LONDON ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE

TOTTENHAM

The Place for Academic Rigour

Preparatory Task: Politics

LAE Tottenham Preparatory Tasks for Offer Holders

Welcome to Politics at LAET!

Over the next two years you will explore the machinations, intrigue and debate within the UK Parliament at Westminster, investigate the ideas and contradictions within the world's leading political philosophies (liberalism, socialism, conservatism and nationalism) and look at the way the world's international organisations (the UN, NATO, the EU and the African Union) work to improve global peace and prosperity.

Let's be clear from the outset: Politics is a rigorous and demanding A Level that requires commitment in class and also a significant amount of independent reading and study around the topics that are discussed in class. The benefit is that you will acquire critical writing, oral and analytical skills as well as debate and discussion skills that will be vital in future life.

Politics is predominantly an essay-based subject, so you should expect to write at length. You will need to keep up-to-date with the news and current affairs through reading quality newspapers and journals, listening to podcasts and relevant radio, and watching news programmes.

The preparatory work within this booklet is not optional – it is expected that you will submit the work in your first lesson with Mr Gilbert, the Head of Politics.

The work in this booklet is self-contained: please make sure that you complete it over the summer.

SESSION BY SESSION OUTLINE

Sessions are planned to take approximately one hour to complete, with follow up and extension work provided.

Session	Content
Sessions 1-4	How is the UK governed?
Sessions 5-8	Democracy and voting
Sessions 9-10	Liberalism
Sessions 11-12	Socialism
Sessions 13-14	Conservatism

HOW TO PRESENT THE WORK

Please take notes on A4 lined paper, clearly marking your name and the session on each piece of paper.

HOW THE WORK WILL BE ASSESSED

There will be an in-class assessment on the content of this booklet in your first lesson at LAET.

PART 1: HOW IS THE UK GOVERNED?

INTRODUCTION

Parliament is made up of the House of Commons and House of Lords. It is the legislative (law-making) body of the UK.

ACTIVITIES

1. Read pages 163/164 of the textbook and the resources provided to answer the following

   questions: How are the House of Commons and House of Lords similar or different in terms of:

   i) Size and demographic make-up (i.e. gender/ethnicity)

   ii) The way in which members are selected

   iii) Party affiliation (how many members of each political party in each house?)

CHAPTER
2

Parliament

Parliament, sometimes referred to as 'Westminster' after the district of London where it meets, is at the centre of the UK political system. It dates back to the 13th century, when the king permitted the election of an assembly to assist him in governing the country. The UK has a 'bicameral' parliamentary system – a parliament with two chambers, an elected **House of Commons** and an unelected **House of Lords**.

In this section you will learn about:

- how the two Houses are structured, and their respective functions
- their comparative powers
- the stages through which a bill passes to become law
- the interaction between parliament and the executive.

2.1 The structure and role of the House of Commons and House of Lords

The selection of members

Members of the House of Commons

Members of the House of Commons are all chosen through election to represent single-member constituencies, using the first-past-the-post electoral system. At the 2015 general election there were 650 constituencies; this is expected to be reduced eventually to 600. The number of candidates seeking election had risen to 3971 by 2015 – an average of six per constituency, mainly chosen and supported by political parties.

Under the Fixed Term Parliaments Act (2011) general elections are supposed to be held at regular intervals, at the end of a fixed five-year parliamentary term. An early general election can be held in one of two possible situations: if a government loses a vote of no confidence and the prime minister cannot form another administration within 14 days; or if two-thirds of MPs support a motion calling for an early election. Theresa May called an early election for June 2017 with the support of the necessary proportion of MPs.

If an MP dies or retires during a parliamentary term, the vacancy is filled by holding a by-election in that constituency.

Most MPs are elected as members of a political party. Only one independent, Lady Hermon – MP for North Down in Northern Ireland – was elected at the 2010 and 2015 general elections. Sometimes an MP may resign or be expelled from a party, and serve out the rest of the parliamentary term as an independent. For example, UKIP's only MP, Douglas Carswell (member for Clacton, Essex), left the party to become an independent in March 2017.

The majority of MPs – roughly three-quarters of the total membership of the Commons – are known as **backbenchers**. The rest are the frontbenchers, who are sub-divided into members of the government, and 'shadow' ministers, who are members of the **opposition**, occupying the front bench that faces the government. The Shadow Cabinet is headed by the leader of the opposition. Since September 2015 this has been Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the Labour Party.

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Key terms

Parliament
the British legislature (law-making body), made up of the House of Commons, House of Lords and monarch.

House of Commons
the primary chamber of the UK legislature, directly elected by voters.

House of Lords
the second chamber of the UK legislature, not directly elected by voters.

Backbenchers
MPs who do not have a ministerial or shadow-ministerial position. They occupy the benches in the debating chamber behind their leaders. Their main role is to represent their constituencies. They are also expected to support the leaders of their respective parties.

Opposition
the official opposition is usually the party with the second-largest number of seats in the Commons. Its role is to criticise the government and to oppose many of its legislative proposals. It also seeks to present itself as an alternative government.

Members of the House of Lords

The House of Lords does not have an upper limit on the size of its membership. In late 2016 it consisted of a total of 809 peers; the parliament website (www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/lords/composition-of-the-lords/) is regularly updated with details of membership. There are three main categories of peer: hereditary peers, life peers and 26 'Lords Spiritual' (Anglican archbishops and bishops) who sit in the Lords for historic reasons, as the Church of England is the official church of the British state.

Pause & reflect

The composition of the House of Lords is one of the undemocratic features of the UK constitution, which makes it different from the political systems of most other Western countries. Do you think that parliament would benefit from reform of the House of Lords, and if so, what form should such reform take?

The House of Lords debating chamber.

The House of Commons debating chamber.

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2. Watch the first 22 minutes of the documentary "Inside the Commons" (up to the part where MPs are

voting).

https://vimeo.com/146333961

Clearly as it was filmed in 2014, many of the members have changed their

role! Answer the following questions:

i)   What happens on Budget Day and why it is described as the most important day of the year.
ii)   Why do so many MPs arrive early on busy days in the House of Commons chamber?
iii)   What is the 'Father of the House'?
iv)   What was the Houses of Parliament built on the site of?
v)   What are the two main parts of the job of the Clerk of the House of Commons (as explained by Sir Robert Rogers).
vi)   What is the role of a party whip?
vii)   Members of parliament are seen being 'lobbied' by constituents. What does this mean?
viii)   How do MPs 'vote' in a division?

Overall, what impression of the Commons do you get from this video? What questions would you have?

- -

EXTENSION

1) Read the report on the social background of MPs:

https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7483/

- To what extent is it important to have a diverse membership of the House of Commons?

2) Read the report on ethnic diversity in public life

https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-

briefings/sn01156/

- How does the representativeness of the House of Commons compare with other parts of public life?

SESSION 2: THE GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

The government are the people responsible for running the country. The political party that wins the most seats at a General Election takes charge of the Government until the next General Election. The leader of the winning party is appointed as Prime Minister and chooses other party members to work in the Government with them - as Cabinet ministers and junior ministers.

ACTIVITIES

1) Use this link (https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers) to explain the key roles of:

   i.   The Chancellor of the Exchequer
   ii.   The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
   iii.   Secretary of State for the Home Department

2) Read the extract below from 'May at 10', Anthony Seldon's biography of former Prime Minister Theresa May and answer the questions below:

It was Theresa May's decision to give Boris Johnson the Foreign Office, feeling that he had been badly treated by Michael Gove in the leadership contest, seeing him as a potential asset, and wanting to give him a chance to show that he could be a thoughtful and effective cabinet minister. "He was deeply surprised in his brief interview in the cabinet room when May said: 'I've decided to give you a really big job'," Fiona Hill, one of May's key advisers, says and remembers Johnson's eyes watering. Her fellow chief of staff, Nick Timothy, recalls the conversation in the cabinet room. "She told Boris, 'I want you to be my foreign secretary'. "He was blown away, gobsmacked, and said, 'This is a great honour,' and how much he wanted the job. He then added, 'I feel, having played a part in making Brexit happen, a real responsibility in making sure that it works out.' I remember wondering if he was entirely sure whether it would work out. "The PM then started talking about creating the Department for Exiting the EU (Dexeu) and the Department for International Trade (DIT). He sounded suspicious but didn't challenge her. She then said, 'You and I have a patchy history, but I know there are two Borises. A deadly serious, intellectual, capable and very effective person; and a playing-around Boris. I want this to be your opportunity to show you can be the former.' "I remember thinking at the time if that was a bit supercilious and wondered if she had been wise to say it. But anyway, he took it on the chin."

