Governance

Sustainable Policies

Democracy

United Kingdom Report

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Sustainable Governance Indicators 2020

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Executive Summary

The United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union has dominated British politics since the June 2016 referendum was called. In this respect, 2019 was a watershed year, as it brought to a head all the political and constitutional challenges of what, by the standards of recent decades, was a momentous governance change. As a representative democracy, the UK constitutional system had struggled to come to terms with the exercise of direct democracy in the 2016 referendum, not least because a sizable majority of members of parliament continued to oppose Brexit. With traditional left-right partisan politics overlaid by leave-remain cleavages, regional divisions and country differences, the British body politic faced exceptional circumstances.

The negotiation of a withdrawal agreement between the United Kingdom and European Union was tortuous, but the government's repeated failure to secure the House of Commons' support for the agreement, exposed a variety of governance problems, both on an institutional and political level. Institutionally, the roles of the executive, the courts and the monarch (as head of state) came under stress. Parliament was shut down against its will, the queen was dragged within touching distance of involvement in a political position, the prime minister was very publicly corrected by the High Court, the government destroyed its own precarious majority through a decidedly un-Conservative purge of the ranks of its own members of parliament and the government openly broke several ministerial promises to Parliament.

Politically, the problems arose largely from the inability of a minority government to cope with the highly contested challenge of delivering on the result of the referendum and the commitment of the two major parties in their 2017 election manifestos to respect that result. The replacement of Theresa May by Boris Johnson as prime minister introduced a very different political style, which initially deepened the political crisis, but then led to a further election to resolve it.

Although, at times, the shenanigans in Westminster both transfixed and appalled external observers, it is moot whether this should be regarded as evidence of hitherto undetected failures of governance or, given that the different arms of power did their jobs and a solution was eventually achieved,

a temporary aberration. Reappraisal of some variables covered in this report is therefore warranted.

As they approached the 2019 general election (the third in a little over four years, in itself an indicator of political instability), both major parties had been undergoing a process of narrowing their ideological range, with the process speeding up as the 2019 general election got under way. Some, mainly centrist, members of parliament in both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party (including a few holding senior positions), decided to stand down, some of them also leaving their parties, effectively admitting defeat in the intra-party fights that have been going on for years in both parties. The result is two more streamlined and more ideologically coherent, but also narrower, major parties. At the same time, attempts to resolve parliamentary polarization through the setting up of new parties or cooperation between existing parties foundered. A solution to the governance impasse in Northern Ireland proved elusive, with the suspension of the Northern Ireland Executive extended to three years.

The disputes around Brexit also crowded out work on several policy domains which require urgent attention, most obviously healthcare (with the National Health Service suffering from capacity problems, likely to be exacerbated by EU staff leaving) and its interactions with social care (especially for the elderly), adequate housing provision and regional disparities. While these issues featured to varying degrees in the 2019 election campaign, the campaign was, nevertheless, dominated by the issue of how to extricate the country from Brexit. Although economic growth slowed in 2019, unemployment remains low, albeit with the unwelcome corollary of stagnating productivity growth. However, the British economy remains vulnerable to Brexit-related uncertainty surrounding future trading arrangements with its biggest trading partner, the EU27.

Unsurprisingly, executive capacity has been tested in the last year. For the most part, the improvements of recent years in communication and strategic capacities have been maintained, and it is noteworthy that even without a majority, Boris Johnson was able to reshape government significantly.

Key Challenges

Dealing with the next stages of the Brexit process – internally and externally, as well as politically and economically – will undoubtedly be the main challenge facing the UK government over at least the next year. Completion of the withdrawal on 31 January 2020 was an important first step and hugely

significant politically. However, new deadlines are already pressing, with the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 and a decision needed by July 2020 on whether to extend the period – by mutual agreement – potentially until the end of 2022. However, Prime Minister Johnson has repeatedly said that he is unwilling to countenance an extension, despite warnings from many sources about the difficulty of achieving more than a "bare-bones" agreement by the current deadline and the acknowledged complexities of negotiating a comprehensive trade agreement. This leaves a very little time for negotiating a trade agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom.

A closely related challenge will be whether the current government can avoid repeating the many mistakes made by the UK side in negotiating the withdrawal deal, including unrealistic "red lines," lack of administrative capacity and experience, departmental disagreements, and wishful-thinking politics. This will require a degree of political will and skill rarely seen from British politicians in recent years.

Renationalization of tasks after leaving the European Union will require a vast amount of primary and secondary legislation, requiring awkward choices about how administrative responsibilities are allocated among the different levels of government. There will be budgetary challenges (e.g., funding and building up regulatory expertise, and recruiting and training specialist personnel for trade negotiations and customs controls) and a need for considerable parliamentary time. Agreeing what rules to follow and working out reciprocity arrangements with regulatory agencies in other countries is also likely to be time-consuming and will require attention to detail. Similarly, the negotiation of new trade deals (or the rolling-over of those previously negotiated under the aegis of EU membership) with many countries will require substantial effort and could be a source of economic problems in the case of failure.

Maintaining the unity of the United Kingdom in the aftermath of withdrawal from the European Union is another substantial challenge for two main reasons. First, the question of Scottish independence is again on the table. There has already been a formal request from Edinburgh for a second independence referendum, which was rejected by London. This may lead to a constitutional clash with unpredictable consequences in advance of Scottish Parliament elections in 2021. A move toward a unified Ireland may also surface, given the provisions of the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement and dismay in the province regarding the possible creation of a de facto border between the rest of the United Kingdom and the European Union in the Irish Sea. How the restored Norther Ireland Executive functions will be pivotal. Second, the deep societal divisions engendered by Brexit will need to be

healed, in a context in which the Johnson government is aware that it has "borrowed," rather than won, the votes of citizens in traditionally Labour-supporting parts of the countries.

A further political challenge concerns how the main parties will respond to the outcome of Brexit and the 2019 election. Both the Conservative and Labour parties will face difficult choices about whether to continue to shun the political center ground. Labour, in particular, needs to find a new narrative, otherwise there will be a lack of effective parliamentary opposition to the government. It remains to be seen whether a new party (or parties) can become successfully established, whether existing parties can absorb disaffected voters or whether one of the two main parties will pivot back to the center ground.

Domestic policy challenges include housing, social care and the NHS, as well as low investment and lackluster productivity. There are also public services and projects for which shortcomings in performance have to be addressed. These include creaking infrastructure and public dissatisfaction with railways, delays in completing major projects, and concern about low detection rates by police forces. Although it is an open question whether the many Brexit-related governance problems were an aberration or evidence of more profound dysfunctionality, a fresh look at the governance system and the distribution of responsibilities will be needed as the country reverts to "normal" majority rule following the 2019 election result.

Party Polarization

In the British system of government, the logic of the two-party system is fundamental. Although far more than two parties sit in parliament (in the 2017 general election for the House of Commons, members from no fewer than eight parties won seats). However, for the last several decades, prime ministers have been drawn from only two parties. Besides the political, there is also an institutional side to the two-party structure, namely the Office of the Leader of the Loyal Opposition. The entire logic and architecture of the House of Commons is geared toward a two-party antagonism, albeit with the corollary that both major parties are themselves coalitions of party members and members of parliament with very different policy positions. Effective "whipping" nevertheless means a strong incentive to maintain party unity on key parliamentary votes. In the non-elected second chamber, the House of Lords, both the role and influence of "crossbenchers" are more prominent, but it is the House of Commons that dominates Parliament.

Historically, the "first-past-the-post" electoral system has nearly always tended to produce stable one-party government majorities, including massive majorities during the Thatcher and Blair years in office. Following the elections in 2010 and again in 2017, no party secured a majority and the Conservative-led governments had to rely on a formal coalition (2010 – 2015) and a "confidence-and-supply" arrangement with the Democratic Unionist Party (2017 – 2019). Nevertheless, governments reliant on cross-party agreements have historically been an exception, with the result that polarization between the two dominant parties is rarely an obstacle to policymaking.

The year covered by this report has, arguably, been an exception that proves the rule, through the conjunction of a minority government and Brexit, an issue that transcended normal party divisions. Dissenting factional views inside the two major parties over this issue, perhaps more than ideological polarization in the party system, repeatedly obstructed the achievement of compromises. This put a considerable strain on the party coherence of both major parties. In early 2019, a small number of members of parliament withdrew from both the Labour Party and the Conservative Party to form The Independent Group (later renamed Change UK). However, this group failed to build sufficient political momentum to establish itself and several of its more prominent members moved on to the Liberal Democrats. With the decision of several members of parliament in autumn 2019 not to seek re-election or to stand as independent candidates in the forthcoming general election, polarization increased further as both major parties lost centrist candidates. (Score: 4)

Policy Performance

I. Economic Policies

Economy

Economic Policy
Score: 7

The UK economic framework was substantially reformed after 1979 in a market-friendly direction and most of these reforms were maintained after the election of the Labour government in 1997, albeit with some rebalancing toward labor interests – notably through the introduction of a minimum wage. The UK economy grew steadily from the early 1990s up to 2007, but then endured a deep recession during the financial crisis before recovering from 2013 onwards, despite weak demand from the euro zone, the United Kingdom's largest export market. There are concerns that the economy is too reliant on consumers' expenditure, fueled by overly high household debt and sustained by very loose monetary policy.

The change in government in 2010 led to the adoption of an economic policy framework ostensibly focused on budgetary consolidation, but there has been a substantial watering down of the fiscal rules put in place by previous governments; targets for returning to fiscal balance have repeatedly been pushed to later dates. This has meant the squeeze on public spending has been less than is often claimed because the government also chose to protect key areas of public services, such as healthcare spending. The corollary, especially as service charges on government debt increased, was that cuts in other areas of public spending had to be even deeper. Insufficient public investment is reflected in creaking infrastructure and skills shortages.

The economy initially appeared to shake off the political shock of the "leave" vote in the June 2016 EU referendum, with the fall in the exchange rate helping to absorb the shock. In 2017, however, economic growth slowed such that the United Kingdom shifted from being one of the most rapidly growing mature western economies to one of the slowest. The labor market has remained buoyant, with the employment rate rising to 75.9% in comparison to

75.7% in 2018, which was already the highest employment rate since the beginning of comparable estimations. This labor-market performance partly reflects a job-friendly economic policy. The average pay grew up by 3.7%, which is the highest growth rate since June 2008. Inflation is projected to remain stable around 2%. Moreover, disappointing productivity figures have led the independent Office of Budget Responsibility to reduce its estimate for the long-term growth potential of the economy and there is concern about how to boost productivity. The current account deficit exceeded 5% of GDP between 2013 and 2016, but decreased to 4.3% in 2018. In 2019, it increased slightly to 4.6%. This is indicative of the continuing export weakness of the UK economy. Uncertainty about future UK-EU relations and threats to the future access of UK financial services to the continental market are weighing on the economy.

Citation:
https://cdn.obr.uk/EFO_October-2018.pdf
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-28/u-k-current-account-deficit-widens-business-investment-falls

Labor Markets

Labor Market
Policy
Score: 8

After a period of remarkably good and stable labor-market performance in which the rate of unemployment was below that of the euro zone and the OECD average, conditions in the United Kingdom deteriorated in the wake of the 2008 crisis and the ensuing economic downturn. Underlying weaknesses (such as the comparatively high degree of working-age inactivity linked to the high number of claimants of disability-related benefits) came to the fore, and the unemployment rate rose to its highest rate since the mid-1990s. But after labor-market flexibility was increased through deregulation and the lowering of secondary-wage costs, the unemployment rate fell significantly from 8.3% at the end of 2012 to 3.8% in September 2019. In fact, recent labor-market performance has been so robust that the new government has declared full employment an official government objective. The UK labor market continues to attract substantial numbers of economic migrants.

However, the increase in employment has come at the cost of weakness in productivity, especially in manufacturing. Real wages only recently returned to their pre-crisis levels and started to rise in real terms, partly because of a moderating effect of immigration. An increase in the national minimum hourly wage to the level of the so-called living wage was announced and is supported across the political parties. From £7.20 for people aged over 25 in April 2016, it rose to £8.21 in April 2019 and is scheduled to rise faster than average wages over the coming years. This is expected to reduce sharply the de facto

subsidy to employers provided by tax credits. There has also been criticism of other facets of labor-market flexibility. For example, the topic of zero-hour contracts gained substantial attention during the general election of 2015 but has not been effectively addressed yet, as Brexit continues to dominate the political agenda. Youth unemployment rose slightly to 11.8% from 10.9% a year before. Although this is a significantly higher number compared to the overall unemployment rate of 4%, it is comparatively low in relation to other major European economies (32.2% in Spain, 27.1% in Italy and 19.2% in France, with an EU average of 14.2%) a year before.

Citation:
Brinkley, I. (2013) "Flexibility or insecurity? Exploring the rise of zero-hours contracts" London: The Work Foundation

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/zero-hours-contracts

Taxes

Tax Policy
Score: 7

The United Kingdom has a progressive income-tax system. The balance between direct and indirect taxes is reasonably fair, as measured in terms of horizontal equity. The system is, however, very complex. In relation to vertical equity, there are too many opportunities for tax avoidance, with the results bordering on evasion for the rich. Property taxes are high and have been increased for purchases of high value houses, but labor taxes are low compared with many other EU member states. The financial crisis and the ensuing economic downturn sharply reduced tax revenue with the squeeze on wages contributing to a lower yield from income tax. However, overall tax revenue has risen over recent years and was projected to be high enough to continue to narrow the public deficit over the course of the current parliament. A risk factor is, though, that the potential costs of leaving the European Union are still unclear and therefore not calculable yet.

