

PSIR OPTIONAL FOUNDATION COURSE

Starting from

9th November 2025 (6 months)

PSIR OPTIONAL ANSWER WRITING PROGRAM CUM TEST

20 September 2025





PSIR Optional Paper-01 Analysis



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Section A



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Q. Explain the philosophical approach to the study of Political Theory.



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Philosophical Approach

Intro → Being something innovative (Like)

'Since Pol. Science deals with the world of humans, traditional approaches in general & Philosophical approach in particular, seem most appropriate to the study of Pol. theory'. Indeed, ^{Phil. approach} is the oldest & most foundational & this approach has been used by Philo. like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Leo Strauss, Dante Alighieri, Plamana & Rawls



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Context → Violence at the global level, US v/s China, threat to multilateralism, Climate Crisis, so much poverty rampant across the world;

Explain Core features

- Normativism (evaluates the pol. System)
- Change oriented (Not Status Quoist)
- Critical examination of value loaded concepts like Liberty + E + J + Rights etc.
- Employs methods like Dialectic, Reflexive Equilibrium, Phenomenology;



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→ Challenged by behavioralists like Lord Bryce - but later on realized mistakes & hence post II in incorporated it.

↓ Facts, facts &

Despite some inherent limitations like

- Speculative, ✓
- No scientific evid. ✓

- Aam Chai theory, it is most relevant for contem. times - One can see its relevance in emergence of multiculturalism, communitarianism, Feminism, Frankfurt School, Social Constructivism, Post modernism. Further, we must not lose sight of the fact that Pol. Sc. deals with the human world & discussion of Values & Needs are integral part of it.



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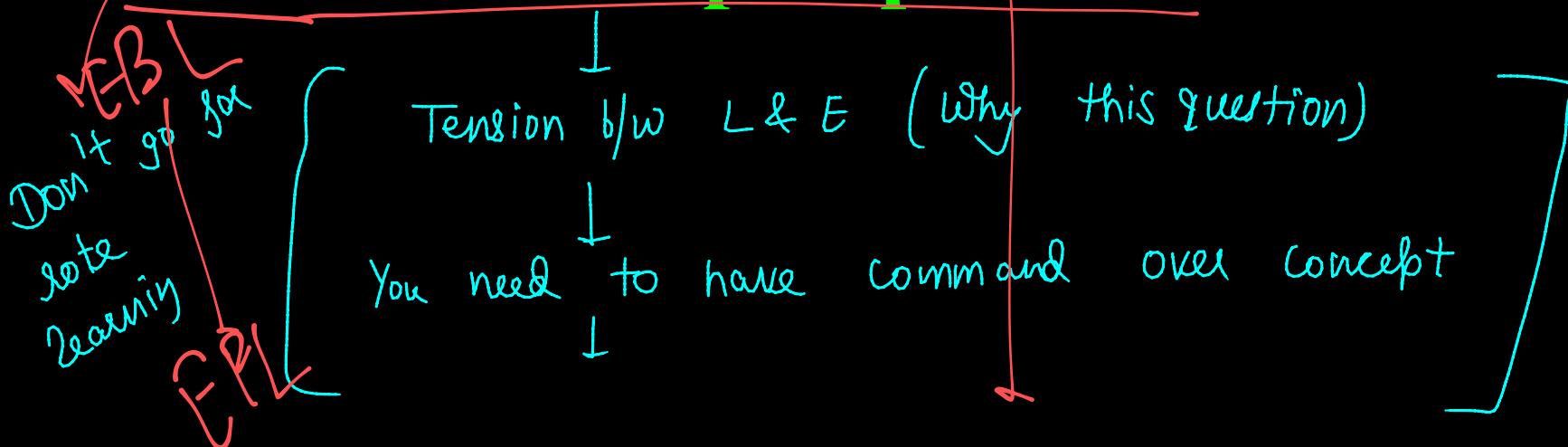


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Overlap Consensus → J.



Q. Write a note on the relation
between equality and liberty from
the multicultural perspective.



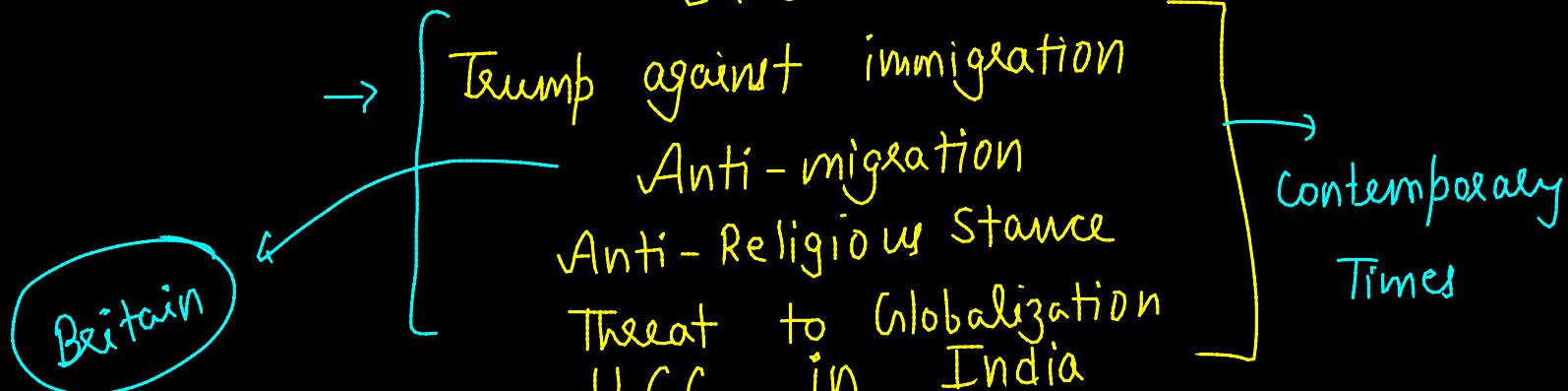
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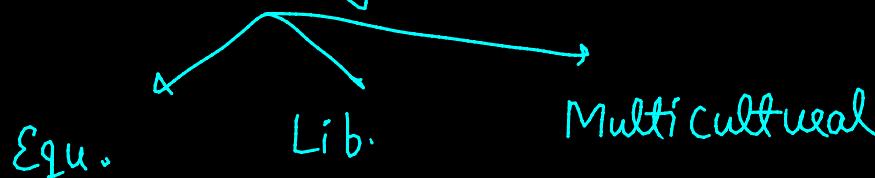
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Why this question ?

L & E - Tension



3 Key words



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Com
V/S
intiv

→ Multiculturalism gained salience in 1980s

with the dev. of globalization & it reframes the relationship b/w L & E by recognizing that both L & E need to be contextualised in order to accommodate minority rights, diverse cultural beliefs & social structures. Some of the prominent scholars are Will Kymlicka, Bhikhu Parekh & Charles Taylor → Context - Explain Significance



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→ Multiculturalism openly challenges the
Classical Liberal way of estab. the relations b/w
L & E from an universalist perspective.

For Classical Liberals, liberty means
liberal concept of atomistic man while equality
implies equal treatment of EBL.
Multiculturalists by contrast argues that

'One size fit approach isn't a good thing' because
People are different (M. Walzer) (Liberal egalitarianism);



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So, it challenges the idea of 'neutral' public sphere & emphasizes the L & E must be redefined to include cultural recognition, pluralism, community based rights.

Post Colonial P

1980s

Citizenship talks of multicultural citizenship in his book Will Kymlicka instead of Universal

AV
MC: A Lib. Theory of M. Rights' He suggests to have Poly ethnic rights, self-governance rights for ethnic minorities (if geog. concentrated) & special refugee rights.



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B. Paekh brings post colonial perspective & connects culture with personality. For him, rejection of multiculturalism & adoption of Universalism is color blindness & smell of ethnocentrism. For him, Equality & Liberty can't be unidimensional & nor their relations rather it must be dialogical that allows space for Diversity to prosper & must be based on mutual respect.

C. Taylor emphasizes the significance of recognition. In the absence of recognition, Liberty &



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equality is monologic.

From the MC perspective, one can find this complementarity in Indian consti. (Art. 14 (EPL), 15, 16, 25, 29, 30) & DPSP, 5th & 6th schedules)

To conclude, for multiculturalists, L & E are not abstract universalism rather shaped by cultural realities & existing diversities. The world should learn from India where Liberty doesn't imply erasure of difference, & equality doesn't imply imposition of uniformity. Instead, if it embraces pluralism, unity in diversity & equity

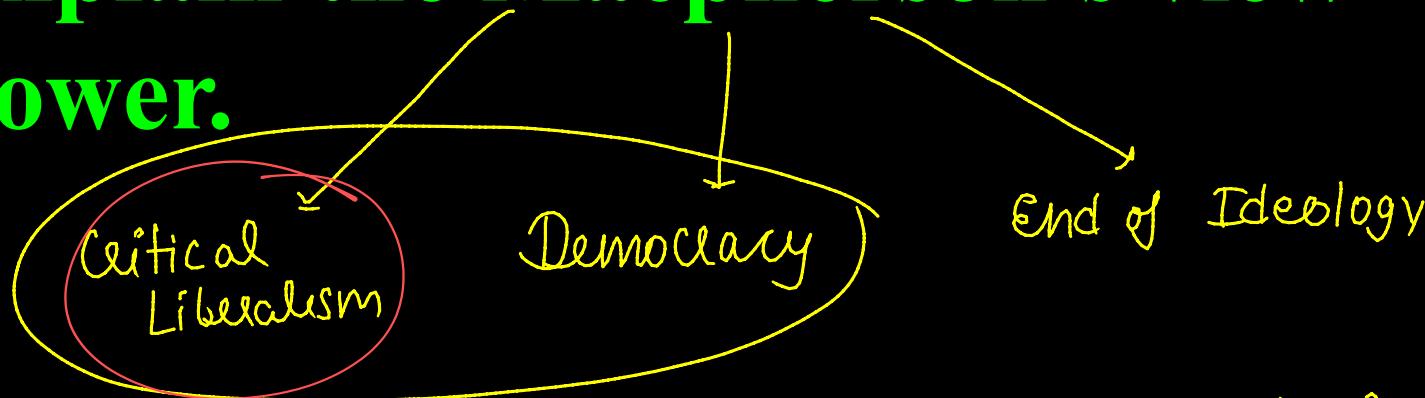


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Q. Explain the Macpherson's view on power.