Some later speculated that she set Johnson up for a fall, knowing that he would disappoint as foreign secretary. "That was not in her mind in appointing him," both Timothy and Hill assert. However, senior officials in the Foreign Office had a different take. "It was a mistake to appoint a known enemy to be foreign secretary. She never trusted him and he knew she never trusted him. For the relationship between prime minister and foreign secretary to work, there has to be trust. There was such hostility. It was awful." Hill had stellar ambitions for her boss. "I wanted to position her as a very serious player on the world stage. If she was to be a world leader, she needed to have good bilateral relations, so I pressed her to take leading positions with India, the US, the Gulf and the Japanese leaders," she says. It would be May, rather than Johnson at the Foreign Office, who would drive British foreign policy in this new era. Johnson's power as foreign secretary was constrained from the outset. The creation of Dexeu stripped out his responsibility for the single most important foreign policy objective of the government, exiting the EU, while the creation of DIT took trade policy firmly away. Whatever May said to him on the day of his appointment, she showed little

commitment in taking his contribution seriously once her government began its work. From now on, foreign affairs would be made in No 10.

An early turf war with Johnson on British policy towards Israel was driven by Timothy. As home secretary May had established strong links with the Jewish community in Britain, who supported her tough line on extremism. Matters came to a head in December, after Donald Trump's election but before his inauguration, when President Obama's outgoing secretary of state, John Kerry, encouraged the UN to slap Israel down before the pro-Israel Trump arrived. Timothy urged May to say that Britain would no longer tolerate the habitual singling out of Israel for denigration by the UN's human rights committee. He phoned Johnson to gain his support. "Great, great, let's go for it," the ebullient foreign secretary replied. But Johnsonpromptly changed his tone, the chiefs suspected after listening to his officials at the Foreign Office. "Of course, I'm as keen to be helpful to our supporters in north London as you are," Johnson told one of May's staff, who surmised that self-interest rather than principle was Johnson's guiding star. May prevailed on the line to be taken at the UN, and Johnson accepted her judgment, but it marked the institutional differences between May's No 10 and the Foreign Office that were to add strain to the personal relationship between the two principals.

Johnson would make periodic remarks that would irritate No 10 and further aggravate the relationship. One came when he said that the UK would "probably" leave the customs union, and another when he said that Saudi Arabia was "a puppeteer" in the Middle East. When his attempts at levity backfired, as when he joked that Italy would have to offer tariff-free trade to sell its prosecco to the UK, No 10 failed to see the funny side. May finally lost patience with him in April 2017 over a leak to *The Sun* concerning her refusal to back airstrikes in Syria, which overstepped security lines. But it was Johnson's constant neediness which,according to Hill, damaged their relationship most. "He'd always be wanting to have meetings with her and she'd say, 'No, sorry, I'm too busy'." He wanted to be a close confidant on the evolution of Brexit policy, but she never wanted his input, another irritant between them. In cabinet, she would be particularly cutting to him for not understanding the detail. A regular phrase cabinet ministers heard was, "No, Boris, it's not that simple." His colleagues winced.

i)   What does this extract show about the importance of personal relationships amongst the most senior members of the government?
ii)   How powerful does the Prime Minister seem according to the extract?
iii)   What issues might a Prime Minister consider when appointing ministers to their cabinet?

EXTENSION

Read the report on Individual Ministerial Accountability
(https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research- briefings/sn06467/)

1. What is meant by the concept of Individual Ministerial Accountability?

2. Which factors result in ministers resigning or being sacked according to this report?

3. How powerful are individual ministers compared to parliament or the Prime Minister?

SESSION 3: THE PRIME MINISTER

INTRODUCTION

The Prime Minister is the Head of the Government of the United Kingdom.

ACTIVITIES

'The Prime Minister is the leading figure in the Cabinet whose voice carries most weight. But he is not the all-powerful individual which many have claimed him to be. His office has great potentialities, but the use made of them depends on many variables, the personality, temperament, and ability of the Prime Minister, what he wants to achieve and the methods he uses. It depends also on his colleagues, their personalities and temperaments and abilities, what they want to do and their methods. A Prime Minister who can carry his colleagues with
him can be in a very powerful position, but he is only as strong as they let him be'

1) What limits are there to the powers of the Prime Minister? Consider your learning from the past two sessions.

2) One role of parliament is to scrutinise the government. Scrutiny is the critical observation and examination. Watch the last fully non-socially distanced example of Prime Minister's Question Time and complete the table to assess how effectively Prime Minister's Questions represents effective scrutiny:

Factors suggesting PMQs provides effective scrutiny	Factors suggesting PMQs provides effective scrutiny

Issues to consider:
- Who asks the questions?
- How would you describe the atmosphere?
- To what extent are responses detailed?

https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000g9mz/prime-ministers-questions-11032020

3) Read and complete the questions underneath:

Unit 2 – Parliament

PRE-CHEWED politics

Is Prime Minister's Questions little more than a "litany of attacks, soundbites and planted questions"?

What's the story?

Essential

In November 2013, the Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, claimed that the current behaviour of MPs at Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) was inflicting "reputation carnage" on Parliament. He argued that "Questions to the prime minister remains, in the view of many people, something closer to a blood sport than to the type of serious inquiry that they would favour". This is not the first time that the Speaker has raised concerns about the conduct of MPs during PMQs. In 2010, he denounced the sessions as a "litany of attacks, soundbites and planted questions" in a speech to the Centre for Parliamentary Studies. Bercow argued that this is a significant issue because PMQs acts as the "shop window" to the House of Commons, garnering most of the media coverage and therefore greatly shaping how the public thinks about the conduct within Parliament. He claimed "The media coverage of that thirty minute slot dominates all other proceedings in Parliament during the rest of the week. If the country comes to an adverse conclusion about the House because of what it witnesses in those exchanges, then the noble work of a dozen Select Committees will pale into insignificance by comparison." On several recent occasions PMQs has drawn media attention after the Speaker has been forced to intervene to address the behavior of MPs. One high profile example was in May 2012, when Bercow ordered the Prime Minister to withdraw remarks he made after he called the shadow chancellor a "muttering idiot".

The format for PMQs has been changed in the recent past, suggesting that further reforms would be possible. Tony Blair changed the format from two separate questioning sessions of 15 minutes, to a single 30 minute session each Wednesday. In his leadership campaign, David Cameron pledged to bring an end to "Punch and Judy politics", a reference to an old, comically violent, puppet show. However, in 2008 Cameron was forced to concede that due to the "adversarial nature" and noise of PMQs "the quieter tone I had hoped we might have been able to have, the better discussion of politics at Prime Minister's Questions, doesn't work."

The rowdiness of the chamber is not restricted to PMQs either. There was some criticism over the behaviour of many MPs during Ed Ball's response to the government's Autumn Statement in December 2013. The Shadow Chancellor had to shout the majority of his speech due to the roar of Conservative MPs who were yelling taunts such as "New Balls please" and "Taxi", making it difficult to actually hear Ball's speech. The *Telegraph* reported that most of the noise had come from what is referred to as the "Treasury Support Group", a team of around 60 energetic MPs who together cause as much of a distraction as possible, to make life harder for the speaking opposition MPs.

Test yourself!

Q) What criticisms has the Speaker made about Prime Minister's Questions?

Q) How has the format for Prime Minister's Questions already been reformed?

Q) What promise has David Cameron been unable to keep as Prime Minister?

Q) Why did the behaviour of MPs attract attention during the Autumn Statement?

EXTENSION

Read the 'Powers of the Prime Minister' according to Lord Hennessy (https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpolcon/writev/842/pm04.htm).

1. What do you notice about how the role of the Prime Minister has changed since the Second World War?

2. What are the 10 most important powers of the Prime Minister in your view? How would you justify this?

SESSION 4

INTRODUCTION

Where does the power lie? You have now looked at two groups – parliament versus the Prime Minister and the government. This session, you will consider where power lies and why.

