

Candidate 1 evidence

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| | <p>On the 18th of February 2019, 7 Labour MPs left the Labour party after allegations of bullying, anti-semitism and failure in the leadership of the party. An unprecedented political event the likes of which has only been seen once before in British politics with the formation of the Social Democratic party (SDP) in 1981. The event has sparked huge controversy with many people demanding that by-elections are held in order to prove the legitimacy of the candidates. They believe this as with support from the party they had more successful campaigns and were elected because of this. On the contrary it has however been argued that a by-election is unnecessary and that partisanship in the UK no longer plays a large enough role to require a by-election. As such it can be asked, to what extent are the new independent group an affront to democracy?</p> |
| | <p>The group itself is in fact growing in support with 3 conservative MPs leaving their party in order to join the new centre oriented political group. With 11 MPs now in the group they have equaled the number of seats that the Liberal Democrats hold and as such can either provide support or opposition to other centre placed political groups. It is yet to be seen whether or not they will form an alliance with the group Liberal Democrats or not. This event is of huge significance as it has the potential to throw British politics into turmoil. This new independent group could offer voters a new party come election time and could challenge the traditional</p> |

power-houses of British politics.

One key issue that has been at the forefront of media attention is the need for this new independent group to be subjected to standing for a by-election to re-gain their seat in parliament. This is because they feel that the group have no legitimacy to make decisions for their constituents and in order to uphold the standards of ~~the~~ democracy it is only right that they are held accountable to the electorate. Source 1, a quote from John Trickett, MP for West Yorkshire said "If you truly believe in accountability, then do the right thing and gain the legitimacy of the people you represent by holding a by-election." This shows how other MPs feel that the group now lack political legitimacy and can therefore no longer make decisions based on their constituents. Similarly to the outcry for by-elections when Conservative MPs left to join Ukip in 2015 they believe that what comes with leaving a party, is a change in beliefs that differs from that of whom you vote for. This in turn would advocate by-elections as they are no longer standing under the same principles. This notion of partisanship and voting for an individual based on their party ~~work~~ and not for their individual merit would also suggest that a re-election is necessary if they vote Labour, because of the constituents support for Labour it is only just to be re-elected as by leaving, you have weakened the party's political position. Source 2, a YouGov poll would support this notion of partisanship

themselves. As the party has changed its stance on issues since election they no longer advocate the same principles as when they were elected. By leaving the party it has been shown that the MPs can return to the policy that they were elected on and can fully serve their constituents wishes and desires by voting entirely for them without any repercussions from party whips who often influence the decisions made in government very heavily. Those who argue that partisanship plays a fundamental role in politics are only correct to a small degree. In British politics partisanship has never been lower. ~~There have been~~ ^{There has been} an increase in voting for an individual based purely on their merit and also for single issue voting. ~~As~~ With undesirable party leaders and poor political control it is for more liberty constituents vote on the representative they want for them in parliament. As such it is clear this would advocate that there is no need for a by-election as the decrease in partisanship has leave these individuals to be elected based on their own merit as a candidate where they can now stand for their constituents better than they previously could have without the influence of party politics.

The group now has 17 members, equal to that of the Liberal Democrats. As such they have a great political impact in parliament today. This is because both the new independent group and the Liberal Democrats have similar political ideological positions in the centre of the political

Spectrum the new independent group have the ability to enhance their voting power should they support the party. In a question session with local MP Jo Swinson, when asked about the potential threat of the new independent group she responded "I think it's exciting. I see no reason to be threatened by the group at this time" (Source 6). This shows how the Liberal Democrats appear optimistic of support from the independent group and that they believe they can unite together to improve their political influence. This is supported by the source 2 where 42% of Lib Dem voters identify with the new independent group showing how their similarity has gained them support. However this could prove detrimental in a number of ways to the Lib Dems. The SNP did not choose to join them as a party but rather instead chose to form their own political group. As such it could be predicted that there is perhaps a fundamental disagreement that may lead to them not supporting the Lib Dems when voting. They in turn could essentially veto the party's votes with the groups 71 votes cancelling out the 71 of the Lib-Dems. In addition there is the potential for the Lib-Dems to lose support as a result of new found support in the independent group. Already in an unfavourable and weak position in parliament, Centre voters may leave the Lib Dems to support this new and more modern take to British Liberalism. As such it can be predicted that the groups political influence could easily grow in the coming months.