- Context : Inequality at Global Level & India
(World Inequality Lab)



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Liberal Society

Mc Pherson view on Power

Extractive Power

McPherson Matrix

Developmental power

	E. Power	Dev. Power
Capitalist	100% 0	100% 100
Workers	0% 0	0% 100

Creative Freedom

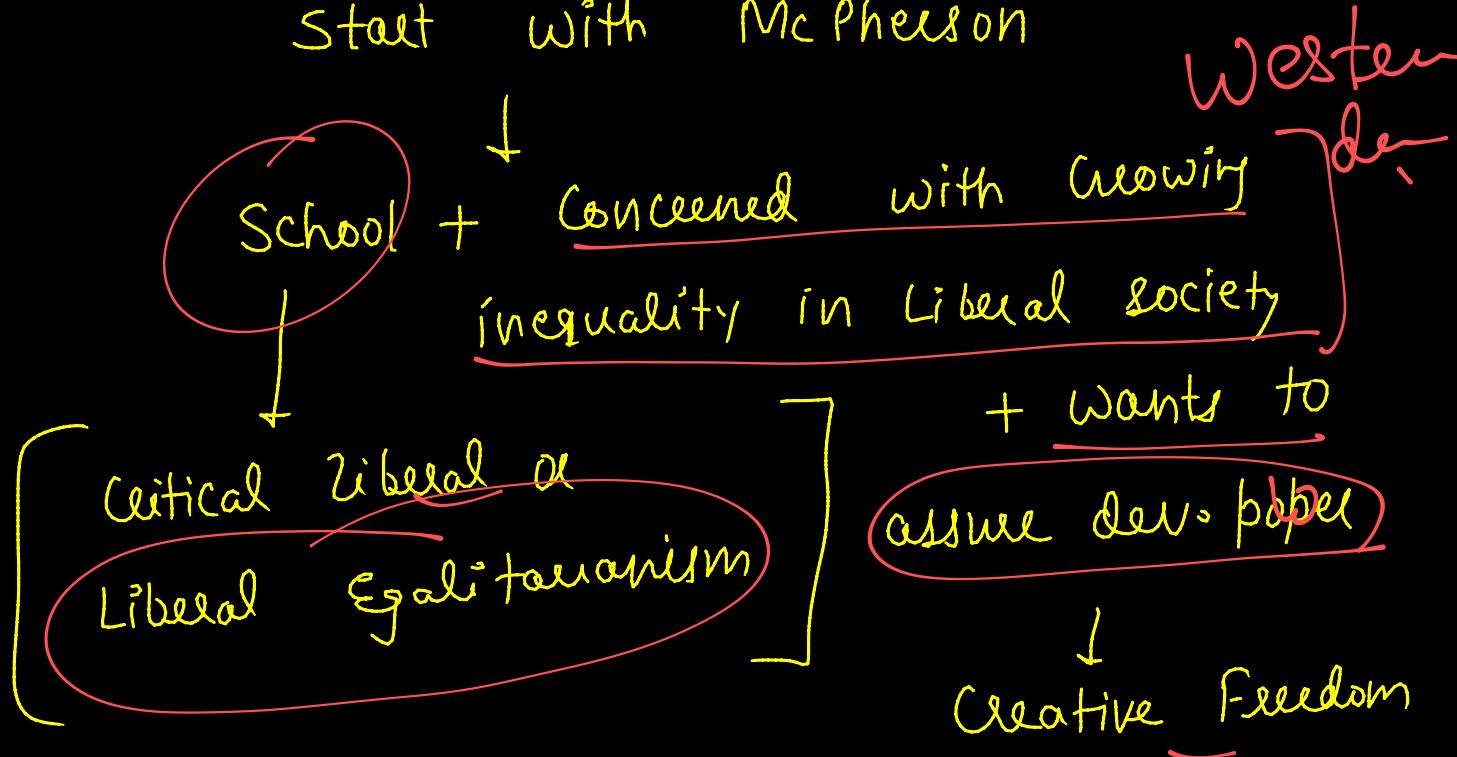


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Start with Mc Pherson



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→ Democracy means empowerment of people - but
west, " don't fulfill the requirement.

He discusses 2 dimensions of power:

→ E·P

→ D·P

→ Solⁿ by him → No Extractive Power for any

→ only D·P → class
i.e. creative freedom
or Dev. as freedom,

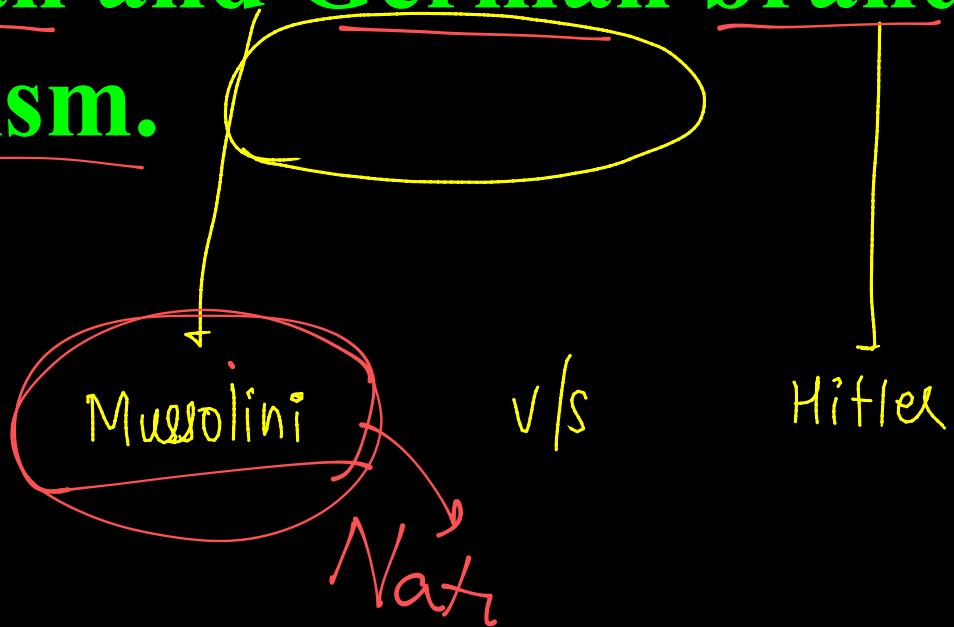


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Q. Mention the difference between Italian and German brands of Fascism.



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→ Instead → focus on fascism - emergence - intel-
war pd. +

→ H. Arendt -] ✓

fascism → K. Popper

→ focus on question (very specific)

L a
H. A

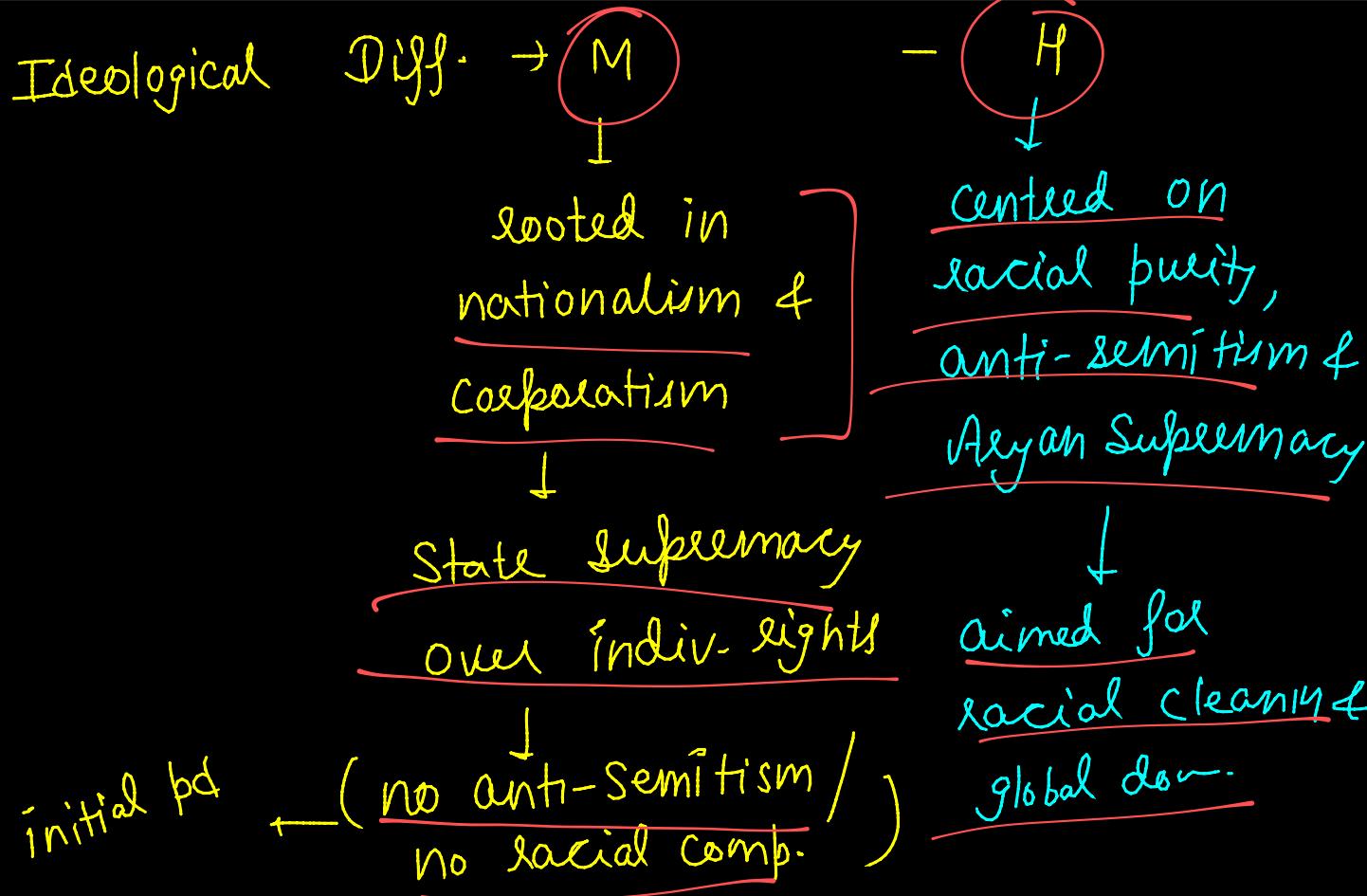
Radical resp. to
liberal democracy +
Post war instability



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Gov. → Socially conservative as
returned monarchy
& traditional insti.
(Catholic Church +
King Victor Emmanuel III)

+
Centralized but not
totalitarian

Totalitarian state
under Hitler's
personal rule

+
No opposition
+
No democracy



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Social Dimension → Promoted

traditional gender

roles but

allowed limited

pub participation

+

Focused on Nat¹

Unity

+

allowed church

strict patriarchal norm

+

Not allowed

organised religion

+

Led to Holocaust +

Genocide +

Unprecedented

Criminality (H. Arendt)



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Though, H. Arendt calls them as unprecedented, yet differ in degree. Both ideologies ejected liberal demo. & Italian fascism was less diabolical than ^{German} Nazism as GH was racialised & genocidal.



