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Examiners' Report

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Pearson Edexcel GCE Advanced Subsidiary
Level In Politics (8PL0-01)

Paper 1 UK Politics

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Introduction

Candidates and Centres should be pleased with the work which they have put in to this series. Responses clearly demonstrate a focus on core key topics aligned with a good grasp of contemporary politics in the UK.

Progress was identified by how well the source questions were answered on Question 2 and 3. There was a progressive move away from treating these as simply comprehension exercises and moving more skilfully to address and unlock the differing Assessment Objectives (AOs) in each source extract.

With regards to the essays in Section C it was pleasing to see a growing confidence in candidates constructing a more balanced argument and paying attention to competing points in the question.

As with all examination series – there is a time to reflect and consider the ways by which our teaching and our student’s learning can be improved. The following takes you through each question with examples of marked student’s work.

Question 1(a)

This was the less popular of the two options but often well done by many candidates. Partisan dealignment is a key concept in voting behaviour and an integral part to understanding current electoral outcomes. The best answers pointed out that this was not a fluctuating or temporary variable – but instead a long-term factor. The more able distinguished clearly between class dealignment and partisan dealignment while at the same time observing the obvious linkage between the two aspects of terminology. Often candidates explained partisan alignment with examples of earlier elections and then the gradual erosion of this after the 1970’s. There is really no set date of its arrival, it like many other political events this is an ongoing process.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 1(a) Question 1(b)

Partisan dealignment is when people no longer hold a certain loyalty to a specific party. This could be for a multitude of different reasons, one being increased education which means that voters are now aware of more policies and the ~~iff~~ impact they have on them. This could be explained by the rational choice theory which states voters will see which political party would best benefit them based on valanced issues. An example of this would've been the 2019 general election which voters were found to have voted differently based on how each party planned to tackle the valanced issue of Brexit.

Another reason for partisan dealignment may be due to the impact of the media. In recent years broadcast media has become a bigger factor in changing how the people may vote due to the introduction of televised political debates between party leaders, an example of this was Theresa May not wanting to attend

and in the next general election she ended up losing her majority. Perhaps this caused concern for the public over what sort of leader she was and caused loyal voters of Conservatives to change who they voted for.

A final reason for partisan realignment may be due to the change in political ideology since the 1980s. Class realignment also plays a role in this as people are now less likely to vote based on class. Whereas before class ABCD would vote Conservative and C2DE would vote Labour people from the working class no longer see themselves as that and tend to think of themselves as middle class. Additionally, the introduction of a more tertiary job based sector in the UK has led to a 'new' working class. This might have caused partisan realignment as changing classes might mean people are less likely to be loyal voters to a certain party based on what class they're in.

(Total for Question 1 = 10 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 10 MARKS

Examiner Comment

This is a top level 3 response. It gives a clear definition of the term and then supplies accurate examples to demonstrate a full understanding. It then shows a wide appreciation of the term, as it shows how class is linked to the concept. It is concise and accurate.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 1(a) Question 1(b)

Partisan dealignment is when an individual separates themselves from a specific party. This is seen if someone has been a member of a party such as the conservatives and then goes on to leave such support and perhaps become what's known as a floating voter.

Whilst there are multiple types of dealignment for example class dealignment. Partisan dealignment has a much bigger impact as it means that the party is losing a reliable seat and this impacts what cities in local election will definitely remain a political stance. Therefore dealignment affects turnout and support for parties and creates pre-election results to become not reliable as it can all change depending on the few that are floating voters and do not align with a party.

Examiners Comment

In contrast this response is far weaker than the previous one. There is correct and rewardable material, but it is not well focused and clearly detailed. The connections are very tangential and there is a manifest impression that this topic is only partially understood. The potential has not been realised.

Question 1(b)

This question was by far the most popular question – with twice as many making this choice. However, sadly it had a far lower mean mark than its counterpart and many candidates simply did not appreciate the scope of the term and exactly what was required. The term is listed under the key terminology of party systems and multi-party systems in the final element of section 2.

In essence a party system relates to the number of parties who compete effectively and have a realistic chance of gaining office and thus wield real or potential political power. As such a multi-party system indicates that there are more than two political parties who contest elections and may end up in government. By simply stating that the UK is a multi-party system as we have several parties is a long way off for the requirements of this topic.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 1(a) Question 1(b)

A multi-party is an system where members of all political parties have a representative to represent them in their area. Furthermore, this includes the Scottish AMS where representatives are the head of their parties where as UK parliament have party leaders. This also includes their voting systems, in an multi-party system they use voting systems such as SR, STV and AMS. Those voting systems allow voters to give two votes; an 1st choice vote and additional vote which also allows for a much more even voting field and majority.

