

**Sociological Perspectives on Modernity**  
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**Lecture - 28**  
**A New Totality II**

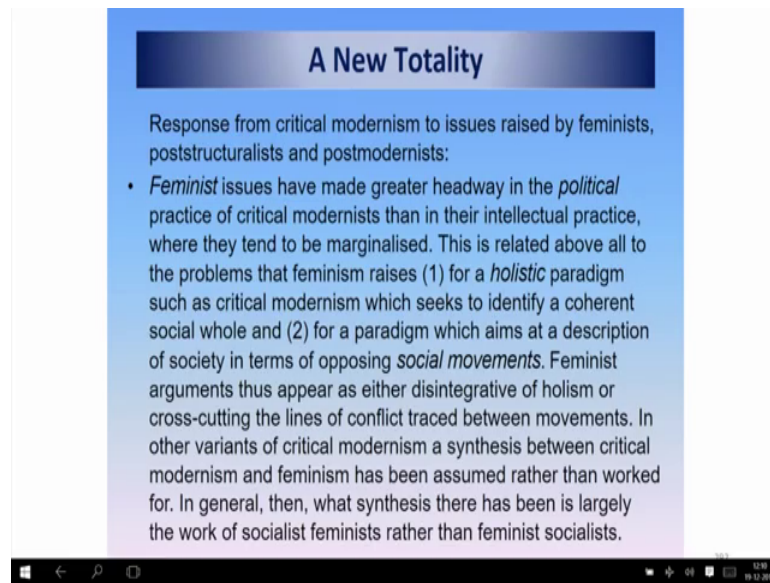
Welcome to the 28th lecture of the course on Sociological Perspectives on Modernity. And we are discussing where actually we have reached the last module. And in the last lecture we have discussed how a new totality may be forged by taking the concerns of both the proponents as well as the opponents of critical modernist paradigm in sociology. And then we have discussed empirical responses to post modernists. And then we have discussed we have tried to evaluate this new totality against the backdrop of 4 critical pillars of modernity namely holism or totality reflexivity rationality and social movements.

For reflexivity and rationality please refer back to the discussion on Giddens and Habermas and today we will discuss a radical edged modernity in the last lecture we have discussed the responses to challenge to modernism on empirical grounds I mean empirical responses to post modernists and in this lecture we are going to discuss the responses to challenge on theoretical roots empirical responses we have discussed, but theoretical responses Giddens effectively it means reflections on modernity is effectively new web area whereas, Habermas's reflections on modernity is new Marxist I mean second generation Frankfurt school.

Similar interests in some way I mean post responses to post structuralists and post modernists are informed by an earlier interest in for example, philosophy of language hermeneutics and so on which also underlies some elements of post structuralism and post modernism. The way there has been an attempt in the direction of the defense of modernity both as historical analysis of a totality and as modernist intellectual perspectives.

it is very important to look back on the on so, far as radicalized modernity is concerned we must look at the works of Giddens and Habermas on this ground because it is a more new weberian account Giddens I mean and then when we look at Habermas it is a new Marxist prospect let us first start with Giddens Anthony Giddens.

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**A New Totality**

Response from critical modernism to issues raised by feminists, poststructuralists and postmodernists:

- *Feminist* issues have made greater headway in the *political* practice of critical modernists than in their intellectual practice, where they tend to be marginalised. This is related above all to the problems that feminism raises (1) for a *holistic* paradigm such as critical modernism which seeks to identify a coherent social whole and (2) for a paradigm which aims at a description of society in terms of opposing *social movements*. Feminist arguments thus appear as either disintegrative of holism or cross-cutting the lines of conflict traced between movements. In other variants of critical modernism a synthesis between critical modernism and feminism has been assumed rather than worked for. In general, then, what synthesis there has been is largely the work of socialist feminists rather than feminist socialists.

For Giddens the institutional analysis of modernity is a Weberian style multi dimensional or pluralist account it becomes I mean these substitutional analysis of modernity becomes of interest in terms of it is link to structuration theory we have already discussed structuration theory how practice is both the medium and outcome of an event and I mean in the in Giddens is discuss Giddens discuss these things in his book.

