

'Evaluate the view that the only political parties that matter in our political system are the Labour and Conservative parties' ANSWER 1

The view that the Labour and Conservative Parties are the only parties that matter in our political system is valid. This is proved by both the Labour and Conservative Party currently taking up the majority of the seats in Parliament. Additionally, since the 1920s only the Labour Party or Conservative Party have ever been in power. However, in 2010 a coalition government between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats was formed which suggests that other political parties do hold some significance in our political system.

This introduction gives both sides but doesn't come to a view.

It could be argued that the Conservative and Labour Parties are the only ones that matter because the two parties take up the majority of the seats in Parliament. At the 2019 General Election, the Conservative Party won 365 seats in Parliament, this made them the party with the most seats in Parliament and therefore the party in government, with their leader Boris Johnson as Prime Minister. The party with the second greatest number of seats was the Labour Party with 203 seats in Parliament. These statistics alone suggest that these two parties are the only ones that matter in our political system as they make up 568 out of 650 seats in Parliament. However, there are currently 8 other political parties/independent candidates with representation in Parliament, making up the remaining seats.

This suggests that other parties do still matter in our political system as they have representation in Parliament. All of this evidence does however suggest that the view that the Labour and Conservative Parties are the only parties that matter in our political system is valid because they are the two most powerful parties in the UK right now, as they have the most elected MPs in Parliament who have the ability to influence decisions.

Here they are showing the opposing argument, but it is too brief, possibly creating a balance issue.

A nice judgement at the end.

More evidence that suggests the view is valid, is that the Labour and Conservative Parties are the only parties that have been in government since 1922. From 1922 to 2019 there has been no general election that either the Labour or Conservative Party have not won. This shows that the two parties are the only parties that matter because they are the only parties to ever be in government. Countering this, there was a coalition between the Liberal Democrat Party and the Conservative Party in 2010 implying that other political parties do still matter and have an influence in our political system. This all shows that the only two political parties that matter are the Conservative and Labour Party because they have always been in government and even when another political party was in government they were still a coalition with the Conservative Party, signifying that the Conservative and Labour Party have always held more power in our political system.

Repeating the previous sentence, not exploring it.

Here they are presenting the opposing view.

AO3, but is it backed up with good AO1 and AO2?

This view could however be seen as invalid because there are other seats in Parliament being held by parties and independent candidates aside from the Conservative and Labour Party. The Scottish National Party have 48 seats in Parliament and they have had an influence on our political system as they made higher education in Scotland free. This shows that other parties and independent candidates do matter in our political system otherwise they would have no seats in Parliament and no influence on public policy. That being said, independent candidates and political parties aside from the Conservative and Labour Parties only hold under 100 seats in Parliament, whereas the Conservative and Labour Party have almost 600 seats together in Parliament. The view still remains valid as the Conservative and Labour Party are clearly the most dominant political parties in our political system

Opposing view, but hasn't it been said more briefly in the first paragraph?

Good judgement at the end.

Would have been better here to show just how significant the SNP have been in making the case for independence.

After reviewing all of the evidence, the view that the Conservative and Labour Parties are the only parties that matter in our political system still remains valid. This is proved by one of the two parties always being in government since the 1920s and currently holding nearly 600 of the seats in Parliament altogether.

Simple conclusion which reasserts its view.

This essay is solid across all 3 AOs. It is a bit descriptive in parts and repetitive in others, but it does a good job of addressing the question and asserts a view.

AO1: Level 3

AO2: Level 3

AO3: Level 3

Overall Level L3 16/30

'Evaluate the view that the only political parties that matter in our political system are the Labour and Conservative Parties' ANSWER 2

I strongly disagree with the statement that the only political parties that matter in our political system are the Labour and Conservative Parties due to the influence that third parties have on the political climate and the valuable contribution minor parties add. Although, with regard to elections, the Conservative and Labour Parties are the only successful parties, third parties still matter in the political system as in recent years they are very valuable in bringing forward different issues, therefore I disagree with the statement.

A solid introduction which gives context to the debate and has a judgement.

I disagree that the only parties that matter in our political system are the Labour and Conservative Parties as the third parties still influence the political climate. Minority parties influence the political climate as they pressurise the government to address their issues. Minority parties are usually single-issue parties as they focus on one topic or belief, such as the Green Party who focus their manifesto on environmental impact and social justice. The Green Party have influenced the political system immensely as they shed light on dire topics such as climate change and they bring forward ways to tackle these issues which have undoubtedly influenced major parties to focus on these pressing issues. In 2019, Labour partially focused their manifesto on a 'green industrial revolution', whilst promising to create '1 million green jobs in the energy sector and through nationwide home refurbishments in a bid to tackle the climate crisis'. These green policies have been influenced from minor parties that, although they do not have many seats in the House of Commons, have an undoubtedly crucial presence in the political system and therefore matter. Arguably the biggest political event in decades is Brexit. This proposition was initiated by UKIP, a minor party. The extreme-right party focused on the issue of immigration and the 'restoration of sovereignty'. Nigel Farage, the previous party leader, stated that he 'want[s] our country back' which caught the attention of many Eurosceptic, anti-immigration voters, therefore influencing major parties to agree with this proposal. 50% of the electorate said that immigration was a cause for concern, with 30% saying that immigration would largely influence their vote. This popularity that initiated with a minor party has led to the biggest political controversy, influencing not only major parties but sparking debate across the UK. This reflects the vital impact that minor parties have on the political system, contradicting the statement that the only political parties that matter are the Conservatives and Labour.

Judgement.

Good knowledge, example, depth and relevance.

Probably should have stuck to one example in this paragraph. Makes it far too long, and a bit confusing. A good example of 'less is more'.

Judgement.

