

PSIR OPTIONAL · UPSC CSE

EDITION 2026

PYQ Vault

560

questions

50

days

10

years of PYQs

DAY 37

Contemporary Global Concerns — I

· 11 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 · 20 marks

Examine the main problems and challenges involved in looking after environmental concerns in world politics.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 environment once peripheral → now the archetypal borderless global issue → **Buzan**: central to the security agenda

R2 a borderless problem handled through a state system → each government answers to national interest first → managing it is structurally hard

Body flow

Hardin's tragedy of the commons → responsibility diffused, states free-ride → no consensus across development levels → short-term gain vs long-term sustainability → North-South divide → **Dauvergne**: improve the environment vs reform an unfair system → **Guha**: empty-stomach environmentalism, emissions without representation → historical responsibility + CBDR

Counter-view

agreements *are* reached and institutions *do* exist (cooperation not impossible) → but weak enforcement, diluted responsibility (**CSE**: Paris, Katowice finance) and US withdrawal (**Ban Ki-moon**) blunt them

Conclusion routes

R1 obstacles are political, not technical → reconciling national interest with a shared planet

R2 **IPCC**: 1.5°C budget exhausted by 2030 even under Paris → urgency demands a common-good, differentiated approach

Environmental issues once sat on the periphery of world politics. Today the environmental crisis is the archetypal global issue, its effects crossing every border & touching the whole planet.

Barry Buzan places the environment at the centre of the security agenda. But the difficulty of managing it is structural. A borderless problem must be handled through a state system in which each government answers to its own interest.

This mismatch is criticised by Garrett Hardin's "tragedy of the commons." Shared resources i.e. the atmosphere, the oceans are degraded because responsibility is diffused and no single state bears the cost of restraint & has reason to free-ride. Consensus is therefore hard to build among states at different levels of development, where short-term economic gain competes with long-term sustainability.

There is the North-South divide. According to Dauvergne, the North treats the goal as improving the global environment, while the South treats the problem as an unfair global system. Ramachandra Guha calls the southern stance "empty stomach environmentalism" and the Global South a "victim of emissions without representation".

Even where agreement is reached, weak enforcement undermines it. Ban Ki-moon argues that the US's withdrawal makes finance harder to raise, given that it is the second-largest polluter.

The obstacles are therefore political, not technical. With the IPCC finding the 1.5°C carbon budget exhausted by 2030 under Paris, a common-good, differentiated approach is the only realistic path.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2017 · 10 marks

Give an assessment of the Feminist critique of contemporary global issues.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 “where do women stand?” in gender-neutral problems → feminism reveals the hidden gendered dimensions

R2 contemporary global issues appear neutral → a feminist lens exposes the patriarchy running through them

Body flow

poverty / education / health worsened by patriarchy → violence against women as global, not private → under-representation in decision-making → climate hits women hardest → globalisation's unequal burdens: Bangladesh factory fire, migrant third-world women's cheap labour → digital divide (12% gap)

Counter-view

Mohanty's self-correction → reject the homogenised “Third World woman” → intersectional, bottom-up solidarity

Conclusion routes

R1 value = making the “personal international” → registered in UNSCR 1325, gender mainstreaming, UN Women

R2 the critique's strength holds only if it stays intersectional, not universalising women's experience

Feminist critiques places one question onto global politics: where do women stand in problems treated as gender-neutral? Their focus is to reveal the gendered dimensions hidden inside contemporary global issues.

Feminism shows that poverty, education gaps & health disparities are worsened by patriarchal systems. Violence against women i.e. domestic violence, harassment & trafficking becomes a global rather than a private concern. Their under-representation in decision-making positions is exposed as a structural gap.

Climate change falls hardest on women in the developing world. Globalisation distributes its benefits and burdens unequally.

Exploitation runs through supply chains, as the Bangladesh garment factory fire showed & affluent economies lean on the cheap labour of migrant third-world women. Even digital spaces mirror old hierarchies as women "12% less likely than men use the internet."