ACTIVITIES

1. Read the article from 'The Week' evaluating the powers of the Government vs Parliament and complete the table below:

https://www.theweek.co.uk/100451/is-the-british-prime-minister-too-powerful

Evidence suggesting that the Prime Minister is powerful	Evidence suggesting that Parliament is powerful

2. Number the evidence above from strongest to weakest (i.e. 1=strongest piece of evidence, 5=weakest).

3. Write a paragraph (approximately 300 words), justifying your point of view on whether the Prime

    Minister or Parliament are more powerful and why.

EXTENSION

Use the articles below to add additional evidence to your table. Consider two further questions:

1. How has the Brexit process changed the relationship between parliament and the executive?
2. What is the relevance to a party's parliamentary majority when considering where power lies?

https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2019/04/10/the-executive-vs-parliament-backbenchers-now-control-brexit/

https://www.ft.com/content/e198720e-3142-11ea-a329-0bcf87a328f2

PART 2: DEMOCRACY AND VOTING

SESSION 5

INTRODUCTION

To understand what is meant by democracy and its historical development.

ACTIVITIES

1) Watch the introductory video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8opqrE2jSmA

2) Read this 'long read' from the independent on the development of democracy and answer the questions below (https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/democracy-history-athens- greece-politics-people-society-a8345136.html#gsc.tab=0)

    i. What is the literal meaning of the word democracy?
    ii. How has democracy developed since the Athenian model?
    iii. How has democracy been damaged in recent times?
    iv. How did the Greek concept of demokratia change in Roman times?
    v. What were the events which led to the establishment of modern democracies in France and America?
    vi. What is 'direct democracy' and what recent examples are there from the UK context?
    vii. What does the author believe are the biggest threats to modern democracy?

EXTENSION

'Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.…'

Winston Churchill, 11 November 1947

1. To what extent do you agree with Churchill? What criticisms of democracy do you think he was referring to?

SESSION 6

INTRODUCTION

An introduction to the first past the post voting system used in UK general elections

ACTIVITIES

1.   Read the summary below:

During a General Election, 650 constituencies across the country each hold separate contests. To become an MP, a candidate needs the largest number of votes in their area. This means every MP has a different level of local support. In many areas, the majority of people will not have voted for their MP.

Even if millions of voters support the same party, if they are thinly spread out they may only get the largest number of votes in a couple of these contests. Tens of thousands of voters supporting the same party and living in the same area will end up with more MPs.

This means the number of MPs a party has in parliament rarely matches their popularity with the public. The number of MPs a party has in Westminster rarely reflects the number of votes the party's candidates received. This tends to generate two large parties, as small parties without a geographical base find it hard to win seats.

With a geographical base, parties that are small UK-wide can still do very well. This tends to mean that Westminster's electoral system benefits nationalist parties. For instance, half of Scottish voters voted for the SNP in 2015, but the SNP won 95 percent of Scotland's seats. First Past the Post tends to generate two large parties, as small parties without a geographical base find it hard to win seats.

Westminster's First Past the Post voting system usually allows parties to form a government on their own. But, these governments may only have the support of 35 percent (Labour 2005), a record low, or 37 percent (Conservative 2015) of the country. Westminster's voting system creates two sorts of areas. 'Safe seats', with such a low chance of changing hands that there is no point in campaigning, and 'swing seats', that could change hands. As parties want to get as many MPs as possible, parties prioritise voters who might change their minds who live in swing seats. Parties design their manifestos to appeal to voters in swing seats, and spend the majority of their funds campaigning in them. But, policies designed to appeal to voters in these seats may not help voters in the rest of the country. Voters who live in safe seats can feel ignored by politicians.

2. Look at the results of the 2015 election. Which parties were advantaged or disadvantaged by the voting system?

Majority – 12
PM David Cameron
Held on 7th May 2015
Electorate – 46,425,386

Turnout – 66.1%
Election spending
Leader's TV debates

Chart: Seats won at the 2015 general election

Conservative — 331
Labour — 232
Scottish National — 56
Others — 31

Table: 2015 general election results summary

Party		Seats	Gain	Loss	Net	Votes	%	±%
■	Conservative	331	35	11	+24	11,334,920	36.9	+0.8
■	Labour	232	22	48	−26	9,347,326	30.4	+1.5
■	Scottish National	56	50	0	+50	1,454,436	4.7	+3.1
■	Liberal Democrat	8	0	49	−49	2,415,888	7.9	−15.2
■	Democratic Unionist	8	1	1	0	184,260	0.6	0.0
■	Sinn Féin	4	0	1	−1	176,232	0.6	0.0
■	Plaid Cymru	3	0	0	0	181,694	0.6	0.0
■	SDLP	3	0	0	0	99,809	0.3	0.0
■	Ulster Unionist	2	2	0	+2	114,935	0.4	0.0
■	UKIP	1	1	0	+1	3,881,129	12.6	+9.5
■	Green	1	0	0	0	1,157,613	3.8	+2.8
■	Others	1	0	0	0	164,826	0.5	−0.3

3. Look at the results for two constituencies in the 2015 election. For each of the scenarios below, explain the actions that the voter or party would take:

The results from the Tottenham and North-east Fife constituencies (general election 2017)

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Labour	David Lammy	40,249	81.6
Conservative	Myles Stacey	5,665	11.5
Liberal Democrat	Brian Haley	1,687	3.4
Green	Jarelle Francis	1,276	2.6
UKIP	Patricia Rumble	462	0.9
Majority		34,584	70.1
Turnout		49,339	67.7
Labour hold		Swing	+7.4

Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Scottish National Party	Stephen Gethins	13,743	32.9	
Liberal Democrat	Elizabeth Riches	13,741	32.9	
Conservative	Tony Miklinski	10,088	24.1	
Labour	Rosalind Garton	4,026	9.6	
Majority		2	0.005	
Turnout			71.3	−1.7
SNP hold		Swing	−4.3	

Scenarios:

- I am a Conservative voter in Tottenham
- I am a Green party supporter in Tottenham
- I am a Green party supporter in North-east Fife
- I am a Labour party supporter in North-east Fife who doesn't want Scottish independence and therefore doesn't want the SNP to win seats
- I am the leader of the Liberal Democrats deciding in which constituency to spend my time and resources

4. Complete the table and questions below:

Evaluation of voting systems

First Past the Post (FPTP)

Advantages	Disadvantages

Task:

1) Use the scenarios on the previous slide and the learning from the lesson to complete the table
2) Rank the points in order from most important to least
3) Taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of the first past the post system, do you believe that the UK should use this system?

EXTENSION

Research alternative voting systems used in other democracies (https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/). Evaluate the claims that the UK should move to a different voting system.
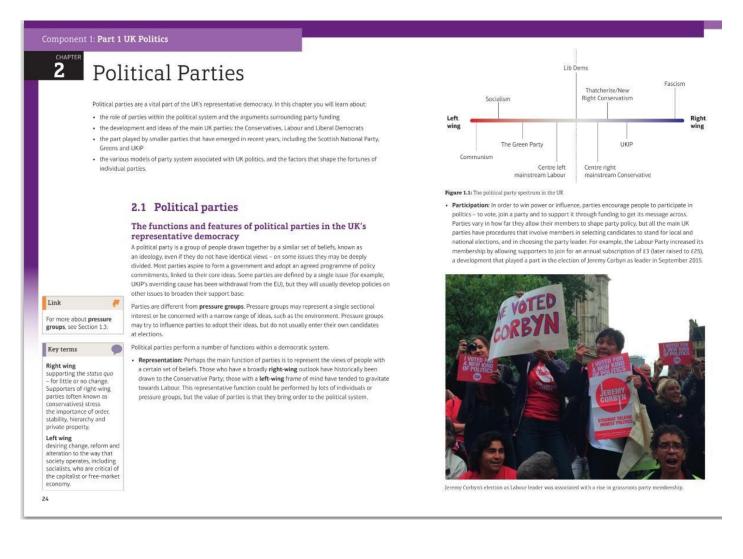
SESSION 7 AND 8

INTRODUCTION

In the UK, much political power lies with the major political parties – the best supported of which are the Conservatives (who are currently in power) and the Labour party.

ACTIVITIES

1. Read the textbook content below:

Component 1: **Part 1 UK Politics**

CHAPTER
2

Political Parties

Political parties are a vital part of the UK's representative democracy. In this chapter you will learn about:

- the role of parties within the political system and the arguments surrounding party funding
- the development and ideas of the main UK parties: the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats
- the part played by smaller parties that have emerged in recent years, including the Scottish National Party, Greens and UKIP
- the various models of party system associated with UK politics, and the factors that shape the fortunes of individual parties.

