### My answer to “Doesn't the free market provided by capitalism inherently discourage free and unbiased media (because free market supports greed)?”

Originally answered here: <https://qr.ae/pNbpi2>

[All my other answers linked in this first answer have been included in blog post so one can read uninterrupted]

Many assumptions and emotive cognition here in the question, so putting my views on those as well while answering the question :

1. “**Capitalism has a definition centered around greed” :** This is subjective opinion at best (for both pro and anti “greed” people). What you call greed, other might call self preservation. Capitalism at best means what humans have evolved into after a few millenia. In fact, there is no exact definition of capitalism. pre-1900s Feudalism to 1980/90’s Free Markets to modern bigtech dominance (what some people who dislike it call surveillance capitalism) are all evolution of capitalism based on society. It is an evolving system of incentives and issues. Self Preservation and Passing onto future generation are two constant themes, nothing else. There is no “capitalism manifesto” to define and micromanage how capitalism should work. We see in nature that very greedy organisms get eaten by the surrounding ones and an extremely selfless one withers off. Selflessness which animals show is also part of self-preservation (greed) , as they want a stable society and expect reciprocity in troubles. A complex system like society needs a fine/optimal balance between greed and selflessness to exist, tilt more towards one side and the system either fails or resets or evolves. Society and Economy are way too complex to be defined/run with 5000 page manuals or blanket terms like “Y-isms” and “anti-X”. I will in this question try to explain how I think these modern political concepts have evolved (IMO of course, fully subjective answer) and why news is really just one aspect of short term fixes humans apply to run their society.
2. “**Absolute Free Market can exist” :** Another flawed reasoning in mind of pro free market people is that a free market can perpetually exist. While Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” is an excellent (and probably the best) policy in short term and does increase prosperity for everyone, it is bound to fail in the long term because division of labor (the concept on which free markets work) doesn’t let all sides have equal moats. So people on on side of division of labor are much more susceptible to creative disruption than others. I don’t blame Adam Smith for omitting this caveat in his theory at all because during his lifetime, creative disruption would have taken centuries and this effect would be impossible to notice. However, in modern times, seemingly free markets automatically turn into asymmetrical spaces : [Muktabh Mayank's answer to How does a company that sells a powerful software package like MS Office survive when others offer a free equivalent package?](https://qr.ae/pNFuzc) . *Basically, all I am trying to say is that Free Market does end up creating a hierarchy of more powerful and less powerful* : [Muktabh Mayank's answer to How far can India go to keep the Chinese players, who are well en-trenched in the global tech supply chain, off the Indian market without prejudicing its own growth?](https://qr.ae/pNCyD5) . There was a time when “Libertarianism” was a proper political wing demanding no opposition to free markets. But now Libertarianism has dissolved into either Neoliberalism (no opposition to monopolies) or Neolibertarianism (no opposition to government interference).
3. “**State run systems are somehow less greedy” :** Our friends on the left have another theoretical idea counterpart of free market which is “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need”. We can discuss the merits/demerits of the idea based on whether it is unfair to high-ability people or not, but let’s leave that aside for now and see how idea works in practice. The idea introduces an arbitrary power concept : “the authority to decide who needs what”. So in communist/socialist countries, we dont really eliminate evils of Capitalism, we just introduce a new method to run the power structure, “control of the supply side”. The Socialist/Communist party running the system builds power structures to control the supply side (“who gets what?”). Free Market on the other hand works on “Demand Side” (and powerful people manipulate demand side to get stronger). Free Market works slightly better because a demand based economy is more natural, that’s all. So people with greed will try a different method than manipulating demand in more centralized economies, which is getting more say in authority which controls supply. [Muktabh Mayank's answer to Is capitalism a long-term solution? Or is it temporary till technology can be used to control people's greed and then communism can be established?](https://qr.ae/pNofjj) . Please understand that nor was Communism thought about with intention to create a power center like Feudal systems have (it in fact had the intention to decentralize power to workers), neither was free market thought about to give rise to the [1% rule (Internet culture) - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1%25_rule_(Internet_culture)), but intentions dont matter ! Incentives do and there is no way someone thinking about a new ideology can model all these scenarios. There is just no perfect political/economic philosophy. Everything is a tradeoff. But remember, whatever political philosophy you adopt, you cannot stay away from the two evolutionary traits of 1. Self Preservation and 2. Desire to do good for progeny. *In your words, you cannot get rid of “greed” even if you run away from capitalism, its much deeper than that*: [Muktabh Mayank's answer to Does communism inherently benefit from war as capitalism (unfortunately) does? Wars have previously boosted the economy of capitalist countries.](https://qr.ae/pNuKHE)
4. “**Unbiased press exists/can exist under some scenario”** : If you have read this long theoretical and subjective answer (and maybe my other linked answers !) till here, I think I would have convinced you that you cannot really run away from power structures (hierarchies) and greed. They are just how humans aggregate as society (or in any group). At best, you can try to make them more fair. The spread of information (which you can call news between 1900s-2010) is the most important way to exercise the power human hierarchies have. So news has always been and will always be “biased”. Its either biased towards people at top of hierarchy or ones who can possibly displace them. [Muktabh Mayank's answer to Is artificial intelligence already controlling us in the form of tech giants manipulating people via algorithms?](https://qr.ae/pNwcan) . Humans are extremely local creatures and they can only look into their intermediate surroundings and make logical decisions. To look beyond that, they depend upon what information is conveyed to them. Most of them will just depend upon processed opinions/statistics from trusted sources, others will try to read into patterns from facts. But there is just so much information out there ! You don’t even need to spread mis-information to build a narrative, you just can pick-and-choose what facts to report out of the available ones to build a narrative. No news organization will choose facts to be reported in random, so the algorithm they use to pick and present facts is what introduces bias.

There is just too many things which happen in real world. History books, epics and biographies were ones the medium to pick-and-choose and then report facts in a way that a narrative can be built for most time in history. Then came the news, after printing press became more common (and then radio waves and TVs). Also there were always hierarchies and power structures amongst humans. It’s no coincidence that facts have been selectively reported all along to preserve such hierarchies.

If you come up with theories like “X,Y,Z-ism caused biased press”, that is just [Confirmation bias - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias). With spreading information becoming easier and easier after invention of printing press or private TV or freedom of expression, you now see more and more points of views and thus begin to realize that there is bias in the news. There is very few negative accounts for ancient power structures like say Alexander (unless they had a parallel power structure, like enemies like Egypt and rest of Mesopotamia have talked all ill about Assyrians). Its not like Alexander had no flaws and some US president or Lenin was totally innocent. Its all about who reported what facts.

As and when more information becomes available, society will reset/rearrange itself accordingly : [Muktabh Mayank's answer to Will the 5G internet make this world a chaotic place?](https://qr.ae/pNCZvk) . You can already see that democracy as a system of government has changed so much after main mode of information switched from TV to Social Media. One reason democracy became common when compared to feudalism was because news emerged as the main means to consume information.

I see this trend as humanity handling issue of trust and [Principal–agent problem - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principal–agent_problem)

as they develop. t will be very interesting to see how fast data with 5G and tech like AI and blockchain will shape the the world in future.

### My answer to “Is artificial intelligence already controlling us in the form of tech giants manipulating people via algorithms?”

Originally answered here: <https://qr.ae/pNwcan>

AI as of now (and for a foreseeable future) is not cognizant, its just a tool like computers, shovels and engines are. So AI cannot really “control” humans.

This is question on line of “Do guns kill people ?” or “Do crazy people kill other people ?”. The answer to that can be inferred by asking, “Was there no homicide before guns ?” or “will there be no homicide if there are no guns ?”. IMO, guns just make killers more efficient, making them better than killers who do not use guns. You might have a different opinion.

Similarly, tech giants are just using algorithms for the same thing elites before them have been using for a long time to control the window of discourse. Humans are hardly able to understand environment beyond their immediate surroundings and will form an opinion based on how is information conveyed to them. The trick to control window of discourse is selective flow of information. You can change society’s view on things by showing the same thing from different perspectives. Fortunately/Unfortunately, that is how human societies are structured. What tech giants can do however is instead of building general narratives which they need to hammer down into everyone’s mind, they have started personalizing flow of information to individuals using algorithms. This makes them much better at bending and shaping opinion as compared to older methods like Newspapers, TV, Books and Public Announcements.

Social Media/Other bigtech just gives a more efficient method for creative destruction of previous ways to control discourse. That is why you find traditional guardians of public discourse who have not been able to master bigtech blaming it for everything like misinformation to destroying society. Truth is an old guard is slowly vanishing and new one is taking its place.

### My answer to “How does a company that sells a powerful software package like MS Office survive when others offer a free equivalent package?”

Originally Answered Here: <https://qr.ae/pNFuzc>

Good Question.

The answer is same as why “Why do Rich tend to get richer and poor tend to get poorer ?” or “Why mostly iPhones sell in the US when there are cheaper Android phones around ?” or “Why most people use Chrome when you have a superb/equivalent browser like Mozilla despite Mozilla being more pro-user ?”. Basically [1% rule (Internet culture) - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1%25_rule_(Internet_culture))

just appears out-of-nowhere whenever we humans consolidate and organize after a creative destruction. We might not like this phenomenon, but that’s how it is. The 90–9–1 rule is visible in many Consumer products’ market shares. Google-Bing-Yahoo in search Engines Chrome-Mozilla-IE in browsers, WhatsApp-Telegram and others in instant messaging and Windows-Mac-Linux is consumer OS and so on. MS Office, Libreoffice and other office products follow a similar pattern.

The reason mostly is Network Effect in case of MS Office. MS Office came out much before any of its free and open-source alternatives and had consolidated its hold by defeating other competitors like Lotus etc long time back. The ecosystem around MS Office thus is HUGE ! Everyone uses it, you have easily available tutorials to use Excel or World, People are taught about it in their BCA/MCA/High\_school/Diploma courses, people will share docx and pptx files with you on email all the time and you have experts all around to learn from. At the level of an individual, there is just too much resistance if you want to use an alternative office product (even if it is free) and MS Office “just works” and the network effect justifies the cost. That is what Network Effect is. Once a consumer product builds an ecosystem, it is extremely hard to put out of monopoly position.

The only way out of a 90–9–1 monopoly is when a new technology disrupts it and you have new enterants competing on totally new ground rules. This creative disruption will slowly settle and you will have new monopolies. Right now, a [Creative destruction - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_destruction)

is taking place as cloud based office suites are getting more popular. Slowly they will take over the offline office products we have now. Google Office, MS Office 360, Lark etc are the new competitors here. But you know, eventually its going to get to 90–9–1 distribution.

### My answer to “How far can India go to keep the Chinese players, who are well en-trenched in the global tech supply chain, off the Indian market without prejudicing its own growth?”

Originally Answered Here: <https://qr.ae/pNCyD5>

This is a very good question. Has an assumption which many people among us consider true or maybe God’s Word. I myself believe in Adam Smith’s concept of “the invisible hand” [Dispelling Mysteries About the Invisible Hand](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/i/invisiblehand.asp)

and that becoming a part of global trade system is very important to develop and make technological progress. I had to do some reading to convince myself why and how being self-sufficient and allowing the invisible hand to run are not opposing concepts but must co-exist.