Chandra Talpade Mohanty rejects western narratives that homogenise the 'Third World Woman' & argues for intersectional, bottom-up solidarity. Its value lies in showing that "personal is international". It is a claim carried into UNSCR 1325, gender mainstreaming and UN women.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2017 · 20 marks

The recent move of USA to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement is a setback in the consensus achieved on protecting the world environment. In this context, assess the future prospectives on climate control.?

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 Paris (2015) = rare voluntary consensus, bottom-up NDCs, <2°C → US exit a real setback (rests on collective commitment, not enforcement)

R2 US withdrawal (Trump 2017 → finalised 2020) = retreat from multilateralism → tests whether a consensus regime survives one major emitter leaving

Body flow

Falkner: exit weakens the collective commitment the accord depends on → **Ban Ki-moon:** US as 2nd-largest polluter burdens the carbon budget + makes finance harder → domino effect: developing states may relax pledges (decarbonisation cost + energy security) → onus shifts to EU / China / India (none experienced in a multilateral regime) + unclear Katowice Rulebook → dilution risk → **IPCC:** 1.5°C budget gone by 2030 even if Paris followed → bottom-up design absorbs the exit, US rejoins under Biden → **Stern:** link climate action to development for equity

Counter-view

one emitter's exit can unravel a voluntary consensus (contagion, diluted finance) **vs** a bottom-up architecture is resilient — survives exits and re-entries, held together by remaining emitters, finance and equity

Conclusion routes

R1 prospects turn on sustained finance + CBDR + leadership of the remaining emitters, not any single state

R2 setback real but not permanent → future secured by integrating climate with equitable development, not the presence of the US

The Paris Agreement of 2015 built a consensus among major emitters to hold warming well below 2°C through a voluntary, bottom-up architecture of nationally determined contributions.

The withdrawal of the US initiated under the Trump administration in 2017 & finalised in 2020 is a setback, because such regime rests on collective commitment rather than enforcement.

Robert Falkner argues that the exit weakens the collective commitment on which the agreement depends. As the 2nd largest polluter, the U.S. burdens the global carbon budget. In Ban-Ki-Moon's view it makes climate finance harder to raise. The danger is the domino effect i.e. where developing states facing the cost of decarbonisation & their energy security relax their pledges, unravelling the consensus.

The onus shifted to the EU, China and India, none with experience of sustaining a multilateral regime, while the unclear Katowice Rulebook raised the risk of dilution. The IPCC finds that the carbon budget for 1.5°C will be exhausted by 2030 even if Paris is fully followed. Still, the bottom-up design absorbed the exit, & the US rejoined under Biden, showing the setback need not be permanent.

Nicholas Stern holds that durable progress requires integrating climate action with development so that the regime remains equitable and inclusive.

Climate control therefore turns on sustained finance, differentiated responsibility and leadership by the remaining emitters and not on the presence of any state.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2018 · 15 marks

Would you agree that the on-going debates on international environmental politics continue to be marred by a new North-South ideological divide over historical responsibility and developmental model? Illustrate your answer with suitable examples.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 agree → environmental politics = a new arena of the old North-South conflict → **Dauvergne's** two goals (improve environment vs reform an unfair system)

R2 since Stockholm 1972 the blocs diverge → G-8 vs G-77 → the divide is ideological, not technical

Body flow

historical responsibility (North's 150 yrs of emissions vs South's equity) → CBDR + Kyoto Annex I / non-Annex I → **Guha** (deep ecology vs empty-stomach environmentalism; victim without representation) → developmental model (right to develop vs shared restraint) → **Indira Gandhi** (poverty as polluter) → EU “good cop” / US “bad cop” + US quits Paris → Paris (2015) dilution + Katowice finance unclear

Counter-view

C. Raja Mohan (South “suboptimal,” “defensive,” reactive) → the divide is sustained by both sides

Conclusion routes

R1 the proposition holds → the divide still mars the debate

R2 eases only via redistributive justice → **Prebisch's** 1% GNP transfer

Environmental politics has become the newest arena for the old North-South conflict. Since the Stockholm Conference of 1972, the industrialised G-8 and the developing G77 have sought different ends from the same negotiations.

Dauvergne argues that the North defines the goal as improving the global environment, while the South sees the real problem as an unfair global system. The divide is ideological and not technical.