This concept of voting in alignment however may prove difficult in the group. This is because presently the group set up is not an official party but rather a group of like minded political independents who are working together to increase their political influence. In turn there is no whip to make them all vote together. An example of this party set up is the lack of leader but rather the decision to appoint Chutika Ummara as "spokesperson" and Gavin Schutler as group convener. This shows how the group presently is an unofficial party lacks leadership. The role of Mr Schutler is highly difficult as despite sharing common ground over the centre of politics this "meeting in the middle" notion can only work for so long. The Conservative and Labour MPs have political beliefs fundamentally rooted on opposite sides so the potential to see party fall out in the future is probable. In spite of the group mention there fusioning for their present set up helps them to grow and develop as a group. To some extent this is correct as it prevents one person becoming leader and taking the party in a specific direction. However it has also been argued that there is another motive for not officially becoming a party. They would have to disclose all financial donations given to the party - whilst they say that they only have receive small donations many believe the group do not want to become an official party yet as they don't want to disclose or they donor who has helped to control the group.

In conclusion, the new independent group are only an affront to democracy to a small degree. The out-cry for a by-election is not as sure. Having left the party they were voted in under its name sense to question their legitimacy upon leaving. Having been funded and supported by the party they may not have been successful without them. This in turn is the reasoning for them being to some degree an affront to democracy.

However it is their reasoning for leaving that helps them reassert their legitimacy. They wish to return to the policy that got them elected and stay true to the wishes of their constituents when elected. By leaving the new can stay loyal to constituents when voting. In addition by challenging the liberal democrats they have opened the floor to greater political debate and discussion, giving voters the opportunity to vote for a party with a new outlook on politics. With members in the group from both the left and right of the political spectrum there is opportunity for discussion and collaboration to enhance British politics in a turmoil period. By staying true to constituents, opening the floor to debate and scrutiny and collaborating to form a well rounded central party they combat media perceptions and are only ~~to~~ an affront to democracy to a small degree.

Source 1-John Trickett "if you truly believe in accountability, then do the right thing and gain the legitimacy of the people you represent by holding a by-election."

Source 2- From what you have seen and heard about the seven MPs who have quit the Labour party and set up The Independent Group, do you think your political values are closest to theirs, or to those of the current Labour party?

YouGov

| % | TOTAL | Lab | Con | LD | Remain | Leave |
|---|-------|-----|-----|----|--------|-------|
| My values are closer to those of the MPs who quit Labour | 22 | 23 | 24 | 47 | 32 | 18 |
| My values are closer to those of the current Labour party | 11 | 27 | 1 | 5 | 19 | 5 |
| My values are not close to either | 33 | 13 | 54 | 22 | 20 | 49 |
| Don't know | 34 | 37 | 21 | 26 | 29 | 28 |

Source 3 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47300832>

Source 4 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47304424>

Source 5 "the Conservative Party has increasingly abandoned these principles and values with a shift to the right of British Politics.

Source 6 Jo Swinson- "I think it's exciting. I see no reason to be threatened by the group at this time."

Source 7- <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/labour-party-split-independent-group-antisemitism-jeremy-corbyn-gavin-shuker-a8785381.html>

Source 8- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47410564>

Source 9- "Our structure is designed to be flexible to accommodate any changes as the group evolves and grows."

Candidate 2 evidence

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Jeremy Corbyn is a figure that by all accounts has divided UK politics in recent years. However, recently his popularity has taken a sharp decline and in the past 18 months, his popularity has dropped by 45 points according to YouGov polls measuring leaders popularity. In the current chaotic political climate in which we seemingly have one of the least respected PM's of all time, Corbyn has continued to damage his own reputation and frankly humiliate himself in Westminster. Despite May's poor performance in Brexit negotiations, only 20% of people believe Corbyn is the best possible Prime Minister. In addition, recently 7 Labour MP's have rebelled from the party to form The Independent Group and many more are threatening to quit. Meanwhile the man at the helm, Corbyn, has said and done very little to combat the issue. He has been considered unfit for government as a result of his fall in popularity, poor leadership qualities, indecisiveness and stubbornness and his allegations of anti-Semitism scandals. However, he cannot be held solely responsible for Labour's turmoil as other issues such as party policy and the legacy of the Iraq War are impacting the party. This issue is of great importance as Labour are the government's key opposition and if they are unelectable then UK politics cannot possibly thrive.