Moving on, in a multi-party system they also have representative for constituencies where they represent depending on their majority of votes. Furthermore, in elections they gain seats whether they've got a large majority or not as compared to the UK parliament as it uses FPTP where majority wins is elected leader.

Also an multi-party system include multiple political parties fighting for control and seats in parliament. They also represent their political parties during the general elections where MP are voters for their head of constituencies.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 1(a) Question 1(b)

One feature of a multi-party system would be proportional representation in Parliament. This would mean that systems such as first-past-the-post would be inadequate in delivering such proportion due to the existence of the winner's bonus. This is where a party gets representation in Parliament that the votes suggest. For example, when UKIP got 12.6% of the shared vote, they only received 1 seat, in ~~contrast~~ whereas the Conservatives ~~were~~ ~~dominant~~ won a majority in Parliament, with less than 50% of the popular vote. With another system, such as STV, it means that there is potential for adequate change for all parties and representation, ^{and potential of a ~~winning~~ ~~discrepancy~~}

Another feature of a multi-party system would have to be adequate funding for more than ~~the~~ the top two parties. Currently, smaller parties, such as Reform UK rely on donors to fund their policy-making due to the fact that they are not state funded. In order to get the electorate to consider voting for a party, they will first have to encounter their policies and decide if they align with them or not to vote them in and lead to a multi-party state. This funding is provided to the opposition party by the state in the form of short

Money and allows for effective campaigns to be carried out by the opposition party to maintain democracy.

Another feature of a multi-party state would be to ~~increase~~ find methods to increase turnout in order to make this multiparty system ~~work~~ apparent. By introducing forms of compulsory voting, such as in Australia, it would mean that the potential for a participation crisis is greatly reduced and that there will be more chance for an accurate reflection of the ~~population's~~ wider population's opinion. This also allows for turnout to increase and for smaller parties to make a breakthrough, due to the increased number of votes; this could also prove to be an incentive for parties and allow for them to effectively campaign to individuals regarding their aims as a party.

Examiner Comment:

There was not a common way in which this question was mishandled – indeed there was a multitude of incorrect assumptions and definitions of what a multi-party system comprised of. Here are two examples of candidates who knew little core detail and gained very few marks.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 1(a) Question 1(b)

A multi party system is a type of government in which no political party is dominant or holds a major majority.

One of the key features of a multi party system is the presence of multiple different political parties in parliament. There are some parties with similar ideologies such as the Brexit party and the Conservative party, who are more right wing leaning. These parties with similar ideologies are put together / secured next to each other in parliament - ~~seen~~ an example of this is the European Union's parliament in Strasbourg who seat for left parties with left wing parties.

Another feature of a multi party system is that they are prone to coalitions / having many coalitions with other nations - ~~seen~~ Northern

Ireland is an example of this, under the Good Friday Agreement 1998, there must be a coalition government to restore the peace.

~~Ans~~ - A Multi Party System also uses a different electoral system than first past the post, the system is usually a type of proportional representation. For example, in the London ~~electoral~~ Mayoral election the system used is AMS, which is proportional and in Northern Ireland the system used is STV, which is another proportional system.

A multi party system also involves the political parties working closely together, which would spread the need for positive politics, ~~and~~ positive media coverage, ~~and~~ and positive conversation.

(Total for Question 1 = 10 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 10 MARKS

Examiner Comment:

This is an example of a candidate who establishes a much clearer picture of a multi-party system. It could be more precise, but it is more focused and in line with the key term, but enough to achieve level 3.

Question 2

This is the first of the two compulsory source-based questions. Here reward is obtained through two assessment objectives only, AO1 and AO2. The task is to use the AO1 given in the source and enhance this and place it in context. This can mean a variety of things – but the core is to show a more developed understanding of the factual base. The next step is to explain and analyse the wider effect of the issue raised.

On this question there was no shortage of brief and concise political facts. Firstly, a table showing the most recent turnout and then five bullet points which detail various aspects of election turnout. Weaker responses would only deal in AO1 by simply re-stating the details shared in the source and this restricted 50% of the available marks. A more successful route is to enhance the detail and then analyse its relevance and show what may arise because of variable patterns of turnout.

SECTION B

Answer BOTH Question 2 AND Question 3.

Read Source 1 on page 2 of the source booklet before answering Question 2 in the space provided.

