

Political Ideologies — Part I

From Freedren's maps to Fukuyama's end-point: liberalism, socialism, Marxism and the meta-debates that define the ideological century.

Revise → write a little → don't break the chain.

15+ PYQs in the chapter (2015–2024)

4 20-mark questions in last 5 years

3 Ideologies appear in GS Paper II too

✓ Liberalism · Socialism
Marxism — all high-frequency

01. Meaning & Nature of Political Ideology

“Maps of the political landscape; without such maps we remain clueless in politics.”

— Michael Freedren

Political ideology: a recurring pattern of beliefs, values, and opinions that explains, justifies, contests, or seeks to transform the political and social order. Understood in two senses: as a *set of ideas* accepted and mobilized in political life; as a *science of ideas* concerned with distortion and social function.

Ideologies arise from concrete historical crises:

- Feudalism → **Liberalism**
- Industrial capitalism → **Socialism & Marxism**
- Patriarchy → **Feminism**
- Interwar crisis → **Fascism**
- Late capitalism → **Post-modernism & Neo-Marxism**

Ideology is not mere theory — it is movement, moral vocabulary, and programme of action.

IDEOLOGY & POWER: Four Frameworks

Dahl

Power as *domination*: getting others to do what they would not otherwise do

Arendt

Power as *collective action*: “the human ability to act in concert”

Foucault

Power is *everywhere*: relational, productive, flows through discourse & surveillance

Gramsci

Power via *hegemony*: ruling worldview becomes “common sense”

UPSC 2021 · Comment

“Political ideology is primarily concerned with the allocation and utilization of power.”

02. Liberalism: Classical → Welfare → Neo

Liberalism is the ideology of the modern West, emerging with the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalist society. It places the **individual** at the centre: rationality, inherent equality, autonomy, rights, and limited government.

EVOLUTION OF LIBERALISM

Classical Liberalism

Locke · Smith · Spencer
Night-watchman state; *laissez-faire*;
liberty as absence of restraint

→

Welfare / Social Lib.

Mill · T.H. Green · Hobhouse · Dewey · Keynes
Liberty as capacity; positive state;
distributive justice

→

Social Liberalism

Sen · Stiglitz · Rawls
Capabilities; market regulation; aid to least advantaged

→

Neoliberalism

Hayek · Friedman · Nozick
Deregulation; privatisation; minimal state; free trade

Classical Liberal thinkers & signatures:

Thinker	Core Claim	Key Text / Line
John Locke	Natural rights, consent, limited government	Social Contract; property as pre-political right
Adam Smith	Laissez-faire; “invisible hand”	Acknowledged public goods: education, infrastructure
Thomas Jefferson	Minimal government	“That government is best which governs the least.”
Herbert Spencer	Social Darwinism	“Survival of the fittest”
Graham Sumner	Radical individualism	“A drunkard in the gutter is just where he ought to be...”

Welfare / Social Liberal thinkers:

Thinker	Contribution
J. S. Mill	Reformed utilitarianism; primacy of liberty; accepted limits of laissez-faire
T. H. Green	Father of positive liberalism; liberty as capacity ; state must create conditions for moral development
L. T. Hobhouse	Liberty as positive welfare; distributive justice, public health, universal education
John Dewey	Active state; democratic social reform
J. M. Keynes	Showed capitalism's instability; mixed economy; planning; wage & tax policy
Harold Laski	Welfare state; socio-economic rights: "Every state is known by the rights it maintains."

"Rights are those conditions of life without which no man can seek in general to be at his best."

— Harold Laski

"Social order not based on recognition of claims of persons is based on sand."

— Harold Laski

UPSC 2020 · 150w Liberalism as a revolutionary idea

UPSC 2024 · 150w Decline of Liberalism

Neoliberalism: revival of classical economic liberalism from the 1970s–80s.

- **Hayek** — planning is a "road to serfdom"; social justice is misguided
- **Milton Friedman** — *Capitalism and Freedom*: freedom possible only through the market
- **Robert Nozick** — *Anarchy, State and Utopia*: minimal state; redistributive justice illegitimate

Washington Consensus institutionalised: free trade, privatisation, deregulation via WTO, IMF, World Bank, OECD. Critics: **Stiglitz** ("failed ideology"), **Piketty** (wealth concentration), **Naomi Klein** (crisis politics), **Karl Polanyi** (markets require state power), **Vandana Shiva** (ecological destruction).

UPSC 2016 · Comment "The political ideology of globalization is neo-liberalism."

