

PSIR OPTIONAL FOUNDATION COURSE

Starting from

9th November 2025 (6 months)

**PSIR OPTIONAL
ANSWER WRITING
PROGRAM CUM TEST**

20 September 2025



By: Deepak sir



PSIR Optional Paper-01 Analysis



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

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, Philo. approach is the oldest & most foundational & this approach has been used by Philo. like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Leo Strauss, Dante Gennino, Plamano¹³ & 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 Dialectics, Reflexive Equilibrium,
Phenomenology;



→ Challenged by behavioralists like Lord Bryce - but later on realized mistakes & hence post 11 incorporated it.

↓ Facts, facts &

Despite some inherent limitations like

- Speculative, —
- No Scientific rigour —

— Arm chair 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 & norms are integral part of it



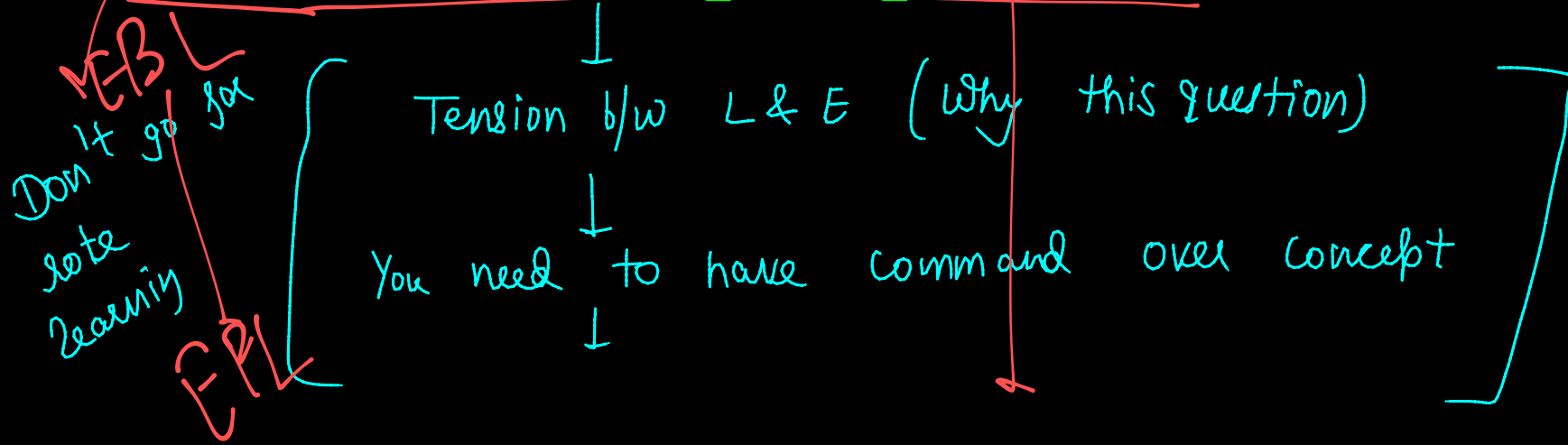
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Overlapping Consensus → I.

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



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Why this question?

L & E - Tension

→ Trump against immigration

Anti-migration

Anti-Religious Stance

Threat to Globalization
UCC in India

Contemporary
Times

Britain

3 Key words

Equ.

Lib.

Multicultural



Com

→ Multiculturalism gained salience in 1980s

V/S

Intiv

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



→ 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 is n't a good thing' because people are different (M. Walzer) (Liberal egalitarianism);



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

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

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



B. Parekh 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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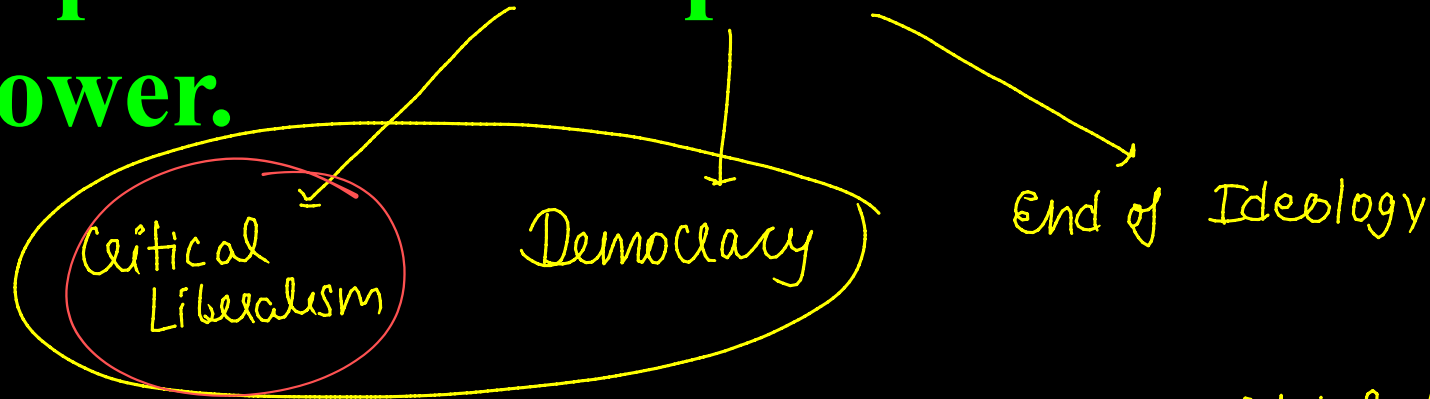
equality is monologic.

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, it embraces pluralism, unity in diversity & equity.



Q. Explain the Macpherson's view on power.



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



liberal society

Mc Pheerson view on Power

extractive Power

McPheerson Matrix

Developmental power

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

Creative Freedom

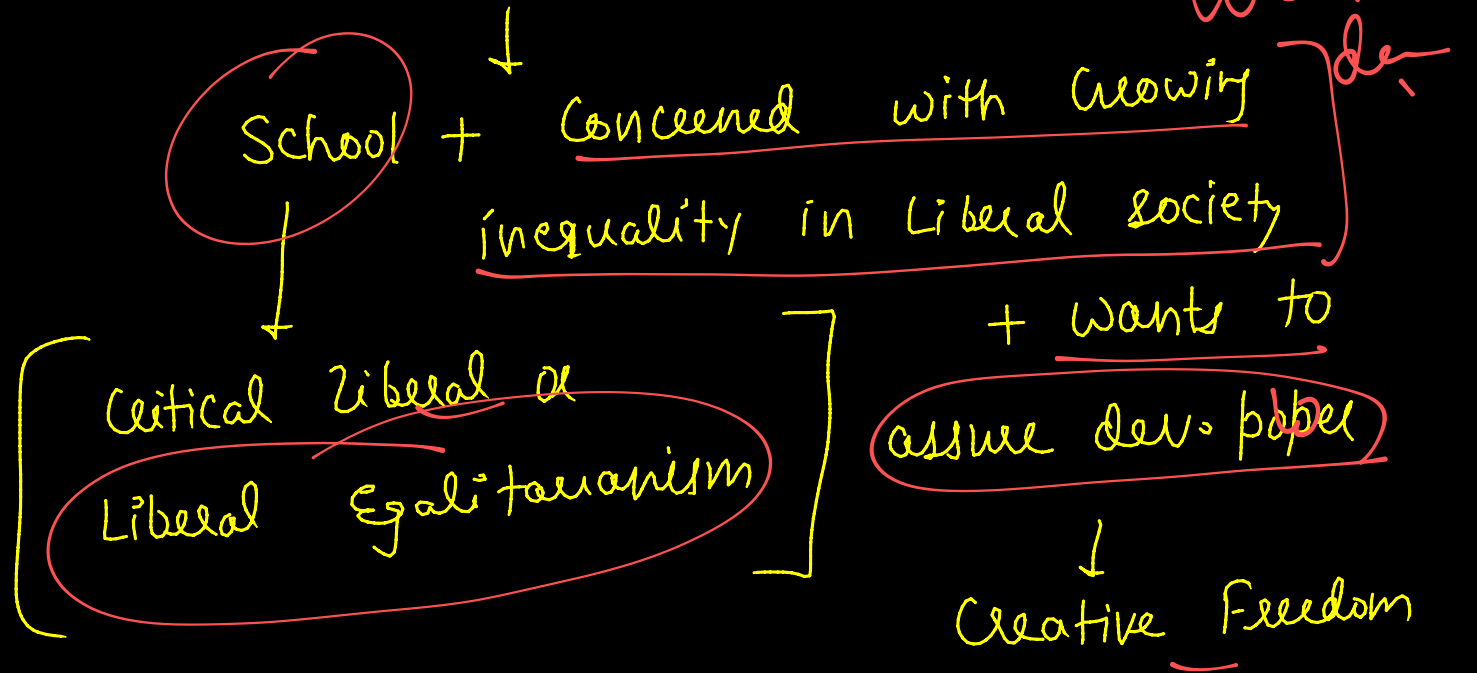


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Start with McPherson



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

He discusses 2 dimensions of power:

→ E.P

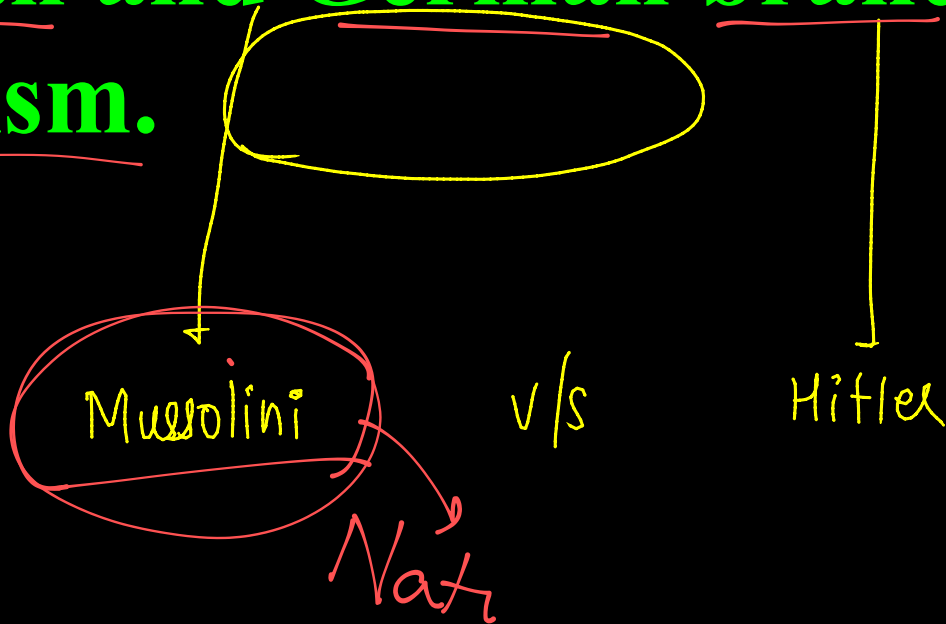
→ D.P

→ Solⁿ by him → No Extractive Power for any
class

→ only D. P →
i.e. Creative freedom
or Dev. as freedom,



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



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→ Introd → focus on fascism - emergence - inter-war pd. +

→ H. Arendt -] ✓

fascism → K. Popper

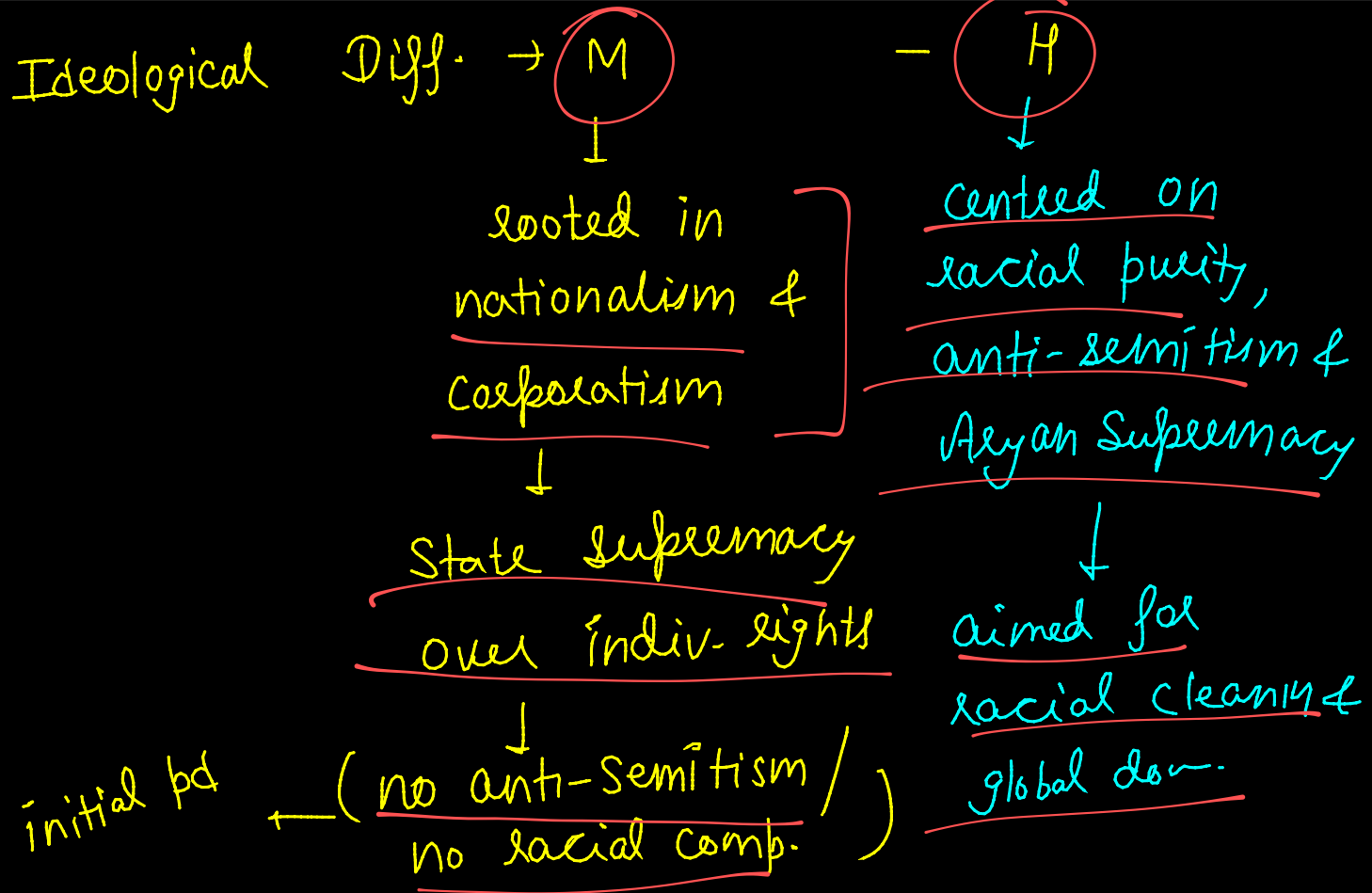
→ focus on question (very specific)

↓

La
H.A

Radical resp. to
liberal democracy +
Post war instability





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 Nat'l
Unity

+

allowed Church

strict patriarchal norm

+

Not allowed
organised religion

+

led to Holocaust +
Genocide +

Unprecedented
Criminality (H. Arendt)



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

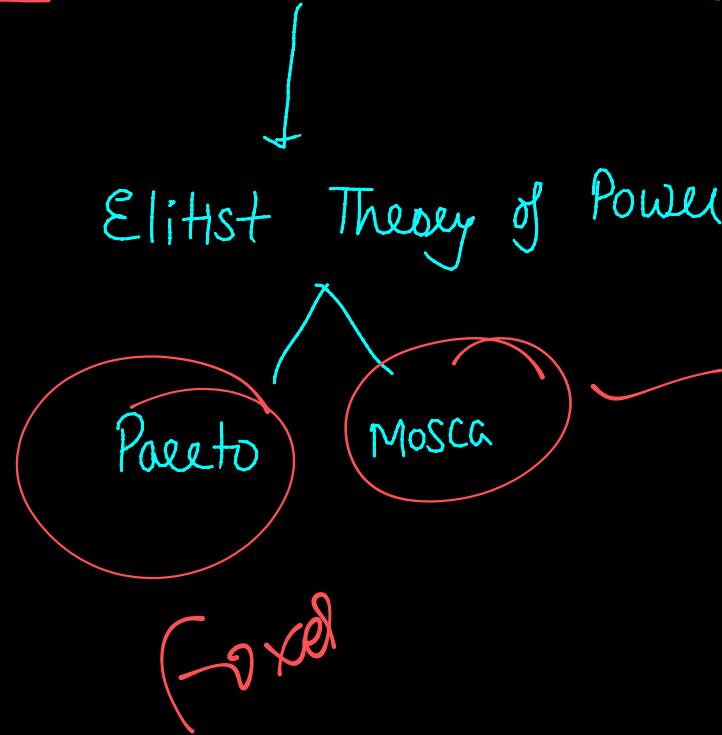


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Q. Explain briefly the elite theory of democracy.