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Q. Explain briefly the elite theory of democracy.



Elitist Theory of Power



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→ Circulation of elites

Foxes + Lions

- History of mankind - graveyard of aristocracies
- Elitist scholars analysis of democracy in both worlds (western world & socialist countries)
 - R. Aarøn - Iron Law of Oligarchy
 - A. Down - Economic Theory of Democracy
 - Max ^W & Schumpeter ^P - Market model of !!



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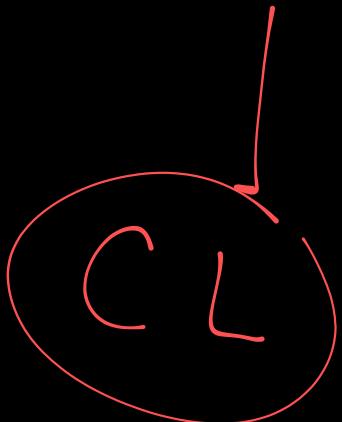
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C. Wright Mills → Empirical analysis

→ of Demo. in the USA

→ Power lies with power elite

(R. Dahl & Charles Lindblom)



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Q.What is the Marxist and Liberal approach towards the state? On what grounds the theoretical differences between them are premised? Explain. (20)

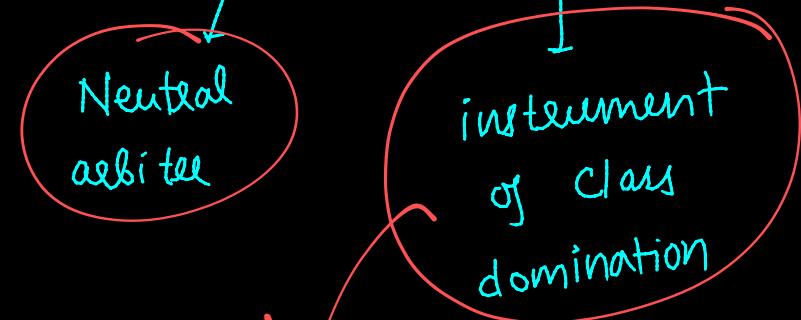


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Intro → Concept of the state
→ Liberal & Marxist → Fundamentally divergent interpretations



HMK
but,

↓
State is a executive committee of bourgeoisie

]

NO
Universal alienism



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Liberal Approach

Night Watchman

welfare state

Locke

James Burnham

Managerial Revn - myth

Democracy
Instrumentalist
Universal

Green, Laski, Keynes

K. Marx - Communist Manifesto

Lenin

R. Miliband

'The State in Capitalist Society'

Famous Miliband - Poulatzas debate

Interpellation

Marxist approach

Structuralist/
Relative Autonomy
School

Marx - 18th Brumaire
of L. Bonaparte

Gramsci
Althusser

Nicole Poulatzaz

'Pol. Power & Social Classes'

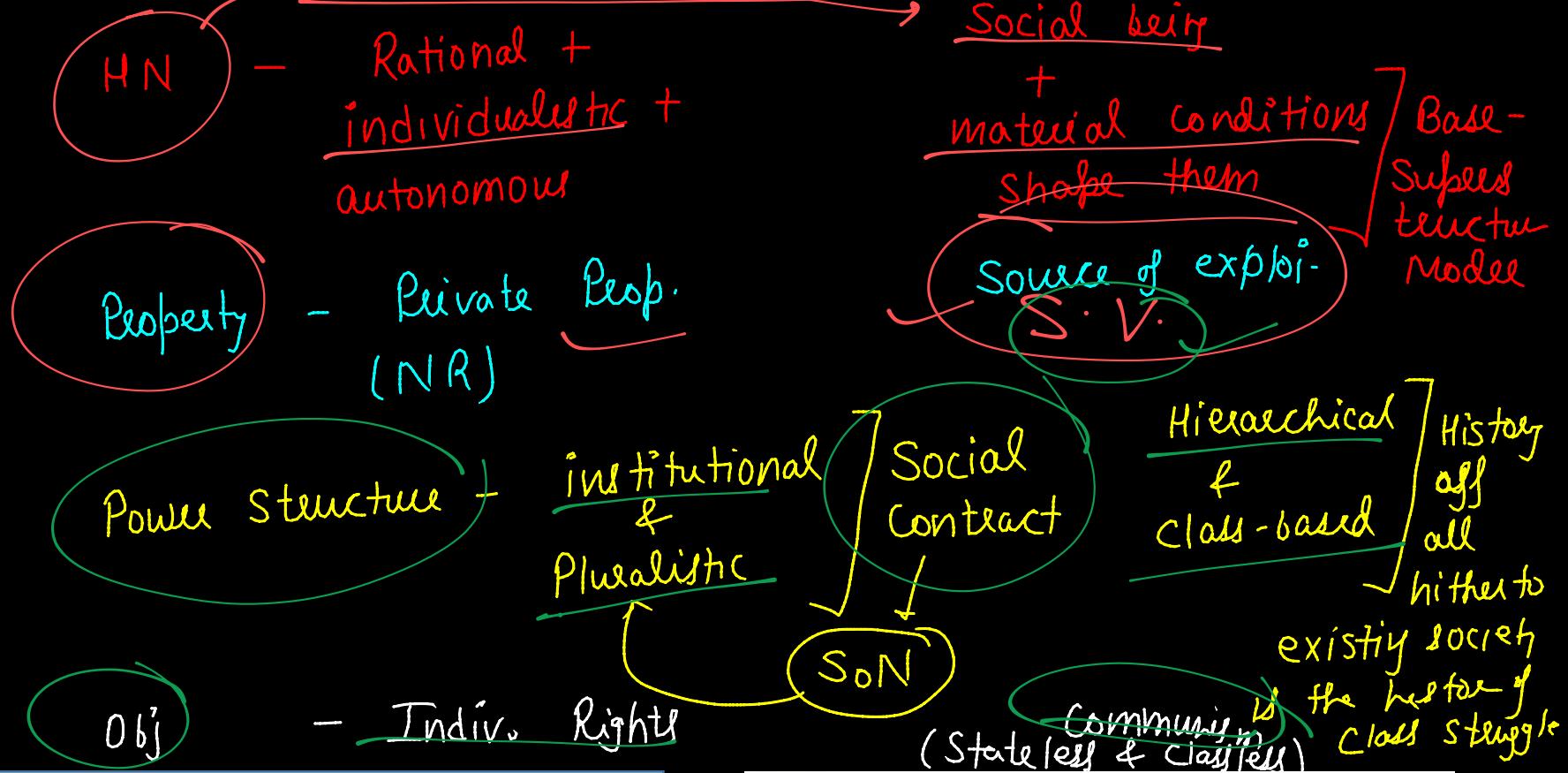


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Grounds on which theoretical diff. are premised



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→ Liberal Thinker →

Q. Karl Popper presents a defence of the open society against its enemies. Elaborate. (15)

Why relevant today

Critic of Plato + Marx + Hegel + Communist society

Democratic backlash + Digital censorship + Ideological polarization

→ The open Society & its enemies

Durily ↓ WW II

(powerful critique of totalitarian ideologies.)



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→ open Society - features :

a.) Allows its members to openly criticise the insti;

b.) ednⁿ - not indoctrination

c.) No monopoly over the truth

d.) No rigid discipline is imposed



Enemies

Plato

- P. king + Eduⁿ System + historicism

Hegel

- Precursor to authoritarian nationalism
+ legitimize state absolutism

Marx

- Praises him for his concern towards justice but critiques his scientific historicism → would lead to revolution



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→ Change - piecemeal / not holistic change

→ open for falsification - No absolute truth

→ Rights of indiv. must be protected;

(Beelin & Willspiee second this thought)

Critical Analysis

→ Levinson
→ Sydney Hook
→ R. Bhagwati

Relevance Today → Open Society are
rise of demagogic leaders
is happening

under threat due to
like Trump, demo. backlash
- (can use freedom index to
back you up); -



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Q. Explain how Rawls used the **liberal** and **egalitarian** perspective to develop his concept of distributive justice. (15)

Establishes a balance b/w indiv. Liberty & Social Equality

Lexical



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M. L. King argues that 'The arc of moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice', which explains the centrality of Justice. Rawls considered it architectonic & he was concerned with es-ab. of peace in society.