2.1 Political parties

The functions and features of political parties in the UK's representative democracy

A political party is a group of people drawn together by a similar set of beliefs, known as an ideology, even if they do not have identical views – on some issues they may be deeply divided. Most parties aspire to form a government and adopt an agreed programme of policy commitments, linked to their core ideas. Some parties are defined by a single issue (for example, UKIP's overriding cause has been withdrawal from the EU), but they will usually develop policies on other issues to broaden their support base.

Parties are different from **pressure groups**. Pressure groups may represent a single sectional interest or be concerned with a narrow range of ideas, such as the environment. Pressure groups may try to influence parties to adopt their ideas, but do not usually enter their own candidates at elections.

Political parties perform a number of functions within a democratic system.

- **Representation:** Perhaps the main function of parties is to represent the views of people with a certain set of beliefs. Those who have a broadly **right-wing** outlook have historically been drawn to the Conservative Party; those with a **left-wing** frame of mind have tended to gravitate towards Labour. This representative function could be performed by lots of individuals or pressure groups, but the value of parties is that they bring order to the political system.

Link

For more about **pressure groups**, see Section 1.3.

Key terms

Right wing
supporting the *status quo* – for little or no change. Supporters of right-wing parties (often known as conservatives) stress the importance of order, stability, hierarchy and private property.

Left wing
desiring change, reform and alteration to the way that society operates, including socialists, who are critical of the capitalist or free-market economy.

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Figure 1.1: The political party spectrum in the UK

- **Participation:** In order to win power or influence, parties encourage people to participate in politics – to vote, join a party and to support it through funding to get its message across. Parties vary in how far they allow their members to shape party policy, but all the main UK parties have procedures that involve members in selecting candidates to stand for local and national elections, and in choosing the party leader. For example, the Labour Party increased its membership by allowing supporters to join for an annual subscription of £3 (later raised to £25), a development that played a part in the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader in September 2015.

Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader was associated with a rise in grassroots party membership.

- **Recruiting office holders:** For a small number of people, party membership leads to recruitment as candidates for public office and thus participation in the UK's representative democracy. Candidates can learn political skills as campaigners and organisers. Parties also have the right to reject or 'deselect' candidates who fail to live up to their expectation so that they cannot stand for that party in any upcoming election. Before the 2015 general election, Conservative activists in Thirsk and Malton (in North Yorkshire) and South Suffolk did not allow the sitting MPs to stand again as candidates.
- **Formulating policy:** Parties generate policies that embody the ideas for which they stand. At a general election they put these proposals before the electorate in a manifesto, a document setting out their programme for government. For example, at the 2015 general election the NHS was a key battleground. The Conservatives promised to give people access to their GP 7 days a week, while Labour pledged that patients would be given an appointment within 48 hours. Parties can also be said to have an educative function, by communicating and explaining their ideas to the public (although they do this to win popular support, so are likely to distort opponents' policies in their own interests).
- **Providing government:** The winning party at a general election has the opportunity to form a government. That party then controls the business of parliament, with a view to passing its manifesto into law. The prime minister is not directly elected by the people, but is usually the leader of the largest party. A prime minister who loses the confidence of their party is vulnerable. For example, in November 1990 Margaret Thatcher lost the support of a large number of Conservative MPs, and failed to win a leadership contest outright. She resigned and was replaced by John Major, who was regarded as better placed to unite the party and lead it to renewed electoral success.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

How would you judge the success or failure of political parties? Should this be measured solely by their success in winning parliamentary seats, or are other features just as important, such as the size of their membership or their influence on government policies? Find examples of UK parties that have been successful in different ways in recent years.

The funding of UK political parties

MPs are paid from general taxation (their basic annual salary in April 2017 was £76,000). They are also allowed to claim expenses to cover the cost of running an office, living in Westminster and their constituency, and travelling between the two. However, in the UK there has been resistance to state funding of parties (a practice that happens in some other countries). Instead parties must meet most of their election costs from the voluntary subscriptions of their membership and from fundraising events in MPs' constituencies. However, there is special state provision to support the activities of the opposition in parliament, known as Short money.

Party funding has been a controversial area because of the suspicion that powerful interests offer financial support in return for political influence (see the Case study). While the Conservative Party has historically been seen as the party of big business, Labour has traditionally been funded by the trade unions, which played a major role in founding the party and shaping its policies. During the 'New Labour' years (1994–2010) this was to some extent replaced by donations from successful individuals as Labour became friendlier towards the business community. The Liberal Democrats (the least well-funded of the main UK parties) often criticise their opponents for being bankrolled by the wealthy. The large parties have been accused of offering political honours, such as places in the House of Lords, to their most generous benefactors, a practice that seems to run counter to principles of democracy and openness.

Case study: Tony Blair and Bernie Ecclestone

Blair faced criticism within months of becoming prime minister in 1997 following the revelation that Bernie Ecclestone, the motor-racing boss, had donated £1 million to Labour. It was alleged that there was a connection between this and a delay in implementing a ban on tobacco advertising in Formula One racing. Blair was forced to justify himself in a TV interview, in which he famously described himself as 'a pretty straight sort of guy', and the money was subsequently returned.

Question

- Following this case, were people justified in being suspicious about the relationship between parties and business interests?

In an attempt to overcome the perception that party funding had become an undemocratic feature of the UK political system, the Blair government passed the 2000 Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act.

As a result of the 2000 act:

- an independent electoral commission was set up to supervise party spending on election campaigns
- the amount that a party could spend was capped at £30,000 in a constituency
- donations of more than £5,000 (nationally) or £1,000 (to a constituency party) had to be declared, and parties had to publish details of donations at regular intervals
- donations from individuals not on the UK electoral roll were banned.

This did not, however, put the issue of funding to rest. In the 'cash for peerages' scandal in 2006, it transpired that several wealthy individuals who had loaned money to the Labour Party had been nominated for honours. It seemed as if the party was exploiting a loophole in the law, which only regulated outright gifts. Blair was interviewed by the police and two of his aides also faced questioning. Although no charges were brought, the affair cast a shadow over Blair's last months in office. It was later decided that loans would be subject to the same rules as donations, and spending limits for parties were revised in the run-up to the 2010 election.

Potential reforms

In 2007 a report by a former civil servant, Sir Hayden Phillips, proposed to address the problem of private donations by moving towards a system where parties are funded from taxpayers' money. However, no subsequent government has acted on this recommendation. Pressure to make public spending cuts under the coalition government meant that this was not the time to place an additional burden on the taxpayer.

A suggestion supported by Labour and the Liberal Democrats at the 2015 election was to impose limits on individual donations to parties. This debate was complicated by issues of party-political advantage because the Conservatives, who stood to lose most from such a move, wanted to place corresponding restrictions on Labour's trade union backers. The Conservative government's 2016 Trade Union Act obliged new trade union members to choose whether to 'opt in' to making payments towards the political levy. This was expected to lead to a significant drop in the funding received by the Labour Party from the unions.

Pause & reflect ✔

Why do you think it has been so difficult to find agreement on the subject of party funding?

2. For each of the two largest political parties – Conservatives or Labour – complete a one page fact file that has the covers the following points:

1. When was the party set up and why?
2. Who is the current leader?
3. How many MPs does it have?
4. What are the main sources of funding?

EXTENSION

Research two key modern figures in the recent history of each party – Margaret Thatcher (Conservative) and Tony Blair (Labour).

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/apr/14/margaret-thatcher-20-changes-britain

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2007/may/11/tonyblair.labour

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/tony-blair/10977884/Tony-Blair-His-legacy-will-be-debated-but-
not-forgotten.html

    i)   What were their key achievements?
    ii)   Why were they such controversial figures?
    iii)   What questions do you have about them?

PART 3: LIBERALISM

SESSIONS 9-10

INTRODUCTION

Liberalism is a political philosophy based on liberty, consent of the governed and equality before the law.

ACTIVITIES

Read the Year 12 student essay below. Highlight the most important aspects of liberalism.

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE LIBERALS IN AGREEMENT ON HUMAN NATURE; THE STATE; THE ECONOMY; AND SOCIETY?

