The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis (1970)

By Evsey D. Domar

Presented by Zhenlei Wang

Evsey D. Domar

- ▶ Russian American economist (1914-1997)
- ▶ Field: Political economy
- ▶ School: Post-Keynesian economics
- ▶ Experience: Carnegie Institute of Technology → University of Chicago → Johns Hopkins University → Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- ▶ Most known for the **Harrod–Domar model** → the **Solow–Swan model**/ exogenous growth model



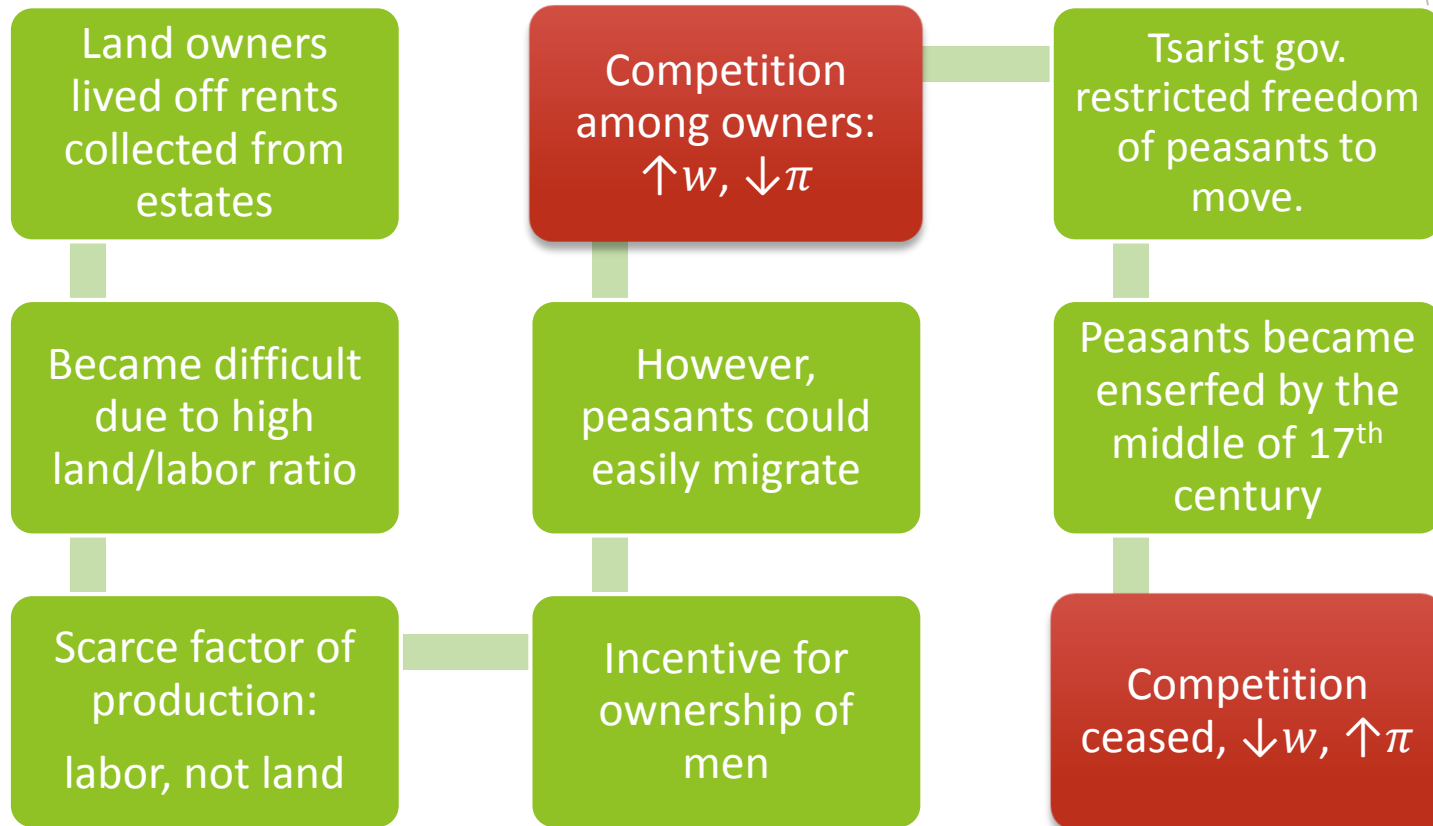
Domar serfdom model

- ▶ Based on hypothesis by Klyuchevsky of the Russian experience in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- ▶ Key: the **Land/Labor ratio**
 - ▶ *High* Land/Labor ratio: land-abundant, labor-scarce
 - ▶ *Low* Land/Labor ratio: labor-abundant, land-scarce
- ▶ The case of Russia
 - ▶ very *high* land/labor ratio: land \gg labor

Serfdom & slavery: difference?

- ▶ Slaves: are fed, clothed, and housed by their masters, can easily be set free.
- ▶ Serfs: Are tied to the land, are paid for their labor in land, to which they acquire certain moral, customary, or legal rights.
 - ▶ Emancipation: Landownership → legal problem

