



Examiners' Report **June 2024**

GCE Politics 9PL0 01

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Introduction

Centres and candidates deserve praise and credit for how they have handled the summer 2024 9PLO1 Politics paper. A few days after the sitting of 9PLO1 the Prime Minister called the 2024 General Election and set in chain a series of events that no doubt will be central to political life in the UK in the coming years. Politics as a subject continues to grow and attract candidates and new Centres. Many new Centres who had not delivered Politics previously joined the Pearson specification in this series.

There is a growing awareness of how to approach both source and essay questions. This is reflected in better handling of planning and approach to the written content. There is also a fuller realisation of the requirements and demands placed by the three core Assessment Objectives (AO). As noted, performance improved again on the previous series for essays and source questions. Unusually, against the established trend, performance dipped slightly on the core political ideas. Advice and guidance are contained in this report to remedy and attend to this.

The report will provide detailed comments on each individual question and aims to reflect the wider findings of all the Examiners who worked on the paper and were able to contribute to the construction of this report.

Question 1 (a)

Overview of Responses

This was the considerably less popular of the two sources. Most candidates demonstrated the ability to identify policies from the Labour and Conservative parties to support their analysis of the source, but this was less true regarding the Liberal Democrats.

Whilst many candidates understood the question and used the source effectively, there was a need for greater depth in analysis, more evaluation, and a broader inclusion of all three established political parties.

Common Issues

Candidates generally understood the points raised in the source and used them effectively to build their arguments. Most candidates had good knowledge, particularly on Old Labour and New Labour.

The best responses engaged with the entire source, understanding that this question was not asking whether parties were Old/New Labour or One Nation/Thatcherite conservatives or Classical/Modern Liberals, but instead whether those labels were still relevant **or** if parties had moved beyond them. However, a large number of candidates did not focus on this and instead turned the question into an Old v New Labour, One Nation v Thatcherite, Classical v Modern Liberal one. This affected their ability to reach the higher levels.

Weaker responses often lacked balance, tending to criticise parties policies rather than analyse them objectively. They also had a tendency to list policies without adequately analysing how these policies demonstrated the ideological standpoints of the parties.

Another issue in this question was that many candidates either omitted the Liberal Democrats entirely or only provided surface-level information about them. This gap impacted on the quality of responses. Conversely, most candidates could name specific policies from Labour and Conservative, using them to construct arguments and evaluate the source. Whilst there was a good understanding and application of recent Conservative policies, there was an overly negative tone from some candidates when referring to the Conservative Party. The very best responses displayed excellent knowledge of both historical and recent political party policies, which they used to support their analysis and evaluation.

One issue that occurs in parties questions is when candidates conflate these questions with their studies on Core Ideas, introducing extraneous information not relevant to political parties questions.

Structurally, most candidates adopted a party-by-party approach, comparing policies against the criteria outlined in the question. This worked very well. Whilst approaching it by themes of policy was a completely acceptable approach, candidates who structured their responses in this way often found it difficult to provide sufficient depth and scope in their responses. Weaker responses listed similarities or differences, without any deeper analysis.

Successful candidates incorporated their judgements into paragraphs or used interim judgements at the end of each section, substantiating their judgements and linking back to the question. This method helped to embed their arguments and enhanced their AO3 marks. High-level responses require substantiated and consistent evaluation throughout, not just in the introduction and conclusion.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Range of Policies: Candidates should be encouraged to learn a broad range of policies from all major parties and understand how these policies link back to their ideological roots.
2. Balanced Analysis: Emphasise the importance of balanced analysis, ensuring candidates avoid overly critical or one-sided responses.
3. Structured Responses: Encourage candidates to interweave incorporated or interim judgements into their essays to maintain a clear and consistent line of argument.

This response shows the huge benefit of maintaining a full focus on the question and ensuring a consistent line of argument.

Since the dawn of the new millennium, none of the three established parties - the Conservatives, Labour, or Liberal Democrats (Lib Dems hereafter) have strayed true to their historical origins, which stem from their namesake ideologies - instead they cater to voters, and have ~~also~~ abandoned left-right politics.

In the conservative party, there had been a long-standing agenda of the influence of One Nation Conservatism (a product of the late 1800s), and Thatcherism - as the source says ('remains influenced by One Nation and Thatcherite ideals'), and there is some evidence that these fundamentals remain the same today. ~~The~~ The Conservatives have ~~never~~ remained true to values of tradition, ~~for example they~~ and law and order. Recent landmark legislation such as the Public Order Act 2023 and Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 are demonstrative of their conservative principles.

of being a law and order party. Whilst there are debates on elements of Conservatism: notably the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, the divisions are rooted on the debate between Thatcher's small state, and One Nation fiscal savings for the NHS and fixing human immigration, ~~there~~ ~~it~~ demonstrating that the modern Conservative party has partially ~~lost~~ ~~shape~~ ~~time~~ ~~to~~ its principles. However, as the same says, the party has instead been defined by populist debates, like 'Europe and immigration', and more recently the ~~at~~ culture wars. One of Rishi Sunak's five pledges was to "stop the Boats", and though there is an element of Thatcherism, hostility to immigration is not an ideal of the New Right, nor is leaving the prestige of the free trade, free market capitalist European Union. Fundamentally, it demonstrates that the Conservative party has largely abandoned its ideological roots, preferring radical change like Brexit and Smoking bans instead of pragmatic norms of decades prior.

~~Similarly, the Labour party~~ There is an argument, as the same says that Labour party

has remained true to its 'left or right wing basis in line with their original ideas', having amalgamated 'old and new Labour policies. The ~~conservative~~ Labour, broadly, continues to be a left-wing party - the ~~inlude~~ ^{include} Stannan promising 6,600 new teachers, VAT on private schools, and the ~~nationalising~~ nationalisation of rail. ~~This demonstrates~~ Similarly, it has not abandoned Trade Unionism, having ~~who~~ whipped its members into voting against the Minimum Service Levels Act. It is demonstrative of a party that is true to the socialist roots of the Labour movement, whilst also incorporating some new Labour ideals, ~~or~~ ^{as} such as Reeves' 'securoconomics'. However, much of the Labour party has in fact abandoned its origins, having radically changed to a place where 'the influence of old Labour is now irrelevant'. Stannan has repeatedly demonstrated the "changed party" he now ~~represents~~ ^{represents} (now attracting the likes of Natalie Elphicke and Dan Poulter). His 6 first steps include a new immigration control scheme, having in the past denied the high net migration figures - demonstrating a shift from the common humanity principle of old

Zakour and the 1948 British Nationality Act, welcoming immigrants. Similarly, suspension of ministerial roles for joining the picket line demonstrates a fundamental turn to the right, where Zakour has radically shifted from the Socialism of the old Zakour towards - at times even beyond - the centrism of Blair and Brown.

The Liberal Democrats, ~~have seen some~~ arguably, have not seen the same change, embracing 'elements of classical liberalism and attributes of modern liberalism. ~~There~~ For example, the party has strived for electoral reform, liberal democracy at its heart, with all its manifestos since Charles Kennedy pledging ~~an~~ abandonment of EUP, most notably the coalition led to the 2011 AV referendum, demonstrating their liberal ~~that~~ drive for a ~~a~~ fairer, more democratic society. ~~Also in coalition~~ Having spent 20 of the past 25 years being in ~~the~~ coalition across Westminster, the Senedd and Scottish Parliament, the Lib Dems have displayed small state fiscal ~~for~~ liberalism, notably ~~in~~ the Welfare Reform Act in 2012, in the

Westminster Coalition. Moreover, these are weak arguments, the Lib Dems having been out of Westminster for coalition since 2010, and out of the Senedd in 2021. The leadership of Ed Davey 'striving to be as independent as possible', 'taking the party in multiple directions'. Arguably, its participation in the 'People's Vote' campaign under Jo Swinson was a violation of its liberal democracy foundation, along with its high state green pledges, which were longer than any other party beside the Greens in 2019. The only facet of ~~liberalism~~ true liberalism left in Ed Davey's party is its 'long-term goal' to rejoin the EU. Despite claiming to be an Orange Book party, since ~~2019~~ the exit of Charles Kennedy, the Lib Dems have abandoned liberalism in favour of an attempt to 'catch as many votes as possible'.

~~There~~ It is fundamentally clear that the three established parties have abandoned their founding principles, and tactically changed into ~~part~~ class-based parties, that will create policy, not on ideology, but on polling.



This essay has one paragraph on each party and stays focused on the question.

It has a clear line of argument throughout, arguing that all three parties have abandoned their historical origins.

It illustrates both sides of the arguments well, with examples.

Whilst the AO3 is not Level 5, overall the essay still achieves this Level.