The Autumn Budget 2018 included the introduction of a so-called digital tax, a form of taxation that has been discussed in many countries but has so far hardly been implemented. The United Kingdom will tax tech companies 2% of the revenue they make from UK users. It will come into force in April 2020 and is expected to raise around £400 million per year. Further, the government announced a new tax on the production and import of plastic packaging that contains less than 30% recycled plastic, which is due to come into force in April 2022, to set an incentive for the reduction of plastic waste. However, planned increases in fuel duties have repeatedly been postponed.

Citation:
World Economic Forum 2017: The Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018.

Budgets

Budgetary Policy
Score: 7

The United Kingdom is fiscally a highly centralized state. As such, central government has considerable control over budgetary policy. Most public spending is directly or indirectly controlled by the central government, with few other influences compared to, for example, federal countries. This also means, however, that the central government has to shoulder the blame if things go wrong.

Under previous Labour governments, the "golden rule" of UK fiscal policy was to limit deficit spending to investment over the business cycle. However, public spending as a proportion of GDP increased during the 2000s and, in hindsight, was too pro-cyclical. In 2009, adherence to these fiscal rules was abandoned to cope with the consequences of the crisis. There is now a fiscal council, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), and looser fiscal rules, including provision for surpluses in "good times," were included in a Charter for Budget Responsibility.

Since the crisis years, UK chancellors have ostensibly focused on reducing the national debt and borrowing – a goal that was supported by moderate but steady economic growth. Initially, the aim of the 2010 coalition government was to balance the net position of public finances by 2015, although in practice the deadline was repeatedly extended. Yet, 2019 may mark a turning point for this policy with announcements by the leading parties that "austerity is over." Despite some risks associated with lower economic growth, the main political parties have pledged to boost public spending and mitigate uncertainties around Brexit.

In addition to the slowing economy, both Prime Minister Johnson and the leader of the opposition, Corbyn, made enormous spending pledges. The Conservatives under Boris Johnson have promised an overall increase of £13.9bn until 2024, consisting of investments and tax reductions, with their biggest single item being an additional £900m per year to the NHS in order to hire more nurses. Under Jeremy Corbyn, Labour's spending plans even add up to the impressive £230.7bn until 2024.

The European Commission's 2019 autumn forecasts show the UK growing at the EU average rate of 1.4% in 2019 and edging upwards in 2020. OBR analyses suggest the United Kingdom's underlying growth rate has declined to around 1.5%, implying future governments will need to exercise restraint in promises to boost public spending. Experience suggests rather extravagant promises in the 2019 election campaign will be fudged.

Research, Innovation and Infrastructure

R&I Policy
Score: 7

The United Kingdom's tradition of being an active player in research and innovation dates back to the Industrial Revolution. The country's clusters of pre-eminent universities have for a long time played an important role in linking cutting-edge academic research with industries such as biotechnology or information and communications technology (ICT). Performance has been weaker in terms of overall R&D spending, which continues to fall well short of EU targets, as well as in the conversion of innovation into sustainable, large-scale production, which holds the potential for long-term profitability. However, it is important to emphasize that the UK economy does not have the industrial base to support a large-scale R&D effort, so it is necessary to look at other indicators, such as ICT spending (which matters more for service industries), to better understand trends in innovation in the United Kingdom.

Over the decades, attempts have been made by successive governments to improve this situation, for example, by targeting weaknesses in technical education on various levels. Recent government initiatives have focused on extending tax credits for R&D, setting up regional Technology and Innovation Centers, investing in digital infrastructure and new university research facilities, as well as establishing Innovate UK to promote economic growth through science and technology.

Despite tentative agreement that the United Kingdom will remain involved in EU research programs, there is still uncertainty about how this will evolve after Brexit and the status of researchers who are EU nationals working in the United Kingdom. This could have an adverse effect on UK universities, although they are lobbying intensively to prevent a negative outcome. While the potential loss of EU funds is not huge, and it has to be recalled that the United Kingdom has always been a net contributor to the EU budget, researchers are more apprehensive about barriers to collaboration with counterparts in the European Union. This all comes despite a year-long debate about how best to attract highly skilled immigrants to the UK science sector. Yet, the number of EU students applying to UK universities increased by 3% in 2018. University officials interpret the upturn either as a last-minute rush before Brexit or as a sign that the attractiveness of UK universities simply outshines the grim political prospects.

The challenge facing the UK government will be how to maintain its research and innovation effort if obstacles arise to collaboration with other EU member states. This could affect not only the university sector, but also the corporate sector – for example in areas like life sciences and pharmaceuticals where the United Kingdom maintains a prominent research role – if the supply networks of UK research facilities are disrupted.

Citation:
https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/feb/05/uk-universities-rise-in-applications-eu-students (31.10.18)

Global Financial System

Stabilizing
Global Financial
System
Score: 7

The City of London is home to one of the world's main financial hubs. Consequently, governments in the United Kingdom have traditionally tried to protect the interests of the City of London against more intrusive regulation whether national, European or global. Governments have often argued that the special characteristics of London as a financial center are not given sufficient attention by Brussels in particular.

At the international level, successive governments have taken a prominent role in attempts to improve the international regulatory framework through international bodies, such as the Financial Stability Board (chaired by the governor of the Bank of England) and the Bank for International Settlements, as well as through the prominent role of the Bank Governor in the European Systemic Risk Board. The United Kingdom has had substantial influence on EU financial reforms, both through government action and in the form of initiatives from the City of London.

Continued uncertainty regarding future relations between the United Kingdom and the European Union could affect the United Kingdom's stance on global financial regulation, although the expectation is that UK financial regulation will remain closely aligned with European Union and international standards.

The European Banking Agency has moved from London to Paris which could have ramifications for the United Kingdom's proximity to centers of decision-making.

II. Social Policies

Education

Education Policy
Score: 7

The Cameron government continued the marketization strategy pursued by the previous coalition and Labour governments. It pursued a policy of liberalizing school regulation to enable non-governmental organizations – such as foundations, businesses and parent-teacher corporations – to set up their own schools, while also strengthening government powers to intervene in "failing" schools and turn them into sponsored academies. The core of this policy was to improve performance by boosting interschool competition, as measured by performance tables administered by the regulator, Ofsted.

Ongoing programs, such as Pupil Premium, are designed to simultaneously improve educational outcomes and strengthen social cohesion by encouraging well-performing schools to accept disadvantaged children. However, the socioeconomic composition of many of the United Kingdom's schools still poses a significant challenge for students from disadvantaged and immigrant backgrounds. A Children's Commission on Poverty inquiry indicated that interschool competition has increased financial costs for pupils and their families, as many schools try to stand out by introducing fancier uniforms, new textbooks or extravagant field trips.

The latest PISA results for 2018 showed some improvement for the United Kingdom, with a jump from 22nd to 14th in reading, from 27th to 18th in science and a slight change from 15th to 14th in maths, and a widening of its advantage compared with the OECD average. Education spending per pupil has not experienced any significant rise since 2009. The Johnson government introduced a spending program of £4.3 billion until 2022. This measure aims to reverse the trend of stagnating education spending.

In the higher education sector, the substantial increase in tuition fees, from £3,300 to levels now in excess of £9,250 per student per year, has been contentious, and there have been suggestions both that fees should fall and that the student loan system needs to be reformed. This could put students off from studying in the most expensive parts of the country, such as London and Oxford. However, so far, there has been no discernible effect on overall student enrollment rates or on access to higher education for students from poorer backgrounds. Though concerns about the level of student debt have prompted renewed debate over the funding of tertiary education. British

universities are concerned that the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union will be damaging, especially if accompanied by a clampdown on EU migrants.

Fears that students from other EU member states will be deterred from applying to what is a highly successful sector, that EU nationals will be put off from working in British universities and that participation in EU research programs will become harder have led to demands from university leaders for a "soft" Brexit. There have been reports of EU consortia being reluctant to include British researchers in new research proposals.

Citation:
WEF ranks quality of UK education system as 15th in Global Competitiveness Report 2017/18 (Singapore 1st,
USA 20th, GER 25th, F 28th).
https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/aug/06/restore-grant-system-for-poor-students-urges-russell-group-chief
https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14370
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/oct/29/key-points-from-budget-2018-at-a-glance

Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion
Policy
Score: 7

A traditional system of social class has long been a feature of British society. Since 1997, successive governments have sought, through a variety of policy instruments and initiatives, to overcome these divisions and to promote social mobility and inclusion. In his short second term as prime minister, David Cameron followed a classic one-nation conservatism policy that aimed to make the United Kingdom "a place where a good life is in reach for everyone who is willing to work and do the right thing," which echoed the "welfare to work" policy approach of the previous coalition and Labour governments. His successor, Theresa May, followed this path by declaring her "mission to make Britain a country that works for everyone" in her first statement as prime minister in July 2016, and Boris Johnson has emphasized his "one-nation" Tory stance. It remains to be seen how this rhetoric will coagulate into social policy. However, one recent major social policy reforms – the introduction of Universal Credit, which aims to replace a series of targeted welfare payments with a single payment mechanism – has been beset by implementation difficulties.

However, while applauding a sharp reduction in child poverty and an increase in the enrollment rate of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in tertiary education, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's latest State of the Nation report also observed that "social mobility is stagnant." The report noted the persistence of divisions around various social criteria, including

class, geography and race. Although the United Kingdom's Gini coefficient has fallen significantly – a common phenomenon after a grave recession – it remains relatively high compared to other OECD countries and the distribution of wealth has become more unequal. The youth unemployment rate (11.9%) is still almost three times that of the overall unemployment rate (4.0%). A recent policy innovation has been the creation of a social mobility index. Over a long-term perspective, the proportion of "NEETs" (people who are not in employment, education or training) is decreasing, although the rate has remained stable over the last year. It is still high in some of the less affluent cities. In addition, the average income of young people has started to lag behind the average income of other working-age population groups. A chronic shortage of affordable housing has further exacerbated the situation of low-income households in the more prosperous metropolitan areas across the southeast of England. This shortage has made it especially difficult for young people to get on to the housing ladder.

Despite persistent economic inequalities, the United Kingdom has a relatively good record in promoting the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities, and also has a relatively good record on gender equality. There has been a discernible social shift against forms of discriminatory language or action, with a number of public figures being ostracized as a result of inappropriate comments. Legislation allowing same-sex marriage came into force in 2014 and a law allowing heterosexual civil partnerships was passed in 2019. While reservations regarding multiculturalism and anti-immigrant sentiments remain common, with some surfacing around Brexit, immigrants tend to be more socially integrated than in many other countries. Policy initiatives over several governments have contributed to a social climate in which discrimination is seen as unacceptable.

Citation:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/798687/SMC_State_of_Nation_2018-19_Summary.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/532793/Main_text_SFR22_2016.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/statement-from-the-new-prime-minister- theresa-may

https://data.oecd.org/emp/employment-rate-by-age-group.htm

https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/august2019

Health

The National Health Service (NHS) remains a cornerstone of the United Kingdom's universal welfare state and is widely regarded as a core public institution. Most healthcare provided by the NHS is free at the point of delivery. However, there are charges for prescriptions and dental treatment, though specific demographic groups (e.g., pensioners) are exempt from these charges. There is a limited private healthcare system.

Despite consistent real increases in public funding for healthcare by governments of all colors, provision has been unable to keep pace with rising demand. Winter healthcare "crises" have become the norm as hospitals struggle to cope with emergency admissions and have to cancel routine operations to free bed-space. This is partly because of the aging of the population, but also highlights inadequacies in funding and in organization of care services for the elderly. Social care is funded by local authorities and has been financially squeezed, resulting in more costly hospital care having to be used. New reports regularly refer to a service, which – while offering excellent clinical care – often struggles to cope. While patient convenience may not be a central focus of NHS provision, attempts have been made to improve local healthcare by creating Health and Well-Being Boards to bring together representatives from all social services as well as elected representatives. The quality of NHS services, monitored by an independent Care Quality Commission, is high, as reported by the Human Development Index (HDI) health indicator. The financial position of many hospital trusts is rather precarious and has been the subject of growing concern over the last year, with more hospitals struggling to maintain standards and missing targets for patient waiting times.

As a universal service, the NHS scores very highly in terms of inclusion. The Health and Social Act 2012 now also allows patients to choose a general practitioner without geographical restrictions. Quality is generally high. However, input and outcome indicators of healthcare, such as how quickly cancer patients are seen by specialists or the incidence of "bed-blocking" (i.e., where complementary social care is difficult to arrange and so patients are kept in hospital), vary considerably across localities. A report by the Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England recommended that health and social care services should be much more closely integrated, but there has, to date, been little improvement.

The NHS is invariably at the center of heated public debates, with competing narratives again evident in the 2019 election campaign. Lately, the debate has been sparked by the changes in the 2016/17 tariff, which regulates public

funding for patient treatment and staff salaries. The tariff changes have shifted and reduced the public payment to clinics and acute trusts – private hospital operating companies commissioned by the Department of Health. These changes contradicted many existing business models and aggravated the funding crises of several major acute trusts. There has also been a long-running dispute over the pay and working conditions of junior doctors, which has led to strikes. The protracted dispute between the government and junior doctors' concerns government attempts to achieve full 24/7 operation in response to concerns that treatment at weekend was of lower standard. A new working contract for junior doctors including a pay rise, and friendlier rules for weekends and long shifts came into practice in 2019. Nevertheless, healthcare in the United Kingdom remains way above average on an international scale.

The unclear future status of EU working migrants has many health experts worried, since the UK health service relies on the recruitment of staff at all levels from other EU member states and third countries.

Citation:
http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/Commission%20Final%20%20interactive.pdf

http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GBR

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/26/junior-doctors-agree-to-82-pay-riseending-four-year-dispute

Families

Family Policy
Score: 8

Over the last twenty years, policy initiatives to improve the work-life balance and opportunities for women's participation in the labor-market have included expanding the provision of childcare facilities extending maternity leave and the introduction of paternity leave. More recently, there have been public calls for companies to increase the number of women on their board of directors, while the possibility of introducing quotas for company boards has been raised.