A reason that Corbyn's popularity can be considered to be making Labour unelectable is as a result of his reputation decline. Many argue that while Labour remains under Corbyn and his volatile reputation, it is unlikely that they will ever become part of government. For example, since 1, a YouGov poll shows that 30% of men and 29% of women have a positive opinion of Corbyn. This means it's unlikely that Labour will win a General Election with Corbyn in charge as the majority of the

population have a largely negative view of him. In British politics, no matter how popular a party's policy is, if the face of the party - the leader - is not respected, often it is unlikely that they will become part of government. The evolution of politics has meant issues such as leadership etc are often more important than party policy. This is because of the increasing relevance of the rational choice model and the decrease in party loyalty. This has been a key factor in why Labour have been less successful recently. Sources suggest that 57% of people generally like Labour while only 32% like Corbyn, meaning Corbyn may be holding Labour back as they are a generally popular party. There are numerous reasons as to why Corbyn's rep has decreased, such as his stubbornness over Brexit and indecisiveness. However, perhaps most importantly, are the allegations of anti-semitic remarks made against him.

The issue of anti-Semitism has come to the forefront of UK politics recently once again. This has done so after Labour MP's defected from Labour to form the new The Independent Group. Ukip leader, Nigel Farage MP for Liverpool Wavertree stated that the party had become "institutionally anti-semitic". Following this, many MP's defended Labour and many condemned Labour's handling of the situation. Corbyn, however, has remained very quiet and has only criticised the MP's for leaving the party. A reason as to why he may be reluctant to fight this issue within Labour is that he himself is part of the problem. This has meant a lot of people have lost trust in him as they see him unfit to run the government. There are several allegations of him making anti-semitic remarks and even

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having links to terrorist figures. Resultantly, a large number of people simply see him as a "terrorist sympathiser" and many cannot bring themselves to vote for a man with such history. They cannot accept that someone with these links is at the forefront of UK politics. These allegations are just further proof after an IRA attack nearly killing Thatcher he invited Gerry Adams - IRA leader - to a Parliament reception. Also he has sat on the editorial board of a hard leftist magazine that praised the IRA and was praised by Palestinian Islamist that said Jews are the blame for 9/11. This has meant a large part of the electorate has lost all faith in him and is making Labour unelectable. These allegations will further tarnish his reputation and quite frankly this alone could prevent him from becoming PM.

Aside from his personal allegations of anti-Semitism etc, Corbyn's reluctance to combat the deep lying issue of it within Labour has meant many have lost faith in him. For example, as shown in Source 4, Luciana Berger a Jewish former MP received online targeted anti-Semitic abuse and at the height of abuse received 2500 hate messages in 3 days. During this, Corbyn remained quiet and seemingly refused to condemn such abuse. This has meant his popularity has decreased as many cannot support the idea of voting for someone who remained quiet during such virulent abuse of a colleague. In addition to combat the issue of anti-Semitism in Labour, an ally of Corbyn was appointed. This has meant a large number of people have lost trust in Labour under Corbyn as they believe the issue cannot possibly be solved. If those at the head

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of the party cannot, and even such abuse, how can the party remain in high regard to the British public?

Another reason as to why Labour could be unelectable is as a result of Corbyn's lack of leadership qualities. Many argue he lacks the suitable leadership traits to ever become PM. This can be seen as he failed to capitalise on his own popularity in 2017. In June 2017 39% of people said that Corbyn would make the best PM, at the same time 39% said May would be the best PM, meaning Corbyn had a chance to heap pressure on May and build up his support. Instead, he saw his popularity drop heavily. This shows that Labour are unelectable under Corbyn. The fact that he failed to capitalise on his own popularity shows he lacks the political know-how and guile required to be PM. A truly good politician would use his newfound popularity to heap pressure on the government and gain even more power. Instead, in an extremely chaotic government, he has managed to make himself look even more chaotic and unorganised and has seen his reputation decline.