Justice is first virtue of social system

Justice as Fairness

Rawls → Greatest philos of our times
→ A Theory of Justice
→ Revitalized moral philosophy, provided a compelling argument for a fair society in A Theory of Justice



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→ While presently him the Nat' Humanities Medall
in 1999 - Clinton called him the 'Perhaps the
greatest pol. philosopher of the 20th cent';

→ Concept of DJ

W → concerned with distri. of primary goods

Maxim
equal Liberty

(Rights + Liberties + Income + wealth +
Self-respect);

Liberal Perspective

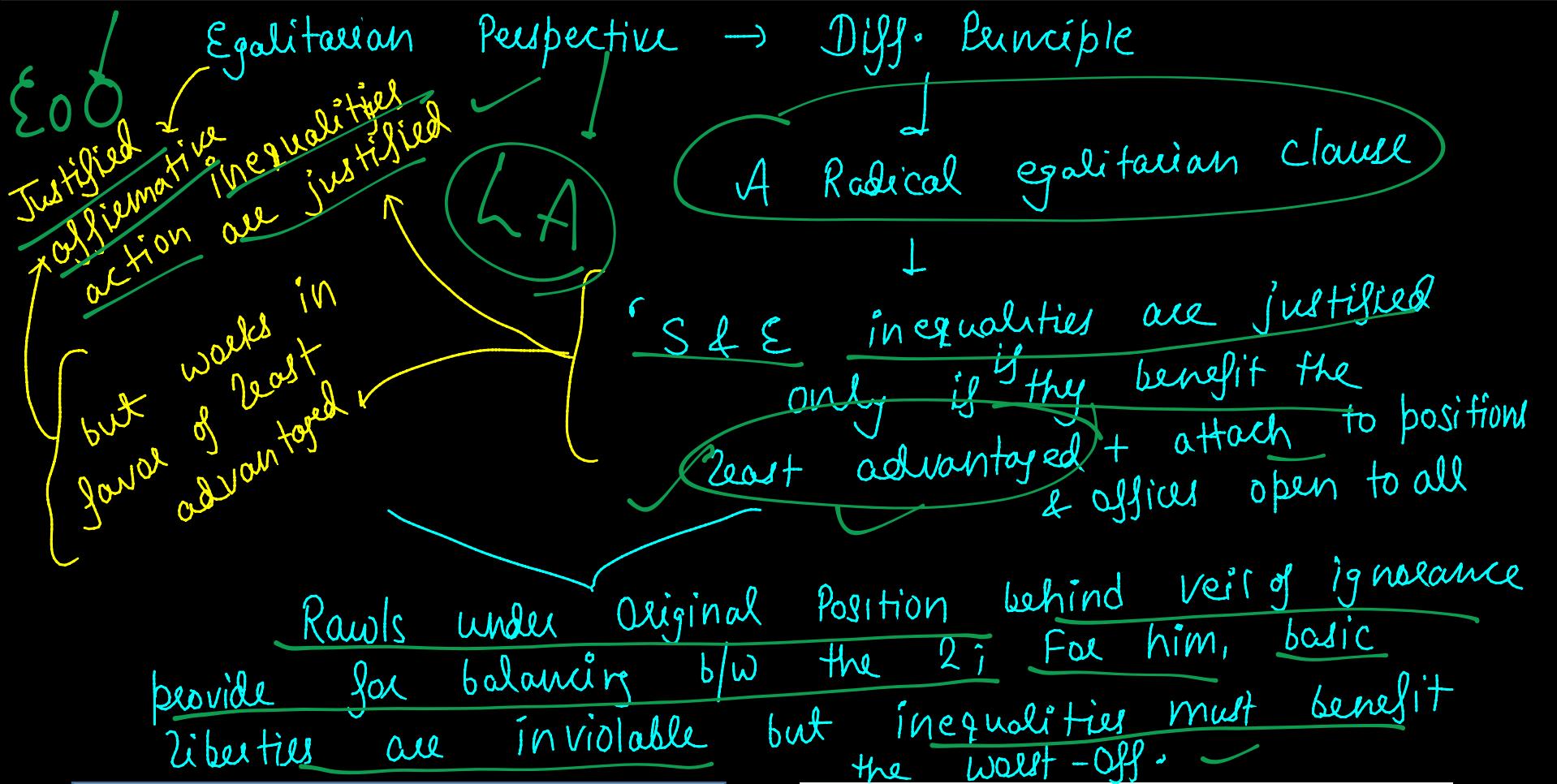
→ inspired by Social Contract tradition
& gives priority to liberty & indiv.
autonomy.



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His distri- Justice must balance freedom & fairness
together - His conception rejects both laissez faire
liberalism & radical socialism, rather provides a
framework for democratic societies seeking

24% durable
1 → both liberty & egalitarianism; (it is like bridge b/w
classical liberalism & extreme socialism)
→ Connect it with today → growth of inequality

29%
in the form of Welfaerism & progressive taxation
[→ Connect it with India - EPL, DPSP]
Rawls in Practice



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Q. Provide a comparative analysis of behavioural and institutional approach to the study of political theory. (20)

C.P.

focus on Holistic reading
Don't compartmentalize the syllabus



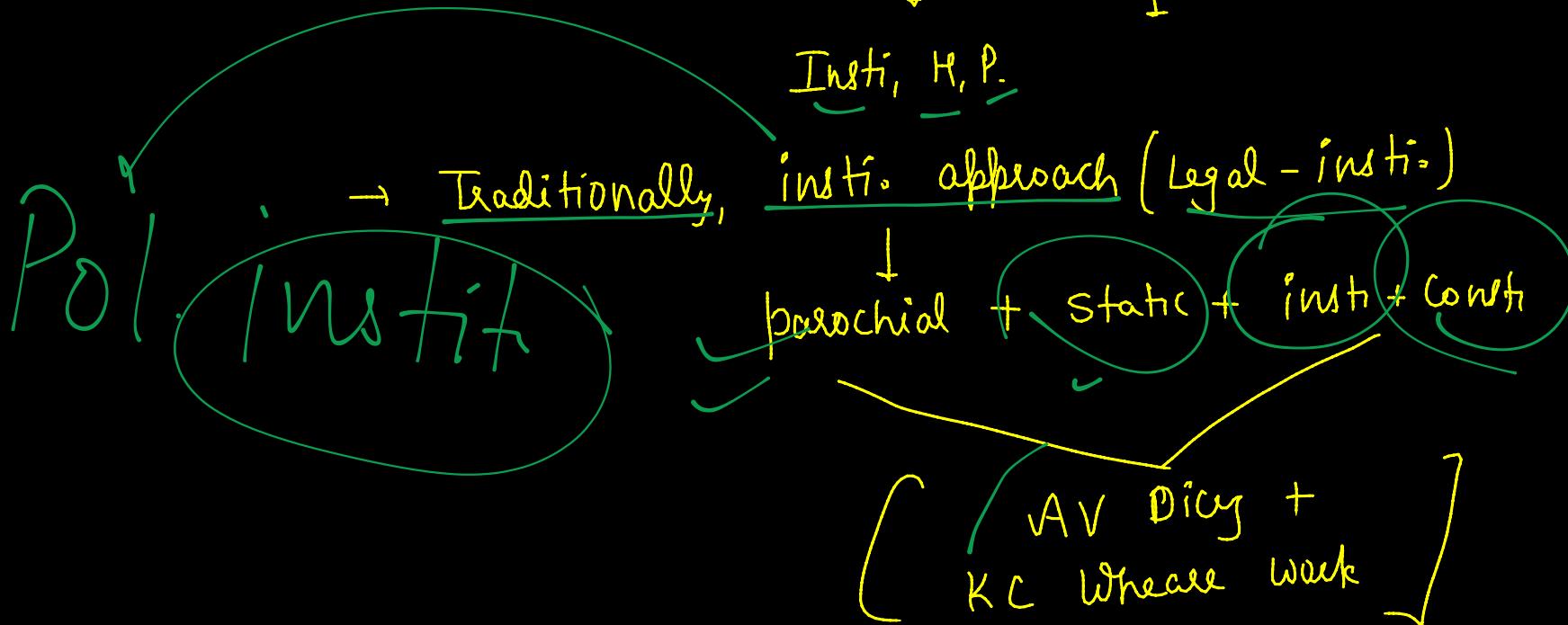
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Intro → Pol. theory -

→ Various approaches (T v/s M)

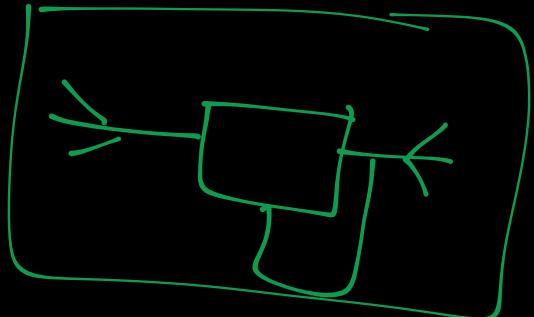


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→ Behaviouralist → System Approach (D. Easton)



- Not just insti. but understanding the whole process
- how env. shape it

~~Politics dynamic~~
Make a Comp. analysis
Insti. Behav.



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→ This led to dev. of post behavioralism & neo-institutionalism

(Theda Skocpol)

Process is imp. but
State remains most significant.

→ Conclude -



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Q. "State does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress." - Mahatma Gandhi. Elucidate (15)

Liberlalism ↗ Taught you at 3 places
H. Arendt → Existentialism (Sartre + Beauvoir)
(F & Natait)

Oceanic Circle of Power + Swaraj +

Why imp?