→ Circulation of elites

Foxes + Lions

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



C. Wright Mills → Empirical analysis

→ of Demo. in the USA ✓

→ Power lies with power elite ✓

(R. Dahl & Charles Lindblom)

CL





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

Neutral
arbitrator

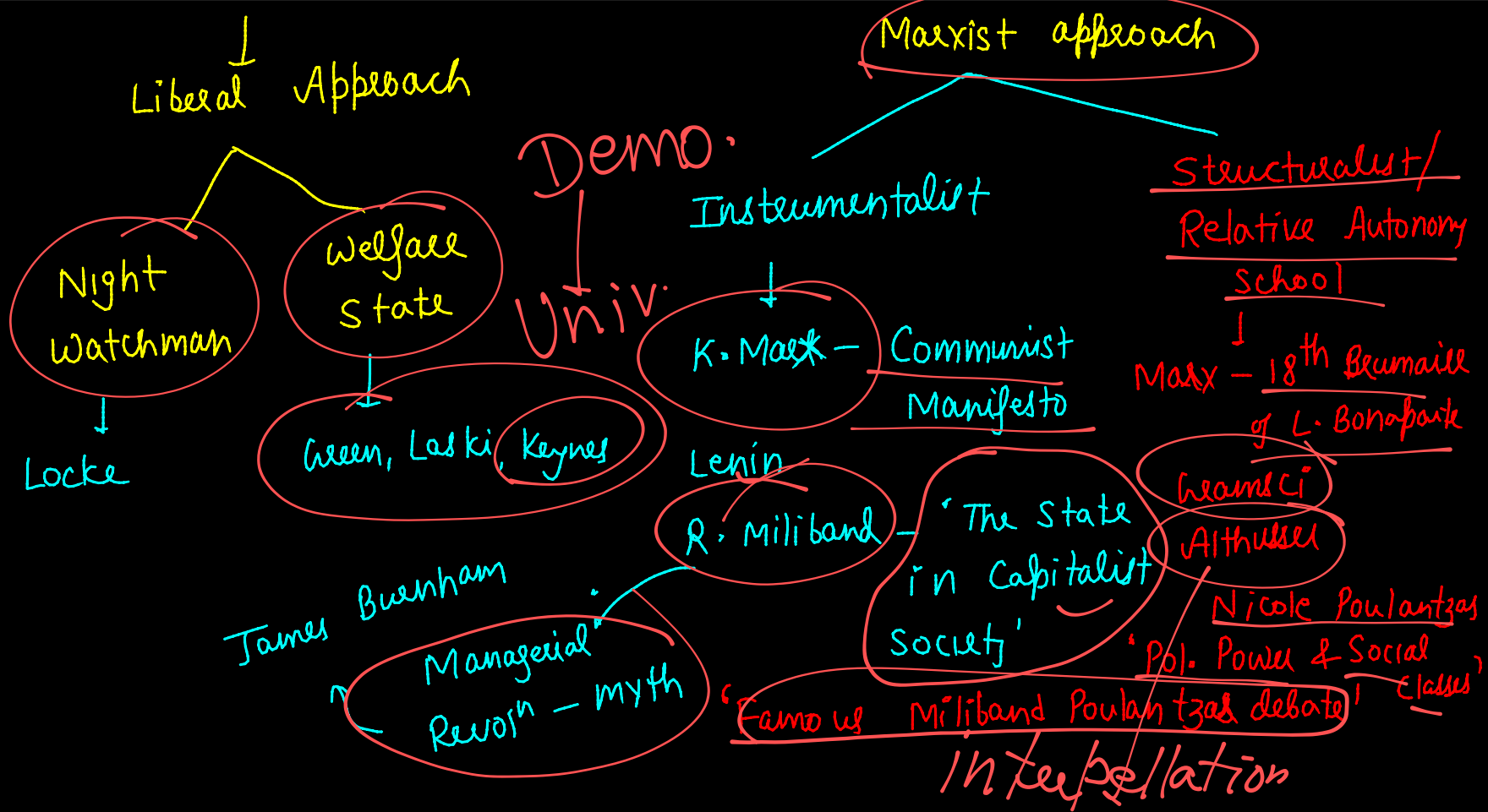
instrument
of class
domination

MM &
Gur

↓
State is a executive
committee of
bourgeoisie

} No
Universal
alienism





Grounds on which theoretical diff. are premised

MN

- Rational +
individualistic +
autonomous

Social being

+
material conditions
shape them

Base-
Super
structure
Model

Property

- Private Prop.
(NR)

Source of expli-
S.V.

Power Structure

institutional
&
Pluralistic

Social
Contract

Hierarchical
&
class-based

History
of
all
hitherto

Obj

- Indiv. Rights

SoN

Communism
(Stateless & classless)

existing society
the history of
class struggle



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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

↓
During WW II

(powerful critique of totalitarian ideologies.)



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→ open Society - features:

- a.) Allows its members to openly criticise the insti;
- b.) eduⁿ - not indoctrination
- c.) No monopoly over the truth
- d.) No rigid discipline is imposed

→ Enemies

- Plato - P. King + Eduⁿ System + historicism
- Hegel - Preceded to authoritarian nationalism
+ legitimize state absolutism
- Marx - Praises him for his concern towards justice but critiques his scientific historicism → would lead to revolution



- change - piecemeal / not holistic change
- open for falsification - No absolute truth
- Rights of indiv. must be protected;

(Beelin & Willspiere second this thought)

Critical Analysis → Levinson ✓
 → Sydney Hook ✓
 → R. Bhargava ✓

Relevance Today → Open Society are under threat due to rise of demagogic leaders like Trump, demo. backlash - (can use freedom index to back you up);



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

Lexical

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



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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

Rawls → Greatest philos of our times

→ A Theory of Justice

→ Revitalized moral philosophy, provided a compelling argument for a just society in A Theory of Justice

Justice as fairness



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→ While presenting him the Nat' Humanities Medal
in 1999 - Clinton called him the 'perhaps the
greatest pol. philosopher of the 20th cent';

Concept of DJ ✓

M → 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.

① 1, 26, 2a



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Exo Egalitarian Perspective → Diff. Principle

Justified affirmative action are justified inequalities

LA

A Radical egalitarian clause

S & E inequalities are justified only if they benefit the least advantaged + attach to positions & offices open to all

but works in favor of least advantaged

Rawls under Original Position behind veil of ignorance provide for balancing b/w the 2; For him, basic liberties are inviolable but inequalities must benefit the worst-off.



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His distri- Justice must balance freedom & fairness together. His conception rejects both laissez faire liberalism & radical socialism rather provides a

24% durable framework for democratic societies seeking

both liberty & egalitarianism; (it is like bridge b/w classical liberalism & extreme socialism)

1 → Connect it with today → growth of inequality
29% Calls for Rawls' distri. justice application in the form of welfareism & progressive taxation
[→ Connect it with India - EPL, DPSP]
Rawls in Practice



