

PYQ Vault

560

questions

50

days

10

years of PYQs

DAY 29

Representation & Participation · 12 questions

Every question carries a Flow Snapshot — and a handwritten model answer on the channel. *“No PYQ will be unfamiliar.”*

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2016 · 10 marks

Comment on the decline of political parties and examine whether new social movements shall be alternative strategy for establishing link between government and society.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 parties aggregate interests, central to representative democracy → but link between government and society weakening

R2 representative democracy in worldwide decline
(**Rosenthal**) → “post-representative” moment
(**Rosanvallon**) → parties losing their government-society link

Body flow

signs of party decline (turnout ↓, membership ↓, trust ↓, personalisation, social-media bypass) → India: dynastic + ethnic politics + economic-environmental complexity → traditional channels fall short → NSMs forge alternative link (shape opinion + policy agenda, capture government attention, advisory-committee inclusion) → Section 377 / LGBT movement fills the gap parties ignored → **Kothari**’s “non-party political process”

Counter-view

movements have not displaced parties → limits of direct democracy → parties stay the main agents of interest aggregation and government formation

Conclusion routes

R1 internet + career activists open popular space → movements supplement, not substitute, parties

R2 NSMs are a real but partial link → they complement parties in connecting government and society

Political parties aggregate interests and remain central to representative democracy, but their capacity to connect government with society is weakening.

Alan Rosenthal views a worldwide decline of representative democracy and Pierre Rosanvallon describes the present moment as "post-representative". The falling voter turnout, shrinking party membership, declining trust in politicians and the personalisation of politics as social media lets leaders bypass party structures.

In India, parties remain dynastic, play ethnic politics and struggle to grasp growing economic and environmental complexities. They shape public opinion and the policy agenda, capture government attention through sustained effort and secure inclusion of their representatives in advisory committees.

The section 377 judgement shows how the LGBT movement addressed a state-society gap that parties has ignored. Rajni Kothari called it as "non-party political process."

The limits of direct democracy keep parties the main agents of interest aggregation and government formation. With the internet's spread and the rise of career activists, movements open up popular space, but they supplement rather than substitute political parties.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2017 · 10 marks

Examine the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) movement in developed societies and how it is affecting the political participation in developing societies.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

- R1 LGBT movement = new social movement of the developed West → quality of life over material demand
- R2 its real weight for developing societies → how it widens who takes part in politics

Body flow

Habermas: economic security → rights + autonomy → postmodern deconstruction of masculinity/femininity → recognition under the third generation of human rights (**Vasak**) → Western methods: lobbying / marches / social media / art → fills state-society gap parties ignored → India: NALSA 2014 (reservation + third gender as first-time voter identity) → Navtej Singh Johar (Section 377 struck down) → participation widens: transgender candidates, closeted sections enter public life

Counter-view

in developing societies NSMs still nascent → closer to conventional protest than Western sophistication → gains uneven

Conclusion routes

- R1 Western-born movement opens new political space in the developing world
- R2 recognition abroad → participation at home, but widening stays uneven

The LGBT movement is a new social movement of the developed West, driven by quality of life rather than material demand.

Its significance for developing societies lies in how it has widened who takes part in politics.

For Jurgen Habermas, such movements move from economic security toward rights and autonomy. The movement carries a postmodern deconstruction of masculinity and femininity. They seek recognition under what Karel Vasak calls the third generation of human rights. In the West it works through lobbying, street marches, social media and art.

In India, the NALSA judgment (2014) granted reservation in education and jobs and recognised the third gender as a voter identity for the first time.

In Navtej Johar, the SC struck down under 377, which had treated homosexual acts as an "unnatural offence". Parties now field transgender candidates and once-closeted sections enter public life without fear.

A movement born in the West has therefore opened new space in developing-world politics. But there it remains at an early stage, closer to conventional protest than to Western sophistication, so participation widens unevenly.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2018 · 10 marks

How big a role does identity play in determining political participation in the developing countries? Discuss your answer with suitable illustrations.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

- R1 West runs on rule of law → developing world runs on identity → identity fills the gap
- R2 legal institutions weakly rooted → identity becomes the key channel of participation → decisive role

Body flow

Pye: non-Western process communal / loyalty-based → mobilise on identity, not issues → **Chatterjee:** civil society vs political society → political society (hawkers, slum dwellers) thrives on identity → India (**Kothari's** caste + **Ambedkar's** Dalit mobilisation, affirmative action) → Nigeria (**Anderson's** “imagined communities” / ethnic) → Lebanon (confessional sectarian quota)

Counter-view

Huntington's double edge → empowers the marginalised vs deepens divisions / weakens national unity

Conclusion routes

- R1 role large and defining, not marginal
- R2 worth conditional → widens participation or hardens cleavages

Identity plays a decisive role in shaping political participation in developing societies. In western systems the rule of law governs the input and output of politics. In the developing world, where legal institutions are weakly rooted, identity holds the key to participation.