The North produced the bulk of emissions across more than 150 years of industrialisation and the South demands equity.

Ramachandra Guha sharpens it, setting the West's "deep ecology" against the South's "empty stomach environmentalism" and calling the South a "victim of emissions without representation".

The South's right to develop against the North's demand for shared restraint. Indira Gandhi called poverty the primary polluter. Within the North, the EU plays 'good cop' while the US, quitting the Paris Agreement, plays 'bad cop.' At Paris historical responsibility was diluted & the Katowice Rulebook left climate finance unclear.

C. Raja Mohan finds the South's posture "suboptimal" and "defensive", reactive rather than proactive, so both sides sustain the divide.

Therefore, the debate remains mired by this new divide, and it eases only through redistributive justice. Raul Prebisch's call for the North to transfer 1% of its GNP to the South.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2019 · 15 marks

Is democracy promotion in developing countries a feasible idea?

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 can democracy be exported? → the record is mixed → feasibility turns on method, not goal → feasible as facilitation from within, not coercion

R2 democracy's universal appeal (**Locke**: safeguard of rights) → method decides feasibility → feasible only where change is organic

Body flow

case for promotion: **Doyle**'s democratic peace (democracies more peaceful, esp. with each other; political culture + moral values + economic ties) → **Sen vs Lee Kuan Yew**: democracy democratises development → but imposition counter-productive: **Locke**'s blind spot (authoritarian/tribal legacies) → “democracy at gunpoint” Iraq/Afghanistan → violence, weak governance, corruption, Taliban 2021 → “cultural imperialism” (**Appadurai**) → “illiberal democracy” (**Zakaria**): elections without institutions, unstable/hollow → **Huntington's Third Wave**: support works only where conditions are conducive → Tunisia (2011 Arab Spring, civil society, internal commitment)

Counter-view

coercive external imposition (“democracy at gunpoint”) vs organic, internally-driven democratisation

Conclusion routes

R1 democracy thrives when internal movements are supported + institutions built over time

R2 feasible as facilitation of an organic, intrinsic process, not coercion

John Locke saw democracy as the safeguard of individual rights & liberties. But feasibility turns less on the goal than on the method.

Michael Doyle's democratic peace theory holds that democracies are more peaceful, especially with one another. It rests on shared political culture, common moral values & ties of economic cooperation. For developing societies, the Amartya Sen - Lee Kuan Yew debate shows that democracy does not presuppose development but democratises development itself.

Locke's own assumption that societies easily adopt these principles ignores their authoritarian and tribal legacies. "Democracy at gunpoint" in Iraq & Afghanistan met violence, weak governance & corruption, and the Taliban returned in 2021.

Arjun Appadurai class these imposition as "cultural imperialism".
While elections without institutions produce Fareed Zakaria's
"illiberal democracy" which is unstable and hollow.

Samuel P. Huntington, in the third wave, argued that external
support helps only where domestic conditions are conducive.
Tunisia confirms this as its transition after the 2011 Arab
Spring rested on an active civil society & internal political
commitment and not outside force.

Democracy thrives when internal movements are supported and
institutions are built over time. Promotion is feasible, but as
facilitation of an organic, intrinsic process & not as coercion.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2020 · 15 marks

Examine the role of the United Nations Framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC) and other major efforts by the UN to address the global environmental crisis.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 environmental crisis = archetypal global issue, crosses borders → collective UN governance the natural site

R2 **Eckersley**: state-centric realism → ecocentric cosmopolitanism → architecture strong in norms, weak in enforcement

Body flow

Rio 1992 → UNFCCC (equity + CBDR + historical responsibility) → Kyoto 1997 (binding targets, carbon credits) → 2013 bottom-up turn: INDCs → Paris 2015 (major emitters pledge cuts) → **IPCC** (WMO + UNEP → science) → SDGs 13, 14, 15

Counter-view

limits: collective good vs national interest → US & Canada outside → no binding enforcement → **IPCC** (pledges too weak, 1.5°C budget gone by 2030) → equity itself contested (**Dauvergne**: North = improve environment vs South = fix an unfair order)

Conclusion routes

R1 role real but structural → builds norms, science, participation → cannot compel

R2 progress depends on aligning the collective good with national interest

The environmental crisis is the archetypal global problem, crossing borders to affect the whole planet. According to Robyn Eckenley, politics is shifting from state-centric realism towards ecocentric cosmopolitanism, making collective UN governance necessary.