A large portion of the electorate have lost faith in Corbyn as a result of his ~~own~~ visible stubbornness and indecisiveness over several key issues. In particular, Brexit: throughout the Brexit process, Corbyn has remained very stubborn and expressed reluctance to compromise with May during negotiations. This has meant his popularity has dropped as he has been accused of playing games in politics and putting his own selfishness above acting in the best interests of the

However Corbyn cannot solely be blamed for the 'tumult' of the party. There are numerous other issues impacting the success of the Labour party. One reason that can be said as to why Labour have been less successful recently is as a result of the legacy of the Iraq War. The war has left a lasting impact on the UK and as a result many have totally lost trust in the Labour Party. In September 2002 a UK dossier claimed Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and that they were ready for use imminently. Resultantly, despite protests Blair's Labour government decided to go to war with Iraq. However after the war had ended and large loss of life had occurred it emerged that Blair based his decision to go to war based on belief rather than fact. As it transpired that Iraq didn't in fact possess the weapons of mass destruction. This has meant that many have totally lost trust in the Labour Party and many cannot vote for a party that had and had such grave consequences. A large portion of the electorate feel betrayed by Labour as Blair's manipulation has caused the deaths of 18 UK personnel (Source 5). This means that many people may be reluctant to vote Labour regardless of leadership etc as they have lost trust in the party as a whole. Regardless of how long it was. It must be noted that despite being a Labour MP at the time Corbyn constantly voted against acting in Iraq and as such cannot be fully blamed at all for this.

Finally, he cannot solely be blamed as there are deeper lying issues within the party such as unpopular policy etc. It can be argued that some of Labour's key manifesto policies are mainly from unelectable. Much of the electorate dislike many of Labour's policies and as such are unlikely

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to vote for them regardless of Corbyn's leadership. For example, since there is a YouGov poll measuring party popularity, shows only 29% of people believe raising the voting age to 16 is a good idea, and only 31% support voting out leaving the EU without a trade deal. This shows Corbyn cannot be solely blamed for Labour's troubles as many of the party's policies are strongly disliked and as a result many people are less likely to vote for Labour. Despite being the party leader Corbyn does not solely party manifesto policy and as such cannot be held solely accountable for the lack of support. However, Labour also have some very popular policies and many believe they would vote for Labour but are deterred by Corbyn's influence. For example, 79% are in favour of increasing the NHS budget by £8 billion over 5 years. And 71% are in favour of banning zero hour contracts. This shows that they may be unelectable under Corbyn as they have a number of very popular policies which means many are deterred from voting for Labour as a result of Corbyn rather than manifesto policy. In addition, an IBSOS Mori Poll showed that 32% of people like Labour but not Corbyn. Meaning it can be argued that he is holding the party back as a large number of people may wish to vote Labour as a result of party policy and may not vote as a result of Corbyn.

In conclusion, to a large extent it can be said that Labour are currently unelectable under Jeremy Corbyn. There are a number of factors in the past 23 years that have contributed to Corbyn becoming a largely unpopular figure among much of the electorate. Resultantly if a General Election was to occur in the next few days it is likely that Labour's share of the vote would reduce meaning

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the party would hold less power and be less capable of challenging the Conservatives. In addition, it is likely that more MPs will continue to leave the party meaning they will have much less power in parliament and struggle to be the key opposition to the government. If more members continue to leave the party risk being eclipsed by rival parties such as the Independent Group. However, it is debatable to say Labour would see large benefit to removing Corbyn from the helm of the party. There is evidence to say there are lack of suitable replacements in Labour and as such, there may not be much benefit to the party in removing Corbyn. Finally, despite this, it has to be said, Labour will remain unelectable under Corbyn as his reputation continues to decline, he lacks the suitable leadership qualities and he has shown himself to be very stubborn and not open over several key issues.