The consequences of modernity I mean there has been a systematic attempt by Giddens at embodying notion of reflexivity within macro social theory that is your move from epistemology to methodology to ontology this such analysis, of such transition from a epistemology to methodology to ontology could be presented like I mean in terms of 3 important pillars of modernity namely reflexivity, holism or totality and social movements.

What is that reflexivity, that we talk about that duality of structure I mean structuration theory deals with this I mean there is technical solution to agency I mean there is technical solution to the dichotomy between agency and structure and Giddens argues that rules are simultaneously a product of action and a precondition for action. It implies that regularities in social organization are not given, but result from a skilled performance which can equally involve the transformation of rules.

And thirdly this is related to a rejection of philosophical anthropology in favor of general statements about human beings capacity to produce their own society the institutions and

structures generated by actors are not necessarily organized in particular ways in contradistinction with what Marx said, it is such account of modernity has shifted from the more empiricist and inhabitablist mode in class structure of the advanced societies which resembles some of the works already discussed earlier to a looser and more contingent account of modernity which need not reach immediate claims about nature of the social world in gender.

So, for as reflexivity is concerned, but. So, far as holism or totality is concerned let us see how modernity for how is modernity characterized by Giddens I mean there is a dialectic of globalization and dispersal which is similar to (Refer Time: 06:01) and (Refer Time: 06:02) disorganization of experience and organization of the or disorganization of national economy and reorganization of the world economy.

Secondly, the reflexive net we must understand the reflexive nature of social thought in modernity I mean social thought becomes constituent element of social reality because theories cannot be produced in back you theories have been generated through social reality right. Such reflexive nature of social thought in modernity is particularly important given the central role of skill and knowledge in production of society.

And thirdly consequently reflexive reordering of social relations of production and most importantly for our purposes the disembedding mechanisms we have already discussed in the case of Giddens. Disembedding mechanisms I mean tokens such as money expert knowledge such as natural science and so on. Such disembedding mechanisms enable inter relation across distances of time and space, they rest upon a said trust in their validity the form abstract steering systems they are increasingly out of control hence a radicalized modernity that I mean hence the reason argment need to radicalize modernity I mean the societies capacity for action on itself has grown dramatically, but the ability to control this is less endless.

Coming to social movements in this context social movements appear as a reaction to the processes of modernity what we see that in capitalism which we look at workers movements in. So, far as industrialization is concerned we look at response to industrialization we will look at ecology movements, environmental group's movements. So, far as surveillance is concerned what is the reaction to surveillance reaction to

surveillance and response to surveillance is in the form of free speech and democratic movements.

What is the response to military power, the response to military power is in the form of peace movements not much has been theorized upon women's movements, it does not imply that it has not been theorized upon at all, but inadequately. Social movements in either at freedom or at self realization and in this way social movements play a valuable role it is in the how to radical edge modernity in the works of a new weberian namely Giddens.

Now let us look at a new Marxists reflection on modernity in the through the works of Jurgen Habermas, Habermas starts from very different assumptions about the nature of society, but ends up at quite similar description of modernity as with Giddens there is a shift from epistemology and methodology to ontological presuppositions I mean in his theory of communication communicative action, but so far as Habermas is concerned you see we have discussed reflexivity totality and social movements in the case of Giddens and in the case of Habermas we are going to first start with rationality, rationality is very important, then also we will go ahead with this we will see so, far.

So, far as rationality is concerned for Habermas human beings are neither isolated subjects nor simply processors of nature their communicatively socialized, inter subjective concept versus both affirmative philosophy of the subject and post structuralist depth of the subject I mean there is a key question that which has become very important I mean it is the constitution of inter subjective reality via understanding between subjects.

Secondly, the concept of rationality for Habermas is then found to lie in this process of mutual understanding, what is that mutual understanding, I mean all acts verbal or physical implicitly range claims as to their validity any statement for example, raises the claim that it is comprehensible, that is true that it is sincere and that it is normatively right.

If queried all of these claims except the last can be defended on rational terms in other words rationality is a potential inherent rationality is potentially inherent in all intersubjective social reality and communicative activity has the character of a dialogue

oriented towards mutual understanding and this consensus is then a goal for all speakers or others.

Thirdly elements of such rationality then differentiate themselves out from this intersubjective reality, in particular the economy and the state come to act as rationalized subsystems of society each of these has a particular referent the natural world on the one hand the human world on the other we have discussed earlier the relationship between nature and human beings.