democratic backslidiy

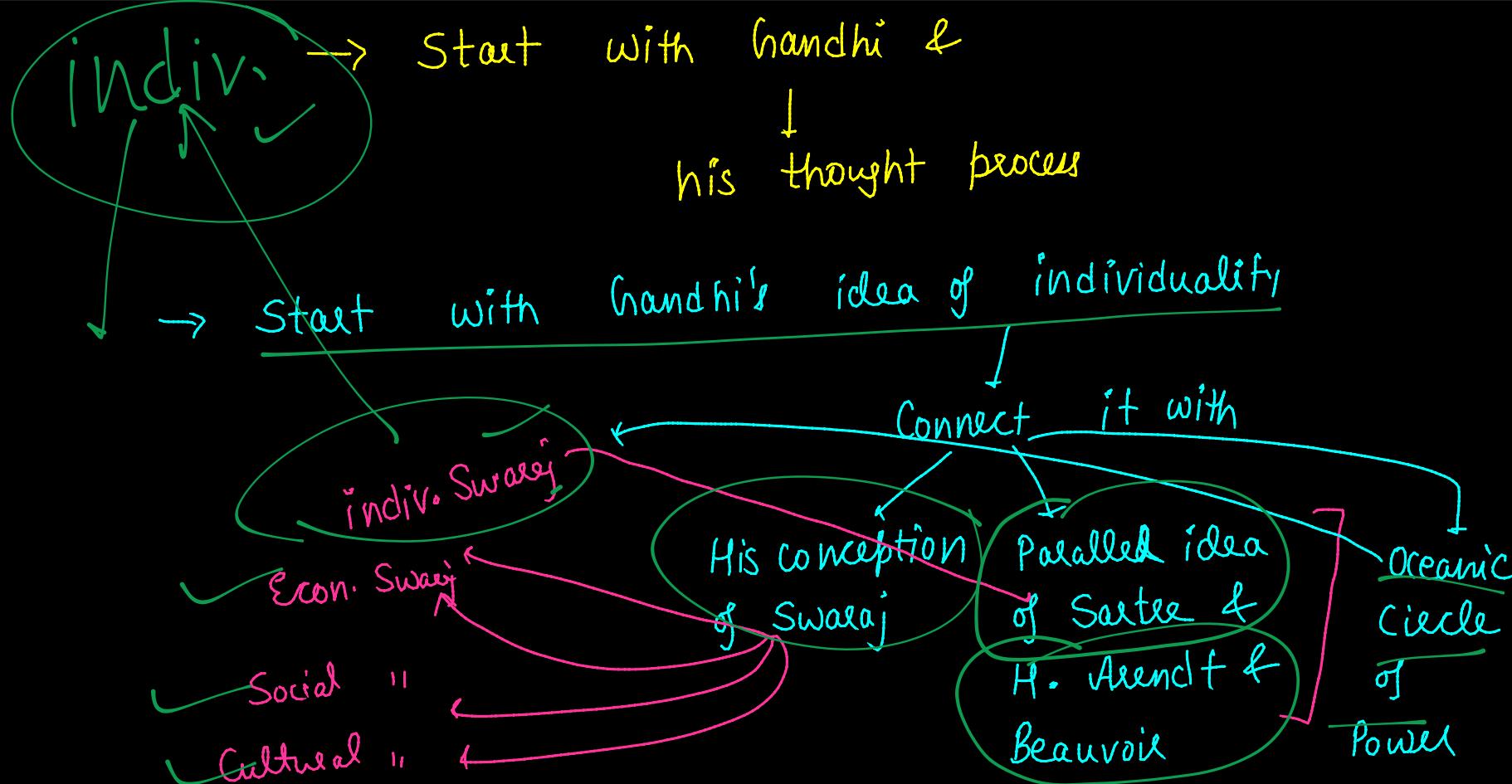
+ Censorship



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→ Gandhi - Philosophical anarchist

- Critic of modern State apparatus - not compatible with Swaraj.
- For him, state symbolizes weakness of man
- " manifests centralization whereas indiv. demands decentralization
- Critic of state's monopoly over violence which goes against principle of ahimsa

→ Similar views expressed by H. Arendt, Simone De Beauvoir, Sartre (



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Q. Explain how the slogan "the personal is political" addresses the issue of women's oppression and discrimination? (15)

Carol Hanisch

Susan Mollie Okin
'Gender, Justice & Family'

4 interpretations



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→ Can start with Foucault → Power is diffused & embedded in everyday practices - including in family structure

or
Sylvia Walby - System of patriarchy has multiple overlap -

or
J. S. Mill - On Subjection of Women
→ Aristotle (Sep. of Personal & Political)
→ Cynthia Enloe 'Where are the women'

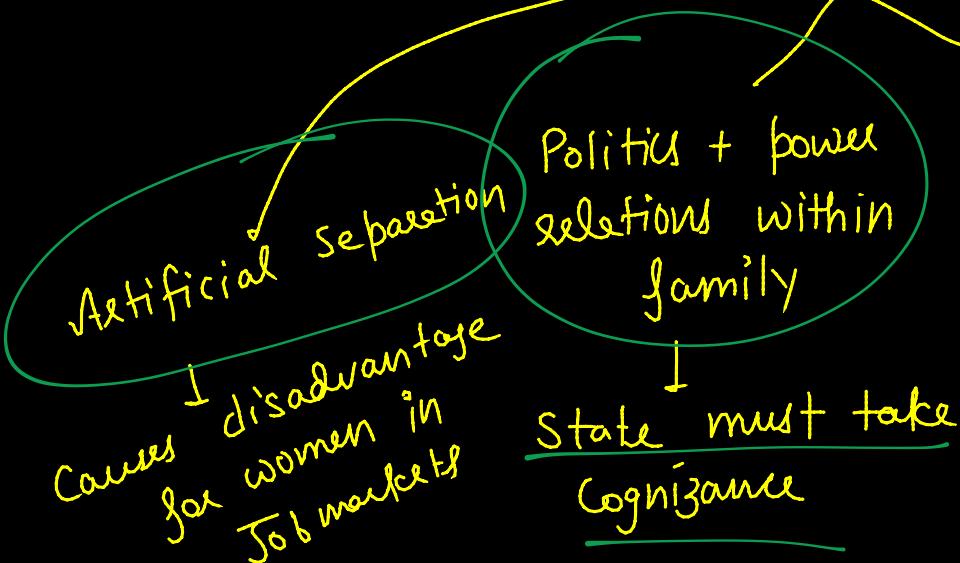


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→ S. M. Okin → interpretations



Under
sep
family
+
insti of
perpetuation
of
value of
patriarch

Separation is arbitrary

State action do make impact but state is insti. of patriarchy

↓

→ Betty Frieden - Feminine Mystique
- Why patriarchy sustains?



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How it addresses

→ Feminist thinkers like S. M. Okin + Iris Marion Young + Nancy Fraser agree that



State need to expand the notion of justice



must include redistribution + recognition within private domains

→ Nancy Fraser argues that acceptance of P is Pol. implies acceptance that discrimination in family, religion & culture is not natural — if it is political sustained



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So you need the state to politically empower women

Calls for
unmasking of domestic
violence + marital rape +
Unpaid care work +
Reproductive control

IM Young - calls for
diff. citizenship

Affirmative
Action

Resulted into raising of pol. Consciousness at
global level + UNSC 1325 + SDG



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25

60%

70%

Q. The foundational base of western democracy has been shaped by Locke's ideas of constitutionalism, freedom and property. Elucidate. (20)

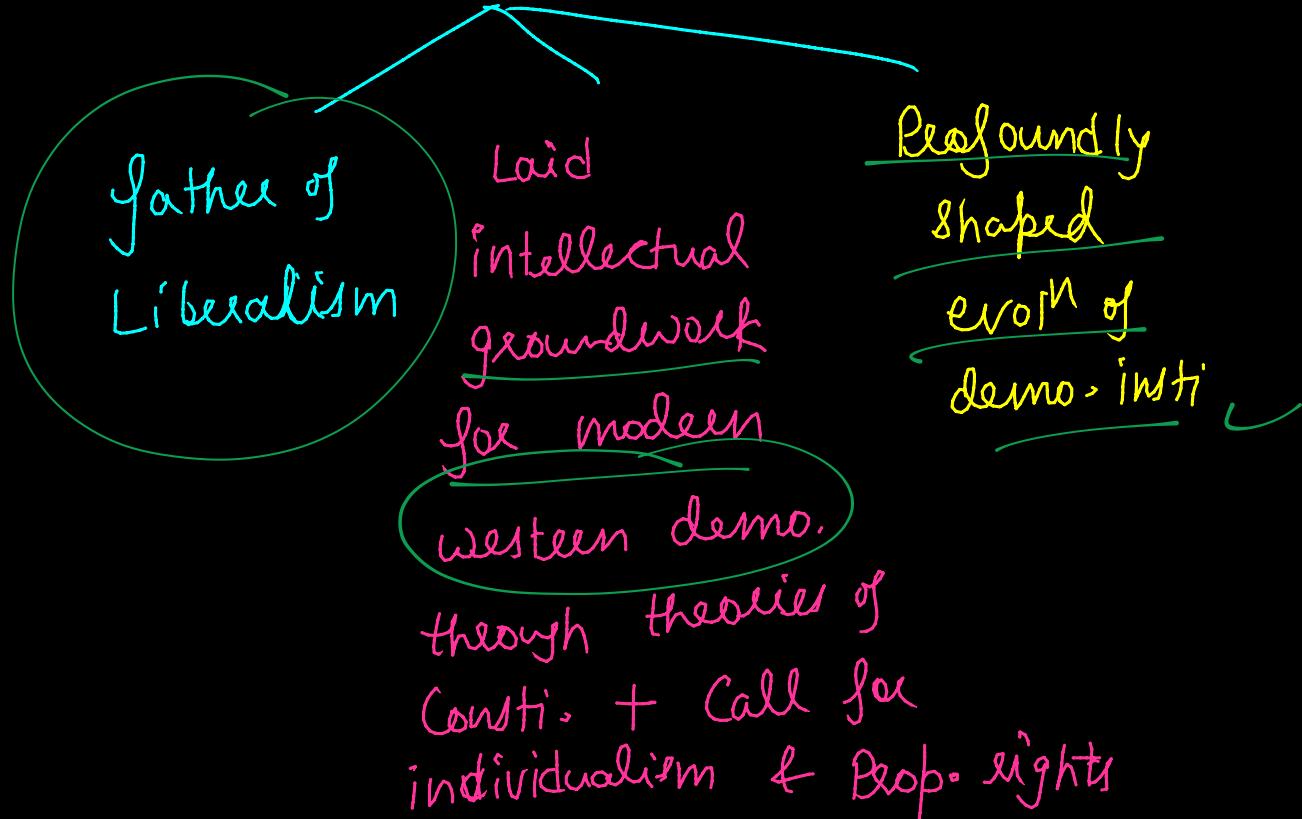


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→ Start with J. Locke



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SoN

Locke - Limited Govt. (bound by social contract) with people

- Sovereignty resides with people
- Underpins ^{Consti.} democracies
- No Law, No Liberty.
- Conception of NRs (are before the state)
 - Even in SoN people were enjoying these



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→ Property - Sole purpose for which mankind has created Commonwealth is protⁿ of property.

- Protⁿ of Property central to
- ✓ legitimacy of govt.
- influenced Capitalist democracies,

→ American Revolⁿ → Jefferson's - life, liberty & Pursuit of happiness

→ Liberal Constitutionalism → RoL, SoP, indir. rights.



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→ These ideas have attracted criticism too

Like McPhm - possessive indiv.

Marx - bougeoisie apologist

Gramsci - part of ideological superstructure

Though called as - - - -

Locke beautifully synthesized Consti. + Liberty & Property.