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

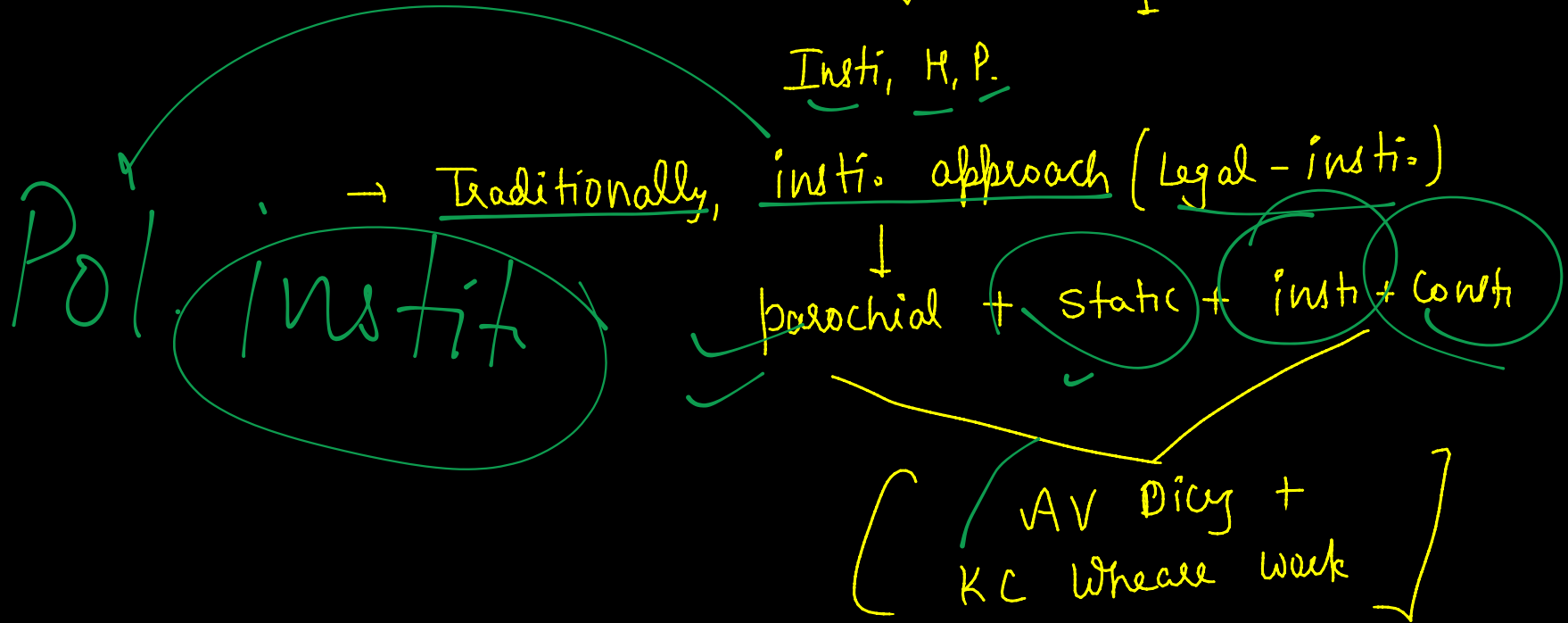
C.P.

- focus on Holistic reading
- Don't compartmentalize the syllabus



Intro → Pol. theory —

→ Various approaches (T v/s M)

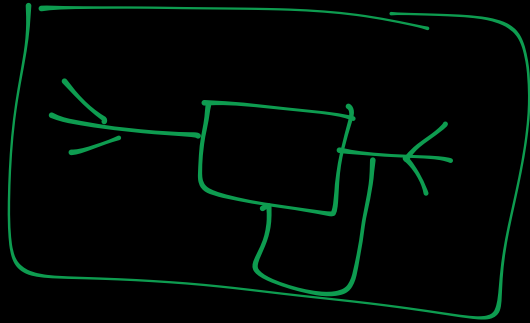


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→ Behavioralist → System Approach (D. Easton)



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

Make a comp. analysis
Insti. Behav.



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

↓
(Theda Skocpol)

↓
Process is imp. but
State remains most significant.

→ Conclude -





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

Why imp?
↓
democratic backsliding
+
Censorship
↓
Oceanic Circle of Power + Swaraj +

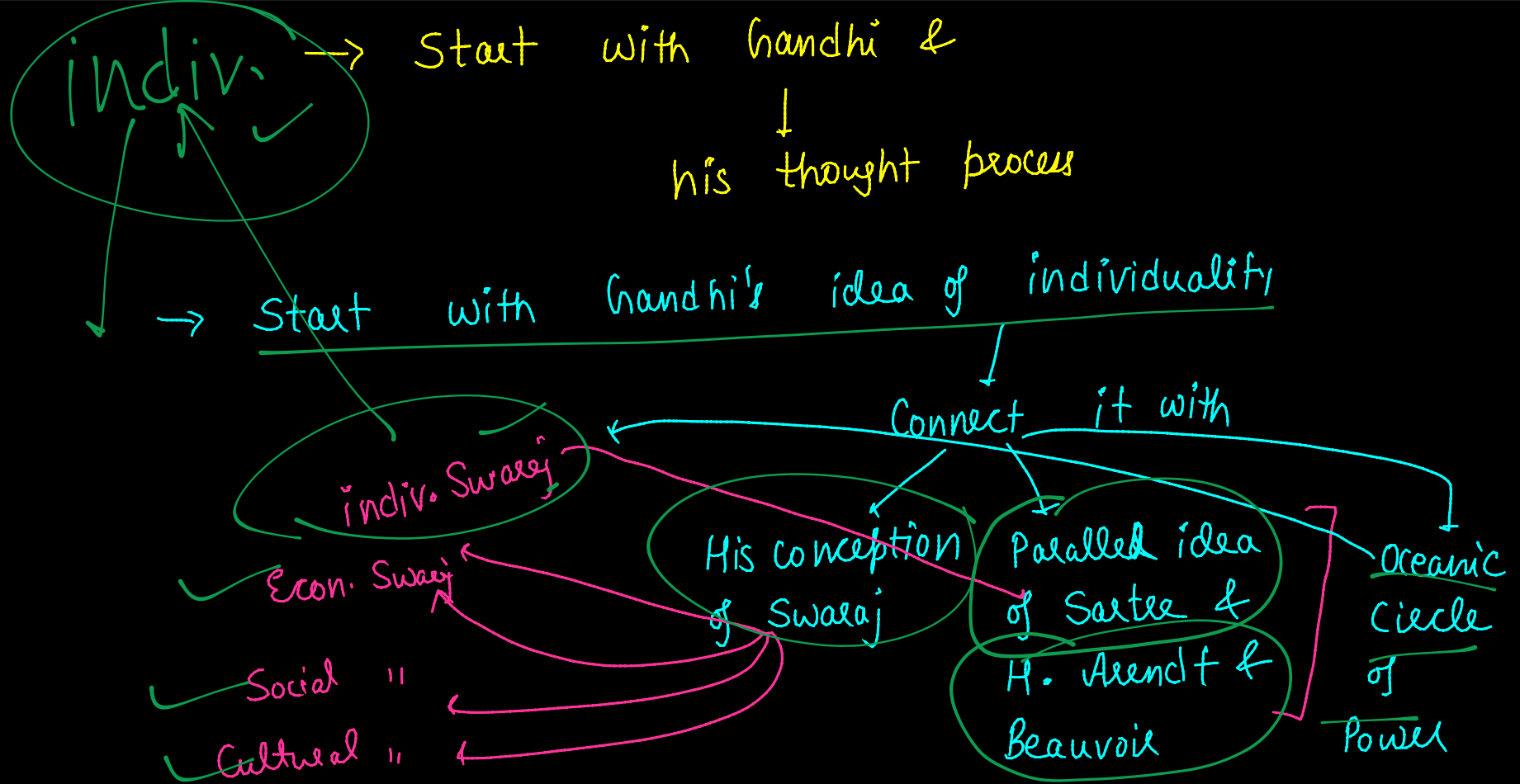
Taught you at 3 places
Liberalism
H. Arendt (F & Notality)
Existentialism (Sartre + Beauvoir)



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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 (