Lucian Pye shows that the non-western political process is communal, charismatic and loyalty-based and people mobilise around shared identity rather than issues. Partha Chatterjee argues this through his distinction between civil society and political society.

In India, caste provides the basis of mobilisation (Rajni Kothari) seen in B.R. Ambedkar's mobilisation of Dalits & demands for affirmative action.

In Nigeria, shared ethnicity, Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" drives group mobilisation. Lebanon's confessional power-sharing allocates offices by sectarian quota, entrenching identity based politics.

As Samuel P. Huntington argues that identity politics empowers marginalised groups but can deepen divisions and weaken national unity.

Identity's role is therefore large and defining, its worth turning on whether it widens participation or hardens cleavages.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2019 · 15 marks

Explain the reasons for low voter turnout in democratic countries with suitable examples.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 turnout read as a health-check of democracy → its steady fall has no single cause → symptom of a widening citizen-institution distance

R2 voting = the minimal act of democratic participation → decline across mature democracies → citizens quietly drifting from the ballot

Body flow

disillusionment / apathy (**Putnam** — falling social capital, EU Parliament polls) → institutional barriers (**Piven & Cloward** — registration, timing, voter-ID; low-income & minority hit) → voter fatigue (**Franklin** — Switzerland) → contentment (**Inglehart** — post-materialism, Japan) → crisis of legitimacy (**Habermas** — Occupy / Yellow Vests → far-right resentment, Trump / Le Pen → distant political class)

Counter-view

low turnout not always decay → contentment, not only disaffection or exclusion → some abstention signals satisfaction with the status quo

Conclusion routes

R1 cure lies in substance, not compulsion → **Sen** — democracy as a good in itself → electoral-funding reform, wider representation, civil society

R2 turnout a mixed signal → exclusion + disaffection outweigh contentment → reconnect citizens to institutions to revive the vote

Voter turnout is treated as a measure of democratic health, but its fall across established democracies has no single cause.

Low turnout reflects a widening distance between citizens and the institutions meant to represent them. Many voters no longer believe their vote changes anything. Robert Putnam, in *Bowling Alone*, links this to declining social capital i.e. the erosion of civic ties that once drew people to the polls.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, in *Why Americans Don't Vote*, show how complex registration, inconvenient timing and restrictive voter-ID laws depress participation, hitting low-income and minority voters hardest. The low turnout is built by design, not chosen.

Mark Franklin finds that frequent elections and referendums tire voters, as in Switzerland. But contentment can lower the need to vote.

Ronald Inglehart's post-materialist values explain Japan, where satisfaction with the status quo, not despair, keeps many home. Low turnout is not always a sign of decay.

Jürgen Habermas ties abstention to corruption and the unmet promise of liberty and equality. This pushes citizens from the ballot to the street i.e. Occupy Wall Street, the Yellow Vests and towards far-right challengers like Trump and Le Pen, voicing resentment against a distant political class.

The remedy lies less in compulsion than in making democracy substantively worth joining. Amartya Sen's argument for democracy is through electoral - funding reform, wider representation and civil - society engagement.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2019 · 15 marks

Write an essay on 'New Social Movements' in developing countries.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

- R1** not every demand is material → Marxist reductionism fails → protest shifts to identity, rights, environment
- R2** **Habermas**: revolt against the over-sized, over-rational state intruding on private life → but in the developing world the shift is only partial

Body flow

organisation = decentralisation + participative, middle class & students (**Mukherjee and Ramaswamy**) → range: youth / feminist / ecological / civil-rights → distinctive Southern face is ecological → **Guha's** empty-stomach South vs full-stomach North + **Shiva's** resistance to global exploitation → grounding: Tiger Leaping Gorge China (2007), Narmada Bachao, Kudankulam → but no independent evolution → still basic needs, methods identical to old (strikes, dharnas), scope tied to direct concerns

Counter-view

Asef Bayat: don't romanticise → without real political-economic change, larger goals stay out of reach

Conclusion routes

- R1** a hybrid — new aspirations resting on an old material base
- R2** still incipient — livelihood dominates, democracy stays procedural (only the vote)

New social movements opened space for the idea that not every human demand is material. Marxist reductionism, tying all collective action to class and economy, could not grasp these newer forms of protest, which turned to identity, rights and the environment.

