

Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives
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Lecture 16
Globalization and Modernity debate

Welcome back to the class. And we are beginning the lectures in the fourth week of the course and in this week as well as in the next week we are going to discuss a very central theoretical concern in the sociological theories of globalization and that is the relationship between globalization and modernity.

This is a very important and central theme in globalization debates especially from a sociological and theoretical point of view because you know that this debate about modernity and how do we describe them, how do you characterise them, when do we set the time period of modernity, when did it begin, when did it end, if at all it ended and then what happened after that, how do we characterise the contemporary times in which we are living. So, these are some of the important philosophical and sociological debates of our times and literature on globalization also is not free from these debates.

So, there is an argument about the emergence of modernity in Europe in a particular time period because of a host of socio economic and political reasons and we attribute this enlightenment as one of the very important manifestations of modernity and a set of institutions and set of new ideas and value systems and then there are also people talk about the crises of modernity especially by the second half of twentieth century, then there is a rather consensus or kind of a conclusion that this phase what we consider as modernity came to an end by 1970s or 1980s.

At the same time this consensus is not completely free from the kind of debates, the kind of theoretical engagement because there is a very substantial section of scholars who believe that we have moved beyond, we have gone past that of modernity and we have reached a stage of post modernity. Whereas, discipline like sociology or a large number of scholars within the discipline of sociology, of course, they agree that very character of modernity has changed, but they are not ready to completely throw away this concept of modernity.

So, we will be discussing for this course three very important scholars who belong to that particular tradition, who argues that modernity has undergone tremendous transformations, but we are not ready to say that we are in a completely post-modern world. Because a post-modern world quite often indicates a complete break from that of the previous system. And these scholars whom we are going to discuss namely David Harvey, Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck are not really belong to that particular category who celebrate the arrival of post modernity.

So, before getting into the specific readings especially of Anthony Giddens, we are going to spend lot of time trying to understand his very influential work, the consequences of modernity. So, before that let me spend some time trying to give some broad picture about this all idea of modernity, what it means to be modernity and then how did sociology engage with that?

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- Anthony Giddens describes sociology as the “study of modernity.” A “shorthand term for modern society or industrial civilization,”



Modernity as produced by three revolutions

- “a certain set of attitudes toward the world, including the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention.” - Scientific revolution
- “a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy.” - French revolution
- “a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy.” - Industrial revolution



So, Anthony Giddens describes sociology as the “study of modernity.” A “shorthand term for modern society or industrial civilization” and you know that sociology emerged as a modern science. It simply did not exist in the mediaeval period. It emerged in the Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, beginning of and the later got institutionalized in the early twentieth century. So, it specifically is a study, is a branch of science or a branch of discipline that emerged in Europe with a specific focus on the industrial or modern society.

So, in a sense Giddens would argue that it is nothing but a study of modernity. So, this whole idea of modernity is something so close to the central theme of sociology. And modernity as produced by three important revolutions and I am not going into the details because these are the very specific reasons why sociology as a discipline also emerged in the Europe during this particular time, during the during late seventeenth and, so late eighteenth and nineteenth and twentieth century.

So, a set of attitudes towards are world, including the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention. So, this idea what we can make sense of under this term scientific revolution. So, what did the scientific revolution tell you? Scientific revolution argued that the world outside or the world around us is amenable to human intelligence. You can use your human intelligence to make sense of that to understand that, to explain that.

You do not really require any super human power, you do not really depend upon a transcendental power to make sense of that or religious explanation or magical explanation or explanation based on magic or some super natural powers, these things are no longer required, you do not need to depend upon Bible, you do not need to depend upon any of the religious scriptures to make sense of that.

Human intellect, human rationality is capable of understanding the natural and physical phenomenon around you and later that was extended to social realm that is why sociology emerged as a science, a positivist science during its earlier phase, I am again not going to that.

So, it is set of attitudes towards world including the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention. You can not only understand that, but also you can intervene and you can change it. And second one, it is a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy, something that was brought into being by the French revolution.


The French revolution is considered to be one of the most important historical epochs that overthrew the feudalism and assured in the period of democracy. So, a set of new ideas and new institutions were brought into picture especially an institution like nation-state. Now, we do not have any other form of governance other than nation-state. And nation-state is a very modern phenomenon. Nation-state systematically displaced all the previous forms of political governance.

So, nation-states and then mass democracy and then whole set of notions of citizenship, notions of rights, the whole ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, all these things were brought to the table by that of French revolution. And then, of course you have the industrial revolution that swept across the western Europe, a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and market economy.


