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Examiners' Report January 2011

GCE Government & Politics 6GP03 3A

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January 2011

Publications Code UA026400

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Introduction

The shorter questions continue to reflect a major problem for candidates: that many candidates either do not read the question thoroughly enough or that they choose not to specifically address the question being asked. Many supplied information that related to the subject area, but this could not always be rewarded if it did not relate directly to the question being asked. This was particularly true of Questions 1 and 3.

Across all questions a lack of detailed knowledge of government actions and party policies on the subject areas was noticeable for many candidates, limiting the marks candidates gained on AO1 in particular. Many candidates chose to answer in very general terms, or relied heavily on traditional party ideologies to assess the topic in question.

Conversely, those candidates who did know a range of party policies well unfortunately tended to only describe the policies, consequently omitting the analysis or synopticity. This was particularly true of those candidates who were well versed in coalition policies. This highlights a need for candidates to be prepared in how to select and deploy the knowledge they have gained in the time allotted. This was particularly true of the questions on the subject areas of the economy and the environment.

Synopticity seemed to pose a problem for a number of candidates, who quite carefully gave political party views in their extended answers, but failed to link these point in terms of consensus or contrasting viewpoints.

Question 1

This question asked candidates to explain how taxation policies have been used to redistribute income since 1997. However, many candidates treated these two key concepts separately, choosing to address only one of the issues in their answer. As a result, a substantial number of responses explained only general taxation policies or attempted to address the issue of whether or not income has been redistributed, failing to link the two concepts.

A surprising number of candidates also entirely misunderstood the concept of redistribution of income, and chose to answer a question of their choosing on welfare benefits in general. A worrying number of candidates also chose to focus their answers entirely on Working Tax and Child Tax Credits, suggesting that they had been preparing for an answer on the impact of benefits introduced under New Labour. Similarly, many candidates displayed excellent, but unfortunately largely irrelevant, knowledge of the coalition's changes and proposals regarding the benefits system. Such answers spent a great deal of time analysing the impact of the abolition of EMA and the new threshold for child benefit, but were unable to relate their discussions to the question. Such responses limited candidates to a Level 1.

In terms of taxation policies, a number of candidates were able to outline changes under New Labour, but too often these were simple descriptions of what Labour has done and unrelated to redistribution of wealth.

Stronger candidates were able to clearly demonstrate that they understood the lack of redistributive policies under New Labour as well as a range of policies that taxation policies such as 'stealth taxes' and the new tier of income tax, while at the same time showing an awareness that arguably there was some redistribution of income with tax cuts and new higher tax rates. It was not essential to refer to the coalition to access level 3, but to reach the top of the level candidates would be expected to display an awareness of the focus of the coalition on spending cuts rather than redistribution.

Candidates achieving level 2 provided less detail and analysis of the extent to which tax policies redistributed income. Such responses were often one-sided, focusing only on the lack of redistribution or on policies that arguably did redistribute income such as the 10p tax band.

Taxes are a key redistributive fiscal policy, ~~and~~ to utilise state ~~and~~ mechanisms to ~~and~~ move money from one social group to another. Labour's ~~manifestos~~ since 1945 have committed to this redistribution, though with the "Relaxed" ^(post-revolution) attitude of New Labour this was seemingly reduced as a key priority for a Labour Govt. Some measures however, did much to redistribute income.

The "10p Top Band" introduced by Brown ~~reduced~~ taxation on the lowest earners in society, thus

ensuring they gained a greater net benefit from the state by the means of enjoying ~~the~~ a higher level of untaxed income. Described by Brown as the "people's tax cut," this reduced the tax burden on the lowest ~~so~~ so spending could further enhance state redistribution. The 2009 50% tax rate on incomes over £50,000 also increased the tax burden on the rich &, in doing so, redistributed ~~the~~ money through subsequent spending of the £4bn additional revenue. The ~~total~~ overall tax burden was raised 1997-2008 from 38.8% to 42%; Tax (of which 50% is paid by the top 6% of the population) was increased on the highest earners for redistribution to the lowest. ~~£~~

Finally, the Coalition's £10,000 tax allowance will lift 23m basic rate taxpayers out of £200 of tax each, thus reducing their tax burden ~~and~~ allowing them a greater benefit from state redistribution.

However, New Labour (specifically the "Third Way" supporters of Blair & Mendelson) also ~~encouraged~~ encouraged less distribution, to ^{the} benefit = "wealth creators". This was seen with the abolition of the 'TOP tax band' in 2007 ~~and~~ reduction in standard rate of income tax from 25% to 20% by 2008:

In this way government instead reduced taxes on the rich. ~~so~~ prevented this being redistributed to the poor. At the same time the increase in indirect taxes, such as VAT, ~~did~~ did much to decrease redistribution. As the IFS points out, indirect taxation does increase taxes on the rich, but also regressively taxes the poor at approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the rate the rich are taxed by. In this way an increase in indirect 'stealth' taxes since 1997 from 22 to 66 by 2008 has ensured a more widespread tax burden and thus a lower level of redistribution between rich & poor.

In conclusion, due to the size of ~~the~~ the tax burden itself increasing, indirect or direct, some ~~tax~~ ^{tax} ~~policy~~ ^{policy} was ~~transacted~~ ^{transacted} to redistribute ~~the~~ resources to the poor.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate clearly understands the key concept of redistribution of income and is able to concisely outline their argument in the introduction. The idea that taxation policies have been used to redistribute income is then argued with direct links to specific policies. The candidate is then able to address the "to what extent" part of the question by posing a counter-argument, again with reference to specific policies. The depth of knowledge and analysis of how far policies redistributed income make this a top level 3 response. 14/15.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates need to have a full understanding of the associated key concepts in each area of study; including a concise definition in the introduction signals an awareness of what the question requires. Candidates should also aim to have knowledge of specific policies that have been introduced that they can then apply to their answers- particularly under New Labour and now the coalition government.

