

General Certificate of Education
June 2003
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 8 Government and Politics – Synoptic Unit

GOV8

Thursday 26 June 2003 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

In addition to this paper you will require:
a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 2 hours

Instructions

- Σ Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen. Pencil should only be used for drawing.
- Σ Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV8.
- Σ Answer **both** the questions in Section A **or** Section B **or** Section C **or** Section D.

Information

- Σ The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Σ Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- Σ You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary, where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

Advice

- Σ You are advised to spend approximately 15 minutes reading the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- Σ 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 passage 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 “It is not enough for governments to have power, they must also have authority.” Discuss. (40 marks)

A2 “Governments are becoming more centralised and more powerful.” Discuss. (40 marks)

The text extract, adapted from 'The Essential Anatomy of Britain' by A. Sampson, Hodder & Stoughton (1992), is not reproduced here due to third-party copyright constraints.

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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 passage 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** “Direct democracy and direct action can never achieve much. Representative government is the only viable form of democracy in the modern state.” Discuss. *(40 marks)*
- B2** What do falling electoral turnouts tell us about modern, democratic government and politics? *(40 marks)*

The text extract, adapted from 'Ministers complacent over turnout', news.bbc.co.uk (7 November, 2001), is not reproduced here due to third-party copyright constraints.

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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 passage 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 systems reflect political cultures.” Discuss. (40 marks)
- C2** “Race is becoming an increasingly significant element in modern political culture.” Discuss. (40 marks)

Race and Political Culture

One of the first national leaders to introduce the issue of race into British politics was Margaret Thatcher. She deliberately discontinued the tradition of a moderate consensus on minorities and immigration and, in a remark carefully designed to attract support from the anti-immigration strand of the Conservative Party, she denounced the “swamping” of Britain by too many immigrants. Before this remark only a handful of political entrepreneurs from the party’s right wing had gone as far, beginning with Enoch Powell’s “rivers of blood” speech in 1968. Powell’s racist approach had built up a large awareness among the electorate and he had successfully radicalised British politics. Later, the issue had been avoided in public by a silent consensus among the main parties, despite opinion polls showing that this would appeal to the public. The new strategy proved successful. Whereas they had been deadlocked with Labour immediately before the interview in which Thatcher made her remark, the Conservatives gained a lead of 9 per cent following it. In the 1997 election campaign, the Conservatives promised to strengthen immigration controls and some Conservative politicians called for voluntary repatriation. In fact, electoral support for the National Front collapsed, to be absorbed by the Conservatives.

From this time, race became an inescapable part of political culture, associated with an increasing birth rate amongst ethnic minorities, legislation in the area of race relations, talk of a “black vote”, racial violence, fragmented communities, institutional racism, the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001.

Source: adapted from D. THRHARDT, “The political uses of xenophobia in England, France and Germany”, in *Party Politics, Vol 1, No 3* (Sage Publications) 1995

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 passage 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 “Changes in government and politics are generally evolutionary rather than revolutionary.” Discuss. (40 marks)

D2 “The very nature of constitutions inhibits reform.” Discuss. (40 marks)

Change and Continuity in House of Commons Reform

The scale of the problems facing the Commons can be measured in the length of the catalogue of possible reforms. In the first year of the Blair government, the House of Commons Modernisation Committee produced four reports covering issues such as the legislative process, select committees, scrutiny of European legislation, voting procedures, the parliamentary calendar and the conduct of debate. However, while promising to streamline procedures, these offered no greater controls on the executive. Indeed, Blair’s prompt ‘modernisation’ of Prime Minister’s Questions, strengthening rather than weakening his position, was done without consulting the House at all.

All hope of reform must come up against the constitution and its fusion of the powers of the executive and legislature. It was this, together with party discipline, that was to render parliamentary sovereignty a fiction. Only the executive has the power to effect change, but why should it reduce its own power? Governments may be enthusiastic about rearranging the deckchairs but will they alter the course of the Titanic?

In the USA, where there is genuine separation of powers, congressional leaders are not members of the executive, neither do they depend on executive patronage for advancement; these are the conditions required for a genuine check on the executive. Clinton, for example, was subjected to unremitting hostility and lost some of his most cherished reformist ambitions.

*Source: adapted from J. KINGDOM, *Government and Politics in Britain*, 2nd edition (Polity Press) 1999*

END OF QUESTIONS