And these two things, industrial production as well as market economy also they replaced the existing form of economic institutions, including that of feudal structure, including agrarian society, agrarian structures.

So, this traditional feudal based agrarian economy was systematic transformed into an industrial based modern market-based capitalist system. So, these three revolutions are considered to be something so significant that happened within a very short period in time in Europe giving rise to a completely different set of ideas of society.

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- The rise of rationality, positivist methodology
- Disenchantment of the world and rise of secularism as a principle
- Discourses on emancipatory project with notions of universal rights
- Discourse on human mastery over the nature



And which is also followed by the idea of the rise of rationality, positivist methodology that you can use your reason in order to understand that. The world around you is amenable to your reasoning, your rationality, each and everything you can question, you do not need to blindly believe what is given in the theology and also the kind of a positivist methodology. Positivist methodology is an adoption of scientific methodology.

And then the disenchantment of the world and the rise of secularism as a principle. So, once you adopt this scientific methodology, you are no longer enchanted by the world. You are no longer in the spell of some unseen force or unseen power to make sense, so this whole world. You know how it works, you are not enchanted, you do not buy the argument that this whole universe is created by God and each and everything is decided by this supreme power.

So, use you use your rationality to make sense of this world and also you think that the religion has to be shown its place. So, religion is made as a kind of a private affair, the role of religion, the scope of religion is very significantly curtailed as something that is limited to the private sphere of an individual. And then the discourse on the emancipatory project with notions of universal rights. This enlightenment values, enlightenment argument is highly emancipatory in its claim.

Most of these enlightenment scholars, they thought about human emancipation, emancipation from the chains of the tradition. Emancipation from the bonds, from the traditional bonds that have enslaved them and they spoke about the universal rights as individual right and then everybody is being equal, the notions of citizenship, all these ideas and of course the discourse on human mastery over nature.

So, modernity was extremely optimistic in the sense that here comes an age where we are going to be the masters, we are going to have our unquestionable mastery over the nature. The nature was increasingly seen as the resource that needs to be kind of utilised, that needs to be used up for the sake of human beings.

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- This great transformation, so profound in its implications, gave sociological theory its reason for existence.
- the discovery of the idea of the "social" or "society."
- Intellectuals came to recognize the existence of society as a supra-individual entity, a distinct phenomenon having its own "specific characteristics, its constraints and its variables."
- Individuals themselves were products of society and sociology as the study of MODERN SOCIETY.



So, this great transformation, so profound in its implication, gave sociological theory its reason for existence. So, as I told you sociology is nothing but a discipline of modernity as Giddens argues. And this whole idea, the discovery of the idea of the social or society. So, this is something very important again. So, all these transformations brought home the point that there is something called as a social as something very distinct which is no longer a residue of some other spheres of activity.

The social cannot be reduced to economy, social cannot be reduced to polity. Social cannot be reduced to say philosophy, social cannot be reduced to say history. So, some a distinct sphere of human activity has to be studied on its own merit and that is why you require a discipline to explosively study this social or this society. So, that is why when we say that sociology is the study of society, we say that it is not society in the general sense, but we look at the social, the nature of interrelation within the society.

The intellectuals came to recognize the existence of society as a supra-individual entity, a distinct phenomenon having its own specific characteristics, its constraints and its variables. So,

these intellectuals began to look at society as a supra-individual entity. Of course, society is nothing but a group of people coming together, but when they come together, there is something more happens, you cannot reduce a society to an individual.

Of course, society function through the individual, but the individual is not the society. It is something beyond an individual. It is something more and beyond an individual. So, the individual themselves were products of society and sociology as a study of modern society.

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- Marx, Durkheim and Weber are the foremost theorists of modernity



- They lived, experienced and reflected over the rise of modernity

- They applied the principles of science inherited from the Enlightenment to examine the origins, characteristics, and dynamics of modern society.



And there are elaborate discussions on this three important scholars, Marx, Durkheim and Weber. Karl Marx, Emil Durkheim and Max Weber. The first two are German and Durkheim is a French sociologist and how they are the foremost theorists of modernity. I am not going into the details about how did they conceive of modernity, how were the critical of modernity, they lived, experienced and reflected over the rise of modernity. And they apply the principles of science inherited from the enlightenment to examine the origin characterise and dynamics of modern society.

So, I hope you would have listened to some of the other courses or I myself have given a course on classical sociological theories in which I undertake a very elaborate discussion on Marx, Durkheim and Weber especially with questions related to their engagement with the question of modernity. So, these are the three important people, the trinities of classical sociological theory or the theories of modernity.