Question 2

This was the most popular short-answer question. Candidates often demonstrated excellent knowledge of the anti-terrorism measures introduced under New Labour. However, this was not always clearly related to why such measures were criticised. Few candidates assessed the effectiveness of such measures, choosing to focus on their impact on civil liberties alone.

Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of a range of specific anti-terrorism laws and measures. Many candidates were able to reference detention without trial, control orders and stop-and-search powers. Level 3 answers should have demonstrated an awareness of the specific impact of measures on civil liberties, for example referencing the clash with the Human Rights Act and the European Convention of Human Rights. Responses which only discussed the impact of measures on human rights in general terms remained in Level 2. A number of candidates were able to attain the top of level 3, with some excellent discussions of the lack of effectiveness of the measures as well as their impact on civil liberties.

Disappointingly, a number of candidates relied on generalisations regarding racial discrimination in their attempts to criticise the measures without specific evidence to back up their points. Such responses would be limited to Level 1, unless candidates were able to link such points to the impact on civil liberties or the effectiveness of such measures- extending their analysis in this way would allow candidates to reach level 2.

Taxes are a key redistributive fiscal policy, ~~and~~ to utilise state ~~and~~ mechanisms to ~~and~~ move money from one social group to another. Labour's ~~and~~ manifestos since 1945 have committed to this redistribution, though with the ^(power redistribution) "relaxed" attitude of New Labour this was seemingly reduced as a key priority for a Labour Govt. Some measures however, did much to redistribute income.

The "10% Top Band" introduced by Brown ~~and~~ reduced taxation on the lowest earners in society, thus ensuring they gained a greater net benefit from



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Examiner Comments

This response begins with a vague reference to 'an anti-terrorism act', suggesting that the knowledge demonstrated will be quite limited. The candidate shows they are aware of only one measure- detention without charge- but only in very basic terms, and only offer one solid criticism regarding the impact on Human Rights. There is an attempt to use up-to-date knowledge, with a reference to the coalition, but again in only general terms and with no understanding of the contrasting positions of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats on detention without charge. 5/15.

The issue of detention without charge, raised to 14 days in the Crime and Disorder Act (04) and subsequently doubled to 28 days in the Terrorism Act (06) has been a hotly contentious issue. It has been opposed by pressure groups such as Liberty as an infringement of rights but the government has seen it as a necessary step to ensure national security. In fact Tony Blair campaigned to have it extended to 90 days but this was defeated in a commons vote.

Control orders were also brought in which can limit the movements of terrorist suspects without charge and put them under curfew. This was opposed by the Lib Dems as it was said to remove essential freedoms, such as freedom to practise one religion as some detainees couldn't access mosques. This issue is currently being debated by the coalition government who have distinctly opposite views on their legitimacy.

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Examiner Comments

This response offers a clear contrast to the previous one- the first paragraph is specific about how detention without charge has changed and who and why it has been criticised. The second paragraph examines a second measure, and is able to make the quite sophisticated point that the coalition government is divided over the issue- further development of this point could have included why the Conservative position is in direct opposition to the Liberal Democrats, or reference to party ideologies.

Question 3

A surprising number of candidates misread this question and so answered a question of their choosing on the benefit system in general, rather than on universal welfare benefits. As a result, many responses focused on assessing the reasons for means-tested benefits such as EMA or tax credits to the exclusion of any analysis of universal benefits.

Those candidates who did understand the key concept of the question generally began their answers with a definition of the term, and were able to relate this to the basic advantage of universal benefits of upholding the founding principles of the welfare state. However, this was where many candidates' attempts at analysis stopped, leading to a large number of one-sided responses focusing on the disadvantages.

Stronger candidates were able to relate the advantages of universal benefits to a discussion about selective universality or the disadvantages of means-testing.

Less strong candidates were only able to reference one universal benefit, such as child benefit or the NHS, but often went on to develop an argument about benefit fraud and abuse of the system rather than focusing on the question.

Universal welfare benefits have recently been put under scrutiny due to the ~~extent~~ increasing costs. Universal welfare benefits include family tax credit, ^{old age} pensions etc. Pensions are becoming a huge problem as there is an ageing population and with better health care people are living much longer. Also there was a post war 'baby boom' which has increased the population. Although the pensions are costly, without them ~~many~~ ^{much} of the older population ~~will~~ would be living in poverty.

People with children receive a universal income to help support their children, ~~it~~ this was a controversial subject in the 2010 general election as David Cameron said that if the family income is over approximately ~~£6,000~~ ~~20,000~~ ~~50,000~~ ^{of 30,000} they would not receive these child benefits. However, this ~~would~~ held a disadvantage as it had 'loopholes'

and a single parent earning just £30,000 would have to run their house on their own with no child benefit.

The advantages of universal welfare benefits is that ~~the poor~~ everybody receives help ~~however, there~~ and ~~so~~ prevents people from going under the 'poverty line'

~~The reason they hold so many disadva~~

The universal welfare benefits seem to only have a few disadvantages, which is the huge cost, approximately 1.8 Billion a year on universal benefits which is continuing to rise as there is ~~long~~ increasing life expectancy and a much higher birth rate. But also, many criticize universal benefits as the ~~the~~ richer families receive as much as the struggling people when they could easily support themselves.



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Examiner Comments

This response begins with a common mistake, referencing a non-universal benefit (Family Tax Credit). However, the bulk of the answer does focus on universal benefits, allowing the candidate to gain credit for the relevant points offered.

There is an attempt to offer a balanced answer, however the arguments offered are undeveloped and lacking detail. For example, the discussion of the changes to child benefit contains some errors, and does not really make a clear point about the benefit as an advantage or disadvantage for universality. 8/15.

