

Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2007

GCE

GCE Government and Politics (6499) 01

Mark scheme

Q1. The Labour Party has been associated with a revisionist form of socialism, Keynesian social democracy, which practised the politics of social justice and tried to narrow distributive inequalities within the capitalist system. This ideological stance has either been completely abandoned or substantially marginalised in recent years. The roots of this neo-revisionism can be traced back to Kinnock in 1987, to Callaghan in 1976, or even to Gaitskell in the late 1950s, but its most important manifestation is the 'modernisation' of the party's policies, values and electoral strategy since Blair became leader in 1994. Arguably, developments such as the decline of the traditional working class and globalization meant that traditionalist socialism in the guise of Keynesian social democracy was no longer viable economically or electorally. The relationship between the modern Labour Party and socialism is the subject of much debate. Many commentators argue that Labour is now a firmly post-socialist party, pointing out that the 'modernisation' process has involved ditching much of 'old' Labour's socialist credentials - examples include the abandonment of nationalisation and the mixed economy, the rejection of Keynesian demand management in favour of a desire to free capitalist markets from government regulation, and the break with Beveridge welfare principles brought about by a passion for welfare reform. 'New' Labour has therefore found an accommodation with a kind of post-Thatcherite market economics. On the other hand, there are those who argue that Labour has not abandoned its socialist principles (a desire for greater equality and social justice remain), but has merely abandoned old and ineffective ways of achieving its goals.

In answering this question, consider the following issues:

- Understanding of socialism/post-socialism (AO1)
- Awareness of recent changes in the policy orientation and development of the Labour Party (AO1 & 2)
- Analysis of implications of changes for socialist beliefs (AO2)

Q2. Devolution reflects the handing down of power to “lower” bodies within a unitary state. The devolution process in the UK has accelerated since 1997, with referendums in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the establishment was the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and (albeit not leading so smoothly to effective devolution) the Northern Ireland Assembly. These developments have had a major impact on nationalism in the UK. This impact could be evident in the changing strength of different kinds of nationalism or in the changing character of different nationalist traditions. In Scotland, the third post-devolution elections in 2007 indicate a strengthening of support for the political nationalism articulated by the SNP. However, the SNP may also be demonstrating a new pragmatism in its nationalism over issues such as the timing of a referendum over links with the UK and over taxation, where traditional socialist commitments may be being re-thought. In Wales, Plaid Cymru’s concern with language and cultural issues appears to have been consolidated, and bolder political demands have been made, for example in demands for the kind of legislative devolution already enjoyed in Scotland. Devolution has had complex implications for the nationalist traditions in Northern Ireland, not least through a strengthening of the more radical wings within republicanism and Unionism, reflected in strengthened support for Sinn Fein and the DUP; but the prospect of power sharing may also have encouraged each to adopt more pragmatic and conciliatory positions. Further evidence of the impact of devolution can be found in the strengthening of English nationalism, at the expense of ‘Britishness’, based on the growing sense of injustice arising from the fact that England alone within the UK lacks a devolved voice, complicated by matters such as the West Lothian question.

In answering this question, consider the following issues:

- Understanding of the process of devolution (AO1)
- Awareness of the nature of the different nationalist traditions in the UK (AO1 + 2)
- Analysis and evaluation of the impact of devolution on the various forms of nationalism in the UK (AO2).

Q3. Liberal democracy is based upon a fusion of liberal and democratic principles. Its liberal components reflect a commitment to limited government brought about through constitutional constraints and institutional checks and balances. Its democratic features are rooted in the principle of consent, reflected in the idea that the right to govern should be based upon success in free and fair, regular, competitive and democratic elections. The UK could be regarded as a defective or immature liberal democracy. Whilst exhibiting many of the basic features of liberal democracy, the UK system is insufficiently liberal and, in certain respects, inadequately democratic. In particular, the UK does not have a codified constitution, an entrenched Bill of Rights or the institutional checks upon the executive that liberal democratic principles tend to imply. Similarly, factors such as the single-member plurality system may mean that representative processes and systems of public accountability may also be subject to criticism. Nevertheless, constitutional reforms since 1997 - for instance, the introduction of devolution, the wider use of PR and referendums, and the introduction of the Human Rights Act - have arguably strengthen the liberal democratic features of the UK political system.

In answering this question, consider the following issues:

- Understanding of liberal democracy (AO1)
- Understanding of the key features of the UK political system (AO1)
- Analysis and evaluation of the extent to which the UK is a liberal democratic political system (AO2)

Q4. The Thatcherite heritage within the Conservative Party reflects a commitment to the free market and the strong state, representing, respectively, the ideas of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. These ideas have dominated Conservative politics since the 'Thatcher revolution' of the 1980s. Post-Thatcher leaders have tried, but with limited success, to shift the party away from at least the electorally unattractive aspects of Thatcherism. This applied, in a variety of ways, to Major, Hague, Smith and Howard, the principal constraint on such a being the Thatcherite proclivities of the Conservative backbenchers, party activists and the party's 'core' vote. However, the election of David Cameron in December 2005 has, some argue, transformed the ideological character of the party, reflecting a more serious and determined attempt to 'bury Thatcherism'. Evidence for this can, for instance, be found in the embrace of a green agenda, an emphasis on public services and focus on the alleviation of poverty, a greater concern about the causes of crime, concern about inclusion and societal cohesion, and a stress on issues such as happiness and family stability rather than economic advancement. Insofar as these positions reflect a belief in fraternity or 'society' (rejected by Thatcherite neoliberalism, but distinguished by Cameronites from the state), they more closely resemble One Nationism than Thatcherism. On the other hand, much of Thatcherism remains. This can, for example, be seen in the continuing emphasis on the free market and low taxation and anti-Europeanism. An alternative view emphasises that

little of substance has changed in the party: 'Cameronism' consists, like 'Blairism' more of sound-bites and rhetoric than of concrete policy positions.

In answering this question, consider the following issues:

- Understanding of Thatcherism (AO1)
- Awareness of recent policy and ideological developments in the Conservative Party (AO1 & 2)
- Analysis of significance for Thatcherism of recent changes (AO2)

Unit 4 Marking Grid

Levels	Performance Criteria	1–4 20 marks	5–7 60 marks
3	Excellent	17-20	51-60
	Very good	15-16	45-50
	Good	13-14	39-44
2	Sound	11-12	33-38
	Basic	9-10	27-32
	Limited	7-8	21-26
1	Weak	5-6	15-20
	Poor	3-4	9-14
	Very poor	0-2	0-8

Unit 5

Levels	Performance Criteria	1–4 20 marks	5–7 60 marks
3	Excellent	17-20	51-60
	Very good	15-16	45-50
	Good	13-14	39-44
2	Sound	11-12	33-38
	Basic	9-10	27-32
	Limited	7-8	21-26
1	Weak	5-6	15-20
	Poor	3-4	9-14
	Very poor	0-2	0-8

Unit 6

Levels	Performance Criteria	Essay 50 marks
3	Excellent	43-50
	Very good	38-42
	Good	33-37
2	Sound	28-32
	Basic	23-27
	Limited	18-22
1	Weak	13-17
	Poor	8-12
	Very poor	0-7