The resulting architecture is stronger in norms than in enforcement. The framework took shape at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, where the UNFCCC was negotiated. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 was its first implementation, binding developed countries to targets and using tradable carbon credits.

From 2013 the regime turned bottom-up, as the UNFCCC introduced Intended Nationally Determined Contributions & Paris Agreement of 2015 won pledges from major emitters to cut emissions. The IPCC, formed by the WMO with UNEP, led the science, while SDGs 13, 14 & 15 extended the agenda.

The collective good keeps colliding with national interests, & the US and Canada have stayed outside key commitments. Lacking binding enforcement, the IPCC finds many Paris pledges too weak, and holds that even full compliance leaves the 1.5°C carbon budget exhausted by 2030.

According to Dauvergne, the North seeks to improve the global environment, while the South seeks to correct an unfair global order.

The UN's role is real but structural. Through the UNFCCC it has built norms, science & participation, but it can guide states without compelling them. Its progress depends on aligning collective good with national interest.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2022 · 20 marks

How has the electoral democracy augmented the participation of people in the democratic process?

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 modern vs ancient democracy = representation → **Tocqueville**: more participation, more democratic → elections the route people entered public life

R2 electoral democracy = a free/fair choice of representatives → the vehicle that widened popular participation → real augmentation, but uneven

Body flow

franchise + secret ballot + open contest → equal say, subjects → participants → participation beyond the vote (office, parties, RTI, civic engagement) → widening real but uneven → **Dalton**'s participation gap (better-off engage, poor under-mobilised) → **Peruzzotti** (populists ride electoral legitimacy → undermine liberal democracy) → electoral victory can mask shrinking real participation

Counter-view

elections widen participation vs the participation gap + populist instrumentalisation → electoral success ≠ meaningful participation

Conclusion routes

R1 inclusive reforms → **Lijphart**'s proportional systems + civic education + participatory-deliberative forums inside institutions

R2 electoral democracy necessary but not sufficient → participation meaningful only when entrenched in institutions

Modern democracy differs from its ancient form in one basic respect i.e. the people no longer rule directly but choose representatives to govern for them.

Electoral democracy is the arrangement through which this choice is made & it has been the main route by which ordinary people entered public life. Alexis de Tocqueville held that the more people take part, the more democratic a system becomes.

An electoral democracy allows every eligible citizen to select representatives through free & fair contests, held independently of incumbents are free of coercion or bribery. This is how the vote converted subjects into participants, giving substance to the idea of democracy as the power of the people.

Elections open further channels i.e. contesting office, joining or building parties & holding governments to account through instruments such as the Right to Information and steady civic & political engagement.

Russell J. Dalton points to a participation gap i.e. the better-off remain the most engaged, while the poorest vote less & lack the resources to lobby. Enrique Peruzzotti argues that populists lean on electoral legitimacy to avoid open authoritarianism, then use that same success to undermine liberal democracy. Electoral victory can therefore coexist with shrinking real participation.

The way forward is making elections more inclusive. Arend Lijphart links proportional systems to higher turnout, civic education & participatory and deliberative forums built into representative institutions.

Electoral democracy is necessary but not sufficient. Participation becomes meaningful only when it is entrenched in institutions.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2023 · 15 marks

Narrate the various ways in which rapid environmental degradation is posing a serious threat to human security. Illustrate your answer with suitable examples.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 security widened beyond the military → protection of resources + survival of populations → **Buzan**: environment now on the security agenda

R2 degradation as a transnational, non-traditional threat → several connected pathways to human insecurity

Body flow

resource conflict (water/diamonds/oil) in scarcity → **Homer-Dixon**: supply/demand/structural scarcity → resource capture + ecological marginalisation → weakened states → insurgency + communal violence → threats to food/energy/economic security → livelihood loss → climate-induced migration + displacement → strain on borders + stability