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

Carol Hanisch

Susan Moller 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

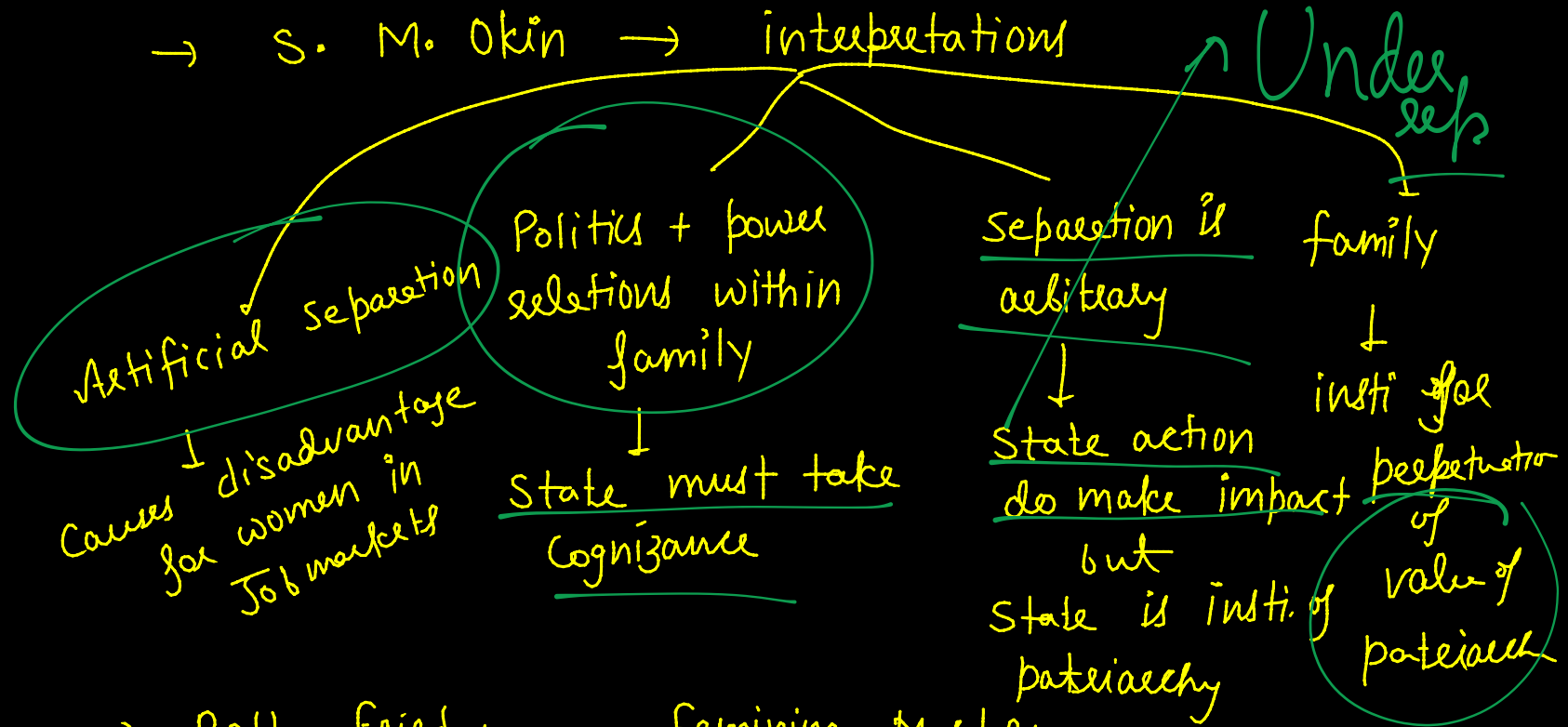
or
Sylvia Walby - System of patriarchy has multiple overlap -

or
J.S. Mill - On Subjection of Women

→ Add Context → Aristotle (Sep. of Personal & Political)
→ Cynthia Enloe 'Where are the women?'



→ S. M. Okin → Interpretations



→ Betty Friedan - Feminine Mystique
- Why patriarchy sustains?



How it addresses

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

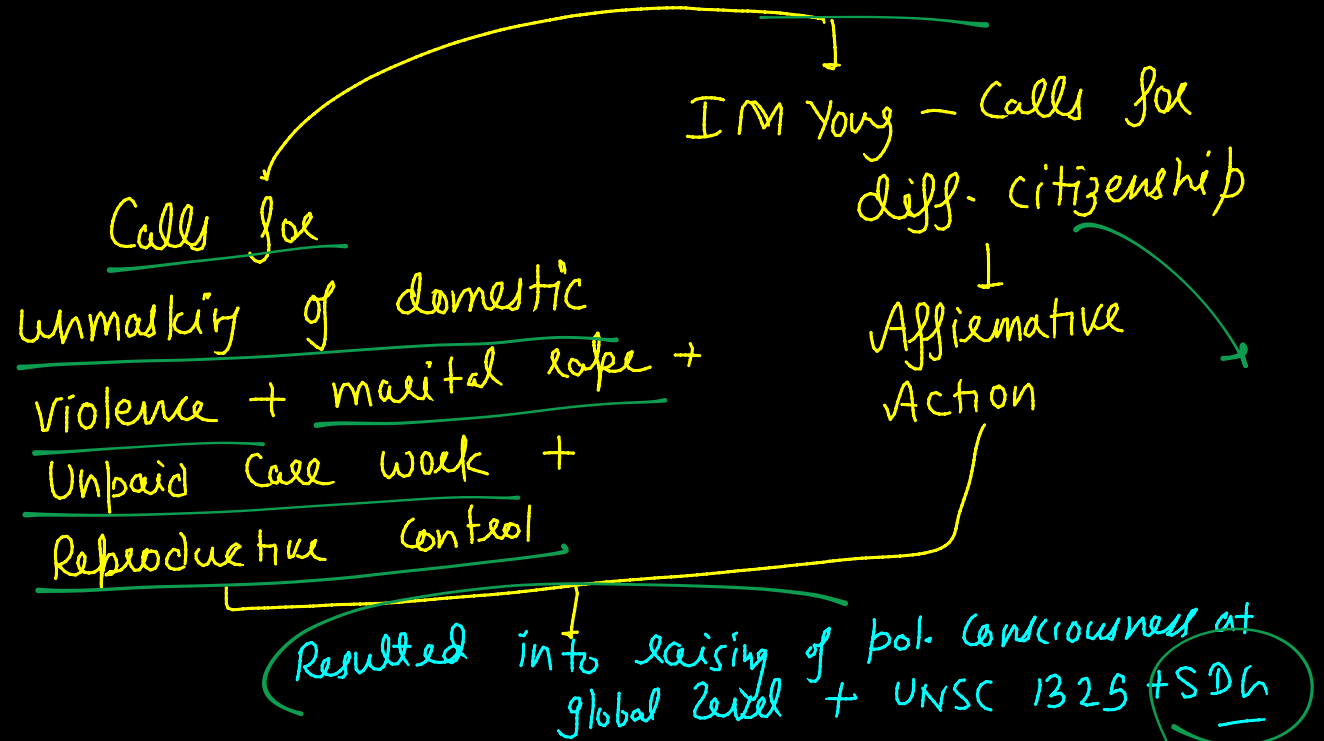
↓
State need to expand the notion of justice

↓
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 — it is political sustant



↓
So you need the state to politically empower women



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250

60%.

70%.

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

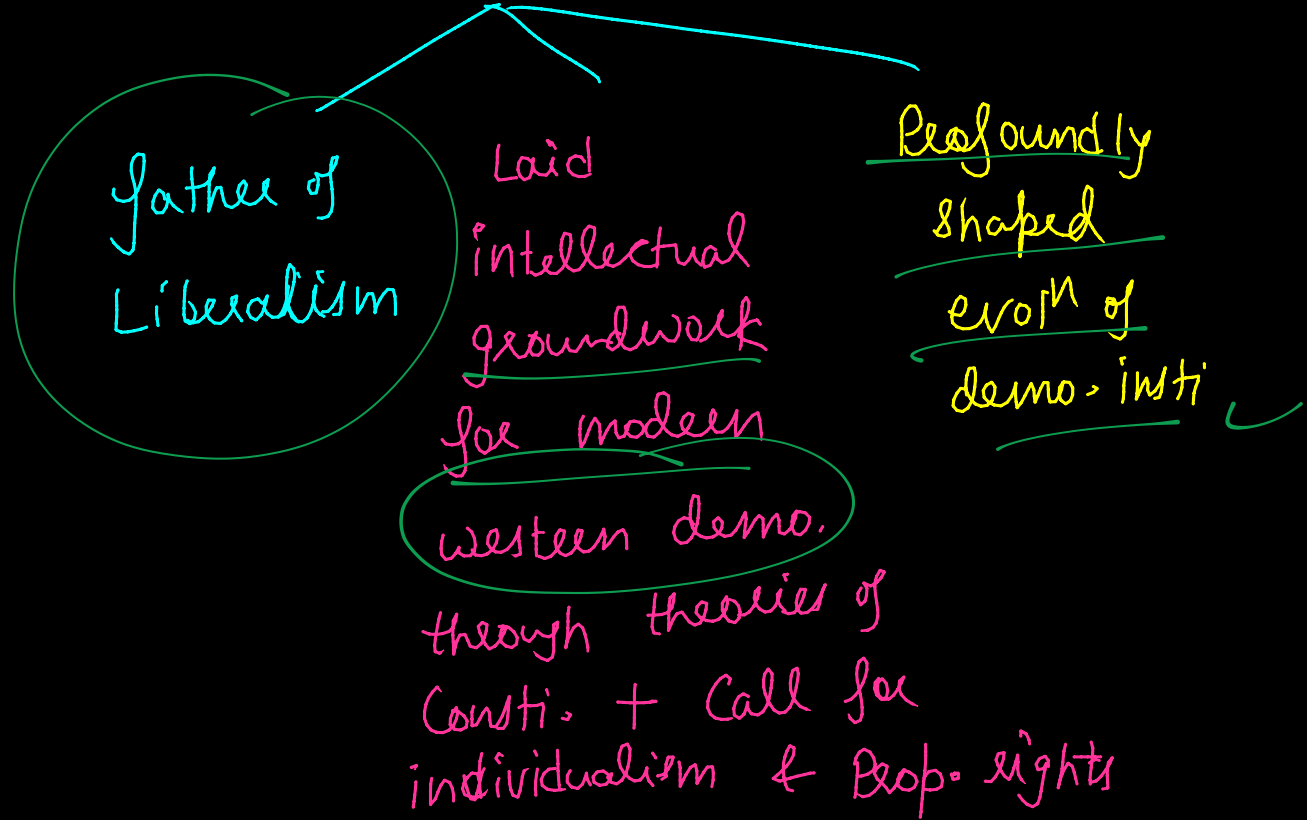


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→ Start with J. Locke



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- SON
- Locke - Limited Govt. (bound by Social Contract)
 - Sovereignty resides with people
 - Underpins ^{Const.} democracies
 - No Law, No Liberty
 - Conception of NRS (are before the state)
 - ↓
 - Even in SON people were enjoying these



