

COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Paper 9770/01
Concepts and Institutions

Key messages

- It is important to fully explain a number of points when answering **Section A** questions.
- **Section B** questions require both sides of the debate to have evidence in support of the argument.

General Comments

The candidates who took this examination generally answered the questions well and there were no major problems in terms of the candidates being able to answer the questions in the time allowed and it was encouraging to see the quantity, and more importantly the quality of their answers.

It was pleasing to see that this year there was a wider selection of questions answered. Broadly there was a 50/50 split in candidates answering either UK or US questions. **Questions 2, 7, and 8** were the most popular and no candidates answered **Questions 5 and 12**.

Comments on Section A questions

The aim of these questions (whether for UK or USA sections) is to assess the candidates' ability to provide a clear, detailed and concise answer for the question set. The focus is on the ability to **explain** the answer. As a general rule the following criteria will help explain the general principles that will guide Examiners in the awarding of marks in relation to the Awards.

The main features expected for the short answers for the awarded levels are:

- Top levels: A number of key reasons, which are well explained and supported with relevant and concise examples
- Middle levels: A number of key reasons, which are not so well explained, possibly some imbalance in the quality of explanation and limited specific examples.
- Lower levels: Some key reasons, with some explanation, focused on the question.

In this examination there was a range of responses but it was encouraging to see that there were more candidates who attained a distinction. It should be noted that using the knowledge of political theorists is not a requirement of this type of question.

UK section

Question 1

There was some good explanation of the powers devolved to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, but all but the best answers tended to ignore the Westminster Parliament. Candidates were expected to cover administrative, financial and legislative powers. There were some answers that did not fully explain 'how power is **shared**' which was the essence of the question.

Question 2

This question was generally well answered with candidates explaining a range of functions of the House of Commons. It was the quality of both the explanation and the supporting evidence that differentiated the candidates.

Question 3

This was the least popular of the questions in this section and not as well answered as the other two questions. Candidates would have benefited by giving a clear definition of 'an uncodified constitution' and then identifying the strengths and giving a developed explanation of the arguments.

US section

Question 7

Some good answers to this question were seen, but most candidates concentrated upon the powers that either Federal Government or State Governments held separately. A better approach would have been to examine the relationship between Federal and State governments in terms of the powers that they share as well as the individual powers, in order to fully address the question.

Question 8

This was a popular question and was generally well answered by candidates identifying the features of the Senate and explaining them with some supporting evidence.

Question 9

This question was less popular than the other two questions in this section. Most candidates attempted to explain the procedure of the Electoral College but candidates did not fully address the issue of 'in recent US Presidential elections'.

Comments on Section B questions

Whereas **Section A** questions are focused on an explanation, **Section B** questions are focused on a discussion. The aim of this type of question is to assess the candidates' ability to provide a well argued and balanced discussion that arrives at a clear and substantiated judgement for the question set.

The main features expected for the long answers for the awarded levels are:

- Top levels: A well argued and balance argument focused on the key issues in the question. There will be evaluation/prioritising, which is fully supported with evidence.
- Middle levels: Will have the many of the features of the top levels, but the quality of explanation/analysis and evaluation will be more patchy and imbalanced. A common error will be that candidate's will identify which is the most important aspect but not provide adequate support for their statement.
- Lower levels: Candidates will attempt to address the question but there will be imbalance in the argument and the quality of the supporting evidence will be limited. There will be limited evaluation.

In this examination there was a range of answers with most of the answers providing the features for merit and pass awards and this was mainly due to two aspects of their answers. Candidates need to provide a range of detailed evidence to support their arguments and this would help them provide the necessary evidence to substantiate their overall judgements. It was encouraging to see that most candidates identified the purpose of the question and were able to focus on their arguments appropriately. Again the ability to identify the key words in the question significantly helps candidates to provide good answers.

UK section

Question 4

There were few responses to this question but they were well answered in most cases. However, more detailed supporting evidence from the governments of Thatcher to Blair, or even Cameron would have enhanced some of the answers.

Question 5

No candidates answered this question

Question 6

Some good attempts to address this question were seen. They had balanced discussion of advantages and disadvantages. As with many of this type of question, some candidates did not fully address the issue of 'assess'. Candidates should, throughout their answer, be attempting to assess which of their arguments are more important and then, overall, which side of the argument is more important in order to reach a supported conclusion.

US section

Question 10

This was the most popular question in this section and required candidates to 'assess the role of the Supreme Court in upholding the rights of American citizens'. The best candidates focussed on the role and the upholding of rights. Weaker answers indicated that candidates had largely ignored the second part and had tended to assess the overall role of the Supreme Court in the constitution.