Question 4

This question elicited a wide range of responses. The environment has become a more popular question, but unfortunately a substantial number of candidates chose to focus their answer on environmental policy in general rather than on the specific area of transport. Those responses that did focus on transport policy were often limited in scope, choosing to discuss motoring policy and ignoring other key areas such as rail and aviation. Such responses were also often very one-sided, arguing that New Labour policy had been very green because of policies such as fuel duty and variation in car taxation, or choosing only to describe policies that could have been described as green.

Stronger candidates were able to assess the rationale for specific New Labour policies and compare them to opposition and now coalition policies, and in some instances quite sophisticated links were made between the political climate and the ability to introduce green policies, such as Kyoto targets and the abolition of the expansion of Heathrow.

A significant number of candidates, however, are still confusing policies with those responsible for them; for instance, attributing the congestion charge to the New Labour government and Kyoto to the Conservative Party, showing the need for substantial knowledge of specific policies.

Nowadays, all of the main parties claim to be the greenest political party. Ever since the formation of the ~~go~~ Green party in 1973, it has had influence over various policies of governments, including transport policies.

Firstly, the fuel price escalator, brought in by the Conservatives and then kept on by New Labour in 1997, was designed to reduce car usage through ~~an~~ above inflation rises in fuel duty. Despite fuel strikes taking place in November 2000, and also popular public support along with Opposition party criticism, the fuel price escalator did return a few years later, due to the principle of how it was believed it discouraged motoring. Furthermore for motorists, compulsory catalytic converters for new cars was a government

policy aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions.

There are also popular Vehicle Excise Duty tax relief for cars that pollute less.

However, some argue that the fuel price escalator was predominantly a labour stealth tax described as a green tax.

Similarly, Air Passenger Duty rose under New Labour and is set to remain in the coalition as a tax on flying, albeit levied on planes rather than passenger numbers.

The small rises in this under New Labour were seen too, to be a stealth tax and not discourage flying, which is highly popular.

Blair described increasing APD before an election as "electoral suicide."

In 2010, the coalition has also scrapped Heathrow's 3rd runway. They marketed this as a green principle, and Synoptically speaking, ~~the~~ the Pressure Group 'Plane Stupid' were strong campaigners for this change.

As the Conservatives are traditionally seen as the party of the economy and industry, scrapping an economically attractive project on environmental grounds represents a huge shift in stance. It could be argued that

green ideas are beginning to further influence UK transport policies in the future to a greater extent.

However, ecologists believe that all forms of carbon emitting transport is wrong, and no transport policy goes as far as to support ecologists.

Environmentalists believe in using sustainable technology to protect the environment, and policies like increased rail spending to improve rail services and attract people from cars backs up the needs of environmentalists more than ecologists.

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Examiner Comments

This response shows how a candidate can link specific policies to analysis of the 'to what extent' part of the question. The candidate demonstrates knowledge of policies from the pre-1997 Conservative government through to the current coalition government, and is able to reference who made certain criticisms of policies. 12/15.

Question 5

The growing consensus on law and order in recent years is well established; however, there have been quite distinct policies between the main parties in key areas such as policing that candidates should have been aware of. There were, nonetheless, a surprising number of candidates who accepted the disagreement part of the question at face value and therefore did not analyse the 'to what extent' part of the question. There were also, unfortunately, a number of candidates who focused on law and order in general rather than policing, or who produced very narrow responses on single issues such as the 'surveillance state' or anti-terror laws.

There were some excellent responses from stronger candidates, who were able to make quite sophisticated analyses of the traditional ideological differences between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, and how these differences have not always been reflected in recent policy. These discussions often led on to an evaluation of the coalition agreement on policing, proving how well some candidates have grasped the 'Key Issues' aspect of this paper.

Less strong candidates often chose to focus their answers on very historical aspects of policing policy, examining policy under Thatcher and Major, with sometimes no references at all to post-1997 policy. Answers which only focused on describing policing policy with no attempt at addressing the analytical part of the question were also very limited; such responses also often lacked any understanding of specific policies and used generalities such as 'increase police power' with no reference to what has been done/proposed.

With the current Coalition government between the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats, their policing policy is a combination of both their own ideology. The main policing ideas that the Coalition want to implement for policing are less bureaucracy and more police. Labour, who are the main current opposition party, generally agree with these policies but would also like to have the police work closer with the community.

The Coalition government want less bureaucracy within the police force, this means that there should be less time police time spent in offices and more time on the streets. This idea is generally agreed on by both the government and opposition parties, the reason that they agree

on this issue is because ~~to~~ if more police were on the streets ~~stopping~~ trying to stop crime it would act as a deterrent for criminals to not commit the crime in the first place. Therefore in this area of policy there is an agreement between the government and opposition parties.

Another ~~area~~ policy that both the government and opposition parties agree on is that there should be more police and ~~an~~ increased police powers. The reason for the agreement of ~~these 2~~ ~~too~~ this policy is that crime would reduce as ~~pe~~ there is more police to stop the crime, and they had more powers to stop ~~some~~ suspected criminals. Although both the Conservatives and Labour party agree on this, it is unlikely that the Liberal Democrats would accept it as they believe in protecting civil liberties and the increase in police powers is threatening civil liberties.

On the other hand, the government and opposition parties do disagree on the idea of having communities involved in policing. The Labour

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Examiner Comments

This is a typical generic response to the question. The candidate attempts to show an understanding of recent policy, as this paper requires, but has only learnt about proposed changes in quite general terms - less bureaucracy and more police and police powers. These are the only references to specific policy in this response, and make no comparison to Labour policies other than in general terms of agreement or disagreement.

Because the answer does directly address the question as set, is focused on the topic of policing and does attempt to discuss agreement/disagreement, it does merit a level 2 mark. However, because the knowledge is so basic and the analysis so general, this mark only reaches the bottom of level 2. 6/15.

Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4 Question 5

Over the years there has been many disagreements over policing between the government and opposition, namely because the different parties have different ideologies which means that they hold different views on where priorities in the policing system lie.

