Chapter 2 - Welsh Politics, Ideology and Political Parties
Pages 22–44, Authors Alison Denton and Russell Deacon

Teacher’s guide – in conjunction with the text book

**Timing:** Students should read the relevant chapter before undertaking the exercise questions and case studies, and discuss their answers. There are answer note suggestions behind all questions. The questions can be undertaken in class or at home with questions/answers and activities being undertaken in the classroom. The material is teaching material and NOT specifically material for answering examination questions.

**Tutor guide:** Tutors should familiarise themselves with the text, questions and answers before undertaking the activities in the classroom. For any unfamiliar terms an extensive glossary of key terms is provided on pages 206–22 of the book. The questions and case studies do not cover all of the material in the chapters. If tutors wish to cover this, they will need to set additional stimulus questions. Tutors and students may also wish to add material not provided in either the suggested answers or the text to the answers. Welsh politics is constantly changing, so answers provided now may well alter as these changes take place.

The questions for discussion and the case studies are found at the end of each chapter. The suggested answers and some ideas for teaching these are provided on the following pages. Tutors should seek to draw these answers from the students and also discuss their merits.

**Suggested answers**

**Chapter 2 Questions for discussion**

*These questions cover some elements of the WJEC AS Government and Politics Specification 2.2 Participation through Elections and Voting, specifically ‘Models of voting behaviour’ and 2.3 Participation through Political Parties, Pressure Groups and Political Movements, specifically ‘The range of political parties in Wales and the UK and their differing ideologies and platforms’.*
1. How relevant is the ‘Three Wales Model’ in explaining political identity in Wales?

*Answer points:* The tutor should remind the students what the ‘Three Wales Model’ is, preferably with the use of a map overlaying constituencies. Page 24 details what the ‘Three Wales Model’ is. Students can be reminded of this and the fact that it is a uniquely Welsh model. Pages 25–6 details the arguments that state whether the model is still valid. Students or the tutor can also examine recent elections and electoral maps to determine the extent to which this model is true.

2. Explain where each political party sits on the political spectrum in Wales, and why it can be positioned there.

*Answer points:* Tutors may well have already covered the political spectrum and therefore it will not need that much of an explanation. If it is required, pages 26–7 explain what the political spectrum is, and students can be reminded of this and apply their own examples. The tutor may wish to give a visual illustration of the spectrum using a line going from ‘far left to far right’, with the centre in the middle. Students can then be asked to plot the five main political parties on this. Although their positions can be argued, it is normally true to state that Plaid Cymru and Labour are on the left, the Liberal Democrats slightly centre left, the Conservatives centre right and UKIP further right. The Greens, if plotted, would be the furthest to the left. If researching this for themselves, students could find policy/leadership statements to justify these positions.

3. React to the following statements and explain your reasons:

   a. The appeal of left-wing politics in Wales is enduring and can be mainly explained by historical factors.

*Answer points:* The key answer points can be found on pages 29–30. These provide coverage of the appeal of the left in Welsh politics both historically and contemporarily. Tutors can relate this to the political spectrum. Students should also note that at virtually every election over half of the Welsh population vote for parties on the left of the political spectrum. This means that the Welsh electorate mainly identify themselves as being on the left of the political spectrum.

   b. Although Welsh Labour has dominated Welsh politics, its position looks more precarious now.

*Answer points:* The tutor should ensure that students look at recent elections and Labour’s share of the vote. They should note Labour’s electoral decline in the 2015 and 2016 elections in Wales. They should also look at its success (mixed in local government elections) and the 2017 General Election. Students should also note that the electoral systems, specifically First Past The Post, help boost Labour’s share of elected members compared with its share of the vote. This gives it an advantage over...
other political parties, even when its vote share falls. This answer can also vary depending on each election.

c. Right-wing politics has no appeal in Wales.

*Answer point:* Students should note that whereas Wales has a dominant party in the form of Labour, there have been times when parties on the right – Conservatives and UKIP – have gained considerable success, coming second or even first. Box 2.5, pages 41–3, can also be explored to determine the appeal to Welsh voters in the past.

d. Plaid Cymru has failed to achieve the level of success that the SNP achieved in Scotland mainly because of the language issue.

*Answer points:* Students should be aware of the scale of the rise and substantial dominance of the SNP in Scotland and also note that Plaid Cymru has never won a Westminster Parliamentary seat in which a considerable percentage of the population are not Welsh-speaking. Students should refer to the 'Three Wales Model' and note that Plaid Cymru’s success is strongest in Y Fro Gymraeg and weakest in British Wales. This may be contradicted by some Plaid Cymru success in Welsh Wales, particularly in Welsh Assembly and local government elections.

**Case study: UKIP and Welsh politics**

*This case study covers some aspects of the WJEC AS Government and Politics Specification Element 2.3.1 Political Parties and Participation in Politics – Differing Party Ideologies.*

Read the case study in Box 2.5 and answer the following questions:

1. **What are the two central differences between UKIP and the other main political parties in Wales?**

*Answer points:* Tutors can note that the other Welsh political parties are all pro-European Union and UKIP is Eurosceptic. It is the only political party in Wales whose central aim is to ensure full Brexit. Another difference is that UKIP’s Welsh leadership is appointed rather than elected. It is the furthest to the right of the political spectrum of any party elected in Wales. UKIP gains most of its elected members through proportional representation rather than the First-Past-The-Post electoral system, which means it has no representation in Welsh local government or Westminster but does have representation on the AMS list system of the Welsh Assembly and the Party List of the European Parliament.

2. **Is UKIP a nationalist party or merely a more Eurosceptic branch of the Conservative Party?**
Answer points: The tutor can note that many but not all of UKIP’s elected Welsh members have Conservative backgrounds. Neil Hamilton, the Welsh leader, is a former Conservative MP, and Mark Reckless AM was elected as a Conservative AM but returned as an independent member who supports the Conservative group. Both were Eurosceptic Conservative MPs. A number of UKIP AMs also have been Conservative Party members elected or candidates beforehand. At the same time, the leader of the Welsh Conservatives, Andrew R. T. Davies AM, and a number of senior Welsh Conservative MPs, David Davies and former Welsh Secretary David Jones are Eurosceptic pro-Brexit MPs. UKIP, however, is a UK nationalist party rather than a Welsh one.

UKIP is the only political party in Wales not to use ‘Wales’ or ‘Welsh’ in its title, although it does create its own Welsh policies. The two parties remain political foes, however, and UKIP’s electoral decline has seen a direct transfer of voters to the Conservatives but also a considerable number who have returned to voting for Labour.

Summary – Reflective learning questions

These should be used either at the end or between the questions for discussion and the case studies to reflect on what has been learned. The students should be given sufficient time to discuss their answers.

1. Where might you make use of the learning we have done today?
2. Create a short television advert ‘selling’ today’s new learning points.

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