Level 5

Some argue that the policies and ideas of ~~one~~ parties do remain consistent from their historical origins however I disagree ~~there~~ ~~to~~ as the Labour and Conservative parties have seen radical change in ideas on ~~the~~ Nationalisation, taxation and euroscepticism.

Some argue that the Conservative Party remains influenced by the One-Nation ideas of Disraeli and New right ideas mainly delivered by Thatcherites. Margaret Thatcher's time in parliament saw huge changes which coincide with the origins of neoliberalism and *Laissez-faire* economic systems. Thatcher privatised the mining industry as well as the water and gas industries which as she strongly believed that these industries were most efficiently run by the private sector. Thatcher also introduced the highly regressive poll tax however ~~to~~ it was quickly replaced by One-nation Prime Minister John Major's fear of the council tax. This shows how the policies of the Conservative party remain influenced by its historical origins. However some disagree, stating that the titles of One-nation of New right no longer fits the policies of the Conservative party. For one, the ~~has~~ ~~seen~~ contractionary ^{fixed} policy being used by Rishi Sunak does not fit the glove of

One-nation ideas which argue that the rich ~~do~~ have an obligation to look after the poor. Furthermore, the Conservative party was previously highly supportive of the European Union until recent years where euroscepticism now grows so much that it led to the EU referendum and the infamous Brexit. Euroscepticism grew so high with the conservative party that they even had plans to replace the Human Rights Act 1998, which was based on the European Convention on Human Rights, with a 'British Bill of Rights'. Additionally, Conservative attitudes to immigration have changed with Rishi Sunak's Rwanda bill, despite receiving a stamp of disapproval from the Supreme Court, received royal assent recently. This shows how the conservative party no longer has remained rooted to its historical origins.

Some also argue that Labour has kept its mixture of New Labour and Old Labour values. This is most prominently seen during the party's leadership under Jeremy Corbyn. Corbyn was a rebel who completely disagreed with Tony Blair's acceptance of capitalism during his time. When he became the leader of the opposition it was thus a massive shock as people thought he may try to bring back the socialist ideas listed in Clause IV. While some of his ideas did indeed reflect socialist values, he was not all for nationalisation again. He created a faction in Labour called Momentum which built heads on policy

with another New Labour faction which popped up called Progress. This saw the application of both privatisation and nationalisation as the two opposing directions found middle ground. This Process however political parties have remained consistent with their views with Corbyn advocating for national education but remaining hubstuck on the nationalisation of water and gas. However it could be argued that Labour party has completely and radically changed from its origins. The influence of Old Labour was completely reformed in 1983 as some described it's a manifesto goals as 'the longest suicide note in history'. This caused Labour to discuss serious reforms to their socialist values of redistributive fiscal policy, strong trade union powers and nationalisation. This lead to Blair introducing huge waves of capitalist ideas such as agreement with privatisation and lower taxation than old Labour proposed. Even today with Keir Starmer's policies ~~do~~ do not fit under the umbrella of New or Old Labour. Starmer's decisions on the Israel-Palestine conflict reflect this as he did not advocate for a ceasefire nor did he provide military or humanitarian aid. Tony Blair was in a similar situation with Iraq yet he still provided and deployed the armed forces after 9/11. This shows how the Labour party no longer aligns with its historical origins as well as its more recent ideas.

Overall, while it is clear to see that Conservatives and Labour do undeniably have some overlap with their historical origins, the majority of their views now are radically different.



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Examiner Comments

Whilst this essay is focused on the question, the counter arguments do little more than list policies of the current parties with little analysis of what this means for their ideological position.

It is also quite descriptive rather than analytical, particularly the Labour Party section.

Furthermore, it does not address the Lib Dems.

Level 3



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Examiner Tip

Exploit all of the available AOs.

Question 1 (b)

Overview

This question was the most popular of the two source questions. On the whole, it was an accessible question, which received a good range of responses.

In particular, candidates demonstrated strong knowledge of referendums, particularly the Scottish independence referendum and the Brexit referendum. Effectively, they discussed arguments for and against referendums, showing good understanding of the subject matter. However, many candidates found it difficult fully to grasp the question, often missing its nuances regarding the 'other political purposes' of referendums.

Common Issues

The most common issue on this question was the misinterpretation of the question. Many candidates had difficulty acknowledging that the question was not asking whether referendums were good or bad for democracy, rather than exploring the issue of them being used for other political purposes.

Weaker responses made the mistake of making this a 'general' referendums response. This often meant that they did not pay full attention to the "other political purposes" part of the question. Stronger responses used the source to reflect on the points made therein regarding other political purposes *"often settling their internal disputes, never for public benefit", "a series of 'yes' votes added to the idea of (Labour's) popularity", "the referendum was a price to pay for the support of the Liberal Democrats to enter the coalition", "outright attempt by the Conservative Party to stop UKIP in its tracks"*.

A second issue was a tendency to focus on more recent referendums, with many responses ignoring referendums held before 2010, missing opportunities to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the historical range of referendums. The focus was predominantly on the 2011, 2014, and 2016 referendums. Stronger responses acknowledged the "referendums since 1997" aspect of the question, using Blair era referendums to illustrate their points very effectively, as well as more recent ones.

There was also a tendency by some to rely on the EU referendum. Centres should ensure that candidates are aware of the significance of all referendums since 1997.

Too many candidates did not explicitly reference the source, and a minority did so only passingly. Candidates should be advised that they need to ensure it is clear that they are using the source. They can do this by quoting the source directly or by paraphrasing the arguments in the source alongside a clear indication that this is "from the source". At the same time, some weaker responses treated the source as conclusive proof of an argument, merely paraphrasing it, without deeper analysis or integration of their own knowledge.

Stronger responses used and referenced the source effectively. They paired arguments from the source, developing them with their own knowledge, and analysing which argument was stronger, coming to effective conclusions throughout their answer. They paid close attention to the content of the source to drive their analysis. Analysis was often brief on weaker responses.

In the strongest responses, analysis was developed extensively in such a way that the how and why of the question was fully explored. However, for weaker responses, lack of pairing was an issue. Some candidates did not pair arguments effectively, leading to underdeveloped analysis and missed opportunities for deeper evaluation.

Whilst AO3 references have improved this year, usually by referencing that “*the stronger argument is*” and “*the weaker argument is*”, this was rarely developed in a meaningful way to explain *why* it was the stronger/weaker side of the argument. As such, AO3 still remains the weakest area for many candidates.

Most responses often lacked sustained arguments or judgements, with some merely summarising points rather than genuinely evaluating them. It is also worth repeating here that introductions and conclusions are an important part of source responses that help to clarify an answer’s key points. Sometimes, introductions stated that they would conduct a process of evaluation without explicitly stating what they ultimately would conclude.

Stronger responses had a clear structure, integrating evidence, analysis and evaluation throughout their answer. They had a clear line of argument throughout, paired their points and then evaluated them, either by incorporating judgements throughout paragraphs or via interim judgements. The very strongest answers' evaluation did more than summarise points made in the paragraph already. Strong AO3 is where judgements are convincing.

As mentioned in previous Examination Reports, candidates need to be reminded that AO1 – knowledge and understanding— is just one part of an answer; having an equal focus on the other two AOs will improve responses.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Focus on Question: Centres should emphasise the importance of understanding and directly addressing the specific question asked.
2. Effective Use of Sources: Candidates need to practice using sources to support broader arguments rather than relying on them as conclusive evidence. They should also learn to integrate their own knowledge with the source material.
3. Balanced Analysis: Encourage candidates to pair their arguments, comparing and contrasting points within paragraphs.
4. Timing and Planning: Rigorous practice under timed conditions can help candidates manage their time effectively across all questions. Planning should also be emphasised to ensure coherent, well-structured responses.
5. Developing AO3 Skills: Teachers should focus on helping candidates develop their evaluation and judgement skills, encouraging them to make definitive conclusions and justify their reasoning with detailed analysis.

All aspects of the question have to be addressed — where the 'other political purposes' is used really well.

To a significant extent, referendums have not supported democracy but have been used for other political purposes. ~~The~~ Referendums are a feature of direct democracy wherein the electorate have the opportunity to vote definitively on an issue. However, these have most recently been used as a tool for major political parties to settle internal disputes, add legitimacy to their decisions and weaponise issues through 'false claims'.