Question 11

This question was generally well argued and supported. As ever with this type of question in which an argument is suggested as being the most important or most serious, the purpose of the question is for candidates to weigh up this 'given' argument against other arguments and then come to a clear conclusion.

Question 12

No candidates answered this question.

COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Paper 9770/02
Parties and Ideas

Key Messages

- Candidates need to make a number of points that are explained in detail for the short essays and ensure they are focussed on the question set.
- Candidates must address both sides of the paradox in the full essays.

General Comments

The overall standard was very pleasing and candidates must be congratulated for their efforts. For the most part candidates understood the requirements of the examination and showed they had a good grasp of the concepts and ideas needed to succeed on this paper. Some excellent short and long answers were produced and high marks were awarded accordingly. Time did not seem to be an issue and most candidates produced full and detailed responses. There were a variety of questions attempted and only **Questions** numbers **2** and **5** were not. The paper allows the option to go down either the British or American route and it was pleasing to see that both options were followed in question choice.

For the short essays Examiners are looking for a very simple approach namely a number of points are required to be explained in detail in order to achieve the highest bands, these points need to be explained with examples to support the assertions.

For the full essays Examiners are looking for a detailed approach. Achieving a balance is the key to being awarded a mark in the top two levels. The Examiner is expecting strong, accurate, focused and selective analysis with current and up to date examples to support assertions. The major weakness of the candidates who fared less well was the fact that they ignored the paradox in the question and these lower band essays on the whole agreed unreservedly with the assertion in it. A more critical approach is to be expected. All full essay questions are evaluative in nature and candidates need to look at both sides of the argument before coming to a conclusion.

One other point which may be worth emphasising is historical background. Candidates should consider the 30 year rule which is more helpful in illustrating current trends rather than reverting back to previous periods (useful background especially on the American side of the syllabus) but at times not wholly relevant. This applies to both Paper 1 and Paper 2. In addition introductions are only useful if they directly address the paradox in the question.

Comments on Specific Questions.

Section A: *Parties and Ideas in the UK*

Short essays

Question 1

This was a popular question and the better candidates showed an impressive understanding of what parliamentary democracy is. The better candidates talked of the separation of power; freedom of speech, the freedom of the press and representative issues. The concept of elitism was also mentioned by some. The candidates who were less successful mentioned some of the above but needed to expand and develop their explanations with enough illustrative material.

Question 2

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 3

The question on multiculturalism was attempted by a small number of candidates and with varying degrees of success. Some addressed the question by discussing issues such as cultural diversity; tolerance; integration and equality between different racial groups, but too often the detailed explanation was not present for a higher mark.

Long essays

Question 4

A small number of candidates attempted the essay on Tony Blair's legacy to the Labour party and impressed with their knowledge and evaluation. In agreement with the question candidates cited the legacy of the Iraq war; Blair's presidential style of government and his use of spin doctors as negative consequences and these points were well illustrated and evaluated. There was also a clear balance evident and candidates argued to the contrary that Blair should be praised for abolishing clause four; for winning three successive elections and for reducing the power of the trade unions.

Question 5

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 6

A small number of candidates attempted this question and did reasonably well. In support of the question candidates talked of the attractiveness of Conservative ideology and policies; their success as the natural party of government under various ministries and the important changes made by David Cameron in making the party more modern. On the other side candidates pointed to the negative impact of the Thatcher period; declining membership and the failure of the Conservative party in the 2010 election to achieve a majority government despite the changes mentioned above.

Section B: Parties and Ideas in the US

Short answers

Question 7

There were a number of very good responses to this question, including outstanding essays that achieved full marks. The quality of these answers was reflected in the direct way in which they addressed the explanation. In it, the candidates mentioned a variety of factors, which included individual liberty; economic freedom and neo-liberal thought and restricting the power of the state over the individual. The best candidates also embellished their answers with some excellent and current examples.

Question 8

The role of political lobbyists provided the focus for this question and for the majority of candidates it provided a fruitful area in which they scored well. Candidates discussed their relationship with particular corporations and interest groups in America, whilst they also discussed the revolving door syndrome and their role in influencing all aspects of the executive and legislative elements of Congress. Some talked about the political experience of the lobbyists and the way in which they provide continuity between regimes. Some discussion of the limits of their role via the 1995 and 1998 legislation would have added weight to their arguments.

Question 9

A small number of candidates attempted this question and on the whole did so successfully. In the best answers a number of explanations were given, such as the aversion to socialism in America and its impact on American political culture; the scepticism of the Republican party in particular to labour groups and the fact that trade unions have little leverage in the highest echelons of power. The fact that trade unions have been usurped by interest groups was also mentioned.

