

General Certificate of Education
June 2006
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 8 Government and Politics – Synoptic Module

GOV8

Thursday 29 June 2006 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

For this paper you must have:

- a 12-page answer book

Time allowed: 2 hours

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV8.
- Answer **both** the questions in **either** Section A **or** Section B **or** Section C **or** Section D.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers. All questions should be answered in continuous prose. Quality of Written Communication will be assessed in all answers.

Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

SECTION A: POWER

If you choose this Section, answer Question A1 **and** Question A2.

When answering the questions that follow, you may wish to refer to the extract below but you do not have to do so. However, your answers must present material drawn from the range of your studies in Government and Politics.

A1 'In the exercise of power some governments lead public opinion, others merely follow it.'
Discuss. (40 marks)

A2 'In practice, a leader's power is primarily determined by the presence of political rivals.'
Discuss. (40 marks)

Text from BAGEHOT, 'The ties that do bind', *The Economist*, 24 May 2003.
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SECTION B: PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

If you choose this Section, answer Question B1 **and** Question B2.

When answering the questions that follow, you may wish to refer to the extract below but you do not have to do so. However, your answers must present material drawn from the range of your studies in Government and Politics.

- B1** 'In theory, democracy implies the participation of *all* of the people *all* of the time but, in practice, it usually amounts to participation by *some* of the people *some* of the time.'
Discuss. (40 marks)
- B2** 'In modern democracies the role of elected representatives is being hijacked by others.'
Discuss. (40 marks)

Text from A MITCHELL MP, 'New Statesman Article', www.austinmitchell.org,
12 February 2004. Not reproduced here due to third-party copyright constraints.

Turn over for the next Section

SECTION C: POLITICAL CULTURE

If you choose this Section, answer Question C1 **and** Question C2.

When answering the questions that follow, you may wish to refer to the extract below but you do not have to do so. However, your answers must present material drawn from the range of your studies in Government and Politics.

C1 ‘Political culture is much more than a collection of attitudes and beliefs.’ Discuss. (40 marks)

C2 ‘Political apathy amongst the young suggests a democracy in decline.’ Discuss. (40 marks)

A Culture of Cynicism and Disengagement?

There is a tendency, evident from interview research, for British people to be vague about political ideas, and to express negative sentiments and views about politics as a process. They have also been connected with declining turnouts in local and national elections, and with declining membership of political parties. A number of concerned organisations point above all to what appears to be increasing apathy and cynicism on the part of young people.

However, arguments about ‘the youth of today’ are, as in every decade, highly dubious. Some influential individuals argued before the Labour Government took office that there is a real generational effect at work; that the politically apathetic, cynical and amoral young people of today are going to age into the politically apathetic, cynical and amoral middle-aged and old people of tomorrow. Yet no evidence was offered in support of this contention. More importantly, recent analysis indicated that membership of associations, and activity outside the home, have not declined in the UK as they have in the USA. While all supporters of democracy should be uneasy about the organisational success of a number of fascist and racist groups, it does seem that their culture and campaigns are at least counterbalanced by the organisational capacity of more democratically- and just-minded individuals.

Notwithstanding these empirical and interpretative grounds for caution, there was a widespread idea, voiced by academics, members of campaigning groups and politicians, that apathy, cynicism, disengagement and anti-democratic activity were signs that British political culture needed to be transformed or at least rejuvenated. Certainly, from the viewpoint of ideal democratic theory, British political culture leaves a lot to be desired.

Source: adapted from E FRAZER, ‘Citizenship and Culture’ in P DUNLEAVY, A GAMBLE, I HOLLIDAY and G PEELE (Eds), *Developments in British Politics* 6, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002

SECTION D: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

If you choose this Section, answer Question D1 **and** Question D2.

When answering the questions that follow, you may wish to refer to the extract below but you do not have to do so. However, your answers must present material drawn from the range of your studies in Government and Politics.

D1 ‘Political systems must move with the times if they are to remain effective.’ Discuss. (40 marks)

D2 ‘In democracies it is easier to change governments than constitutions.’ Discuss. (40 marks)

The June 2003 Cabinet Reshuffle

All Cabinet reshuffles provoke extensive critical comment and analysis. After the reshuffle of June 2003 there were just two Cabinet members still occupying the posts they held in 1997: Blair himself and Gordon Brown as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Only five other original members remained in the Cabinet (Prescott, Straw, Blunkett, Beckett and Darling), underlining a continued rapid change of personnel. However, this reshuffle proved particularly controversial, because it had major constitutional implications beyond the personnel of government.

The departure of the controversial Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, had been widely expected to bring forward long-canvassed changes to his office and responsibilities. The extensive powers of the Lord Chancellor had long been regarded as woefully out of date. As head of the judiciary, presiding officer of the House of Lords and a senior member of the Cabinet, the Lord Chancellor traditionally played a key role in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, in marked contrast to the separation of powers which is seen in the US Constitution. Reformers advocated the replacement of the Lord Chancellor’s Department with a Department of Justice. Blair surprisingly chose instead a new Department for Constitutional Affairs led by Lord Falconer, perhaps to provide more co-ordination and cohesion to the constitutional reform programme in the interests of ‘joined-up’ government. The announcement of the abolition of the post of Lord Chancellor, and the related reforms, provoked outrage from the Conservative Party and others who saw the changes as an affront to the evolutionary nature of the British constitution.

Source: adapted from R LEACH, ‘Update 1: Reshuffling the Cabinet March–June 2003’, www.palgrave.com/politics/coxall/update.htm

END OF QUESTIONS

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