Jurgen Habermas calls them as a resistance to the excessive size and rationality of the state and its intrusion into the private lives of individuals. In developing countries, however, this shift stays partial, blending the new with the old,

Their organisation rests on decentralisation and participative decision-making, drawing on the emerging middle class & students as Subrata Mukherjee and Sushila Ramaswamy observe.

Ramachandra Guha contrasts the "empty stomach" environmentalism of the global South with the 'full stomach' environmentalism of the North.

While Vandana Shiva sees such movements resisting global exploitation and promoting sustainable development.

The green movement in China against the Tiger Leaping Gorge dam (2007), which threatened to displace 100,000 people, the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Kudankulam protest show this character.

But in developing societies these movements have no independent evolution. They centre on basic needs and their methods strikes, dharnas and protests. They stay close to older movements, with scope limited to issues that directly affect participants.

Asef Bayat argues that without substantial political and economic change, their larger goals may remain out of reach. They are still at an incipient stage, where livelihood dominates and democracy often means only the act of voting.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2020 · 10 marks

Has the increased participation of the underprivileged in the political process of the developing societies strengthened democracy or created political chaos and conflict? Comment.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 post-1980s democratisation wave → participation central to democracy → underprivileged drawn in → deepening, not decay

R2 entry of the excluded looks like disorder → but it is democracy widening its base → strengthening, not breakdown

Body flow

inclusion widened → **Yadav** “democratic upsurge” → **Kothari** caste mobilisation → electoral integration → raised negotiating power → chaos surfaces: Mandal reservation clash + communal violence + mobocracy (**Naipaul**) → **Huntington**: not political decay → **Riggs**: not a “development trap” → India deepens democracy through the churn → weak democracies (Pakistan/Myanmar) = military-bureaucratic oligarchy, not mass participation → **Gramsci**: subaltern participation = first condition of emancipation

Counter-view

participation as mobocracy — caste-reservation and communal conflict, competitive identity politics (**Naipaul**) → set against participation as empowerment and democratic deepening (**Yadav**, **Kothari**, **Gramsci**)

Conclusion routes

R1 underprivileged strengthened democracy → conflict is the friction of deepening, not chaos

R2 churn is the price of inclusion → contained within democracy → empowerment over decay

The wave of democratisation since the 1980s made participation central to democracy and developing societies widened the base of inclusion by drawing in the underprivileged.

This entry has deepened the democracy. Yogendra Yadav describes a "democratic upsurge" i.e. the rising participation of the underprivileged in search of empowerment. Rajni Kothari argues that caste became the basis for mobilising people & integrating them into the electoral process. The wider participation raised their negotiating power.

Caste & reservation clashes over Mandal, communal violence and competitive identity politics can slide into mobocracy. V.S. Naipaul calls this disorder in India: A million mutinies now.

But such conflict is not necessarily political decay, as Samuel P. Huntington argued, nor a 'development trap' in F.W. Riggs's sense. India has instead sustained & deepened democracy.

Where democracy stays weak, as in Pakistan or Myanmar, the cause is military-bureaucratic oligarchy, not mass participation.

For Antonio Gramsci, the participation of subaltern classes is the first requirement of their emancipation.

The underprivileged have strengthened democracy & the conflict it causes is the friction of deepening, not chaos or decay.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2021 · 20 marks

Explain the impact of electoral systems and cleavages in shaping party systems with reference to developing countries.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 party system = relevant parties (**Sartori**), not raw count → two shapers: electoral rules + cleavages

R2 electoral design vs social division → their interaction, not either alone → developing ≠ West

Body flow

district magnitude decisive → FPTP single-member vs PR multi-member → **Duverger's** law (FPTP → two-party + candidate-centred; PR → multiparty + programme-based) → India deviation (no clean two-party; dominant-party → coalition) → rule alone insufficient → cleavage = historical social line → caste/religion/language/ethnicity deeper than class → ethno-nationalist/religious/regional parties → **Kothari** (caste as mobilisation + electoral integration) → **Bienen & Herbst** (class weak in Africa) → religion fills gap (Algeria's ISF) → FPTP + cleavages + **Riggs's** prismatic society/formalism → intermediate party (closer to mass than elitist; India)