The Cameron government had emphasized the Troubled Families program, established in 2011. The program aims to help families in precarious situations with personal mentoring and support from local social workers. A 2016 evaluation from the National Institute for Economic and Social Research revealed mixed results. The increased spending apparently did not result in any statistically significant betterment in the living conditions of the supported families, though at the same time the subjective reporting of the supported

families did improve. However, an internal evaluation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 2019 found much more positive results, paving the way for the program to be renewed.

Cuts in welfare spending, associated with the central policy of reducing the budget deficit, have negatively affected some core family policy measures, especially for single mothers who rely disproportionately on social benefits. The difficulties around the introduction of Universal Credit have had negative effects on some families, not least by lowering support for larger families.

Citation:
National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme

https://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/universal-credit/

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786889/N ational_evaluation_of_the_Troubled_Families_Programme_2015_to_2020_evaluation_overview_policy_re port.pdf

Pensions

Pension Policy
Score: 8

The United Kingdom has a three-pillar pension system in which the second (employer-based) is the mainstay. Private pension funds were hardest hit by the financial crisis as investment yields fell, and some needed capital injections from employers. However, this has not had a significant effect on the incomes of those already retired. New entrants into private pension schemes are being offered less attractive terms than their predecessors. The Pensions Act 2010 will increase the state pension age to 66, from 65 for men and 60 for women, by 2020. Certain reforms have shifted pressure from pension funds to individual pensioners. These reforms will change the pensioners' living conditions substantially in the years to come. However, compared with many other countries, the UK public pension system is fiscally sustainable and guarantees the maintenance of a minimum income for pensioners through a "triple lock" of raising the basic state pension by the highest rate of inflation, average wages or 2% per annum. Successive governments, perhaps fearing a backlash from "gray" voters, have pledged to maintain this policy, despite some criticism about the growing burden on the "millennial" generation.

The United Kingdom used to have a comparatively high degree of poverty among the elderly compared to other European countries. Older people lacking earnings-related pensions are at a comparatively high risk of poverty. This has improved as pension provision has expanded, an increase in the proportion of pensioners owning mortgage-free properties and through specific additional

payments, such as winter heating. The overall figures disguise some inequalities among groups of pensioners. For example, lifelong housewives fare much worse than those who have the benefit of adding occupational or private pensions to their income from the state pension system. Most pensioners are, however, on reasonably comfortable incomes. If anything, recent debate has been about cutting some of the fringe benefits of better-off pensioners, such as free bus travel, because of fears about an undue burden on younger generations.

Citation:
Ebbinghaus, Bernhard (2019): Pension reforms and old age inequalities in Europe: From old to new social risks?, Conference Paper, European Sociological Association Conference, Manchester 2019

Integration

Integration Policy
Score: 6

Due to the country's colonial history, the United Kingdom has a large share of ethnic minorities (approximately 14% of the population), and integration has long been an important area of government policy. However, while the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 imposed the general duty to promote race equality on all public authorities, the United Kingdom has not developed a formal integration program. The focus has been more on the protection of minorities than on the integration of migrants, but that is because the United Kingdom has a preference for multiculturalism. There are both regional and ethnic differences in integration, with some cities and smaller towns having concentrations of populations of distinct ethnic groups, and tensions over access to public housing and public services in localities where recent immigrants have concentrated.

The Equality Act 2006 merged three existing bodies (including the Commission for Racial Equality) into a new Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EHRC is an umbrella organization, which attempts to enforce integration and equality across several dimensions, such as ethnicity. In recent years, attempts to create a national narrative around "Britishness" were aimed at changing from an ethnocentric concept of citizenship to a more civic one.
Attempts to increase diversity in parliament have been promoted by both major parties. As a consequence, public life reflects society more today than it did two decades ago. However, in public bodies, such as the police, concerns remain that minority ethnic groups are under-represented.

During and shortly after the Brexit referendum in 2016, there was an increase in anti-immigrant rhetoric and racially motivated crimes. Although it subsequently declined, it then rose again after the terrorist attacks in London

and Manchester in 2017. Bodies such as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and Human Rights Watch have expressed concern.

A distinction has to be made between the openness to diversity in British society, culture and institutions, which undoubtedly surpasses that of many other European countries, and the stance of UK governments over the last decade toward immigration. As home secretary, Theresa May introduced a target of keeping net migration to "tens of thousands," although this target was consistently missed by a wide margin. In pursuit of this target, the Home Office adopted a "hostile environment policy" to deter immigration to the United Kingdom.

A direct result of the hostile environment policy was the so-called Windrush scandal in 2018. Home Office employees had destroyed legal documents of citizens who originally came to the United Kingdom as Commonwealth citizens before the 1970s, resulting in a number of unjustified deportations or withdrawals of rights to re-enter the United Kingdom. The public and political outcry, itself a manifestation of societal attitudes, led to rapid action to overturn evident injustices, but introduced no major legislative changes. The recently appointed home secretary, Priti Patel, has promised to curb immigration after Brexit, and signaled that there would be no distinction between EU and non-EU citizens, raising concerns about a hardline immigration policy and the status of immigrants in the United Kingdom.

Citation:
National Police Chiefs' Council Report 08. Jul 2016.

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: CERD/C/GBR/CO/21-23.

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance: ECRI Report on the United Kingdom, 4 October 2016.

https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-politics-46034742/yvette-cooper-is-confused-by-caroline-nokes-position-on-eu-migrants-after-brexit

Priti Patel's Conservative Party Conference speech: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1mJFJDPdOQ

Safe Living

Internal Security
Policy
Score: 8

Objectively speaking, citizens of the United Kingdom have enjoyed improved security over the last 15 years as the crime rate has dropped significantly and consistently (although it continues to be relatively high in absolute terms when compared to other OECD countries). This is not reflected, however, in increased subjective perception of security, since British citizens (probably influenced by media reporting) perceive crime to be on the rise. The issue thus

remains in the public spotlight, and cuts in the budgets of the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice – in line with overall budget cuts to fight the deficit – have therefore been politically contentious. The most recent figures do, nevertheless, suggest a further fall in crime, although questions have been raised about whether "new" crimes like cybercrime are being adequately recorded. Moreover, even in higher crime areas, there are few signs that citizens consider the environment to be unsafe. However, there has been some concern about the impact of the substantial reduction in police numbers on the ability of the police to respond. Doubts have also surfaced about the effectiveness of elected Police and Crime Commissioners.

The coalition government abolished some of the harsh counterterrorism laws introduced by earlier Labour governments in an attempt to correct the balance in favor of civil rights. A new National Crime Agency started work in the autumn of 2013 as a central body for crime fighting. Certain high-profile revelations of police malpractice, including the recently exposed falsification of records in the Hillsborough football disaster of 1989, have led to disquiet about police behavior, but have not conspicuously undermined confidence. There is some concern about inadequate responses to cybercrime, with significant increases reported in crime statistics.

The 2015 Conservative government – and its Home Secretary Theresa May – reformed the police disciplinary and complaint system to improve trust between citizens and the police. Furthermore, it has made the Police Federation subject to the Freedom of Information Act to improve transparency in the police force.

There is continuing concern about terrorist threats, accentuated by the renewed difficulties in the Middle East and the evidence of the involvement of UK-born jihadis and, as in many other EU member states, sporadic terrorist attacks. There is concern about the threat posed by returning fighters from the Middle East, which has led to an increase in resources for the security services. There are occasional briefings from these services about "plots disrupted."

Global Inequalities

Global Social Policy
Score: 8

Despite regular objections from politicians, the United Kingdom has been one of the few OECD countries, which has maintained a commitment to devote 0.7% of GNI to foreign aid. In 2017, only Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark and Turkey met this target. Under the coalition government, this spending was ring-fenced against cuts and the recent spending review has reaffirmed the commitment, despite frequent criticism from some populist politicians.

Development assistance spending is coordinated by the Department for International Development, whose work is scrutinized by the newly created Independent Commission for Aid Impact.

In general, the United Kingdom is a proponent of open markets and fair access for developing countries, although an attempt in the late 1990s to espouse an ethical trade policy was subsequently quietly dropped.

While accepting its formal duty of care to asylum-seekers, the United Kingdom has been reluctant to join efforts by certain other EU member states to accommodate refugees and maintains tough border controls, including in the English Channel which emerged as an entry point for displaced persons and economic migrants over the last two years.

III. Enviromental Policies

Environment

Environmental
Policy
Score: 8

Environmental goals were ostensibly close to the heart of both governments led by David Cameron. Yet, some critics have expressed dismay at cuts in subsidies for green energy, and an increase in government support for natural gas fracking and nuclear power. The latter was reaffirmed in the decision to proceed with new reactors, but recent re-assessments of the commercial viability of nuclear energy may prevent it happening. The coalition government (2010 – 2015) set itself the goal of becoming "the greenest government ever," and its Conservative successor governments have not noticeably changed tack. However, worries about the cost of living led the government to suspend automatic increases in fuel duties for seven years in succession, and there have been rumblings of discontent over the 2008 Climate Change Act, which forms the legislative foundation for climate-change polices.

In many areas, the Cameron government continued previous government's initiatives. For example, market-based environmental policy mechanisms, and a planning system designed to preserve and protect "green belts" around major conurbations. The "eco towns" initiative of the former Labour government, promoting low carbon emissions, renewable energy, expansive green space and high recycling rates, was substantially scaled back due to spending cuts.

After taking over from Cameron in July 2016, Prime Minister Theresa May dissolved the Department of Energy and Climate Change, which had existed since 2008, merging it into the newly established Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. This step was harshly criticized by environmentalist groups. In her keynote speech at the Conservative and Unionist Party Conference, Prime Minister May did not mention any environmental topics beyond the ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement which took place on 11 November 2016. In a speech given at the U.N. General Assembly in September 2017 she stressed again the importance of staying within that agreement. There are renewed signs under the current environment minister, Michael Gove, that environmental policy will feature more prominently in the government's agenda in the future, while air quality has become an issue of growing public concern.

Much environmental policy is still determined by the European Union (e.g., the Water Framework Directive or the Biodiversity Agenda) beyond which there is little space for nationally specific initiatives. After "Brexit," some divergence from the European Union could occur, although there is no reason to believe that the United Kingdom will renege on big issues such as the Paris climate accord. Renewable water resources have never been an issue for the United Kingdom, although utility companies are being encouraged to reduce leaks and improve sewerage. Forestry policy is a devolved competence. In England there is Forestry Commission, which has responsibility for both tress and biodiversity.

The "#FridaysForFuture" movement and the more radical "Extinction Rebellion" group have – like in many other European countries – pushed climate policy into the limelight and elicited commitments from all parties to do more during the 2019 election campaign.

Global Environmental Protection

Global Environmental Policy Score: 9

Under the Conservative governments of John Major (1990 – 1997), there was a policy shift and the United Kingdom became one of the foremost advocates of environmental protection standards in the European Union. The United Kingdom ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

The United Kingdom has consistently pursued environmental protection and the reduction of carbon emissions. The coalition government of 2010 continued the carbon emissions targets for 2020 set by the preceding Labour government. The new Conservative government is likely to maintain this approach.

The Conservative government has boosted the construction of both on-shore and off-shore wind farms to raise the United Kingdom's share of renewable energies. Having previously encouraged fracking for natural gas, it now appears that public opposition to it has prevailed and companies in the sector are abandoning plans to continue drilling.

The United Kingdom ratified the Paris climate change deal at the Marrakech COP 22 summit in November 2016. The United Kingdom continues to be in the mainstream of European opinion on these issues and has deplored the Trump administration's rejection of COP 21. Following a large-scale public consultation, the government plans to introduce new measures to curb the use of plastics, including plans to introduce a plastics tax announced in the October 2018 budget, arguably demonstrating international leadership. The international aid budget includes "clean energy" projects.

Citation:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752202/Budget_2018_red_web.pdf see page 48

Quality of Democracy

Electoral Processes

Candidacy Procedures
Score: 9

In the United Kingdom, procedures for registering candidates and parties can generally be considered fair and without regulatory discrimination. The process of registration is uncomplicated, and the information required is offered by the state and easily accessible. No restrictions or regulations exist on party programs, but there are regulations limiting the choice of party name, which must not be obscene, offensive or misleading. The party emblem should also avoid these qualities. Registration as a candidate requires a deposit of £500 and the support of at least ten voters. Support from a party is not necessary, as candidates can run as independents, and many candidates do take advantage of this provision. Very occasionally, a candidate standing on a single issue achieves election, even in national elections.

Members of certain groups are not allowed to stand for election to the House of Commons, namely those in the police, the armed forces, judges, and members of the House of Lords who sit and vote there. While this may be considered reasonably necessary in a democracy (although no such restrictions are in place in many similar democracies), it seems harder to justify the exclusion of people who are subject to bankruptcy or debt relief restriction orders, because this is tantamount to a second punishment for financial mismanagement and thus discriminating against them.

Media Access
Score: 7

The media play a central role in political campaigning, and the importance of coverage has further increased in recent years through the rise of social media and the internet. Television remains the most important medium for campaigning in general elections. Paid TV advertising is prohibited for political parties, who can only advertise in newspapers. However, major parties are granted a certain amount of free time for TV advertising, a concession that is not available to minor parties and which could be construed as a deterrent to them.

Coverage on television is fair and balanced, and monitored by Ofcom, the industry regulator. Broadcasters are required to be balanced in their coverage of parties, especially at election time. Though there has been regular criticism of how broadcasters interpret the term "balance." On occasion, a minority

view (for example on climate change) will be given equal weight by organizations such as the BBC. No such restrictions exist for the print industry and indeed there is strong tradition of crass partiality, especially by some newspaper groups that are prominent in national political life, visible once more during the Brexit referendum campaign of 2016 and the ensuing political quarrels. There is therefore a marked imbalance between print and broadcast. Independent fact-checking agencies, such as Full Fact, which complement media presentations of statistics, try to highlight misleading claims and will be cited in media analyses.

