Theoretical Debate Over the Relationship between Ideology and Practical Politics

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ABSTRACT: Political ideology is based on beliefs, values, and principles guiding the preferred form of government and societal organization. While providing coherence and direction for political parties, ideologies often clash with the pragmatic realities of governance. Practical politics prioritizes pragmatic considerations over ideological principles, focusing on achieving realistic goals through compromise and negotiation. This tension underscores the dynamic nature of political theory and practice, where ideological ideals must adapt to real-world complexities. The clash between ideological ideals and pragmatic necessities in governance underscores the dynamic nature of political theory and practice. Scholarly research explores this interplay, highlighting debates on the relationship between ideology and practical politics. The study highlights the complexity of navigating the interplay between ideological frameworks and practical considerations in political decision-making. It acknowledges the challenges inherent in reconciling abstract principles with the exigencies of governance. It analyses political ideology theories imperative for policymakers to balance ideological commitments and pragmatic policies. This research comprehensively explores theoretical approaches to the relationship between ideology and practical politics, shedding light on the ongoing discourse within political theory and its implications for effective governance.

INTRODUCTION

Political ideology is a collection of ideas about the preferred form of government, outlining a preferred vision for how a government should function and how society should be structured. It refers to a set of interconnected beliefs, values, and principles that individuals or groups hold regarding society's proper organization and governance. Ideology serves as a defining feature of political parties, shaping their identity, objectives, and actions in the political arena. Through ideology, parties can implement their vision for society and compete for political power and influence, although the principles of ideology may clash with the pragmatic necessities of governing and addressing real-world problems.

Within political ideology, there are different preferences for specific forms of government. This could include the distribution of power among different branches of government, the role of political parties and interest groups, the relationship between the state and the individual, and the allocation of resources and opportunities within society. While ideology offers a consistent vision of governance, the realities of political practice require pragmatism and flexibility to address practical challenges and achieve tangible results. This tension highlights the dynamic nature of political theory and practice, where ideology provides a framework for political discourse and aspiration, but practical politics requires adaptation and compromise to address the complexities of governance effectively.

Scholarly research on the determinants and consequences of political ideology, challenging implementing ideological ideals and recognizing the difficulties inherent in political decision-making. In political theory, this tension between ideology and practical political issues reflects the ongoing struggle to reconcile abstract principles with real-world complexities. Baderin (2013) explored contemporary debates about the meaning and value of realism in political theory, concluding that political theory threatens or disrespects real politics. Bhambra and Margree (2010) argue that the challenge with ideology and politics lies in how the traditional concept of ideology supplants practical politics. They contend that effective practical politics should acknowledge that the identity of a political group arises in response to a specific situation, and maintaining the identity claim becomes obsolete when the underlying need is no longer present. Gjorshoski (2016) maintains that ideologies identify themselves based on their position on the political spectrum while also conflicting with other crucial issues within their political camp. Pettit (2018) advocates for a realistic approach to political theory, balancing ideology and practical politics. Olson (2011) underscores the role of culture in shaping the relationship between religion and politics.

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The research highlights an ongoing debate among political theorists regarding the relationship between ideology and practical politics. The study examines the complex interplay between ideology and practical considerations in the political decision-making. It maintains that the persistent tension between the theoretical ideals of political ideologies and the practical realities of governing is because political ideologies offer coherence, consistency, and guiding principles for political action, while practical politics often requires compromise, flexibility, and adaptation to changing circumstances. Since ideologies provide a comprehensive framework for understanding political decision-making, they do not always align with the practical considerations and challenges faced. Consequently, policymakers must balance ideological principles with the need to achieve concrete goals, maintain stability, and respond to the demands of various stakeholders.

PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON POLITICAL BELIEFS

In contrast to ideology, practical politics is grounded in practical considerations rather than moral or ideological principles, leading to an ongoing debate among political theorists about the boundaries between ideology and practical politics (March, 2009). This statement contrasts practical politics with ideology, emphasizing that practical politics is primarily driven by pragmatic considerations rather than moral or ideological principles. In practical politics, decision-making focuses on achieving specific goals or outcomes realistically and feasibly, often through compromise and negotiation. Unlike ideology, which provides a comprehensive framework of beliefs and values about how society should be organized and governed, practical politics prioritizes policymakers' immediate challenges and opportunities. It involves assessing the available resources, navigating competing interests and stakeholders, and finding effective solutions to pressing issues.

Research by Feldman and Johnston (2014) challenges the unidimensional view of political ideology, advocating for a multidimensional approach to understanding its determinants. This line of inquiry seeks to understand the extent to which genetic factors contribute to the formation and persistence of political ideologies among individuals and populations. They argue against the norm that political science studies have investigated possible genetic influences on ideology as well as the role of personality factors, based on the assumption that it is possible to understand the determinants and consequences of ideology via a unidimensional conceptualization.

The researchers argue that the determinants of ideological dimensions are vastly different across a wide range of variables, while focusing on a single ideological dimension obscures these differences and, in some cases, makes it difficult to observe important determinants of ideology. They show that multidimensionality leads to a significant amount of heterogeneity in the structure of ideology that must be modeled to fully understand the structure and determinants of political attitudes. As they explain, political ideology refers to a set of beliefs, values, principles, and ideas that individuals or groups hold regarding the proper organization and governance of society. It encompasses a comprehensive worldview that guides one's understanding of politics, economics, social issues, and morality. Political ideologies provide frameworks for interpreting the world, evaluating policies, and making decisions about political action. They often encompass perspectives on the role of government, individual rights, social justice, economic systems, and international relations.

Scholarly exploration of the determinants and consequences of political ideology has predominantly focused on investigating personal influences on political beliefs. Mikel Rectenwald (2013) argues in his book "Secularism and the Cultures of nineteenth-century Scientific Naturalism", that ideology focuses primarily on the interests and concerns of specific social groups based on shared identity characteristics such as race, gender, or ethnicity.

His theory suggests that ideologies often prioritize the interests and concerns of specific social groups defined by shared identity characteristics, such as race, gender, or ethnicity. He argues that this focus on group identities can lead to a one-sided perspective, where the needs of particular communities are emphasized at the expense of considering the broader interests of the entire population. He contends that ideology can lead to a narrow understanding of social issues, where solutions are tailored primarily to address the needs of certain groups while potentially marginalizing or disregarding the concerns of others. This approach may contribute to polarization and division within society without considering the broader commonalities or shared interests that could foster unity and cooperation.

Fundamental to political science is the notion that political parties are grounded in ideology, shaping their activities and driving policy objectives. Rectenwald explains that ideology distinguishes one political party from another, encompassing shared beliefs held by specific individuals or social classes. ideology serves as a defining feature of political parties, shaping their identity, objectives, and actions in the political arena. It is through ideology that parties articulate their vision for society and compete for political power and influence. The ideology of a political party shapes its identity, informing its overarching goals, objectives, and approaches to governance. It influences the party's stance on various issues, such as the role of government, economic policies, social justice, and international relations.

Rectenwald (2018) contends that this narrow focus on group identities can lead to a one-sided perspective, where the interests of particular communities are prioritized over the broader interests of the entire population. Instead of advocating for policies and initiatives that benefit society as a whole, identity politics may emphasize the protection and promotion of specific group identities,

often at the expense of others. He argues that ideology reinforces divisions within society by emphasizing differences between social groups rather than promoting commonalities and shared goals, and advocates for a more inclusive approach to politics that transcends identity-based divisions and prioritizes the common good of all members of society.

The impact of personal influence on political ideology is challenged by Rectenwald due to the limitations of ideologies solely focused on identity politics. Rather, he advocates for a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to addressing social challenges. Adding to this conception, Leeper and Slothuus (2014) argue that a key characteristic of democratic politics is competition between groups, particularly political parties, which shape citizens' opinions by mobilizing, influencing, and structuring choices among political alternatives. The important role of competition between groups is highlighted by Slothuus and Bisgaard (2021), who found that citizens' policy opinions changed immediately and substantially when their party switched its policy position - even when the new position went against citizens' previously held views.

