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Edexcel GCE

Centre Number

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Government and Politics

Advanced Subsidiary
Unit 2: Governing the UK

Monday 4 June 2018 – Afternoon
Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

Paper Reference

6GP02/01

You do not need any other materials.

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **two** questions, **one** from Section A and **one** from Section B.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
– *there may be more space than you need.*

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
– *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- You will be assessed on your ability to organise and present information, ideas, descriptions and arguments clearly and logically, taking into account your use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.



Turn over ►

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**Answer TWO questions, ONE from Section A and ONE from Section B.
Section B starts on page 14.
It is advised that you divide your time equally between both questions.**

SECTION A

Answer EITHER Question 1 OR Question 2.

EITHER

1 Study the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Constitution

The absence of a UK codified constitution is regarded by some to be of substantial significance and a major problem, but this position is not shared by all. There is disagreement about whether existing UK arrangements are desirable, or whether a codified constitution of some kind should be adopted. It is often held that establishing a codified UK constitution, where none already exists, would be a difficult task because of the antiquity and continuity of the UK constitution and its flexibility. It is also suggested that the lack of a critical moment at some point in history provided by military defeat, colonial independence or revolution, helps explain why the UK does not have a codified constitution.

At the heart of the debate surrounding the reform of the UK's constitution lie assessments of 'parliamentary sovereignty'. This is a controversial subject, with disputes about both its nature and desirability. Many see the loss of parliamentary sovereignty as politically destabilising for the country. There is a debate over whether a Parliament can create a codified constitution, given the principle of parliamentary sovereignty and it not being able to bind its successors. In addition, who other than a supreme parliament could construct a codified constitution and how could it do that and please all political viewpoints?

The commonly held view is that there is, in practice, a direct choice between either the retention of parliamentary sovereignty or the establishment of a codified constitution. On the other hand some suggest that a codified constitution could be compatible with continuation of parliamentary sovereignty. According to this view, it is possible that the content of a codified UK settlement could include reference to parliamentary sovereignty. A text could bring together the fundamental principles, sometimes called conventions, of our constitutional arrangements the most important of which is that Parliament is sovereign.

(Source: adapted from Dr Andrew Blick Kings College London
'Codifying - or not codifying - the UK constitution.' 2007)

- (a) With reference to the source, why is codification seen as a difficult task? (5)
- (b) With reference to the source and your own knowledge, what tensions exist between creating a codified constitution and retaining the principle of parliamentary sovereignty? (10)
- (c) Assess the impact of the reforms that have been made to the UK constitution since 1997. (25)

(Total for Question 1 = 40 marks)



OR

2 Study the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Prime Minister and Cabinet

The rise in the power of the Prime Minister at the expense of the Cabinet did not begin in 1997; it can be traced back more than four decades ago when Richard Crossman highlighted the phrase 'Prime Ministerial government'. The period since 1997 has seen an unprecedented further concentration of power in the Prime Minister and the decline of the Cabinet.

Cabinet Ministers have seen their power fall owing to a number of factors. Primarily, Cabinet Ministers have lost their collective voice in preference for 'sofa government' where decisions are not made as a group but in one-to-one meetings. The media and the message have become all important and this has been centralised through the office of the Prime Minister. Most ministers have become little more than spokespersons for the policies of political appointees in Number Ten. The situation is further compromised for Cabinet Ministers who are not fully consulted on new legislation and merely nod things through at Cabinet; they are effectively by-passed. In essence this is part of a wider problem for Cabinet Ministers for the load of government business is too heavy for them, and there are limitations of a twenty or so strong body for effective decision making.

However, there is a case that the Cabinet can and does fight back. Mrs. Thatcher declared it was a loss of confidence in her Cabinet that led to her resignation. John Major had trouble in ensuring he had Cabinet loyalty and indeed one member of his Cabinet, John Redwood, challenged Major for the leadership in 1995. A Prime Minister can become weak if the Cabinet is divided on major issues. This happened to David Cameron when senior figures such as Boris Johnson and Michael Gove became central figures in the Leave Campaign, and as this camp ultimately won the Referendum in June 2016, these Cabinet colleagues undermined his authority as Prime Minister.

(Source: adapted from Roger Gough 'An end to sofa government: better workings of Prime Minister and Cabinet.' 2011)

- (a) With reference to the source, how have Cabinet Ministers seen their power decline? (5)
- (b) With reference to the source and your own knowledge, how can the Cabinet effectively challenge a Prime Minister? (10)
- (c) To what extent has the office of Prime Minister become 'presidential'? (25)

(Total for Question 2 = 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 40 MARKS



Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒

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(a) continued

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(c)

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((c) continued)

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SECTION B

Answer EITHER Question 3 OR Question 4.

EITHER

3 To what extent do both Houses of Parliament fail to carry out their main functions?

(Total for Question 3 = 40 marks)

OR

4 'Civil liberties and human rights have been eroded in recent years.' Discuss.

(Total for Question 4 = 40 marks)

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(Total for Question = 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 40 MARKS

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS



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