HUMAN NATURE:

Liberalism is fundamentally governed by the optimistic belief that humans are intrinsically rational, therefore are fueled by reason rather than emotion or prejudices. Because Liberals believe that reason is an integral part of human nature, therefore they believe in equality which has arguably led many Liberal thinkers to champion the rights of the disenfranchised. Most notably Mary Wollstonecraft advocated for the formal equality of women on the basis that women are rational, independent beings who are capable of reason just like men, therefore should be entitled to the same rights. Formal equality was a particularly progressive idea for the18th century which proposed the idea that all individuals are entitled to the same legal and political rights in society, making Wollstonecraft quite ahead of her time for her views on the extent to which human nature was governed by rationality. Another key implication of rationalism is the notion that all humans deserve happiness, as argued by Jeremy Bentham: a utilitarian thinker who believed that society should strive for the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number'. Similarly, because all liberals alike believe that humans are capable of rationality and reason, therefore Liberals support the idea that humans have free will. The idea of optimism is also highlighted through the core idea of liberty, whereas optimists, Liberals seek to empower the freedom of the individual. This however is where Liberals begin to disagree as some support the concept of positive freedom, whereas others believe in negative freedom as the way for individuals to gain full emancipation. Negative freedom- supported by Mill and rooted in utilitarianism- stipulates freedom from coercion or restraint, otherwise considered as freedom from interference from the state. Because classical Liberals believe in the rationality of human nature, therefore they support no interference from the state as they believe it is unnecessary for the state to impose on people. Contrastingly, many modern Liberals- specifically Rawls- support the idea of positive freedom, where individuals are free to maximize their potential through state interference as they recognise that some state intervention is necessary to achieve complete freedom for all individuals. However, within the idea of freedom Liberals do agree on the idea of limited freedom. For example, Liberals believe that power is corruptible, therefore as people of a self-seeking nature, laws are helpful to limit us. This idea is highlighted through Locke's idea of a limited government whereby the power of government should be limited and based on consent from below and both rulers and people must be subject to the law to remove the opportunity for unrestrained forms of power to be exercised.

Another fundamental belief of liberalism, individualism is considered to be another aspect of the foundation of human nature. Regarding Individualism, there are 2 opposing views- classical Liberals support egoistical individualism and modern Liberals support developmental individualism. Starting with classical Liberals, egoistical individualism is the belief that humans are naturally self- reliant and view a collective of people- not as a society- but as a collection of individuals where everyone puts their own interests first. Furthermore, this view encourages hard work as citizens are able to realise their full potential through the means of competition within a competitive 'society'. In opposition, modern Liberals support developmental individualism which recognises that as individuals we have a responsibility to one another and that by working as a society to reduce inequality, we can create a

meritocracy. However, modern Liberals argue that this can only happen if individuals work together as a society instead of working just in their own self- interests. Significantly, many modern Liberals feel that inequality has grown beyond the justification of human nature and rationalism, therefore such inequality threatens the ability to manage and maintain a stable society. Rawls advocated for the theory of justice which stipulated that society must be just and guarantee every citizen a life worth living, therefore the gap of inequality be kept to a minimum, which he argued is only possible under the principle of developmental individualism.

THE STATE:

While liberals tend to agree on the basic principles of human nature, there is an arguably much larger divide between classical and modern Liberals when it comes to the role of the state. Many classical liberals view the state as a 'necessary evil' as they believe that the state is 'necessary' in its ability to protect people and property, however it is also 'evil' in its power to interfere and control. Another core principle is the idea of limited government which is enforced by the social contract theory. Limited government, as proposed by Locke, outlines the idea that the power of the government should be limited and based on consent from below. Along with many Liberals -both classical and modern alike- he strongly opposed the unrestrained exercise of power as he believed it to be corruptible, therefore favouring the notion that both rulers and people should be subject to the law. The rationale behind such an idea stems from the doctrine of natural rights and natural laws which states that the government derives its legitimacy from the people and doesn't have an inherent, God- given right to rule over others, therefore classical liberals support a limited role of the state and favour constitutionalism, where codified rules govern a state's role and perform checks and balances. To further limit the power of the state, classical Liberals support Federalism as they believe that by sharing and decentralising power, the power of the state is less concentrated and therefore arguably weaker. However, federalism can be problematic for example in the US individual states can exercise strict control over the region and impose their own laws which reduces individual freedom and creates inconsistency regarding laws in relation to other states, meaning that not every citizen in the country has the same rights and freedoms. Locke also introduced the idea of the social contract theory where society, the state and the government are based on a voluntary agreement or contract. Resultantly, he argued that people should accept the authority of government as long as they completely fulfil their part of the contract by protecting property rights, exercising tolerance in religious matters and not interfering in areas of private conscience. Another key idea held by classical Liberals is the night watchman state. Classical Liberals strongly believe that any enlargement of the state should be avoided as the role of the state is to protect and maintain, not expand its control into the lives of individuals. As a result, classical Liberals support the view that the route out of poverty lies with the individual and the family, through hard work. Similarly, classical liberals support the idea of a meritocracy which is exemplified through Richard Cobden's view that the poor should look to 'their own self-reliance, rather than the law'.

In contrast, many modern Liberals support the notion of the enabling state as they recognise the significance and prevalence of inequality and see the state as being responsible for enabling people to progress and achieve social mobility. This illustrates the modern liberal belief of positive freedom, which is where the state intervenes to increase one's freedom and help them achieve their full potential, specifically allowing marginalised individuals to prosper and succeed. Classical Liberals however would strongly oppose this and instead favour negative freedom which is freedom from interference from the state as they believe in social Darwinism, whereby individuals should be encouraged to work hard to succeed, rather than rely on the state to support them. However, the modern liberal view is supported by Rawls who believed in the theory of justice whereby society must be just and guarantee everyone a life worth living as everyone has an equal entitlement to certain basic rights and liberties. Such ideas led to further developments within the modern liberal political sphere, such as the creation of New Liberalism which offered reforms to address 'old age, accident, sickness and unemployment' which were prevalent issues affecting society during 1906-1911

when such reforms were introduced. Another development as a result of the theory of justice was the Beveridge report which proposed that the role of the welfare state was to combat the 'five evils of want, squalor, disease, idleness and ignorance'. Both reforms reflect the modern liberal principle that the role of the state is to intervene to increase the positive freedom for all citizens. Arguably the biggest division in liberalism, while modern Liberals support state intervention as a way of reducing inequality, classical Liberals morally oppose the welfare state as they believe that it reduces self-reliance and the sense of responsibility. Furthermore, classical Liberals argue that transfer payments from the state in the form of 'benefits' rather than support those most vulnerable, actually strengthen the power of the state and reduce the rights of the individual, leading to state dependency. Classical Liberals would argue that state dependency undermines the rationale of humans as it takes away the power from the individual and instead creates a 'nanny' state whereby people lose the fundamental principles of free will and instead become a means to the ends- no longer a valued individual but bound to a society.

THE ECONOMY:

Classical Liberals and modern Liberals have particularly opposing views when it comes to the economy. Classical Liberals strongly oppose mercantilism- which was the dominant idea of the 16th & 17th centuries that encouraged governments to intervene to increase exports and decrease imports- as they believed the basic principle that the market works best when it is left alone by the government. The classical economist Smith viewed the economy as a market whereby the natural forces of demand and supply would reach equilibrium as the market operates according to the wishes and decisions of rational individuals. Resultantly, classical Liberals believed in the idea of the 'economic man', which illustrated the notion that all human beings are fundamentally egoistical and desire material goods. Furthermore, Smith argued that the economy operated according to market forces and was therefore a self-regulating mechanism which should be 'free' from government intervention as it is managed by the 'invisible hand'. Many classical Liberals too supported the rise in free market ideas such as the principle of laissez-faire which suggests that the state should play no role in the economy and instead leave the economy completely alone. This principle of a hands-off approach opposed all forms of factory legislation as it followed the belief that the unrestrained pursuit of profit will ultimately lead to a general benefit- lead to the greater good. Such ideas are supported by Locke's view that all humans are rational beings as through exercising free will in pursuit of optimizing their utility, they will make sensible decisions as consumers and producers in an economy for example as consumers they will only demand goods they really want, therefore through the rationality of humans the forces of the price mechanism will be successful and reach market equilibrium, independent of state intervention. Furthermore, classical economics supports the idea of social Darwinism which outlined
the belief that inequalities of social position and political power are natural and inevitable due to some people being more suited by nature to succeed, therefore the government should not interfere to promote equality as this is unnatural and would instead promote laziness over a meritocracy which argues that those with a willingness to work will prosper and succeed.