Counter-view

universal typologies exist (**Weiner & La Palombara**) vs same design + deep cleavages give context-specific systems that cannot be imported

Conclusion routes

R1 electoral design × cleavages, filtered through transitional society → distinctive developing-country systems

R2 interaction, not electoral rule alone → sets developing world apart from the West

Giovanni Sartori argued that a party system is defined not by the raw number of parties but by the number with systemic relevance.

Two forces shape it: the electoral system, which sets the rules and social cleavages, which divide the voters.

Plurality and majority systems elect a single member, while proportional representation elects several, raising proportionality and party number. From this Maurice Duverger drew i.e. first-past-the-post tends toward two party systems & candidate centred campaigns, while proportional representation encourages multi partyism and programme based campaigning.

In developing societies caste, religion, language and ethnicity run deeper than class, producing ethno-nationalist, religious & regional parties.

Rajni Kothari showed how caste becomes the basis for mobilising people and integrating them into electoral process.

Where class is weak, as Bieman and Herbst find across Africa, religion fills the gap and Algeria's Islamic Salvation front fused religious and political appeal.

F.W. Riggs's prismatic society, where formal rules and actual practice diverge, the result is an intermediate party system, closer to the mass than the elitist type, as India shows.

Myron Weiner and Joseph La Palombara built global party system types, but they cannot be imported into developing societies.

The interaction of electoral design and social cleavages, filtered through a transitional society, explains the distinctive party systems of the developing world and sets them apart from the West.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2021 · 10 marks

“Political parties and pressure groups are sine qua non of democracy.” Comment.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

- R1 democracy = organised choice → parties + pressure groups the two channels that make choice possible
- R2 claim restated → both are the indispensable machinery linking citizens to power

Body flow

Laski: only alternative to party government is dictatorship → parties convert demands → programmes, supply govt + opposition → **Hague & Harrop**: without parties, “chaos of individual opinions” → pressure groups complete the machinery → **Finer** “invisible empires”: policy influence without office, voice minorities parties overlook → **Kothari**: widen participation, “non-party political process,” beyond the vote → **Webb**: together they give citizens control over elites → **Schattschneider**: democracy’s foundation tied to both

Counter-view

behaviouralist caution: parties → electoral machines, pressure groups → junior partners → wealthier groups crowd out weaker voices → indispensability is conditional

Conclusion routes

- R1 sine qua non only as living channels of representation, not vote-gathering bodies
- R2 statement holds, but form must serve function — revive the representative/movement character

Democracy is government through organised choice and parties, pressure groups are two channels that make that choice possible. Harold J. Laski held that in any modern state the only alternative to party government is dictatorship.

Parties convert scattered demands into rival programmes and supply both government and opposition. Hague and Harrop argues that without them a democracy would dissolve into a "chaos of individual opinions".

Samuel Finer described them as "invisible empires" that shape policy without seeking office, voicing minority interests that broad parties overlook. According to Rajni Kothari, they widen participation as a "non-party political process", carrying democracy beyond the vote.

Paul Webb adds that together the two give citizens real choice over and control of their political elites. E.E. Schattschneider therefore tied the very foundation of democracy to the working of both.

Behaviouralists argues that parties have shrunk into electoral machines and pressure groups into junior partners, while wealthier groups crowd out weaker voices. They remain *sine qua non* only where they stay living channels of representation, not mere vote-gathering bodies.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2022 · 15 marks

Discuss the role of social movements in strengthening the democratic processes in developing societies.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

- R1 developing democracy often procedural, limited to voting → movements as the chief non-party channel carrying democracy beyond the ballot
- R2 define social movement (change / new order / resist) → excluded sections unheard between elections → movements give democracy real content

Body flow

Kothari: social movements as non-party political processes → marginalised bypass elite-captured institutions, shape policy from outside → platform for minorities adds legitimacy + effectiveness → **Tarrow:** spread of democratic rights makes the state the target → **Tilly:** high-capacity states absorb collective action, low-capacity states breed violence → illustrations: Myanmar / Section 377-LGBT gap parties ignored / Anna Hazare → AAP → new communication tech fuels more direct democracy

Counter-view

role not unqualified → movements can turn anti-democratic (Nepal, parts of Africa → civil war) → **Bayat:** without deeper political-economic change, goals stay out of reach

Conclusion routes

- R1 movements deepen participation beyond procedure → strengthen democracy in developing societies
- R2 outcome hinges on state capacity + restraint → supplement, not replace, formal channels

In many developing societies democracy stays procedural, reduced to act of voting, while large sections remain unheard between elections.