Perhaps most significantly, recent referendums have produced what the source refers to as 'a close result' with 'limited democratic legitimacy' - thereby undermining the foundational principle^{of democracy} a referendum is supposed to represent. This was particularly evident in the Brexit referendum where only 52% of the electorate voted to leave the EU, with 48% voting to remain. As Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland collectively voted to remain, the leave result was claimed to be especially undemocratic as it ignored the wishes of devolved powers. Therefore, this evidences that ^{a referendum with such} ~~such a~~ divisive constitutional ~~change~~ implications held little democratic

thus representing a major fault.
Legitimacy. Nonetheless, despite the fallibility of referendums, it could be contested that it is extremist to suggest political parties hold an alternative political motivation in holding them. Supporters of referendums argue they provide "a definitive answer on contested topics", of which is particularly useful where the UK's trustee model may blunder in separating the issue from party politics. This was particularly relevant for Brexit where David Cameron suspended the principle of collective ministerial responsibility to allow party members to campaign for both sides of the argument, clearly indicating party politics and individual ideas would have played a role in decision making. Thus, when the UK voted ~~to~~ to leave, the leave camp, headed by eurosceptics Boris Johnson and Michael Gove, had a clear mandate to enact the country's decision and Cameron resigned. This emphasises how much party politics influences government decisions: referendums remove this ~~to~~ bias and place the decision in the hands of the people. Nonetheless, this argument is significantly weakened when considering how referendums have used "close results" ~~to~~ as well as objectively ~~to~~ large majority opinions to benefit their

government of the day. The source explores how Blair used the Scotland devolution referendum to entrench his Northern voter base, exemplifying how referendums are a tool of government. However, this argument is firmly positioned as strong due to the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, where Cameron placed the minimum vote quota at 55% rather than 50%. As this was in reaction to early polling, this entrenches the view that referendums have 'little democratic legitimacy' and have been used as a tool of government politics.

Furthermore, referendums since 1997 have not supported democracy because they have been used to 'settle internal disputes, never for public benefit'. The nature of referendums means they are announced and called at the whim of the government but their results are not legally binding, only by convention. Particularly during the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition, an AV referendum was used as a bargaining chip to enable the coalition agreement to function. Therefore, many argue that the issue salience and voter recognition of what an Alternative Vote ~~would mean~~ would mean, was so low because

this was a symbolic referendum of which Cameron did not support but wanted to pacify Clegg and his centrist faction. Therefore, this evidences that the referendums are not for the benefit of the people but for the benefit of the party. Nonetheless, many argue this was a feature of Cameron's coalition and that "referendums add legitimacy to major constitutional changes"-many of which benefit the people. For example, many contend that the changes to ~~power sharing~~ ~~power~~ power dynamics ~~as~~ as a consequence of devolution necessary to call a referendum: to enact this without a constitutional mandate would have been reminiscent of Hobbes's Leviathan. Although this suggests referendums prevent tyranny of the executive, many argue they reinforce it -such as by enabling "the Conservative party to stop UKIP in its tracks". Following ~~the~~ UKIP's win of 3.8 million votes in 2015, ~~man~~ it was seen as vital to hold a Brexit referendum both ~~to~~ to placate euro-sceptics like Jacob Rees-Mogg - who held considerable power in the far-right and to stop an emerging party becoming a threat. Therefore, it can be concluded -although with less strength than the former argument - that referendums are both a tool to "settle

internal divisions' and diminish opposition - thus inhibiting democratic principles rather than advancing them.

Furthermore, referendums since 1997 have not supported democracy but have provided a platform for 'false claims' to ~~be~~^{gain prominence}. This is perhaps the slightly weaker argument as it is most relevant to the 2016 Brexit referendum and onwards. Features of the Brexit campaign ~~the~~ were often built on ~~false~~ misrepresented ideas presented as fact: most notably the red bus saying £350 million would be directed to the NHS upon leaving the EU (which hasn't happened) and a campaign that said leaving would halt Turkish migration (even though Turkey aren't in the EU). This shows how most recent referendums have played on culture wars and the advancing prominence of the far right to gain electoral support. Thus, not contributing to a healthy democracy in perpetuating false news on behalf of party factions. However, many argue referendums 'open up honest debate' - inspiring high turnouts. Salient issues correlate to high referendum turnouts - for example a 72.2% turnout for Brexit and 84% for the

2014 Scottish Independence referendum. However, this can be largely attributed to the culture wars generated by party factions that can often lead to herd voting. This was particularly true where geographical region was most greatly correlated to how the electorate voted on Brexit, thus showing herd voting was at play. Therefore, ~~the~~ referendums ^{have} ~~do~~ not promoted productive discourse on issues, but ^{instead} ~~for~~ the frames of false claims. Thus, not contributing to a healthy democracy.

To conclude, referendums have not supported democracy since 1997 but have instead aided ulterior political motives. Most significantly, parties have used them to settle internal disputes - both before, during and after referendums - ~~but~~ and ~~increase~~ remove opposition. They ultimately have limited democratic legitimacy and negatively influence the wider political landscape. Thus, ^{in recent years} referendums ~~the~~ have been used as a tool by parties to advance their political agendas, although evidence suggests this is a greater feature of the Conservative Party.



This is an excellent response that engages fully with all aspects of the question.

It interweaves source references throughout, which includes some excellent analysis that is very effectively evaluated.

Level 5

Source questions, in many ways, have the framework of a plan with their content, by raising the lines of argument in often a binary challenge.

Referendums are when there's a vote on a single issue, it usually includes a yes or no answer & is split opinion. For example, Brexit referendum was on the single issue of the UK remaining in the ~~EU~~ European Union (EU). They have arguably been used for non alternative political agendas over the years as mentioned in the source "for the ~~go~~ benefit of the governing political parties often setting disputes." however this essay will argue that referendums still ~~effect~~ promote democracy & ~~that still~~ are still serving their political purpose of solving single issues, adding legitimacy & opening up debate, to ~~the~~ re-invigorating political life.

"Referendums add legitimacy to major constitutional changes". Legitimacy is the ~~& the~~ right given ~~to~~ carry out certain political objectives, this can be gained through elections for example, it gives mandate. In Scotland, the right to vote was given to 16-17 year olds, this being a major

Constitutional change, it required legitimacy to be enacted or else it may serve no grounds within politics. Referendums on such ~~test~~ this single issues allow the population to vote yes or no on whether they agree with it. If the majority agree the policy can be enacted, this allows for quick issues to be solved quickly & efficiently & prevent divides within society. On the other hand it ~~can~~ referendums ~~can~~ arguably may lead to ~~other~~ prolonged internal divisions within parties such as the Conservative Party during Brexit who were split between the ideas of the One Nation & ^{new} right, however Johnson's Government can be ~~seen~~ as arguably be said to have no internal divide, weakening this argument. Referendums still serve political purpose through giving constitutional changes legitimacy.

~~Ref~~ Moving on, referendums "have given a definitive answer on contested topics". Due to the nature of the referendums being that of a single question on a single issue with a simplistic yes/no answer, the ~~prop~~ process of ~~for~~ overcoming ~~long~~ ~~test~~ contestable topics can be

~~the~~ made much quicker & easier to overcome through a single referendum. For example, the ~~the~~ Alternative Voting System referendum (2016) which utilised ~~refer~~ a referendum to come to a conclusion on a single issue, with that as people who are voting are more inclined to want to learn more about the voting system than voting about which encourages political participation & serves as an educational function. However, some may not be fully educated on the issue at hand & vote anyway, this can lead to an unrealistic outcome of ~~but~~ the actual opinions of the country & make it unrepresentative. Also, with the referendum, it coming to a sole decision doesn't always come to a decision quickly such as with the issue of Brexit which was extremely prolonged & even led to internal party division with the ~~the~~ Conservatives meaning referendums arguably don't efficiently carry out their political purpose but can even worsen the issue sometimes. This is disputed with the fact that a decision was ~~still~~ made & the UK left the EU as well as the fact that that issue was so wide, people who didn't necessarily engage in politics were educating

themselves on the issue, widening political activity within the country.

~~Final~~ "They have re-invigorated political life & opened up honest debate with high turnouts & renewed activity in recent years". Referendums evoke discussion amongst people, with the influence of the media being more prominent now, big issue such as the ones ~~that~~ that referendums are based on such as Brexit, circulate much quicker with more people being aware of them & now they effect UK politics. They encourage people to voice their opinions in which they debate about to show their political standpoints, this way Government can be more representative of the opinions within the country & now each constituency differs from each other.

In Conclusion, referendums still serve their political purpose through ~~giving~~ resolving contestable debates & offering definitive answer to ensure an efficient Government in the resolution of issues, they serve educative ~~pro~~ purpose & increase political activity through incentivising people to know about the issue they're voting on.

As well as offering legitimacy to major constitutional change.



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This essay is a good example of a response that does not engage with both premises of the question.

In the first section it tries to, but is not particularly successful.

The second and third sections only focus on democracy.

Level 3

Question 2 (a)

Overview

This essay question was not as popular as Q02b.

Candidates displayed a strong understanding of pressure groups, showcasing a wide selection of groups. However, they had difficulty demonstrating comparable knowledge of think tanks, lobbyists, and corporations, often lacking specific knowledge and case studies for these groups.