Citation:
https://fullfact.org/

Voting and Registration Rights
Score: 9

In general elections, British, Irish and qualifying citizens of Commonwealth countries can vote. In local and devolved parliament/assembly elections, EU citizens resident in the United Kingdom can also vote. Entitlement to vote thus extends beyond British citizenship. However, the aforementioned nationalities can vote only if they have leave to remain in the United Kingdom.

In order to be entitled to vote, voters must be on the electoral register, which is maintained by local authorities and updated annually. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 also introduced individual electoral registration, which is intended to improve the security of the registration process. Registration statistics show regional and social discrepancies. There has been some concern that in certain localities where a significant proportion of the population do not speak English as a first language the registration process has been abused. Sporadic complaints are made about excessive (and possibly manipulated) use of postal votes.

A restriction on the right to vote in national elections applies only in three cases, namely criminal imprisonment, mental disability and membership either of the House of Lords or the royal family.

Party Financing
Score: 6

The Electoral Commission oversees all political financing in the United Kingdom. The commission is an independent institution set up by parliament, which publishes all its findings online to make them easily accessible. Although all donations above a certain threshold must be reported to the commission, the fact that political parties are largely dependent on donations for their ever-increasing spending on national campaigns has repeatedly led to huge scandals in the past. There have also been highly publicized cases where individual party donors have been rewarded by being granted honors. Changes have also been made to prevent donations from individuals not resident in the United Kingdom. Although these cases have generated considerable media interest, there is not much evidence that donations have influenced policy.

In 2011, the Committee on Standards in Public Life published a report recommending a cap of £10,000 on donations from individuals or organizations. This recommendation was welcomed, at the time, but has not been introduced.

Contributions from party members or local associations (through local fundraising) are relatively minor, though still useful to parties, compared to the amount parties receive from institutional sponsors (trade unions in the case of the Labour Party, business associations in the case of the Conservative Party) and individual donors. There is also some state financing of parties (known as "Short Money" after the politician who initiated it in the 1970s), which will be cut following the latest government expenditure review. The amount of Short Money received by a party is linked to the party's representation in the House of Commons, which means that parties that lose seats in a general election will face a funding squeeze during the next parliament. The 2010 – 2015 coalition government pledged to reform party financing, but made no substantial progress on the issue. The Conservative government elected in 2015 passed a Trade Union Act, which includes new restrictions on trade union financing for political parties. This will reduce the Labour Party's income.

Popular Decision-Making
Score: 3

It may seem strange at a time when UK politics is almost completely determined by the result of a referendum, but formally referendums play a small role in UK governance. They are rarely called in the United Kingdom, although they have been used in a handful of cases in recent years, including at local level to decide on whether to establish an elected mayor. Referendums also only follow from a government decision, rather than a citizen initiative, and require a specific legislative initiative to be enacted instead of being a routine process. The legal foundations for calling a referendum and binding the government to its outcome are weak, as the results are not legally binding. Citizens can, via an online petition, call for a parliamentary debate on any topic. Yet, the House of Commons is not obliged to agree to the debate and high-profile proposals can be – and frequently are – ignored. However, the outcome of the Brexit vote shows that they can become politically decisive and may lead to major changes in the United Kingdom's political system. Despite their lack of constitutional standing, referendums in the United Kingdom have a de facto influence on policy decisions, but this is rather ad hoc.

Referendums are often more a part of politics and agenda setting than a structural part of the United Kingdom's policymaking process. The central government may use a referendum to unite the population behind a controversial position and, by doing so, hope to silence their critics for good. Tony Blair's devolution referendums in 1997 and 1998 or the 1975

referendum which was used by then Prime Minister Wilson to counter opponents of the European Union in his party are prominent examples, as was the Brexit referendum campaign. The 2010 – 2015 coalition government's referendum in 2011 on an alternative voting system to replace "first-past-the-post" was called at the insistence of the junior coalition partner, the Liberal Democrats, but (successfully) opposed by the Conservatives.

In the 2016 referendum, a majority of voters declared their wish to leave the European Union against the advice of the leaders of the mainstream political parties, although several leading figures in these parties, in and out of government, opposed their party lines. Recently, the case for a second referendum on the results of the Brexit negotiation was loudly pushed by the People's Vote initiative, but has been strongly resisted, including by the leaders of the two main parties and many members of parliament. The main reason cited by many opponents of a second referendum, even by those hostile to Brexit, was that it would be undemocratic to ignore the result of the 2016 poll. The Labour Party, however, changed its position for the 2019 general election by promising to offer a second referendum if it won the election, but its ambivalence on the matter nevertheless confused voters.

The conduct of the 2016 EU referendum elicited legal action regarding the use of personal data and breaches of spending limits, as well as allegations of Russian influence. However, there is little evidence these incidents significantly altered the outcome. The bruising experience of the 2016 referendum and the lack of constitutional clarity on how to respond to the results of referendums make further resort to them unlikely at the UK level, although there is clear grassroots support for a further plebiscite on Scottish independence in Scotland.

Access to Information

Media Freedom
Score: 8

In the United Kingdom, television channels both in the public and the private sector are required by law to be politically neutral. The public regulator, Ofcom, oversees the sector. No such requirement exists for print media. The BBC, the main public-service broadcaster, is financed by a television license fee, which is effectively a poll tax. It is overseen by a board of governors and enjoys almost complete political independence. However, recent scandals may have weakened the BBC's standing, although there is as yet little evidence of that in its behavior, and it remains the case that TV and radio journalists often subject government and opposition politicians to very tough interviews. Politicians of all persuasions frequently accuse the BBC of bias, arguably highlighting the fact that it is outside political control. The aftermath of the News of the World scandal in 2011 (which led to the Leveson Inquiry and its

2013 report) exposed the overly close relations between politicians and the press. After a lively debate on whether stricter press regulation should be adopted to prevent excessively intrusive journalism, a new consensus seemed to emerge that formal regulation should not be introduced and the government has proved to be uneasy about acceding to demands for tougher statutory regulation.

Security reasons are sometimes given for restricting press freedom and, as in the case of government attempts to clamp down on disclosures by Edward Snowden, tend to cause considerable political and public backlash. Such incidents can tarnish the relationship between the UK media and the government. The journalists' resistance to intimidation and their reporting of government surveillance practices are a shining example for civil journalism. Several media actors expressed concerns about the libel laws in the aftermath of the 2013 Defamation Act, which was meant to protect freedom of speech, but there have been no more recent cases in which the underlying freedom of the press has been questioned. However, a recent assessment by the Paris-based NGO Reporters without Borders (RSF) is critical of the UK record. As in many other countries, the unfettered freedoms of social media are being challenged.

Citation:
https://rsf.org/en/united-kingdom

Media Pluralism
Score: 7

The strong concentration of newspaper ownership has long been a feature of the United Kingdom's media market and that continues to be the case. The BBC as a public-service broadcaster has a dominant position, especially with regard to broadcast and online news. There is a long tradition of powerful individual owners, such as Rupert Murdoch (News Corporation), dating back to the 19th century. This coexists with a lively regional newspaper scene. However, regional newspapers have little influence in terms of national opinion.

The electronic media and television market, in contrast, is much more balanced and also required by regulation to be politically neutral.

The support of the Murdoch media empire has been considered politically crucial over the last two decades. The firm has been very influential particularly in terms of the United Kingdom's position toward European integration. Following the News of the World scandal and the enquiry into corporate standards at News Corporation, Murdoch's influence may have been weakened, but that of the Daily Mail Group remains strong. In addition, the Leveson Inquiry has demanded higher diversity in ownership and tighter regulation on media mergers, both of which (if enacted) could also work

toward more diversity of opinion. The press, collectively, has strongly opposed attempts to circumscribe the freedom of opinion, and the matter remains unresolved.

Access to
Government
Information
Score: 8

The United Kingdom has a long tradition of official secrecy. Though in recent years successive governments have very actively tried to capitalize on the transparency and cost-savings potential of making government information available online. Together with the Freedom of Information Act 2005, this has contributed to easier access for citizens and, often in a very high-profile way, the media. The restrictions on what information can be provided under the Freedom of Information Act (cost limits; national security restrictions; state financial interests) are largely in line with the respective regulations in other countries. More recently there has been a debate about restricting the right to freedom of information. However, the former head of the civil service and the Cabinet Office minister responsible for the civil service have both opposed any restrictions on access, although former Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose government introduced the Freedom of Information Act, has said that he regrets doing so.

The United Kingdom has also been at the forefront of making government data available for commercial use and citizen inspection ("open data"). Recent efforts to simplify and render government information more accessible have seen the replacement of a profusion of web sites with a single government portal (gov.uk) and it is clear that the government now regards the provision of information as a high priority. It is noteworthy that the United Kingdom is now mentioned internationally as a leader in open government and access to data. In the World Justice Project's 2015 Open Government Index, the United Kingdom ranked 8 out of 102 countries, behind the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Canada.

Yet, this exemplary policy does not include all vital documents. For political reasons (e.g., to avoid undermining of the UK negotiating position vis-a-vis the EU27), the government sought to withhold or delay publication of strategic legal and economic assessments of the government's Brexit plans. For the most part, Parliament was able to insist on publication. The Johnson government delayed the publishing of a dossier from the intelligence and security committee concerning alleged Russian interference in the 2016 referendum campaign.

Citation:
http://worldjusticeproject.org/open-government-index/open-government-around-world

Civil Rights and Political Liberties

Civil Rights
Score: 6

In the United Kingdom, civil liberties have long been protected despite the absence of a written constitution and an accompanying bill of rights. The country thus shows that effective protection is possible if support for civil rights is firmly rooted in society and therefore is expected of the government of the day. However, UK citizens have been afforded additional rights of protection from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Events of the last decade such as terrorist attacks have also demonstrated that the balance between state interests and individual rights can be more easily tilted if there are no institutional protections at hand. Various anti-terrorism acts (2000; 2001; 2005; 2006; 2008) have given the UK government more and harsher instruments to fight terrorism. For most citizens, these anti-terrorist measures are not an issue, but for the very small minority that they affect, they can be a source of dismay. In the past, governments had objected to rulings from the ECHR, to the extent that some government ministers advocated a UK withdrawal from the court. The absolute national sovereignty of British courts was a crucial argument to the campaign to leave the European Union.

While courts and public pressure have from time to time succeeded in stopping practices like the indefinite detention of non-nationals, the state has usually succeeded in reintroducing them after some time under a different name, for example when replacing "control orders" with "terrorism prevention and investigation measures." However, it does so under quite intense media scrutiny. The files leaked by former U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) subcontractor and system administrator Edward Snowden disclosed a degree of digital surveillance in the United Kingdom that far exceeded expectations. The Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), with its Tempora and MUSCULAR programs, as well as the NSA/GCHQ PRISM joint venture, tracks and evaluates a very large share of national and international electronic communications. But despite the initial media outcry, public opposition to these programs has been relatively mild. Furthermore, wider society is well aware of the proactive tradition of its national intelligence services, and criticism tends to be limited outside the context of libertarian pressure groups. The most sustained opposition today comes from communication firms whose servers were hacked by government agents to access private data. An upshot of this episode was the introduction of a new Investigatory Powers Act in 2016, with regulations coming into force in 2018.

There have been several legal challenges to the government approach, often initiated by NGOs such as Liberty or Privacy International. In October 2016, the investigatory power tribunal, which is the only court that hears complaints against the intelligence agencies (i.e., MI5, MI6 and GCHQ), ruled that the

mass collection of private data as committed by the security services between 1998 and 2015 failed to comply with Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights and was therefore illegal. After being declared unlawful by the Court of Appeal, significant parts of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016, better known as the "Snoopers' Charter," will need to be overhauled by the legislators. However, as Computer World reported in summer 2019, the courts have supported the government position on, for example, the right to appeal judgments of the tribunal.

Although the government has announced plans to replace the Human Rights Act with a new Bill of Rights, it is unclear what will change and how court decisions based on EU law will be made when the United Kingdom leaves the European Union.

Citation:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/668943/Response_to_the_IPA_codes_consultation.pdf

https://www.computerworlduk.com/security/draft-investigatory-powers-bill-what-you-need-know-3629116/

https://www.computerworld.com/article/3427019/the-snoopers-charter-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-investigatory-powers-act.html

Political Liberties
Score: 8

Without a written constitution and the protection it affords, citizens of the United Kingdom have no fundamental rights in the sense of enjoying special protection against the powers of the executive and parliament. Citizens' rights in the United Kingdom can thus be said to be residual and negative in nature. Citizens can do anything not expressly prohibited by law, but there are no positive rights to assert against the government unless the government concedes them. In practice, UK citizens enjoy considerable freedoms, although rights to protest were somewhat circumscribed by a law requiring protesters to give advance notice to the police of a demonstration and restrictions on protests in sensitive locations. Even so, demonstrations do take place, sometimes without respecting the legal obligations. For example, in 2019, the "flash" protests by Extinction Rebellion were initially treated lightly by the police, but were subsequently more robustly policed, partly in response to public objections to the disruption caused.

Since disputes about political liberties always arise over contested issues, UK citizens have little recourse within the political system, especially when compared to continental European political systems. The Human Rights Act of 1998 (HRA) represented an attempt to create a "higher law" to which all other laws must conform. It offers individual and minority rights, and empowers judges to hold the executive to account and review acts of parliament. But its effectiveness is constrained by the fact that the government can temporarily

annul the HRA, if it considers this necessary for the benefit of the country, and it remains contested.

The relative informality of civil rights in the United Kingdom is often justified by the strong tradition of a fair and open public discourse, which forms the very heart of the United Kingdom's political identity.