A social movement is a collective attempt to change social institutions, build a new order, or resist change. According to Rajni Kothari, social movements are non-party political processes. When elite-captured state institutions failed the marginalised, these groups turned to non-party formations that shape policy from outside.

This extra-parliamentary struggle from below works to broaden democratic participation. Sidney Tarrow views that as democratic rights spread, the state itself becomes the target of collective action.

Charles Tilly argues that high-capacity democratic states absorb such action, while low-capacity ones breed greater violence in public life.

The overthrow of military rule in Myanmar is the case of movements strengthening democracy. In India, the LGBT movement forced open a state-society gap that parties had ignored, and Anna Hazare's 2011 anti-corruption stir fed into party politics through the Aam Aadmi Party. New communication technologies have fuelled these engines of more direct democracy.

Movements can also turn against democracy, as recent slides into civil war in Nepal and parts of Africa show. Asef Bayat argues that without deeper political & economic change, their goals often stay out of reach.

In developing societies, movements strengthen democracy by deepening participation beyond procedure, but the outcome rests on state capacity and their restraint. They supplement formal channels, not replace them.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2024 · 20 marks

Discuss the major recent social movements related to the physical rights of women in various countries of the world.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

- R1** physical rights = freedom from violence + control over one's own body → sharpest edge of women's rights → recent movements turn private harms into public claims
- R2** these movements read as new social movements → **Scott's** personal autonomy (women's liberation) over body, health, safety

Body flow

rights base: freedom from violence + highest health standard, but inequality still feeds violence → sexual/reproductive health tied to life, health, privacy → **CESCR** + **CEDAW** affirm health includes sexual/reproductive health → **#MeToo** (digital age) exposes gender-based violence + harassment → abortion as central battleground → **Amnesty International** + grassroots defenders → Argentina, Ireland, Poland, South Korea

Counter-view

violations persist (forced sterilisation, virginity examinations, forced abortion, FGM, early marriage) → WHO + UN: ~1 in 3 women face violence, barely changed in two decades

Conclusion routes

- R1** recognition won, resources not → funding + political will lag → 2030 target distant
- R2** **Fraser**: recognition without redistribution stays incomplete → physical rights now await the second

Physical rights of women i.e. the right to live free from violence and to control one's own body from the sharpest edge of the struggle for women's rights. Recent movements worldwide have turned these private harms into public political claims.

Alan Scott places women's liberation at the core of personal autonomy, and it is this autonomy over body, health & safety that the recent wave asserts.

Women's rights include freedom from violence & discrimination and the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Sexual and reproductive health is tied to rights to life, health and privacy. The committee on economic, social & cultural rights and the committee on the elimination of discrimination against women affirm that the right to health covers sexual and reproductive health.

The clearest example is the digital-age #MeToo campaign, which exposed how widespread gender based violence & sexual harassment remain.

Amnesty International, working with grassroots defenders, has pressed to change strict abortion laws in Argentina, Ireland, Poland and South Korea.

These gains sit against stubborn violations i.e. forced sterilisation, forced virginity examinations, forced abortion, female genital mutilation and early marriage. A WHO & UN report finds one in three women worldwide have faced intimate-partner or sexual violence.

The movements have won recognition but not resources. Funding and political will lag behind need, and the 2030 target to end this violence looks distant. As Nancy Fraser argues, recognition without redistribution stays incomplete; the physical rights of women still await the second.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2024 · 15 marks

Critically examine the role of political parties in sustaining and stabilising democracies in the developing societies.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 parties = bridge between State & citizenry → participation, representation, accountability

R2 survival of democracy turns on party institutionalisation, not mere presence

Body flow

Huntington: parties institutionalise mass participation = order → mobilisation outrunning institutions = disorder, party-less = coup-prone → **Dahl** (polyarchy): plurality bridges social/economic/ethnic groups, cuts marginalisation → **Diamond**: party competition = accountability = long-term stability

Counter-view

developing-world reality blunts these functions → **Sandbrook**: personalism over ideology + **Webb**: parties as personal/dynastic property → erodes accountability → **Migdal** ("strong societies, weak states"): clientelism/patronage stalls consolidation → **Horowitz** ("ethnic outbidding"): parties deepen polarisation instead of bridging cleavages

Conclusion routes

R1 role genuine but conditional → not parties as such but institutionalised parties sustain democracy

R2 India holds democracy through party churn → institutionalisation the deciding factor; without it, parties destabilise

In developing societies political parties are the bridge between the state and the citizenry, offering platforms for participation, representation of diverse interests and government accountability.

