

Categories of Political Science

Lecture 14. Political Ideologies

Yury A. Kabanov  
Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science and  
International Relations,  
Higher School of Economics  
[y.kabanov@hs-econ.ru](mailto:y.kabanov@hs-econ.ru)

Lecture 14 Overview

- What is ideology?
- What are the functions of ideologies?
- What are the differences between basic (classic and modern) ideologies:  
liberalism, conservatism, social democracy and

1. Ideology: Definition

- XVIII century, Antoine Destutt de Tracy: ideology (idea + logos) is a discipline which studies human ideas in a scientific manner;
- No ideas come from "mind" or "soul". The ideas are based on our sensation of the reality (perception, memory, judgment, volition), hence they can be studied empirically and positively. Ideology takes anti-metaphysics positions;
- Practical application of the ideology was to develop a good man by education and governmental policies, but failed because of Napoleon;
- The term drastically changed its meaning since that.



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoine\\_Destutt\\_de\\_Tracy#/media/File:Destutt\\_de\\_Tracy.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoine_Destutt_de_Tracy#/media/File:Destutt_de_Tracy.jpg)

"We have only an incomplete knowledge of an actual one known nothing of its intellectual content. **Ideology** **is not** **of** **being** and it is to mean that this part is important and is necessarily **interrelated**"

1. Ideology: Definition

- Karl Marx: ideology is used in a pejorative and abusive meaning;
- If a theory is "ideological" it means that either its author has "false consciousness" (wrong assumptions), or the theory functions to serve the interests of a certain class;
- Ideology is used to legitimize the rule and preserve the existing power relations.
- Ideology aims at convincing people that the status – quo is just, justified, "natural", God-given etc.



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl\\_Marx#/media/File:Karl\\_Marx\\_1848.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx#/media/File:Karl_Marx_1848.jpg)



1. Ideology: Definition

- Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: ideology is a system of values, views, beliefs that are socially constructed, defined and preserved;
- Ideology helps the powerful to preserve the status-quo by obscuring the reality;
- Utopia is a critical view on reality, unlike ideologies, utopias aim at changing the status-quo;
- It's difficult to draw the line between ideologies and utopias in reality.



Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/14/KarlMannheim.jpg>

1. Ideology: Definition

- Hamilton's list (1987): 27 elements;
- It consists of ideas, beliefs, attitudes etc.;
  - It is a more or less coherent system;
  - It is associated with a particular social group, or with the whole society;
  - It is functional;
  - It is socially determined;
  - It contains of statements of facts, normative statements (morals, values);
  - It seeks to explain, facilitate choice and decision, provoke action;
  - It seeks to preserve the order or to promote a (radical) change;
  - It is a weapon of the political (class) struggle;
  - It allows no criticism...

What ideology is... and is not

1. Ideology: Definition

Ideology is not:

- a political theory or philosophy, although it can be based on them as a simplified and popularized version;

We study ideologies, but are not guided by them in research

What ideology is... and is not

Examples?

2. Ideology: Functions

- orientation: to make sense of the world we live in, to provide basic description of the society etc.;
- mobilization: to mobilize people to act;
- integration: to unite people by forming a general interest that is primary;
- amortization: to protect the elites, to maintain social and political stability;
- defense: to protect social groups from others.

2. Ideology: Functions

Levels of Ideology

- Theoretical (conceptual): development of ideology, its key foundations;
- Political: transformation of ideas into party manifestos, policies, slogans. Ideology is becoming propaganda;
- Common: propaganda is adapted in every-day life, communication and political activities.

3. Ideologies: Overview

Right-Left Dichotomy:

- government intervention vs. the role of individuals;
- social spending and welfare;
- equality vs. individual initiative;
- public sector vs. private sector;
- individual rights vs. collective rights.

3. Ideologies: Overview

Liberalism

- Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations: free market and the "invisible hand";
- John Locke: the social contract can be reconsidered if the government doesn't follow it; natural right to freedom, life and property.



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam\\_Smith#/media/File:Adam\\_Smith.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Smith#/media/File:Adam_Smith.jpg)



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Locke#/media/File:John\\_Locke.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke#/media/File:John_Locke.jpg)

3. Ideologies: Overview

Liberalism

- Individualism: protection of autonomy, priority of individual interests;
- Personal freedom: boundaries are settled in the "social contract";
- Equality of opportunity and, if possible, of outcome, meritocracy;



3. Ideologies: Overview

Conservatism

Edmund Burke:

- Reaction to the revolutions in Europe: to protect "the sovereignty of the ruler" from "the sovereignty of nations";
- Following traditions is a way to preserve social stability (religion, monarchy, family).



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund\\_Burke#/media/File:Edmund\\_Burke.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Burke#/media/File:Edmund_Burke.jpg)

3. Ideologies: Overview

Conservatism

- The irrational human behavior should be contained by institutions (the role of government, social values);
- The existing rules should be preserved and only gradually changed;
- Equality of opportunity, not of outcome.
- To create a vision of the future based on the vision of the past;
- Order, stability, traditionalism.



3. Ideologies: Overview

Socialism and Social Democracy

Eduard Bernstein

- Stems from the ideas of Marx, but criticizes its views on the rapid demise of capitalism;
- The changes should be made evolutionary, not revolutionary, through democracy and reforms.
- Key ideas:
  - The moderate view on state ownership, mixed economy;
  - Social welfare measures (education, social security, healthcare) and public spending;
  - Governmental regulation of economy to promote social justice, income redistribution and equality.
  - Equality of opportunities and outcome, equality.



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduard\\_Bernstein#/media/File:Bernstein\\_Eduard\\_1897.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduard_Bernstein#/media/File:Bernstein_Eduard_1897.jpg)

Lecture 14 Check-list:

I know:

- The views on ideology of A. de Tracy, K. Marx;
- Definitions of ideology and its differences from political theory or philosophy;
- Functions and levels of ideology;
- The main features of liberalism, conservatism, socialism and social democracy;
- Personalities mentioned in the lecture.