It was clear, however, that this question was accessible for candidates and provided opportunities for the very top marks.

Common Issues

Many candidates concentrated heavily on pressure groups whilst neglecting the other elements of the question. This resulted in incomplete responses that did not address the entire scope of the question.

This was compounded by a noticeable gap in candidates' knowledge of think tanks, lobbyists, and corporations. This included a lack of detailed case studies and specific examples.

Some candidates used good examples but attributed them to the wrong group, which weakened their answer. Interestingly, a number of responses incorrectly treated *all* pressure groups as outsider groups, whilst categorising all think tanks, lobbyists, and corporations as insider groups, leading to skewed analysis focused on insider versus outsider status.

Whilst candidates could describe pressure group campaigns and their successes or failures, they found it difficult to analyse these in relation to the question. They often knew the activities of pressure groups but could not discuss effectively the various ways these groups exert influence.

A key question for candidates to consider is how does this example enhance the point I am making? Understanding why groups have influence was crucial for deeper engagement with the question.

Often, candidates did not compare pressure groups directly with think tanks, lobbyists, and corporations. Instead, they treated these entities in isolation, comparing whether each group did/did not have influence, which limited the depth and development of their responses. Also, candidates who amalgamated think tanks, lobbyists, and corporations found it difficult to explore the question fully. The best responses came from those who assessed each group separately, against pressure groups.

The best responses drew nuanced distinctions between each group, considering insider versus outsider status, extent of membership and funding, and access to government. High-scoring responses used contemporary examples, such as Owen Paterson, Just Stop Oil, and Greensill Capital, the Institute for Economic Affairs, to illustrate their points. This demonstrated the importance of using current events and recent case studies.

Successful candidates incorporated their judgements into their paragraphs or used interim judgements at the end of each section, substantiating their judgements and linking back to the question. This method helped to embed their arguments and enhanced their AO3 marks.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. **Specification Coverage:** Teachers should ensure that candidates have an understanding of all elements of the question, not just pressure groups. This includes detailed knowledge of think tanks, lobbyists, and corporations. Examples of the last three should be as familiar as pressure groups are.
2. **Focused Analysis:** Encourage candidates to analyse *how* pressure groups may exert influence, rather than just focusing examples of success or failure. This will help in developing more detailed analysis.
3. **Comparisons:** Candidates should practice comparing and contrasting the influence of different groups directly, rather than discussing them in isolation. This will enhance their ability to provide a more structured and focused response in questions like this.
4. **Use of Contemporary Examples:** Centres should encourage candidates to consider contemporary examples, to ensure that they are able to develop their arguments with up-to-date evidence.
5. **Developing Judgements:** Candidates should be encouraged to practice incorporating evaluation into their responses to substantiate their judgements within their paragraphs. This practice will help them to construct more nuanced and focused AO3 responses.

This essay will argue that pressure groups have greater influence than think tanks, lobbyists, and corporations. Pressure group is made up of a group of people who ~~believe for~~ ~~that~~ campaign for the same purpose to ~~change~~ influence government policies.

One reason why pressure have much greater influence ~~over~~ than others like think tanks, lobbyists and corporations is because ~~the~~ many pressure groups have been successful at ~~their outcomes~~ achieving their outcome. This can be conveyed in recent years when the British Medical ^(BMA) Association have been ~~an~~

a successful in getting NHS doctors a pay rise during Covid-19. The ~~BMA~~ BMA during Covid-19 raised awareness and campaigned that doctors are very vital and integral to our lives and we should allow them a pay rise to be appreciated during Covid-19. Therefore, this example shows that pressure groups have great influence and have been successful in recent years.

However, this argument can be undermined, because pressure groups like Extinction Rebellion who have a radical aim haven't been successful. This is because there's been a ~~public~~ public outcry regarding their radical and extreme stunt. For example, stopping cars and sitting in a line of groups

on roads and blocking traffic. They block ~~vehicles~~ vehicles and pedestrians from moving forward. These type of stunts are very disliked by the general public and government. As a consequence, of their stunts and actions and other radical pressure groups there has been Public Order Act. ~~which is~~ This act restricts such act like sticking hands to the ground, etc. ~~whereas~~

~~Another reason why~~
~~Another reason~~ Another reason why pressure groups have much greater influence ~~or~~ than others is because in recent years pressure groups like Youth Demand aim to put an end to Ozaa genocide and en. new oil and the gas drilling and production. Also, very recently university students

are doing encampments to show their solidarity to the Palestinian people and to put an end to the genocide in Gaza. University students from University of Birmingham, University of Manchester and University of Cambridge etc. Furthermore, all these examples of pressure group and the general public supporting their aim shows pressure groups have much greater influence.

However, this point can be undermined because ~~corporations have a much high funding and connections with politicians. There seems~~ It seems to be that politicians are often bought by money and corporations because of their money funding. This can be conveyed through

the Owen Patterson scandal, where a company had paid him to lobby in their favour and he in fact did do that. As he was successful at lobbying the government. Furthermore, it's important to highlight that this was later found and as a result of that the Transparency of Lobbying Act 2014 was established. ~~to register lobbyists~~

A third reason why pressure groups have much greater influence over others like lobbyists and corporations etc, is because of the success of Marcus Rashford's Free School Meals ^(FSM) Campaign. Marcus Rashford endorsed FSM should be provided to pupils during Covid-19 and holidays. He was successful as the government

government did provide FSM during Covid-19 and gave out e-vouchers for families to buy food for their children during the term of it. Therefore, this shows that pressure have the huge influence as in this case they used celebrity endorsement in which was Marcus Rashford.

~~Overall~~ ~~Overall~~ Furthermore, to conclude it can be conveyed that pressure groups have much more significant influence than others like lobbyist etc. This is because pressure groups mostly have the support of the general public and pressure groups have had huge success in recent years like FSM, BMA and Youth Demand.



This response was typical of many in that it recognises in the title the need to discuss think tanks, lobbyists and corporations but it does not manage to engage enough with this part of the question to achieve higher than Level 3.

The points made are generic and the analysis is limited. It does, however, include some good examples.

Level 3

Question 2 (b)

Overview

This was the more popular of the two essays, and candidates generally demonstrated good knowledge of election campaigns and manifestos.

The best responses showed in-depth knowledge and consistent comparisons, whilst weaker responses often deviated from the main question or lacked depth in analysis.

The majority of responses identified correctly that the question required analysis between election campaigns and manifestos versus other political factors. However, several candidates faced challenges in addressing the question comprehensively.

Common Issues

Many weaker responses did not stay focused on the question. They tended to evaluate other factors determining election outcomes without adequately addressing campaigns and manifestos. These responses often evolved into discussions about various factors without maintaining a clear focus on the question.

Stronger responses effectively compared campaigns and manifestos with other influential factors, supported by detailed contemporary knowledge. This approach led to well-focused analysis and substantiated judgements.

Candidates who referenced recent events, such as the impact of the manifesto pledge to “get Brexit done” in 2019, Theresa May's campaign in 2017, and Jeremy Corbyn's campaigns in 2017 and 2019, demonstrated a good understanding of the influence of campaigns and manifestos. However, a number of candidates referenced the 2024 election, despite it not having been called at the time the exam was sat, which was difficult to assess.

The best responses employed a clearly-structured approach, maintained a consistent comparison of campaigns and manifestos versus other factors for each election discussed. Some candidates separated campaigns and manifestos comparing each one in turn to other factors, whilst other candidates combined campaigns and manifestos and compared them both to another factor. Both approaches were successful, although the success of the latter approach was dependent on the extent to which both areas were considered.

Weaker responses tended not to focus sufficiently on them both, they also focused excessively on other factors, thereby not addressing the main question effectively.

The most common other factors that were compared to campaigns and manifestos were the media, leadership and social factors. When comparing factors with campaigns and manifestos, weaker responses tended to discuss the other factor without any reference to campaigns and/or manifestos.

Stronger responses made close comparisons between the two areas they were comparing, for example suggesting that although campaigns were important, the media can have a very large effect on the lens through which the campaign is seen etc, or that leaders are key to deciding what the party's key manifesto pledges are and also play an intrinsic part of the campaign.

As with previous questions, evaluation was key to success. Incorporating judgements into paragraphs or using interim judgements at the end of each section, helped to embed their evaluation and enhanced AO3 marks.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Analysis: Centres should emphasise the importance of making effective comparisons in questions that ask for the relative importance of factors.
2. Contemporary Knowledge: Candidates should be reminded of the importance of contemporary examples, which will help candidates develop arguments.
3. Structured Responses: Encourage candidates to structure their responses with introductions and conclusions, paired arguments, clear incorporated or interim judgements and a coherent line of argument. This will improve their overall response quality.