Long essays

Question 10

This was the most popular question on the paper and for the most part was completed to a high standard. The best candidates were able to give a balanced assessment of the paradox raised by the question and for the most part exemplar material illustrated their points in an illuminating manner. In support of the assertion candidates noted the undue influence of interest groups on Capitol Hill whilst pointing to the fact that they are unelected and unaccountable. Larger interest groups such as the NRA were noted as having a disproportionately undue influence. Yet the balance needed to score highly was also shown and an impressive counter argument emerged in many cases. Candidates pointed to the fact that interest groups provide expertise; are a route for wider political participation and make government aware of alternative views outside of the two mainstream political parties.

Question 11

A small number of candidates attempted the question on the Democratic Party and did reasonably well. Some talked of Obama's administration whilst comparing it with other Democratic Presidents such as Roosevelt, Johnson, Kennedy and Clinton. A discussion of a wider range of policy areas usually ensued such as healthcare; foreign policy and racial policy all of which were illustrated with interesting exemplar material. On the other side of the argument candidates pointed to the many successes under Clinton during the New Democrat project when the party veered to the right.

Question 12

Very few candidates answered this question and they were hampered by a lack of knowledge such that the essays were largely imbalanced and incomplete in coverage. Candidates needed to evaluate Reagan's presidency giving evidence of successes and failures whilst bearing in mind that the question focuses on the whether the criticism was justified.

COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Paper 9770/03
Ideologies and Philosophies

Key messages

- Candidates should set the passages in context where it helps them to explain either the similarities or differences between them.
- Candidates need to make greater use of a range of political theories in the longer essays.

General comments

The overall quality of the responses seen was very variable, ranging from very well focused analytical responses to those that were largely descriptive and not well focused on the demands of the questions set. The overall knowledge of political theory was sound, but weaker candidates struggle to apply it to the questions set and adopt a largely descriptive approach. However, at the higher levels candidates displayed a wide range of knowledge of relevant theorists and adopted an analytical approach in which they were willing to offer their own view and use the theorists to support it and it is this approach that should be encouraged. There is a tendency for some candidates to rely heavily on recent political developments and not make full use of political theorists and this had a detrimental impact on their overall performance. However, it was pleasing to see that candidates did attempt to compare the passages in the short answer section, rather than rely on a largely sequential approach.

It was evident that some candidates do need to spend longer engaging with the actual writings of some of the more prominent theorists so that they find it less demanding when faced with extracts from theorists. It would be helpful if more time was spent using extracts and undertaking comparative work before the examination as some candidates were unsure of the required approach for the shorter questions. It might be helpful if the key themes highlighted in the syllabus were taught through the use of extracts from the key writers as candidates would become more accustomed to the style of writing of many of the key thinkers.

In some instances the range of theorists used to support arguments in the longer essays was also disappointingly narrow and candidates should be encouraged to read more widely so that they can go beyond Hobbes and Locke, which did appear to be the limit of some candidate's responses. Candidates should not be frightened to put forward their point of view about the issue in the question and should then use their knowledge of theorists to support their argument, rather than allow their answer to be driven by description of a few theorists, or even worse by modern politicians. This paper does not require candidates to have detailed knowledge of current political events, although reference to more recent developments will be more appropriate in answering some questions than others.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify the need for consent, present in both passages, but very few were able to pick up on Passage B making the contract that Locke hints at a reality. Some noted that both passages mentioned the right to liberty, and linked that to rights and compared that to citizens who were just expected to obey. Some candidates also commented on the emphasis on the freedom of the individual, the inheritance of equal rights and the limits that this places on the powers of government in Passage B. Some seemed confused by the use of the term 'Creator' in Passage B and saw that as the state, which resulted in some confused understanding.
- (b) Most responses understood that toleration was an important part of liberal philosophy, but more answers needed to make greater reference to Mill's principles of individual liberty or Locke's

concern for religious toleration. However, most were able to explain how toleration was associated with other key liberal beliefs. There were some answers that were able to develop this and show that the concept of toleration has widened over time, initially concerned with religious toleration, but in the twentieth century with issues such as homosexuality and ethnic and other minority groups. There was some discussion of the limits to toleration, most notably when the liberty of an individual is threatened, but less mention was made to concerns about the security of the state. It might have been hoped that more able candidates would have developed their answer further and considered the impact of social and economic factors on behaviour and how this impacts on liberal attitudes towards punishment. There might also have been consideration of the issues surrounding personal morality, as many liberals view these as personal matters which are not the concern of the state.