The earlier notion was that no nature controls everything metaphysical proponents of metaphysics say I mean metaphysical perspective suggest that no nature controls human beings then positivistic say scientific stage suggests that no it is human beings which you have the potential to control nature that is why we have seen no transition from faculty of contemplation to faculty of control perceived thinkers.

Most of the perceived thinkers for example, Marx first pointed out that no there is a dialectical relationship between nature and human beings human beings are not only controlled by nature, but also know how to control nature by acting upon nature human beings not only change nature, but also changed themselves I mean, but also change the social relations involving it.

This is very important that I said particularly the economy and the state come to act as rationalized subsystems of society each of these has a particular reference the natural world on the one hand and the human world on the other and each whether there is human world or natural world they operate in terms of goal rationality in relation to this referent.

Lastly each is enabled to do this by means of a non linguistic token money or power our communicative accent has been reduced to money and power relations and these this system fourthly these systems are then counter opposed to the life world out of which they developed in Habermases terminology Habermas used the term Lebenswelt. Lebenswelt to refer to life world I mean these systems are then counter poached to the life world out of which they developed.

A life world which is characterized by the non instrumental rationality of communicative action and increasingly they come to colonize it as economic and administrative

imperatives react back on everyday life. So, far as social movements are concerned social movements can then be seen as a reaction against this colonization by the instrumental reason of subsystems which follow their own independent logic and in defense of an ideal communicative reason.

Please note that so far as totality or holism is concerned similarity of these 2 Giddens pluralist account of institutions of modernity and of disembedding mechanisms there are differences that there. So, far as the concept of life were life world I mean Lebenswelt not accepted by Giddens who then has to present movements as effectively ungrounded reactions to modernity.

Major achievement of Habermas's concept of totality or holism is its ability to combine a structural analysis of the logic of systems of the economy and the state with a micro social analysis of the life world and this is related to the argument of Raymond Williams and E P Thompson that we have studied in cultural studies response to the critical modernist paradigms in sociology and that I mean our everyday culture of working class and so on.

It can also be argued that Habermas's argument centered on decentered subjectivity or communicative action avoids the false alternative between individual intentional subjectivity and impersonal systems and it is then similar in effect although not in content to Giddens double structure I mean duality of the structure. Coming to rationality again coming back to rationality again in relation to post structuralism or post structuralist or post modernist critique and so on.

The key argument here is over the meaning of rationality for post structuralist as for earlier critical theorists there is only one nationality to be accepted or rejected and block Habermas; however, argues that the enlightenment discourse on modernity has always carried a counter discourse which it which is now making it more which is now making more explicit.

Habermas argues for example, that the young Hegelians who include Marx and far back saw a reason not as an absolute, but as situated reason in relation to history is situated region in relation to history, in relation to external nature, in relation to decentered subjectivity of internal nature and in relation to society as the alienated powers of human lives.

And other differences include the I mean if you look at such things that discourse of modernity then counter discourse on modernity subject centered region inter subjective model object rationality, communicative rationality when I say subject object rationality I mean goal rationality instrumental rationality and when I say communicative rationality I mean substantive rationality.

If I say this differences also can include necessarily good autonomy of economy and states of systems, but as a counter discourse we can also say that no, these are unbalanced growth increasing autonomy of ditto. In Habermas's own language the paradigm of the knowledge of subjects has to be replaced by the paradigm of mutual understanding between subjects capable of speech and accent I mean he discussed this in his philosophical discourse of modernity.

Giddens argues that, Habermas makes use of 3 types of rationality, one is local criteria of rationality in communicative action, which gives rise to the possibility of universally valid judgments as to the rationality or otherwise of speech and action. Secondly the concept of the rationality I mean comprehensibility of human action and thirdly the social expansion of rationality in the modern period.

Clearly; however, these are intimately linked I mean whether you say talk about local criteria of rationality in communicative action or the concept of rationality I mean comprehensibility of human action and the social expansion of rationality in the modern period each of these 3 4 types of rationality are interlinked the first 2 directly so, the third has a following in particular circumstances.