2 Using the source, explain why election turnouts are important.

*In your response you must use knowledge and understanding to analyse points that are only in the source. You will **not** be rewarded for introducing any additional points that are not in the source.*

(10)

elections turnouts are important.
turnout at UK elections over the years have decreased. In the 2019 General election turnout was 67.3% which was for the decision on whether or not we should leave the EU. This decision was very important as it would impact on how the people live their ordinary lives. Things would have changed and alot of people did not vote. ~~election~~ // In the election many lower income individuals did not even register to vote. ~~The~~ The election was very important as us leaving the EU would have impacted them. for example the prices of everything has gone up since Brexit.

Examiner Comment

This is a very limited response. Firstly, the AO1 is narrow and fails to capitalise on the material in the source. The source is largely repeated with little enhancement and then there is no extensive AO2 built around the points raised.

Answer BOTH Question 2 AND Question 3.

Read Source 1 on page 2 of the source booklet before answering Question 2 in the space provided.

2 Using the source, explain why election turnouts are important.

In your response you must use knowledge and understanding to analyse points that are only in the source. You will **not** be rewarded for introducing any additional points that are not in the source.

(10)

Election Turnouts are important as it makes a huge difference on our life decisions, for example it is said that the people least likely to vote are 18-24 year olds, women and ethnic minorities these are the groups that are least likely to vote which affects their life as the political parties aim to please these voters who turnout results and on their political stands the voter who turnout are which results in them getting what they want

Another reason why election turnouts are important is that it shows how many people are involved with the politics since 2019 the turnout for the election by type has been on a gradual decline until 2021 where it dropped by over 15% in voter turnout which affects the results if there are less voters then the results it calls for a re-election as there not that many voters.

Examiner Comment

In contrast this example fulfils the essential criteria. That is, it takes a point out of the source and enhances its relevance and meaning. It then analysis the issue and explains what we can deduce and make of the impact. This is a level three response.

Question 3

Question 3 is the second of the compulsory source based questions. Here the AOs do differ, and specific skills are required to access the marks available. No credit is given for AO1 – the reward is for an analysis of the source and then reaching a verdict or judgement on the competing points raised. In addition, the rubric of the question also requires the candidate to identify anything that the two sources share an agreed view upon. This latter part being an essential requirement to reach level three.

Here we have two sources who have distinct views on the role of think tanks in a democracy, although there is some minor agreement as to their scope and worth. Weaker answers simply wanted to give back the AO1 content and tell us the views of both contributors – thus few if any marks can be gained. The opinion of each needs to be analysed and then a verdict reached on the creditability of these views. There is no room for 'fence sitting' but instead a need to be sharp and focused on the source and commit to a view if the higher levels are to be attained.

Read Sources 2 and 3 on page 3 of the source booklet before answering Question 3 in the space provided.

- 3 Using the sources, assess whether think tanks strengthen or weaken democratic decision making.

In your response you must compare and contrast **similarities** and **differences** and consider competing points by analysing and evaluating them. **Only** analysis and evaluation based on knowledge from the sources will gain credit.

(10)

Think Tanks drastically weaken democracy. It is true that they free up time for ministers and elected officials, but this comes at a cost.

Think Tanks are funded by the richest, most powerful individuals in the country, and nobody funds think tanks without expecting a return on investment. Whilst providing ready made policies for elected officials, those policies are ready made by secretive think tanks, and funded by wealthy, self interested individuals.

Whilst it is undeniable that the research think tanks conduct, and the experts in their field that assist in policy drafting, we can't the fact that this research will always be biased, and undemocratic, serving only to benefit the rich and powerful whilst weakening the everyman, and democracy as a whole.

Examiner Comment

This response begins with a judgement – which is fine but then fails to really marshal the source in an effective manner. There is no real sense that the competing debate – both agreements and points of disagreements are covered. Only one point, the wealth of thinks tanks is effectively covered. The response is given a level 2 at entry point.

Read Sources 2 and 3 on page 3 of the source booklet before answering Question 3 in the space provided.

- 3 Using the sources, assess whether think tanks strengthen or weaken democratic decision making.

In your response you must compare and contrast **similarities** and **differences** and consider competing points by analysing and evaluating them. **Only** analysis and evaluation based on knowledge from the sources will gain credit.

(10)

One way that think tanks help to improve decision making is by undertaking research in order to propose effective policy. Source 2 states that 'officials and politicians have ~~a~~ limits on their ability to research', suggesting that they are unable to propose fully researched and effective policy on their own. Source 3 then argues that research 'is vital for making good decisions', suggesting that, like source 2, politicians alone, without the ability to research, cannot make the best decisions. This shows that both sources agree that think tanks, with their ability to research and propose policy based on this, improve decision making. However, a key feature of ^{the} democracy is that ~~the~~ ~~electorate~~ decisions are made on behalf of each MP's constituents. Although think tanks are useful for proposing researched policy, their influence over decision making cannot be democratic. Their increased influence means that not everyone gets an equal impact on the ~~the~~ ~~the~~ decisions made in Parliament, making decision making less democratic. Therefore, although Think Tanks and their research are vital to policy making, their increased influence ~~over decision making~~ weakens democratic decision making.