Question 2

- (a) Most answers identified the key similarities and differences between the two extracts. There was usually reference to limited government and individual freedom, which is mentioned in both extracts. The more able candidates often commented on the reference to American values and used this to argue that Passage B was more reflective of the US brand of New Conservatism and then went on to suggest that it had a greater basis in religion. There was also consideration of the stress in Passage B on national sovereignty and patriotism and this resulted in some weaker response drifting into lengthy considerations of US foreign policy. There were some relevant comments about the origins and dates of both passages and candidates should set the passages in context where it helps them to explain either the similarities or differences between the passages, but they must avoid the contextual setting dominating their answer.
- (b) Better answers displayed a clear understanding of the key features of both traditional conservative ideology and neo-conservatism. However, there were very few answers that considered the different strands of either conservatism or neo-conservatism, which would have allowed more subtle comparisons to be made. Most answers argued that there were elements of traditional conservatism that were present in neo-conservatism and often considered the issues of law and order and traditional values. There were few answers that picked up on the difference between European and American conservatism, which would have provided a valuable area for consideration. There was some discussion about the role of the state, but some appeared uncertain as to traditional conservative attitude towards the role and scope of the state and seemed unable to compare that with problems facing neo-conservatives, who ideally want the state to be rolled back, but are concerned by the threat of social disorder. Some attention was given towards attitudes towards the economy, but answers could have developed this further and the same was true in considering the influence of religion.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify the main differences expressed in the two passages and some were able to place Castro's speech in context, but few made reference to Blair's modernising policies and the abandonment of many traditional aspects of British Labour beliefs. Many made links between Castro's views and those of traditional or revolutionary Marxism, but needed to compare his views on the individual with those expressed by Blair. The passages gave candidates the opportunity to compare the role of the state and individuals, but this was often not developed and only alluded to in passing. There was little mention of the term 'communitarianism', which might have been helpful in summarising the views offered in B. There were few answers that were able to take a more general overview and suggest that Passage A is an attempt to make revolutionary socialism relevant to a modern economic society, whereas B shows how socialism is trying to adapt to a new world.
- (b) Candidates who had a clear grasp of the concept of communitarianism were able to compare its key elements with those of liberalism. However, many candidates were unaware of the different types of communitarianism and this severely limited the scope of their answer. However, most were able to pick up on the idea that it was at odds with liberal individualism, but this was required more development. There were few who considered that its emergence in the 1980s and 1990s was, at least in part, a response to the liberal individualism, which had stressed individual rights and liberties over the needs of the whole community. There were some answers that argued communitarianism was not a rejection of liberal ideas, but instead built on the socialist ideas of community, co-operation and fraternity. However, many answers were limited by their limited

understanding of liberal ideas and therefore did not address issues such as justice, the individual, duties and responsibilities.

Question 4

- (a) This was not a popular question. Those who did answer this question were often unable to pick up on the basic difference in perspectives between the two passages and this meant the major point of comparison was misunderstood. Passage A offered a rational version of the theory, whilst Passage B offered a theological version, where the absolute power of the monarch is similar to the absolute power of God.
- (b) Those who did answer this question struggled to define nationalism and were unable to link the key ideas to the concepts of illiberal and intolerant. There was little, if any reference to key theorists and even references to fascism were limited. Candidates seemed uncertain about the reasons for the emergence of nationalism and did not equate its emergence with challenges, either internal or external. There was some consideration of the lack of tolerance towards outsiders, but this was needed further development. Candidates were also unable to consider the nationalism put forward by liberal democratic theorists who argued that it was tolerant and democratic.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates had little difficulty in identifying the key reasons for the development of fundamentalism, but often the answers went no further than the content within the passages. At the lower levels candidates were unable to see the key themes of social, economic and political reasons for its emergence and many did not link these ideas to an appeal to those marginalised from society. There was some consideration of the breakdown of traditional religious values, but this was not always developed and few linked this view with Heywood's comment that fundamentalism appeared to offer a solution to those who faced perplexing or incomprehensible problems. Candidates could have picked up on its development being a response to the need to reassert cultural identity and a rejection of corrupt western values, which is put forward in Passage B. There was a great deal for candidates to write about, but the passages did need to be read carefully so that a simplistic analysis was avoided.
- (b) Many candidates started by outlining the key concepts of liberalism and then compared anarchism with them. However, answers did not consider either the different forms of liberalism, or more importantly, the different forms of anarchism, but instead treated it as a coherent set of beliefs. Candidates could have discussed collectivist forms of anarchism and used this to show that there are differences between the ideologies over the issue of freedom, with liberals suggesting that community comes about by an agreement between people, but for anarchists, communities must be totally voluntary and natural, therefore the use of force would not be needed. Most were able to consider the issue of liberty and the role of the state and this dominated most of the answers. Most argued that whilst liberals see the need for some form of state, anarchists insist all forms of the state are unacceptable. Candidates could have picked up on the liberal view of human nature as this could have been linked to the anarchist belief that individuals will exercise restraint. There was some discussion about the role of laws and many argued that liberals recognised the need for laws to protect liberty and the individual, whereas anarchists countenanced no laws. Candidates might also have considered the issue of private property, which is a key element of liberal philosophy, but anarchists oppose its preservation. There was some recognition that the societies both propose would maximise individualism and the fulfilment of personal progress and creativity. Many concluded that the anarchist aim of creating total liberation went much further than liberalism.

COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Paper 9770/04

Contemporary International Debates:
Contexts and Comparisons

Key messages

- Candidates would do well to clearly define and show their understanding the terms used in the questions, such as universal human rights, as a secure basis for developing their arguments.
- It is essential that candidates attempt to provide arguments on both sides of the divide and base their conclusions on the evidence/arguments they provide.

General comments

The questions are set with the specific aim of allowing candidates a broad approach, allowing differentiation in responses. Candidates should continue to expect such broad-brush questions in the future.

Candidates should be made aware of some general advice about technique for the examination. It is very good practice to clearly define all the specific terms used in the question in the opening paragraph or paragraphs. This is an excellent way of setting up the debate and the highest level responses do this to great effect. Candidates who did not clearly specify the exact nature of the debate they were undertaking scored less well in this examination. Candidates should also be reminded of the necessity for balance in their essays. Those candidates who had one-sided or weak arguments for one element of the debate also struggled to achieve the higher levels. Some candidates had developed arguments for half an essay, but significantly weaker and less convincing arguments to wards the latter stages. Candidates are very likely to remain in the lower parts of Level 3 for unbalanced answers or answers that do not remain entirely focused on the question set. Candidates are also encouraged to bring as much theoretical and contemporary knowledge to their answers. As Examiners always comment, candidates should be prompted to carefully read every word in the question and respond to every word in the question. Knowledge must be of course be shown in answers, but it should be stressed to candidates to add their own analysis, views and evaluation in order to score in the higher levels.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates made a reasonable attempt at answering this question but needed to provide more background theory to their answers. Candidates did provide some alternative roles for the state other than providing security, but few candidates could give a sustained argument for the state's only role to provide security for its citizens. Some candidates did focus on the concept of security but they did not tend to give clear, defined parameters for what they felt 'security' meant. Clear arguments for other government roles were expected to counterbalance the single role of security.

Question 2

This was by far the most popular question on the paper. This question allowed candidates to bring much contemporary knowledge to their answers including, Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan, but not all candidates took the opportunity to do so. Candidates were quite confident in giving examples of when intervention should take place, such as for humanitarian reasons. Candidates also discussed whether economic or national self-interest was a justifiable reason for intervention, but this argument was generally less well thought through and so less successful. Once again, unbalanced answers were common as a reasonable proportion of candidates were unable to give a sustained argument as to why states should not intervene in the internal



affairs of others. Candidates showed some knowledge of organisations as the UN, NATO and the EU but were not particularly able to weave them into their arguments.

Question 3

Candidates who attempted this question often needed to define, however broadly, what they understood by 'interdependence'. Candidates had a general idea of what it meant and based their answers on this understanding. However, those candidates would have been rewarded much more highly if they had spelt out what interdependence is and taken their argument from there in a much more structured and explicit way. Arguments why interdependence makes conflict less likely should have been contrasted with arguments that interdependence makes no difference to the likelihood of conflicts. Then, based on the evidence presented, candidates needed to come to a conclusion as to how far they agreed with the statement. This is much better than stating 'I agree ...' in the opening sentence and then just giving reasons in support.

Question 4

Candidates could bombard the Examiners with examples of states that clearly did not respect human rights, with more sophisticated answers pointing out that some states that lay claim to high standards of human rights protection may not actually keep their word. However, many answers were unable to attain the higher levels as the defence of the notion of universal human rights was weaker and less developed. Whilst universal human rights may be difficult to define, it is expected that candidates will attempt to explain their understanding of these rights in order to answer the question.

Question 5

The best answers showed that the candidates had a detailed understanding of what globalisation is, what global government is and whether one may show the need for the other. This question did elicit some of the better responses as candidates were able to make use of the recent global economic problems to bolster their arguments. Again, the weakness of responses tended to be the defence of the nation-state and the Westphalian system, rather than the criticisms of the nation-state in dealing with interconnected global problems.