Effectively Habermas argues that this third element the process of rationalization has followed a very selective path in modern times under the impact of the most dominant mode of production today that is capitalism. Please note also that in terms of programmatic aims while Habermas follows Marks and Lukacs in sync instrumental irrational subsystems as a refined form of human activity.

We have discussed reification in the context of Lukacs, while Habermas follows Marx and Gyorgy Lukacs in examining instrumental rational subsystems as a refigt form of human activity Habermas no longer holds out hope for overcoming this reunification and their relative autonomy from other human action, but rather hopes for a reconquest of the life world by communicative reason.

In sociological language Habermas does not believe that the instrumental rational subsystems can be reduced to the communicative action in the life world either practically or theoretically thus like, this is like the shift from the philosophy of the subject to decentered holism or decentered totality. The aim of achieving an ideal speech situation where inequalities of power and resources for example, are no longer standing in the way of full understanding between equals remains valid nevertheless, Habermas as liberal is concerned for defense of private realm and uncoercive communication.

If we have to take stock of what we have discussed in this section or new totality before we move on to modernity in India. Modernity I mean India between worlds between multiple worlds. Let us first see how this new totality is looking at these concepts I mean the 4 key concept says 4 key concepts of modernity 4 central critical pillars of modernity namely holism or totality reflexivity rationality and social movements.

Then modernity as a paradigm, then modernity in contradistinction with deconstruction of modernity and what is this the general outlook that we are going to we have developed over this all these lectures. These 4 concepts 4 key concepts to start with holism or totality, I mean at it is simplest the concept of society as a whole can mean societies as units usually implicitly nation states.

I mean and this was interrogated this was criticized by Wallerstein and Lash and Lury that in contemporary context there is only one global society for Wallerstein is capitalist world economy and this version of totality or holism implies the need to set temporal or conceptual boundaries to the unit hence in one version the concept of modernity I mean modern society as a whole.

It suggests double periodization one capitalist patriarchy as distinct from non capitalist societies and from other patriarchys and secondly, class society or gendered society as a meta period in effect or in all historical societies and both versions implied holistic concepts of society as such not just modernity the kind of philosophical anthropology developed by the young Marx by Habermas and by some socialist feminist and so on.

And at this highest level even non curious become descriptions of society as a whole especially the anti ontological trust of post structuralism implies an ultimate source in an apparently infinite flexible infinitely flexible and purely social nature of humanity. Please note that such there are certain difficulties normally raised around the notion of



human nature decline greatly if we take the primary element of human species being to be our social nature.

The argument over modernity is then one over the extent which we can describe society as dominated by for example, class in gender or by capitalist patriarchy there is a rejection of determination and of ontological reality at this point makes the kind of relativist historicism which treats different specially or temporarily separated societies as irreducibly different and unknowable difficult or impossible to sustain.

Foucault avoids this problem as at the cost of a radical denial of the performance of his theories and an ad hoc approach to theory construction, necessarily so because any formal coherence between his different approaches would imply statements about the nature of the social world and hence theories of general holism or totality.

This is very important coming to a reflexivity, it is a deeply contested area we will we will discuss it at different levels I mean when your new totality looks at reflexivity I mean in. So, far as historicity is concerned I mean at the level of social reality there is increasing scope for society to act on itself I mean investment political transformation modes of culture I mean cultural modes and so on.

Secondly intersubjective networks I mean growth in autonomy and reflexivity in sense of distance and conscious acting on networks and thirdly process of rationalization I mean good rationality and communicative rationality that we have seen in the works of Habermas these all relate to modernity reflexivity. In general under this purview is either the need to theorize the effect of reflexivity on action. So, far as Giddens is concerned or the need to theorize it is effects in research contexts, but (Refer Time: 25:39) discussed.

So, far as rationality is concerned instrumental rationality as proposed by Weber is counter pushed to the communicative rationality of the life world in the case of Habermas again Weber pointed out value rational social acts and the post structuralist suggested that non-rational next. It is always seen as closely linked to modernity that in affirmative modernism rationality is good rational science politics economics and so on reflexivity simply upsets this.

This argument works because of the identification between rationality and I mean communicative rationality and instrumental rationality. So, far as social movements are

concerned there are 3 axes of variance here there is an emphasis on first there is an emphasis on consciousness or culture versus instrumental rationality rational organizations I mean different conceptualizations of nature of movements.