In today's debates on state overreach, civil liberties
& economic justice - Locke's Ideas continue to
offer a normative compass.



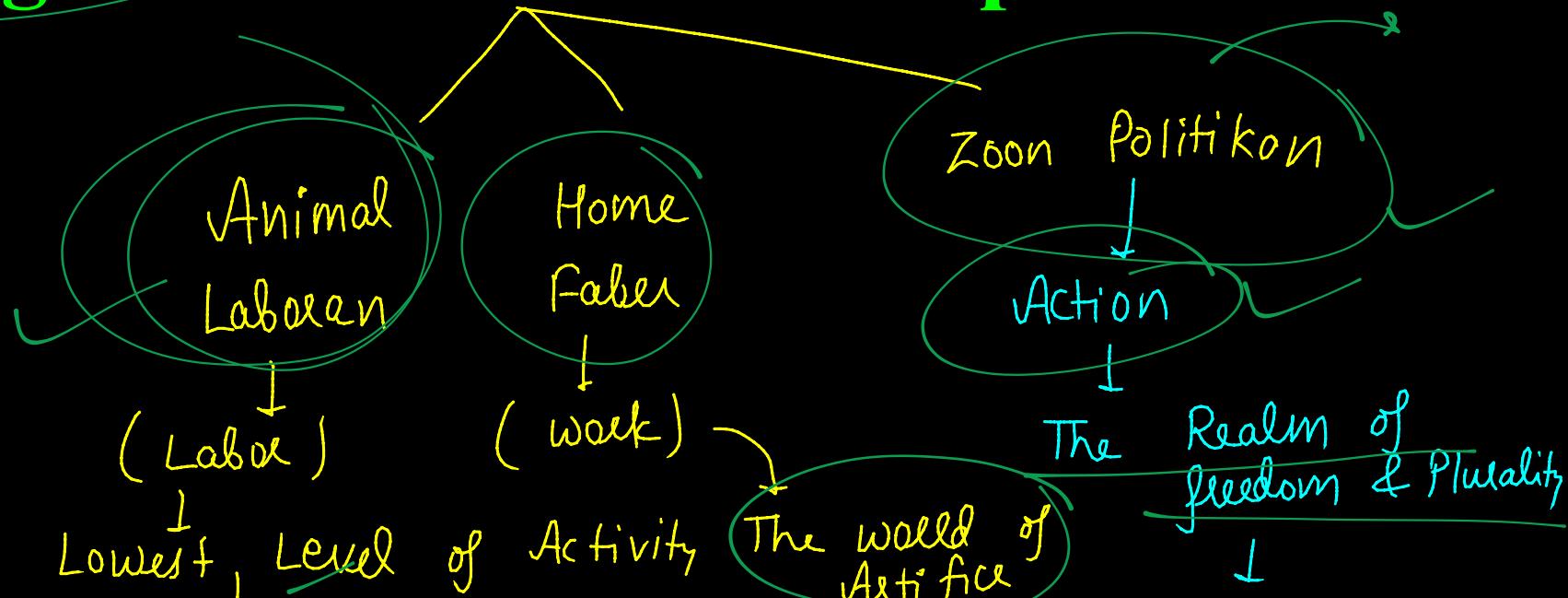
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Q. Hannah Arendt analysed a few categories of **vita activa**. Explain.

(15)



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↓
Cycle of Necessity

↓
foundaⁿ of
civilization

↓
Participation in
public life
(Zoon politikon)

↓
Realm - Pervate Sphere

(Lowest order action)

↓
by this we
make world
fit for
action

↓
Sustains life but not
Create a lasting world.

↓
differentia
specifica

↓
Critique modernity for making
Animal Labour most impo.

↓
It is where you
dis close your
Unique



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Rise of mass society + elite domination

Capacity to do something new - Natality → Freedom

action - essence of pol.

life & human dignity

Plurality → means presence of others

Challenges the western philo. tradition

privileged

Plato

Vita Contemplativa over vita activa



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↓
Can happen only in public



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Q. Do you think that legitimacy

acquired by consent or

Locke + Rousseau

+ T. H. Green

(will not
succeed)

manufactured by indoctrination is

an essential element in

Gramsci
(Hegemony)

Idiots
en

maintenance of political rule?

Heribert
Maesuse

Habermas +
(Legitimation
crisis)

Justify your answer with relevant
examples. (15)



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→ Start with Legitimacy → Max Weber

Ideal Types

Traditional authority Charismatic authority

Ration - Legal.

→ Imp. of legitimacy →

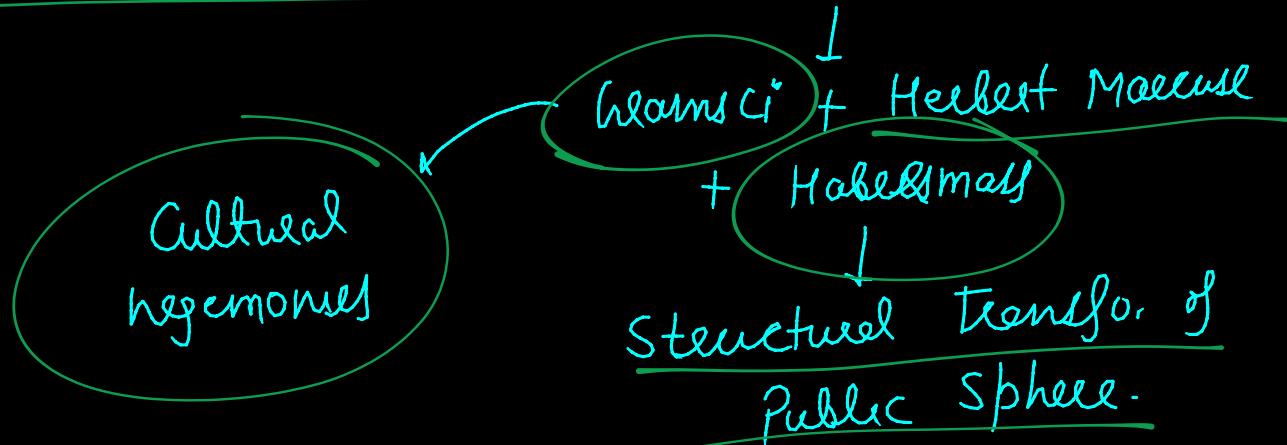


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→ Another School is represented by Marxist



→ Example of Syria (Bashar Al Assad)

→ " " " N. Korea - legitimacy manf. through Cult of personality & ideological control;
Nazi Germany -



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Critical Opinion

While both forms may sustain pol. rule but only legitimacy acquired by consent is in sync with human dignity + sus. Dev. + pop. participation + ethical nov.



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Section B



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Q.Explain briefly the role of
Peasant Movements after 1857 and
before independence.

(1857 - 1947)

↓

Role → After 1857



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Colonial Poli

Early Revolts

↓
Indigo Revolt

+
Deccan

↓
Exposed
colonial
structure
exploitative
aggression

Riots + Pabna

1900s - 1930

Champaran +
Bardoli + Kheda

linked agrarian
grievance with
nationalist
consciousness

1930s - onwards

All India Kisan
Sabha - demanded
(1936)
abolition of
Zamindari &
rights for
Tenants;

+
Tehsila
↓
Class Consciousness

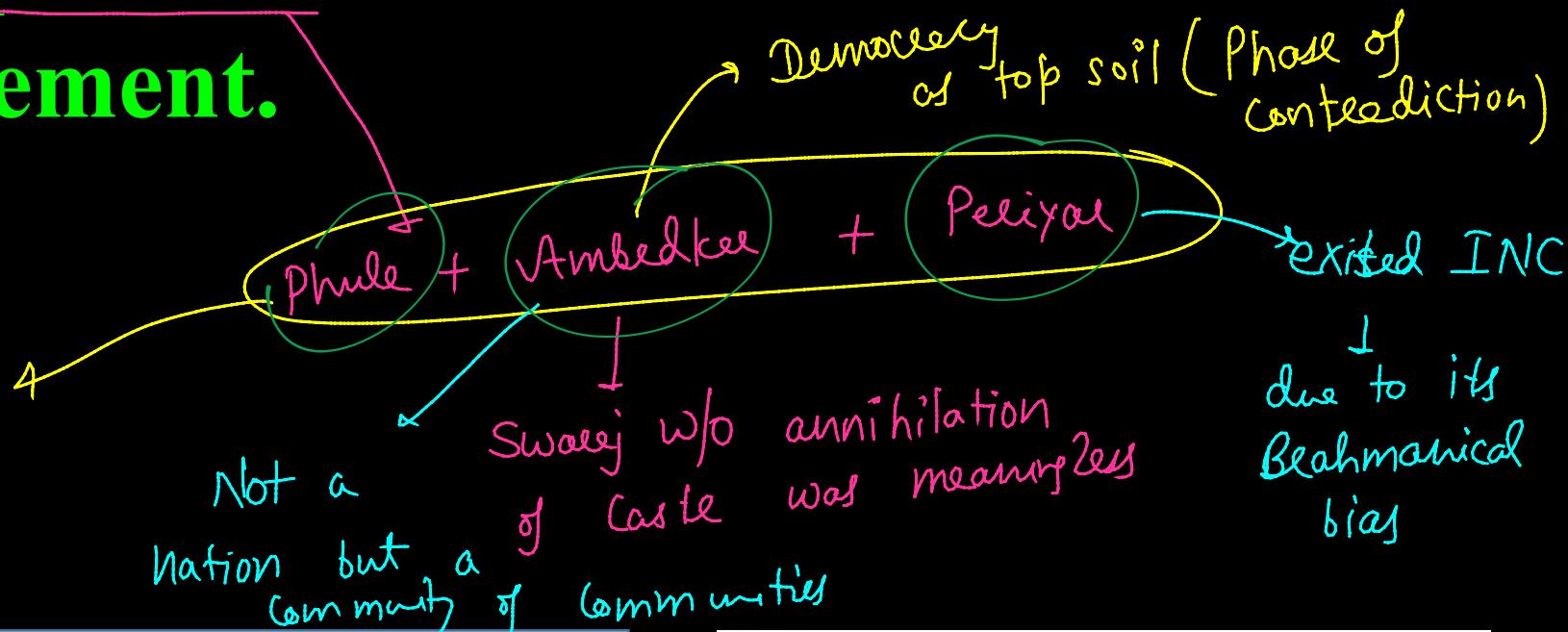


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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

