

# Dialectics

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1. Everything changes.
2. Everything is interconnected.
3. The basis of change is internal.
4. Everything has contradictions, which lead to change.

Contradiction: a relationship between two “aspects” which are “opposing” or “conflicting.”

5. Dialectical determination.
  - a) Unidirectional determination
  - b) Mutual determination
  - c) Dialectical determination: Mutual determination with a dominant aspect.

# Metaphysical View

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1. Eternal, unchanging things and categories.
2. Things are isolated from one another and interact only mechanically.
3. When change occurs, it is due to external forces.
4. Things are non-contradictory.
5. Unidirectional determination.

# Materialism

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Which is more “real” or “primary”:

matter ----- mind

being ----- knowing

being ----- consciousness

Idealism: Mind is more “real” or “primary.”

Materialism: Matter is more “real” or “primary.”

# Expressions of Philosophical Materialism

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1. “Ideological reflexes” and “echoes” in the brain of actual life processes – *German Ideology*
2. “Conceiving, thinking ... appear ... as the direct efflux of their material behavior” – *German Ideology*
3. “Consciousness is only the reflection of being” – Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*
4. “Social being ... determines consciousness” – *Preface*
5. “[People] alter their thinking along with their real existence” – *German Ideology*
6. “The production of consciousness is ... directly interwoven with the material activity ... of [people] – *German Ideology*
7. “The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life processes in general” -- *Preface*

# Base and Superstructure

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**Economic aspect of society:** The activities and institutions through which people transform nature into the means of human subsistence.

A) Production: the creation of means of subsistence.

B) Distribution: the allocation of products among groups and individuals.

**Political aspect of society:** The body of “laws” in a society, together with the activities and institutions through which people make, interpret, modify, and enforce laws.

Laws: Principles or rules specifying rights and duties of persons; rules of conduct

**Ideological (or cultural) aspect of society:** The modes of thought and expression in a society.

## Base and Superstructure (con't.)

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**Claim:** The economic aspect (economic base, economic relations, economic structure) of a society determines the character of the political and ideological aspects of that society.

# Base and Superstructure (con't.)

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## Feudalism

1. Decentralized, small-scale political units
2. Ideas of obligation and rank

## Capitalism

1. Large nation-state
2. Ideas of individual liberty and equality before the law

## Base and Superstructure (con't.)

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### Alternative Views

**Historical Idealism:** Ideas determine historical development.

**Economic Determinism (or crude materialism):** Ideas and political developments play no independent role in affecting the development of the economic base and have no independent development of their own.



# Forces and Relations of Production

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**Forces of Production:** The means of production and the productive capacities of producers.

Means of production: tools, machines, produced materials

Productive capacities of producers: strength, skill, knowledge about productive techniques

**Social Relations of Production:** The social relations that people enter into in the process of production

## Forces and Relations of Production (con't.)

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**Claim:** The forces of production determine the character of the social relations of production.

**“Relations of Production”-ism:** The social relations of production determine the character of the forces of production.

**Technological Determinism:** The social relations of production have no effect on the forces of production.

# Social vs. Material Relations of Production

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**Forces of Production:** The means of production and the productive powers of people.

**Social Relations of Production:** Relations among people that necessarily entail rights and powers.

**Material Relations of Production:** Relations among people in the process of production abstracted from power relations.

# Social Relations of Production and Property Relations

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**Question:** How are SRP different from property relations (which are legal relations)?

SRP are power relations.

The power relation embodied in the SRP explains the property relations in society.

# Social Relations of Production and Property Relations

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## **Example:**

Capitalists have the power to

- Compel workers to work for them

- Direct the labor process

- Appropriate the final product

Laws about private property legitimate and help to enforce those powers.