Another way that ~~the~~ think tanks weaken democratic decision making is through their funding, and the influence this could have on the policies and ideas they propose. Source 2 states that 'they attract funding to

undertake vital research', implying that donations are simply a means to an end, and the donors themselves have to no influence over the think tank's activity. However, source 3 argues that think tank funding means that 'they work for the rich and powerful bodies who fund them'. Funding through donations could be seen as corrupt because think tanks are most likely to make proposals which favour the donors that keep them operating. This would weaken democratic decision making, as it would mean that the individuals who fund think tanks are likely to have great influence over policies and decisions. Certain individuals having more political influence than others is highly undemocratic, and source 3's argument that think tanks work for their donors suggests that this is the case. Therefore, think tanks, and their funding through donations, weaken democratic decision making by giving some people more ~~influence~~ influence than others.

(Total for Question 3 = 10 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 20 MARKS

Examiner Comment

This Level 3 answer clearly engages with the question, it clarifies an area of agreement and then uses the sources well to come to show the contested debate. It 'picks a side' and takes us through to a logical conclusion of why that side is supported.

Question 4 (a)

This question was overwhelmingly the more popular of the two by a ratio of over 2:1. Virtually all candidates could identify a range of referendums since 1997 some with greater accuracy than others. The most common being the EU referendum, the referendum on Scottish independence and the AV referendum in 2011. Having said that many brought in the referendums for devolution at the start of the Blair administration. Interestingly – though having no bearing on academic outcomes - most candidates concluded that the benefits of referendums were limited and their worth over-estimated. A minority spent too long on the practical implications of Brexit and its operative repercussions as opposed to its political consequences. Many discussed the question of legitimacy and the role of parties, parliament, and the voting public and these linked well to a consideration or otherwise of benefits.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 4(a) Question 4(b)

a) 'Referendums since 1997 have benefited UK politics'

A referendum is a vote on a question in which one answer must win. The answer with the majority of votes is the result for the referendum.

In 2014 Scotland held a referendum to decide whether or not to remain in the UK. Scotland already had many devolved powers such as certain tax controls, healthcare and education however this referendum was to become an independent country with their own sovereignty. The referendum changed rules on voting for Scotland with them allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote alongside the normal 18+, this created a record breaking turnout at the polls, which massively increased political participation. The increase in political participation can be argued to be beneficial to UK politics as it will help create a more proportional and representative result.

The 2014 Scottish referendum resulted in Scotland remaining in the UK. This could argue that the referendum was a waste of time and money due to the result remaining the same as if it had never happened. This could argue that referendums have not benefited UK politics as it has only had costs to the government.

A second referendum that has happened since 1997 is the Brexit referendum of 2016. This ~~election~~^{referendum} offered voters a choice of whether to remain in the European Union or to leave the European Union (EU). This vote was called for by David Cameron and upon the result not going in his favour, (the result was to leave the EU) Cameron resigned. After David Cameron resigned the UK has had various prime ministers as leaders of the Conservative party, 5 since 2016 (David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak) the frequent changing of prime minister has brought great uncertainty to British politics with many resigning as they 'couldn't get Brexit done' this has been a negative outcome of referendums on UK politics.

There are some benefits to referendums. One major benefit is it provides a clear answer that has to come from a majority (although in some cases such as Brexit the majority is very slim 52% 48%) meaning the outcome is fair and representative which is beneficial for UK politics. The Brexit referendum also brought sovereignty back to Westminster Parliament as previously EU laws had sovereignty, this is beneficial to UK politics as power is reserved by the government. Brexit also ensured we no longer had to pay money to be a part of the EU giving more government funding to be spent ~~the~~ where such as public services.

However, the Brexit referendum has cost ~~us~~ significantly to leave the EU and the trade issues it continues to problem us with, such as fishing rights and so on. It can also be argued that the result (52% leave 48% remain) can hardly be called a majority as almost half of the population that voted didn't want it, meaning it isn't truly ^{representational}. There has also been issues with the wording of the poll, ^{vote's card,} with it changing from 'remain' and 'leave' to 'yes' and 'no' favouring the ~~yes~~ side making it in effect a rigged election which is very damaging to the credibility of UK politics and its outputs.