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

- Protⁿ of Property central to
✓ Legitimacy of govt.
- influenced capitalist democracies,

Founda^l base
→ American Revolⁿ → Jefferson's - life, liberty & Pursuit of happiness
→ Liberal Constitutionalism → RoL, Sol, indiv. rights.



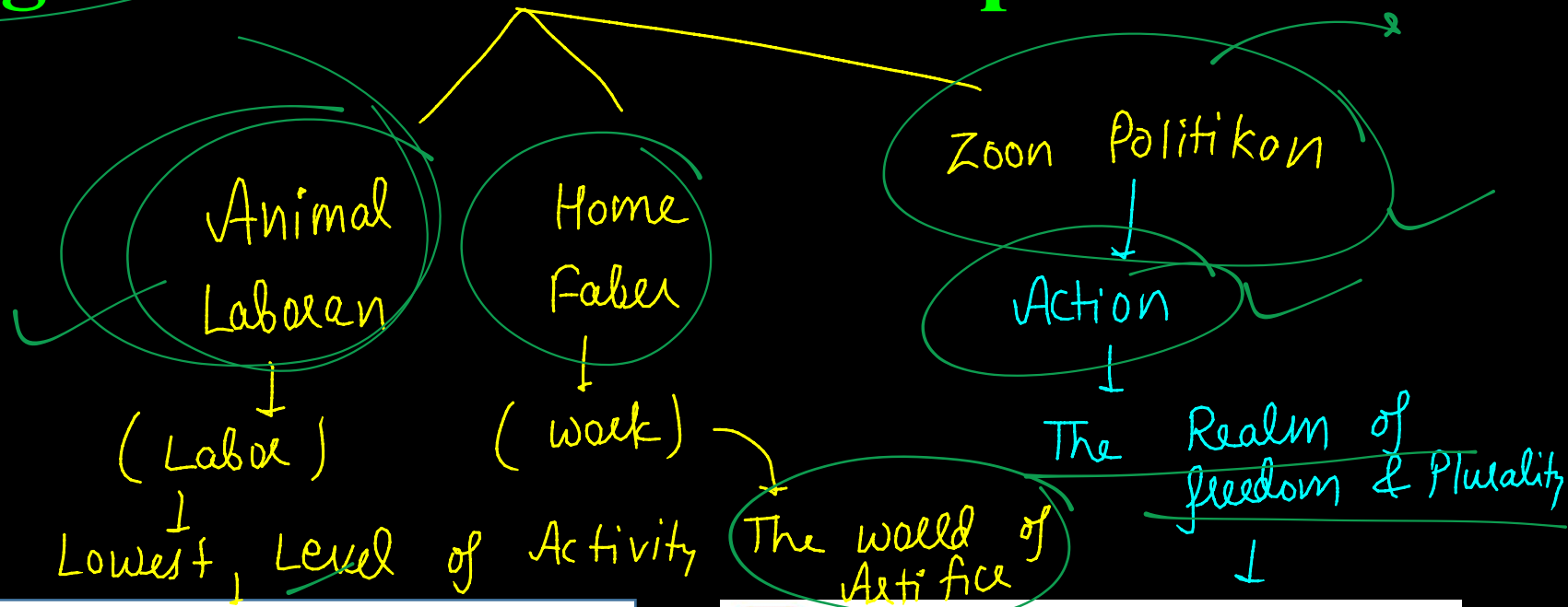
→ These ideas have attracted criticism too
Like McPh - possessive indiv.
Marx - bourgeoisie apologist
Gramsci - part of ideological superstructure

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.



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

(15)



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↓
Cycle of Necessity

↓
Realm - Private Sphere

(Lowest order action)

↓
Sustains life but not
create a besting world.

↓
Critique modernity for making
Animal Zaboran most impo.

↓
foundaⁿ of
civilization

↓
by this we
make world
fit for
action

↓
Participation in
public life
(Zoon politikon)

↓
differentia
specifica

↓
It is where you
dis close your
Uniqueness



↓
Rise of mass
society
+
elite domination

↓
Challenges the western
philosophical tradition

↓
privileged — Vita Contemplativa
↓
Plato over vita activa

Capacity to do something new — Natality
↑
Freedom

↓
action — essence of pol.
life & human dignity.
↓
Plurality → means Presence of others



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↓
can happen only in public



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Q. Do you think that legitimacy acquired by consent or manufactured by indoctrination is an essential element in maintenance of political rule? Justify your answer with relevant examples. (15)

Locke + Rousseau
+ T. H. Green

(will not force,)

Gramsci
(Hegemony)

+
Herbert
Marcuse

Habermas +
(Legitimation crisis)

Idhar en



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→ Start with legitimacy → Max Weber

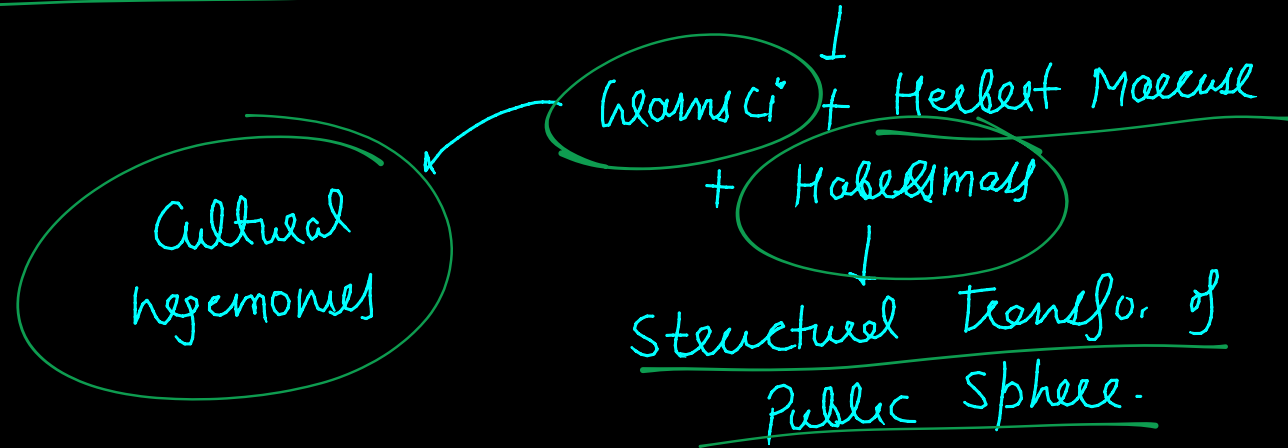
→ Ideal Types

Traditional authority Charismatic authority Ration-Legal.

→ Imp. of legitimacy →



→ Another school is represented by Marxist



→ Example of Syria (Bashar Al Assad)

→ " " N. Kozee - Legitimacy manf. theory
Cult of personality & ideological
Nazi German - control;



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 gov.



