1.7 Long-Term Factors Influencing Voting Behaviour: Class, Age and Region

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 60 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short-answer questions may be brief but must be precise. At least two extended answers require full sentences and developed explanation. The final 30-mark question must be a structured essay with a clear judgement.

1 State two long-term demographic or structural factors commonly cited as influencing voting behaviour in the UK, naming the factor in each answer.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Explain the concept of partisan dealignment in the UK and give one consequence for party organisations.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Evaluate the view that class is no longer a significant influence on voting behaviour in the UK.

(Total for Question 3 is 30 marks)

4 Explain two ways in which age influences voting behaviour in the UK, and give a brief contemporary example for one way, including the election year cited.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

5 Explain three ways ethnicity can influence voting behaviour in the UK, giving at least one brief policy-related reason for the patterns described.

(Total for Question 5 is 6 marks)

6 Using the source below about regional voting patterns in the UK since 1997, analyse two ways the source supports the claim that region remains a significant long-term influence on voting behaviour, and two ways it suggests region's influence has weakened. Source: 'Regional summaries 1997 to 2019 show sustained Labour dominance in many urban northern seats and continued Conservative strength in rural southern constituencies, while Scotland shifted from Labour to SNP dominance after 2007; turnout and ticket-splitting vary between regions.'

(Total for Question 6 is 12 marks)

Mark scheme · 1.7 Long-Term Factors Influencing Voting Behaviour: Class, Age and Region

Question 1

one accurate factor named, e.g. age	**B1**
a second accurate factor named, e.g. social class, region, ethnicity, or gender	**B1**

Answer: Any two of: age; social class; region (e.g. North-South differences, Scotland/England); ethnicity; gender.

Question 2

defines partisan dealignment as the decline in long-term party identification among voters	**B1**
explains that voters are less likely to identify with a single party over their life course	**B1**
gives one consequence, e.g. parties invest more in short-term campaigning and targeted messaging	**B1**
or gives an alternative consequence, e.g. parties rely more on professional campaign teams and less on mass membership	**B1**

Answer: Partisan dealignment is the decline in stable party identification, meaning fewer voters see themselves as lifelong supporters of one party. One consequence is that party organisations invest more in short-term targeted campaigning and professional campaign staff rather than relying on large, active memberships.

Question 3

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic assertions about class and voting with limited factual support, little analysis and no sustained evaluation. Arguments are generalised and unbalanced.	**1-7**
Level 2 Clear knowledge and some analysis of evidence for and against the view. Evaluation is present but may be one sided or underdeveloped, and the judgement may be tentative.	**8-15**
Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge and developed analysis engaging with both sides of the debate. Evaluation weighs different arguments and evidence and reaches a supported judgement, though some aspects may lack depth.	**16-23**
Level 4 Sophisticated, wide-ranging knowledge and sustained analysis that integrates empirical evidence, theory and counter-arguments. Evaluation is balanced and reaches a clear, well-justified judgement on the extent to which class remains significant.	**24-30**

Indicative content:

- Arguments that class is less significant: evidence of class dealignment and partisan dealignment since the 1970s and 1980s, with a decline in class-based voting; more voters identifying as non-party identifiers; rise of valence voting where competence and economic management matter more than class identity.
- Empirical support for decline: falling correlation between occupational class categories and vote share across successive general elections; growth of floating voters and volatility in many constituencies since the 1990s.
- Arguments that class remains significant: class still correlates with voting in many areas, especially where socioeconomic inequalities persist; working-class concentration in specific regions often predicts party preferences, and class intersects with region, education and ethnicity to shape voting.
- Empirical support for continued significance: examples where traditional class bases persist, such as Labour strength in many northern urban areas until 2019 and continued Conservative strength among older, more affluent voters; party realignments often operate along class-related economic issues such as austerity or welfare.
- Complexity from interaction effects: class may operate indirectly via related variables such as education, occupation, and place of residence; education as a predictor has risen in importance and sometimes mediates class effects, for example higher education levels correlate with Remain voting in 2016 and with support for certain parties.
- Counter-evidence and nuance: 2019 saw Conservative gains in some traditionally working-class seats, suggesting class voting is conditional on issues like Brexit and leadership; class retains predictive power but is not deterministic for all voters.
- Theoretical points: distinction between lifecycle and cohort effects, and between structural class effects and short-term issue-based shifts; class may remain a structural background influence even when short-term valence or issue factors change outcomes.
- Conclusion approaches: a balanced judgement might argue class is less dominant than in the mid 20th century but remains an important, though mediated, influence; its explanatory power has changed rather than disappeared, so the view that class is no longer significant is too strong, but recognising the decline is also accurate.