Modern Liberal views on the economy differ drastically. While classical Liberals favour a self- regulating free market following the doctrine of laissez-faire, modern liberals support 'managed' economies which is where the government intervenes to deliver prosperity. Modern Liberals sought to abandon the principles of laissez- faire as they saw its ever-increasing failure to guarantee general prosperity in economies. Notable, such economic disasters such as The Great Depression of the 1990s demonstrated the failure of the free market to deliver prosperity and stability, prompting modern Liberals to support an alternative method where the government intervened and addressed such market failures. Keynesianism refers to the economic theories of Keynes, who strongly believed that governments could manage their economies by influencing the level of aggregate demand, for example through imposing expansionary or contractionary fiscal policy. Modern Liberals supported his theories as they believed that the government should interfere in markets to solve issues such as high levels of unemployment and inequality. Keynes' ideas centred around the idea that the invisible hand was insufficient in solving unemployment and promoting growth, therefore the government had to intervene through expansionary fiscal policy which is where government expenditure increases, causing a large injection into the economy and taxes, which are a withdrawal, are reduced which together increases aggregate demand, reduces unemployment and leads to a rise in real GDP. Many modern Liberals favoured this ideology as it meant that governments could manipulate employment and growth levels and ultimately secure general prosperity for all. Such economic theory is supported by Rawl's theory of justice which states

that a fair society is one in which the difference in outcomes for the richest and the poorest is kept to a minimum as government intervention in the economy is designed to act as a safety net, increasing employment for the unemployed and helping to reduce inequality. Furthermore, Keynesianism can be applied to Rawl's idea of the veil of ignorance as by interfering in and regulating the economy, governments are promoting prosperity for all, therefore are approaching the economy as if they are behind a 'veil of ignorance' which means that they are intervening in the economy - not skewed by their own knowledge of their position in society- but by adhering to an objective to make the economy most efficient in a way that would guarantee the most equality.

SOCIETY:

When it comes to society, classical Liberals have a fairly positive view of civil society which they deem to be a 'realm of freedom'. Rooted in the ideology of utilitarianism, classical liberals support the idea of negative freedom which is introduced in Mill's 'harm principle' which states that within a society, individuals should be free to do anything except harm others. Classical liberals therefore support a society in which individuals are free from interference from the state. Furthermore, Mill outlined the limitations of state interference, for example he believed that the government was entitled to restrict behaviour that adversely affected the freedom of others, such as violent or disorderly conduct, however should not interfere in self- regarding behaviour which was behaviour that affected only the individual of the action. While Mill's views are centred around classical liberal ideology, his views are argued by many to bridge the gap between classical and liberal views of society as he accepted that some degree of state intervention was justified to prevent the poor from enduring injustice. Another common belief held by classical Liberals is the view that society should be a strict meritocracy, whereby those who work hard are rewarded with success, thus supporting a society that promotes equality of opportunity. Significantly, classical Liberals do not believe in such a thing as society and instead advocate for the rights and freedoms of the individual. As a result, they often support social Darwinism as a justification for poverty and inequality, as this theory argues that those with ability and a willingness will prosper, however those who are incompetent or lazy will not. Likewise, classical Liberals would argue that it was not the government's role to create complete equality in society, as this goes against nature, therefore would oppose the introduction of a cradle to grave welfare and instead support safety-net welfare which aims to protect the most vulnerable without addressing bigger societal issues such as inequality and poverty. Furthermore, classical liberal feminism also has particular beliefs surrounding the role of the state in achieving equality. For example, Wollstonecraft advocated for formal equality- the idea that all individuals have the same legal and political rights in society. She believed that suffrage and education were the most necessary and impactful means for women to be viewed as free individuals within society and therefore supported the introduction of laws to create equality within society.

Modern liberals however have quite opposing views of how they vision society. While classical Liberals believe humans are intrinsically self-serving utility maximisers, modern liberals support the idea that humans have sympathy for others, therefore their egoism is somewhat constrained by a degree of altruism which is a concern for others based off of a belief in a common humanity. Therefore, modern Liberals view society as an amalgamation of individuals who are linked together by ties of empathy and social awareness. Primarily, modern Liberals dispute negative freedom and instead advocate for positive freedom whereby they accept the need for state intervention as a way to allow individuals to maximise their full potential. Modern Liberals value the power of positive freedom to recognise that liberty may also be threatened by social disadvantage and inequality, which in turn requires a revised view of the state to that of which classical Liberals are comfortable with, as by interfering the people's lives, the government may be able to protect them from 'social evils'. This doesn't mean though that modern Liberals put society before the individual- while they believe that the state has a social obligation to interfere to expand the freedom of individuals, they understand that the state cannot force people to be good members of society, they can only seek to provide the conditions to allow individuals to make rational and moral decisions. Furthermore, unlike classical liberals who believe in self-help and individual responsibility, modern Liberals support social

liberalism which advocates for a welfare state whereby the government takes primary responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens. Modern Liberals support welfarism on the grounds that it provides equality of opportunity to individuals disadvantaged by their socioeconomic circumstances. For example, the expansion of the welfare state was primarily down to the findings of the Beveridge Report (1942) which set out to tackle the 'five giants'- want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. Similarly, Rawls introduced the 'Theory of Justice' where he proposed the 'difference principle': where social and economic inequalities should be arranged to benefit the least well off which is arguably an attempt to protect those in poverty, thus favouring a supportive society rather than a collective of individuals. Significantly, modern Liberal feminists arguably build on the beliefs of their classical counterparts as they see the need for more radical government action. For example, unlike Wolstonecraft who advocated for equal rights through suffrage, modern Liberal Friedan argued that the state needed to do more in order to create a society where there was equality of opportunity as she believed that it was social conditioning rather than biology that led women to become wives and homemakers, rather than pursuing careers. Therefore, her main concern was with the creation of a level playing field to enable women to compete equally with men, and not berestricted to a narrow range of what were considered 'acceptable' occupations.

EXTENSION

Choose an element of liberalism highlighted in the essay and research it further. To what extent is it evident in the UK political system today?

PART 4: SOCIALISM

SESSIONS 11-12

INTRODUCTION

Socialism is a political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole.

ACTIVITIES

Read the article below from the Independent and answer the questions.

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COMMUNIST AND A SOCIALIST?

The terms 'socialist' and 'communist' are often confused, thanks in large part to the Cold War

The day after the first Democratic presidential debate, Donald Trump called Bernie Sanders a maniac.

"This socialist-slash-communist," Trump said to raucous cheers. "I call him a socialist-slash-communist, because that's what he is."

Well, no. The terms "socialist" and "communist" are often confused, thanks in large part to the Cold War. Layer on top of that the nuance of the term "democratic socialist," which is how Sanders describes himself, and it's easy to see why people might generally be confused. (Even if they aren't intentionally blurring that line, as it's safe to assume Mr. Trump might have been doing.) As our Dave Weigel and David Farenthold reported this week, voters are not clear on the difference, either.

To offer America a bit of a primer, I reached out to Dr. Lawrence Quill, chairman and professor of political science at San Jose State University, over e-mail. He explained the difference between communism, socialism, capitalism and democratic socialism — in very professorial terms.

Capitalism — or really the concept of "liberalism" — arose in the 17th century, and centers on the right to private property. In Adam Smith's foundational "Wealth of Nations," Quill notes, "is recognition that capitalism is going to make the lives of a good majority of the population miserable, and that there will be a need for government intervention in society and the economy to offset the worse effects."

Socialism was in part a response to capitalism, largely through the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Socialism focuses on the inequalities that arise within capitalism through a number of possible responses. Quill outlined some possibilities: "[T]he state might 'wither away' or collapse altogether, in others it would
regulate the production of goods and services, in yet others it would become thoroughly democratic" — all with the aim of reducing that inequality.

You can see that's where democratic socialism arises. That philosophy, Quill writes, seeks "democratic control of sectors of society and economy in order to avoid the pitfalls of an unregulated market and — this is most important — the kind of terrible authoritarian government that emerged in the Soviet Union."