Overall it is arguable that referendums are beneficial to the UK political system as they provide a clear result from a majority, have shown to increase participation, and are an effective way to provide an answer to issues that impact the whole country. However the negatives outweigh the positives. They are costly in both time and money (both campaigning and ^{and in the outcome} conducting the vote), they can have a great negative impact on how the country is run, people are often not happy with the outcome (Scotland wish for another independence referendum as they are not happy with the outcome of the first) and most importantly they remove power from the government and give them to the people, which although democratic, it can be argued many people do not have the skills or knowledge to make an educated decision on ~~the~~ referendums.

~~that~~ impacts hold such a high weight on the country.

Examiner Comment

Here we have two referendums with comments that have taken place since 1997. The material is largely correct, but the depth of content is not expansive and the AO2 and AO3 which emerges places this in level 3 overall.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 4(a) Question 4(b)

Referendums are a form of direct democracy that allows the electorate to ~~refuse~~ vote on major political issues. Since 1997 with New Labour, there has been a growth in referendums and their influence into ~~into~~ UK political decisions. Critics of this view would argue that referendums have hindered UK politics, as it means that the representatives who are our trustees in Parliament cannot act on the expertise and skill that the electorate lack. Proponents of this view would argue that that referendums have ~~aided~~ aided the movement of decision making, by pushing the matter out of general or Parliamentary dispute. On balance, this essay will argue that referendums have ~~benefit~~ benefited UK politics since 1997.

Critics of this view would argue that referendums have hindered UK politics, as the ^{supposed} lack of expertise has ~~not~~ prevented democracy from evolving. They would point to the 2011 AV referendum. This referendum was an initiative brought in by Nick Clegg in the Lib Dem and Conservative coalition. Firstly, turnout was low at 42%, and the decision ~~remained~~ remaining from the referendum was that first past the post (FPTP) should be retained. Critics would argue that the lack of expertise ~~prevented~~ in the electorate prevented the shift away from FPTP. They would highlight that FPTP generates a two party state, and

leads to wasted votes. ~~Instead~~ AV would have allowed a more representative method of voting, reducing the amount of wasted votes allowing for a more representative democracy. They would exaggerate that the referendum itself withheld the UK from adapting to a more proportional system that could have represented more of the electorate.

However, this argument fails to acknowledge the unaddressed confusion about the AV system from the Liberal Democrats. It was difficult to explain, and the advertising was poor on behalf of the Liberal Democrats. People did not understand, and the difficulty to explain AV aided to their decision to retain FPTP, a much easier electoral system. Even the government suggests that people did not understand and felt apathetic to the matter of AV. Therefore, the stronger argument is that referendums since 1997 have benefitted the UK politics, as the decision in referendums represent the views of the people, and are successful. For example, the 1998 Scottish devolution referendum, allowed for Scotland to receive devolved powers. The high demand meant that Scotland was provided with administrative and legislative powers that would make democracy more accessible to them. Referendums clearly reflect the views of the people, and show that they are equipped with the expertise to decide on important matters. Through the referendum, Scotland was able to have separate power from Westminster, and

grow ~~the modern~~ democracy in their region, which was highly beneficial to UK politics as it ~~allowed for~~ prevented the separation of the Union. Power could grow, and the UK could remain united through referendums.

Critics of this view would argue that referendums hinder UK politics, as they do ~~not~~ ~~not~~ ~~even~~ ~~more~~ believe it cannot ~~boost~~ the declining participation. They would point to the 2004 London Mayor referendum, that had a low turnout of 32%. They would explain how referendums fail to decrease political apathy, and are just ~~not~~ ~~not~~ ~~not~~ enhancing participation. They would even compare it to the high levels of participation in ~~the~~ ^{the} 1979 UK general elections ~~to~~ which had a turnout of 77.7%. They would explain that since 1997, and the increase of referendums, there has been a decline in participation and turnout. They would blame that on the increased indirect democracy and reliance on ~~people~~ the electorate to do the work of MPs.

However, this argument fails to acknowledge that referendums, like the London Mayor, were specifically targeted towards London. People in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the North of England ~~do not~~ ~~participate~~ are not affected or interested by the potential introduction of mayors. This means that the low turnout is not reflective of the

entirety of referendums, as the London Mayor referendum did not interest or involve ~~the~~ members of the electorate away from London. Therefore, 1 referendum still do benefit ~~the UK~~ UK politics, but specific and targeted referendums cannot be used as a measure of all referendums as people were not personally affected by it. Therefore, the stronger argument is that referendums benefit UK politics as they do increase participation. This is best ~~can~~ exemplified by the ~~Scottish~~ Scotland independence referendum that had a turnout of 84.4%, and the Brexit referendum in 2016 that had a turnout of 72%. This emphasizes that referendums that have significant impact to the entire country or a electorate, have significant impact on political participation. Referendums typically do affect the entire population or region, and so the 2014 and 2016 referendums are a better measure at looking at a holistic picture of UK participation. It shows that referendums are highly successful in boosting participation, and improving the engagement of the electorate in UK politics. Referendums help UK politics to stay relevant and important, and they bring ~~forward~~ out political issues. Referendums centralise UK politics, ~~also~~ making it ~~consistently~~ consistently important for people to vote and legitimate decisions.