CONSENSUS ON CONFLICTING OPINIONS

A prominent approach to ideology and practical politics refers to the process of reaching a common understanding despite the existence of differing viewpoints or perspectives. It involves finding a shared position or resolution that accommodates various viewpoints and addresses concerns raised by different parties. This process often requires negotiation, compromise, and dialogue to bridge gaps between opposing opinions and facilitate mutual understanding. Consensus-building fosters cooperation and collaboration among individuals or groups with divergent interests or beliefs, leading to more effective decision-making and outcomes.

The work of Jeremy Waldron (2000) offers crucial insights into the fundamental values that place ideological and practical politics within the same framework. His concept of the "circumstances of politics" describes the need for a common decision in the face of disagreement. His argument rejects the notion that rights are usually negative claims on others – claims to their forbearance –and argues that rights can be understood perfectly well as a discourse in which affirmative claims are articulated. Waldron investigated the historical, philosophical, and cultural roots of political ideologies and the principles that shape different political ideologies. Through analyzing policy implications, researchers can assess how ideological positions translate into practical policies and their impact on various aspects of society, including governance, economics, social welfare, and international relations. Waldron's work concentrates on the significance of understanding the interplay between ideological beliefs and practical politics within a broader framework of common values. By recognizing the foundational principles that unite political actors, policymakers can navigate ideological differences more effectively and work towards achieving common goals for the betterment of society.

Research of political theory, as Waldron suggests, concerns itself with how political institutions shape disagreements and facilitate resolutions concerning social ideals. His research underscores the importance of understanding how institutions navigate disagreements and implement decisions to realize societal aspirations while accommodating diverse perspectives and interests. Waldron's work provides essential insights into understanding the fundamental values that reconcile ideological beliefs with practical politics. He delves into the foundational principles that serve as common ground, bridging the gap between abstract political ideologies and the practical realities of governance. In his analysis, Waldron emphasizes the importance of recognizing shared values and aspirations that underpin both ideological beliefs and pragmatic political action. He suggests that despite apparent differences in ideological positions, political actors often share core values related to societal ideals, such as justice, equality, liberty, and social welfare. Waldron's work suggests that these shared values provide a framework for cooperation and consensus-building among diverse political actors. By focusing on common objectives rooted in fundamental principles, ideological differences can be transcended, and practical solutions to societal challenges can be pursued collaboratively. Furthermore, Waldron's insights shed light on the role of political institutions in mediating conflicts and facilitating resolutions concerning social ideals. He emphasizes the importance of democratic processes, deliberative mechanisms, and institutional frameworks in navigating disagreements and implementing decisions that reflect shared values and societal aspirations.

This perspective allows us to explore how political institutions play a crucial role in mediating conflicts and reconciling competing values and interests within society. Waldron explains that political theory research explores how political institutions facilitate the resolution of disagreements and conflicts concerning social ideals. These social ideals represent normative principles that individuals and groups aspire to realize in their societies, but which may give rise to conflicting interpretations and policy preferences. Political institutions help navigate disagreements by establishing rules, procedures, and institutions for adjudicating conflicts and implementing decisions. He advocated that through deliberation processes, individuals and groups can articulate their interests, values, and concerns, leading to informed decision-making and consensus-building.

According to Alex Cukierman in his study "The Roles of Ideology, Institutions, Politics, and Economic Knowledge in Forecasting Macroeconomic Developments: Lessons from the Crisis" (2010), ideology outlines the broad, long-term objectives that a nation's policymakers aspire to achieve. He discusses the importance of ideology, institutions, politics, and economic knowledge for forecasting economic policies and their impact on macroeconomic developments. He argues that policies are implemented through policymaking institutions such as the legislative and executive branches of government and/or by appointed bureaucrats with

appropriate expertise. Still, he contends that these objectives are seldom fully realized and can be viewed as falling under practical politics rather than strict adherence to political ideology since policy choices are affected by the beliefs of decision-makers and their advisors about the impacts of policy decisions on desired objectives.