Let us talk about the basic assumption here : “Free Trade gets the best growth, the freer the better”. That is true to a very large extent. Inefficiencies start occurring if you interfere too much in free trade as competition doesn't exist at all and this makes a stagnant, inefficient and bloated economy. Pre-1990 India’s socialist economy was like that and so we had to unwillingly accept free-trade in 1991, which was the economic fashion and trend back then. India tried to do everything by itself before 1991 and post 1991 we decided to stop trying to do most of the things and become the [Sweatshop - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweatshop)

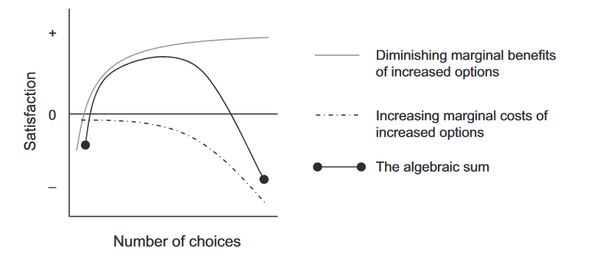
of the world following the concept of specialization : [Division of labour - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_of_labour)

. As you might see, we were at one extreme before 1991 and the other extreme after 1991. There was a time in 2000s that buying anything India-made was considered really bad and working at an Indian institution was considered backward and everyone wanted to work at a MNC. At the time of independence in 1947, the exact opposite was true.

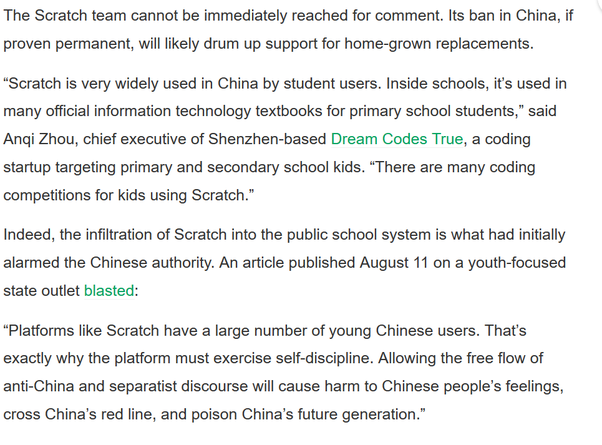
Its only after the [Financial crisis of 2007–2008 - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_crisis_of_2007–2008)

2008 crisis that people started understanding that the old Indian proverb of “ना अति बरखा ना अति धूप” ( [Moderation - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moderation) ) is true in economics too. You need some redundancy, too much efficiency is like too much sugar in body. You need a lot of sugars to do your work, but a bit in excess, they start rotting the system. That appears to be true with most systems. In their paper here: [https://www.swarthmore.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/user\_profiles/bschwar1/GrantSchwartz\_PPS2011.Too%20Much%20Good%20Thing.pdf](https://www.swarthmore.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/user_profiles/bschwar1/GrantSchwartz_PPS2011.Too Much Good Thing.pdf)

Adam Grant and Barry Schwartz told that there should be efficiency in any system, but to make it run at the maximum efficiency is generally harmful by giving concept of inverted U.



So while there is no doubt that you need to be efficient , but should not try to be the most efficient. That is in term of economics, you need to have as much free trade and as less control/centralization as possible, but that doesnt mean you give away the nation’s leverage altogether. The best example about how this works is China itself. China objects strongly when India applies any restrictions on trade, but does the same itself. Just yesterday : [China bans Scratch, MIT’s programming language for kids – TechCrunch](https://techcrunch.com/2020/09/07/scratch-ban-in-china/)



Not just that, Chinese market access is for sectors where it doesnt want to develop specialization in, otherwise the only access you get to is its cheap workforce. This enables development of economic sectors which it desires. No other country apart from China has been able to develop global internet companies like AliBaba, Baidu , TikTok and others after US. Same with electric cars, Solar, Consumer Electronics and many other technologies. No other country is in a race to become a superpower with US apart from China, understand the relationship.

The Chinese economic growth has been better than India, because unlike India, China took a bet on what segments it wants to specialize in rather than India which chose to specialize in industrial segments it was a more natural fit to.

To defeat the general rate of progress of world’s economies, you will have to make several of such convex bets [Convexity (finance) - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convexity_(finance))

and hope for some of them to succeed. Japan and the Asian tigers [Four Asian Tigers - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Asian_Tigers) did it in 1990s and China did it in 2000–2020. State forced industrialization is one such convex bet, all you need to make sure is that you dont get totally isolated from supply chain like North Korea and Soviet Union : [Industrialization in Japan: Origins, Characteristics & Impact - Video & Lesson Transcript | Study.com](https://study.com/academy/lesson/industrialization-in-japan-origins-characteristics-impact.html?wvideo=up3rn5t1r0)

India has till now resorted to the risk free option of free trade, which has given it a decent economic push, but we need to take bets too. China took a bet to become the hub of global supply-chain when it was clearly not going to be able to and succeeded by giving clever access to its market. India on the other hand let inefficiency creep in until things broke and it had to surrender its market with very few restrictions. We need to understand our populace and need to build both a consumer base and a supply-chain focused both inward and outward.

My opinion is that we should try to have as much free trade but not run blindly behind it . Some points I would like to say about why in practical world, the overplaying “invisible hand” fails (this is opinionated and not based on any research) are as follows:

**No inter-country free trade is actually free :** A very good documentary about that here :

[https://youtu.be/DnW9ZQtI1\_E](https://youtu.be/DnW9ZQtI1_E)

Global free trade is well packaged politics. Global Trade is only as beneficial as the person negotiating it on your behalf has leverage and good intentions. We have been lucky to have not negotiated things too badly, but not everything is perfect. As said earlier, free trade is good, but no point going banana over it.

**Some specializations are less “replaceable” than the others and hence carry more risk :** Adam Smith’s invisible hand is very true for a short-term static universe, but it doesn't take creative disruption into account. Some specializations achieved by free trade, like India becoming an IT sweatshop are more at risk of becoming redundant than say Computer Science research. China recognizes it and has launched [Made in China 2025 - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Made_in_China_2025)

program which targets industry 4.0, things that are not going to go through commoditization soon. Replaceable specializations lead to instabilities.

### My answer to “Is capitalism a long-term solution? Or is it temporary till technology can be used to control people's greed and then communism can be established?”

Originally answered here: <https://qr.ae/pNofjj>

That is a really misinformed question based on many many assumptions, all of which are flawed :

1. **Pits Capitalism and Communism as ideological opposites, they are not:** Communism is a form of government with fixed rules which basically was trying to solve problems of Industrial Revolution era Europe and has rules and laws accordingly. Many people think they work even today. Capitalism has no fixed rules and definition apart from A. allowing private property and B. inheritance from ones parents and C. Supply-Demand Trade, that is A. self-preservation and B. betterment of progeny, things that evolution has taught all life forms (including humanity) to do. C is something only humans do. So everything wrong with humanity can be attributed to capitalism. Wars, slaughters, rapes, killings, children dying, whatever bad thing you want, attribute to capitalism, because all systems are capitalist in the world. Even Soviet Russia was capitalist, the capital was not dollars, but network within “the party”. You had ways to do both A. self-preservation and B. inheritance in all communist countries through reputation. C. Trade is what “by the book” communism is terrible with and is the reason why no communist country exists now apart from DPRK. People need to stop having the impression that there is a book of evil called “Capitalist Manifesto”, capitalism can mean everything under humanity and nothing.
2. **Assumes “Capitalism” benefits from war :** Again, who is capitalism ? where is its bank account ? War, Pandemics, Economic Crashes are events which transform the world. They press a Reset button. Due you think during war businesses like Hotels and Spas and luxury wines make profit ? There are industries that go bankrupt when any such transformative event happens. Are they not capitalism ? Any transformative event needs people power to mobilize and handle. The people of the entire country as a whole sells part of its future prosperity (or sacrifice humans who would have earned prosperity) to deal with situation. Now while everyone sells some part of their future prosperity, some people gain more than the others. It’s a combination of luck and leverage. Some rich businessmen go poor, less rich ones get richer. We look at the people getting richer and think “all” capitalists make money off misery. Very common problem with humans, stereotyping. No one looks or makes a note of those who became poorer or got bankerupt. Not saying that there are no evil businessmen, but blanket thoughts painting “All X is B” cannot be foundations of knowledge. The worst is common and poor people, who will always fare worse after any such Transformative Event. In a way communist (and fascist) ideology gain from war is when people start looking for easy explanations for their misery instead of the big picture and begin adopting thoughts like “All capitalists are pigs” or “All Untermensch are drag”. That is the only way such extreme ideologies will sell. Most communist countries were colonialism/war torn (Soviet Russia was formed post World War 1, PRC and North Korea post world war 2). Nazi Germany was born post world war 1.
3. **War can boost economy of any country involved :** Wars ceased to be profitable for any involved parties from long time back. War requires lots and lots of investment, forcing countries to accumulate or borrow, both basically sucking out future wealth. There was time when winners could ransack and loot. That was a way to totally rob out the loser to make sure the resources wasted to win the war were recovered. This in past, made war a profitable affair for winners. But now with us conscious about human rights etc., all this is not possible and war ends with basically two parties : A. Less Damaged (Winner), B. Damaged Beyond Repair: Poor. Frankly, in modern world, taking an emotional decision like going to war guarantees some percent of ruin. Almost all winners in latest wars have been negatively effected. Britain ceased to be a world power after World War 2 ended despite winning it, Many people believe US would have been better if they did not get into the Iraq war (Iraq War is possibly the best example of victory we know by any country ever, it took weeks for US to capture Iraq) and Soviet Union dismantled after war in Afghanistan. A few people are leveraged and lucky and make profit during wars, but that is never entire countries (or system of capitalism). People who lose out in wealth due to war are never accounted for unlike those who lose out on life.

With these three assumptions wrong, I don't think the question has any standing.

### My answer to “Is capitalism a long-term solution? Or is it temporary till technology can be used to control people's greed and then communism can be established?”

Originally answered here: <https://qr.ae/pNofjj>

There seems to be a lot of emotive cognition in the question (I don't know whether intended or unintended). The following assumptions make no sense :

1. Greed needs to be eliminated for a perfect society.
2. “Communism” is some kind of ideal goal.
3. “Technology” is at some superhuman level in current time or near future and humans are flawed secondary characters . (and technology can be used to make people fall in line by some methods).

**Argument against 1:**

First of all, there is no standard form of Capitalism unlike Communism which has a written manifesto. No one really knows what exactly should be done ideally in capitalism, except that it is the default system of private property humans have evolved into and keep evolving as civilization grows. Due to that reason, its very easy to pick on Capitalism as one can pick whatever and associate it with evils of Capitalism. Cronyism and Gatekeeping : Capitalism, Climate Change : Capitalism, Wars : Capitalism, systemic discrimination : Capitalism and so on. There is no doubt that system has flaws and it is a useless debate to defend or criticize capitalism. However, since its not exactly fixed in writing and treated like gospel, we know what needs to be improved and can work towards it. Why destroy something when you can improve it ?