Non-discrimination
Score: 8

Over the last 15 years, measures to combat discrimination have entered the political agenda, the statute books and, perhaps most tellingly, have become cultural norms. Starting with the Race Relations Act 2000, all public authorities have been obliged to promote race equality and tackle discrimination. In 2006, this was extended to cover gender and disability discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 has added further areas, such as age, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity and religion or belief. Political pressure is being exerted to add "caste" in order to fight discrimination still common in the Asian community. The legal framework is therefore very robust in countering discrimination and has had a significant impact on social attitudes, with the result that incidents of discrimination are rapidly and loudly condemned.

The state has made a serious attempt to end discrimination and abolish inequalities by reacting to a number of scandals in, for example, the police force with its alleged "institutionalized racism." Relatively minor incidents on the football field become headline news and the mainstream view is very strongly anti-discriminatory, to the extent that even populist political parties appealing to indigenous groups have to be very careful to avoid any hint of overt racism or other forms of discrimination. The perception that the indigenous population is crowded out from public services and social housing has contributed to concerns about the impact of immigration, on which right-wing political forces and the right-wing press are capitalizing. There is still a massive imbalance in the national DNA database (40% of the black male population is registered, but only 13% of Asian males and 9% of Caucasian males) and anti-terrorism laws sometimes entail racial profiling. These phenomena may be primarily rooted in security concerns rather than in explicit discrimination. They can, however, nurture discriminating path dependencies in criminal investigations. While such relations have lately been the subject of heated public debates in countries like France, the Netherlands and the United States, the debate in the United Kingdom has remained comparatively quiet. Moreover, support for equality measures is evident in how public opinion reacts to cases of discrimination.

Rule of Law

Legal Certainty
Score: 6

In the United Kingdom, the government and public administration apparatus act in line with legal provisions. This is facilitated by the government's extensive control over the legislative process, which enables the government to alter provisions if they constitute a hindrance to government policy objectives. Media and other checks on executive action deter any deviation.

An interesting test case arose as a result of the fraught stand-off between Parliament and the government during the autumn of 2019 when the former passed an act obliging the government to send a letter requesting an extension to the Article 50 deadline. The government did comply, albeit with bad grace and with two accompanying letters, saying it disagreed with the obligation. Despite these theatrics, the law was followed and an extension agreed with the European Union.

The process of delivering Brexit has seen considerable uncertainty about whether successive deadlines would be met and how different interests would be affected. The "Great Repeal Bill," the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill 2018, promised to bring all legislation derived from the European Union back into the UK legal system. Although the bill finally achieved a second reading at the end of October 201 9, its further progress to becoming an Act of Parliament was interrupted by the calling of a general election. Completing Brexit will also entail a large number of statutory instruments, a form of legislation that limits the legislature's ability to scrutinize. There were also concerns that a large proportion of the legislation necessary to implement Brexit would be introduced in this way – with critics deploring so-called Henry VIII Clauses, referring to the 16th century English monarch's propensity to over-ride Parliament. Given the volume of legal changes needed, the balance between primary legislation and a resort to statutory instruments is a delicate matter, but it would be incorrect to regard the government as not acting in accordance with legal provisions.

The uncertainty has long been a source of great concern for the business community and international investors in the United Kingdom. An unusually harsh remark came from Hiroaki Nakanishi, chairman of Keidanren the largest Japanese business association, who deplored the lack of clarity about what the UK government expects the future UK-EU relationship to be. Similarly, the post-Brexit status of the more than three million EU citizens currently living and working in the United Kingdom has still not been reliably clarified.

:
https://www.gov.uk/eu-withdrawal-act-2018-statutory-instruments
Fore Keidanren source: https://www.ft.com/content/37e87630-a9eb-11e8-94bd-cba20d67390c

Judicial Review
Score: 8

The United Kingdom has no written constitution and no Constitutional Court, although the supreme court fulfills this function. Consequently, the United Kingdom has no judicial review comparable to that in the United States or many other European countries. While courts have no power to declare parliamentary legislation unconstitutional, they scrutinize executive action to prevent public authorities from acting beyond their powers. A prominent example was the ruling of the High Court of Justice in November 2016 that the British government must not declare the United Kingdom's separation from the European Union without a parliamentary hearing. The United Kingdom has a sophisticated and well-developed legal system, which is highly regarded internationally and based on the regulated appointment of judges.

Additional judicial oversight is still provided by the European Court of Human Rights, to which UK citizens have recourse. However, as a consequence of several recent high-profile ECHR decisions overturning decisions made by the UK government, some political figures called for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the court's jurisdiction even before the referendum. The role and powers of the ECHR in the British legal system in a post-EU United Kingdom remain unclear.

In recent years, courts have strengthened their position in the political system. In cases of public concern over government action, public inquiries have often been held. However, implementation of any resulting recommendations is ultimately up to government, as the public lacks legal power. Judge-led inquiries tend to be seen by the public as having the highest degree of legitimacy, whereas investigations by members of the bureaucracy are prone to be regarded more cynically. Many such inquiries tend to be ad hoc and some drag on for so long that there is limited public awareness of the subject by the time their final reports are published. The extensive delay in publishing the Chilcot inquiry into the Iraq war, finally made public only in July 2016 several years after it was supposed to be completed, was widely criticized by the government, media and citizen groups.

Appointment of
Justices
Score: 7

The judicial appointments system reflects the informality of the constitution, but it has undergone substantial changes in recent years, which formalize a cooperative process without a majority requirement. Since the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, the powers of the Lord Chancellor have been divided up. Furthermore, the supreme court of the United Kingdom has been established, which replaces the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords and relieves the second chamber of its judiciary role. The queen appoints 12 judges to the supreme court based on the recommendation of the prime minister who is advised by the Lord Chancellor in cooperation with a selection commission. It would be a surprise if the prime minister ignored the advice or the Lord

Chancellor or selection commission or the queen ignored the recommendations of the prime minister. The queen has a formal, ceremonial role and she is bound to impartiality. In contrast, the Lord Chancellor has a highly influential role and consults with the legal profession.

There is no empirical basis on which to assess the actual independence of appointments, but there is every reason to believe that the appointment process will confirm the independence of the judiciary.

Corruption
Prevention
Score: 8

The United Kingdom is comparatively free of explicit corruption like bribery or fraud, and there is little evidence that explicit corruption influences decision-making at national level. Occasional episodes arise of limited and small-scale corruption at local level, usually around property development. The delinquents of recent scandals in UK politics mostly acted within the law. However, these scandals point to a continuing gap between politicians' attitudes and the public's expectations. Regulations against corruption have already been formalized to strengthen them, with the 2004 Corruption Bill consolidating and updating regulations into one law. On most international comparisons, the United Kingdom comes out with strong scores.

The members of parliament expenses scandal of 2009 provoked a call for more transparency in this field, but is an example of an informal "British" approach to the political problem of not wanting to raise the salaries of members of parliament. Instead, there was a tacit understanding that they could claim generous expenses. The rules were tightened very substantially in the wake of the scandal, and an independent body was set up to regulate member of parliaments' expenses. Codes of practice, such as the Civil Service Code and the Ministerial Code, have been revised (the latter in October 2015, following the election) and are publicly available. The volume of material published has been overwhelming, with examples range from lists of dinner guests at Chequers (the prime minister's country residence) to details of spending on government credit cards. The most recent report (December 2016) from the independent adviser on ministerial interest appears to present a clean bill of health and notes that no reason to investigate any breaches of the ministerial code since 2012.

At a more subtle level, influence based on connections and friendships can occur, but rarely with direct financial implications. However, some regulatory decisions may be affected by the exercise of such influence.

Citation:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468255/Final_draft_ministerial_code_No_AMENDS_14_Oct.pdf

Governance

I. Executive Capacity

Strategic Capacity

Although the United Kingdom has one of the most centralized political systems and is one of the long-established liberal democracies in the world, the resources directly available to the prime minister are relatively limited compared with those available to other heads of government. Formally, there is no prime ministerial department to provide strategic planning or advice, although the Cabinet Office provides an important coordinating role across government and its head, the cabinet secretary, attends cabinet meetings. The cabinet secretary is also the head of the civil service, after the two roles were separated under the previous coalition government, and chairs the quarterly Projects Commissioning Board. In 2014, the post of chief executive of the civil service was created with the incumbent becoming a permanent secretary of the Cabinet Office in 2015. The Projects Commissioning Board works closely with the Economic and Domestic Affairs Secretariat (EDS), established in summer 2015, which fosters future and innovative projects. Generally, the Civil Service has undergone substantial modernization and professionalization over the past decade.

At a political level, a special advisory unit has supported all recent prime ministers. Special advisers and civil servants staff these advisory units. The remit of the Number 10 Policy Unit is defined by the prime minister but tends to focus on strategic political and policy decisions. In 2012, the prime minister and deputy prime minister established a dedicated Implementation Unit within the Cabinet Office, charged with driving implementation in areas deemed to be of high priority and now reinforced by the creation of implementation task forces to oversee the delivery of policy initiatives.

However, these structures in some cases diminished the executive's ability for strategic planning. The quarrels within the second May cabinet, which blocked

most pressing policy decisions, and the fruitless efforts of Prime Minister May to tame her own ministers laid bare the inherent deficits of an excessively loose organization of executive power. The situation further deteriorated after May's bitter resignation. The new prime minister, Boris Johnson, and his chief special adviser, Dominic Cummings, quickly adopted a strategy that combined opacity with confrontation, alleging that Parliament worked against "the people." Without a majority in the House of Commons and without a public strategy for the government, this resulted in what many observers considered to be close to a constitutional crisis.

Citation:
https://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/twelve_actions_report_web_accessible.pdf

Institute for Government (2014) Whitehall Monitor 2014 A data-driven analysis of the size, shape and performance   of   Whitehall (http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/IFG%20-%20Whitehall%20Monitor%202014.pdf)

Expert Advice
Score: 7

Non-governmental academic experts played an important role in conducting independent reviews of central government policy or strategy during the post-1997 Labour governments. They have worked on the economics of climate change (Sir Nicholas Stern), the future of the pension system (Lord Turner), a review of health trends (Sir Derek Wanless) and fuel poverty (Sir John Hills). Established academics have also served in decision-making bodies such, as the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England since 1997 when the Bank of England was made independent of government. These academics have thus been given substantial influence over core decisions. Most government departments solicit external studies on policy-relevant issues and are supported in doing so by a new Cabinet Office team called Launchpad. The reports are subject to normal procurement rules, typically with a restricted call for tenders.

When the previous coalition government (2010 – 2015) took power, the change altered the political orientation of the experts consulted by government. However, a further shift in practice was due to the commitment to what is known as open policymaking (OPM), under which policymakers are called on to actively seek broader inputs into the policymaking process. The traditionally strong influence of think tanks has continued, but those of the left-leaning variety (e.g., the Institute for Public Policy Research and Policy Network) have been replaced by more conservative-minded ones (e.g., the Resolution Foundation and the Center for Policy Studies). The interactions are transparent but occur at various stages of the policymaking process and are often initiated by the think tanks themselves. What appears to have changed is the underlying approach to OPM, which has increasingly sought not only to emphasize evidence-based policymaking, but also to identify more appropriate

policy solutions. A "what works" team in the Cabinet Office facilitates this process and government departments publish details about their areas of research interest. The Government Office for Science is a unit dedicated to bringing scientific evidence to bear on decision-making. In November 2018, five new business councils, covering major export-sector clusters, were established to advise on how to create the best business conditions in the United Kingdom after Brexit.

There are also many informal channels through which government consults or is briefed by individual academics who have expertise in specific areas. These channels are often more influential than more formal consultation processes. One recent example was the review of the balance of competences between the EU and UK levels in which several government departments made very extensive attempts to engage with academics. Civil servants are routinely involved in academic events, and benefit from professional policy training and the Trial Advice Panel. The Trial Advice Panel, which consists of experts from within government and academics, supports civil servants to design experimental and quasi-experimental assessments for programs and interventions.

In the negotiation of the EU withdrawal agreement, informal links proliferated, including with think tanks, business interests and academia, but the fundamental political choices were not obviously influenced by expert advice.

Citation:
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-office-for-science/about

Interministerial Coordination

GO Expertise
Score: 9

The primary coordinating role is undertaken by the Cabinet Office, which has expertise in all areas of government since Cabinet Office officials commonly worked in other departments before. According to its website, the Cabinet Office has over 2,000 staff, is responsible for the National Security Council and is central to "making government work better." The Cabinet Office's Economic and Domestic Secretariat is responsible for coordinating policy advice to the prime minister and the cabinet, and the attached Parliamentary Business and Legislation (PBL) Secretariat provides advice on legislation and supervises progress made by bill drafting teams. The head of the Economic and Domestic Secretariat is also responsible for the Implementation Unit and the operation of the Implementation Task Forces, which oversee the implementation of government policies, and coordinates between ministers and public officials. Implementation Unit staff are policy experts from the civil service with good ministerial networks and excellent substantive expertise.

The role of the Treasury in putting pressure on departmental spending also contributes to interministerial coordination.

Line Ministries
Score: 9

The Cabinet Office is at the center of policymaking. Since the May 2015 general election, all line ministries are required to prepare single departmental plans (SDP), building on a process already launched during the previous coalition government. As explained by John Manzoni, the chief executive of the civil service appointed in October 2014, these SDPs are intended to bring together inputs and outputs, clarify trade-offs, and to identify where departments and the cross-departmental functions need to work together to deliver the required outcomes.

Line ministries' policymaking is subject to intense scrutiny by the Cabinet Office, while the cost implications of line ministries' policy proposals are controlled by the Treasury.

The creation of implementation taskforces, working alongside cabinet committees, is intended to strengthen the central oversight of policy proposals.

Nevertheless, coordination mechanisms were not able to resolve the political tensions around Brexit. Thus, while the machinery of government remains broadly capable of involving the Prime Minister's Office, the manner in which Brexit has dominated policymaking over the last year militated against "business as usual."