UPSC 2022 · Discuss Community, culture and nation weaken the hegemony of neo-liberalism

03. Socialism: Pre-Marxist to Social Democracy

Tom Bottomore: socialism is a social order ensuring feasible equality of access to economic resources, knowledge, and political power, with the minimum possible domination of one group over another.

"Socialism is like a hat which has lost its shape because everyone wears it."

— C.E.M. Joad

Capitalism vs. Socialism — Contrast

Capitalism	Socialism
Private ownership of means of production	Social control over production
Market as allocator; wage labour	Emphasis on socio-economic equality
Production driven by capital accumulation	Equality of outcome, not merely opportunity
Society: bourgeoisie + proletariat	Freedom from necessities, not just state interference

Pre-Marxist (Utopian) Socialism: moral critique of capitalism; emphasis on cooperation; no theory of inevitable class struggle; preferred persuasion and model communities.

Thinker	Contribution
François-Noël Babeuf	Conspiracy of the Equals; liberty/equality/fraternity empty without abolition of private property
Claude Henri de Saint-Simon	Attacked privilege; distribution according to work; common ownership of productive resources
Charles Fourier	Small cooperative associations based on shared passions
Robert Owen	Self-supporting, self-governing communities; cooperative production
Pierre-Joseph Proudhon	"Property is theft."
Louis Blanc	Social workshops under worker control

Assessment: ethically powerful, strategically weak. **Maurice Dobb** and **George Lichtheim** treated it as a vital humanist precursor.

UPSC 2015 · Discuss Key features of pre-Marxist socialist theory

Fabianism — British gradualist socialism; named after **Fabius Cunctator**.

- Parliamentary road; peaceful socialization; social conscience; middle-class intellectuals
- Thinkers: **Sidney Webb, Beatrice Webb, G. B. Shaw, Graham Wallas, H. G. Wells, Annie Besant, G. D. H. Cole, Edward R. Pease**
- Strong impact on Labour Party, welfare state, and post-colonial planning

Syndicalism — trade union as foundation of future social order.

- Anti-state; anti-parliamentary; class struggle decisive; direct action
- Methods: general strike, sabotage, go-slow, boycott
- **Georges Sorel** — major intellectual leader
- **C.E.M. Joad**: “a form of social theory which regards trade unions as the foundation of a new society.”

Guild Socialism — middle path between syndicalism and collectivism.

- **Rockow**: “intellectual offspring of Fabianism and Syndicalism.”
- Thinkers: **Arthur Penty, A. R. Orage, S. G. Hobson, G. D. H. Cole**
- Abolition of wage labour; self-governing guilds; functional democracy
- Influenced by **Ruskin, Morris, Carlyle, J. N. Figgis**

Social Democracy & Revisionism: **Ferdinand Lassalle** (universal suffrage; reformist state); **Eduard Bernstein** (gradual revision of Marxism); **Karl Kautsky** (parliamentary majority route).

UPSC 2017 · Discuss Define Socialism. Salient features of Fabian Socialism

04. Marxism: Core Theory & Variants

“Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!”

— **Karl Marx**

Dialectical Materialism: matter, not ideas, is primary; contradictions drive change. Three principles — transformation of quantity into quality; interpenetration of opposites; negation of negation.

Historical Materialism: “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but their social existence that determines their consciousness.” — **Marx**. Stages: primitive communism → slavery → feudalism → capitalism → socialism → communism.

BASE & SUPERSTRUCTURE

SUPERSTRUCTURE

Law · Politics · Religion · Culture · Ideology

Reflects & legitimizes ruling-class interests; site of ideological struggle



BASE

Forces + Relations of Production

A.P. Sheptulin: basis as intermediate link between productive forces & superstructure

UPSC 2015 · Discuss Relationship between base and superstructure in Marxist theory

Class Conflict, Alienation, Surplus Value:

Concept	Content
Class Conflict	“History is a history of class struggles” — under capitalism, bourgeoisie vs. proletariat
Alienation	Workers lose control over: product of labour; labour process; species-being; social relations
Surplus Value	Labour is the source of value; workers create more than wages received; excess appropriated by capital

Influences on Marx: **Hegel** (dialectics) + **Feuerbach** (materialism) — German philosophy; French radical tradition; English political economy.