To a significant extent, the outcomes of general elections are mostly decided by election campaigns and manifestos. However, there is an interconnection of other factors within these that help improve the popularity of a party: most significantly, this is media coverage but leadership and ~~external~~ ~~the~~ ~~factors~~ political climate also play a role. Overall, the way an election campaign is presented to the electorate is the most significant influence on election results, manifestos play a role but to a lesser extent and the media interrelates and influences them both.

Most significantly, general elections are largely decided by election campaigns as the electorate infers the competency and strength of a future government from these campaigns. This argument holds particular strength due to the historical significance of the Blair campaign, where ~~the~~ Labour's 1997 campaign based on constitutional reform earned them 418 seats. As John Major's campaign of continuity meant the conservatives suffered a record defeat, this perhaps suggests

the vigour and vitality of an election campaign plays a significant role in winning a general election. This is further strengthened by the result of Boris Johnson's 2019 campaign - wherein his slogan 'Get Brexit Done' earned him the reputation as a man of competency following the failures of May's government to pass a Brexit deal. ~~This shows that a campaign plays a~~ This is in contrast to Corbyn's campaign that did not take ~~the~~ a decisive stance on Brexit and thus remaining invisible on discourse surrounding the major issue of the election. This subsequently correlates to the 365 seats Johnson won and the 203 ^{Labour} Corbyn won - including a record loss of previously safe seats in the North, thus, showing to a significant degree that election campaigns mostly decide a general election. Nonetheless, many contend it is the leadership of the campaign, not the campaign itself that determines how the electorate vote. For example, ~~the~~ ^{in the 2010s} the rise of the Liberal Democrats can largely be attributed to the charisma of Nick Clegg and ~~not~~ his connections to the youth voters: his constituency was Sheffield Hallam which presented the image of man who cares about students, thus supporting his youth oriented campaign.

However, this argument is largely redundant as both quality leadership and a sound election campaign are often correlated and not mutually exclusive. For example, ~~Tony Blair the work of Alistair~~ ~~although Thatcher's campaign of strength and stability~~ Tony Blair's Campaign video 'Things can only get better', illustrated to the electorate he was able to connect ~~with~~ ^{with} voters whilst leading his campaign. ~~Like this shows how great~~ Although this example is less recent, examples can be drawn from the lack of leadership ^{shown} leading up to by ~~Clayton~~ ^{Clayton's campaign} leading up to the 2015 election that saw him lose power. Thus showing how campaigns are often deciding factors in general elections in shaping the views of the party, a trend of which is both modern and historic.

Nonetheless, manifestos also play a significant role in deciding the outcomes of a general election as they clearly evidence what the party's mandate to lead will be based from. A strong manifesto has consistently been seen as vital to winning an election: Thatcher's 1979 manifesto was formed on the principle of strength in adversity to trade unions ~~and~~ and

directly opposed the Labour Party who were trying to compromise with trade unions following the winter of discontent. This shows how manifestos draw the dividing lines between parties and so clearly present a polarity with which the electorate can choose from. A strong manifesto was also vital to Johnson's 2019 campaign where his promise to Get Brexit Done by ^{31st} January 2020 clearly separated him from Corbyn who wouldn't set a target. Although this clearly shows how a strong manifesto can create confidence in a leader, many argue it is external political pressures that influence an outcome. For example, ~~that~~ many of Keir Starmer's six key pledges ~~in the~~ published in anticipation of a 2024 election are vague: for example, to promote economic stability and to end anti-social behaviour. These would be perceived as weak if it were not ~~from the~~ for the poor perceptions of the Conservative leadership who trail 40 points in the polls. Although this evidences external factors greatly influence the reception of a manifesto, it does not take away how vital they ordinarily are to an election result. For example, Michael Foot's 1983 manifesto was

dubbed 'the longest suicide note in history' - leading to a significant Labour defeat. Likewise, Corbyn's far-left manifesto advocating for cooperation with Europe significantly contrasted the incumbent Conservative manifesto of strength and national pride post-Brexit. Therefore, this shows a historical trend that manifestos have played a significant role in generating support for a campaign.

Nonetheless, it can be argued that media reception of a campaign and manifesto is becoming of increasing importance in the digital age of e-democracy. Alistair Campbell's media training of Tony Blair arguably contributed to positive press, including the support of a formerly Conservative newspaper The Sun, which meant he was more visible than John Major. Likewise, Theresa May's poor press in the 2017 election, with headlines calling her campaign wooden and manifesto "a snooze", arguably led to her ~~only~~ small majority win - relying on a confidence and supply agreement with the DUP to enact her campaign promises. Nonetheless, the root cause of media ~~pressure~~ ~~on~~ is ~~often~~ mostly stimulated by coverage.

the quality of a campaign and manifesto and so these are the most significant cause of their win. ~~For~~ This is best evidenced by the role of TV debates, where Nick Clegg arguably 'won' the debate leading to the 2015 election but lost his power in the executive in the actual result. Likewise, Boris Johnson was viewed unpopularly by those deeming him a 'loser' of the TV debate in 2019, but went on to win a 162 seat majority. Therefore, this shows media coverage to have a more limited influence on the outcome of general elections and are in fact more reactionary to campaigns and manifestos.

To conclude, election campaigns most significantly influence ^{the outcome of an election by} ~~the party and leader are perceived~~ ^{influencing now} the party and leader are perceived. Likewise, ~~manifestos~~ manifestos also perform the same function but are often overshadowed by the political environment. Although the media plays a role in presenting the campaign and manifesto, they have less of an influence on the outcome of an election as they are largely reactionary, particularly in the technological ^{era}.

(Total for Question 2 = 30 marks)



This essay is focussed on the question. It does not digress whilst considering the impact of other factors on campaigns and manifestos, in this case, leadership, wider political context and the media.

It is worth noting here that the interplay between the factors is particularly good, which enhances the quality of the analysis.

Level 5



Keep the line of argument constant and well supported: use clear decision-making at the outset, to set the course.

Since 1979, elections in the UK have been decidedly more subject to the outcome being based on the image of the leader and the media's view of the party than it has been on campaigns and manifestos.

Leaders appearing weak has been one of the most prevalent weaknesses of electoral success in UK general ~~elections~~ elections. In ~~2010~~²⁰¹⁵, Miliband's weak image and control ~~spurred~~ stirred support for the Conservatives and led to the country moving from a 'chancellor's foot' into 'chaos with Ed Miliband', eventually leading to his defeat to ~~David Ca~~ incumbent David Cameron who had provided the proof the UK was not yet apathetic to his time as Prime Minister. On the other hand, Theresa May was also seen as a ~~weak~~ weak leader after her snap 2017 general election, as she refused to take part in leadership debates. However she was ultimately successful and led the party ~~until~~ ~~to~~ with a DUP confidence and supply deal until 2019. This therefore demonstrates how outcomes of general elections are not

decided by campaigns and manifestos as well as leadership. Campaigns can cost you elections, such as for Labour in 2015.

On the other hand, election campaigns have proved to be a resounding factor in major electoral wins. In 1979, Thatcher's hiring of advertising agency, Saatchi and Saatchi, as well as her utilization of photo opportunities and overall housewife persona, led to a large plume of new conservative voters, giving her the large majority of 44. Similarly to Tony Blair in 1997, who initiated the first use of 'spin' in UK elections with help of Alister Campbell and future cabinet minister Peter Mandelson. On the other hand, it could be demonstrated that elections are decided by the failures of the other ^{major} party. In 1979, as a result of the winter of discontent and widespread striking, Callaghan was deeply unpopular and seen as unelectable ~~for~~ after Labour's 18 years. Similarly, in 1997, ~~the~~ conservative party was plagued with scandal and disunity, and the far right populist Referendum party enacted the spoiler effect and took the vote away from the conservatives, leaving Blair's Labour with 418 MPs. However, in the case of these elections, it is clearly demonstrated that planned, deliberate, and ~~intentional~~ election campaigns lead to election

wins, rather than other parties' policies.

However, it can be seen that the impact of the media on elections has a larger impact on the outcome than the manifesto. In 2019, the Labour Party's manifesto and policy was widely received positively, however the media villainised Corbyn, such as BBC Newsnight making Corbyn look as an emblem of Communist Russia and being forced to apologise. This was also shown by the Sun accurately predicting the PM since 1980, and gleefully declaring in 1992 it was 'the Sun who won it'. This means campaigns, constituency efforts, and manifesto policy can result in failure simply due to the wider impact of the media on people's overall voting behaviour. On the other hand, the rise of several media and social media campaigns has resulted in a more equal playing field for party campaigns as all parties have equal access to social media. In 2016, the Leave EU branch of the Brexit Campaign worked with political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica in order to utilise Facebook data to target users ~~therefore~~. Even so, it is the media which holds the respect of the UK's traditional electorate, and as such the power and their political careers, demonstrating the growing redundancy

of election campaigns and manifestos.