This is by the way true about say Human Body (and any other complicated thing that has evolved over a lot of time) as well, you get to know more and more everyday, but its too hard to understand everything. Once you figure out something is not ideal in human body (say someone has a fungal itch), do you treat the fungal itch or do you just replace the skin with some new thing like say “skin of an animal resistant to fungus”. All artificial organs are mechanical copies of human organs not because human organs might be the most effective machines (sometimes they are), but because you don't know what effect a totally new type of organ might have on the rest of body.

Evolution has taught all organisms “[Self-preservation - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-preservation)

”. Greed is an extension of it. While too much greed which harms other individuals is bad, getting rid of greed totally is even worse. Greed is the incentive that makes humans take risks, taking risks is what changes the world. If the inventor of polio vaccine would have taken a safe career choice to farm in their own field, millions of kids would have been in pain, if Elon Musk had no greed about of wealth and fame, electric cars would not be in trend today. Controlled Greed drives progress. Even scientists/engineers in Soviet Union would work much better than civil servants, because they were paid in kind by recognition and better amenities.

**Argument against 2 :**

Communism on the other hand is “non-scientific”. Here the critique can be done better because there is a proper definition. It tries to explain something as complex as human society on basis of one factor : “Class Conflict”. Not saying that class conflict is not one of the aspects of society, but to say that is the only lens human society can be looked at is kind of dumb. Communism has repeatedly failed when implemented in its ideal form and the reason is that it denies fundamentals like evolution and tries resetting a complex system like human society with a rulebook of 500 pages. To think that Marx and Engels could have beat millions of years of evolution from their experience of a few decades and figured out a way to reset human society with no flaws is a moot point. Pragmatists like Stalin could still pull off some modified variant of communism, but that was not until they started mixing communism with the elements of capitalism that everyone hates : “gatekeeping”, “hierarchy” and most importantly “exploitation”. Communism at scale has the same problems as capitalism and more ! (Read about Soviet Union during late 80s).

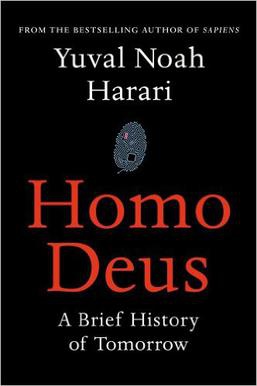
At very basic level, communism basically asks humans to start treating everyone as equals. There is no way one can treat one’s girlfriend in the same way one treats their potential competitor. I would argue that most nuclear families as a socio-economic system run communism, at least a few I know do. Favoritism is looked down on, there is shared space/goods and the money a parent (or both parents) earn is everyone’s money. Extending this has been shown to be possible for a group of humans say 50–100 who treat everyone like a family, but then it just breaks. You simply cannot have a family of 7 Billion, that is too many to emotionally empathize with in human psyche.

And why is communism more popular than existing boring capitalism ? Because radical (and more vocal) people often fall for “*Easy Answers”,* so will fall for things like “Lockdowns during pandemic take away freedom”, “Facebook has disintegrated society”, “Jews are evil”, “There should be no billionaires” or “Earth is flat”. No one wants to get into the nitty-gritties as A. Its not simple to understand, B. Its even harder to build a political narrative out of it. The non-radical people understand to stay away from these.

**Argument against 3:**

This is probably the biggest misconception people always seem to have. They seem to think they are in some special “technically/socially advanced” part of history. Humans have always been in acceleration mode since they became upright monkeys. The time gap between innovations/adoptions keeps going down due to better communication and infrastructure, and thus the speed of progress is super-exponential. Humans have always been on this journey to progress and still continue to be. You can think of human progress as a faster variant of evolution, what evolution would have achieved in a few Billion years, humans achieved in 1 few 100,000 years using intellect. That said, we are in no way in a special part of history where we have addressed all the concerns of society or will be able to address all concerns in a visible frame of time using technology. The reason is A. Society is hard to fix B. Society is evolving and demands increase, 100 years back it was food for all, 100 years later it will be say free asteroid for everyone. People used to believe so in early 20th century as well, maybe in early 19th century too, just like they do today. This flawed reasoning makes people think that there are messiahs who have/will make everything good with this magic called technology. While there is no doubt leadership is important, it is society which is evolving and self-correcting. Top Down reform has never been possible.

I dont blame common people for this opinion, “thought leaders” like Yuval Noah Harari have been pushing this narrative that humans have somehow reached this next level where we can now have just top-down progress push. Most people follow them.



In the book Homo Deus written a few years back, he says humans are now evolved enough that no pandemic can spread and here we are in the middle of one. There can be pandemics in future too just like there have been in the past.

Humans are on a journey of progress just like they have always been.

### My answer to “Will the 5G internet make this world a chaotic place?”

Originally answered here: <https://qr.ae/pNCZvk>

I assume the question is asked on the premise that with such humongous data speed available to each person, will society get out of control as hierarchy/order will be hard to maintain ? I dont foresee any other way 5G can harm, as its not going to be rolled out without tests.

The correct theoretical answer to this is : We dont know. But probability of chaos prevailing due to 5G is quite very less given that humanity is quite tenacious. Why so ?

You can think of human world as a very large self-organizing system. Any system which is isolated tends to have high entropy over time. I am not talking about the more popular thermodynamic entropy ([Entropy (classical thermodynamics) - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entropy_(classical_thermodynamics))

) here but the probabilistic concept of entropy [Entropy (information theory) - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entropy_(information_theory))

which simply means that the more new variables you introduce into the system, the shock or surprise value of the system increases. Just by existing, humanity is creating new issues which can surprise and damage it. We are also adding more variables with the resources of Earth we consume or the human population increase. Also with every new technology we add into the system (AI / blockchain / 5G / Genetic Engineering), while you add a few ways for the system to grow, you add many more possible ways for the system to fail. A self-organizing system will either adapt or evolve around a new surprise to incorporate it. However, if the change is something that overwhelms its capacity to adapt or evolve, it will get destroyed. Such irreversible changes are called systemic risks.

However, a technology like 5G is not a systemic risk, that is 5G can be rolled out gradually and problems it causes can be addressed along the way. Humanity is a self-organizing system, so it will roll out a new technology incrementally and use active stability (tactical measures) to avoid pitfalls and not crash and burn when the technology is being introduced. In simpler terms, humans are adaptable and will slowly adapt to incremental technologies and circumstances. You can say the same for new technologies like genetics or AI. The only problems are systemic risks (like pandemics, say COVID19, or say asteroid hitting the Earth), which cannot be paused and will overwhelm the speed at which humans adapt. These can damage or destabilize system as a whole.

Another path technology luddites suggest is to not take any risks at all, that is make surprise factor as zero from technology, invent no technology. That would essentially make the system implode as you are adding new issues and people all the time and society (and nature) can only bear as many people in its natural state. You need technology to adapt the society for good.

Other people who propose restrictions on new technology actually believe in passive stability (plan everything beforehand and create regulations/controls to avoid failures). They are mostly wrong as they cannot imagine all possible scenarios and end up creating regulatory capture.

Paraphrasing Jordan B Peterson from his book, “the path to progress lies in between stability and chaos”. Too much stability (not inventing new technology, too much restriction on thoughts and movements) will create chaos as system crashes under its own weight. 5G is a risk, but not a systemic risk.

5G internet is an incremental change. There is no doubt about the fact it will introduce changes into the system, but you will always have the option to turn it off. With new information available, humans will realign and the humanity as a system can adapt or evolve, but its rare that humans will not be able to take it.

More practically, what changes did the transition from 3G to 4G bring ? You can kind of extend the arrow and predict what changes will 5G technology bring. More apps and more centralized data over the internet. A lot many things we cannot even imagine right now. That said, I personally find it hard to believe that faster internet can damage humanity. In many places, the data speed change between 3G and 4G is not even that high to notice and maybe even after 5G is rolled out, many people will get data speed of 4G levels only for a long time. So it might actually even turn out to be marketing gimmick in some circumstances.

### My answer to “Despite having so many good engineers, IITians, etc., why does India not have its own Microsoft, Google, etc.?”

Originally answered here :

I have answered this question here somewhat : [Muktabh Mayank's answer to Can Indian startups break Google and Facebook’s dominance?](https://qr.ae/pN4NYf)

However, Let me reiterate my points : <https://qr.ae/pN5TRQ>

1. The competition is very asymmetric and creates a vicious cycle. Large companies have lots of money and resources and thus an Indian company which raises less money in early phases will find it really hard to compete. Indian startups find it really hard to attract and retain talent in early phases unless they don’t raise huge amount of money. Thus their product is “jugaad” or not as refined as product from a Trillion Dollar company. So, raising money to compete is hard and hence making product better is hard. Good product takes lots and lots of investments and if you are competing with a biggie with lot of resources with negligible money and talent, all you can do is build a cheaper version which caters to long tail of audience. India has many startups like this. Infact the Chennai SaaS mafia are all good tech startups and compete with likes of Salesforce and Microsoft and Googles, but they started with a focus to build a cheaper alternative, where the “jugaad” things works very well. If some day Indian market starts preferring (slightly low quality) local alternatives to high quality brands, India will have its own Googles. Russia and China have their own big tech ecosystems because they did not allow these firms to get into their market, no other country in the world has any competitors to these. There is no way a Trillion Dollar behemoth can be defeated by a set of kids working from a apartment in terms of product quality. Most IITians would prefer a job in a tech multinational than fighting this impossible battle. [Big Tech – Wikipedia](_blank)
2. Another way startups gain edge is by creative destruction, that is using a revolutionary new technology where the Trillion dollars a behemoth has has no advantage. That used to be true till a few decades back, Microsoft disrupted previous OS companies, Google disrupted older search engines and FB disrupted previous social networks. The previous companies were stuck in their cocoon and could not recognize upcoming trends gathering more and more entropy. However, the new behemoths (FAANGs as people call them + MS, which is now an internet company too) have recognized this and sold Wall Street the idea of innovation and [Growth investing – Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Growth_investing) and they compete just like fast moving startups, not like slow moving heavyweights, basically seldom letting startups disrupt them. How many fundamental technology giants even the US has seen after emergence of FAANGs ?The reason is that these companies dont act like traditional too big to fail companies but large startups.
3. The only way India got its large startups was (upto now) was early bird approach, that is quickly building a large enough company before the international rival grew huge in India. Ola, Flipkart , PayTM and the like. Google, Facebook etc were well established before startup culture in India started.

### My answer to “As an Indian If I am buying a Xiaomi phone do I indirectly Contribute to Chinese Economy which is not good for Indian Economy?”

Originally answered here : <https://qr.ae/pNbKBk>

{You will need context of India-China tensions in 2020 to get the background of this question : [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020\_China%E2%80%93India\_skirmishes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020_China–India_skirmishes) }

Yes. Buying a Chinese phone contributes to economy of China. Money does go to China and it can invest that money into military build up on our border and kill our people just like it did earlier.

[20 Indian soldiers killed in LAC stand-off with Chinese troops](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/20-indian-soldiers-killed-in-lacstand-off-with-chinese-troops/story-1qTQWKJjba6xXAKwyMh2aM.html)



Its not just simple ‘Chinese firms paying taxes in China’ issue, China’s state has deep connections with its companies.:

[Huawei: China’s Controversial Tech Giant](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/huawei-chinas-controversial-tech-giant)



Chinese companies are also notorious for potential data transfer to China. Apparently they are bound by a Chinese law to transfer data of anyone on their platforms to Chinese government anytime it demands.