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Central questions



What are the origins and defining characteristics of the new capitalist or industrial society, how does it differ from the traditional society of the past, through what processes did the transition from the premodern world to the modern world come about, what are the driving forces and developmental tendencies of the emergent industrial society, what is the fate of the individual in the modern age, what new problems and dangers does the era of modernity pose, what does the future hold, and how might we best respond to the radically new circumstances of modern social life?



Now, these are some of the central questions. What are the origins and defining characteristics of the new capitalist or industrial society? How does it differ from the traditional society of the past? Through what processes did the transition from the pre-modern world to the modern world come about? What are the driving forces and developmental tendencies of the emergent industrial society? What is the fate of the individual in the modern age?

What new problems and dangers does the era of modernity pose? What does the future hold? And how might we best respond to the radically new circumstances of modern social life? These are some of the central questions of modernity as well as that of sociology.

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David Harvey: Conditions of postmodernity



Although the term 'modern' has a rather more ancient history, what Habermas (1983, 9) calls the project of modernity came into focus during the eighteenth century. That project amounted to an extraordinary intellectual effort on the part of Enlightenment thinkers 'to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic.' The idea was to use the accumulation of knowledge generated by many individuals working freely and creatively for the pursuit of human emancipation and the enrichment of daily life. The scientific domination of nature promised freedom from scarcity, want, and the arbitrariness of natural calamity. The development of rational forms of social organization and rational modes of thought promised liberation from the irrationalities of myth, religion, superstition, release from the arbitrary use of power as well as from the dark side of our own human natures. Only through such a project could the universal, eternal, and the immutable qualities of all of humanity be revealed.



Chapter on modernity from the book titled 'Conditions of post modernity' written by David Harvey. So, from this section onwards, this slide onwards I am using couple of paragraphs from a very important book by David Harvey titled the 'Conditions of post modernity'. So, these are the paragraph straight away taken from those from this particular book. So, Harvey argues that although the term 'modern' has a rather more ancient history, what Habermas

a very important German scholar, philosopher who passed away recently, calls the project of modernity came into focus during the eighteenth century in Europe. That project amounted to an extraordinary intellectual effort on the part of the enlightenment thinkers to develop objective sciences, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic.

So, what were the important agenda of these enlightenment thinkers? One is, to develop objective science, the science which tells you the truth, the science which is not influenced by any ideology or any theological positions about the fact something that claims to give you an objective understanding of the world around it. And the universal morality and law and most of this enlightenment scholars claim to have identified a set of universal set of morality and laws.

And many of them even believed that sociology can be fashioned as a science which can think about universally applicable social laws and autonomous are according to their inner logic. The idea was to use the accumulation of knowledge generated by many individuals working freely and creatively for the pursuit of human emancipation and the enrichment of daily life especially in the fields of art.

The scientific domination of nature promised freedom from scarcity, want and the arbitrariness of natural calamity. So, the scientific domination of nature that we believe that we are able to tame the nature, we are able to control the nature, we are able to manipulate the nature for our own benefit. So, if you look into some of the most important scientific innovations and discoveries and which later translated into major technological innovations, all these things were aimed at providing far better comfort and luxury and access to hum beings to the various aspects of nature.

So, it gave you enormous amount of optimism that we are now being able to control the nature, whether it is about constructing a dam or generating electricity or n number of example whether it is about transportation, about aeroplanes or about telecommunication, whatever be that, we were of very strong belief that we are able to tame the nature with the domination of nature promised freedom from scarcity, want and the arbitrariness of natural calamity.

The development of rational forms of social organisation and rational modes of thought promised liberation from the irrationalities of myth, religion, superstition, release from the arbitrary use of power as well as from the dark side of our own human natures. And this is the kind of a more ethical or moral dimensional of modernity. Modernity believed in the use of rationality. So, once you begin to think through rationality, you think that human beings so far were living in a world of irrationality and this irrationality was seen as existing in the field of myth, magic, religion, superstition, tradition, everything.

So, modernity was seen as a rescuing of people, lifting out of people from this world of ignorance and backwardness into that of the field of scientific rationality. So, this has a very strong moral position as well which claims that the scientific world view, scientific version of truth is more acceptable, it is more important, it is more objectively correct than any other alternative forms of reality and also development of a series of rational forms of social organisation and for example the nation-state.