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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 Riots + Pabna

↓
exposed exploitative
colonial agrarian
structure

1900s - 1930

↓
Champaran +
Bardoli + Kheda

↓
linked agrarian
grievance with
nationalist
consciousness

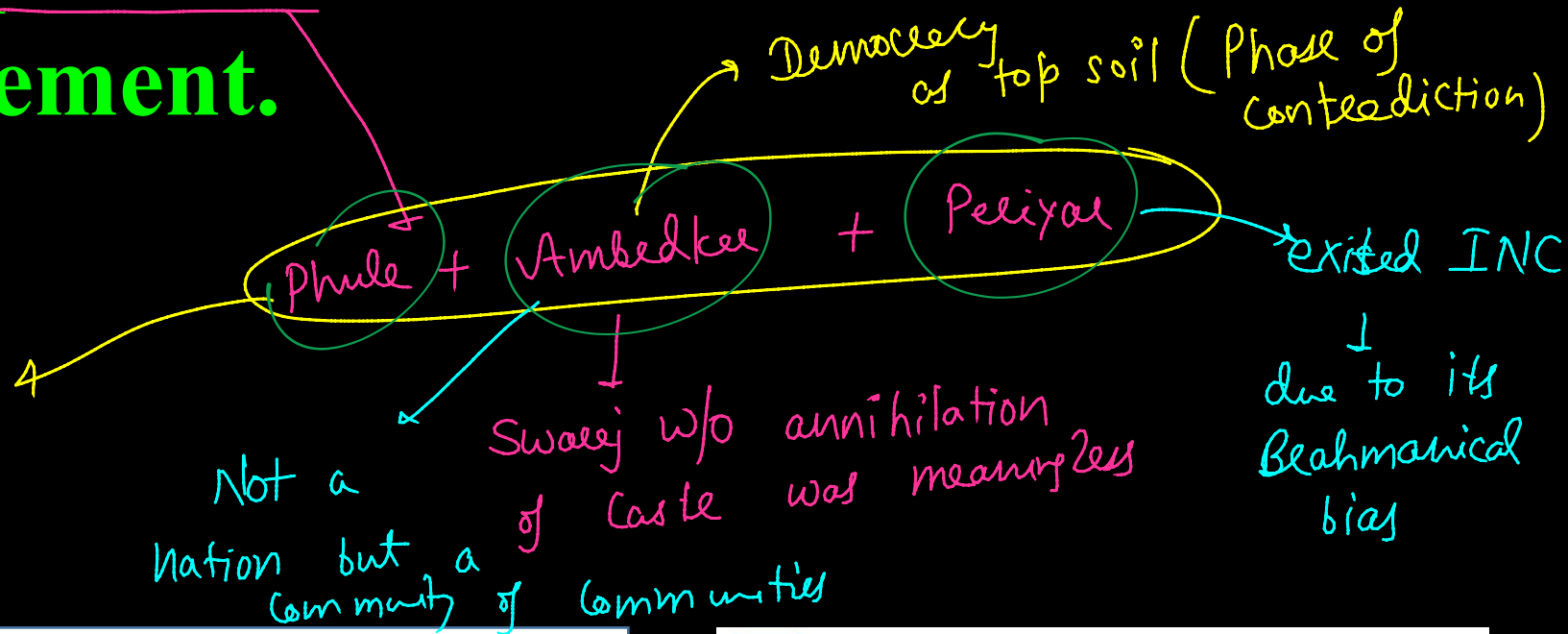
1930s - onwards

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

+
Tebhaga
↓
Class Consciousness



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



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↓
Envisioned India as
Bahiskrit Bharat (ostracized India)
↓
aspired for Prabuddha Bharat
(Enlightened India)



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

Think of
Art. 19(1)(f.)
+ acquisition of property
31
↓
R 2 Prop

Shank

1st C.A.A
+
9th Schedule
v/s
+ 44th C.A.A
→ 1978



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→ Start with Land reform prog.



not an Economic interventions



but Social revolⁿ

→ Consti. issue in 1950

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



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

↓
Upheld it in S. Plesad (1951)

↓
44th C.A.A -

→ ~~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.

GS 2



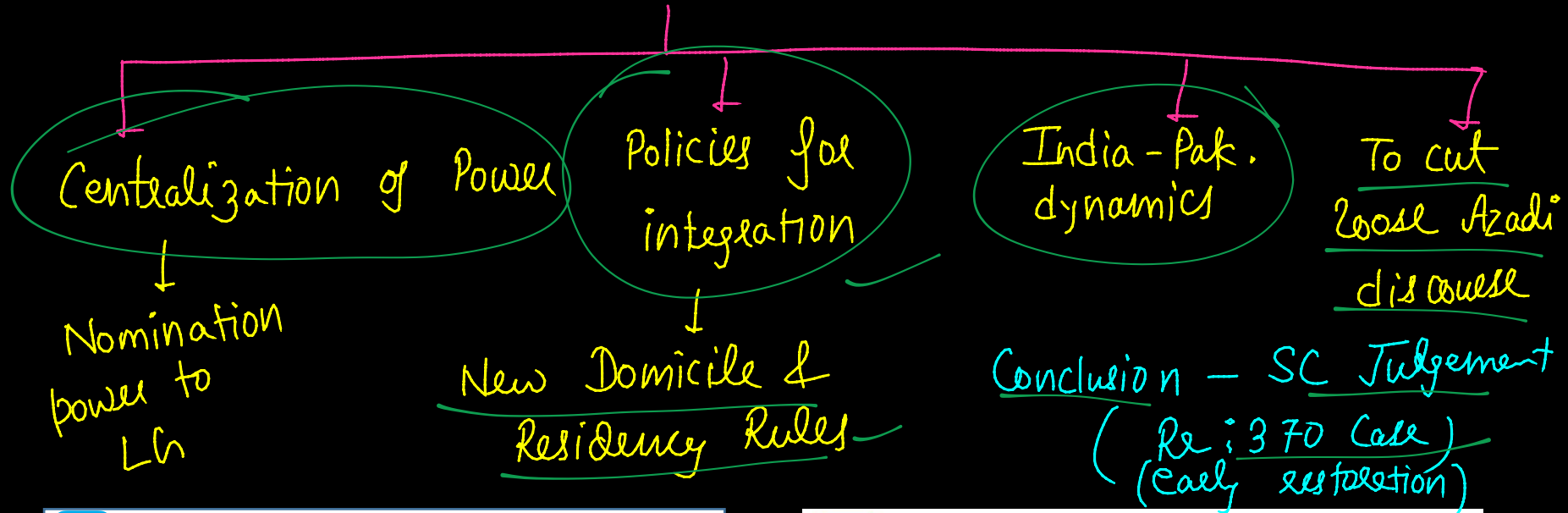
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Intro - talk about paradigmatic shift ✓

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



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

Highlight both sides

- + ✓ Achievements
- ✓ Limitation - H L Dattu

Use scholars like U. Baxi - 'Toothless Tiger'

A. Sen - (conclude with way forward)

R. Bhargava -



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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?

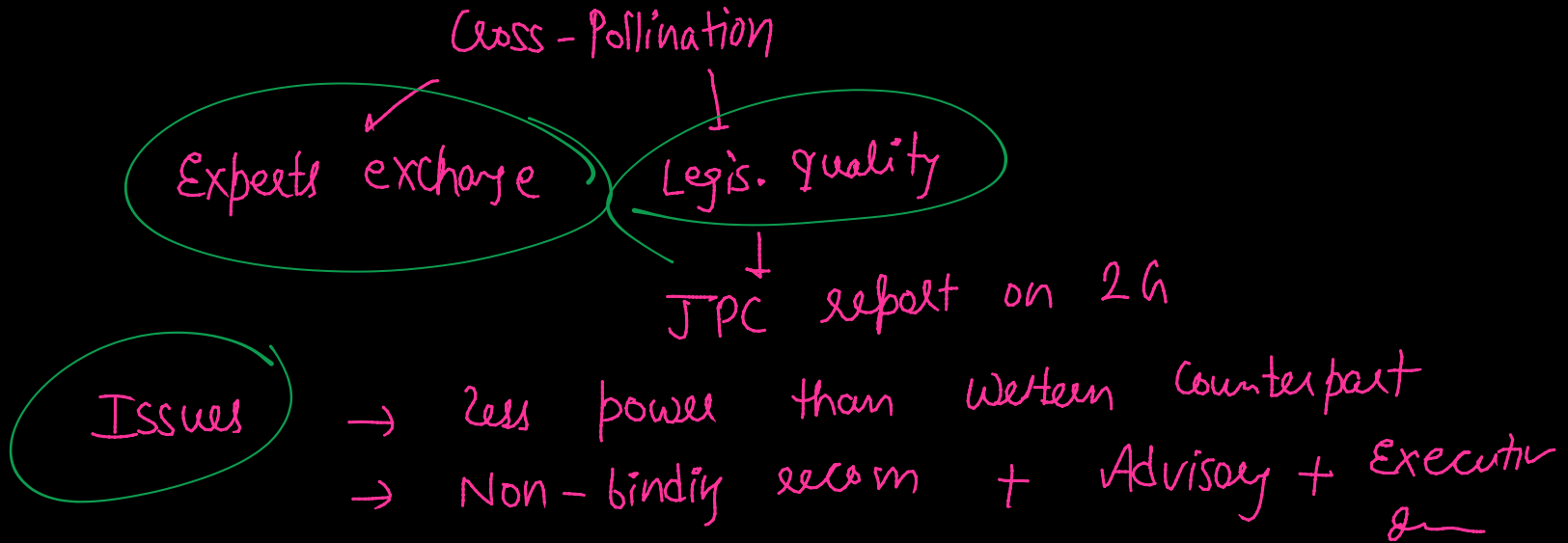
— Data on PCs } → How many bills sent for scrutiny?



