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Q3(c)

"Political ideology is primarily concerned with the allocation and utilization of power." Comment

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · PSIR GS 1 · 15 marks · Concept of power, hegemony, ideology and legitimacy.

Concept of power, hegemony, ideology and legitimacy.

Core demand of the question

- "Political ideology is primarily concerned with the allocation and utilization of power." Comment. (15 marks)

Revision summary

Ideology maps who should hold power and how it may be used.

Easton's allocation of values is the political-science core of the statement.

Marx, liberalism, feminism, and **Gramsci** are rival maps of that allocation.

Kautilya and **Ashoka's** dhamma show utilization as statecraft and as public ethic.

The statement is primarily true; justice-talk still constrains what counts as a rightful use.

Introduction

The statement is close to **David Easton's** definition of politics as the authoritative allocation of values. An ideology is a map of who should get power, how it may be used, and what that use is for. It is not only a cloud of ideals.

Body**Ideology as a map of power**

- **Marx** treated ideology as ideas that veil class power, yet Marxism is itself a programme for seizing and using state power.
- Liberalism, in **Locke**, **J. S. Mill**, and **Rawls**, allocates power by rights, representation, and lexical liberties, and it limits utilization by law.
- Conservatism allocates to tradition and established elites. Feminism, in **Pateman** and **MacKinnon**, reallocates the public-private map of power.
- **Gramsci's** hegemony shows that allocation is also cultural: consent is a use of power before the police arrive.

Allocation and utilization

- **Allocation answers who may command:** monarch, class, people, party, or umma.
- **Utilization answers to what end:** accumulation, dharma, welfare, racial purity, or **Ashoka's** dhamma as public ethic.
- **Kautilya's** Arthashastra is openly about the king's use of danda and treasure. Ideology here is statecraft, not sermon.

- Indian parties after **Rajni Kothari**'s Congress system allocate tickets by caste and region; **Jaffrelot** shows ideology and social cleavage joined in that utilization.

Comment: primarily, not only

- **The statement is right as a political-science first cut:** strip an ideology and you find a claim about power.
- It is incomplete if it forgets that ideologies also name justice, salvation, and identity, which then bind how power may be used.
- **Habermas** would add that democratic ideology is concerned with the justification of power in public argument, not only with grabbing it.
- **Easton** still fits: values are allocated authoritatively. Ideology is the story that makes that allocation look necessary.

Flow diagram

Political ideology -> Allocation who rules
Political ideology -> Utilization to what end
Easton -> Authoritative allocation
Political ideology -> Authoritative allocation

Conclusion

Political ideology is primarily a design for allocating and using power, as **Easton**, **Marx**, and **Kautilya** in different ways show. It is also a claim about justice and meaning. Comment: start with power, then read the ethic that tells rulers what that power is for.

Facts & figures

Easton

Politics as authoritative allocation of values for a society.

Gramsci

Hegemony is ideological leadership that allocates consent, not only offices.

Kautilya

Arthashastra treats power, treasure, and punishment as the science of the state.

Kothari

The Congress system described how a dominant party allocated power across India's social map.