The stabilising case rests on Samuel P. Huntington. In *Political Order in Changing Societies* he argues that parties organise & institutionalise mass participation, the key to order in modernising societies. The mobilisation outruns institutions, participation breeds disorder and party-less systems stay conservative and turn coup-prone.

Robert Dahl's idea of polyarchy argues that a plurality of parties bridges social, economic and ethnic groups, reducing marginalisation and instability. Larry Diamond holds the party competition keeps governments responsive to the electorate aiding long-term stability.

Richard Sandbrook finds personalistic politics displacing ideology across Africa & Latin America, & Paul Webb shows how parties often become personal property of founding leaders.

Joel Migdal's strong societies, weak states captures how clientelism and patronage crowd out policy and stall democratic consolidation. Donald Horowitz sees "ethnic outbidding" in divided societies, parties deepen polarisation rather than bridging cleavages as Dahl hoped.

The role of parties is therefore genuine but conditional. In developing societies it is not parties as such but institution-alised parties that sustain and stabilise democracy.

India's experience, holding democracy together through decades of party churn, shows the difference that institutionalism makes; without it, parties can as easily destabilize the order they were meant to secure.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2025 · 20 marks

Of late, centrist and centre-left political parties have been facing setbacks while centre-right parties have been in ascendancy the world over. Comment.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 spectrum set by ownership → left/state-proletariat, right/private-capital, centre/liberal + social democracy → name the trend

R2 setbacks are real → but signal exhaustion of the post-war centrist consensus, not a settled right victory

Body flow

centre-left rested on welfare-socialist consensus (SPD / Scandinavia, Keynes + welfare) → 1980s New Right (Thatcher / Reagan) broke it → state rolled back, economic ground lost → deeper cause = lost distinctiveness → **Kirchheimer's** catch-all + “end of ideology” → mainstream convergence, class anchor weakens → vacuum filled → New Right returns (W. Europe, Canada, Australia, NZ) → right-wing populism = ethno-nationalism + anti-elitism → drivers: economic insecurity + cultural backlash → Trump / Le Pen / Salvini

Counter-view

the right is not monolithic → **Burke's** moderate right (gradual change, rule of law, some welfare) vs far right (absolutist, ethnically exclusionary) → costs: strain on democratic norms, polarisation, far-right violence

Conclusion routes

R1 the shift is a representation gap left by a converged centre, not a durable realignment

R2 plural parties remain vital for minority voice and healthy competition

The left-right divide turns on ownership: the left favours state ownership for the working proletariat, the right private ownership benefiting capitalists & the centre the ground of liberal democracy and social democracy.

The recent setbacks to centrist and centre-left parties, set against a rising centre-right are real; but they reflect the exhaustion of a post-war consensus more than a settled victory for the right.

The German SPD and Scandinavian social democrats built mixed economies, balancing Keynesian policy with welfare. By 1980s the New Right, led by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, broke this consensus, rolling back the state in favour of free markets and privatisation.

Otto Kirchheimer's catch-all party marked the retreat from ideological loyalty toward broad appeal and the mid-1950s "end of ideology" mood drew rival parties toward a common centre.

Into this vacuum the New Right returned across Western Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Right-wing populism joins ethno-nationalism to anti-elitism, mobilising resentment against immigrants, minorities and the establishment. Its drivers are economic insecurity i.e. unemployment, wage stagnation, inequality and cultural backlash, seen in figures like Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen and Matteo Salvini.

The moderate right of Edmund Burke accepts gradual change, the rule of law and welfare. The far right seeks an absolutist, ethnically exclusionary state, straining democratic norms, deepening polarisation and at its extreme, feeding violence in New Zealand and the West.

The shift is therefore a symptom of a representation gap, not a durable realignment. Plural parties remain vital for minority voice and healthy competition.

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