Counter-view

the burden falls unevenly → **Buzan**/Copenhagen securitisation (existential framing, extraordinary responses) → **Beck's** Risk Society: manufactured risks contested + unequally distributed → Global South disempowered → Maldives: existential threat, little voice

Conclusion routes

R1 environmental insecurity inseparable from injustice + inequality → a transnational threat demands cooperation → SDGs as a blueprint for resilience

R2 **Beck**: shift from short-term national interest to long-term planetary ethics

Security today extends well beyond military concerns to the protection of vital resources & the survival conditions of populations. Rapid environmental degradation has emerged as a non-traditional security threat whose effects cross national borders.

Barry Buzan places the environment within the present-day security agenda. It endangers human security through several connected pathways. Thomas F. Homer-Dixon shows how environmental scarcity i.e. supply-induced, demand induced & structural drives resource capture & ecological marginalisation.

Degradation weakens the material foundations of human life, threatening food, energy & economic security together. As livelihoods erode, climate-induced migration & displacement follow, straining borders & unsettling political stability.

Buzan & Copenhagen School understand climate change through securitisation, framing environmental threats as existential issues that justify extraordinary responses. Ulrich Beck's Risk Society thesis argues that such manufactured risks are politically contested & unequally distributed, disempowering vulnerable states of the Global South.

Small island states like the Maldives face an existential threat to their very territory, but hold little voice in forums dominated by industrial powers.

Environmental insecurity is therefore inseparable from social injustice & inequality. SDGs offering a shared blueprint to address the root causes & build resilience to the severest impacts.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2025 · 10 marks

Explain the non-traditional security threats in the context of food and environmental crises.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 security once state-centred / military → non-traditional turn → welfare threatened by non-military, transnational sources (**Caballero-Anthony**) → food + environment as the clearest cases

R2 the widening of “security” beyond the state → food and environmental crises named as non-traditional threats → both erode livelihoods and stability

Body flow

non-traditional security defined (**Caballero-Anthony**) → food crisis: reduced supply, rising staple prices, hunger (**Timmer**) → scale: ~258m / 58 countries / 2022; ~9m hunger deaths a year (**WFP**) → unequal burden: women, children, poor households, small producers → environment amplifies: climate extremes cut farm labour productivity (up to 14% in low-income tropics) → **Homer-Dixon**: supply / demand / structural scarcity → resource capture + ecological marginalisation → state capacity weakened → insurgency, communal violence → responses: equity-centred adaptation, rights-based access, flexible transboundary governance

Counter-view

food and environmental stress as a “development” concern vs a genuine “security” threat → **Homer-Dixon**'s scarcity-conflict link settles it on the security side

Conclusion routes

R1 these are security threats precisely because they hit livelihoods, weaken states and breed conflict

R2 the durable answer is equity-centred, rights-based and transboundary — not military

Since the World wars & the Cold war, security was viewed mainly through a state-centred, military lens. Non-traditional security concerns threats to the welfare of the state & the wider community that arise from non-military sources.

According to Caballero - Anthony, these threats i.e. environmental, food, health, water, energy & migration are often transnational & food and environmental crises are among their clearest forms.

As food crisis, as Timmer explains, is the difficulty of accessing food due to reduced supply, marked by rising staple prices that bring hunger & malnutrition. Around 258 million people in 58 countries faced acute food insecurity in 2022 & the World Food Programme reported nearly 9 million hunger deaths a year.

climate extremes cut agricultural labour productivity by up to 14% in low-income tropical countries. Thomas F. Homer Dixon argues how supply-induced, demand-induced & structural scarcities drive resource capture & ecological marginalisation. It weakens state capacity and fosters insurgency & communal violence.