Indispensable

(Legis. Scrutiny + Collab. b/w HoP & CoS + Checks on executive power +

Ambedkar (depoliticized deliber.)



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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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→ Context → Sof TN v/s Gov. of TN Case
→ PR reference on Art. 200

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

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



→ Key Cases

1.) Benubai Union Case (1960)

2.) Ayodhya Ref. case (1994)

2.) Recent Ref. -

↓
Examine

+
- consti. clarity ✓
Ro L ✓

- Non binding nature
- Potential for pol. misuse



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

R. Dhanan & 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

→



How not eluded

- Coalition Politics back at Centre → 2027
- Judicial Safeguards
 - MADA Case
 - Lalita Purohit Vaidh Case
 - S of TN Case

Issues

- Kerala claim & fiscal centralization
- Use of Gov. Discretion & Presidential Ref.
- census exercise & upcoming delimitation exercise
- DN DE, — Uniformity



Scholar's Opinion

- Yamini Aiyar - 'The Indian System is Breaking Down' in F. Affairs in July 2021
 - Undermining of federal balance & unity;
- R. Kothari -
- Faizan Mustafa -

Concl → Spirit is not eroded but being transformed



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

Start
with 73rd
+
74th C.A.A

+ all issues

+ Schabas - Neeja Gopal + R. Kothari +



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Naila Kabeel → 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)

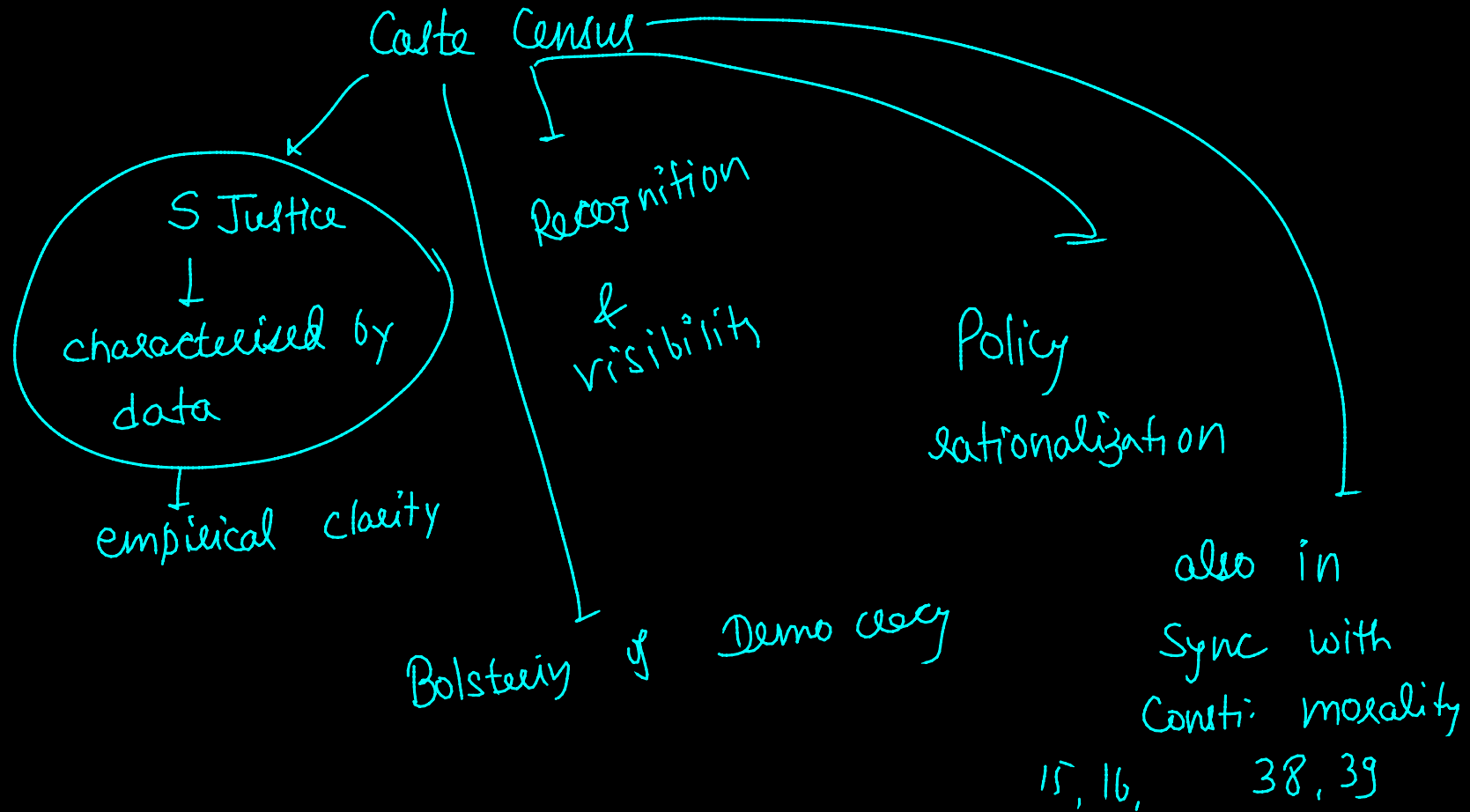
*Casteisation of Politics
& Politicisation of Caste*



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

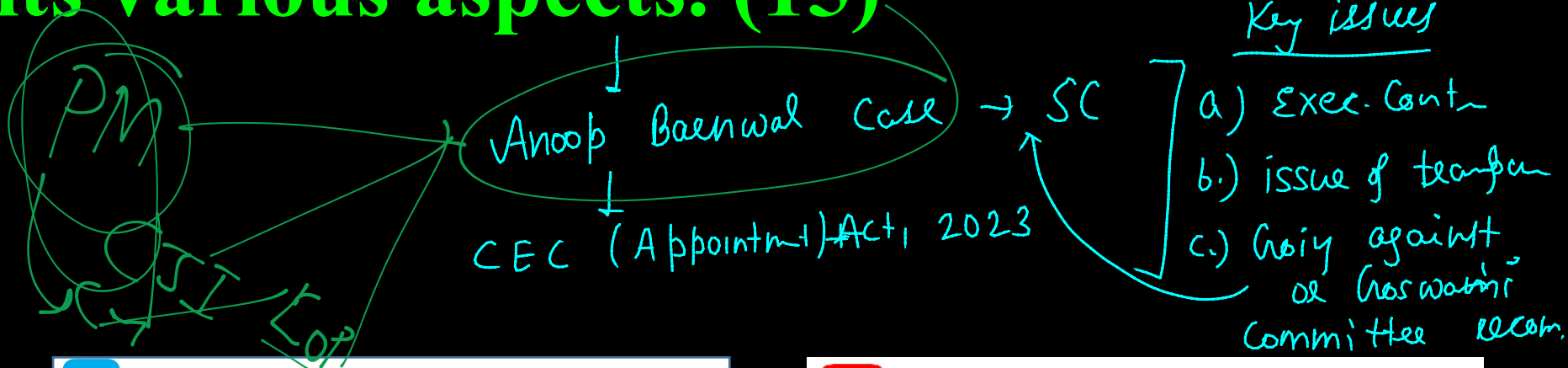


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Q. There is a debate on the procedure for appointment of the CEC and ECs to the ECI. Analyse its various aspects. (15)



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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)

Caste



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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
feath
↓
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)

Congress &
Dalit
inclusion

+
BSP +
Devidhan

+
Rise of Model
Politics

↓
Sudha Pai + Christophe
Jaffar + R. Kothu



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