Politics Assignment Source Sheet:

Source 1: https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/explore/public_figure/Jeremy_Corbyn
-30% of Men and 29% of Women have a positive opinion of Jeremy Corbyn
-Since June 2017, % of those believing Corbyn would be best PM has dropped 23%

Source 2 : <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori>
-57% of people like Labour as a party
-32% of people like Jeremy Corbyn

Source 3 : Luciana Berger-“Labour have become institutionally anti-Semitic”

Source 4 : <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/08/man-joshua-bonehill-paine-harassed-mp-luciana-berger-online-jailed-two-years>
-At height of abuse, Berger received 2500 hate messages in 3 days

Source 5 : <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36702957>
-182 UK personnel deaths in Iraq War

Source 6 : <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2019/01/09/eurotrack-corbyns-policies-popular-europe-and-uk>
-29% of people believe reducing the voting age to 16 is a good idea
-31% of people believe ruling out leaving EU without a trade deal is a good idea
-71% of people in favour of banning zero hour contracts
-79% of people in favour of increasing NHS budget by £8 billion over 5 years

Source 7 : <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47277281>

Candidate 3 evidence

Social Class is the most dominant factor affecting voting behaviour today. Discuss

Voting behaviour is form of electoral behaviour and is the way in which people vote. This is a form of political behaviour and allows for an insight into the way people vote and why they do it. Being able to understand the way people vote is vital as it allows us to see how decisions are made and evaluate the outcomes come about for example from general elections to referendums. Many factors affect voting behaviour for example, social class to media as well as short term factors such as the image of the party leader and long term factors such as geography, age and gender. This essay will look at three of the main factors that have an influence on voting behaviour and analyse and evaluate them to conclude on which factor has the greatest impact upon voting behaviour in the UK. These factors will be social class, age and social media.

In the 70's voting behaviour became more erratic, this meant that the outcomes of votes were drastically different to before. This may have come down to social class and geographical location, "Class was widely seen as the key to understanding voting behaviour in the UK" – Andrew Heywood. Social class is based on a group of people who share the same socioeconomic background such as working class and middle class. Where you live has always had a big impact on the way you vote. For example those living in the North of the UK are more likely to vote for parties such as Labour and SNP, as those living in the North of the country are more likely to have been brought up in a working class background and policies by those parties are more targeted towards those people within those social classes whereas those in the south of the country are more likely to vote for parties such as the Conservatives and are more likely to have grown up in elite and middle class areas. This makes clear the big divide within the country on how class affects voting behaviour and become more "class-based" throughout the years. One way to explain this may be through differences in policies that parties offer to the public such as the conservative party favour low taxes and reduced welfare support across the country which are more likely to appeal to those in social classes A/B. However parties such as Labour and SNP favour polices that provide greater support for example providing more within the welfare state and there being higher taxes to support everyone across the UK. Another example could be that in Scotland, Labour and SNP joined forces to tackle the effects of the Bedroom Tax which was introduced by the Tory government; this meant that Scots didn't have to pay the dreaded tax and allowed for the money to be used for better things in those affected lives. These types of policies are more likely to appeal to those in social class D/E. On the other hand, through changing attitudes, it is shown through evidence that people are moving away from class-based voting which is called "Class de-alignment" and are more interested in other factors. Class de-alignment is when people move away from the social class that they are in, this may be bad as parties may be unable to target certain classes through their policies as people have moved away from the term social class.

Similar to social class, age of voters is said to have an impact on voting behaviour. A survey by YouGov on 52,615 people showed that those in the 70+ age bracket, 69% voted conservative whereas those in the 18-19 age bracket, 19% voted for conservative. This shows the difference in voting behaviour between the age groups, this may be because as people get older, they're more likely to favour traditional policies by the conservative party because they're more fearful of change or are wanting to protect their wealth, "A tendency for people to become more conservative with age." – Andrew Heywood. On the other hand, voters in the younger generations are more likely to vote for current issues such as unemployment and greater education which sways more towards

Labour and SNP policies. For example, Labour supports the abolition of tuition fees in the UK which would appeal to younger generations. In a survey by Ipsos Mori, it shows that those people between the age of 19-24 had the lowest voter turnout with just over half turning up to vote compared to 71% in the age bracket of 65+. This may be because younger generation feel as though their voices aren't heard and don't have a say in political issues that are happening, this therefore means that older generations views and wants are further represented and acknowledged, meaning that law and policies are more traditional and represent what the older generations want. This also discourages younger voters on voting meaning that less will turn up to vote. This means that the younger generations are underrepresented and their views and wants in society are ignored.

