

Election Campaigns

Presentation by Dr Peter Jepson
To be used in conjunction with Chapter 2 & 3 (62-67)
of
'Essentials of UK Politics' by Andrew Heywood.

Requirements ...

- Read and précis notes will be checked.
- Annotate your PDF notes.
- Raise your hand if you have a question.
- Turn off your mobile.

The cost of the party machine

- It is estimated that the two major parties both having running costs in excess of £20m a year. The Conservatives have had huge debts and Labour too has financial problems.
- How do these parties get funds?

Sleaze ...

- Concern existed about wealthy donors - for example, Bernie Ecclestone (Formula One) donated £1 million and the rules on tobacco advertising were changed.

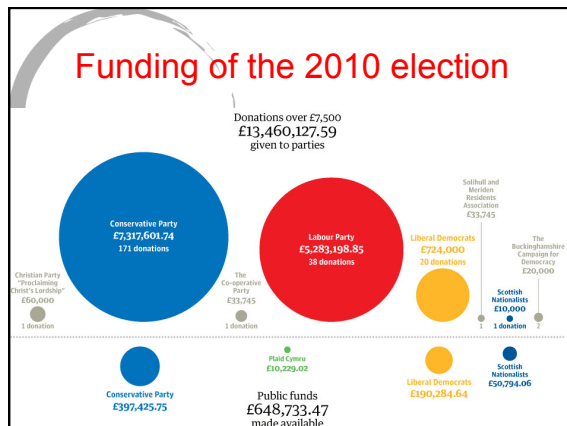
Standards in public life

- Following cases of sleaze the 'Committee on Standards in Public Life' (Chaired by Lord Neill) was established which led to the and the following requirements ...

Standards in public life

Elections and Referendum Act 2000

- Ceiling on national campaign expenditure (£30,000 per constituency).
- Parties must produce quarterly reports of large donations (£5000 plus).
- Weekly donation reports during elections.
- Foreign Donations to UK parties banned - Electoral Commission overseas.



Is this situation fair?

- The three political parties to accept the most in donations from 1st Jan/31st March 2010 were:
 - Conservative Party - £12,357,714
 - Labour Party - £4,072,432
 - Liberal Democrats - £1,931,147

In Pressure Groups

Discuss the arguments for and against the state funding of political parties.

Should we fund the Green party? What about the BNP?

What is a manifesto?

“The doctrine of a mandate has an important place in UK politics”.

- What is a manifesto? What is a mandate and why is it important?
- Is a coalition agreement equivalent to a mandate?

Election Campaigns

- These have changed over the years and do vary according to where you live (safe seat V target seats) - if it is a general election etc.
- The main political parties run professional, choreographed general election campaigns.

Advertising

- The “Labour isn’t working” poster campaign won for the Tories in 1979.
- Likewise “Labour’s double whammy” in 1992.
- Labour sent out text messages to young voters in 2001 and telephone canvassing is now a major feature.



National issues

- Most elections are won and/or lost on national issues. It is possible (but rare) for local issues to influence an outcome (e.g. Dr Richard Taylor save our hospital campaign in Wyre Forest in 2001-lost in 2010).

The media and elections

- TV coverage is required to be equal during an election campaign. They should ensure all candidates are covered and prefer none.
- However, this does not apply to NEWSPAPERS who often seem to be mouth pieces for a particular party. Labour has courted Rupert Murdoch (The Sun, The Times etc).

Break into Pressure Groups

Discuss and the explain to class the importance of different types of media in election campaigns

- Newspapers
- TV coverage and opinion polls.
- Traditional approaches - canvassing - leaflets, poster campaigns, public meetings.
- Use of the internet, telephone canvassing, text messaging.

Who does an MP represent?

Is an MP a delegate of his constituents or his party? **Discuss this option openly in class.**

Should an MP, as per Edmund Burke MP (1729-97), be free to vote based upon their independent judgement based upon the merits of the issue? **(Does this suggest an MP is better than his/her constituents?)**

Who does an MP represent?

- 3 models of representation
1. Constituents
 2. Party
 3. Society in general

**Which one is the most important?
Shouldn't an MP represent his party's views above his constituents?**

Who does an MP represent?

- Should an MP mirror the society it represents? {Labour the working class - Tories business?}
- What does the term MICROCOSM mean?

Representation issues

- A record 22 per cent of all MPs are now women, almost four times the number elected in 1987.
- The Conservative Party almost doubled its number of female MPs in 2010, as the proportion soared from 9% to 17%.
- more people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds were elected, with numbers almost doubling from 14 to 27.

Gender issues ...

- Would more women MP's change Parliament?
- Why does Dr Jepson disagree with all women-shortlists? See http://www.peterjepson.com/sex_discrimination.htm
- Can you spot the reference to Dr. Jepson's in the text book?

Break into Pressure groups ...

- One side arguing for all-women shortlists - the other against.