On balance, it is clearly demonstrated that the outcomes of general elections are not mostly decided by election campaigns and manifestos, but instead party image-led by the leader, and the leadership of the party in the wake of numerous challenges.



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Examiner Comments

Whilst this answer addresses the influence of campaigns on general elections, it is significantly weaker on manifestos.

It is also more focused on other factors and does not compare factors well enough against each other. Additionally it is inaccurate in places.

Level 3



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Through effective comparison the response is targeting AO2 — making a decision about the comparison is AO3.

Question 3 (a)

Overview

This question about the liberal view of the economy was not as popular as the Conservatism question. Most candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of liberalism, its two strands and the relevant key thinkers. However, there was a need for deeper analysis and a more focused application of this knowledge to the economy. Also, by improving balance, structure, and timing in their responses, candidates can enhance their marks.

Common Issues

There was generally good understanding of the liberal view of the role of the state, individualism, freedom, and nearly all candidates could identify differences between classical and modern liberalism.

However, despite their knowledge, candidates did not apply it specifically to the issue of the economy. Moreover, when they did relate their knowledge to the economy, there was confusion around the differing views of classical and modern liberalism.

Most candidates were able to state that all liberals support capitalism but when it came to articulating differences in their views, candidates were less confident in their responses. Most candidates referred to *laissez-faire* economics when discussing classical liberalism and to the increased role of the state to intervene in the free market, as advocated by Modern Liberals.

However, often, Modern Liberalism was conflated with a form of socialism, with candidates unable to appreciate the nuances of the modern liberal focus on freedom. It was also surprising that there was little discussion of the role that negative and positive freedom play on their differing views of the economy. There were also some misunderstandings of thinkers such as Rawls and Mill, who were often attributed with ideas they did not have eg redistribution of wealth and nationalisation. Once again, some candidates discussed neo-liberalism, which is not a strand of liberalism in the specification.

Another common issue was that many candidates veered significantly away from the economy by addressing liberal differences in general, for example Classical vs Modern Liberal ideas on human nature, society, the role of the state etc. Although there are some overlapping concepts here, such as the role of the state in the economy and the impact of different economic systems on social harmony, usually these connections were not made by candidates. The driving focus of this question should be agreements and disagreements over the economy.

Stronger responses developed clear points that focused on the economy, often linked to aspects such as the free market, relationship with the state or individual freedom. Consistently, candidates ensured that they were linking points back to the premise of the economy. These responses had very accurate knowledge and could explain not only that there were differences, but *why* those differences occur.

Stronger responses focused on agreements and disagreements between the two strands of liberalism over the economy, usually focussing on the size and role of the state in the economy, their view of welfare, as well as the impact of their differing views on individualism and freedom on their view of the economy. They focused on comparing strands' views and then carefully selected key liberal thinkers to illustrate these differences over the economy. They were able to consider agreements and disagreements, but they also were very clear about whether or no the agreements or disagreements were the most significant.

Many weaker responses were unbalanced usually with much more focus (or only focusing) on disagreement. Both agreement and disagreement must be given consideration, to achieve higher marks. Also, when comparing disagreements between strands, candidates will achieve higher marks by moving on from "side-by-side" comparisons within paragraphs to a more integrated approach to comparative analysis.

Another area that needs to be addressed by centres is that many candidates still focus on the differences between thinkers rather than addressing debates between the different strands of liberalism. Thinkers should be used to develop and support arguments made about the different strands.

Stronger responses effectively referenced key thinkers, including those from both classical and modern liberal perspectives, such as John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and John Rawls. However, as with last year's responses, the eagerness of some candidates to include all five key thinkers often led to inappropriate references, such as shoe-horning in Wollstonecraft and Friedan, who are less directly related to economic issues.

Centres should remind candidates only to use appropriate thinkers to illustrate their responses. Equally, some candidates merely name-drop key thinkers such as "*modern liberals such as Rawls*" without developing how Rawls' ideas are relevant to the point being made.

AO3 was, once again, the weaker of the AOs with candidates unable to include judgements into their responses, or where they did, they tended to write a quick one-sentence summary at the end of a paragraph rather than a substantiated judgement. Moreover, the stem, "*To what extent*" is still problematic for many. Candidates often treated the question as a binary issue—either liberalism is divided, or it is not—without exploring the extent of division and the complexities involved. The stem requires candidates to make judgements assessing whether similarities are more significant than differences (or vice versa), to achieve well in AO3. The issue central to this stem is the degree of difference – and its measure.

As a reminder, all ideas questions require a response that includes introductions and conclusions. Candidates may structure their responses into agree/disagree paragraphs or into themed paragraphs, where both agreement and disagreements are considered. Whichever structure is chosen, substantiated judgments must be woven throughout the answer.

Timing was an issue for some candidates: these responses felt rushed , with many having insufficient time and providing rushed conclusions or were incomplete.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Focus on the question: teachers should emphasise the importance of relating liberal principles and key thinkers specifically to the question asked.
2. Balance: candidates should be reminded of the importance of discussing both agreement and disagreements.
3. Essay Structure: reinforce the need for clear, structured responses with well-developed introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions. A strong focus on planning can help avoid rambling and ensure all aspects of the question are addressed.
4. Timing Practice: Provide more practice in timed conditions to help candidates manage their time effectively and produce complete, coherent essays.

This is a good example of thinkers serving the strands.

3A. Liberalism can be split into Classical Liberals and Modern Liberals. Some argue that they are not divided on the economy as they both united on need for capitalism. However, the divergence about the extent of the state in the economy, and ~~the extent of~~ ^{the mix of economic + equality.} welfare, shows that overall, the Liberals are more divided than united on the economy.

approach

Whilst there is overall more division on the economy than unity, there is still some unity. This is seen as both Modern and Classical Liberals are unified on the use of capitalism. The originality of All Liberals believe Capitalism provides freedom, as it provides freedom of choice, freedom of living. This is a core pillar of Liberalism. Furthermore, all Liberals agree on the need of ownership of private property. This originally stems from John Locke, who said fundamental rights in life are "life, liberty, and property." This notion was the first one which linked ownership of private property to Liberalism, and it has been accepted by all Liberals. They believe that owning private property gives you something to "fall back on" in times of economic trouble. Therefore, one area where there is clear unity in the economy is over the use of Capitalism and the ownership of private property.

However, this is where the unity within liberals on the remains

ends, and overall, there is clearly more division. One of the areas of division is the relationship between the ^{approach of the} economy and the state. Classical liberals believe in a small state, ^{and great} allowing for economic freedom whereas Modern liberals advocate an enabling state, ^{approach} which can support individuals. Classical liberals believe in a minimal state comes from their belief in negative liberty that the smaller, less interventionist state will allow for economic freedom. This stems from their belief in negative liberty - they value freedom from the government above all else. John Stuart Mill exemplified this in his harm principle, which states that humans should be free to do whatever they want ~~as long as~~ as long as it doesn't harm anyone. This highlights their belief in a minimal state to ensure economic freedom. However, Modern liberals reject this, believing that a minimal state is not effective, as some people in society need help from the state economically. ~~This came when modern liberals saw their living in squalor not~~ This stems from liberal Stevenson, who said "A starving man is not free" - this shows their belief that a minimal state isn't enough, therefore an enabling state is needed to help people in the economy. This stems from their belief in positive liberty, and John Rawls exemplifies the need for an enabling state in his veil of ignorance theory. This states that if you were to create a world and not know where you'd be in that world, you'd make one with a small gap between the rich and the poor and with an enabling state. This is rejected by classical liberals who's belief in egotistical individualism means they are entirely self-seeking, and therefore do not

credit or enabling state but a small one for economic freedom. This is rejected by Modern Liberals due to belief in developmental individualism. Therefore, it is clear there is great division over the role of the state ~~is~~ in the economy.

division

The final area of ~~disagreement~~ is in the way ~~the~~ economy and equality interest. Classical Liberals believe everyone inherently has equality of opportunity, and therefore there is no need for welfare. However, Modern Liberals don't believe that there is equality of opportunity so welfare is vital. Modern Liberals saw that people born poor, in squalor, or with disease have a much more difficult time climbing to the top of society than those ~~who~~ born in the upper echelons of society. Therefore, they advocate strong welfare systems in place to ensure equality of opportunity by helping those at the bottom of society. For example, John Rawls said that strong welfare institutions are vital for economic prosperity. However, this is rejected by Classical Liberals, whose belief in an absolute meritocracy would view that the only reason why those at the bottom of society don't rise up is due to their work ethic ~~not~~, essentially, they must be lazy. Classical Liberals also believe that equality of opportunity is given to all humans by virtue of being born. Therefore, they reject the view that a welfare system is needed, and they believe that this just takes away the economic success of others. This is rejected by Modern Liberals, as they do not believe that everyone has equality of opportunity when born. Therefore, it is clear that

there is far more diversity over liberal approach to the economy
the unity.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is more diversity in
the approach to the economy than unity. The diversity is the
approach to the role of the state in the economy, and over
the approach to welfare, far outweighs unity over approach to
the use of Capitalism



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This is an excellent response that achieves Level 5 via an Agree/Disagree/Disagree structure and effectively addresses the issue of the economy.