These are the two things why sudden anti-china sentiment is being seen in Indian market. When our data, our land and our people can get in danger by us spending money on something, why do it ? Its true that China is the factory of the world and many components for almost everything you buy come from China, a share of profit going to Chinese firms is vastly different than all of it. Most countries have realized this supply chain bottleneck and are trying to fix it.

That said, buying Chinese products doesn’t harm our economy directly. It might not be the best way we should run our economy (otherwise China would be allowing products of other countries to dominate in its local markets, which it doesn’t and I guess no one really considers Chinese economic policy bad), but its still better than how our country had a socialist economy pre-1990s gatekeeping for our elite.

I think we can learn from China how to use our markets to not just grow economy but also make it more sturdy. Post independence, our markets have had strange emotions, either not opening up at all or becoming totally xenophilic .

The answer is always in the middle, what probably we are trying now, no mandatory import substitution but a preference to Indian goods and services.

### My answer to “How can we say that India can affect the Chinese economy while on the other hand all Indian startups such as Paytm, Ola, Oyo, Swiggy, etc. are funded by China only?”

Originally answered here: <https://qr.ae/pNCZMX>

{You will need context of India-China tensions in 2020 to get the background of this question : [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020\_China%E2%80%93India\_skirmishes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020_China–India_skirmishes) }

I have written in detail about this in my answer here: [Muktabh Mayank's answer to What are your views on Chinese investment in Indian unicorn startups?](https://qr.ae/pN2Ivf)

1. Why do we need to effect China’s economy ? All we need to make sure is we aren’t too dependent on their supply chain which they might use as a leverage against us. The aim should be to develop our nation’s economy while having reasonable control and competition. We need to work for benefit our our people, ways-of-living and community, not for harm of someone else. Don’t fall for the emotional shorttermism of harming/effecting someone else’s economy. It’s not a [Zero-sum game - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zero-sum_game). A civilization built on malefic intentions will not last, India has never done this in past, is not doing anything like this today, and will not do it in future.
2. You need external money to grow with less amount of risk. Equity Investments are almost never bad if handled carefully. As long as startups are serving India and have effective management in India, there is no problem in reducing risk right now when we are relatively weak by giving away some share of our future riches. Marginal Utility of money is much high now than it will be when our country is rich and developed. Emotions and business dont mix well together, dont confuse them.

### My answer to “Should Indian netizens come together to create a decentralised, democratic, and technocratic political party?”

Originally Answered Here: <https://qr.ae/pNF9wX>

So this answer will have some facts and some opinions. You are welcome to disagree.

First of all, I am all in for a decentralized political party which discusses things from different viewpoints before they take stance on policy. The rest of the answer is however about democratic-technocratic party.

From the limited history I know, I dont think its possible to have a decentralized, democratic and technocratic political party which wins election and then goes on to actually go and achieve something.

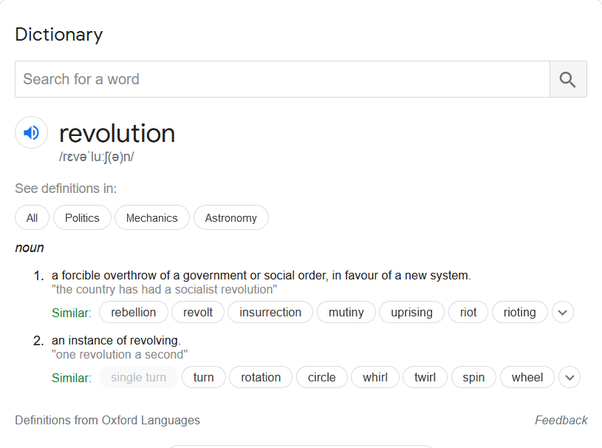
* Technocracy failed as a democratic political movement when it was originally conceived during great depression times in the USA. Did not hold any ground.
* Bureaucracy (which is the technocratic wing of any democracy) is almost always really unpopular as slow and corrupt. In India, think of all the “lunch ke baad aana” ya “chay naashta mil jaata” type things you have heard. Technocrats are almost never popular due to their tendency to appear “above the masses”. The technocratic party basically says has an agenda : “technocrats know better”, think of going to people and asking votes on burning issues saying “You guys are idiots, I am an expert and here is what we should do and so vote for me”. That might work sometimes, but mostly people feel safest when they feel someone like them is running the country, not someone whose entire goal is to “appear smart”.
* Technocracies work well only when there is a single party rule, dictatorship or oligarchy. Private companies are essentially oligarchies where CEOs achieve things that you cannot even dream of achieving in a government. China has a technocratic form of government and their officials have moved mountains (Despite that we regularly hear of purges of corrupt officials). Stalin might have had his flaws but imagine the way his technocrats could transition Soviet Union, the old man of Europe to an war machine which produced cheap weapons like nothing else. Why so you ask ? According to me, here is what happens : A. Career technocrats (who climb up career ladder) are mostly risk averse, all they have to do is show their credentials and not get into a controversy. This creates a vicious cycle where the ones who even want to do something have to face massive resistance. B. Expert Technocrats, like an “expert” nominated as ABC (ex- XYZ at PQR), have too much optionality, that is if they have credentials and they take any actions, no questions are asked about if they screw up as they were doing it according to “science”. In a private company or a totalitarian government, technocrats are forced to take risk and have no optionality. Think of going and telling Stalin as his Chief Engineer that getting a tank factory up in 1 month is not possible. Putin basically injected the scientists who invented COVID vaccine with the vaccine first. In China, promotions of technocrats are driven by numbers delivered, not years of experience. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2644688>. That is uncomfortable, but unfortunately when technocracies work well is when they dont really have a choice other than working well. In democracy, elected legislature/executive is in charge of pushing technocrats out of their comfort zone and making them work, but seldom get the effect of a dictator on helm or a company board who can basically finish the CEO’s career and make him/her redundant for life if (s)he screws up.
* So if you want technical people to work, set them up for a job with huge rewards if they succeed and huge failure if they fail. This is the only way it would work. That is not how a liberal democracy works. You have to take people’s opinion into account, have baggage of the constitution, have to maintain public image, co-ordinate different branches and do so many other things. A technocracy and a liberal democracy cannot be fully aligned. Look at how Singapore, in my view the best technocracy runs : [The True Story of Lee Kuan Yew’s Singapore](https://palladiummag.com/2020/08/13/the-true-story-of-lee-kuan-yews-singapore/).
* How do we know which technocrat should lead ? Is good work at one’s current position an indicator that they will work better when given a better office ? That is not true as well. People really good at the current job are often bad when promoted. [The Peter Principle: A Theory of Decline](https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/publications/peter-principle-theory-decline) . So its very rare that Chief Scientist or Chief Economist or Chief Secretary will make a good President. Leadership is a different skill as compared to technical skill IMO. Democracies need leaders on top with technocrats helping them advance the nation ahead. A technical person can be a leader at the top too, but they should not reach there because they were good in their technical knowledge, but because they are a good leader.

### My answer to “How come all the IT revolution happened in the US and not in other parts of the world?”

Originally Answered Here: <https://qr.ae/pNoq9n>

IT “Revolution” did not happen just in US. IT has changed the whole world for good. One of the major factors in India’s post-socialist economic growth is due to IT revolution and automation. Africa despite of poor infrastructure has economies growing faster than 10% per annum because of Information Technology. Another thing is “Revolution” is quite a strong word. It has a specific meaning which often incorporates violence. Revolutions are often stupid and lead nowhere. I find the term [Creative destruction - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_destruction)

better, that is what brings about most change.



Maybe a better question can be “Why did IT revolution start in the US and why did IT create the most billionaires in US ?” . That would be a much better question. The answer is not as simple as you think.

Think of the creative destruction phonomena humanity has seen before which required lot of efforts:

* The first large buildings from Egypt
* Codified Law and Trade from Mesopotamia
* Civil Engineering from Indus Valley
* Mathematics from India
* Macedonian phalanx
* Greek Philosophy
* Principles of Empire Building from Rome
* Gunpowder and Silk from China
* Renaissance from Italy
* Spanish/Portuguese shipping
* Industrial Revolution from Britain
* Electronics breakthroughs from the US
* IT breakthroughs like telephony, satellites and internet from the US

Most of these phenomena did not stay restricted to the country they originate in, in fact, many of them benefited other countries more than the country of origin. They reason is discovering something is different from exploiting the new discovery. For example, Industrial Revolution originating from Great Britain actually made US industry base strong enough to emerge as the deciding factor in World Wars and hence as the new world power. Similarly, while Chinese invented the gunpowder, Central Asians (Turks) made empires out of it in Anatolia, India and Iran.

But there is one thing common amongst the countries inventing these technologies :

They were all rich and superpowers of their time. Rich countries have rich people who have money and resources to invest in a new technology development, so that they can benefit from being the early bird. Money drives inventions and luck drives who profits most from these investments.

TL,DR: IT revolution happened in the US because in the timeframe of 1950–now, US is the richest country with rich people who can invest into things that can give them profits. Being Rich also has basic requirements of stable government, rule of law etc. Greed is not always bad. Adam Smith stuff !

### My answer to “How did China become the world’s second largest economy with the help of reverse engineering?”

Originally Answered Here: <https://qr.ae/pNMVYl>

Good Question. One line answer is that you cannot be good at everything at the beginning, you start with one advantage you have and then use it to place your eggs in other baskets. China used its one well defined strength and advantage and is now finally in a state where it can look into developing new moats.

China’s advantage was its cheap/humongous labor force and united population ( achieved by the not so famous [Cultural Revolution - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution)

) willing to rally behind their country/leadership in any decisions they make. [Deng Xiaoping - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deng_Xiaoping)

’s government skillfully engineered this “people’s republic” advantage into Market-Capitalist principles, creating the “factory of the world” we see today. China had population advantage and they used it well. There are other advantages/moats like capital/research/technology that you suddenly cannot create. People need to get better off, stock money, be able to go to universities (within and outside country) and be willing to invest and work in their own country for a country to develop these specialized advantages.