Social media is a platform used by many every day, especially political parties. The use of social media allows for political parties to keep the public up to date with their plans and views on current issues. Out of the 650 MPs, 579 have a twitter account which they use to communicate with the public. SNP MPs all have a social media platform which is because all members were instructed to have a social media platform after the 2010 election, so they can communicate with their constituents and promote the party for future and upcoming elections. The use of promoting their party on social media has had a positive impact on the SNP party as in the 2011 elections they won an overall majority. As younger generations dominate social media, the use of social media can be helpful in targeting younger people to vote for their party as well as allowing for there to be an interest towards politics. This may encourage younger people to become more interested in politics and see a surge in the numbers of younger MPs, for example David Linden, the MP for Glasgow East was sworn in at the age of only 27 which highlights the interest in younger people in joining parties. Although the use of social media can come as a benefit to political parties, it can also be detrimental towards the party. Andrew Heywood said that, "Media exposure portrays leaders as the brand image of their party." Nearly every day there are new article posted regarding leaders of parties with the majority usually referring to something bad that the leader has done. These articles can be spread across social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook by everyone across the world in a matter of seconds. This means that all eyes of the party leader and what they do can influence how the party is seen as by the public for example, Jeremy Corbyn recently came under fire regarding anti-Semitic claims within the party which have been circulating since he became leader in 2015. Many people have criticised Jeremy Corbyn's handling of the situation and believe he hasn't done enough to diffuse the situation. As a result, 8 members of the Labour party have recently resigned and joined an independent party due to his lack of leadership skills when dealing with this problem as well as his part he played within the messy brexit situation. This highlights the power social media can have on how parties are viewed, therefor meaning that followers can be lost or gained through the exposure given to the parties and their leaders through social media.

Overall, I believe that social media is the most dominant factor affecting voting behaviour. I believe that age was the least dominant factor as although there was a vast difference between the youngest generations and the oldest generations, the generations in between weren't consistent which makes it partly unreliable. Social class was an important factor to consider as there was a large difference between the different parts of the countries voting. It is clear that social media is the most dominant factor that affects voting behaviour through the easy accessibility to articles regarding political parties and uses of social media platforms to connect further with constituents and followers. As well as this, the use of social media allows for the encouragement of younger

people within the UK to get more involved with politics and lead to there being a rise in younger MPs within parties across the UK and the numbers of younger voters rising.

Politics Source Sheet**Source 1**

<https://www.snp.org/policies/pb-what-is-the-snp-s-position-on-the-bedroom-tax/>

Source 2

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dealignment>

Source 3

<https://nva.org.uk/2017/05/general-election-2017-party-manifestos-policies-young-people/>

Source 4

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2017/06/13/how-britain-voted-2017-general-election>

Source 5

<https://www.mpsontwitter.co.uk/list>

Source 6

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Linden_\(politician\)](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Linden_(politician))

Candidate 4 evidence

British constitutional affairs contains the question as to whether we should maintain our constitutional inheritance or amend it? In that sense, should we keep our uncodified constitution or move to a codified document? Interest in this issue has emerged since the 1990s. Beginning with New Labour's Tony Blair and his ratification of the Human Rights Act and moving towards the Liberal Democrat Nick Clegg, who is in favour of a judicial Bill of Rights, there is political interest in amending our constitutional structure. Nevertheless, Unlock Democracy.org are a campaign group which are sceptical of these piecemeal reforms. They argue that executive power in the UK is too concentrated in parliament - the government of the day is free to ignore the constitution. There are no effective checks and balances!

The concepts of 'negative' and 'positive' constitutionalism highlight the fragility of the UK constitution. As an ideal type, the former refers to a separation of powers. The latter refers to civil freedoms such as freedom of speech and habeas corpus. The UK constitution does not always protect these ideals.