Leninism:

- **Vanguard party** of professional revolutionaries; **democratic centralism**
- Workers achieve only trade union consciousness spontaneously (*What Is to Be Done?*)
- Imperialism = highest stage of capitalism; revolution at the weakest link
- State and Revolution: bourgeois state must be destroyed → proletarian state → withering away under communism
- Critics: **Karl Kautsky** (minority revolution); **Julius Martov** (dictatorship over proletariat); **Rosa Luxemburg** (bureaucratic centralism)

Rosa Luxemburg: *Reform or Revolution; The Mass Strike* — reforms necessary but insufficient; spontaneous working-class action crucial; nationalism weakens internationalism.

Maosism: peasantry as revolutionary force; protracted people’s war; countryside encircles cities; mass line; antagonistic vs. non-antagonistic contradictions; Cultural Revolution; Sino-Soviet split.

Revolution in Permanence (Trotsky, Marx, Engels): revolution cannot stop at bourgeois-democratic stage; moves in “unbroken chain” to socialist revolution; uneven and combined development allows backward countries to skip stages.

UPSC 2022 · 150w “Revolution in Permanence”

Neo-Marxism & Frankfurt School:

- **Georg Lukács** — *History and Class Consciousness*; **reification**: capitalism turns social relations into thing-like relations
- **Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas**
- Critical theory goes beyond description → seeks emancipation
- **Culture industry** standardizes consciousness; technology becomes tool of control
- **Benjamin**: loss of aura under mechanical reproduction
- **Marcuse**: one-dimensional man; “democratic unfreedom”
- **Habermas**: public sphere; communicative rationality; **ideal speech situation**; “unforced force of the better argument”

“Culture today is infecting everything with sameness.”

— Theodor Adorno

“A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization.”

— Herbert Marcuse

“Free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves.”

— Herbert Marcuse

Structural Marxism (Louis Althusser): emphasized structures over agency; **Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs); Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs); interpellation; overdetermination.**

Miliband–Poulantzas Debate:

Miliband (Instrumentalist)	Poulantzas (Structuralist)
State directly tied to capitalist class; welfare state did not alter class domination	State has relative autonomy ; not a mere puppet; structure that helps reproduce capitalism; gravitates toward capitalist interests in crisis

Gramsci & Hegemony: ruling class rules by *consent* as well as coercion; civil society = key site of ideological leadership. “The supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as domination and as intellectual and moral leadership.”

Contemporary relevance: widening inequality; labour precarity; gig economy; corporate concentration; cultural hegemony; surveillance. **Piketty** — unchecked capitalism produces unsustainable inequality; **Wolfgang Streeck** — cumulative decay in neoliberal capitalism; **Richard Wolff** — homelessness and insecurity in advanced capitalism.

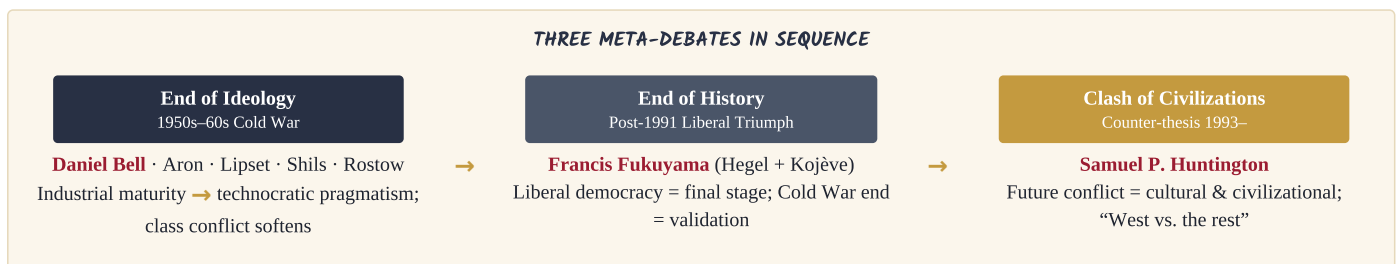
Criticisms of Marxism: economic reductionism; historicism; underestimation of religion & culture; authoritarian outcomes. Critics: **Karl Popper** (historicism, closed system); **Max Weber** (economy alone cannot explain); **Hannah Arendt** (totalitarian dangers).