Using its first advantage, that is large and willing to work for country population, China developed a LARGE middle class, creating incentives for businesses that created rich people and capital and scholars in their own universities or scholars that went to top US universities and decided to come back and work. Now that technology/capital is plenty, China is evolving from what you are calling a “reverse engineering” economy to a first world innovation based economy. China is right now somewhat like how US was at end of World War 2. It has capital that it can invest in other places and take advantage of their growth (Africa/Central/South Asia/South East Asia) and build capabilities/afvantages which are more resistant to creative destruction like technology,science,space. [“Made in China 2025”: China's answer to Industry 4.0](https://www.europeanchamber.com.cn/en/upcoming-events/11057/_Made_in_China_2025_China_s_answer_to_Industry_4.0)

[Belt and Road Initiative - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belt_and_Road_Initiative)



[Made in China 2025 - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Made_in_China_2025)

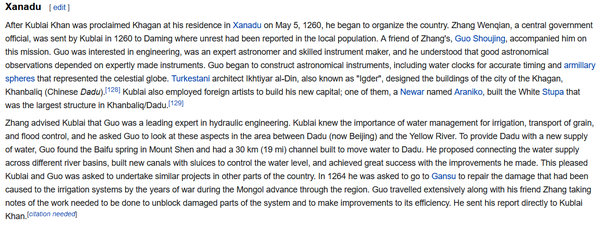


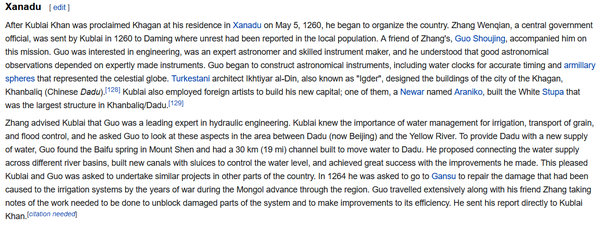
BTW, this is not a unique strategy, all world powers have arisen through this principle :

1. Develop one or a few unique advantages and come ahead of the world,
2. Conquer/Dominate the world and learn of other cool technologies/advantages people groups have,
3. Copy/Better the advantages of other people becoming prominent.

Mongols won a huge empire using their unique warfare methods, but slowly adopted traditional Chinese moats like Silk / Tea trade, Chinese engineering and irrigation technology.

[Kublai Khan - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kublai_Khan)



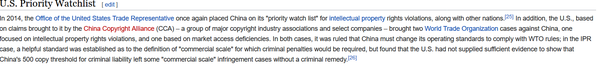


British developed Navy and came to dominate trade becoming resourceful, then they conquered India / dominated China and forcefully took their advantages under their own control (started making clothes in UK, started growing tea and silk in India and stated growing spices in caribbean ).

[Textile manufacture during the British Industrial Revolution - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textile_manufacture_during_the_British_Industrial_Revolution)



That was the 18th century equivalent of China stealing IP (or what you call Chinese Reverse Engineering methods). [Intellectual property in China - Wikipedia](_blank)



US did the same with Europe and UK, basically using investment and technology to develop a large industrial/financial base and then coming to capture trade/commerce/softpower/top technology after UK became a secondary power post world wars. As an Indian born near economic opening up of the country, I hardly find any connection to erstwhile empire my ancestors lived in, but many to US contemporary culture.

[Allied technological cooperation during World War II - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allied_technological_cooperation_during_World_War_II)



China did the same thing. Using the investment from US elites looking to “globalize” and their willing workforce as low cost labor, they got their initial advantage and are now taking up the advantages US and other countries have in terms of technology.

### My answer to “Can inheritance be called nepotism?”

Originally Answered Here: <https://qr.ae/pNolgo>

No. There is a clear distinction between inheritance and nepotism from how I see it.

Inheritance is the transfer of wealth one has earned lawfully in their life to their progeny or kin. The wealth has been earned and is owned by the person who is passing it down. When one owns money or property legally (that is they have not stolen it and have paid taxes), I think its upto them what they do with it, whether spend it or save it and pass it on.

Nepotism on the other hand, is using one’s power and social status to do gatekeeping. That means using one’s power to create resistance for outsiders to reach the same or similar positions of power. For example, (what is in news in India these days), rich Bollywood personalities may deliberately use their connections to get their kids act in more and more movies while reducing chances for others. Another example is a politician’s kid getting preference over a similar (or even more) qualified people in politics, just because of connections of their parents. The reason is that the minimum requirement for most jobs, except the ones at apex/absolute top are average joes, so you wont feel the effect of a less effective person in the job, unless you contrast it with a very effective person sitting on the job. For example, someone sitting at a clerk’s position because they have contacts won’t be necessarily bad and you will notice the difference only when you see a very smart clerk work. Nepotism uses this fact to sneak in less qualified people due to the contacts. Its not always sneaked in btw, sometimes people are very open and blatant about nepotism.

All people want is if they are able to overcome their social obstacles to become as good as people from better families than them, they are pushed behind just because they come from less influential facility.

Nepotism according to me is unfair (and thus wrong) because:

1. While wealth is lawfully earned and possessed and the person has the right to do whatever with it (burn/donate/spend/save it for the kids). Inheritance is the exercise of this right. Its not necessary they use the wealth optimally for society or even themselves.
2. Status, influence and power is earned but is not possessed. In a meritocractic society, status is given to a person for their capability and is not possessed like in a monarchy. Influence is shared property of the person with influence and the society which gives them influence. They are not justified in using the influence in a way that is sub-optimal and bad for the society. People doing nepotism are basically cheating the society.

Nepotism nullifies the most important basis of meritocratic society that is “equality of opportunity”. In monarchies and other hereditary form of government, nepotism is built in and hence they enjoy low to no citizen-satisfaction and loyalty. Many people would not even mind if a monarchy who doesn't hear their voices be replaced. Try toppling a meritocratic society and see the retaliation !

Going against inheritance is basically going for “equality of outcome”. Equality of Outcome has fundamentally flawed assumptions that dont survive evolution human society :

1. People dont love their kids more than they love the kids of others. Life would have not evolved if this wasn’t true.
2. Equality of outcome finishes the incentives of risk taking people. Most human progress is because someone dared to light the first fire, tame the first wolf (all dogs are basically wolves), sit on the first immature assembled airplanes and touched radioactive elements without adequate protection (Marie Curie actually due chronic radiation poisoning) .
3. Humans are better at different things and we cannot expect them to be equally good at everything. Someone cannot be either a good engineer or good doctor or good politician, maybe one of these or two at best.

### My answer to the question: “Is nepotism in democracy a boon or a bane?”

Originally answered here: <https://qr.ae/pNuBxW>

This should not even be a question.

***Nepotism is of course bad for democracy.***

What everyone needs to understand is Inheritance is not Nepotism. People do not speak out openly against nepotism because they confuse the two : [Can inheritance be called nepotism?](https://www.quora.com/Can-inheritance-be-called-nepotism) Nepotism is using trust given by the public in a way to benefit one’s near and dear ones and thus harming the society as a whole. Inheritance is passing down wealth one rightfully earned to ones’ progeny. There is a reason in any decent government, office can be taken away for malpractices, but not one’s honestly earned wealth. Public trust and ability combined makes an influencer, not just their personal attributes, hence they cannot use their influence like personal property for decisions suboptimal to society.

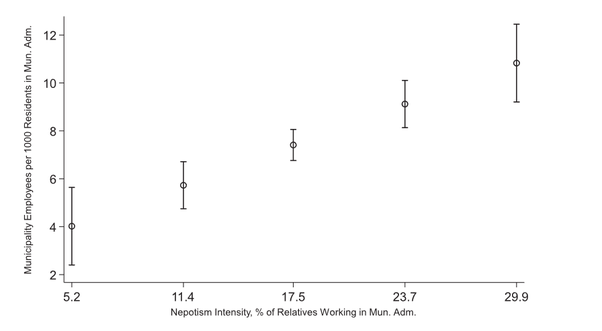
**Why is Nepotism bad ?**

The biggest problem with measuring the effects of nepotism is that its hard to :

1. **Identify when Nepotism is taking place :** While the very famous cases cannot be hidden, many other cases are hidden well. Many public figures who appear to be rich and famous all due to themselves, often have used their parent’s connections. This makes it really hard for common people to associate talent with meritocracy. “All ABC officeholders are same” type of mentality benefits nepotists.
2. **Recognize mediocre public managers in short term :** People incoming from nepotism are often mediocre (otherwise they would not need nepotism), but they tend to be well informed (because that is what is going to save them from humiliation). They will hide behind rules, be good at public dealings and people pleasing. The aim of mediocre people is “to not get fired” and not “to do their job well”. Hence its harder to single mediocre people. So to normal people, they would look more acceptable. Looking acceptable is good way to run away from performance/responsibility.
3. **There is no control experiment for performance of a nepotism user (No one to compare):** Its very hard to know if someone has used nepotism to get ahead in life, its even harder to know what would happen if someone with merit would run the show instead of someone taking advantage of their name. Coming from an influential family gives people more risk appetite allowing them to compound more skills. The only way to understand if an actor from middle/lower class of society will be as famous (or actually more famous) as one from an influential background is to give them the same risk appetite (say get as many movies where they continue to not act well before acting clicks to them). That is not really possible. People can identify thus only blatant cases of nepotism, when the person being pushed ahead is so bad they cannot even hide their incompetence.

This study of nepotism in politics <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2474736X.2020.1781542>

finds an interesting relationship. The percentage of people in administration who are relatives goes up with more number of municipalities jobs.



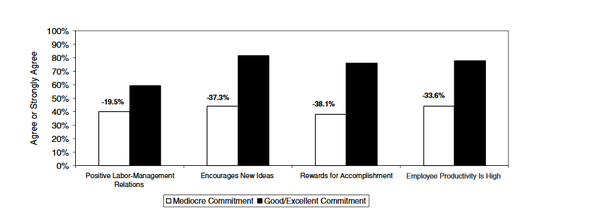
While the number of people who are relatives increasing with number of government jobs is obvious as “more people being hired means more people related to each other can be hired”, but the percentage of related people going up with larger number of job basically means, for larger municipalities, relatives are more likely to get hired !

The authors characterize nepotism as “Rent Seeking” by influencers, who when they cannot convert whole of their influence into money (because as I said, influence is a shared trust between influencer and influenced and not a cheque to be cashed), use their influence to get their relatives to become influencers too.

There is also a hint that the government is made bigger (and more inefficient) by overhiring to accommodate nepotism. In my experience, people using nepotism often want to protect their image by hiding behind degrees and expert opinions to save themselves from responsibility of their action. I think one way to use your influence and get relatives hired is to use money to get a degree and get them a job as an expert/consultant and the other way is to hire a lot of intellectuals who can create an environment to defend your policies and nepotism. You need overhiring in both cases. But that makes system inefficient for common man.

There is no doubt that nepotism over meritocracy would get more mediocre people hired. (not all people using nepotism can be meritorious!). Managers with perceived traits of mediocrity have been shown to have bad collaboration and yield. (This study is a bit too subjective to determine mediocre managers so take it with a grain of salt) : <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242221207_What_Is_Managerial_Mediocrity_Definition_Prevalence_and_Negative_Impact_Part_1>





So, according to this study, mediocrity reduces productivity and cohesion in the long run. This is because mediocre people are bad at taking responsibility and initiative. These are also very common in nepotism culture by using safety as an excuse to avoid action and building an environment of “the whole system is slow and corrupt” to hide one’s inaction.

### My answer to “Do Indians now feel the absence of an eminent economist in the decision making process to lift the economy as repeated measures of GOI are not giving desired results?”

Originally Answered Here: <https://qr.ae/pNMQbi>

{This question was asked in September 2020, during COVID19 disruption when economies of most countries had tanked}

India has an economist in the decision making loop always to advice government : [Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Economic_Advisor_to_the_Government_of_India)

The post is right now being held by [Krishnamurthy Subramanian - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishnamurthy_Subramanian).