Critics of this view would argue that referendums hinder UK politics, as they believe it does not settle issues within the union. They would point to 2014 Scottish referendum and how that still has not settled the debate for Scottish independence. ~~Even in 2022, Scotland took their case to the Supreme Court (Indy2 Ref) to see if Scotland and the Scottish government itself can call an independence referendum. They would also point to the breakdown of Stormont in 2017, another example of how referendums failed to settle the issue.~~ Even in 2022, Scotland took their case to the Supreme Court (Indy2 Ref) to see if Scotland and the Scottish government itself can call an independence referendum. They would also point to the breakdown of Stormont in 2017, another example of how referendums failed to settle the issue. They would express how referendums, and decisions stemming from referendums are not final. In fact, they continue to pose issues later on, as seen with the potential independence of Scotland, even though 55% answered 'No' to Scottish independence. They would also

However, this argument fails to recognize that the Supreme Court did decide that Scotland was not allowed to conduct its own Scottish independence referendum, which settled the debate of Scottish independence. This shows that ~~decisions~~ decisions from referendums are upheld and are used to ensure that ~~UK politics~~ matters dealt by referendums (the people's will) are not undermined. It is clear that UK politics benefited greatly by the referendum in ensuring the unity of UK. Therefore, the stronger argument is that referendums are beneficial in UK politics in settling debates within the union. For example, the ongoing

debate between conservatives (eurosceptics and eurosceptics) which doubted the competency and efficiency of the government was finally settled with the 2016 EU referendum. The Brexit referendum, with 52% of the electorate wanting to leave, this decision was upheld, even though two thirds of Parliament were pro-remain. The decision of the people was upheld, and it dramatically reduced the gridlock within Parliament on this debate. This form of direct democracy is able to resolve issues within the UK that even our justices (Mr.) fail to do. This is beneficial as it ensures closure on long-standing issues and sets the trajectory for Parliament to find resolutions. Therefore, referendums are highly beneficial to UK politics in escalating and resolving an issue.

Overall, it is clear that referendums are highly beneficial to UK politics, as they ensure a decision cemented decision is reached on complex matters and by the people, which ensures the representativeness of the decision too. It aids the development of UK politics to keep it centralised and engaging, as it boosts political engagement by giving people the choice and say in a matter. This makes it significantly beneficial to UK politics.

(Total for Question 4 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS

Examiner Comment

This response really takes off and attains the top level – level 5. It is packed with concise information well explained and understood (AO1) it then shows crisp analysis (AO2) and is sewn throughout with concise and sustained evaluation (AO3).

Question 4(b)

This answer as noted was far less popular than its predecessor. The mean mark was lower than 4a but not in a significant manner. There were no issues with the term 'established parties' as defined on the specification. Centres had more often guided their students to take a historical as opposed to contemporary view of the ideas and policies of the established parties. This was a valid route and gained reward. Far fewer candidates took a more contemporary view and compared the current policies and ideas of the established parties. Hence greater detail was often given to the ascendancy/fall/rise of Thatcherism in the Conservatives and the advent of New Labour under Blair in the 1990's. Weaker answers failed to cover core policy issues – and although the specification lists named key areas, reward was given to credible and current policy issues where they arose – such as migration and Brexit as two oft quoted examples.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 4(a) Question 4(b)

It can be argued that there are no significant policy differences between political parties for a number of reasons. These include: parties are likely to continue popular policies of predecessors, the movement to the centre for Labour and Conservatives, and similar manifestos across parties.

However, it is important to consider the other side of the debate. This includes: the fact ~~of popularity~~ of parties ~~support~~ that often manifestos are very different between parties, different views on certain issues and others.

However, it can be argued that there are no significant policy differences between established parties in the UK.

To begin, it can be argued that there are no significant policy differences between established parties, because governments often continue with popular policy from previous governments. An example of this is in 1997 New Labour continued with many Thatcherite policies from the 80s despite being different parties. Tony Blair continued with Thatcher's Conservative policy of being tough on law and order by introducing the ASBO and continued with her economic policy as seen when the Bank of England was given independence to choose its own interest rate in 1997. This shows that there are no significant policy differences between parties because New Labour continued previous Conservative

policies despite being on the opposite side of the 2 party system.