The coalition government have announced plans to introduce ^{elected} new police commissioners from 2012 onwards who will decide on the budgets and where resources will be spent for that police districts. There will be 42 newly elected commissioners and ~~they will~~ and they will only be able to serve two terms maximum.

The coalition believe that this will greatly increase police accountability as the commissioners will be elected by the public. However Labour have greatly criticised the policy on the basis of 20% budget cuts to the police force and how the

government will afford '42 new positions' as Ed Milliband put it.

Furthermore, when Labour were in power they introduced performance related pay and targets to ~~some~~ police. For example

in Thames Valley officers are awarded 5 points for ~~settling~~ ~~convicting~~ ~~someone~~ someone on their phones whilst driving and 10 points for solving a rape. Labour believed that these targets would motivate officers to achieve higher conviction rates however the Conservatives believe that these targets made police cut corners and concentrate on the easier to solve low level crimes.

In addition to this, the ~~new~~ coalition government plans to get more police out on the street. Under the Labour government only 13% of police were actually on the streets whilst the rest were burdened with red tape paper work. Theresa May of the liberal/conservative coalition said, "We are going to turn the police from form writers to crime fighters". The coalition has put a greater emphasis on personable ~~and~~ policing.

In conclusion, in recent years there has been a distinct disagreement between

the parties over policing as they Labour have put their stamp of a 'target culture' into practice in the police force in an effort to drive up standards. The Conservatives and now the coalition believe that the main aim ~~to~~ is to get people ~~out~~ out on the

selects serving the community. There is little chance of consensus on politics, even though both the government and the opposition has slowly moved towards the centre of politics in recent years.

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Examiner Comments

In contrast to the previous clip, this candidate outlines specific policies and offers clear analysis of opposition party agreements or disagreements in some areas.

Because of the range of knowledge of policies and party views displayed, and the coherence of this answer, the candidate merits a low level 3. However, more balance on areas of consensus in recent years would move this answer further through the level. 11/15.

Question 6

This was the most popular essay question.

There were a wide range of responses to this question, from the less strong to the extremely able. There were also a wide range of approaches to answering this question- some candidates chose to discuss the welfare state in general, with examples from key areas such as the NHS and education, whilst others chose to focus their analysis on one key area (usually the NHS) with comparisons to the other areas of welfare.

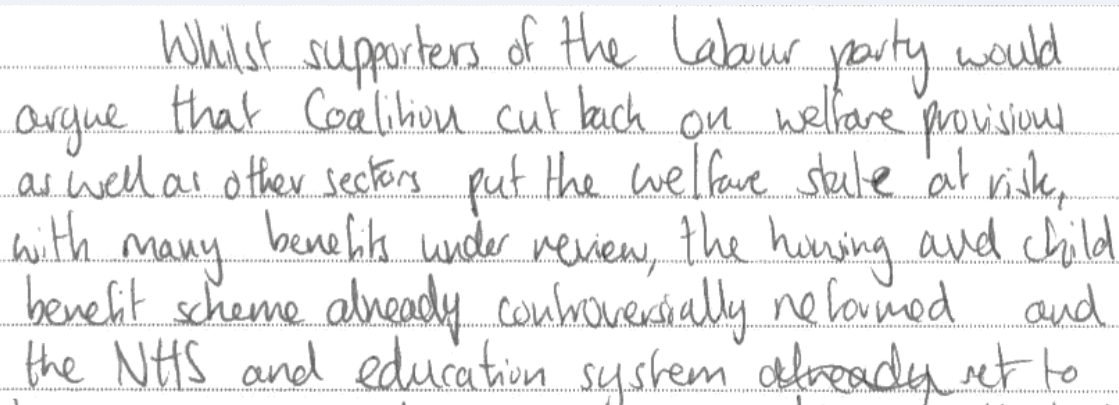
Most responses accepted the claim, citing Labour's historical record, and indeed as in previous years, less strong candidates spent too much time detailing the history of the creation of the NHS rather than analysing who would be most likely to protect it.

However, a substantial number of candidates were able to use the recent coalition cuts and proposals to suggest that perhaps the NHS is not in danger under the coalition, and many of these responses were able to link such policies to the economic climate- suggesting that although Labour currently disagree with many proposals, they may not have been able to avoid similar reforms (particularly of the NHS and tuition fees) if they had had to continue to deal with the recession.

Stronger candidates were able to link such arguments to changes made under New Labour- such as target-setting, the use of 'market forces', increased prescription charges, small changes to the pension etc-and how these suggested that the welfare state might not have been entirely safe under Labour either.

The less strong responses did not go beyond outlining the traditional views of the main parties in supporting/criticising the welfare state, and used these to form simplistic arguments on the basis of the Conservatives wanting to slash spending and privatise more, compared to Labour's desire to increase spending and 'save' the NHS.

The majority of candidates scored marks for synopticity on this question, as most candidates did attempt a balanced answer, so offering contrasting viewpoints on who would keep the welfare state safe. The strongest responses were able to cite New Labour policies that suggested keeping the welfare state as it had been when it was founded was not their main priority, and that the way the welfare state is treated by various governments depends on the economic climate of the time. Contrasts were made by a number of candidates between pre-coalition Conservative and Liberal Democrat policies, which also scored synopticity marks, particularly those responses that were able to explain the context of the change in Liberal Democrat education policies. Candidates who used the change in policies on tuition fees and EMA to merely criticise the Liberal Democrats, however, would not have scored synopticity marks, as this would not show an contrasting views.



