1.10 Party Funding, Internal Factions and Political Consensus in the UK: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short questions require concise sentences. Levels-marked extended questions should be answered as developed paragraphs with relevant named examples and a clear judgement where required.

1 Evaluate the extent to which UK political parties are internally united in the contemporary period, considering funding pressures, ideological factions and the legacy of post-war consensus.

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(Total for Question 1 is 30 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.10 Party Funding, Internal Factions and Political Consensus in the UK: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic and generalised knowledge of party organisation, with limited analysis. Arguments are undeveloped and evaluation is minimal or absent.	**1-7**
Level 2 Clear knowledge of funding pressures, factions and consensus with some developed analysis. Evaluation is present but may be one sided or lack depth, and examples may be general rather than precise.	**8-15**
Level 3 Detailed and accurate knowledge of internal party divisions, funding influences and historical context, used to construct a sustained analysis weighing unity against division. Evaluation is balanced and supported by named examples and evidence.	**16-23**
Level 4 Sophisticated analysis integrating strong, wide-ranging AO1 knowledge, developed AO2 reasoning and careful AO3 evaluation. Responses compare multiple causes of unity and disunity, assess the relative weight of funding, factions and historical consensus, use precise contemporary and historical examples, and reach a clearly justified overall judgement on the extent of internal unity.	**24-30**

Indicative content:

- AO1 elements: description of main funding streams (membership subscriptions, trade union affiliation fees to Labour, large individual and corporate donations, Short Money and Policy Development Grants), and how these revenue sources differ between parties.
- AO1 elements: identification of major intra-party factions in Labour (Old Labour tradition, New Labour Third Way, Corbynism/hard left) and in the Conservatives (One Nation, Thatcherite New Right, pro-EU and Eurosceptic wings).
- AO2 analysis: how funding pressures shape internal unity, for example dependence on wealthy donors can align policy makers with donor preferences, while mass membership or union funding creates different internal incentives and accountability.
- AO2 analysis: how factions produce operational disagreement over policy direction, candidate selection and leadership, producing visible rebellions and leadership challenges; discussion of examples such as Corbyn-era tensions, the divisions over Europe including the 2016 EU referendum and its aftermath, and One Nation versus Thatcherite debates over austerity and public services.
- AO2 analysis: the legacy of the post-war consensus, its relative collapse under Thatcher and how that shifted the spectrum of acceptable policy, with resulting longer term polarisation on economic policy even if some consensus remains on core institutions.
- AO3 evaluation: weighing the argument that parties remain broadly united at the level of core institutions and electoral competition, for example both major parties accept the basic rules of parliamentary democracy and contest elections, against the counterargument that policy and funding pressures make internal unity fragile and episodically break down.
- AO3 evaluation: consideration of reform options and mitigations that affect unity, such as donation caps, transparency, state funding proposals and internal reforms to candidate selection and party democracy.
- Conclusion: a reasoned judgement considering whether unity is better described as conditional and strategic rather than deep and permanent, for example parties may show surface unity during elections but experience deep internal factionalism and funding-driven tensions in policy formation, so the answer should weigh these comparative strengths and provide a justified overall position.

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