The US system of constitution is useful for understanding how change can be brought in the UK. As a federal system there are clear checks of power between federal government and state government. The former, typically, cannot interfere in affairs reserved to the individual states. There are also checks and balances between the executive, legislature and judiciary. They are reciprocal monitors of each other - each has powers over the others to maintain checks on power and civil freedoms. This relates also to their having a bill of rights. As the constitution is judicial, the Supreme Court is able to uphold the constitution - often where civil freedoms come under threat from an over-powerful executive.

The US example is a good model for comparison to the UK. It is an organised coherent constitutional system. The UK has more accidental system of constitutional law and arguably needs revised into a coherent codified document. Constitutional provisions are dispersed through wide-

varying statute laws, conventions and common law. It is confusing to the public as there is no codified written document. ~~It is~~ Unlockeddemocracy.org cite this circumstance as an example of democratic weakness that could be easily addressed in a constitutional convention. In addition, the constitution is malleable - it is very easy to reverse by the government of the day. It is open to governments to use statute law to make partisan amendments that are not always in the public interest. This is seen in the controversial Terrorism Act 2006 which was criticised by its ignoring the principle of habeas corpus in allowing detention without charge for 28 days.

A further criticism of the British constitution is that it is out of date in key areas - it needs to catch up with events. As a unitary constitution it keeps all political authority in Westminster. The devolved assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are granted devolved powers but ultimate authority still resides with Westminster. Powers could be recalled back to Westminster - such as tax varying powers. Again there is ambiguity regarding the Brexit issue and the (European) HRA. Leaving the EU creates uncertainty as to whether Britain can retain the HRA or need to create a British Bill of Rights. Again with the House of Lords, it still hasn't got a precise role in parliament - a constitutional remit could help resolve what its modern role should be. If the UK should construct a new constitution it would need to address these issues.

Contrary to the above, it is true that the existing constitutional structure is historically stable. Much like Edmund Burke's (1729-1797) concept of inheritance, parliament has been stable. It has moved from monarchical to democratic status. The argument follows we don't need reason to our constitution, but instead for people to take an active interest in its existing provisions. The constitution has underpinned our system of democracy. With a stable House of Commons, with regular elections and a choice of parties and leaders, it is a system shown to work in modern democracies and arguably doesn't need change.

The existing constitution is, unlike the USA, responsive and quick. If a constitutional problem arises it is relatively easy to resolve. This is seen in the ambiguous convention of criteria for an MP to resign. The example of disgraced MPs, such as Chris Huhne who was convicted for perverting the course of justice, still holding power was changed by the 2015 Recall of MPs Act. This legislation was a quick response to a constitutional issue. This advantage is unlike other entrenched systems of constitutional rules bases

Despite these strengths of being responsive more critical problems exist in our uncodified constitution. The work of the political analyst Joseph Schumpeter draws attention to democratic elites and elective dictatorships. There are very limited checks and balances to the UK constitution. Elective dictatorships harness political legitimacy from the electorate only to use the time between elections to pursue their own, rather than their electorates, wishes. This is unbounded power that a new constitution could check. At present, the legislature is nearly always dominated by party majorities who then invest power in their leadership team. The whip system ~~the~~ likewise ensures conformity to the wishes of the executive - deselection as an MP is the ultimate penalty for disagreement with the leadership. Executives don't always act in the public interest, as in the 2006 Terrorism Act, and there is an argument to base a constitution on a separation of powers.

This latter idea has a long tradition. It was the enlightenment thinkers John Locke and Montesquieu who called for a separation between the executive, legislative and judiciary. In essence it means the reciprocal monitoring of each others actions. The US system has taken this to its fullest extent where the legislature can devise legislation and not, as in the UK example, just deliberate on policy. The system of standing committees in the US system is likewise very thorough in revising legislation. Again, with the judiciary, there is the ability to strike out legislation - meaning it goes back to where it came from for more deliberation or revision.

Given the dominance of the UK executive over parliament, there is a strong case for having a separation of power. The legislature could then act in the public interest - which is the reason many MPs chose the job. Likewise the judiciary could monitor the actions of the government - again ~~maintain~~ maintaining the public interest and checking executive power.