The case in Russia



Domar serfdom model

A high land/labor ratio

Competition among landlords for workers

$\uparrow w, \downarrow \pi$

Landlords have incentive to organize themselves politically

Force the government of serfdom or outright slavery on the laborers

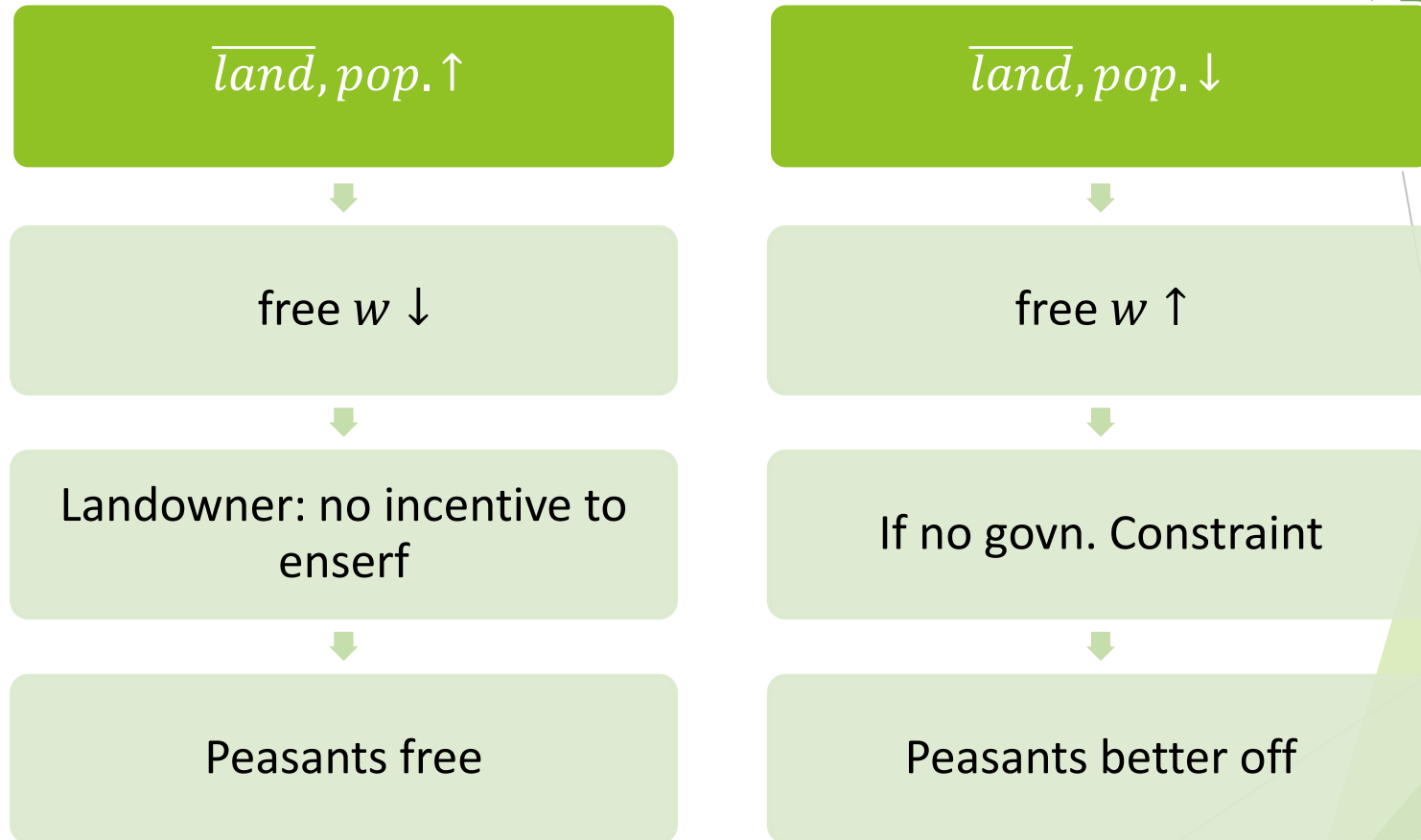
The causes of serfdom

► Serfdom was the result of:

1) A high land/labor ratio

The presence of this exogenous political variable seriously weakens the effectiveness of my model: it makes the presence of free land by itself neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the existence of serfdom. It is not a necessary condition because so long as marginal productivity of labor is high, serfdom may continue to exist even if