Communism "was the endpoint of Marx's ideas," Quill writes, though Marx didn't delineate what it would

look like, exactly. "We find hints in works like 'The German Ideology" (1846) where there is a description of working life that is unalienated, i.e. creative and various — we hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, and become opera critics in the evening." During the Cold War, though, the idea came to be inextricably and pejoratively associated with the Soviet Union and with the elimination of private property. The term, in Quill's words, "served as a shorthand for all things un-American" — which was the way that Trump used it.

Quill's most important point is that "all of these terms are 'umbrella concepts'; in other words, they are host to a family of related ideas, not all of them compatible with one another." We tend to use the terms concretely, which necessarily introduces inaccuracies. Or, as Quill put it, "they [can] serve as excuses not to think, as belief systems that discourage explorations of the mismatch between theory and practice and the inconsistencies of any grand theory."

So that's the college-level curriculum. Next, I scaled it back a bit and talked to Tori Waite, who teaches high school history at Del Mar High School in San Jose. After all, since most of us were first introduced to these ideas in high school, perhaps we just need a refresher.

"When we teach about the different types of economies," Waite said, "the first thing we do is we talk about economic questions. How is it made? Who makes it? Who gets to buy it? Based on the economy, different people answer those questions."

Simplifying Quill's explanation: "In a communist country, the government answers those questions. There's no private business. There's no private property. The government decides."

"In a capitalist society, the people make those decisions. The businesses, the market decides how much products will cost, how many there are, where it will be made."

"In the socialist system, there's a mix of both. The government operates the system to help all, but there is opportunity for private property and private wealth. That's generally how we talk about it." Back to Quill's point: A socialist government could control all of the means of production — or it could, for example, use taxes to redistribute resources among the population.

Both Quill and Waite note that the United States is not a purely capitalist society. There are and have long been socialist aspects to how the government makes decisions and applies its power, while still striving to keep the marketplace as free as possible. And, of course, while allowing democratic decisions to guide what it does.

The example of the United States serves as a reminder that these ideas exist on a three-dimensional scale, in which differentiation is often tricky.

    i)   What is socialism?
    ii)   What are the key beliefs of the ideology?
    iii)   What historical examples are there of socialist countries?
    iv)   What are the advantages of a socialist system?
    v)   What are the problems which is a socialist system might create?

EXTENSION

To what extent do you agree that Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party manifesto in 2019 was a socialist one?

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/nov/21/jeremy-corbyn-labour-manifesto-harks-back-to-1940s

PART 5: CONSERVATISM

SESSIONS 13-14

INTRODUCTION

Conservatism is a political ideology which favours free enterprise, private ownership, and socially conservative ideas.

ACTIVITIES

Read the article below and answer the following:

  i)   What was the title tell you about the article?
  ii)   What are Heywood's main arguments/points?
  iii)   What did Heywood state about:
    -   Traditional conservatism
    -   One-nationism
    -   Neo-liberalism
  iv)   What questions do you have in follow-up to this article?

CONSERVATISM: A DEFENCE FOR THE PRIVILEGED AND PROSPEROUS?

ANDREW HEYWOOD

Political ideologies are commonly portrayed as, essentially, vehicles for advancing or defending the social position of classes or social groups. In this view, ideologies 'belong' to a specific class or group and are configured in line with its interests. Socialism is thus linked to industrial working class, liberalism to the rising middle classes, feminism to women, and so on. Conservatism, for its part, has either been seen, narrowly, as a defence for the aristocracy or landed nobility, or, more generally, as a means of upholding the interests of those in society who are privileged and prosperous. This has allowed critics to dismiss conservatism as mere ruling-class ideology.

However, there are drawbacks to seeing ideologies in such terms. Not the least of these is that it fails to take account of historical change and the extent to which ideologies adapt or are reshaped as they are exposed to changing social pressures. In the case of conservatism, this has occurred particularly through the advent of democracy and the emergence of mass politics, both consequences of industrialisation. In what ways do conservatism's core values reflect a bias in favour of dominant or elite groups? How has conservative ideology been reshaped in the light of changing social circumstances. To what extent have the social concerns of conservatism expanded beyond those of the privileged and prosperous?

CORE VALUES: UPHOLDING WEALTH AND PRIVILEGE?

It is difficult to argue that, in origin, conservatism was not closely aligned to the interests of dominant or elite groups. Conservative ideas arose in reaction to the growing pace of political, social and economic change, which, in many ways, was symbolized by the 1789 French Revolution. In seeking to uphold the ancien régime, conservatives acted in defence of an increasingly embattled landed nobility and the institution of monarchy, even though in Britain in particular this stance assumed a distinctly pragmatic character, influenced by Edmund Burke's (1729-97) idea of 'change in order to conserve'. The bias that this

implied in favour of the interests of the privileged and prosperous was clearly reflected in the theoretical make-up of conservatism, especially in its commitment to the values of tradition, hierarchy and property.

TRADITION

In demanding respect for tradition, conservatism sought to legitimise a profoundly inegalitarian political and social status quo, one characterised by endemic privilege and rule from above. From the conservative perspective, institutions and practices that have been passed down from one generation to the next have, in effect, stood the 'test of time'. Having proved their value, they should be preserved for the benefit of the present generation as well as future generations. Tradition therefore constitutes the accumulated wisdom of the past. Such thinking was nevertheless also entangled with a belief in hierarchy.

HIERARCHY

Hierarchy implies that society is naturally stratified, divided into different levels on the basis of factors such as wealth, status and power. All attempts to promote social equality are thus doomed to failure. Such thinking stems from the tendency within conservatism to view society as an organism, a living entity that is shaped by natural forces rather than by human intervention. A key implication of this view is that society, together with all organisms, comprises a collection of unequal or different parts. So, just as the human body is composed of organs - the heart, liver, spleen and so on – which each have a distinct function, society is made up of classes, social groups and institutions that each have a specific role. Divisions within society between the rulers and the ruled, the elite and the masses and, for that matter, the rich and the poor can therefore be seen to have been ordained by nature.

PROPERTY

Finally, strong support within conservatism for private property implies that the established economic order should be upheld, leaving limited scope for legitimate wealth redistribution. For conservatives, property has a range of psychological and social advantages, which go beyond the liberal emphasis on property as an economic incentive and a reflection of individual effort. These include that property provides people with security in an uncertain and unpredictable world, giving them something to 'fall back on', and that, in giving people a 'stake' in society, property helps to breed the 'conservative' values of respect for law, authority and social order. At a still deeper level, conservatives have supported property on the grounds that it is an extension of an individual's personality, in the sense that people 'realize' themselves, even see themselves, in what they own.

ONE NATIONISM: A CONSERVATISM FOR THE POOR?

The main way in which British conservatism responded to the pressures generated by industrialisation was through the emergence, in the mid-nineteenth century, of One Nation ideas and values. Some, indeed, have argued that this process profoundly revised the social orientation of conservatism, allowing it, in particular, to take account of the needs of the poor and less well-off. The origins of One Nation conservatism are usually traced back to the ideas that Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81) developed in novels such as Coningsby (1844) and Sybil (1845), which were written before he assumed government office. Writing against the backdrop of widening social inequality and, in continental Europe at least, revolutionary upheaval, Disraeli drew attention to the danger of Britain being divided into 'two nations: the Rich and the Poor'. One aspect of this was an appeal to prudence. Disraeli feared that the poor and oppressed working masses would not simply accept their growing misery, a lesson that seemed to be borne out by the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, which had affected much of continental Europe. For Disraeli, social reform designed to alleviate the suffering of the poor was the surest way of stemming the tide of revolution. Reform, in short, was the antidote to revolution.

However, Disraeli did not only appeal to prudence, his thinking was also based on moral principles, and especially paternalism. In his view, wealth and privilege brought with them social obligations, in particular a responsibility to care for the disadvantaged and less well-off. Such thinking harked back to the feudal principle of noblesse oblige, the obligation of the aristocracy to be honourable and generous. In Disraeli's neo-feudalism, noblesse oblige was reinterpreted in explicitly social terms. One of the crucial aspects of One Nation thinking was, nevertheless, that social position is essentially a consequence of the accident of birth. The wealthy are, in effect, the fortunate, while the poor are the unfortunate. Not only does this imply that, blighted by misfortune, the poor are 'deserving' of support, but it also suggests that the compassion of the rich is spurred by the reflection: 'There but for the grace of God go I'.

