

General Certificate of Education
June 2004
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 8 Government and Politics – Synoptic Unit

GOV8

Thursday 1 July 2004 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

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

Time allowed: 2 hours

Instructions

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

Information

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

Advice

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

SECTION A: POWER

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

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

- A1** “In a pluralist society power is said to be dispersed. However, it is not dispersed evenly.” Discuss. (40 marks)
- A2** “The image and personality of political leaders are increasingly significant factors in determining their effective power.” Discuss. (40 marks)

The Blairite image of leadership

The kind of power sought by politicians in a democracy is authority. The sociologist Max Weber famously identified ‘charisma’ (i.e. an attractive and compelling personality with popular appeal) as a key source of such authority. Today, much media reporting and analysis centres upon this aspect of power. Figures such as Margaret Thatcher and Bill Clinton have been regarded as having much charisma while others, such as William Hague and John Major, have often been seen as lacking this ingredient.

The symbolic status of the leader is obvious in fascism, which can in part be defined by its adherence to a principle where leader figures embody the people whose will they manifest, as in most dictatorships. However, it is also the case in democratic contexts where political leaders develop and receive support because of their ability to embody the aspirations or beliefs of a movement. This is one reason why there is such interest in the personal lives of politicians, just as there was with earlier kings and queens. The successful representation of the leader is thus still crucial in democracies, though it must take a different form to that in totalitarian or monarchical states. The intensity with which this symbolic aspect is experienced varies between different countries. It is, for example, clear that the President of the United States must carry far greater symbolic weight than the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom because of differing traditions.

The personality of Tony Blair has been the subject of much comment. There was a belief that he had taken Bill Clinton as his model. However, as his second term opened, recurrent rumblings in the Parliamentary Labour Party and unflattering poll data suggested that the image had finally tarnished. Blair sought power by appearing ordinary, as one of us. He justified policies by linking them to his personal experience and commitment. As time moved on and things did not get better, the Blairite image had no extraordinary resources to draw on, no cultivated charm with which to inspire. If politicians present themselves as just like the rest of us, choosing to lose entirely the aura of charismatic authority, they will be judged as one of us. Unlike familiarity, the price of intimacy is not contempt but indifference. Perhaps, if the Blairite image is shown to be a failure, it will have been a victory for politics.

Source: adapted from ALAN FINLAYSON, “Elements of the Blairite image of leadership”,
Parliamentary Affairs Vol. 55 (Oxford University Press) 2002

SECTION B: PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

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

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

B1 “Representative democracy is the denial of true participation.” Discuss. (40 marks)

B2 “Falling electoral turnouts show democracy to be in need of revival with improved voting procedures and other forms of participation.” Discuss. (40 marks)

Democracy and representative government

Ancient Greece consisted of many small, self-governing city-states. Adopting a variety of methods and institutional frameworks for conducting public affairs, these presented a ‘unique laboratory’ for the study of government. Many of the Greek philosophers saw democracy as the most desirable form of government, a belief they bequeathed to modern civilisation.

In order to be entirely democratic, a system of government should permit all citizens to take part in making public policy. There have been examples of such direct democracy: the Greek city-states made some provision for it and early parish government in Britain saw the community meeting in church precincts to make decisions about such issues as roads, bridges and law and order. The government of the small communities formed by the New England settlers in America was also widely participative in character, as are the Swiss cantons today.

However, the Greek city-states were very small, no larger than around thirty square miles. With a considerable number of slaves, citizenship was restricted to fewer than 20,000. Yet even these communities proved too large to govern themselves directly at all times. A mass forum cannot give the kind of consideration sometimes necessary for decision-making. The result was the emergence of representative democracy.

Yet, although direct democracy in the modern nation-state has generally been seen as impractical, in an age of advanced technology the use of electronic means of consultation, such as the phone or internet, makes it possible to test opinion directly on issues, policies and services. Such methods featured in the market-driven politics associated with New Labour’s highly successful campaign for the 1997 general election. Critics have called this ‘dipstick’ rather than direct democracy and it reflects a global trend pioneered in the USA. This will not satisfy those wishing for a more genuine form of participation who will always seek other ways to influence governments.

Source: adapted from JOHN KINGDOM, *Government and Politics in Britain* (3rd edition) (Polity Press) 2003

TURN OVER FOR SECTION C

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SECTION C: POLITICAL CULTURE

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

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

C1 “Political culture sets limits on what governments can do.” Discuss. *(40 marks)*

C2 “Class, as the dominant social cleavage in politics, has been undermined by numerous forces.” Discuss. *(40 marks)*

“The Growth of Social Diversity”, text adapted from
P DUNLEAVY, “Electoral representation and accountability”, in
I HOLLIDAY, A GAMBLE & G PARRY (eds), *Fundamentals in
British Politics* (Macmillan) 1999, pp. 204-230 - not reproduced here
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SECTION D: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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

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

- D1** “Despite much talk of reform by politicians, continuity is the dominant factor in most political development.” Discuss. *(40 marks)*
- D2** “A lengthy period out of office is the best preparation for a reforming government.” Discuss. *(40 marks)*

"Government and Reform", text adapted from R PYPER & L ROBINS (eds),
United Kingdom Governance (Macmillan) 2000, pp. 301-309,
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END OF QUESTIONS

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