Secondly differences, I mean difference different conceptual frameworks must be built to make integration between old social movements and new social movements and thirdly movements from below versus movements from above I mean the one must there is a need to rethink the role of agency. It requires a coherent approach on the lines of Alan Turain and Jurgen Habermas I mean there is a move from worker employer conflict including class culture or class consciousness to new social movements versus state and economy as the central structure of society I mean there is there must be shifts within modality.

Secondly, it implies bracketing question of the nature of the transformation in the case of Les and Murray we have seen how, what are the unintended effects of old conflicts which lead to management and welfare state in other words a new intelligence a which gives rise to movements from both sides both old social movements as well as new social movements.

And there is a debate on the role of agency I mean that agency debate I mean versus structurally stand and voluntarist positions emphasizing networks and intersubjectivity, I mean you can look at Habermas is reflex and so on, intersubjectivity and E P Thompsons reflex and so on class. In critical modernist paradigm in sociology there is a distinction between formal and substantive rationality Weber per for example, Weber on bureaucratization marks on capital or between communicative and value rationality that we have seen in the works of communicative rationality in the works of Habermas and value rationality in the in the context of Weber.

Reflexivity is useful here because it enables us to stand one step back from formal or gold rationality and ask about the substantive rationality of the goal and the actual effects of the process of trying to achieve that goal. Critical model modernist paradigm in sociology as a I mean if I have to say modernity as a paradigm 4 important pillars that I want to discuss here I mean there is a distinct social totality in particular the formation of capital and the modern state.

Secondly, this follows logic of rationalization which may and may be caused by its differing normative implications, but some at least of the effects of this are positive and thirdly modern society is not simply increasingly rational, but also increasingly reflexive. Hence the critic of instrumental rationality inflated into a critic of reason in general and the increasing feedback effect, I mean the loss of the appearance of simplicity.

And fourthly social movements from below and above appear as agents constituted by and constituting these processes I mean in the case of Giddens rationalized in the modern totality. I mean movements act these processes I mean movements act to rationalize certain social movements, they play a crucial role they act as they act to rationalize for example, production, management, politics, citizenship movements, social provision I mean welfare state, but are constituted themselves in their goal rational elements by this environment.

Because of their role society is increasingly reflexive both management and so, new social movements up the reflexivity stakes, if we have to look at modernity on the one hand and post structuralism post modernism feminism cultural studies on the other the claim that totality I mean post structuralism post modernism they represent certain misunderstandings of modernity.

The claim that totality does not exist is negated by the denial of social agency I mean social movements that we have discussed as ineffective or unreal if structure does not exist an agency is impossible how come anything happens. Reflexivity is misunderstood as problematic for modernism because rationality is only understood as goal rational instrumental rationality.

In other words modernity is identified with affirmative modernism or critical modernists are read as if they were affirmative modernists. Against this it has to be argued that escape from communicative rationality is not possible the fully irrational can only be pointed to not communicated by definition, what is treated as irrational are locally communicatively rational situations of communicative closer the far right world pictures are rational within these limited terms and in these contexts in other words they make sense in communication between members of far right groups.

Reflexivity is constituent not only of modernity, but also of substantive rather than formal rationality, formal rationality can be identified with for example, parliamentary politics, the substantive rationality of social movements critics and challenges this by emphasizing not the formality of electoral and parliamentary procedures, but the substance of political participation I mean democratic movements and when we look at modernity and feminism the great unsolved this is a great answer unresolved theoretical issue the starting point for example, is that the concept of patriarchy is on the same level not as capitalism, but as class society.

It implies that we need a theorization of capitalist patriarchy as a specific type of patriarchy as well as a specific type of class society that suggests that its specificity has to do with the formal rationalities of capital and state involved. Please note that there is an ambiguous position of the women's movements I mean as goal rational economic or political challenge it is likely to wind up with greater gender an equivalent of the welfare state compromise.

Need to there is a need to expand the still unsatisfactory definition of rationality and use feminist research methods to open for the resource of reflexivity which are after all potentially infinitely recursive. There are key new issues of second wave feminism that question the self that question the self or reflexivity and the meaning of rationality beyond this there is a.