Therefore, the response lies in equity-centred adaptation, rights based access to resources & flexible transboundary governance.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2025 · 10 marks

Comment on the Red Lipstick Movement in the context of feminist rights.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 red lipstick as agency → contests gendered policing → appearance tied to political power

R2 everyday adornment → becomes a feminist claim

Body flow

suffragettes / “shrieking sisters” defiance → US suffragists / 1912 New York rally / emancipation → WWII / despised by Hitler / resilient femininity + patriotism / Rosie the Riveter → 2021 Portugal / Ventura insults Matias → #VermelhoEmBelem / “fight fascism with style” → Afary & Friedland / adornment as female agency, anti-authoritarianism, liberal politics → authoritarian bans → adornment as protest

Counter-view

memetic visibility ≠ structural change → symbolic assertion alone is insufficient

Conclusion routes

R1 strength → consciousness-raising + transnational solidarity

R2 symbolic assertion must connect to deeper reform → substantive rights

The Red Lipstick movement treats the wearing of red lipstick as an act of agency that contests gendered policing and ties appearance to political power. Everyday adornment becomes a feminist claim.

Suffragettes, mocked as mannish "shrieking sisters," wore red lipstick in defiance & US suffragists embraced it as a symbol of emancipation at the 1912 New York rally. During the 2nd World War, red lipstick despised by Adolf Hitler stood for resilient femininity & patriotism.

Its contemporary form emerged in Portugal's 2021 campaign, when the far-right candidate Andre Ventura insulted Marisa Matias by tying her red lipstick to unprofessionalism and sexualisation.

The #VermelhoEmBelem response painted lips red & framed femininity as revolutionary, choosing to "fight fascism with style."

According to Janet Afary & Roger Friedland, cosmetics carry not only sexual objectification but female agency, anti-authoritarianism & liberal politics. Where authorities ban cosmetics, adornment itself becomes protest.

Its strength is consciousness-raising & transnational solidarity. But memetic visibility does not automatically yield structural change. Symbolic assertion must connect to deeper reform to secure substantive rights.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2025 · 20 marks

The world currently has been in the throes of a twin process of ‘democratic backsliding’ and ‘democratic backlash’. How would you explain this paradox?

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 democracy more championed than ever, yet more eroding than in decades → the paradox stated

R2 **Held:** nations embrace democracy just as the nation-state's efficacy is questioned → read as globalisation's double edge

Body flow

define backsliding (erosion of executive constraints) + backlash (nationalist reaction against openness), advancing together → two vectors of backsliding: charismatic populism (Erdoğan, Orbán, Trump, Chávez) + partisan degradation (party abandons rules, captures courts / checks / election machinery) → backsliding globalised via transnational networks (parties, think tanks, media; autocratic backing) → same networks seed parochial backlash against the openness that enabled them → Global State of Democracy Report (43% declined over five years; 70% under non-democratic/backsliding rule; Hungary, Philippines, Brazil, India, USA)

Counter-view

erosion is not terminal → recovery routes remain: defend institutional intermediaries, preserve bulwark institutions, contest subnational offices even where national ones are captured

Conclusion routes

R1 the paradox = globalisation's double edge: it spreads both democracy and the tools that erode it

R2 openness is at once democracy's vehicle and its vulnerability → the “twin process” is one phenomenon, not two

Democracy today faces a striking contradiction. It is more championed than ever, but more democracies are eroding than at any time in decades.

David Held argues that more nations embrace democracy just as the efficacy of the democratic nation-state is questioned. The paradox dissolves once democracy's twin ailments are called on two sides of globalisation's double edge.

Backsliding is the removal of constraints on elected executives i.e. weakening the rules on who may vote, run or check power. Backlash is the reactive, nationalist mobilisation against open borders, free trade & the free flow of ideas. One erodes democracy from within & the other turns outward against openness.

Backsliding travels along two routes. Charismatic populism lets a leader claim the sole right to represent "the people" and bypass institutions.

This erosion is globalised through transnational networks of parties, think tanks & media, sometimes backed by autocratic states.

The same networks that spread backsliding seed parochial reactions against the very openness that enabled them & hence backlash. The Global State of Democracy Report shows by 2020 around 43% of democracies had declined over 5 years & roughly 70% of humanity lived under non-democratic or backsliding rule, with Hungary, the Philippines, Brazil, India & the USA named among the backsliders.

Defending institutional intermediaries, preserving bulwark institutions & contesting subnational offices remain open. The paradox therefore reflects globalisation's double edge. It spreads both democracy & the strategies that erode it.

All 11 questions — PDF + handwritten answers

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