The argument above presents a very negative picture of the conduct of executives. Supporters of the constitutional status quo cite the concept of parliamentary sovereignty. There are already checks and balances in the operation of the British parliament, Westminster is the highest authority in the land and gains this status through democratic legitimacy. The public are wise enough to see culpas on their freedoms and act accordingly. If a government exploits its authority then it is likely to be seriously challenged at the next election. The public also tend to place trust in their politicians and then to hold them to account at election time. Again it is the case that no government can bind its successor - the flexibility of the constitution means that statute laws are easily changed if found unpopular or unconstitutional.

The topic of constitutional entrenchment also shows how the UK system is more flexible than the US system. It is a flexible and responsive constitution whereas the US can become bogged down in legal disputes with an unelected and often partisan Supreme Court. Again, amendments in the US system, 27 since its inception, are very difficult to achieve. The need for supermajorities in congress and ratification from individual states. This leads to a system that lacks responsiveness to fast moving political issues.

This is not to say our system of judiciable law is fit for purpose. Clearly the UK Supreme Court has a weak remit. Its role is largely confined to upholding the HRA. In that, it cannot challenge legislation and can only state that proposed laws are incompatible with the sentiment of the HRA.

Again with the UK Supreme Court, a revised constitution could check bad law making - or laws seen not to be in the public interest. The example of the Data Protection Act 2018 is a case in point. It effectively monitors internet habits of the general public in order to find criminal activity - or amongst the habits of law abiding citizens.

In the debate of constitutional reform there is clear evidence that the UK system has worked over centuries. It is a flexible and responsive system that has provided for, mainly, stable government. The question is to whether we should keep this system or adopt to a more American system. There is also the argument that we need democratic renewal in our political culture. Unvote democracy.org cite weak electoral participation in local, national and European elections as a sign of disengagement due to executive powerholding, and in Westminster in general seeming to be aloof and remote. However, the key issue as to why the UK should adopt a codified constitution is that currently any executive can ignore the constitution. Again there is no judiciary to meaningfully step in to protect constitutional provisions. Likewise, the UK legislature can effectively only debate legislation that has been devised by the executive. There are only very weak checks and balances.

| Politics Higher Resource Sheet | | | |
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| Candidate Name | | Scottish Candidate Number | |
| <p>Bill Jones and Philip Norton (2010) <i>Politics UK</i>, 7th Ed. Pearson Education – used for history of constitutional reform – negative and positive constitutionalism – constraining government and enabling citizenry.</p> | | | |
| <p>Duncan Watts (2003) <i>Understanding US/UK Government and Politics</i>. Manchester University Press. – Used for information on political elites, authority and types of constitutions.</p> | | | |
| <p>Hafferman, R. et al (2011) <i>Developments in British Politics</i> (Meg Russell chapter) – opinions of modern political parties to constitutional reform.</p> | | | |
| <p>Hazell UCL (2010) <i>Bill of Rights in the Coalition – Human Rights Act and Bill of Rights</i> – centralised power and remoteness of politicians – executive elites and dictatorships.</p> | | | |
| <p>Heywood, A. (2004) <i>Political Theory, An Introduction</i> (3rd ed) Palgrave MacMillan – general background information on constitutions.</p> | | | |
| <p>Heywood, A. (2017) <i>Essentials of UK Politics: For AS and A-Level</i> (4th ed), Palgrave. – general background information on constitutions.</p> | | | |
| <p>Ian Budge et al (2007) <i>The New British Politics</i> – sources of the constitution – do we need protection from over powerful government?</p> | | | |
| <p>Philip Norton in <i>Politics Review</i> (Nov 2009, v.19. n.2) – information on Gordon Brown's opinion on constitutional reform.</p> | | | |
| <p>Unlockdemocracy.org – used for campaigns information and information on constitutional reform.</p> | | | |
| <p>Recall of MPs Act 2015</p> | | | |
| <p>Edmund Burke (1729 - 1797)</p> | | | |
| <p>War of Independence (1775 - 1783)</p> | | | |
| <p>Terrorism Act 2006 was revised to allow detention without charge for a maximum of 28 days.</p> | | | |
| <p>Data Protection Act 2018 allowing security services to harvest personal internet data.</p> | | | |