Q. Write a note on the Dalit perspective of Indian National Movement.



↓
Envisioned India as
Bahiskut Bhara (ostealized India)

↓
aspired for Prabuddha Bharet
(Enlightened India)



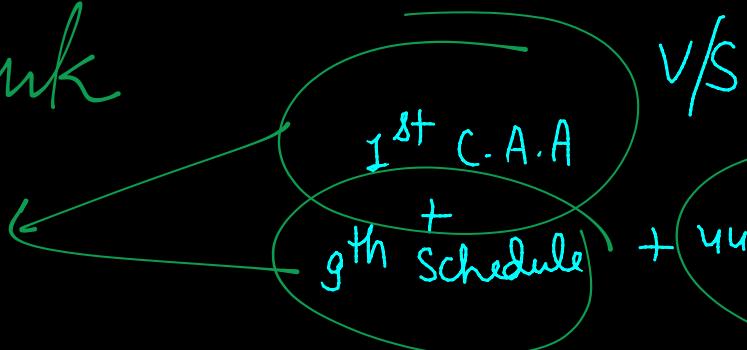
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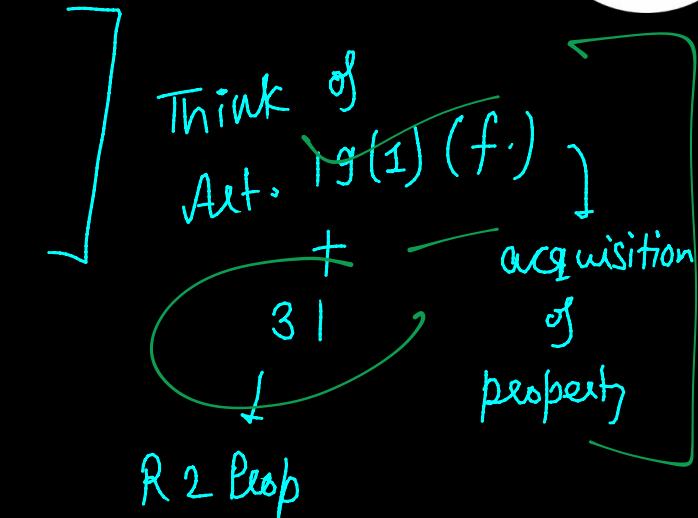
<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

Q. Land reforms programmes led to some constitutional amendments. Comment.

Shank



1978



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→ Start with Land reform prog.



not an Economic interventions



but Social revolution

→ Consti. issue in 1950

FRI v/s Land Reform Laws
(Zamindari abolition acts)



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1st CAA - 1951 (31A & 31B + 9th Schedule - blackhole)

Upheld if in S. Plesad (1951)

4th CAA -

→ I R Coelho Case (2007)

9th Sched

J R



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→ Signifi → reflect transformative constitutionalism i.e.
evolⁿ of consti. to meet social needs.



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Q. Delineate the key factors that have shaped the evolving political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir post 2019.

GS2



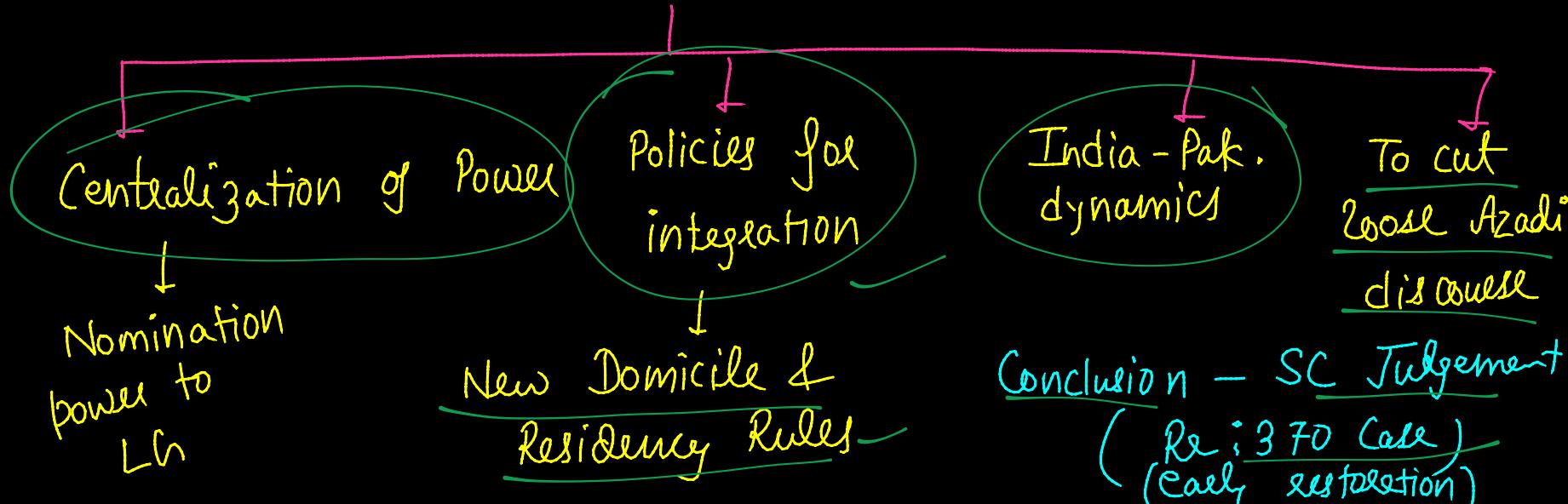
<https://t.me/UPSCwithDeepakPrakash>



<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

Intro - talk about paradigmatic shift ✓

- First time in the history of Indian republic
- Uniqueness - 370 -
 - Key factors
 - Int.
 - Ext.



Conclusion - SC Judgement
(Re: 370 Case)
(Early restoration)



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Q. How far has been the NHRC successful in achieving its objectives? Comment.

Highlight both sides

+ ✓ Achiever

- ✓ Limitation - H C Daftu

Use scholars like U. Baxi - 'Toothless Tiger'

A. Sen -

R. Bhagava -

(conclude with way forward)



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>



Q. Parliamentary committees are indispensable to the legislative process. It provides for the opportunity for cross-pollination between the two chambers of the parliament. Discuss. (20)



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

→ Parliamentary Committees — Substantive heart of legislative process —

— indispensable — transcend partisan divides, deepen legislative engagement, foster cross-pollination b/w HoP & CoS

PRS —

→ Why this Question?

— Data on PCs

] → How many bills sent for scrutiny?

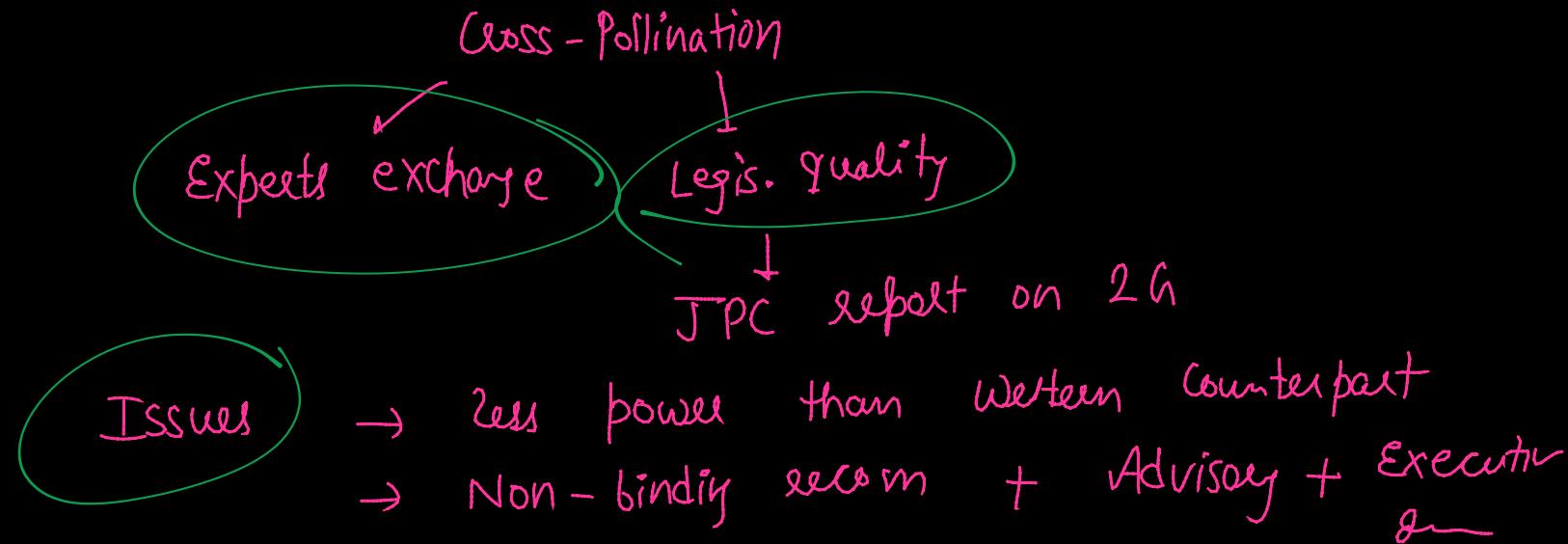


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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

Indispensable
(Legis. Scrutiny + Collab. b/w HoP & CoS + Checks on executive power +
Ambedkar (depolitized delib.)