It has excellent knowledge of Liberalism and uses this knowledge well to tease out areas of similarity and difference between the strands.

It is strand-driven and uses thinkers well to exemplify and develop the points it makes.

Particularly worthy of note is the highly-integrated comparative analysis throughout the answer. While AO3 is weaker, this response does enough to achieve Level 5.

Level 5

This is an example of how responses can drift away from the core demands of the question.

Classical and Modern Liberals are very divided over their approach to the economy. Classical liberals believe in laissez-faire economics whilst modern liberals support Keynesian economics. Classical liberals support a minimal state but Modern Liberals support a welfare state. Classical liberals believe in lower taxation whereas ^{Modern} Classical Liberals believe in redistribution.

Classical and Modern Liberals both agree the economy should not be unstable, like in the free market. ^{all liberals believe} Instability leads to depressions, which should be avoided. ~~not~~ Classical Liberals and Modern Liberals disagree on which economic model to follow. Classical Liberals believe in Laissez-Faire economics as 'the ^{invisible} guiding hand' of the market dictates supply and demand, and consumer wants, leading to greater freedom. ~~John Locke believed that~~ However, modern Liberals massively disagree; they advocate for ~~more~~ Keynesian economics with the government tempering the economy, upkeeping high employment. John Stuart Mills saw the disadvantages in society caused by unemployment being so widespread and with workers being so abused in dangerous situations, arguing it wasn't freedom to work jobs that you couldn't negotiate the safety of. 1905 governments adopted this approach and introduced a number of working reform acts. As well as Macmillan pursuing Keynesian economics,

bailing out businesses and reducing unemployment. Overall, Liberals highly disagree on how to approach the economy but are similar in their ~~pur~~ initial pursuit of freedom in the economy.

Classical liberals and modern liberals disagree on economic state intervention. Classical Liberals believe in a ^{Night} Watchman State, whereas ~~a~~ Modern Liberals advocate for a Welfare State. A classical Liberals Night-Watchman state is formed by the belief that the state should not intervene outside of property rights, justice and in the army, leading to maximised personal freedom. This state would have no impact on the economy. Modern liberals advocate for a welfare state from Rawls' veil of ~~it~~ ignorance. ~~Saying~~ Modern Liberals would say there is no world where you would want to blindly be born into ~~economy~~ poverty.

This concept was further explored by the Beveridge report, leading to the UK's welfare state being set up to support those who were struggling after the war.

To modern liberals, the welfare State allows everyone to be free as everyone is ~~held~~ ^{raise} to a base level of economic welfare. Overall both liberals agree ~~on~~ the state has the power to influence the economy, however classical liberals ~~Overall, Classical and Modern Liberals dis~~ believe the state should be minimal but modern liberals the state should take care of basic needs. Both ~~is~~ strands

argue that they benefit economic freedom.

Classical + Modern

Overall, Liberals disagree strongly on the economy, but both have similarities in their goal of freedom. Liberalism today is less divided as our modern welfare and laws evolved from Modern Liberal thought. Classical Liberal thought is less relevant nowadays as it does not fit the modern economy.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response has some relevant and accurate knowledge about Liberalism but there is also a great deal of irrelevant and inaccurate knowledge.

Modern liberalism is portrayed as supporting redistribution. Additionally, agreement within Liberalism is barely addressed throughout the response.

Whilst the response outlines what Classical and Modern Liberals believe, it is less effective in developing why they believe what they believe. Lastly there is no attempt to address the issue of 'extent'.

Level 3



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Focus on the core demands of the question.

Question 3 (b)

Overview

This was the most popular of the two Core Ideas questions. Candidates generally exhibited a strong understanding of conservatism and its key thinkers and engaged well with the question. However, there were notable areas where improvements are needed to enhance the depth and coherence of responses.

There is a need for deeper analysis and more structured responses that lead with strands. Evaluation is also an area that candidates find difficult on core political ideas questions.

Common Issues

Given that this was a broad question, the vast majority of candidates engaged with it successfully, demonstrating a sound understanding of conservatism and its strands. However, sometimes broad questions like this can lead to responses that lack focus and ramble, as some did on this occasion.

Many responses had good knowledge of the conservatism but merely listed their ideas rather than focusing on explaining areas of similarity and difference.

Stronger responses looked at different themes and analysed the extent of difference. The most common themes were human nature, pragmatism, organicism, paternalism and the economy. However, there were some common misunderstandings in exploring these areas, notably the idea that the New Right believes in human imperfection, organicism and pragmatism, which is inaccurate.

The New Right also proved a challenging area for candidates more generally, with neoliberalism treated as an independent strand, divorced from the New Right, as opposed to it being a central strand within the New Right alongside neoconservatism.

Several responses did not acknowledge all three strands within Conservatism, which is important — given the nature of the question that asks for agreement and disagreement within Conservatism as a whole.

There were still responses that wrote a narrative account of what each strand of Conservatism stands for, in separate paragraphs, and therefore not engaging in the demands of the question: to evaluate the extent of agreement or disagreement.

Stronger responses discussed the extent of agreement and disagreements within conservatism, comparing *why* the differences and similarities exist. By doing this, candidates are able to make fully effective substantiated arguments and judgements of whether or not there is more disagreement or agreement.

Weaker responses simply listed the differences between strands or thinkers without much context, exemplification or evaluation of extent of agreement or disagreement.

Many responses were narrative in nature, focused only on what the strands thought rather than explaining why they held these beliefs. This lack of explanation impacted their AO2 marks. For higher marks, responses should explore not only what the strands agree and disagree on but also *why*. The ability to explore the principles that underly their beliefs is the key to high quality analysis in Ideas questions.

Significant numbers of responses were **still** led by the thinkers rather than by strands – despite this being highlighted in successive Examination Reports and on Inset provision. This approach often led to confusion about the most relevant strands for the thinkers mentioned.

Significant numbers of candidates answer Ideas questions solely by reference to thinkers, excluding strands altogether. This approach significantly impedes their ability to achieve the higher levels. Candidates should know how to lead with the strands and to avoid describing and comparing the different thinkers.

Candidates who engaged with similarities and differences through a highly comparative lens produced stronger responses. The vast majority of responses did explore the views of the different strands within paragraphs but in a side-by-side comparison, often with a sentence in between, usually, *“However, One-Nation conservatives believe...”*. In order to improve comparative analysis, centres should consider helping candidates to consider a more integrated approach to comparative analysis.

With regard to thinkers, most candidates were able to use thinkers in their answer and very, very few were affected by the two-thinker cap. However, there are still some responses that only name-drop the thinkers rather than using them to enhance and develop the point they are making.

Also, it is an absolute requirement of Ideas responses that they include discussion of agreement and disagreement. This is something that a significant proportion of candidates do not do, usually omitting areas of agreement, and they are penalised for it. The best responses included an analysis of agreement and disagreement within conservatism. In Ideas responses, as mentioned in previous Examination Reports, it can be 1/3 to 2/3.

As with the Liberalism question, candidates often did not engage with the 'to what extent' aspect of the question, resulting in brief or unsustained evaluation. Centres should remind candidates that this is not a binary Yes/No question. They are being asked to decide if disagreements are more significant than agreement (or vice versa).

Responses that engaged with the 'extent' aspect of the question achieved significantly higher marks in AO3. Centres should reinforce the need for clear, structured responses that include clear introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions, which all include discussion of 'extent'. This approach will help candidates to manage their time and provide comprehensive responses.

Regarding timing, like the liberalism question, many candidates had difficulty, resulting in short or unfinished responses – this has a significant impact on their overall marks.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Focus on Strands: Teachers should emphasise the importance of leading with strands rather than thinkers. This will help candidates structure their responses more effectively and reduce confusion.
2. Explanation and Justification: Encourage candidates to explain *why* the strands hold certain beliefs, not just what those beliefs are. This deeper analysis will improve AO2 marks.
3. Essay Structure: Reinforce the need for clear, structured responses that include well-developed introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions. This approach will help candidates manage their time and provide comprehensive answers.
4. Contemporary Examples: Contemporary examples are not necessary for Ideas questions. Exemplifications should come from the use of key thinkers.