Whilst supporters of the Labour party would argue that Coalition cut back on welfare provisions as well as other sectors put the welfare state at risk, with many benefits under review, the housing and child benefit scheme already controversially reformed and the NHS and education system already set to

be restructured, the coalition would argue that the welfare state is even safer in their hands, that all their changes are fair and progressive and will increase efficiency, and that it is Labour's mismanagement of the economy that has meant the welfare state has had to be cut in the first place. Many ^{on the left} would argue that Labour created the welfare state and the NHS, and have upheld its principles since, and that the Ed Miliband would claim that the Conservative led

coalition government is taking advantage of a tough economic climate to conduct a Thatcherite, ideologically driven purge of the welfare state. He has talked of the 'squeezed middle' and has heavily criticised Coalition changes to child and housing benefits, as well as the proposed restructuring of the NHS. Issues such as the increased pension age have also caused controversy, whilst the Coalition government would argue that despite having Labour's mess to clean up, the welfare state will be made fairer and more efficient ~~is~~ efficient under their control.

When the George Osborne announced in his budget that welfare provisions would be cut more than any other department, saving up to £7 billion, Labour were quick to attack the government, claiming the budget showed that the ~~government~~ coalition was Conservative led, and driven by an ideological agenda.

That while conservatives ~~always~~ always believed the welfare state should form a safety net, and Miliband claimed David Cameron and his Conservatives agreed, dubbing the Coalition 'the most right-wing government of our modern era'.

above £44,000. This system has been criticised because of irregularities in the way it operates, meaning families with almost double the ~~income~~ total income of those who do not ~~also~~ qualify for child benefit can still claim the extra money. Similar changes have also been made on housing benefits, particularly affecting Londoners, with even ~~Conservative~~ the Conservative London Mayor Boris Johnson talking of 'social cleansing'. There has also been talks of changes to the unemployment benefits to further reduce 'scrounging' and a review of all those currently entitled to disability living allowances amongst others, will come under review. Along with the increase in retirement age in the UK, and ongoing debates on issues such as winter fuel allowance, it is these policies that many supporters of Labour and the original welfare state, say ~~one~~ ~~cannot~~ prove that the welfare state would be safer in Labour's hands. They claim that the principle of universality has been too far changed into conditionality, and that this has always been the Conservative ideology. Many Labour supporters claim that backing such policies mean that the Liberal Democrats have abandoned their principles, leaving Labour the only progressive party left, and the only party that

can uphold the welfare state and ensure its 'safety'.

Changes in education and healthcare have also been criticised as damaging to the welfare state. Whilst the NHS is currently being restructured,

with more power being handed to GPs, Labour argue that the problems with rationing and the 'pot-code lottery' will be exacerbated, potentially compromising the principles of 'from cradle to grave' and 'free at the point of delivery'. In education, Labour claims free-schools and the focus on 'outstanding' rated schools becoming academies is creating an elitist system and will affect the education of those coming from the poorest background. The scrapping of EMAs has also been criticised by Labour, saying again the poor are being victimised, and Ed Miliband would emphasise the 'squeezed middle' when criticising the increase in tuition fees from £3,300 to £9,000 a year, and claims that programmes such as 'True Start' are at risk.

On the other hand, the Coalition government and its supporters would claim that the welfare state is being reformed and will be made more efficient under their control, not being dismantled. They argue that despite Labour's ~~own~~ economic 'mess' meaning that the welfare state has had to face cuts, efficiency can still increase, and that the welfare state can be public can be assured of the safety of the welfare state.

On the other hand, the Coalition government and its supporters would claim that the welfare state is being reformed and will be made more efficient under their control, not being dismantled. They argue that despite Labour's ~~own~~ economic 'mess' meaning that the welfare state has had to face cuts, efficiency can still increase, and that the ~~welfare state can be~~ public can be assured of the safety of the welfare state.

Under criticism for their changes to the benefits system, they claim that the new housing and benefits systems are fair and progressive, and have been thoroughly thought through. They admit that

everyone will ~~have~~ suffer, using the slogan 'we are all in this together', but claim that this is the fault of the recklessness of previous Labour governments. Ian Duncan Smith also argues that his proposed changes to the benefit system, forgetting and reviewing more benefits, and merging them into a 'universal credit' system is also a fairer method, also upholding the principle of universality.

On education and health the government again would argue efficiency is the focus, and ~~would~~ claim that the restructuring of the NHS will drive up standards whilst saving money, but promise that healthcare provisions will not be sacrificed. They say that the education changes will benefit everyone, especially

those coming from poorer backgrounds, claiming that ELLAs were scrapped because of their inefficiency, and that the pupil premium system will be much more successful. They also claim that the new university tuition fees system is fairer, with the poorest paying the least back, as well as claiming free schools provide extra diversity and choice.

Many on the left ~~of it~~ would also argue that the years of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown's governments proved that the welfare state would not be safer under Labour, and would claim that

the welfare state has in fact been at risk since 1979, when Margaret Thatcher moved away from the post-war consensus. Whether or not you agree that the welfare state would be safer under Labour simply depends on your political viewpoint. Whilst the ~~extra~~ current cuts to the welfare provisions certainly seem as if they are going to squeeze the original welfare state even further, it would be entirely unfair to argue that the Coalition government is the first to compromise such principles, and previous Labour governments have formed a significant part of the post-Thatcherite consensus on the welfare state.

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Examiner Comments

This candidate clearly understands the need to refer to specific policies and how to construct a reasoned and logical response to the question. Synopticity is included from the very beginning, with the introduction outlining both Labour supporters viewpoints and contrasting them with coalition criticisms. This skill is then demonstrated throughout the essay, which tries to address both sides of the case and comes to a solid conclusion. Level 3 on all assessment objectives, 37/45.

Question 6 ✘

Question 7 ✘

Question 8 ✘

The welfare state is praised by some and mocked by others as a joke however many reforms have been introduced under the coalition which put these welfare benefits at risk ultimately breaking down the welfare state.