Question 4

identifies one way age influences voting, e.g. older voters are more likely to support Conservative parties	**B1**
develops that younger voters tend to favour more progressive or left parties	**B1**
identifies a second mechanism, e.g. lifecycle or generational effects	**B1**
develops how lifecycle or cohort effects operate, e.g. attitudes shift with life stage or cohorts retain formative attitudes	**B1**
gives a brief contemporary example with year, e.g. 2019 general election where younger cohorts favoured Labour and older cohorts voted Conservative	**B1**

Answer: Age influences voting because older voters are statistically more likely to support Conservative parties while younger voters tend to favour Labour or other progressive parties; this can reflect lifecycle effects (attitudes change as people age) or generational cohort effects (younger cohorts having distinct formative experiences). Example: in the 2019 general election younger age groups showed higher support for Labour compared with older age groups who leaned Conservative.

Question 5

identifies one way, e.g. many ethnic minority voters show higher support for Labour	**B1**
explains a reason related to policy, e.g. Labour perceived as more supportive on immigration policy, anti-discrimination and public services	**B1**
identifies a second way, e.g. religious identity intersecting with ethnic background can shape party preferences	**B1**
explains how socioeconomic status linked to ethnicity can influence voting, e.g. groups concentrated in urban, lower-income areas may favour parties promising stronger welfare provision	**B1**
identifies a third way, e.g. turnout differences among ethnic groups affecting electoral impact	**B1**
explains turnout influence, e.g. barriers to registration or trust in politics can reduce turnout and alter how ethnicity translates into seats	**B1**

Answer: Ethnicity influences voting because many ethnic minority voters have tended to support Labour, partly because Labour is perceived as more supportive on immigration, anti-discrimination and public services; religious identity may intersect with ethnicity to shape party preferences in specific subgroups; socioeconomic patterns, with some ethnic groups concentrated in lower-income urban areas, can make them more likely to favour parties promising stronger welfare and public services. Turnout differences also matter, since lower turnout among some groups can reduce their electoral influence even if they have clear party preferences.

Question 6

Level 0 No relevant analysis of the source or regional voting patterns.	**0**
Level 1 Basic paraphrase of the source with limited analysis. May identify one way in which region matters or has weakened, but lacks development.	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear analysis using the source, with one developed point supporting region as significant and one developed point suggesting weakening, or two less developed points.	**4-6**
Level 3 Detailed analysis using the source for both sides: at least two developed points showing how region remains significant and two developed counterpoints showing weakening, with reference to the source language.	**7-9**
Level 4 Sophisticated, balanced analysis that integrates the source with wider knowledge, showing how the source both supports and qualifies the claim about region as a long-term influence, and reaching a reasoned conclusion about the overall weight of the source evidence.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- Support 1: The source states Labour dominance in many urban northern seats from 1997 to 2019, which supports the idea that regional industrial and urban identities continue to shape long-term party strongholds.
- Support 2: The source notes Conservative strength in rural southern constituencies, indicating enduring regional divides such as North-South differences in party preference tied to differing local economies and social composition.
- Support 3: The shift in Scotland from Labour to SNP dominance after 2007 demonstrates region-specific political realignment that is consistent and long-term rather than a short-term fluctuation.
- Weaken 1: The source mentions turnout and ticket-splitting variation between regions, which can dilute the predictive power of simple regional labels if voters in the same region vote across party lines or abstain at different rates.
- Weaken 2: The phrasing 'sustained Labour dominance in many urban northern seats' allows for exceptions and local variation, implying region is not uniformly determinative across all seats in a region.
- Weaken 3: The source covers 1997 to 2019; longer-term trends such as the Conservative gains in some northern seats in 2019 suggest regional patterns can change, reducing the fixed predictive power of region.
- Integration: A strong answer links the source to wider knowledge, for example noting the 2019 Conservative gains in traditional Labour northern seats and the rise of the SNP after 2007 as evidence that region can both predict durable patterns and be the site of clear political realignments.
- Conclusion: The source supports the claim that region remains significant, especially where identity and economic structure align, but it also shows qualification because turnout, ticket-splitting and political realignment mean region is a strong but not always decisive predictor of individual constituency outcomes.