Additional research outlines ideological values as guiding principles that shape individuals' visions for governance, justice, and cultural norms, serving as a moral compass for societal progress and policy evaluation. Andrew Heywood (2021) identifies key levels of ideological values that lead to a desired future and a vision for a better society. In his book "Political Ideologies"' he identifies ideological values as fundamental principles that serve as a blueprint for shaping the future and envisioning a better society. These values represent core beliefs and ideals that individuals or groups aspire to realize in their communities, guiding their actions and shaping their vision for the future. According to Heywood, ideological values provide a framework for understanding societal norms, goals, and aspirations. They encompass a range of principles related to governance, social justice, economic systems, morality, and cultural norms. According to Heywood, by articulating these values, individuals and groups outline their vision for a better society and establish benchmarks for evaluating political policies and actions. He explains that ideological values serve as a moral compass, informing decisions about governance, public policy, and social change.

THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

Another aspect of research concentrates on the democratic emphasis on institutions, individual rights, and citizen empowerment for a functioning society and establishing the concept of freedom in a relationship of ideologies with social and political structures. Nikola Gjorshoski explores in his study "The Ideological Specifics of the Variants of Contemporary Conservatism" (2016) elements of ideology grounded in democratic principles, such as sustaining the system, protecting citizens' rights and freedom, and preserving public morality. He examined the aspects of ideology that are deeply rooted in democratic principles and specifically ideologies prioritize certain fundamental values and objectives that are essential for the functioning of democratic systems. According to his research, democratic ideologies emphasize the importance of maintaining and strengthening democratic institutions and processes. This involves upholding the rule of law, promoting transparency and accountability, and ensuring free and fair elections. By sustaining the system, democratic ideologies seek to safeguard the democratic framework and prevent authoritarianism or tyranny. Gjorshoski further concentrated on protecting citizens' rights and freedoms and claimed that central to democratic ideologies is the protection of individual rights and freedoms. This includes civil liberties such as freedom of speech, assembly, and religion, as well as political rights such as the right to vote and participate in the political process. Democratic ideologies prioritize the empowerment of citizens and aim to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunities to exercise their rights and liberties.

An important aspect of his work is preserving public morality. He explores the role of ideology in preserving public morality within democratic societies. While democratic principles emphasize individual freedoms, they also recognize the importance of collective values and norms that contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. Democratic ideologies seek to strike a balance between individual autonomy and collective interests, promoting ethical behavior and social cohesion. By examining these elements of ideology grounded in democratic principles, Gjorshoski sheds light on the foundational values and objectives that underpin democratic political systems. These values serve as guiding principles for policymakers and citizens alike, shaping the direction of public policies and political discourse in democratic societies.

Philip Pettit (2011), a philosopher and political theorist, advocates for a realistic approach to political theory, emphasizing an understanding of the distinct nature of political rule and proposing a conceptualist yet non-relativist account of what actions politicians should take. In his influential book "Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government" (1997), Pettit articulates his republican theory of freedom, which he contrasts with both liberal and communitarian perspectives. He argues that republican freedom is best achieved through the establishment of institutions and practices that promote non-domination and ensure accountability among political authorities. This can include mechanisms such as the rule of law, democratic governance, and the separation of powers.

One of Pettit's central concerns is the concept of freedom and its relationship to social and political structures. In his book "Freedom: psychological, ethical, and Political" (2018), Pettit argues that freedom is sometimes cast as the psychological ideal that distinguishes human beings from other animals; sometimes as the ethical ideal that distinguishes some human beings from others; and sometimes as the political ideal that distinguishes some human societies from others. He has developed a theory of freedom based on the idea of "republican freedom," which emphasizes the absence of domination or interference in one's choices and actions. According to Pettit, true freedom requires not only the absence of coercion but also the absence of arbitrary or unaccountable power that can constrain individual agency. In his work, he emphasizes the importance of understanding the distinct nature of political rule and proposes a conceptualist yet non-relativist account of what actions politicians should take. His work contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities of politics and provides normative principles for evaluating political institutions and practices in contemporary societies (Pettit, 2011).