Are you suggesting that all the decisions should be made just economists as in a technocracy ? That is not really the best approach according to me as I explain here : [Muktabh Mayank's answer to Should Indian netizens come together to create a decentralised, democratic, and technocratic political party?](https://qr.ae/pNF9wX)

Reasons according to me are :

1. Economics is not a science like say Maths/Physics is. Answer to a question is not fixed. Its study of cause and effect. You will have economic theories and schools and different solutions to the same problem. Each of this . When you choose an economist to take all decisions, you are essentially choosing one school of economics over other. Its more like making a religious/philosophical/political choice than say vouching for evidence based science. The best approach is to have representatives from different schools advice to leader (who is good at decision making) who then takes the right step.
2. A technocrat on top who is there because (s)he as an expert has tonne of optionality to try out untested theories and not be responsible to people for their failure in anyway unlike an elected politician who needs to go back to people for validation. Every Economic Policy Decision tries to optimize some number, which it always will very well or average, but whether improving that number helps common people can be judged by people’s validation. A bureaucrat on top OTOH has the problem of not being qualified enough and need to rely on experts’ validation. That is the reason we choose leaders, people solely responsible for decision making, they have no excuses and have to perform what people expect them too.TL,DR : Democracy is better than technocracy/bureaucracy !

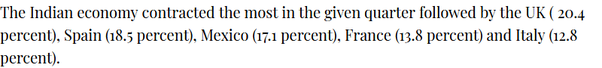
You can have opinions about whether the Economic decisions are optimizing the metrics that you consider important and disagree with them (that is democracy), but to say that no economic policy exists and no economic policy is involved in taking the decision is not correct. India’s government has a process, flawed or good.

Another thing that all of us need to understand that India and most countries of the world (except China who is not doing as bad) are going through a bad phase due to the pandemic. Economy is us people going out and spending money. Most people are afraid and some have lost their job and hence people are spending less making economy shrink for most places where pandemic has spread. We don’t really know how the economic recovery will look like for any country and only time will tell.

India was locked down for very long to develop an infrastructure against the pandemic. This is very different from other cold countries who had to reopen during their summers to avoid letting people die and are facing second wave of the pandemic now.

Is this recent case guiding your perception ? Lot has been written comparing India’s Jun-Aug 2020 quarter performance under a partial lockdown with countries that had already opened up (without this disclaimer) :

[India's GDP contraction worse than any other G20 nations, says Gita Gopinath; Congress links slump to demonetisation - India News , Firstpost](https://www.firstpost.com/india/indias-gdp-contraction-worse-than-any-other-g20-nations-says-imf-gita-gopinath-congress-links-slump-to-demonetisation-8781431.html)



In June :

[France reopens economy to quicken virus recovery - ET HealthWorld](https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/france-reopens-economy-to-quicken-virus-recovery/76377706)



Now :

[Coronavirus: France to impose night-time curfew to battle second wave](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54535358)



I have pasted links about France here, but a similar situation is ongoing in other countries you would typically think of having an economically better quarter in Jun-Aug 2020.

India chose a longer lockdown to get rid of the first COVID wave and is reopening now during its festival season. You can expect people going out and spending more and economy bouncing back a bit.

[Muktabh Mayank's answer to Amongst this exponentially increasing COVID-19 cases, is unlock V a good move? Why?](https://qr.ae/pNMilQ)

Industry is already anticipating this and hence you see +ve news like this :

[Manufacturing PMI at over 8-year high in September; industry raises output at full throttle](https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/manufacturing-pmi-at-over-8-year-high-in-september-industry-raises-output-at-full-throttle/2095661/)



The best we can hope is now that we are reopening, people go out and spend giving our economy some much needed recovery while following social distancing and wearing masks during upcoming festival/marriage season.

Ok , so now summarizing (and adding some more points just in case) :

1. Economy is us people going out and spending. Despite most Indians still having the traditional economy when they think of GDP, India is now a [Consumer economy - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer_economy). We were afraid and locked in our houses and afraid of spending till sometime back and it was bound to fall. To reopen, government needed to win our confidence so that we go out and spend on reopening. That is what has happened with first wave of pandemic peak getting over. People will now be willing to go out and spend making the wheel if economy turn.
2. So now we are reopening just like other countries did. We did not have to hurry unlike Europe to reopen in summers as we have pleasant winters. We could get past the first peak and develop some infrastructure. Some of our experts take things half cooked. We take reopen-shut formula of pandemic economy from other countries doesn’t mean we take the exact timings of reopen-close. (And then there is so much noise!). Europe, US and India have different business seasons. Let’s learn to learn and think beyond the west BTW and copy tricks how China, Korea and Vietnam contained the pandemic, high mask compliance.
3. If you think all this co-ordination is being managed without technical people advising government, I think you need to reconsider your opinions. While not all technologists are good at decision making and even their jobs, some are really really good.

### My answer to “Being Liberal is good, so why are Liberals hated so much in India ?”

Originally Answered Here: <https://qr.ae/TS4cmg>

*The following is very much my reading of the current political situation in India. I am not an expert on either politics or history, so take this answer with a grain of salt :*

Indian political scene is filled with misnomers : “Liberals” are not really liberal, “Rationalists” are actually communists, all sides of political spectrum are basically “progressive”, that is want living conditions of humanity to get better with time, “Secular” word is very unclear in definition, “Indian Intellectuals” many a times aren’t intellectuals (many celebrities who are counted as intellectuals haven’t really completed their basic education, they can be called leaders, not intellectual).

So “Being liberal is good” is not really a fact like you have mentioned. It is a statement like saying “Movie X is good”. It is a subjective statement.

You need to understand that the “liberal” politics in India is not really liberal (liberal politics is a different type of politics altogether which has no support base in India), but a mix between Fabian socialism, neoliberalism and identity politics. (essentially the politics of Indian National Congress at different stages during Indian democracy period, which has been in power for most of the time post-independence).

In current context, If you understand that you like the policies implemented by the INC in India, you can definitely call yourself an “Indian Liberal”, but please don’t feel you have a liability to be called “liberal” as the word has a good reputation. You might like the Indian Liberal philosophy, the Liberal(or classic liberal as now it is called, given there is a neoliberal philosophy too) philosophy, none, a mixture of both, whatever you feel like.

As of 2019 , I want to explain (as to how I understand) what is an “Indian Liberal” philosophy and what are they really against in current BJP regime. (And that there is a lot in common too which they should not really be against)

***The Indian Liberal Political stance***

**1) Fabian Socialism:**

I think if you are reading this answer you probably already know what socialism is. Socialism is basically a democratic form of communism which aims at bringing wealth redistribution and state/co-operative ownership of important means of production. By just policy of democratic socialism, Political Communism in India and Socialism are not really different as both comply to electoral means to gain power. (There is also real communism in India which wants to overthrow capitalists through a bloody and warlike revolution, what we know today as [Naxalite - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naxalite)

). However, Fabian thought is what sets them apart.

Fabian thought is slightly different though. [Fabian Society - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fabian_Society)

. It believes that the best form of government is that which is run by an elite and aims to redistribute wealth as a “Socialism run by Aristocracy” (This is not my words, but Annie Besant’s, J.L.Nehru’s political guru).



If you look at Indian politics, most elite people’s families have been elite for generations. Just google a bit about post-Nehru Congress leaders or our artists or mediapersons etc, you will see a lot of them come from elite families (who were quite influential after or sometimes even before independence) and stay elite. They don’t want to show it, try to portray themselves as common people, but they are. Fabian Socialism creates an ecosystem which tries to implement socialism without becoming more populist (We will discuss about the term later).

If you remember before the internet and social media, the only way to understand the depths behind a topic was to read opinions on a topic in newspapers. I used to read opinions and editorials of Indian English newspapers when I was a kid. Thinking of it, a lot of subjective knowledge was passed to me as real knowledge and I probably still believe a lot of it even now. That is the epitome of Fabian society, I was guided into what I believe is right in a lot of topics by elites whom the media thought were experts in their fields.

In India, the way Fabian Socialism works is the following:

1. Highlight weak sections within the majority and become their representative. 2. An elite ecosystem to run the country and create propaganda

3. Meritocracy in executive and technocracy to keep populism in check (the people think they get a say in running government).

The entire concept of dynasty politics is not just limited to politics, but also in media, arts, business, judiciary etc. Fabian thought aims at building an elite which runs the show. In UK, OxBridge educated elite is another example of a similar “socialist aristocracy”: [List of University of Oxford people with PPE degrees - Wikipedia](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_University_of_Oxford_people_with_PPE_degrees)

There is a small inlet for the common people to break into this elite through competitions etc to make sure they are not dissatisfied.

So its not just Nehru-Gandhi family, but a set of families which run the country. They take in a few new elite people and the old ones are retained, keeping their narrative aligned always. They let certain meritorious people into elite who comply with their narrative enriching the ecosystem . Let me explain a bit more.



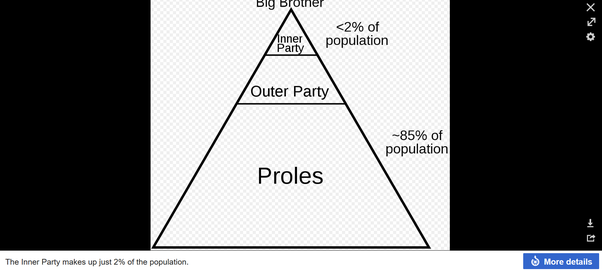
Socialism in my view is basically elite-run Communism. It follows similar goals to communism, but is unlike communism, not brutal and authoritarian, allows for economics to flourish too and makes more rational choices.

There is a somewhat parallel movement in India we had of a more populist (identity politics based) socialism and you have common people rising to become powerful politicians. (Mulayam Singh Yadav, Nitish Kumar, George Fernandes, Lalu Yadav, Kansiram etc ). But since the ecosystem was built to facilitate fabian socialism, they all convert into fabian socialists in the long run. Most of these populist socialist parties have now evolved into what is known as “dynestic politics” parties in India. That is the reason why some people even allege that the BJP is becoming like the Congress (because the country works based on ecosystem and parties have to adopt it to some extent to run the nation). [The class of 1975 - Times of India](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/deep-focus/The-class-of-1975/articleshow/47749948.cms)



If we think in the terms of George Orwell, the INC is the [Inner Party - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_Party)

and it has developed an ecosystem that any ruling party has to comply to.



In modern context, Socialism’s most important call is to end wealth inequality. Means of production and other philosophies have been replaced by Neoliberalism (including here in India) and welfare state. Only very recently, we are seeing Jeremy Corbyns, AOCs and Bernies of the world bringing the hard left back. Truth is that combining Socialist welfare state with neoliberalism has had some really good consequences for people for countries.