In addition, it can also be argued that there is no significant differences between policies between established parties in the UK as it is becoming increasingly common for parties to move to centre ground in order to gain votes across social classes. An example of this is in 2010 when the Conservatives added providing free school meals for infants to their manifesto to gain working class vote. It ~~or~~ leads to a consensus between policies across parties. Similarly, another example is where Labour removed nationalisation from their manifesto in 1997 to gain middle class voters which led to an overlap with Conservative Policy. Therefore, it can be argued that there is no significant differences between party policies.

Furthermore, this can be seen by the fact that often parties have similar policies to alternative parties. For example, in 1997 both the Liberal Democrats and New Labour had a focus on constitutional reform. This led to an overlap allowing Liberal Democrat voters to tactically vote for New Labour so their needs were met. This added up to 30 seats onto the New Labour Majority. Similarly, in 2017 Labour under Jeremy Corbyn

had a focus on protecting the environment which overlapped with the Green Party causing Green Party votes to shift. Therefore, it can be argued that there are no significant differences between party policies.

As seen, it is clear that there is no ~~not~~ significant differences between party policies because of the continuation of previous policy, main parties in the centre ground and overlapping manifestos. However, it is important to consider the other side of the debate including major manifesto differences and policies. Overall, it is clear there are no significant differences.

To begin, it can be said that there are ^{significant} differences between party policies because of wide differences in manifestos. For example, in 2019 the Conservatives under Boris Johnson had an emphasis on getting Brexit done. Alternatively, Labour under Corbyn wanted a 2nd Brexit vote and the Liberal Democrats under Sunning wanted to stop Brexit altogether. This shows there are significant differences in party policies because the 3 largest parties all wanted largely different things in relation to Brexit offering a large amount of choice.

It can also be said that there are significant differences between party policies because of the large gap in ideologies between parties in certain

election. For example, in 1983 Labour had a very left wing manifesto including nationalisation whilst the Conservatives went to the right. They were at polar ends of the political spectrum showing differences in policy. There can also be significant differences in policy depending on personal aspirations of leaders. For example, Theresa May wanted an increase in free and private schools in 2017 whilst Jeremy Corbyn wanted to abolish tuition fees.

To conclude it is clear that overall there is no significant differences in policy between established parties because in order to win they move to the centre ground resulting in overlapping policy, they also continue popular policy from predecessors and take policy from other parties to gain tactical votes. It is therefore evident that there are no significant differences in policies across parties.

Examiner's Comment

This is a level three response. It is a good example of how an essay can be limited by a lack of balance as is required in the rubric of the question. As the essay opens it hints that we are 'to consider the other side of the debate'. However, we are not treated to this exposition. What is here is clear and correct but it is only one side of the picture – had the other side been replicated it would have easily moved into the next level.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

DCV x3 C, D, OV

Chosen question number: Question 4(a) Question 4(b)

Established political parties include the famous Labour and Conservative parties, which are commonly believed to be at odds in their policies. By separating policies under their respective leaders over time, one can assess their foreign and domestic views as pragmatically changing to suit voters. This essay will argue that there are clear policy differences, with balance to the pragmatic nature of politics.

Proponents of this view would insist that their policies between Labour and Conservatives within ~~foreign~~^{foreign and domestic} policy are extremely similar, if not the same. They would lucratively refer to Jeremy Corbyn's 2017 manifesto, in which they opted to keep Trident, the UK's nuclear deterrent in place, despite traditional Labour values being to remove such items, thus they would insist that they were in line with Conservative policy.

However, this argument fails to realise that this was merely a pragmatic move to protect the UK due to the tumultuous state of foreign affairs. One can identify that Labour opposed Theresa May's Conservative manifesto, which wanted to remove police officers from the streets to save money, which she then

implemented, leading to a surge in crime. This informed the Labour Party of the effect of less police officers on streets. As a result, in 2019 adding to their manifesto a pledge still currently in place to put 10,000 police officers back on the streets, to decrease crime.

Therefore, it is clearer to see that, within the realm of foreign and domestic policy, there are significant differences between the established parties. One can assess this through Labour pledging to extend votes to EU nationalists and immigrants residing in the UK, which is extremely different to the current Conservative rhetoric to reduce migration and strengthen ^{our} borders with bills such as the Small Boats and Legal Immigration bill. As such one can see that these policies are extremely different to one another. Therefore, the stronger argument is that established political parties such as Labour and Conservative share no similarity in foreign and domestic policy concerning voting, civil servants and migration.