When Labour was in power until the absolute financial crisis and recession back in 2009 they were operating under a fairly stable economy with steady economic growth and relatively low inflation. However when the Libcon coalition came to Government they had a lot of problems to deal with, particularly the absolutely enormous deficit which wasn't and won't be improved until sufficient measures are taken, the start of those we can see now with the welfare state rapidly shrinking. Examples of this would be the cut in child benefit which to many millions would have been a huge help and to many others the only way they could afford to raise a child, some of these even still being classified as below

the poverty line. Job Seekers ^{allowance} has also been harshly re-evaluated and so only those who are actually trying to _{with evidence}

find ^{with evidence} employment & receive help which basically anyone could have got easily under the Labour party previously regardless if they were looking for work or not. Disability benefits have perhaps ~~been~~ experienced the most change under the coalition much more in depth analysis and tests are taken to ensure that the people who are claiming it are genuinely unable to work etc and so are in need of financial help for real reasons which can be proven by tests etc. All of these changes seem like a much more Thatcher approach to the welfare state and definitely undeniably a conservative idea. Thatcher's beliefs were that people should fend for themselves and not rely on the state so heavily. It was a firm belief of hers that people should surely be working and be almost completely self-reliant and receive help when in huge need, such as with the council housing programme.

Cameron obviously isn't trying to bring back Thatcher neo politics but he has got this huge financial deficit which needs immediate attention. I think it's difficult to say the welfare state would be safer under Labour than the coalition as financially the welfare state

under Labour was absolutely huge however times have changed and money must be saved and spent as practically and sparingly as possible. It is heavily believed that the Labour party particularly under Gordon Brown completely mismanaged the welfare system and that although necessary to help those truly in need, money was worryingly given out completely carelessly to people who would abuse the system and take the tax payers money and essentially "sponge" of the state which isn't acceptable. This has definitely been something brought to the attention of the coalition whilst trying to reduce the deficit. In closely studying the figures of expenditure on benefits for the welfare state it was made even more obvious that the system was being played by thousands who didn't deserve them and were sometimes just too lazy to work or even find a job. EMA is a great example of misuse of the system, originally designed to help those less fortunate into further education so that they have a better chance and choice with their future, it is now obvious that for the majority that isn't the

case. Instead rather those amounts of students could afford to go on to college etc however fell within the criteria which was as simple as a parents salary bracket. No additional information ~~was~~ is required it's assumed with a salary lower than the stated level you wouldn't be able to afford to. However the additional money given to these people for support was and still is used as extra money for alcohol cigarettes and a trip down the student union. The coalition are to terminate EMA because of its misuse and drain on funds which could be invested in improving the deficit situation.

Therefore I would say that the welfare state would not be ~~any~~ safer under the Labour party. This is due to the fact that the global recession has ~~totally~~ ^{severely} crippled the UK economy and so raising finance is one of the biggest goals of the government at this time. Should Labour have won the election then they would have too been looking for things to cut and ultimately the most mismanaged and careless use of finances was used on the welfare state for so many other reasons other than its

actual purpose to help those less fortunate in times of need. The Labour government would have slashed and removed some of the welfare state because it's what is financially crucial at the moment to use all resources as productively and efficiently as they can.

**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Comments

This response is quite basic- while the candidate is able to reference some of the coalition's policies, there is little contrast with the New Labour government and no synopticity. While the candidate does mention Thatcher's viewpoints and argues that Cameron is trying to bring Thatcher's ideas back, this point is accepted as fact and no opposing or alternative viewpoint is offered. Some of the points made are also very general, such as that students abuse EMA and that is why it is being scrapped, and that the welfare system was mismanaged by Gordon Brown allowing money to be given out "completely carelessly".

The generalities of the arguments made and the obvious gaps in the candidate's knowledge made this a very weak answer. 12/45.

Question 7

This question saw the most limited answers across the paper from candidates, particularly in terms of synopticity. A sizeable number of candidates chose to only address one side of the argument, and unfortunately many candidates chose to answer a question of their own choosing on how the Labour government handled the recession, suggesting that they had revised heavily from the June 2010 paper.

Candidates should have been aware that governments are no longer the main factor shaping economic policy, and could have referred to points including the withdrawal of government from strategic areas of the economy, the devolving of power over interest rates, the impact of globalisation and the impact of EU membership. Counter-points could have included that governments still set taxation levels and decide distribution of expenditure in key areas, that agencies such as the Bank of England are still answerable to the government, that the UK is a leading player in international bodies and that the UK has retained monetary control in Europe.

Very few candidates were able to construct an argument around multiple points, and most relied heavily on the devolution of power to the Bank of England and the impact of the sub-prime market collapse in the USA. Surprisingly few candidates referred to the impact of the EU or the fact that the UK has not yet joined the Eurozone.

Stronger candidates focused on the Bank of England, discussing its power over interest rates and how the recession impacted on this, rather than assessing these as separate points. The best responses were able to evaluate how much impact government control of interest rates would have had on the recession in light of increasing globalisation. Such responses were also able to evaluate the impact of Gordon Brown and international bodies on the economic crisis. Some candidates were able to directly and analytically relate this to whether or not the UK government could have prevented the crisis or lessened its impact through control of the economy, citing examples such as the Northern Rock bailout as an example of government action.

In terms of synopticity, candidates should have been able to discuss contrasting party views on governments' handling of the economy, for example how the Conservatives reacted to the powers given to the Bank of England and how they believed it would impact on the control of the economy, and indeed how they reacted to the economic crisis and to what extent they blamed New Labour or accepted the globalisation argument. Other strands of contrasting viewpoints included how Keynesian policies impact on control of the economy, compared to neo-liberalism and globalisation theories.

The extent to which governments are able to exert centralised control over the economy is subject to the extent of powers the government has, the impact of outsider influence, and the strength of each. Within governmental power, since 1997, is now only the Bank of England where previously it controlled monetary policy. As well with increasing globalisation, and thus dependence on multinational

companies to create jobs affects economic control. It is then also true that economic control is influenced by global financial markets. So to what extent does the government have control?