Look at the HDI:



Or World Happiness Index:



Or quality of life:

[The 23 cities with the best quality of life in the world](https://www.businessinsider.in/thelife/the-23-cities-with-the-best-quality-of-life-in-the-world/articleshow/63382161.cms)

In India, you can roughly equate the AAP government’s work in Delhi to be India’s equivalent to the welfare state. [Delhi Government Performance Report 2015-2019](https://aamaadmiparty.org/aap2019/)

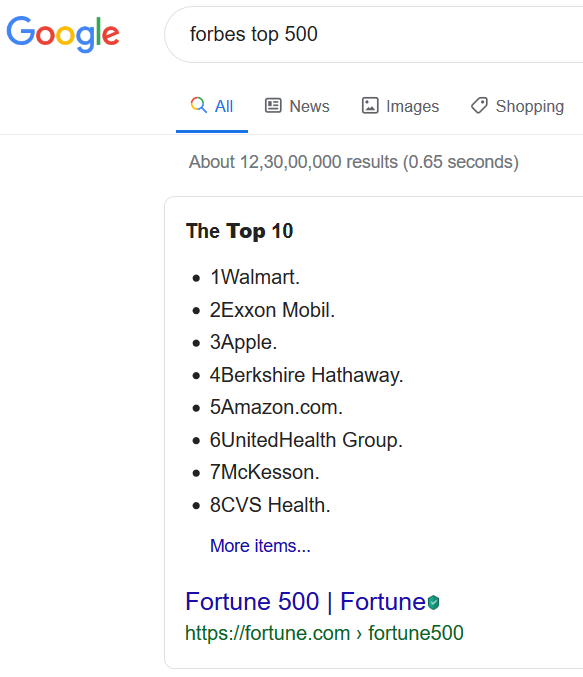
(That link is from website of the political party itself so yeah, use some salt)

**2) Neoliberalism:**

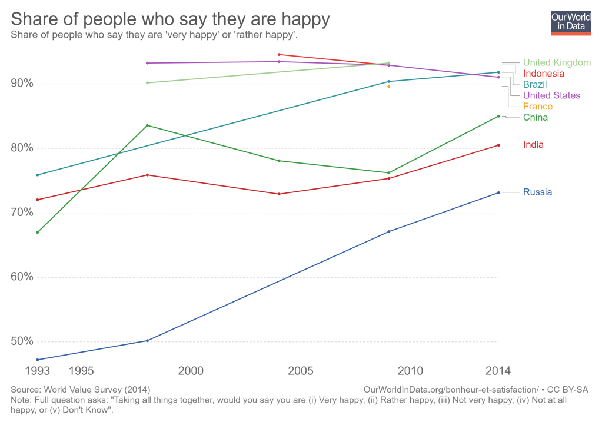
[Neoliberalism - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoliberalism)

is a policy that most left-of-center political parties adopted 1990s onwards (Democrats in US, Labor Party in UK, INC in India). Embracing capitalism and globalization as more “efficient” socialism. Neoliberalism basically lets globalization take precedence. As trade increases, prosperity grows, and more money for helping depraved. This sacrifices the goal of finishing “economic inequality” , but no one complains given better circumstances that arise. Parties also become more center in the political spectrum, making them more acceptable.

The other policies of identity politics remain, while the cathedral/ecosystem allows meritocratic entrance not just by meritocratic competitions but also by entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurs who get into the elite using the system is what a lot of critics call “cronies” in modern era. This policy has proven to drive growth. Most modern global multinational companies took their form thanks to neoliberal policies and they became huge. Neoliberalism and multinational giants support and reinforce each other. You can assume that most Forbes companies these days are a product of globalization and Neoliberalism. So is a lot of discoveries and inventions and human achievements.

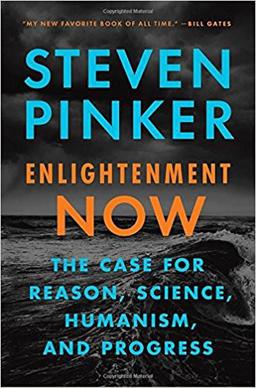


This has definitely made the world a better place:



Poor people are getting a better life due to this and in some countries in Africa, the average age is going up by more than 1 year to live every year, that is people have more years to live ahead of them as they get older.

A very nice narrative around this can be found in Enlightenment Now, one of my favorite books, which tells how chasing openness in science, reason, humanism and betterment of people has been achieved in last few years and the world is becoming a better place every day:



Indian National Congress was somewhat neoliberal during their stint as UPA governments in 2004–2014. The good thing is you can be socialist and neoliberal both (infact that is the most prevalent form of center-left politics in the world) .

**3) Identity Politics:**

So how would a minority of elites can run such a huge country on socialism/neoliberalism ? If you basically tell people you want to run a democratic neoliberal government to open up the country, help traders, entrepreneurs and scientists, you will not get even a few votes in a democracy.

The answer is by never letting a majority form. Social Justice is a good concept, but when it is combined with identity politics, it becomes an effective measure to never let the majority unite. Any and every society in the world has its flaws and fault lines. You can effectively make the weaker sections support the elite without a lot of trouble. In India, you have Minority politics, Backward caste politics, Scheduled caste politics, Women politics and so on. This is a brilliant way to keep populism in check. *Votebank politics* is the common name for this phenomenon in India. All you have to do is positive discrimination to rule.

[Minorities must have first claim on resources: PM](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/minorities-must-have-first-claim-on-resources-pm/articleshow/754218.cms)



Identity Politics does give a feel to marginalized segments of society that they have sway in the society, and that is why it wins.

Unlike intellectuals and elite who respond more to facts, common people respond more to emotion and will respect identity politics shown real and emotional stories of oppression, poverty and struggle.

There is some argument that identity politics actually works: [In Defense of Identity Politics - Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society](http://signsjournal.org/currents-identity-politics/walters/)

But most people disagree:

[Why identity politics benefits the right more than the left | Sheri Berman](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/14/identity-politics-right-left-trump-racism)

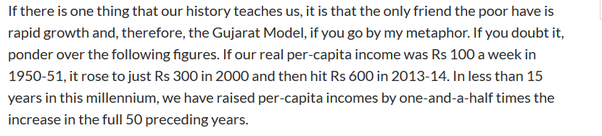


***Indian Liberal is against What ?***

Well, now that I have described in my own definition what an Indian Liberal is, let me describe what are they fighting against:

**Modi-ism (This is not really a term, but I don’t really know what we have as an actual term for this phenomenon)**

Modern Hindutva, BJP, Modi-ism or whatever terms you want to put to the current phenomenon that has rocked India in terms of politics recently is not a new one. It evolved from Congress itself when it was a big tent party for Indian Independence before it took a decisive fabian socialism turn under Nehru. Unlike most right-of-center parties in the world, Modi’s politics is not really conservative (You can see a lot of people writing “Hindutva is not Hinduism”, that is because not all tenets of our traditional religion is what he aspires to), fiscally socialist(Modi government distributes many freebies to poor people), but yet pro-business (in fact they have sometimes been criticized for being anti-business too). Economically, BJP is closer to Democrats (general democrats, not the left fringe we see these days) than Republicans in US. Modi government is trying to run a version of Obamacare in India. The “Gujrat Model” he wants to bring to the nation is more or less how we define Neoliberalism above. [Growth in Gujarat hasn’t been confined to 1% of population](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-commentary/growth-in-gujarat-hasnt-been-confined-to-1-of-population/)



Economically, the only difference between Modi and previous Indian governments is his openness to let businesses created outside the elite class. He has reduced red tape and number of laws, made getting businesses registered, loaned and closed easier. He also promotes SMEs/MSMEs/startups and pitches them everywhere. This appeal to allow non-elite people in the top is what we will address next.

As an Indian Liberal , you might oppose Modi for the following for just opposition’s sake, but there is not too much ground to this criticism:

1. His Neoliberal economics
2. Him being “old-fashioned” or “orthodox”
3. Socialist policies

The truth is he is trying to solve the same issues as a Indian Liberal government would try and solve and agrees with you things need to change from the status quo. Sometimes he might come up with similar solutions to what an Indian Liberal government would come up with (with lesser or higher efficiency), sometimes his policies will be radically different.



There are two issues however on which there is massive disagreement. These are the fundamental issues which when Modi tries to change, people blame him for changing the “idea of India”

**Populism :**

The most fundamental difference between Modi’s thought and Indian Liberal thought is who sets the narrative : the majority of people or a set of elite.

Populism is the rule of the majority. Basically Populism means sticking to what the majority thinks is right. Some basic things you can easily guess that the majority in a nation state wants is :

1. non-interference in day to day life
2. control of morality
3. social mobility and
4. Social Influence and Relevance

This puts Populism at odds with the rule of the elite. Let’s see examples of these fundamental differences:

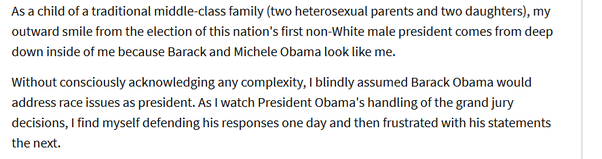
1. *More social mobility as long as you dont want to destroy the system.* If you respect the system (Nazi Party in Nazi Germany, CPC in China and Communist Party in USSR), you could rise from the bottom of the society to the top.

Stalin ,for example, came from a family of shoemakers:



In a elite run state (US from 1990–2016 was a proper neocon-neolib state) , most people who get power even from marginalized sections of society are elite too. Barack Obama, for example, had a more privileged life than most African Americans.





[Speaking from A Place of Privilege: Why Barack Obama Can't Win for Losing on Race?](https://www.myacpa.org/blogs/senior-scholar-blog/speaking-place-privilege-why-barack-obama-cant-win-losing-race)

As you see above, many people in the community weren’t totally happy with the way he ran his Presidency (Not talking about Republicans who were unhappy with him, I am talking about people who had voted for him expecting him to bring some huge reform for his own community).



[How Obama Failed Black Americans](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/how-barack-obama-failed-black-americans/511358/)

That’s because as an establishment candidate there is only so much he could do (and he was a pretty good President overall), you cannot expect populist policies from him like what these people were expecting.

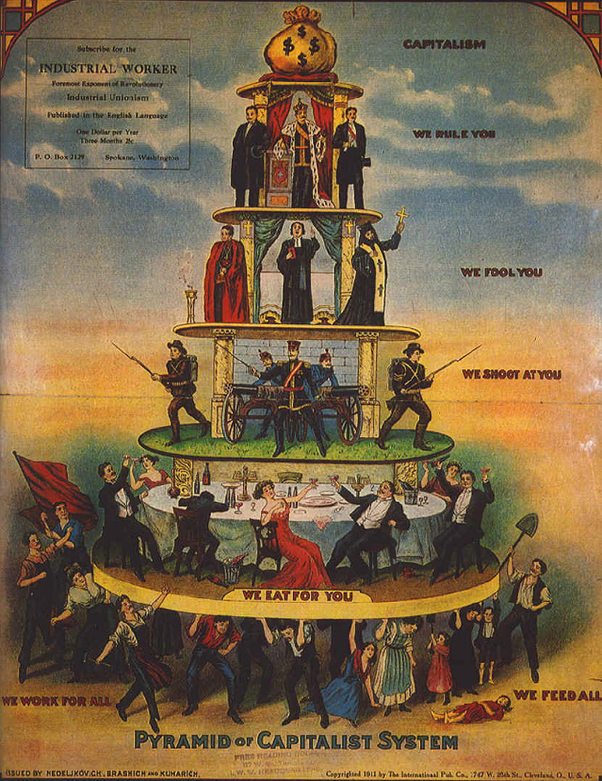
2. *Social Influence of the majority is better and they are left alone:* Trump canceling Paris climate accord for coal miners or putting trade embargo on China to make sure manufacturing stays in US are steps that help common Americans live their life without expecting too many changes. This is something majority likes, stressful constant life. Gradual changes is what they want. Elites are strong and well placed to take blow from changes in day to day life, common people are not. That is the reason why their openness-to-change is low. So when populists start placing majority’s comfort above elite policies, well, the common people feel they have more power in society. This is in direct contrast to Identity Politics, where marginalized groups feel they are in power.