free land is no longer present; it may even be imposed at this stage, as it was in the Russian Ukraine in the eighteenth century. Free land is not a sufficient condition because, as I stated above, without proper governmental action free land will give rise to free farmers rather than to serfs.

The exogenous political var.

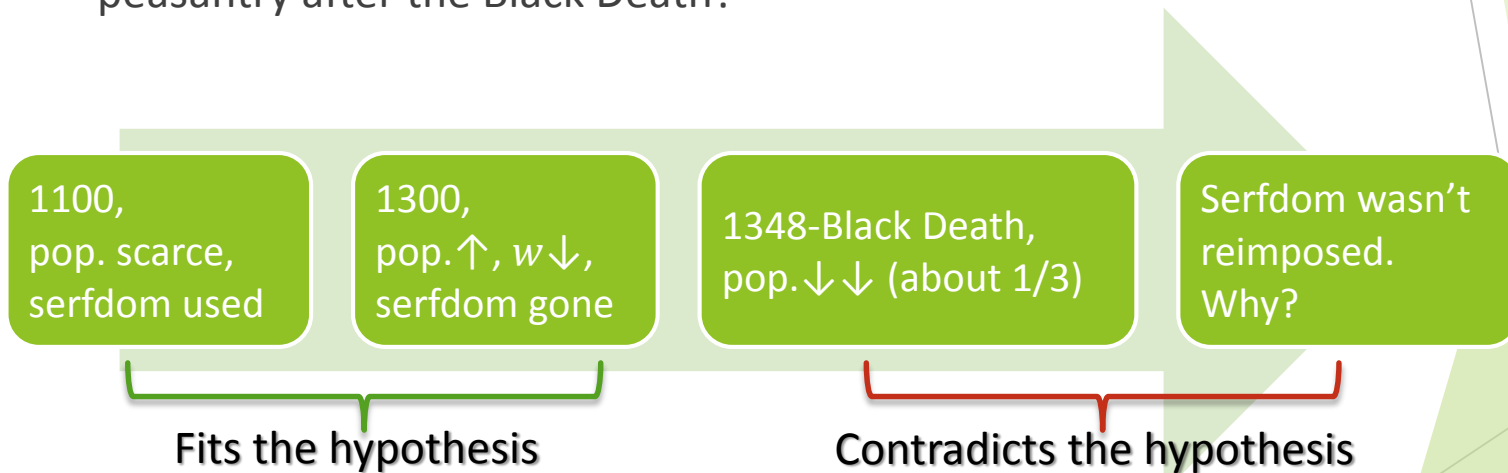


The causes of serfdom

- ▶ Serfdom was the result of:
 - 1) A high land/labor ratio
 - 2) The governmental intervention: suppress the mobility of labor

Empirical puzzle

- ▶ The Black Death puzzle (1348):
- ▶ Why didn't the Western European nobility re-enserv the peasantry after the Black Death?



- ▶ Recommended: "Serfs Up!" The Unofficial Paul Krugman Web Page, 5.8.03