Cabinet Committees
Score: 9

The composition and terms of reference of cabinet committees are decided by the prime minister. The minister for the Cabinet Office generally also has an influential role, chairing 10 and sitting on all but two cabinet committees under the May government. The creation of implementation taskforces alongside conventional committees led to a net increase in committee numbers. After the change of prime minister in the summer of 2016, two noteworthy innovations were the establishment of the European Union Exit and Trade Committee, and the Economy and Industrial Strategy Cabinet Committee, both of which were chaired by the prime minister. Additionally, a committee on social reform was created. However, leaks from cabinet ministers suggested that key decisions on Brexit were not adequately shared outside the prime minister's inner circle.

When Johnson succeeded May as prime minister, he radically altered the mix of committees, reducing them to just six, three of which were largely focused on concluding Brexit, the over-riding priority of his government. This exemplifies the UK government's tendency to create new committees rapidly

in response to shifts in political priorities, demonstrating the flexibility of the system. Once withdrawal from the European Union has taken place a wide-ranging revision of these committees to reflect the next set of political priorities is certain to occur.

Cabinet committees reduce the burden on the cabinet by enabling collective decisions to be taken by a smaller group of ministers. Since the Conservative government of Edward Heath (1970 – 1974), it has become an established norm that decisions settled in cabinet committees are not questioned in full cabinet unless the committee chair or the prime minister decide to do so.

Citation:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/720421/20
18-06-27_DUP_CC_Transparency_Return__October_to_March__FINAL.pdf

https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/whitehall-monitor/whitehall-explained/cabinet-committees

Ministerial Bureaucracy
Score: 8

The interministerial coordination of policy proposals is an official civil service goal. Single Departmental Plans (SDPs) set out departmental objectives and how these will be achieved. SDPs highlight areas of cross-departmental working, including where departments are working together to deliver shared objectives and are overseen by the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister's Office. There are also some cross-departmental bodies established in response to the identification of specific objectives, such as the Work and Health Unit set up to improve the employability of disabled or ill people.

However, problems of capacity and capability in this area have been revealed by surveys undertaken within the civil service. Examples of civil service disruption are, on the one hand, the Civil Service Reform Plan of 2012 and, on the other hand, the coalition's spending cuts, which have hit parts of the ministerial bureaucracy very hard and led to considerable job cuts. Relations between the civil service and the government have been affected, but the situation does not seem to have had a great impact on the efficiency of policy-proposal coordination. As explained above, the Cabinet Office assures coordination at the level of officials.

There are concerns that the workload required to deliver Brexit will undermine coordination within government. Though once Brexit is concluded, reversion to the usual procedures can be expected.

Informal Coordination
Score: 8

Informal coordination was a hallmark of the Labour governments under Tony Blair (1997 – 2007). However, informal coordination was reduced during the Labour government of Gordon Brown (2007 – 2010) and largely abolished under the coalition government (2010 – 2015), because of the need for avoiding tensions within the coalition.

Having returned to one-party government in May 2015, it was expected that informal forms of coordination would become more common again. Yet, the divisions within the governing Conservative Party, namely among senior ministers and party factions, over the United Kingdom's future relations with the European Union complicated informal coordination, to a point of more or less open sabotage, that finally lead to the collapse of the May government. The rift within the Conservative Party even widened under May's successor Boris Johnson.

Cabinet committee discussions are regularly preceded or accompanied by bilateral meetings of relevant ministers supported by senior officials across government. These will often be chaired by the chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster or by other senior ministers.

:
Collaborative Civil Service: https://civilservice.blog.gov.uk/2016/04/28/a-model-for-a-more-collaborative-civil service-the-estate-strategy-in-action/

Digitalization for
Interministerial
Coordination
Score: 8

The Government Digital Service (GDS), established in 2012, established standards for new digital services and promotes the government's digital-by-default approach. GDS is also responsible for providing common technologies and services to departments for their digital services (e.g., the gov.uk platform, and cross-government payments and notifications services). All government departments now have digital technology teams, which in some departments are also responsible for internal IT services for officials.

Use of digital technologies for policy coordination is evolving. A standard set of email and office software (either Microsoft Office or Google Suite) is used, and video conference facilities are also increasingly employed. However, submissions to ministers are generally still handled in paper form once the official has supplied it to their private offices, although some ministers do read electronic copies on their official laptop, tablet computer or smartphone.
The Cabinet Office has introduced the "Better Information for Better Government" program in response to Sir Alex Allan's Review, which examined the government's approach to record-keeping in the digital age. However, effective digitalization in the NHS remains a major challenge and there were difficulties in rolling out the Universal Credit welfare reforms.

An assessment by Daniel Thornton of the Institute for Government provided qualified support to government efforts to achieve more digital coordination. A report by the Public Accounts Committee on the progress of the government's Verify program (intended to ease digital access for citizens by simplifying verification of their identity) was scathing about the failures of implementation and lack of progress.

Citation:
Alex   Allan   review:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/589946/20
17-01-18_-_Better_Information_for_Better_Government.pdf

https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/head-of-ddat-final.pdf

https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-
committee/news-parliament-2017/accessing-public-services-through-verify-report-published-17-19/

Evidence-based Instruments

RIA Application
Score: 7

The reduction of regulation costs has been a long-standing policy goal of successive governments. Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) have to be prepared for all legislation, which affects businesses, charities and voluntary bodies, to assess the benefits and burdens of the planned measure. Academic research has questioned the value of these assessments since their results are not systematically integrated into the decision-making process, but they are certainly applied. The threshold for conducting a full RIA has been raised from effects exceeding £1 million to £5 million, but this is expected only to reduce the number of RIAs by 7%. RIAs are followed up after five years to verify their findings, with independent oversight.

While this is good overall practice, there was some doubt about the timing of impact assessment of the major policy transformations associated with Brexit. The former Brexit Secretary David Davis stated repeatedly that the government has assessed the impact of different possible models of Brexit, though not with a formal RIA. Numerous studies have, nevertheless, been undertaken by different departments, although the government has resisted pressure to make all the relevant documentation public in a timely manner. Some elaboration is provided by the Institute for Government.

Under the Johnson government, the handling of the RIA system has declined to one of political expediency, with the government neglecting to take its legal obligations in this area seriously. For example, the chancellor has resisted pressure to undertake an RIA examining the changes promised in the negotiated Withdrawal Agreement in autumn 2019.

Citation:
Dunlop, Claire A. et al. 2012: The many uses of regulatory impact assessment: A meta- analysis of EU and UK cases, in: Regulation & Governance Vol. 6 23-45.

https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/no-deal-brexit-uk-preparations

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/841245/E
U_Withdrawal_Agreement_Bill_Impact_Assessment.pdf

Quality of RIA
Process
Score: 7

The Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC), a body established in 2009 and independent since 2012, is responsible for quality evaluation and impact assessment. The RPC provides feedback to the Reducing Regulation Committee, a sub-committee of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, on the quality of the analysis and evidence presented. The RPC does not actively solicit input from outside the government department concerned, but is open to submissions from other stakeholders on the impacts of proposed regulation. Transparency and guidance is provided on the government website (gov.uk) detailing how to contact the RPC. The government invites direct comment on the process in an effort to engage citizens and, perhaps more importantly, businesses. To reduce regulatory costs for businesses, the government committed to a Business Impact Target. There is a one-in-three-out principle for new regulations, with information regularly updated online.

This is again contrasted by the fact that these rules seem to have been permanently ignored in the planning and execution of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

Citation:
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulatory-policy-committee/about#rpc-guidance-and-training

Sustainability
Check
Score: 8

In the United Kingdom, the whole RIA process aims to provide support for sustainable policymaking. The assessment is based on a wide range of different indicators, including social, environmental and ecological. However, economic indicators seem to be the most important. The assessments analyze the impact of regulation over several time periods (i.e., short, medium and long-term), and they attempt to take into account external shocks and irregular developments. There is a sustainable development impact test to complete for all relevant policy proposals.

Citation:
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sustainable-development-impact-test

Quality of Ex
Post Evaluation
Score: 10

Evidenced-based decision-making is deeply rooted in the United Kingdom's tradition of firm and efficient legislation, and ex post evaluations are as vital a part of public policymaking as impact and sustainability checks. The OECD ranks the United Kingdom second among its 40 members for its approach. Specialist analytical functions have recently been brought together to form the Analysis Function, further strengthening their role in policymaking and service delivery. Analytical approaches to evaluation are set out by the Magenta Book and the Green Book, supported by the Cross-Government Evaluation Group coordinated by HM Treasury. More recently the Behavioral Insights Team

(formerly a team within the Cabinet Office, but now an independent entity) and the What Works Network (coordinated by the Cabinet Office) promote the increased use of evaluation methods, especially randomized controlled trials.

The notion here is to make government more efficient, and so to quickly identify and overcome unnecessary regulatory hurdles. In 2011, the previous coalition government launched the "Red Tape Challenge," encouraging citizens to report unhelpful or burdensome legislation that could be cut or reformed. However, the main focus of the United Kingdom's commitment to ex post evaluation is surely on facilitating business.

The Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) assesses the quality of the government's RIA analyses and further examines all published ex post evaluation. If the RPC submits a recommendation to the government, it is expected to be implemented into law. Further, businesses can directly address the RPC if they disagree with or feel disadvantaged by a specific governmental regulatory assessment.

Citation:
OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2018

Societal Consultation

Public
Consultation
Score: 7

The United Kingdom had a weaker tradition, compared to many other EU member states, of systematically incorporating civil society organizations into the decision-making process. Nevertheless, a significant effort has been made since 2010 to make government more open and, in 2019, a new action plan for open government was published. The plan sets out eight commitments in the areas of influencing policymaking, transparency on publicly owned resources and access to data.

Previous changes had led to a substantial increase in policymaking transparency and included systematic efforts to consult a range of actors. However, the extent to which social partners are formally engaged in the policymaking process continues to be less than in many other western European countries. The 2010 – 2015 coalition government established a "compact" to govern civil society engagement in policymaking in England, under the auspices of a (junior) minister for civil society. Civil society is also listed as one of the responsibilities of the minister for the Cabinet Office. The United Kingdom was a founding member of the Open Government Partnership and, as a member of the partnership, it is committed to producing a national action plan to engage with civil society. The current plan detailed a range of commitments. According to a recent self-assessment, some three-quarters of

these commitments have already been achieved or are underway, though 27% of these commitments are behind schedule. Impact assessments are one means by which consultation has been enhanced, with drafts circulated to stakeholders before being finalized. Feedback on these drafts considered before decisions are taken on whether or not to proceed with the policy change under review.

In 2014, some 650 public consultation processes took place, all described on the government website (gov.uk) and this increased further in 2018 when 767 were conducted. In addition, a range of Advisory Boards solicit input into the policymaking process in areas such as migration and social security. However, a concern (expressed to the reviewer by a former minister for the Cabinet Office) is that the follow-up to many consultations is limited. Given the pluralist nature of the UK system of interest groups and associations, it can also be difficult to identify which organization would be competent and legitimized to speak on a certain issue. However, through initiatives such as the Policy Lab, set up in 2014, the Cabinet Office has established a catchy approach to open policymaking. The United Kingdom continues to be prominent in the Open Government Partnership and made good progress toward the National Action Plan 2016 – 2018.

The 2016 Brexit referendum was unusual in negotiating public support. As had happened in the only previous EU referendum in 1975, members of the government and parliamentarians taking the governing Conservative Party whip were given the right to be leading members of the "leave" campaign, even though the official government position was to support "remain." Similar dispensation was given to opposition shadow ministers.

Citation:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compact-the-agreement-between-government-and-the-voluntary-community-sector

https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/about/

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/668970/Final_mid-term_self_assessment_report_NAP_2016-18.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-national-action-plan-for-open-government-2019-2021

Policy Communication

Coherent
Communication
Score: 5

Compared with the culture of secrecy of earlier decades, government has become much more open in the United Kingdom in recent years. This is due to a combination of the Freedom of Information Act passed by a Tony Blair-led Labour government, and a willingness to use the internet to increase

transparency and open up government. The government website (gov.uk) provides extensive information on government services and activities, and has been redesigned to be more user friendly. It is also a single gateway website, which aims to facilitate greater coherence in line with the government communications plan.

On international measures, such as the Open Data Index or OECD government assessments, the United Kingdom scores well and there is clearly a strong push from within the administration to enhance communication, for example with a strategic communications plan and a single communications budget.

However, while the mechanisms of communication were laudable, communication in recent years can be criticized. Government communication around the divisive issue of UK membership of the European Union has been far from clear and this lack of coherence remains apparent as governments in recent years have struggled to explain their stance to the public. Theresa May failed to develop a clear message, with briefings from rival factions in government undermining the prime minister's communication. Although her successor, Boris Johnson, sought to clamp down on leaks, the fraught politics of autumn 2019 were not conducive to a coherent strategy. As with so many facets of governance, the settlement of Brexit is expected to result in a return to more coherent communication.

Citation:
OPM Approach: https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/ is an open site with short articles on the OPM approach
https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/communications-plan/

Implementation

Government
Effectiveness
Score: 5

The United Kingdom's political system is highly centralized. For example, there are no "veto players" outside of the central government who could challenge or undermine the government's core policy objectives. There is no written constitution or Constitutional Court, although the Supreme Court can challenge government decisions directly and effectively. There is provision for judicial review, something the government is currently trying to limit given its extensive use in recent years. The devolution of certain powers to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has meant that some national policy goals are subject to decisions at the subnational level over which the central government has only limited powers. In particular, the influence of the Scottish Parliament, based in Holyrood, has increased substantially following the close outcome of the Scottish referendum and the massive gains made by the Scottish National Party across Scotland in recent UK general elections.