In India, Demonetization [2016 Indian banknote demonetisation - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2016_Indian_banknote_demonetisation)

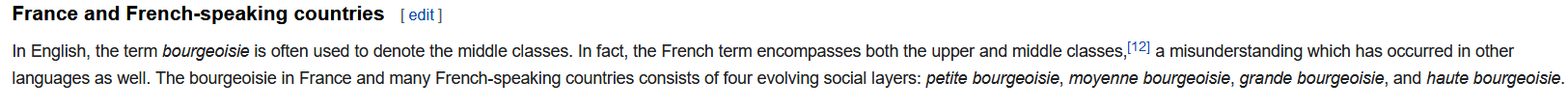
which has been told to be a failed move by most experts was loved by most Indians at that time and is still loved even now. Most of us have personal anecdotes of our black money grabbing corrupt government servant or businessmen relatives who had to sweat hard to save their money and might have lost a lot of it. These were the same people who had used the system to their advantage. Majority doen’t really know how RBI says most of currency came back, but we do remember these “elite” rich evil people getting troubled and this amused them, despite the fact they had to face hardships too. Now these people of silent majority don’t come out and interview on television and write editorials on newspapers and so they are hard to find online, but go ask your neighbor from lower middle and lower class and there are stories you would have not heard.

The problem with will of majority is, it is emotional and often sub optimal. Probably because the majority is facing life everyday, they don’t get the context or time to gain the bigger picture. Occam’s Razor is very good, but when you don’t have enough facts, you can often choose a very simple narrative that actually doesn’t even explain the situation but just sounds right to you (Occam’s Razor is for scientific competing hypothesis, but when a simpler non-scientific hypothesis like “Jews are evil” comes into play, it just gets stupid). Unfortunately, that has what has happened with populism in the past.

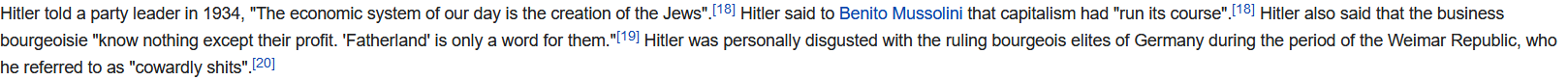
Populism has been around for a long time, I feel communism is populism in some way and so is Fascism. For example, look at the communist poster here:



It is basically hating everyone as an elite except the common working class. [Bourgeoisie – Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourgeoisie) was basically everyone who did not want what the will of the people was.

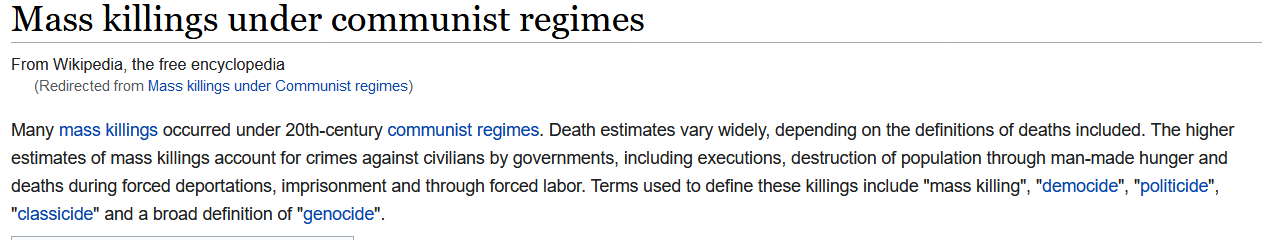


If you think this was just communism that was against the elite, check out the other star of the show, the nazis :



So if you have ever wondered why “People’s Republic of China” has People’s in its name or why Nazi Party’s full name was National Socialist Germans *Workers* Party. These were populist governments. Populist governments haven’t had the best of reputation:

[Mass killings under communist regimes - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_killings_under_communist_regimes)



[The Holocaust - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust)

Holocaust, one of the largest organized killing of humans, was result of a populist regime :

So the fear of populism is somewhat justified given what has happened in the past. However, in recent times, we have seen some populist governments functional and not just killing people all the time (with some flaws of their own no doubt) which has slowly started changing the trend.

There are things now majority in most countries (at least for sure in India) understands, hence they don’t want a communist style grassroot level populism:

A. There will be inequality, there will be elites without whom the country won’t be able to function. These elites will have more power

B. You need economic growth in the country to create a larger and richer middle class who can live a more comfortable life

C. Businesses are important and are brutally hard to run, people now support businesses that have come up using opportunity, but hate the ones that use the system.

D. Meritocratic selection of elite is better than nepotism.

And that brings us to the new form of populism we see these days (at least in Asia) :

Neoliberal Populism is a recent phenomenon and has been somewhat of a lesser mass murderer than Communism or National Socialism. This was basically invented in Singapore by Lee Kuan Yew, the guru of Asia’s economic rise.

[Lee Kuan Yew eulogised as a 'leader, not a populist politician'](https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1750577/lee-kuan-yew-eulogised-leader-not-populist-politician)

Does that description of leader sound familiar in India ? That’s exactly how Narendra Modi is being projected too.

This populism combines a political capitalist system :

<https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/cato-journal/2015/2/cj-v35n1-2.pdf>

and a meritocratic political+executive elite:

<https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/gia/article/resisting-authoritarian-populism-lessons-from-for-singapore>

This system has in last few years lifted millions out of poverty. Takes just few decades to turn countries from low income to high income:

If you are reading my answer from top till now, look at the Gujarat model article I had shared. Get the similarity ?

There are the usual drawbacks of Populism like no way for dissent which have been present in all three countries above (not just China but also South Korea and Singapore) . There are also additional risks of persecution of minorities and shifting the focus of country from the neoliberal track to a more nationalist one like in Russia.

In India, Modi is trying to get a neoliberal populist subsystem in place in conformation with Indian Constitution. While there is an meritocratic executive elite in India ( [Union Public Service Commission - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_Public_Service_Commission))

The political elite is not at all meritocratic as I have described earlier. It is very dynastic and that is why they do not like the concept. Many people accuse Congress of nepotism, a lot of them blame our cinema industry for the same too. Populism requires this to change and you will see constant efforts by Modi to put such changes in place.

For example, judges in India are appointed by recommendations. Modi’s introduction of a judge appointment commission was met with a lot of criticism and was later struck down by the Supreme Court. However, Supreme Court has introduced new methods to make the appointments more transparent.

[National Judicial Appointments Commission - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Judicial_Appointments_Commission)

When an Indian Liberal is accusing Modi of changing the idea of India, they are against this type of populism. Just an example of a latest populist speech here:

3. Control of Morality: By this I mean who decides what is wrong and what is right. For example if there is a question “If a person comes to your house at night asking for help and looks shady, should one help them or not ?”, majority might think very differently to it than what elites think. They both live in very different localities, meet very different people and hence one might feel that the other is pushing their views on other.

Look at the narrative on Diwali (biggest hindu festival) coverage from different sides of the spectrum:

Truth is Diwali does add some pollution into atmosphere for one day, but the pollution in/around Delhi is prevalent throughout the season and peaks weeks after Diwali. Given that, is it OK to boycott traditional practice of crackers ? That is what control of morality means and that is what fight is about.

So I hope I have been able to somewhat explain what Indian Liberals don’t like about the populist terms of Modi government.

The other issue of contention between Indian Liberals and Modi-ism is

**Hindutva:**

This is a very hot button issue. Probably what the BJP and its allies are hated for the most by Indian Liberals. While Indian Liberals refer to it as “the philosophy of hate”, while for the cultural right wing, its a philosophy to make Hinduism more resistant to the flaws it had during muslim invasions and British raj as a society.

When Savarkar (the proponent of Hindutva) met Mr. Gandhi (a very conservative Hindu), he was trying to prove to him that Hinduism needs to change to become less prone to division, while Mr. Gandhi wanted the old practices of Hinduism to stay.



[When Mahatma Gandhi met Veer Savarkar | India News - Times of India](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/when-mahatma-gandhi-met-veer-savarkar/articleshow/71326322.cms)

One of the ways to become less prone to division is to become more cohesive and defensive. That is not something a lot of people will like as it reduces the openness to new ideas like socialism or secularism or different religions.

Indian liberals and Indian right is very very strongly divided over this issue. Politicians from Modi’s party who give useless inflammatory speeches against others time-to-time further give rise to the doubt that maybe political Hindutva is not a defensive philosophy but a hate philosophy.

So in a nutshell, if you believe in many of the following:

1. Socialism as a means to redistribute wealth
2. Neoliberalism
3. Minorities getting power through identity politics
4. A government more influenced by intellectuals and less by what the majority would think.
5. Don’t believe that Hinduism as a culture needs to be more cohesive/defensive or think Hinduism is obsolete and needs to go away.

You can say you are an “Indian Liberal”

An Indian Right Wing guy (also called RW on social media) is one who has a good number from the following beliefs:

1. Populist, that is believes majority sentiment should be considered important.
2. Doesn’t want nepotism but a meritocratic elite/intellectuals.
3. Believes Hinduism needs to be more united to save the local cultures/beliefs.
4. Neoliberal economics
5. Socialism as a means to keep the nation together.

***Based on the above discussion, you should make a choice about what political group you belong to rather than just thinking that “being liberal is a supposedly good, so I should be a liberal” or an otherwise equivalent statement like “Being Populist seems like a good option”.***

Classical Liberalism or Liberalism (not Indian Liberalism) is basically the policy of Laissez Faire capitalism, freedom in all regards to people and progressiveness. This philosophy has absolutely no political base in India. A lot of people who believe government should let the religions alone and think only in terms of economy belong to this school of thought, but if you think about the ramifications of such a government, it might not be really possible to have such a government.

***The other part is Why are liberals criticized so much ?***

1. Anyone who takes a stance is criticized by the other side. People have different belief systems so one needs to open to criticism when one proposes subjective ideas.
2. The best way for an elite to run the show is to not be distinguishable from the crowd. But many elites become “Let them have cake” level disconnected from the majority and speak/do things the majority doesn’t like. That begets criticism.
3. Many people are “Indian liberal” because this has social brownie points in some circles. These people to show themselves as more distinguished start an arms race which gets them to become more and more fringe.
4. Going with the saying “enemy of enemy is friend”, Indian Liberals have sometimes taken support from people who have taken refuge in far left or many alternative -isms. Communism wants the nation state to be obsolete and hence these people sometimes say things against the country as a whole instead of a political party. That rubs many people the wrong way. Also nothing is without consequences, you dilute your ideology when you mix it with anyone. Also the global trend of moving far left for center left politics supports this.
5. Indian Liberals like any other political group are hypocritical in highlighting problems when they seem fit and staying shut when needed. Hypocrisy is guaranteed to get criticism. For example, an Indian Actress who criticizes Diwali festival for fireworks had lot of fireworks in their movie release party.