Proponents, however, would argue that welfare policy between the parties has stayed in line with one another between Labour and Conservative since 1945, the Post War Consensus era. They would refer to the implementation of the NHS being kept under Conservative policy despite their staunch privatisation values.

which conflict with Labour's nationalisation values.

However, this argument ignores the changes made to the NHS under Conservative governments which have greatly affected it. The coalition government in 2010 (Conservative and Liberal Democrats) under David Cameron privatised dentistry to a large extent, making over 10% pay for dental treatment unless there were extenuating circumstances. Furthermore, Cameron's austerity measures cut NHS funding to some of its lowest levels since its creation. This directly contradicts Labour policy, which proposes it will nationalise dentistry once again and increase NHS funding back to what it once was over time. This shows extreme differences between the policy of Conservatives to Labour policy in welfare.

Therefore, it is arguably clearer that there are policy differences between established parties in welfare, with Labour and Conservative taking opposing stances to one another. This is further supported by Labour pledging to nationalise energy if they win the next election, whereas Conservative policy opts to keep it privatised to increase economic output through competition. Thus, one can see staunch policy differences between the two established parties in welfare, with Conservatives prioritising profit over public health. Currently with their policies.

Proponents of this view would then turn to economic and educational policy. They would point to the similar economic and educational policy between the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Labour in raising tuition fees and implementing pupil premiums for disadvantaged pupils, while the raised tuition fees would improve university standards and the economic profit gained could be considerable to fund other services, such as wages for teachers and the NHS.

However, this argument fails to recognise that the rise in tuition fees from £6,000 roughly to £9,250 per semester meant that disadvantaged pupils would either not go to university or experience tear jerking student debt. Furthermore, this was felt so much so that the Liberal Democrats were almost completely wiped out at the 2015 general election and Labour has since pledged to make university affordable until it can be re-nationalised due to the fragile nature of the UK economy.

Therefore, one can identify that while the three established parties once agreed and had similar policies, ~~but~~^{this} is not the case anymore. The stronger argument is that their educational and economic policy differ in consideration to society as their core values are vastly different to one another, with Liberal Democrats

and Labour being more aligned in Socialism than the capitalist, sometimes outcast Conservative Party.

On balance, it is clearer to argue that their policies only align when it is beneficial to the state of the country at that time, thus they approach these situations pragmatically to ensure that policies are effective. However, it is incorrect to assume that policy is the same between the three established parties as they each identify differently on the political spectrum. Therefore, it is stronger and more reliable to assess the differences in their policy, thus this essay is concluding that the established parties have significant policy differences in all areas of their policy ideas and categories. Only aligning them when they pose a benefit to the standing of the leading party, thus highlighting its pragmatic nature, but not being the same entirely.

^{Ultimately}
~~there~~ there are significant policy differences between established parties in the UK.

Examiner's Comment

This is a Level 5 answer it has a real focus on the question with all the AOs reaching that level. The student has established their case at the outset and there is a continuous chain of reasoning which takes us from the introduction to the conclusion. It is carefully crafted and takes us through how policy has changed and where there is both similarity and difference. It considers similarities but then takes us through how this position is undermined. Now the case against similar policies is made much stronger and clear than the case against. However, this is not an issue for there to be 'equal' coverage in a content sense – the main issue is that both sides are addressed.

Paper Summary

The following key points should be taken away from this exam series:

- For question 1 – the emphasis is solely on AO1 – hence the quality, depth and clarity of knowledge and understanding is paramount. Examiners do not list or count how many points are made, instead they make a judgement on the quality of the material. Hence how well explained and detailed are the facts? If examples are used, how well do they show understanding?
- For question 2 – the first of the two source questions the task is to exploit and develop only the material presented in the source. It is not productive to venture elsewhere and to introduce new material.
- For question 3 it is vital to appreciate how the changed Assessment Objectives require a bespoke focus and approach. There has to be mentioned a point of agreement and then a debate as to which side makes their case and why. Spending time repeating the content achieves very little. Now it is fine to provide 'mini snippets' of the source for direction but large-scale repetition is not productive in outcomes or use of time.
- For the essay questions we now have all three AOs carry equal weight and reward – so each has to be established. Secondly there is a clear need for balance. Where a candidate simply addresses on side of a contested debate – it is impossible to leave level 3 – or even get into level 3. Thus, the rubric demands of the question are vital and must be adhered to. On both essay title the rubric command is 'you should consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.'
- The use of current examples enhances a response and adds value to all of the AOs if they are well developed.