Persistent problems in the National Health Service have had to be addressed by resort to emergency funding. Meanwhile, disputes over some issues – such as a third runway at Heathrow or the (slow) construction of HS2, a high-speed rail-link between London and northern England – have been affected by the impact that the issue would have on individual ministers' parliamentary constituencies. The government has also struggled to introduce major welfare reforms, notably Universal Credit. The Institute for Government (IfG) notes an increase in the number of major projects for which delivery is "in doubt" or "unachievable" compared to five years earlier. IfG has found that, among other challenges, Brexit has distracted civil servants, undermining the effectiveness of civil service operations. The untimely death of Sir Jeremy Heywood, the former head of the Home Civil Service, has also forced a change in the leadership of the civil service.

On the whole, UK governments are able to achieve what they set out to do, because the electoral system is geared to generating parliamentary majorities which facilitate implementation of objectives. Nevertheless, and especially when the government's majority is small, difficulties can arise in achieving policy objectives because of intra-party factionalism and parliamentary party rebellions. Even under the exceptional coalition government between 2010 and 2015, Premier Minister David Cameron often had more trouble controlling his own party's right-wing than dealing with the demands of the junior coalition partner, the Liberal Democrats. After the general election in 2017 in which May lost her absolute majority and was forced into a "confidence-and-supply" arrangement with the Northern Irish unionist DUP, challenges in implementation became only too evident – and even more so after she was replaced by Boris Johnson who eventually withdrew the whip from no fewer than 21 Conservative members of parliament. The UK government was without a majority in the House of Commons for weeks, which in this traditionally parliament-focused system meant a de facto standstill of almost all government action.

The conclusion to draw is that in the relatively rare circumstances of a hung parliament, the UK government will struggle to implement policies. In the exceptional circumstances of 2019, the difficulties were exacerbated, but are expected to be solved by a return to majority government.

Citation:
https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Whitehall%20Monitor%202019%20WEB1.pdf

Ministerial
Compliance
Score: 7

The prime minister has traditionally had more or less absolute power to appoint (and fire) ministers. Prime ministers use this power of patronage to earn the loyalty of backbench members of parliament and to ensure that

ministers stick to the government agenda. The prime minister is also able to reshape the machinery of government, such as the remit and composition of ministries and cabinet committees.

Despite occasional leaks, the collective responsibility of cabinet is a well-entrenched doctrine, with standards of behavior are set out in the Ministerial Code. The prime minister's power is partly dependent on the incumbent's political strength and calculations by their party and potential rivals as to their future electoral success (which is directly linked to their own job security). Party whips also play a key role in passing legislation and thus in supporting the government, and – although Conservative members of parliament elected since 2010 are sometimes considered to be more prone to rebellion – any members of parliament with strong political ambitions have to be wary of being branded as mavericks. However, this label has become significantly less stigmatizing over the past years.

Following the 2016 referendum, several ministers publicly dissented from the government line on Brexit, with some ministers even resigning from the cabinet, while others used leaks and briefings to undermine the prime minister. As with other questions on executive capacity, the particular circumstances of Brexit being implemented by a minority government were unusually difficult. The ensuing disputes within the cabinet blocked Theresa May's key policies and finally collapsed her government. Her successor, Boris Johnson, who was a central figure in sabotaging Theresa May's premiership, has since managed to reinstate the discipline he himself helped undermine.

Monitoring
Ministries
Score: 9

The tight integration between the Prime Minister's Office and the Cabinet Office enables prime ministers to be effective in determining the strategic direction of the government. Through Treasury Approval Point processes, the Treasury has long had an important monitoring role, which goes beyond the role of finance ministries in other countries. Decision-making is concentrated in strategic units and in informal meetings. Ministers have to reveal their preferences in cabinet meetings, cabinet committees and bilateral meetings with the prime minister or chancellor. Consequently, monitoring is relatively easy for the core executive, also by means of the single department plans.

Some recent initiatives have reinforced central oversight, including the merger of the Major Projects Authority and Infrastructure UK into the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, which reports to both the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury. There are implementation task forces set up at ministerial level to drive delivery in a focused set of priority areas and an implementation unit in the Cabinet Office which works on behalf of the prime minister to track the delivery of priority policies and the wider government program. It intervenes where delivery or operational performance is at risk, or progress is unclear and

strengthens implementation capability across the civil service. The Financial Management Reform launched in 2014 has been evaluated as a success by the Institute for Government. The Department for Exiting the European Union oversees departments' progress toward implementing the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. The department has identified individual workstreams that need to be taken forward, and works closely with departments and other parts of central government to monitor delivery in these areas.

Citation:
Whitehall's   Financial   Management   Reform: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/IfG_FMR_Cima_briefing_paper_ WEB_2.pdf

Monitoring
Agencies,
Bureaucracies
Score: 7

The United Kingdom was an early adopter of delegating civil service work to executive agencies in order to improve performance and reduce costs, which has been going on since the early 1990s under the Next Steps Program. There is, moreover, an expectation that the departmental minister takes responsibility for any agencies that the ministry oversees but no expectation that the minister will have to resign if problems arise in an agency. The ongoing Civil Service Reform also seeks to introduce new instruments of performance control and individual accountability, for example, through guidance, such as Managing Public Money. The Cabinet Office has recently revised its guidance on public-service reviews and issued a code of good practice for partnerships between departments and arm's length bodies.

Nevertheless, problems have arisen. After repeated criticism, the UK Border Agency, which is responsible for the entry and management of foreign nationals, was taken back into the Home Office to improve transparency and political accountability. It still attracts some negative headlines and there are evident stresses arising from the management of prisons by private contractors. Several child-abuse scandals revealed shortcomings in the monitoring of local-level entities, including local childcare, youth and police services. Further, the horrible fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 (which caused upwards of 70 deaths) exposed major failings in British construction supervision. To some extent, quality control bodies – for example, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for the police – provide safeguards through setting standards. However, some public agencies have been heavily criticized. For example, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee has been very critical of HM Revenue and Customs, the tax collection agency.

Citation:
Elston, Thomas 2011: Developments in UK executive agencies: re-examining the disaggregation – re-aggregation thesis, Paper presented to the Governance of Public Sector Organisations study group at the 33 rd Annual Conference of the European Group for Public Administration, Bucharest, 7th – 10th September 2011.

Task Funding
Score: 6

Within the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have
devolved governments, which have responsibility for major public services,
such as healthcare and education. England has no devolved government,
though local authorities in England have responsibility for a more limited
range of public services, including schools. The central government exercises
tight control over the finances of the devolved governments and local
authorities in England. The bulk of local authority revenue in England comes
from central government grants, even the rate of property tax is controlled
centrally. As a result, local authorities have been among the hardest hit by
government spending cuts. Social care is an especially problematic area, but
local authorities are also highly constrained in dealing with basic services,
such as filling potholes in roads. Increased task funding for subnational
governments was announced in the 2017 budget, but it does not go far enough
to offset funding gaps.

Given the absence of a written constitution, there is no mechanism to govern
the allocation of funds to finance these devolved tasks. As such, any decisions
about funding is subject to political and administrative negotiations through
formula-based need assessments. Agreements such as the "Barnett Formula"
for Scotland, Wales and England provide some stability of funding, while for
historical reasons Northern Ireland has a distinctive form of financing.
However, despite their recent reaffirmation, these agreements could change if
a future government decides that fiscal consolidation requires severe spending
cuts.

The Scotland Act 2012 gave the Scottish government new taxation and
borrowing powers. After the close outcome of the Scottish independence
referendum and as a result of the Smith Commission's report, the new
Conservative government announced the devolution of further tax powers –
including income-tax powers – to the Scottish Parliament. The details of
additional borrowing powers for the Scottish Parliament were laid down in the
Scotland Act 2016, which allows the Scottish government to borrow £450
million a year for infrastructure investment, such as on schools and hospitals,
up to a total of £3 billion.

The National Assembly of Wales has far less fiscal discretion, but central
government has agreed that further borrowing powers should also be devolved

to the Welsh Assembly and agreed on a fiscal framework.

A new settlement for the Northern Ireland Assembly has also been under discussion for some time. However, after the Northern Irish parties were unable to form an executive after the regional election in 2017, Northern Ireland has de facto fallen back under the direct control of Westminster. Moreover, a quid pro quo for the Northern Irish DUP's support for the May government was extra funding for the province.

The growing number of devolved administrations in England has led to the rise of several self-confident new political actors (e.g., the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), whose fiscal relation to the central state is expected to become a major political topic in the subsequent post-Brexit devolution debate. However, central government funding for local governments was one of the areas most heavily cut during the years of public spending retrenchment. The cumulative effect of these cuts has been considerable, with many councils obliged to run down already slender reserves, and a number of local governments have struggled to maintain even statutory services. Notably, special measures were imposed on the Conservative-run Northamptonshire County Council – in effect a declaration of the council's insolvency,

Citation:
Scully, Roger/Jones Richard Wyn 2011: 7. Territorial politics in post-Devolution Britain, in: Heffernan, Richard et al.: Developments in British Politics 9, Basingstoke and New York
Smith   Commission   Report: http://www.smith-commission.scot/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/The_Smith_Commission_Report-1.pdf
Autumn Statement 2016: https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-statement-2016

Constitutional
Discretion
Score: 8

A distinction must be made between local authorities of England, on the one hand, and the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly of Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly, on the other hand. The devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland enjoy considerable autonomy from central government, in contrast to the strong restrictions on local authorities in England. In recent years, the trend has been reversed through measures stemming from the 2011 Localism Act. These measures substantially increased local authorities' decision-making and spending powers over, for example, healthcare, skills training, transport, employment support, physical infrastructure investment and housing. In addition, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016, in what can be seen as a limited push toward English devolution, established directly elected mayors for combined local authorities in England and Wales, so-called metro mayors. Eight elections for metro mayors were held in 2017.

The devolved parliaments in Scotland and Northern Ireland have ruled against the creation of directly elected mayors in their respective regions. The

establishment of a directly elected mayor in England or Wales normally follows a local referendum, although neither Leicester nor Liverpool held a popular vote. However, in the majority of cases, voters opposed the establishment of a new mayoral office and one even revoked an existing office (Stoke on Trent in 2009). In 2018, 17 cities had directly elected mayors, including London. However, one (Torbay) will be abolished in May 2019 following a referendum. There are also seven so-called metro mayors, who are the chairs of "mayoral combined authorities," for instance in the Greater Manchester Area and the West Midlands. In addition, there are several indirectly elected mayors with comparable political powers and many localities have a purely ceremonial Lord Mayor.

Some further powers are shifting to the devolved administrations. Scotland's increased tax powers are now in effect and being used: the 2017 Scottish Budget sets out new income-tax bands. Meanwhile, the New Welsh Land Transaction Tax was introduced on 1 April 2018. The return of powers from the European Union will lead to a significant increase in the decision-making powers of the Scottish and Welsh governments, and what is expected to be a restored Northern Ireland executive after a long political hiatus resulting from the collapse of the power-sharing executive in early 2017.

The political weight of these subsidiary authorities varies strongly and the substance of mayoral offices in the traditionally centralized political system of the United Kingdom is hard to measure. The number of mayors is clearly increasing, but remains remarkably low in comparison to the total number of authorities. However, several of the largest and most important cities of the country (e.g., London, Bristol, Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region) have directly elected mayors. Notably, the Greater London Authority is headed by its mayor, the Rt. Hon. Sadiq Khan, and culturally and politically can almost be seen as a federated state within the United Kingdom.

An evaluation by the Council of Europe notes a general satisfaction with recent developments in the United Kingdom, but expresses concern about funding and "the limitation of local authorities' discretion to manage local affairs through the intervention by various ministries of the central government."

The Scottish Parliament and the Scottish government have become major political actors, especially through the Scotland Act 2016. Although the powers of the Scottish Parliament are revocable by central government, they should be considered permanent for political reasons. The Welsh and Northern Irish parliaments have considerable autonomy, granted for instance in the Wales Bill.

However, these powers differ in degree from those held by the Scottish Parliament, although new financial powers are being devolved, such as the proposed introduction of a Northern Ireland rate for corporation tax. Even if some decisions by the Scottish government have antagonized central government, the central government has not intervened.

Citation:
Guide to Localism Act: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf

House of Commons Briefing paper SN05000 2016 – Directly elected mayors: http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05000

National Standards
Score: 7

There are supposed to be national standards for service delivery by local authorities or the parallel networks of agencies for specific policies such as the trusts running healthcare, but recent scandals have shown that implementation can be unsatisfactory and thus that there can be "postcode lotteries" in standards. Recently, the Care Quality Commission, a body charged with overseeing the quality of health and social care, was criticized for a lack of transparency. A subsequent report by the National Audit Office found that, while there had been considerable improvements, shortcomings still needed to be addressed.

Although central government has the capacity to ensure national standards on this issue, it does not always do enough to "watch the watchers." All members of the civil service are pledged to a range of codes (such as the Civil Service Code, the Directory of Civil Service Guidance) to ensure national standards in performance, conduct and delivery. In 2012, the Standards Board for England – which has scrutinized civil service commitments to the codes since 2000 – was abolished. The central government has encouraged local authorities to set up regional standards boards. This is in line with the Localism Act 2011, which changed the powers and scrutiny of local government in England. The ongoing Civil Service Reform, which started in 2012, established a new range of national standards, especially in skills, accountability, transparency and diversity, as recorded in the New Public Appointments Governance Code.

An agreement on common standards was reached between central government and the devolved administrations in October 2017 regarding powers returning from Brussels. In a similar vein, a new Appointments Governance Code came into effect on 1 January 2017.