• However, although the minor parties influence the political system, they are consistently proven unpopular amongst the electorate, minimising the influence that they could have as they lack the seats to have an impact. After the 2010 coalition, the Lib Dems, who before 2015 had 57 seats, lost 49 of their seats after proving very unpopular following their coalition. The failure of the Lib Dems demonstrates that third parties have a very short window of influence, proving that they do not matter as much as the major parties.

Here they address the opposing view to the one above, albeit briefly.

Is this their judgement? If so, it is different from their stated judgement.

• In conclusion, minor parties such as UKIP and the Green Party have a very valuable place in the political system as they influence society or major parties with their beliefs, despite their lack of seats in the Commons. Some could argue that the major parties implementing these ideas make the work of third parties irrelevant as they are only briefly influential, however I believe that the third parties are vital to the system.

Here is an interim judgement, recognising that smaller parties do matter.

Some could argue that the only parties that matter in our political system are the Labour and Conservatives because of their consistent electoral success, making the UK adopt a 2-party system. The Conservative and Labour Party are successful parties due to their experience in government, their supporters and their funding. Since 1935, the government has alternated between a Conservative and Labour rule, gathering many members of their parties and therefor many donations. In the run up to the election in 2019, there was a total of £30.7million in donations, with £19.4million going to Conservatives and £5.4 million towards Labour. These donations, donated by individuals, companies or trade unions, reflect how the country supports the parties and how much the electorate trust the experience of the parties to fulfil their role successfully. The minor parties receive considerably less, with Sinn Fein receiving £144,650, demonstrating the lack of support minor parties have.

A solid point.

The two main parties are richer than minor parties and can use money to their advantage, allowing the major parties, who receive much more than minor parties, to continue the disparity between parties, giving the major parties an unfair advantage. During the Coronavirus pandemic, research was orchestrated to reflect how the public view the government's capabilities, and 60% of the public said that they trust the Government, the highest figure in 20 years. The increase in governmental trust, especially in times of crisis, increases the likelihood of the major parties to be re-elected as they are demonstrating to the public that they are the most competent in looking after the country. Due to the increase in governmental trust and the advantages that major parties have over minority parties; it is partially accurate to so assume that the only political parties that matter in the political system are Conservatives and Labour.

Ideally the student should stop here and move to the counter argument. Instead it adds a different argument which is confusing.

However, although these parties are consistently elected, many people are abstaining from voting as neither party seems like a viable option for them as these parties often ignore problems that the electorate want to be covered, such as the climate issue. 70% of voters were bored of Brexit and many believed the Government were side-tracking other important issues, leading to 44% of the UK electorate to abstain from voting. Furthermore, 2010's coalition indicated that the ability of the government is in serious question and the desirability of these parties is on a steep decline.

This counter argument does not relate and is quite weak – needs really to be about growing vote share/seat share in the various elected bodies in UK for minor parties?

In conclusion, it could be argued that the only parties that matter in our political system are Conservatives and Labour as they accumulate the most votes, donations and support.

This interim judgement is arguing the opposite to the previous one, which would be OK if it was explained in the context of the overall judgement being reached in the whole essay, i.e. 'even though in this case Labour and Conservative are the only parties that matter, this does not detract from the overall view argued that smaller parties matter too'.

Finally, I disagree that the only political parties that matter are Labour and Conservative because the minor parties represent issues that impact a smaller percentage of people however are equally as pressing. The minor parties represent issues that aren't covered in the major parties manifestos, such as the Women's Equality Party who want to achieve a society that values and embraces the role of women and minorities. In 2016 in their first election they accumulated 350,000 votes which gave the party a spotlight, allowing other parties to recognise that there is a lack of women representation in politics and a lack of policies that aim to achieve an equal society. After their successful first election, Labour recognised the importance of their manifesto regarding the violence towards women and began their own strategy to combat violence against women in Liverpool. The attention a minority party received from a major party reflects that although the major parties implement or represent these policies, in order to achieve the best in society, it is a necessity to have minor parties who speak for the unrepresented.

A judgement.

Too similar to argument in first section.

However, although these minority parties achieve recognition, they still lack the ability to represent these views in the House of Commons and they lack the opportunity to make a difference on a national scale as they are underfunded. Their single-issue mindset can be seen as a setback as many people cannot relate to these minority issues and therefore has no additional benefit to them, therefore they will never achieve a large percentage of the vote. These parties have a disadvantage as they do not have the popularity of major parties and do not have the funds to make themselves known, therefore they remain somewhat irrelevant in the political system.

Again is this a judgement? It goes against the stated view.

In conclusion, minor parties are crucial for representing those who are disadvantaged or the minorities of society. They educate and bring forward ideas to make society fairer for everyone and not just the majority. However, due to their small audience, they will remain a small party therefore unable to reach a proper position in the political system. However, their impact is still advantageous to the political system as they make parliament more democratic, therefore I disagree with the statement that the only parties that matter are Conservatives and Labour.

Interim judgement.

In conclusion I strongly disagree with the statement that the only political parties that matter in our society are Labour and Conservatives as the minority parties make parliament more democratic. The minority parties successfully influence major parties and society, which is a necessity as it educates those about unrepresented, pressing issues such as climate change. Although the major parties have many more supporters and a very high chance in electoral success, the minority parties still play a valuable role in the political system as they continue to influence parliament.

This is a good, nuanced conclusion, agreeing that Labour and Conservatives matter most, but minor parties STILL matter too.

This essay's biggest weakness is a lack of planning and thought. It jumps around from place to place and is also repetitive. It is so long, the student would have been better to spend more time thinking and planning and less time writing. It could be half as long and twice as good. The first paragraph shows some excellent quality knowledge and depth. The judgement also jumps all over the place.

AO1: Level 4

AO2: Level 3

AO3: Level 2

Overall Level L3 18/30