So, the nation-state emerged during the period of modernity with the kind of a contract between the state and the citizen. So, the citizen is supposed to do his or her duties and then the role and the state is supposed to protect the citizen through the enactment of law and then a series of other organisations like bureaucratic institutions.

And rational modes of thought promised liberation from the irrationalities of myth, religion, superstition, release from the arbitrary use of power as well as from the dark side of our own human natures. This is a very interesting point. Because these people, enlightenment thinkers believed that once you really you begin to use your rationality, we no longer will be like this brute and nasty people that is being kind of characterised by earlier thinkers.

We will not be brute. We will not be violent; we will be more civilised people. We will not use unnecessary forms of violence, rather we will be more civilised and cultured people. Only through such a project could the universal eternal and the immutable qualities of all humanity be revealed. So, this was one of the important claims or beliefs or aspirations of modernity and different people had different take on that, I am again not going into that.

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Enlightenment thought (and I here rely on Cassirer's, 1951, account) embraced the idea of progress, and actively sought that break with history and tradition which modernity espouses. It was, above



all, a secular movement that sought the demystification and desacralization of knowledge and social organization in order to liberate human beings from their chains. It took Alexander Pope's injunction, 'the proper study of mankind is man,' with great seriousness. To the degree that it also lauded human creativity, scientific discovery, and the pursuit of individual excellence in the name of human progress, Enlightenment thinkers welcomed the maelstrom of change and saw the transitoriness, the fleeting, and the fragmentary as a necessary condition through which the modernizing project could be achieved. Doctrines of equality, liberty, faith in human intelligence (once allowed the benefits of education), and universal reason abounded. 'A good law must be good for everyone,' pronounced Condorcet in the throes of the French Revolution, 'in exactly the same way that a true proposition is true for all.' Such a vision was



For example, Marx, how did Marx believe this particular process was very different from how say Durkheim believed in or how Max Weber believed in that we will see that slowly. So, enlightenment thought and here I rely on Cassirer's account embraced the idea of progress and actively sought that break with history and the tradition which modernity espouses. It was above all a secular movement that sought the demystification and desacralization of knowledge and social organisation in order to liberate human beings from their chains. So, this is a very important argument.

So, enlightenment embrace the idea of progress, so this whole idea of progress was seen and presented as a one particular unitary way of reaching a particular predefined destination and this idea of progress is very closely connected with this idea of unilinear evolutionary model that many of these early sociologists and then philosophers very strongly believed in. They all believed that every society is destined to follow a particular predefined path towards the towards a higher state of affairs and this higher state of affairs is characterised by the then existed western European societies.

So, western European societies were seen as the model towards which all other societies in the world are supposed to follow. So, progress and actively sought that break with history and tradition which modernity espouses. So, modernity was seen as a clear break from the tradition. It was above all a secular movement, as I mentioned earlier. It very specifically told religion to mind its own business, it wanted the religion to be in the back within the house, it wanted religion to be confined to the private sphere.

It made its stark division between the private sphere and the public sphere. So, you can be a believer, nothing wrong with it, but keep your religion within the four walls of your house. Make religion a kind of a personal engagement, do not bring in religion to the realm of politics, do not bring in religion to the realm of education or law or literature or other stuff. And demystification and desacralization of religion. So, there is nothing anymore divine about a knowledge.

So, knowledge is no longer divine, knowledge is no longer divinely ordained certain thing, knowledge is no longer the monopoly of divinely selected group of priests or clergy. Knowledge is democratized. Knowledge and social organisation in order to liberate human beings from their chains. It took Alexander Pope's injunction, 'the proper study of mankind is man' with great seriousness.

To the degree that it also lauded human creativity, scientific discovery and the pursuit of individual excellence in the name of human progress, enlightenment thinkers welcomed the maelstrom of changes and saw the transitoriness, the fleeting and the fragmentary as a necessary condition through which the modernizing project could be achieved. So, this large-scale changes and unprecedented scale of changes that is why they call it as this fleeting and the fragmentary, these movements are seen as something quite natural, something that is unavoidable. So, all that is traditional will be wither away, will simply disappear.

And doctrines of equality, liberty, faith in human intelligence once allowed the benefit of education and universal reason abounded. 'A good law must be good for everyone', pronounced Condorcet in the throes of the French revolution in exactly the same way that a true proposition is true for all. So, these are some of the very radical enlightenment ideas that you believe in the doctrine of equality that you believe that every human being deserves liberty and you have faith in human intelligence and you believe in the universal reason and it must be equally applicable to everybody.