Significantly, the government controls fiscal policy in the UK. This is to say that they control the amount of public expenditure as well as the amount of money they can create via taxation. In the previous Labour administration, significant impact was made through public expenditure. In the 1999 Comprehensive Spending Review, the then Chancellor, Gordon Brown, announced

a £50bn increase in spending with £21bn and £19bn to be spent on the NHS and education respectively. Positively, in education, exam grades in GCSEs and A-levels have risen as a direct result in greater investment. Investment brought education ^{spending} to the 5.6% GDP, European average. Investment here was also meaningful to the public, annoyed by neglect of public services by the previous administration.

That the government ~~was~~ ^{was} able to stimulate the economy ~~had~~ with public expenditure, during a time of recession, can be seen as positive by ~~some~~ ^{persons}. This was ~~seen~~ ^{seen} with initiatives such as the Car Scrapping scheme, which paid citizens £2000 to

several cars older than ten years. This gave citizens money, money to invest in newer cars, stimulating the car industry.

The government's ability to affect the economy is perhaps limited due to the transfer of monetary policy to the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England. ^{in 1997} The MPC controls interest and exchange rates, as well as money supply (the amount in circulation). As a result, the government sets the MPC targets, such as in the Labour years with a 2% target of inflation. Negatively, the government has little control. Equally, however, transfer of monetary policy to the MPC has meant policy

is made in the long-term interests of the economy (such as with a reduction of interest rates to 0.5% during the ~~recent~~ recent recession) which gives it stability. This in turn allows the government to be gradual, plan for the future and thus have a meaningful influence on the economy.

Where the government has less influence is with the implications of a globalised economy. With increased prominence of multi-national companies (such as Google) and their ability to create (and remove) thousands of jobs, the degree of government's ability to change economic conditions is limited to those required/demanded by multi-national companies.

One example of this is that Google placed their European headquarters in the Republic of Ireland due to favourable tax rates. This in turn led to greater job creation (and thus stimulation of the economy) in Ireland than it did in Britain. That multi-national business demands favourable economic conditions directly affects tax revenue. Legally, multi-millionaires (such as Sir Philip Green, of the Arcadio group) can avoid billions of pounds worth of tax revenue. In 2000, a potential £6bn tax to be paid by Vodafone was waived. Governments allow this to happen because of the jobs created by big business, and the vote.

Fear of consequences of taxing businesses - most importantly that they will take business and even jobs out of your country. To a great extent here then, the government has little power to generate more money and to meaningfully affect the economy. Similarly, that national economies are interdependent affect the government's ability to control the economy. That Britain was pulled into recession during 2008 was largely due to the collapse of the US mortgage economy in the USA system, as well as the Lehman Brothers Bank, in the USA. The country was also brought into recession in 1990-92, because of the unification of East Germany's economy with

the world. The country was in ~~part~~ part ~~not~~ severely affected due to membership of the ERM, ~~as~~ where currency was based on the traditionally strong Deutschmark, reduced in value due to the unification. Here shown are instances which severely affected the UK government's ability to control the economy.

So due to increased globalisation, the UK government is now less able to ~~take~~ exert meaningful control of the economy.

Finally, the Government's ability to control the economy (in this sense: change it) is limited due

to the consensus on use of supply-side economics. The system which concentrates on economic prudence, low inflation, low unemployment and improvement of skills in the labour workforce (to increase its flexibility), has proved to, in general, produce economic prosperity and stability.

Consequently, in the face of its success it is hard to give validity to other methods (such as Keynesianism). In this sense, the UK government is limited in its ability to ~~act~~ meaningfully or manipulate the economy.

So ~~also~~ in conclusion, with ability to control fiscal but not monetary policy, with little influence

over the global economy (and its consequences on economic scope) and the extended right of centre consensus of an economic democracy, it is only to a moderate extent that the government can exert meaningful control on the economy.

**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Comments

This response is an excellent example of how a candidate can weave synoptic points in to their argument. A clear line of argument is followed from the outset, as the candidate sets out their analysis in the first introductory paragraph.

Throughout the response, the candidate logically argues their case, backing up their points with examples, but also offering opposing views as counter-points. This allows them to reach level 3 across the assessment objectives. 35/45.

Question 8

Once again the essay on the environment was the least popular option, but in contrast to June 2010, this question saw a sizeable number of high level responses.

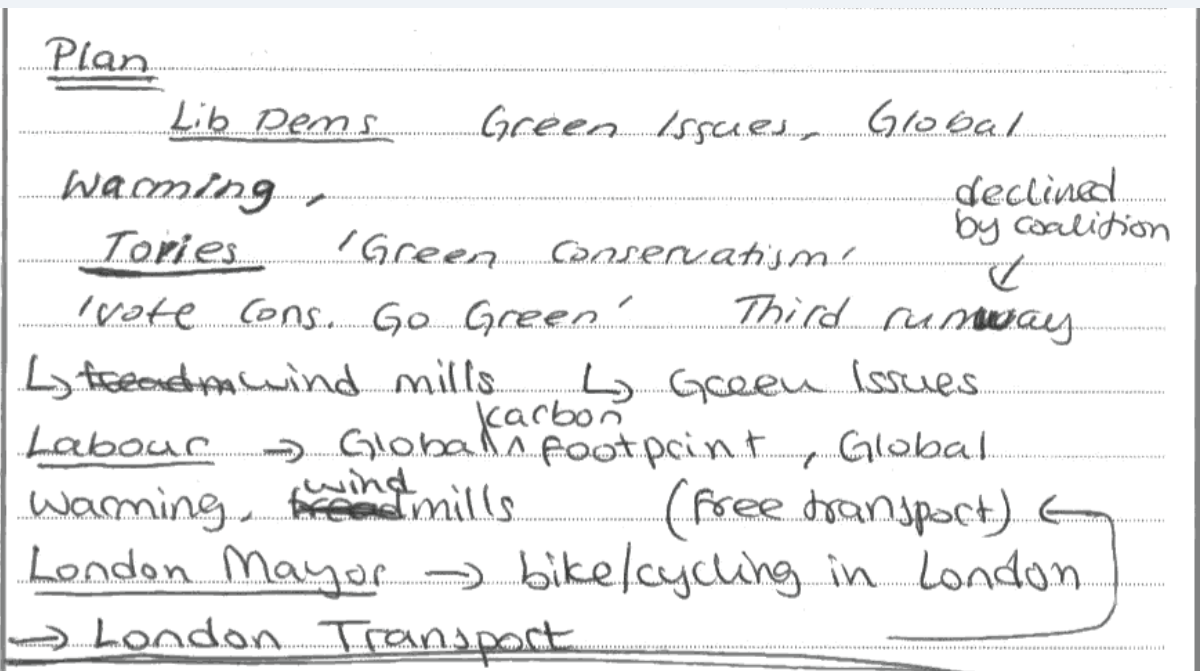
The less strong responses were ones where candidates talked about the main parties' views in general terms, with little reference to specific policies. Some candidates relied entirely on the ideological positions of the main parties, with no reference to actions taken by various governments or to current views on climate change.