UPSC 2019 · Discuss Contemporary relevance of Marxism

UPSC 2024 · Comment Marxism is a political theory of action demanding strict compliance

05. Meta-Debates: End of Ideology · End of History · Clash of Civilizations

THREE META-DEBATES IN SEQUENCE



Debate	Core Claim	Key Critics
End of Ideology	Mature societies moved beyond grand ideological conflict; politics becoming technocratic. Bell: “cunning of reason.”	Marcuse (masks domination); C. Wright Mills (ideology at elite level); Althusser (ideology constitutive); Titmuss & Macpherson (structural inequality ignored)
End of History	Liberal democracy is the final form of government; Cold War victory = ideological endpoint. Intellectual base: Hegel + Kojève (recognition).	Huntington (civilizational conflict); Slavoj Žižek (capitalism’s contradictions persist); Robert Kagan (ambition and power endure); post-colonial critics (Eurocentrism); China’s rise; democratic recession
Clash of Civilizations	8 civilizations; fault-line conflicts; role of core states; “West vs. the rest.” Post-9/11 revival.	Edward Said (Orientalist oversimplification); Amartya Sen (multiple identities); Fukuyama (later reservations)

★ Power Quotes Box

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— Theodor Adorno

• Scholar Index — Key Thinkers & Their Topics

Scholar	Topic	Scholar	Topic
Freeden, Michael	Ideology as political “maps”	Locke, John	Classical liberalism; natural rights
Foucault, Michel	Power everywhere; discourse & surveillance	Green, T. H.	Positive liberalism; liberty as capacity
Gramsci, Antonio	Hegemony; consent vs. coercion	Laski, Harold	Welfare liberalism; rights & state
Hayek, F. A. von	Neoliberalism; road to serfdom	Keynes, J. M.	Welfare liberalism; mixed economy
Friedman, Milton	Neoliberalism; freedom via market	Nozick, Robert	Neoliberalism; minimal state
Bottomore, Tom	Definition of socialism	Joad, C.E.M.	Socialism & syndicalism defined
Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph	Utopian socialism; “property is theft”	Owen, Robert	Utopian socialism; cooperative communities
Sorel, Georges	Syndicalism; direct action	Cole, G. D. H.	Guild Socialism; Fabianism
Marx, Karl	Historical materialism; class conflict	Engels, Friedrich	Dialectical materialism; Rev. in Permanence
Lenin, Vladimir	Vanguard party; democratic centralism	Trotsky, Leon	Revolution in Permanence
Mao Zedong	Maoism; peasantry as rev. force	Luxemburg, Rosa	Mass strike; critic of Leninism
Althusser, Louis	Structural Marxism; ISAs & RSAs	Lukács, Georg	Reification; class consciousness
Marcuse, Herbert	One-dimensional man; democratic unfreedom	Habermas, Jürgen	Public sphere; communicative rationality
Adorno, Theodor	Culture industry; sameness	Miliband, Ralph	Instrumentalist view of the state
Poulantzas, Nicos	Relative autonomy of the state	Piketty, Thomas	Wealth concentration; Marxism relevance
Bell, Daniel	End of Ideology; cunning of reason	Fukuyama, Francis	End of History; liberal democracy final
Huntington, Samuel P.	Clash of Civilizations; West vs. rest	Said, Edward	Critic of Clash; Orientalism
Sen, Amartya	Capabilities; multiple identities	Stiglitz, Joseph	Social liberalism; neoliberalism failed
Polanyi, Karl	Markets require state power	Weber, Max	Critic of Marxism; multi-causal history

06. How UPSC Asks It

Theme	Year & Format
Ideology & Power allocation	2021 · Comment
Liberalism as revolutionary idea	2020 · 150w
Neo-liberalism as ideology of globalization	2016 · Comment
Community/culture/nation weaken neoliberal hegemony	2022 · Discuss
Decline of Liberalism	2024 · 150w
Pre-Marxist socialist theory	2015 · Discuss
Define Socialism + Fabian Socialism	2017 · Discuss
Base and Superstructure	2015 · Discuss
Contemporary relevance of Marxism	2019 · Discuss
Revolution in Permanence	2022 · 150w
Marxism as theory demanding strict compliance	2024 · Comment
End of Ideology debate	2019 · 150w
End of History debate	2017 · Note

07. Today's Practice

Pick one. Write it. Time it.

UPSC 2022 · 150w Comment on "Revolution in Permanence." UPSC 2019 · Discuss Contemporary relevance of Marxism. UPSC 2024 · 150w

Decline of Liberalism.

Model answers drop tonight on @psirbyamitpratap

Blank on a point above? It's covered in full in your **Foundation / OGP class notes & handouts** — revise it, then write.

See you tomorrow with Day 09 — Political Ideologies Part 2 (Fascism, Gandhism, Feminism, Multiculturalism)