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The twentieth century – with its death camps and death squads, its militarism and two world wars, its threat of nuclear annihilation and its experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – has certainly shattered this optimism. Worse still, the suspicion lurks that the Enlightenment project was doomed to turn against itself and transform the quest for human emancipation into a system of universal oppression in the name of human liberation. This was the daring thesis advanced by Horkheimer and Adorno in their *The dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972). Writing in the shadow of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, they argued that the logic that hides behind Enlightenment rationality is a logic of domination and oppression. The lust to dominate nature entailed the domination of human beings, and that could only lead, in the end, to 'a nightmare condition of self-domination' (Bernstein, 1985, 9). The revolt of nature, which they posited as the only way out of the impasse, had then to be conceived of as a revolt of human nature against the oppressive power of purely instrumental reason over culture and personality.



Now, so this was the kind of a promise of modernity, the project of modernity, something still people call it as the unfinished project of modernity. If some, if now sitting in 2020, if you look back and then see whether this promise has been materialised, has it come true? The resounding answer is no.

We have made tremendous progress, I am not somebody who will be dismissive of the great achievements of modernity, because it is now become a fashion or it has become quite easier to dismiss everything that came as a result of modernity and then say that everything was bad and modernity is completely violence, I do not subscribe to those arguments.

So, but the kind of promise, the kind of uncritical optimism many of the champions of modernity expose now seems to be discredited, it is no longer valid. So, the twentieth century with its death camps and death squads, its militarism and two world wars, the threat of nuclear annihilation and its experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has certainly shattered this optimism. And we know that whether it is the First World War or Second World War and most importantly the Hitler's Germany, the Genocide, the Nazi movement that was precisely rational.

They used scientific rationality to wipe out millions of people from the earth from the phase of the earth. So, and then we saw the military power happening, so Hiroshima and Nagasaki so that really brought in quite a lot of questions about all these kinds of a claims that the science is a saviour, rationality is the saviour, technology is the saviour, we are going to have a bright future, we are going to be less violent, our history is going to be less bloodied. So, all these kinds of claims seem to be shattered by the second half of twentieth century.

Worse still, the suspicion lurks that the enlightenment project was doomed to turn against itself and transform the quest for human emancipation into a system of universal oppression in the name of human liberation. So, what are you doing in the name of emancipation to other people? So, you know that even colonialism was justified, colonialism was legitimated with these kinds of a claims that we are we have come here to uplift you, we have come here to modernise you, we have come here to take you to the path of progress.

So, similarly, many of these claims of modernity was seen a violent imposition on the cultures of vast majority of people who otherwise were contented with different kind of cultures. So, a series of uniform mechanisms and world views and institutions were imposed on completely different kind of cultural groups with quite a lot of violence. This was the daring thesis advanced by Horkheimer and Adorno in their thesis 'The dialectics of enlightenment'. So, it is a very important work which talks about the kind of a negative as well as positive implications of or value orientations of enlightenment.

Writing in the shadow of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, they argued that the logic that hides behind enlightenment rationality is a logic of domination and oppression. How could a political ideology that emerged from Marxian notion of human emancipation could turn into one of the most autocratic and most violent forms of political ideology? How could a ruler like Hitler execute millions of people, millions of people without any of prick of conscience? How could he have his own subordinates and other ordinary Germans to do this kind of inhuman acts?

So, they argued that heights behind enlightenment rationality is the logic of domination and oppression. The lust into dominate nature entailed the domination of human beings and that could only lead in the end to a nightmare condition for self-domination. The revolt of nature which they posited as the only way out of the impasse, had then to be conceived as the revolt of human nature against the oppressive power of purely instrumental reason over culture and personality.

So, this whole idea of instrumental reason that we are going to discuss in the coming slide as well is something very important. So, we all celebrate rationality, but what if rationality is taken to the extreme? And then we do not care about ethics, we do not care about people, we do not

care about certain kind of values, we do not care about the nature, we only want things to be done in the most efficient manner and with a system like capitalism that with its never-ending demands and desires, how do you make use of these technologies to ensure that you employ this kind of rationality and that kind of rationality can be extremely violent.

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Whether or not the Enlightenment project was doomed from the start to plunge us into a Kafkaesque world, whether or not it was bound to lead to Auschwitz and Hiroshima, and whether it has any power left to inform and inspire contemporary thought and action, are crucial questions. There are those, like Habermas, who continue to support the project, albeit with a strong dose of scepticism over aims, a lot of anguishing over the relation between means and ends, and a certain pessimism as to the possibility of realizing such a project under contemporary economic and political conditions. And then there are those – and this is, as we shall see, the core of post-modernist philosophical thought – who insist that we should, in the name of human emancipation, abandon the Enlightenment project entirely. Which position we take depends upon how we explain the 'dark side' of our recent history and the degree to which we attribute it to the defects of Enlightenment reason rather than to a lack of its proper application.