As noted, the most effective way to deal with core political ideas is with the tension between, and within, the named strands.

Overall, there are ~~also~~ more large disagreements than agreements within conservatism - whilst it could be argued that they have broad similarities over the economy, this view is discredited through human nature, the state, and the ~~exact~~ type of economy. Therefore, it is clear that there are large disagreements.

In regards to human nature, it could be argued that there are significant agreements. All conservatives take a sceptical, and rightly pessimistic view on human nature; Traditional Conservatives for instance, agree believe on the chaos of humanity 'in the state of nature'. With Thomas Hobbes 'in Leviathan' arguing that humans are 'nasty, brutish and short'. However, this is where the disagreements end. One nations have significantly revised the traditional view, instead suggesting on human imperfection, and fallibility, but insisting that humans are not terrible. What is even more significant however is the New-Right belief. Neo-Liberals argue that humans are rational, and selfish, and not imperfect. They argued that human nature is driven by

The need for self-fulfilment, a notion advocated by Ayn Rand who promotes the virtue of selfishness. Even traditionalists themselves disagree to the extent of human imperfection, with some arguing against the commonly accepted Hobbesian view, like Edmund Burke, who emphasised human 'fallibility'. Therefore, although conservatives take a general view of human nature as sceptical, there are large disagreements to the extent, ~~too~~ with some even ~~completely~~ New-Right even completely disregarding it.

Furthermore, it could be suggested that the state offers ~~some~~ agreements between the strands. One-nations and Traditional Conservative emphasise the need for the state (due to their view of human nature). They ~~state~~ see the state as necessary to keep stability and an organic society from crumbling. They both also see a ruling duty of the elite to look after the people, because the world is so complex. However, this is where the agreements end. New-Right Conservative completely reject state intervention, and the need for a large state, who instead prefer a minarchist state, this is supported by Nozick's 'Anarchy, State and Utopia' who espoused the need for a minimal state, arguing that 'tax, for the most part is theft'. Also, ~~the~~ one-nations emphasise the need for a welfare state,

and more paternalism, seen in Disraeli's social reforms, whereas traditional see the state's job to simply keep society preserved. Overall, there are large disagreements for the state, as they disagree on the state role, and type of state.

Finally, conservatives disagree largely on the economy. However, there are some agreements - All conservatives want a capitalist society that is market based. They believe that capitalism will drive human progress forward, and will create opportunities. All also believe in the right to property in the economy, emphasising its necessity to preserve order. But, the disagreements are more important. While traditional and one-nation want state intervention, Neo-liberals want a completely free market. Ayn Rand's theory of objectivism in 'Atlas Shrugged' exemplifies how neo-rights see that individuals drive the market forward, not the state. Conversely, one-nations believe in a mixed economy with somewhat progressive taxation. By taxing the rich, they hope to create some sort of unionism, as Disraeli famously said how he did not want a society of 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Therefore, ~~there are large disagreements on between the conservatives on the economy~~. Furthermore, whilst

New-Right conservatives see property in the economy, as an ~~inalienable~~ inalienable right, one-nations stress that property entails responsibility - and ~~as~~ therefore that right can be shipped. ~~Therefore~~ As a result, there are large disagreements in the economy, as although there are similarities that they all want capitalism, the extent to which there is a free market is heavily disputed.

In conclusion there are large disagreements ~~that~~ over agreements between conservatives. Although they have general agreements on the type of human nature people have, and that capitalism is the best economic system, there are ~~at~~ severe disagreements within this. In fact, regarding the state, there are no complete unifying feature that all three strands share - whilst New-Right want a nightwatchman state, one-nations prefer a paternalistic state to help people. Whereas traditionalists believe that the state should exist to keep social order and to stop chaos. Therefore, it is ~~unmistakably~~ evident that there are large disagreements over agreements.



This is an excellent response that achieves Level 5 via a themed structure.

It focuses on three areas:

- human nature
- the state
- the economy

It has excellent knowledge of conservatism and uses key terminology effectively to explore similarities and differences.

It considers agreement as well as disagreement and focuses on differences between strands, using relevant key thinkers to exemplify and develop points. It has a clear line of argument throughout, focusing on extent.

Level 5

conservatism collectively has a negative view on human nature, advocate for a minimal state in modern times and minimal state intervention and the predominant view is that ~~there~~ there is no inclination for humans to ~~form~~^{come to} gather in society. However, there is some disputes about the role of the state, the economy and society. On balance, there is more ~~disagreement~~^{agreement} than ~~agreement~~^{disagreement} in conservatism.

Firstly, ~~the~~ ~~low~~ conservatives largely advocate for capitalism, but they have disputes on how to control it. Traditional conservatives fear free-market capitalism and so advocate for a Keynesian economic instead, so that there is more state regulation on the economy. Burke advocated for this as well as Michael Oakeshott. Oakeshott claimed that free-market capitalism disrupts society. ~~and~~ on the other hand, Robert Nozick advocated for free-market capitalism. Also, Ayn Rand viewed humans to have

egotism but ^{humans} used this to practice free market capitalism, as it requires more dynamic individuals. ~~On balance~~, This can be seen with the introduction of 'Reaganomics' in the USA as that practised free-market capitalism. On balance, all conservatives largely agree on ^{free-market} capitalism as a way to regulate the economy. This can be seen with the current conservative party adhering to free-market capitalism.

However, there are ⁱⁱ ~~disagreements~~ ^{agreement} upon the state within conservatism. Traditional Conservative Thomas Hobbes believes that there should be a social contract put in place as life without it would be 'nasty, brutish and short'. This deduces that due to their negative view on human nature, the state needs to help regulate it. On the other hand, Ayn Rand suggests to 'roll back the frontiers of the state' ⁱⁱⁱ ~~by~~ ^{by} policies such as privatisation and tax cuts. This can be seen with Margaret Thatcher privatising British Gas and British Telecom, and introducing tax cuts for the rich. On balance, there is more agreement

on law and order from the state within society. Ayn Rand also said that the most dynamic individual needs law and order. Also, the Nation Conservatives also advocate for a paternalistic state enforcing law and order. ~~Disraeli said that 'the palace is not safe if the cottages are not happy'~~. Michael Oakeshott believed that the state should enforce law and order as without it, the society would be 'noisy'. Robert Nozick also advocated for a minimal state.

~~Finally~~ Lastly, there is agreement on their negative view on human nature. Burke saw humans as 'flawed but fallible' and Thomas Hobbes saw humans driven by 'the envy and hatred'. This indicates a negative view on human nature amongst traditional conservatives. On the other hand, the New Right thinker Ayn Rand saw acknowledged that humans are individually capable of their own path as one can infer from her book 'The Virtue of selfishness'. The New Right also acknowledge that humans are driven by their own motives, contrasting the Hobbesian view. On balance, there is a ~~quite~~ collective negative view on human nature.

one-nation conservatives believe that ~~there~~ although humans are more communal, they are still 'noisy', ~~As~~ as said by Oakeshott. Although there are hints of optimism, there is still an underlying ~~degree~~ pessimism amongst all the conservative thinkers.

Overall, there is more agreement than disagreement within conservatism on human nature, the state and the economy. There are small disputes on how to control everything but there is a collective negative view on human nature, an advocacy for free market capitalism and an emphasis on law and order with a minimal state.

⊗ As individuals are capable of their own freedom.



There are several issues with this response.

One of the main issues is that it is thinker-led, barely referencing the strands at all, throughout the whole response. As a result, the answer does not really address the issue of differences between the strands.

As outlined in many Examination Reports, candidates should be encouraged to understand differences between strands, not thinkers.

Additionally, there are significant inaccuracies in the understanding of conservatism, as well as the use of policies as examples, which is not necessary for Ideas responses.

Planning and thinking through a response pays dividends: it has been avoided here and the response suffers as a consequence.

Level 3



Plan and think through the response for high marks.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this examination, candidates are offered the following advice:

- With essays and source-based questions candidates need to choose or decide a line of argument and adhere to that line. It shows uncertainty when candidates either change their mind or present uncertainty in discussion about the force of their argument or the line or direction, when they introduced the topic
- Ensure candidates focus on achieving AO3 marks — often the poorer relation in terms of the other two AOs. This is done by many actions— a good one being the production of interim judgments or mini-conclusions throughout the narrative
- On core political ideas (and non-core for that matter) it is preferred if candidates conduct their line of argument with a clear focus on the strands that the specification provides
- The key thinkers are there to add value and meaning to the strands — not the other way round
- Contemporary political events and their inclusion enhance responses. It was encouraging to see recent political activity in candidates' answers, whether that be current active pressure groups, new political party policy, recent campaigns or current reflections on referendums. Covering current events in class and engaging candidates pays high dividends in terms of marks and levels

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