LIMITATIONS OF ONE NATIONISM

Nevertheless, although the advent of One Nationism may have ended British conservatism's exclusive concern for the interests of the privileged and prosperous, it is questionable whether it altered conservatism's social orientation in a fundamental way. This can be seen in at least three ways. In the first place, the purpose of One Nationism was to preserve hierarchy, not to revise it, still less to abolish it altogether. Reforms, such as those introduced under Disraeli in the 1860s and 1870s, to extend voting rights to the working class and to improve hygiene and housing conditions, are perhaps best understood as strategic concessions to the poor, designed, most basically, to reconcile them to their traditional position in society. One Nation reformism is therefore an example of Burke's idea of 'change in order to conserve', and it is driven less by a concern for the poor for its own sake and more by 'enlightened' self-interest on the part of the rich.

Second, One Nation thinking presents the rich in a broadly positive light, while being less flattering about the poor. This is because it holds that compassion and social responsibility increase in line with people's economic and social position. Whereas the rich are seen as generous and morally concerned, the poor, though 'deserving' in the sense that they are not the architects of their own misfortune, are portrayed as essentially passive. As 'victims' of social circumstance, the poor lack the ability to help themselves and so rely on the charity of others. Third, One Nation principles are consistent with only limited welfare provision and minimal levels of wealth redistribution. Rather than seeking to narrow the gap between rich and poor on principled grounds, linked, for instance, to equality and social justice, One Nation reformism is geared to a less ambitious and more pragmatic goal, namely rendering the working masses politically quiescent. Once that goal is achieved, further or more radical reform is deemed 'excessive'.

NEOLIBERALISM: BEYOND HIERARCHY AND PRIVILEGE?

The other major transformation in conservative ideology that has stimulated debate about its possibly changed social orientation is the rise of neoliberalism, a trend that in Britain is usually associated with the emergence, since the 1970s, of economic Thatcherism. Neoliberalism is defined by the goal of 'rolling back' social and economic intervention and the attempt to establish an unregulated capitalist economy, based on the principles of the free market and 'rugged' individualism. Its supporters argue that, in ridding conservatism of social biases of any kind, neoliberalism has effectively decoupled the ideology from the notions of hierarchy and privilege. This is because neoliberalism, in line with the classical liberalism on which it is based, sees society in strictly individual terms. Society (if it exists at all) consists of a collection of separate and independent individuals, each of whom is solely responsible for his or her economic well-being. Although some individuals are rich and others are poor, it is meaningless to think of society being made up of collective entities such as 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Hierarchy has therefore been displaced by meritocracy, and privilege has been rendered entirely irrelevant.

Neoliberals nevertheless go further and stress that there are ways in which the establishment of unregulated capitalism will particularly benefit those individuals who are less well-off. This occurs, first,

because the scaling-back the benefits system releases welfare recipients from a 'dependency culture' that both saps initiative and enterprise and robs them of dignity and self-respect. In such a view, welfare is a cause of poverty, not its cause. Second, neoliberals insist that the boost to the economy that occurs as the 'dead hand' of government is removed brings benefit to all, including those who are economically less successful. This is known as the theory of 'trickle down', and it is based on the assumption that although poorer individuals may receive a smaller portion of the economic cake in a free-market economy, they will enjoy rising absolute living standards, because the cake itself expands.

CRITICISMS OF NEOLIBERALISM

Significant doubts have nevertheless been expressed about whether, by embracing neoliberalism, conservatism has abandoned its bias in favour of the privileged and prosperous. Apart from anything else, to the degree to which they remain faithful to conservative values and beliefs, neoliberals conservatives are only able to embrace meritocracy to a limited extent. For example, the application of strict meritocratic principles implies that inheritance should be heavily taxed or severely curtailed, a position that runs clearly counter to the conservative belief in private property. Similarly, meritocracy is inconsistent with the survival of traditional institutions such as public schools and 'Oxbridge' universities, which give some people educational and social advantages over others which have little to do with personal ability or hard work.

Furthermore, critics of neoliberalism argue that it is strongly linked to economic inequality. While businesses and wealthy people prosper from tax cuts and economic deregulation, poorer people are made more vulnerable by the withdrawal of social supports and the weakening of trade unions. Empirical trends have also been used to support such assertions, notably the trend for the counties that have embraced neoliberalism with greatest enthusiasm to also have witness growing inequality and declining social mobility, as has happened in Britain and the USA since the 1980s. Finally, neoliberalism may not only promote economic inequality but also help to legitimise it. If people's economic and social position is believed to be determined solely by their ability and appetite for hard work, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that rich people 'deserve' to be rich while poor people 'deserve' to be poor.

EXTENSION

Research some key Conservative thinker – Hobbes, Burke and Oakshott. What were their key ideas?

PART 6: FEMINISM

SESSION 15

INTRODUCTION

Feminism is a political movement concerned with the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes. This session will consider the extent to which gender equality exists in the UK today.

ACTIVITIES

1) Consider and discuss the following statements with a friend or family member:

   i)   "Boys and girls are naturally different"
   ii)   "There are some characteristics which are male and others which are female"
   iii) "Gender roles are assigned by society, not defined by birth"

2) Gender equality timeline:

1882: The Married Women's Property Act
- married women given the right to own their share of the family home

1918: Representation of the People Act 1918
- gives the vote to women over 30yrs who meet a minimum property qualification

1919: The changing view of women in law
- minor Bills and positive comments in the right direction

1919: The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act ("the Act 1919")
- introduces equal employment status for women

1922: Changes in the Legal Profession
- women can become barristers and solicitors

1928: The Equal Franchise Act
- introduces voting rights for women over 21 years

1958: Life Peerages Act
- women admitted to the House of Lords

1970: The Equal Pay Act
- women workers fight for and receive equal pay

1975: The Sex Discrimination Act
- women fight for equal treatment in work and society

2010: The Equality Act
- women receive legal status as equals to men

2017: Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations
- employers required to declare the gap in gender pay

2019: Employer Equal Pay Statistics
- gender pay statistics available for the first time

Why might some people consider that equality was achieved in the 1970s?

3) Read the article below from the New Statesman magazine and answer the questions
   (https://www.newstatesman.com/v-spot/2013/05/five-main-issues-facing-modern-feminism)

   i.   Describe the five main 'fronts' of feminism according to the authors. What evidence do they use to support each of them?
   ii.   To what extent does this article 'prove' that gender equality has not been achieved?
   iii. What are the most important pieces of evidence put forward by the article? Justify your reasoning.

iv.   Read this article (https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/international-womens-day-2018-statistics-numbers-female-lives-feminism-gender-pay-gap-a8244101.html).
What evidence from this article would you use to suggest that the top five fronts for feminism explained above are incorrect? Again, justify your reasoning.

EXTENSION

Read the article considering the generational splits between feminism (https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/may/11/how-metoo-revealed-the-central-rift-within-feminism- social-individualist)

- Explain some of the key divisions between feminists and the impact of these divisions.

Read the article on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on women (https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/03/feminism-womens-rights-coronavirus- covid19/608302/).

- To what extent do you agree that the pandemic disproportionately affects women?

SESSION 16

INTRODUCTION

We will study a range of key feminist thinkers. One is Charlotte Perkins Gilman. She wrote a famous short story called 'The Yellow Wallpaper', which will be the focus of this session

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ACTIVITIES

1) Read Gilman's short story and answer the questions below (https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/theliteratureofprescription/exhibitionAssets/digitalDocs/The- Yellow-Wall-Paper.pdf)

   i.   How is the wallpaper representative of the domestic sphere?
   ii.   Why do you think Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote The Yellow Wallpaper?
   iii.   What are some themes in The Yellow Wallpaper? Symbols? How do they relate to the plot and characters?
   iv.   What is the role of women in the text? How are mothers represented? What about single/independent women? What is important about women--in the historical context?
   v.   Why is The Yellow Wallpaper sometimes considered essential reading in Feminist Literature? What are the qualities that make it representative?

EXTENSION

Read some other freely available seminal works of feminist

   literature: Simone de Beauvoir: The Second Sex

   https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/index.htm

   Carol Hanisch: The Personal is Political

   http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html

   Kimberle Crenshaw: Intersectionality

   https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mapping-

   margins.pdf