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>



Q. Examine the constitutional
provisions and nature of advisory
jurisdictions of SC of India.

Evaluate your answer with
relevant examples. (15) ✓



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

→ Context → S of TN v/s Govt. of TN Case
→ PR reference on Art. 200

→ Consti. Provisions → Art. 143(1)
→ " 143(2)

→ Nature — Non-binding
+ discretionary
+ No Adversarial Parties



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

→ Key Cases

1.) Beebhai Union Case (1960)

2) Ayodhya Ref. Case (1994)

3.) Recent Ref. -

Examine

+

- Consti. clarity ✓

Ro L ✓

-

- Non binding nature
- Potential for pol. misuse



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U. Baxi → Not to use Art-143 to avoid judicial finality;

R. Dhawan & Faizan Mustafa - need for judicial restraint in Pol- sensitive references,



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Q. The recent developments in Indian politics has not eroded the true spirit of federalism in India. Critically examine this statement with the help of appropriate examples. (15)

means some steps have damaged true spirit too



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→ Start with Indian federalism
(Austin) (Wheare) ✓

→ Context +

→ Art. 370 & judgement

→ S of TN v/s Gov of TN case

→ Net borrowing ceiling case

→



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

How not ended

- Coalition Politics back at Centre → 2024
- Judicial Safeguards
 - MADA Case
 - Lalita Peshad Vaish Case
 - S of TN Case



Issues

- Kerala claim & fiscal centralization
- Use of Gov. Discretion & Presidential Ref.
- Census exercise & upcoming delimitation exercise
- ON DE, - Uniformity



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

Scholar's Opinion

- Yamini Aiyar - 'The Indian System is Breaking Down' in F. Affairs in July 2028
 - Undermining of federal balance & unit;

- R. Kothai -

- Faizan Mustafa -

Conclusion



Spirit is not eroded but being transformed

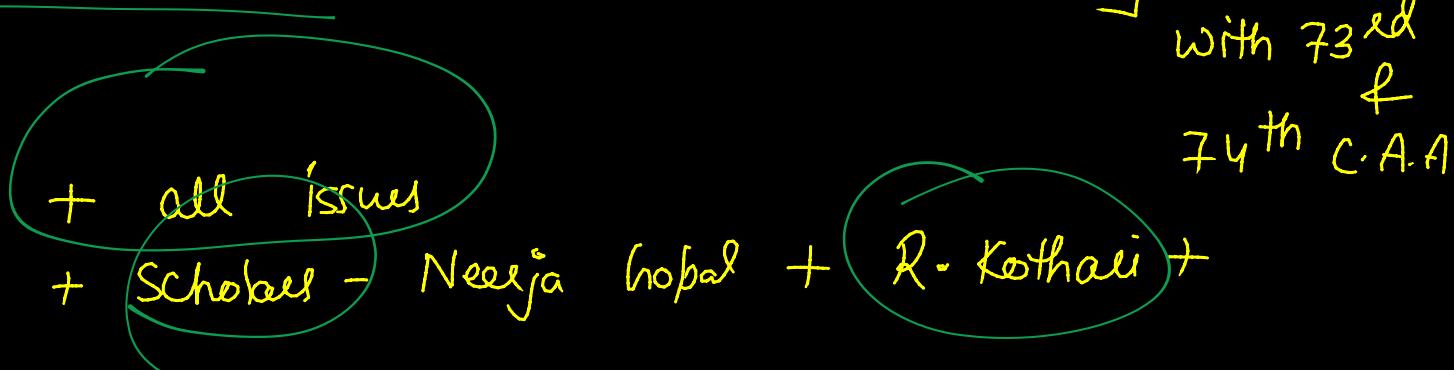


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Q. Enunciate the impediments to women's participation in local governance in the process of political decentralisation. (20)



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>

Naila Kabell

→ You need to understand the diff. b/w
access & agency in empowerment



↓
73rd & 74th
achieved this

more groundworks are needed



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<http://www.youtube.com/@CivilsPhodo>



Q. Caste remains a vital axis for political mobilisation in India.

How would the caste census address the aspirations of people?

Discuss. (15)

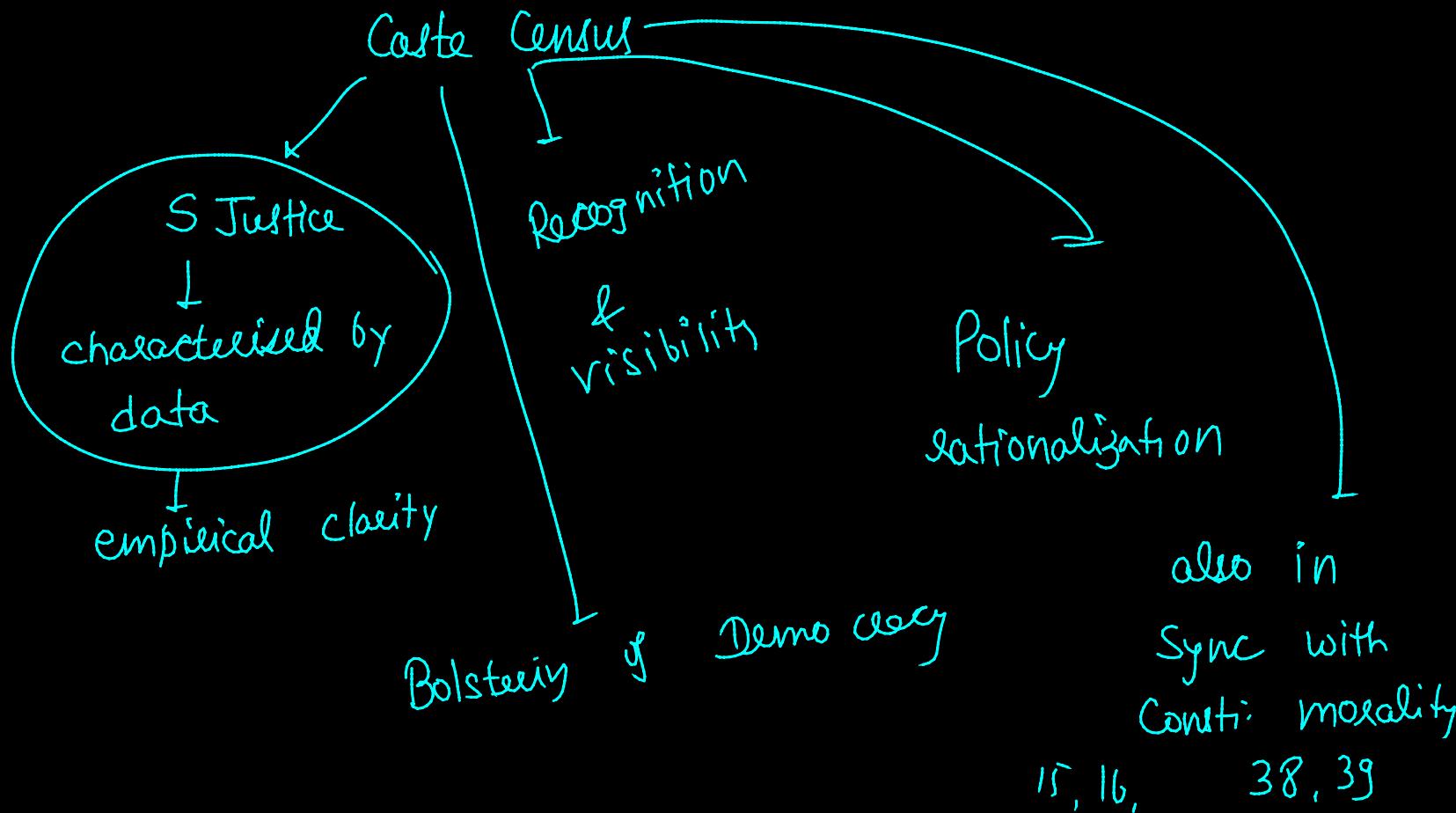
*Casteisation of Politics
& Politicisation of Caste*



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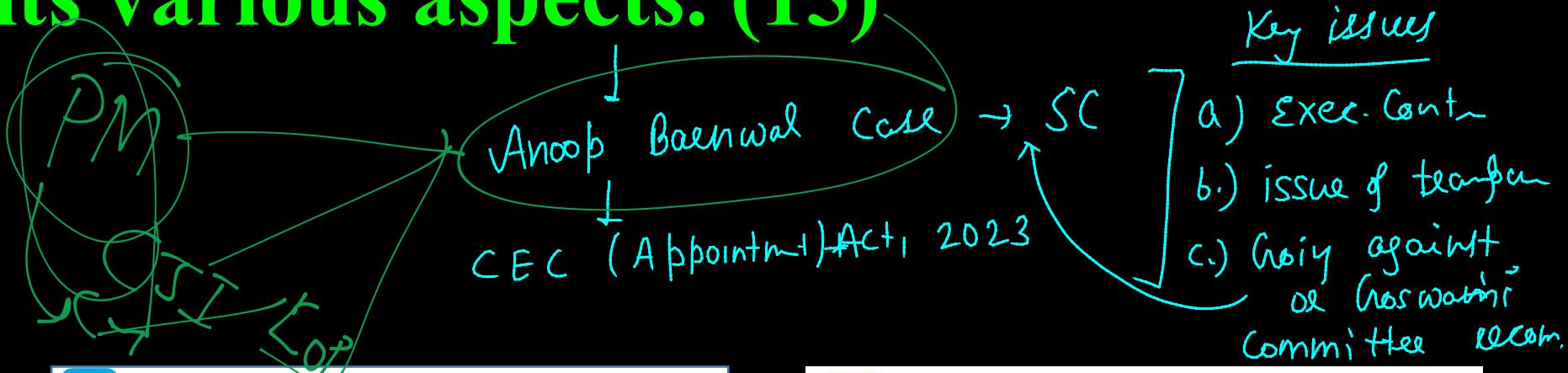


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Q. There is a debate on the procedure for appointment of the CEC and ECs to the ECI. Analyse its various aspects. (15)



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implications → democratic credibility

+

insti. " "

R o L +

+

Consti. Morality



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Q. The decision to conduct Population Census-2027 has reopened the debate on delimitation in India. Discuss its various aspects. (20)

Case



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- N-S
- Pol. Representation
- Caste Enumeration → new layer of delimitation
 - + Sub-Quota demands
 - +



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Q. With reference to Nehruvian perspective of planning and economic development, examine how the early phase of economic planning in India has laid the foundation of modern India's economic growth. (15)

Nehruvian
feat

↓

how
HI +
centralized
planning +



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Q. Illustrate with examples how political parties in India have played a crucial role in drawing the historically disadvantaged groups into the mainstream political system. (15)

Sudha Pai + Christophe Jaffé + R. Kothari

Congress & Dalit inclusion

+ BSP + Devidhar

+ Rise of Model politics



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THANKS FOR WATCHING

Try it for Today...



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