So, now another continuing with that whether or not enlightenment project was doomed from the start that to plunge us into a Kafkaesque world, whether or not it was bound to lead us to Auschwitz and Hiroshima and whether it has any power left to inform and inspire contemporary thought and action are crucial questions. So, what happened to this whole project was this enlightenment idea, rationality was supposed to lead to all these kind of concentration camps and then Hiroshima and Nagasaki and these are important questions.

There are those like Habermas, who continued to support the project, albeit with a strong dose of scepticism over aims, a lot of anguish over the relationship between means and ends and a certain pessimism as to the possibility of realizing such a project under contemporary economic and political conditions. And then there are those and this is we shall see the core of post-modern's philosophical thought – who insist that we should in the name of human emancipation abandon the enlightenment project entirely.


Which position we take depends upon how we explain the dark side of our recent history and the degree to which we attribute it to the defects of enlightenment reason rather than to a lack of its proper application. So, this is the crux of this whole idea. There are people including Habermas and including Giddens and Ulrich Beck who still are not ready to throw away the concept of modernity or this whole idea of emancipatory project. They know that it has ran into problem, the science and technology and these universal ideas, the universalism has become quite violent, but they are not ready to throw it off.

But there is another very substantive, a very influential set of people who believe that enlightenment project and this whole idea of emancipation must be a thrown away, who insist that we should in the name of human emancipation abandon the enlightenment project entirely, which position we take depends upon how do you define what is the darker side.

So, it is not an easy question. Now for example post-modernist would want a celebration of divergence, a celebration of differences, very important argument, but again ideas of equality,

ideas of liberty, ideas of fraternity are some of the very important core ideas which I do not think that any society can really overlook.

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Weber argued that the hope and expectation of the Enlightenment thinkers was a bitter and ironic illusion. They maintained a strong necessary linkage between the growth of science, rationality, and universal human freedom. But when unmasked and understood, the legacy of the Enlightenment was the triumph of . . . purposive-instrumental rationality. This form of rationality affects and infects the entire range of social and cultural life encompassing economic structures, law, bureaucratic administration, and even the arts. The growth of [purposive-instrumental rationality] does not lead to the concrete realization of universal freedom but to the creation of an 'iron cage' of bureaucratic rationality from which there is no escape. (Bernstein, 1985, 5)



Now, they argued that, this is again a quote by Bernstein. He kind of summarises Weber and this is from the same book by David Harvey. The post-modern conditions, Weber argued that the hope and expectations of the enlightenment thinkers was bitter and ironic illusion. They maintained a strong necessary linkage between the growth of science, rationality and universal human freedom. But when unmasked and understood the legacy of the enlightenment was the triumph of purposive instrumental rationality.

This form of rationality affects and infects the entire range of social and cultural life encompassing the economic structures, law, bureaucratic administration and even arts. The growth of purposive instrumental rationality does not lead to the concrete realization of universal freedom but to the creation of an iron cage of bureaucratic rationality from which there is no escape. This is an extremely important point that Weber re-emphasised again and again. If you take all this idea of instrumental rationality to an extreme level in the name of efficiency because you usually you use rationality for realising efficiency.

So, in order to make efficiency if you use rationality blindly, it can have very negative, catastrophic consequences and that will create a complete inhuman world with catastrophic consequences on the society, on the nature, on everything because an instrument of rationality while it ensures more efficiency it also results in complete lack of empathy, complete lack of kindness, understanding moral issues, ethical issues, value systems, peoples choices, peoples opinion all this things are seen as unnecessary impediments for the execution of the most instrumental rational decision and when we are seeing it today, we are seeing it today in every aspect of social life here we are able to see that.

So, Weber one of the greatest theorists of modernity, greatest theorist of rationality he himself was extremely conscious about these things that is going to happen that is why he called it as an iron cage which is something that is very difficult for you to escape from. So, let me stop here and this is a very broad overview of this whole idea of modernity, and we will continue the discussion with the readings of Antony Giddens from the next class onwards. And we are discussing his book 'The Consequence of Modernity', so that we will take some time, couple of hours to discuss that book in detail. So, see you then. Thank you.