There were also a number of responses who focused their answers entirely on one party, usually the Labour Party. Such responses often accepted the quote at face value and regurgitated what could have been an answer to Question 4 on transport policies.

Those candidates who were able to reference New Labour policies often failed to contrast these with other political parties, thus losing marks for synopticity, or were only able to construct a basic evaluation of the Conservative Party's green credentials. Again, however, such evaluations often only outlined the 'vote blue, go green' aspect of Conservative Party beliefs, with no reference to specific party policy either in opposition or in coalition.

Stronger candidates were able to outline both New Labour policies such as the Kyoto targets, transport policies, renewable energy such as wind farms and the Climate Change Levy, while also offering a critique of the apparent success of such policies. The best responses were able to increase the synopticity marks they gained for such a critique by directly comparing such policies to Conservative and Liberal Democrat criticisms and also to what extent such policies depended on the political and economic climate of the day. There were also some innovative responses which offered the environmentalist and the ecologist views of government and opposition policies, again earning synopticity marks.

A number of candidates were also able to offer high-level responses that focused on policies from the May 2010 manifestoes, often developing discussions on how Conservative and Liberal Democrat policies in particular have developed since the formation of the coalition.



Although
the statement 'None of the major parties have policies that effectively address the challenge of climate change' holds some truth to it, in recent years the major political parties have presented themselves to be concerned about climate change, and had previously been focusing on green issues.

Since 1997, the Labour government had promoted 'Green issue' by supporting groups such as 'Friends of the Earth' in promoting the wider ^{higher} wider use of public transport, and watching 'your carbon footprint' through the media.

They had set up many wind mills in order to reduce carbon emissions by producing electricity through this method, and with the help of the media and environmental groups, encourage people to use solar lighting, and solar panels.

The Thatcher government however,

The Thatcher government however, seemed little concerned about climate change, and had always neglected it, however the Conservative Party under Cameron in 2005 seemed more concerned about climate change, hence calling itself 'Green Conservatism' and using slogans such as 'Vote Conservative, Go Green'. Cameron had increasingly spoken of 'green issues' and how

measures need to be put in place in order to tackle this problem. Also the 'third runway' had ~~not~~ been very controversial, but has now been declined by the coalition government.

However Furthermore, the Liberal Democrats have always been seen to be environmentally friendly and concerned about climate change. However, many argue that the promises made by the Lib.Dems manifesto are unlikely to be kept as they had never been in power before and are now restricted by the nature

of the coalition government.

It can also be argued that climate ~~at~~ change, although has been on the major parties' agenda, it has not been their main focus. For example Labour's main focus was the education system and the welfare state, and that the coalition government have shifted their focus on the economy, however many

conservative supporters may argue that due to the economic crisis of 2008, all focus has been on the economy and had it not been for the crisis, the Conservative Party would have already put forward many environmental schemes in order to control climate change.

Boris Johnson, as London Mayor has also seen to address climate change by setting up cycling in London and promoting its use as it's more accessible and practical, as well as reducing congestion in London.

The Labour government however, also made London transport such as buses free for ~~the~~ those ^{who are} 18 and ~~or~~ under in age. This had also played a part in their concern for of climate change, as they tried ~~had~~ discouraged people from using their cars, and made public transport more appealing.

However, it can be argued that they made no real changes in order to tackle climate change as they hadn't really been interested, the Conservatives have also been criticised as right wing Conservatives refuse to believe in the issues that are arising from climate change, and that it had all been for publicity and support and that truly there are strong Thatcherite elements in the working of the Conservatives in the coalition government.

Nevertheless, Cameron has tried to show the public about his concerns of climate change by travelling

by bus or bike, however this has been mocked by the Labour party as it was soon established that Cameron, whilst cycling to work had a car closely following him on his journeys, this further proves that ~~the~~ the Conservatives have merely put on a show and that they don't have such policies that effectively

address the challenge of climate change and the same has been said about Labour and the Liberal Democrats. This is based on their manifestos and that the parties (when in power) had failed to comply and address climate change effectively.

**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Comments

This candidate has written a fairly lengthy answer, but refers to very few specific policies designed to tackle climate change. There is an attempt to directly address the question, but the analysis offered is of general beliefs about the environment and public transport, keeping the marks in the lower range of level 2 across the assessment objectives. 23/45.

**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Tip

Extended answers would be much improved by more detailed references to specific policies- in this case, such as Labour's Kyoto-inspired targets and the Climate Change Levy (A01). Further analysis of the extent to which the quote offered for discussion is acceptable- in this case whether these policies are designed to tackle climate change, or if they are driven by international commitments or economic means would help improve the A02 and also the synopticity marks- particularly if criticisms by other political parties or sources like established green pressure groups was offered.

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