In his book: "The Politics of Prudence", Russell Kirk (2023) introduces ideological principles that are closely tied to cultural norms and values, including public morality, customs, rules, continuity, caution, reform, imperfection, freedom, property, volunteer

community, limited authority, and a balance between change and consistency. These principles shape attitudes towards governance, social order, and individual freedoms, influencing political discourse and policy decisions.

Public morality refers to the collective standards of right and wrong that guide behavior within a society. It shapes laws, norms, and social expectations, influencing individuals' conduct and interactions. Customs are traditional practices or rituals that are passed down through generations within a society. They reflect cultural heritage and often play a significant role in shaping social behavior and identity. Rules are established guidelines or regulations that govern behavior and interactions within a society. They provide structure and order and help maintain social cohesion. Continuity refers to the preservation of traditions, values, and institutions over time. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining stability and consistency within society.

Caution involves exercising prudence and careful consideration in decision-making processes. It emphasizes the need to weigh potential risks and consequences before taking action. Reform entails making changes or improvements to existing systems, institutions, or practices. It reflects a desire for progress and adaptation to evolving societal needs and challenges. Imperfection acknowledges the inherent flaws and limitations present in human societies and institutions. It emphasizes realism and humility in addressing societal problems.

Freedom refers to the ability of individuals to act and make choices without undue constraint or interference. It is a foundational principle in many ideological frameworks, emphasizing individual autonomy and liberty. Property rights involve the ownership and control of resources, assets, or wealth. They are central to economic systems and are key in shaping social relations and power dynamics. A volunteer community is a group of individuals who come together voluntarily to pursue shared goals or interests. It emphasizes the importance of voluntary association and cooperation in addressing societal needs.

Limited authority refers to the restriction of power and authority to prevent abuse or tyranny. It emphasizes the importance of checks and balances and the rule of law in restraining governmental overreach. The balance between change and consistency emphasizes the need to strike a balance between innovation and tradition, progress and stability. It recognizes that societies must evolve and adapt to changing circumstances while also preserving important cultural and institutional foundations.

CONCLUSION

The manuscript provides an overview of the relations between politics and religion, while also delving into broader theoretical perspectives on the relationship between ideology and practical politics. Political theory research focuses on how political institutions mediate conflicts over social ideals, facilitating resolutions through deliberation and consensus-building. The research sets the stage for a detailed exploration of the complex interplay between ideology, religion, and practical politics in Israeli politics and provides a solid theoretical foundation for analyzing these dynamics.

The research maintains that the tension between ideology and practical politics can lead to debates and disagreements within political systems. It highlights the challenges of translating ideological principles into actionable policies and the complexities of governing in a dynamic and diverse society. Ultimately, the relationship between ideology and practical politics reflects the ongoing struggle to reconcile abstract ideals with the realities of governance. While ideology provides a guiding framework for long-term goals and values, practical politics requires adaptability and responsiveness to changing circumstances, often leading to debates about the extent to which ideological principles should influence policy outcomes.

Practical politics is characterized as an approach that prioritizes addressing political problems and fostering collective recognition, regardless of ideological or identity-based affiliations. This pragmatic approach to politics aims to find solutions to societal challenges that transcend ideological divisions and prioritize the common good. Politics involves tactics, strategies, and compromises aimed at achieving concrete goals, whether they be policy outcomes, electoral victories, or the maintenance of political stability. Practical politicians prioritize effectiveness, adaptability, and responsiveness to changing circumstances, often navigating complex political landscapes where multiple interests and stakeholders are at play. Ideology, on the other hand, refers to a set of interconnected beliefs, values, and principles that provide a framework for understanding and interpreting political phenomena. Ideologies offer comprehensive worldviews that prescribe norms, goals, and solutions to societal problems based on underlying philosophical, moral, or economic premises.

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