Citation:
HM Government 2012: The Civil Service Reform Plan; http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Civil Service-Reform-Plan- acc-final.pdf https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Capacity-and-capability-to-regulate-the-quality-and-safety-of-health-and-adult-social-care.pdf

Effective
Regulatory
Enforcement
Score: 8

The implementation, execution and control of regulations in the United Kingdom is the task of the civil service and statutory regulatory bodies. Many of the latter are set up on a statutory basis, either as non-departmental public bodies that report to parliament or as non-ministerial government departments, ensuring that they are at arms-length from government and ministers. There are also a number of non-governmental regulators for different industry sectors, some of which are voluntary and some of which are placed on a statutory footing either through legislation or a Royal Charter.

The civil service (also known as "Whitehall" for its historic location in London) is a highly centralized and powerful bureaucratic body that abides by very strict codes of conduct, and generally provides an indispensable and loyal service to the UK government. To uphold or extend the government's regulatory efficiency, parliament can launch an inquiry into a defined part of society or national business to assess possible interferences with political decision-making. For example, a Commons Select Committee in 2011 notably reported on the unethical and unlawful practices of journalists, which resulted in stricter regulation of powerful media conglomerates in the United Kingdom.

Like many other countries, key industries in the United Kingdom, namely the financial and insurance industry in the City of London, are able to lobby against unwelcome regulation more forcefully than other businesses or civil society.

Adaptablility

Domestic
Adaptability
Score: 7

The organization of ministries in the United Kingdom is a prerogative of the prime minister, and traditionally the precise division of tasks between ministries apart from the classic portfolios of foreign policy, defense, the Treasury, and the Home Office has been subject to considerable change. There is some evidence for international and supranational developments playing an important role in these decisions on UK government structures, a clear example being the creation of the Department of Energy and Climate Change, with an explicit remit to engage in international action to mitigate climate change, although was subsequently subsumed within new ministries following the change in prime minister in 2016. New cabinet committees have been set up (and subsequently terminated), such as a committee on Syrian refugees in 2015. There have also been developments leading to new cross-departmental structures. The establishment of the National Security Council was a response to security-related issues, while the creation of a cross-governmental joint energy unit was motivated by the Ukraine crisis.

The United Kingdom has in some areas been an early, and sometimes enthusiastic, proponent of norms and practices that have been championed by international bodies, including those overseeing financial stability and transparency in government. The Open Data Charter and the Open Government Partnership (in which the United Kingdom plays an active role) were agreed under the United Kingdom's G8 presidency. The United Kingdom is an acknowledged leader in open government and ranked 1 out of 115 countries in the 2016 Open Data Barometer.

Perhaps reflecting the prevailing UK attitude to "Brussels" before the decision to leave the European Union, there has been some resistance to policy recommendations from the European Commission, including the country specific recommendations associated with EU semester process, unless they accord with government priorities like tax avoidance and establishing trade links. There is less resistance to recommendations from, for example, the IMF, even when the recommendations of the IMF and European Union are similar.

In addition to the obvious reactions to Brexit, such as reconfiguring ministries and cabinet committees, efforts are being made to develop trade policy capability, in order to respond to the expanding UK role in trade internationally. For example, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has worked with the Department for International Trade (DIT) and others to develop a cross-Whitehall Trade Policy and Negotiations Faculty in the FCO's Diplomatic Academy.

International
Coordination
Score: 6

The United Kingdom has long played a leading role in coordinating international initiatives and the country's imperial legacy has contributed to its active stance on international commitments. It has led global responses in recent years, for example, in efforts to eradicate poverty in Africa, coordinate the EU response to the Ebola outbreak, promote reform in the financial sector, and combat climate change and corruption.

As a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, the United Kingdom is very active in the United Nations in security matters and also plays a prominent role in NATO. Government structures, such as the National Security Council, ensure consistency. It led the way in supporting the Rohingya in October 2017.

However, following the decision to leave the European Union, the United Kingdom will have to rethink its role in the world, especially among its European neighbors. There is a risk that the demands on governance capacity of dealing with the various levels of negotiation will distract attention from wider global concerns. To this extent, domestic politics have already inhibited

international coordination with the United Kingdom's European partners and may inhibit coordination with other countries in the future.

Organizational Reform

Flexibility and informal meetings are a key feature of the government system, enabling it to respond in a way uniquely tailored to the situation at hand that has always been valued highly and is an essential constituent of prime ministerial government in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the Cabinet Office in particular has a remit to monitor the government's functioning and does so through a range of mechanisms, which have been reinforced by recent civil service reforms, particularly civil service management procedures. A key change introduced by the new government is the introduction of the more wide-ranging "single departmental plans," which replace the use of business plans. These single departmental plans set clear priorities for departments, encompassing manifesto commitments, critical business-as-usual activity, and efficiency and productivity initiatives. In addition, self-monitoring occurs through implementation task forces (a 2015 innovation which complements cabinet committees), regular assessments of progress by the Civil Service Board chaired by the cabinet secretary and a new so-called shadow civil service board. The shadow civil service board is composed of junior civil servants and charged with assessing specific projects and advising senior management. In response to critiques from Select Committees and the Institute for Government, the government revised its guidance on the machinery of government, placing greater emphasis on the importance of senior leadership and accountability.

This self-monitoring has been bolstered by a renewed commitment to open government and the public release of data. Executive monitoring is complemented by media scrutiny, parliamentary committees, various policy-specific statutory bodies and independent organizations, such as the Institute of Government. The Institute of Government stated that its task of monitoring central government was facilitated by the availability of data, "the fact we can produce this report supports that." The dissemination of good audit practices has been encouraged by the publication of internal audit standards and there are periodic reviews of areas of governance concern, recent examples being an audit of race disparities and a review of national security capabilities.

Citation:
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/civil-service/about/our-governance#civil-service-board
https://civilservice.blog.gov.uk/2015/07/29/clarifying-our-priorities-single-departmental-plans/
https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/cabinet-committees-and-implementation-taskforces-membership-list
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641252/PSAIS_1_April_2017.pdf

Institutional
Reform
Score: 8

As mentioned above, the organizational flexibility of both the core executive and the distribution of tasks to specific ministries is a core characteristic of the UK system of government. Cabinet reorganizations and new institutional arrangements have often been the prime minister's weapon of choice to improve government performance. However, such reorganization can also be motivated by intra-party politics or public pressure, and it is difficult to evaluate the success of specific measures in enhancing the strategic capacity of the government. Recent civil service reforms have also served to enhance strategic capacity, while various open data initiatives have increased government transparency. More generally, the government is exploiting digital technology opportunities right across the functions of government.

Very substantial changes in governance do occur. Recent examples include the restoration of the Bank of England's lead role in financial supervision and an alteration to the basis of financial regulation. Both of these examples followed evidence of the ineffectiveness of the preceding model, and shifts in the balance between state, market and external agencies in the delivery of public goods.

Changes in institutional arrangements, such as ministries or the focus of cabinet committees, were among the approaches taken to try to resolve the many difficulties in implementing Brexit. Despite the capacity to adapt in this way, the strategic changes could not overcome political blockages.

II. Executive Accountability

Citizens' Participatory Competence

Political
Knowledge
Score: 7

The UK government provides considerable information to its citizens through detailed websites, both at the core executive and the ministerial level. This flow of information has been enhanced in recent years. These websites contain general information, progress reports and statistical data. As part of its online material, the government makes some effort to ensure that citizens use this information by targeting specific groups. For example, a digital voter registration toolkit was developed in conjunction with a single-parent charity, while the "Rock Enrol!@" pack was designed to engage young people. The most important source of knowledge for citizens is TV broadcasting, followed by newspapers and radio.

According to an opinion poll by Ipsos MORI in 2010, 53% of those asked said that they had "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of knowledge about politics, while 47% answered that they had "not very much" knowledge or knew "nothing at all." The share of those claiming knowledge has risen over the previous decade by about ten percentage points, indicating a subjectively better understanding of politics by citizens in the United Kingdom. A telling figure is that the proportion of citizens voting in certain television talent competitions is higher than in many national elections. A more recent 2017 Ipsos MORI "peril of perception" poll found the United Kingdom to be at the higher end of knowledge of widely discussed issues, though behind the better-informed Nordic countries.

Citation:
Ipsos   MORI   2011:   Knowledge   of   Politics   2003-2010;   http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2757/Knowledge-of-Politics-20032010.aspx?view=wide
https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/perils-perception-2017

Open
Government
Score: 10

The United Kingdom is highly committed to its open government agenda. It is a founding member of the Open Government Partnership, which since its beginning in 2011 has become a major global advocate for citizens' free access to government data. Parliament, the government and the civil service reliably and timely publish all not-restricted documents on their websites.

The UK government has a long history of publishing official statistics, and since 2007 this has been governed by the Statistics and Registration Service Act. The act created the UK Statistics Authority, a non-ministerial department, with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as an executive agency within the department (ONS previously reported into HMT). The act also created the Office for Statistics Regulation, which sets the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and oversees the accreditation of "National Statistics." Beyond the official statistical system, the government publishes a wide array of data and is a world leader in open data. The UK government publishes an extensive array of transparency data (e.g., senior public servants' salaries, workforce data, special adviser pay, and details of ministerial and senior officials' meetings) – over 9,000 items on the government website (gov.uk) are categorized as "transparency data" and over 10,000 FOI requests have been published. The government also has a dedicated data portal (data.gov.uk), which makes publicly accessible over 47,000 datasets published by the UK government and other public authorities. Furthermore, the United Kingdom alongside Canada ranked 1 out of 30 governments in the latest Open Data Barometer (2016 – 2017) and in the OECD's latest OURdata index (2017) the United Kingdom ranked 4th out of 31 countries.

Committee and working group meetings are streamed via a range of online platforms (e.g., YouTube and FacebookLive). Furthermore, the government provides an efficient online search-engine for government documents (data.gov.uk). Meanwhile, the bi-annual Open Government Action Plans, which set goals and standards for open government in the United Kingdom, are negotiated in cooperation with the UK Open Government Network (OGN), a coalition of active citizens and civil society organizations.

Legislative Actors' Resources

Parliamentary
Resources
Score: 6

Members of parliament have relatively few resources at their disposal in terms of personnel capable of monitoring government activity. Parliamentary parties have few additional resources and therefore can provide little support. In addition, if a party is in government, a substantial proportion of its members of parliament will be (junior) members of the government and therefore not too keen to monitor themselves.

Parties in opposition are granted some public funds to hire additional researchers to fulfill their duties of controlling the government. But in terms of resources this is still not much compared to those the governing parties can call on through the ministerial bureaucracy.

The Dame Laura Cox Report 2018 exposed the widespread problem of bullying and harassment of House of Commons staff. In response, the House of Commons Commission announced measures to prevent further bullying, which the House of Commons adopted. However, a fully independent complaints process has still not been introduced.

Citation:
European Parliament / Directorate-General for Research 2000: Comparison of organizational and administrative arrangements in EU national parliaments; http://edz.bib.uni-mannheim.de/daten/edz-ma/ep/00/budg110_en.pdf

Obtaining
Documents
Score: 7

The "Osmotherly Rules," updated in October 2014, define the rights of select committees to obtain government documents. Although published in a Cabinet Office document, like many internal parliamentary rules, they are informal and cannot be legally challenged. However, documents are rarely held back and will thus be made available to committees. Only in very specific, pre-defined circumstances are documents withheld from select committees.

Although the government party normally has the majority on the committee, explicit party-political motives rarely come into play. Freedom of Information requests can additionally be used to obtain documents, but this does not include documents that affect national security or public interests. The media

reinforce parliamentary scrutiny through their strong influence and the keen interest they take in committee findings that challenge the serving government.

Committees' rights are thus not formally limited, but there are occasional disputes between committees and government over the provision of specific information, and committees will then have to order the publication of government documents. Recent high-profile examples include documents assessing the impact of the United Kingdom's withdrawal for the European Union and strategy papers describing the government's approach to Brexit. In addition, the Johnson government delayed publication of a dossier from the intelligence and security committee about alleged Russian interference in the Brexit referendum campaign. In nearly all cases, Parliament eventually prevails, with the government likely to suffer reputational damage for resisting.

Citation:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/364600/Osmotherly_Rules_October_2014.pdf

Summoning Ministers
Score: 8

Ministers can be summoned to parliamentary committee hearings, but they cannot be forced to attend, because ministers have to be members of parliament or members of the House of Lords, and members of parliament cannot be forced to attend any meeting. However, the Osmotherly Rules recommend that ministers accept invitations to a hearing as an act of respectful courtesy, and thus ministers will usually accept an invitation to a hearing in a select committee. It would be headline news and damaging to the minister in question if they refused to appear before a committee on anything remotely controversial, although the answers given to committees can be bland. Ministerial questions in plenary sessions of parliament complement the work of committees and can be quite sharp in tone. The prime minister and key aides traditionally refuse to appear before select committees, but have appeared before the Liaison Committee, which is composed of the chairs of all the other committees.

Summoning Experts
Score: 10

Parliamentary committees may summon expert witnesses who will usually provide any evidence willingly. Should they decline to do so, committees then have the power to order a witness to attend, though this would be exceptional. Committees also often employ experts as specialist advisers.

Committees may also summon actors involved in an issue that the committee is investigating. Examples include the examination of press barons in the context of the Leveson Inquiry into phone hacking by journalists, of the entrepreneur Philip Green regarding the pension deficit of the BHS department store chain, and of Cambridge Analytica executives during the Information Commissioner's investigation into the propagation of misinformation during

the Brexit referendum campaign. Such hearings invariably attract extensive media coverage.

Every government department is shadowed by a committee in the House of Commons (20 at the time of writing). The remit and number of committees adapts to reflect changes in the makeup of the government. House of Lords select committees focus on broader topics and are less directly matched to departmental task areas, but cover important areas. One example is the Science and Technology Select Committee, which in turn has subcommittees that cover specific topics, such as the implications of autonomous mobility or the possible meaning of the withdrawal from the European Union for universities' staff policies.

However, the capacity of committees to monitor effectively is limited due to a lack of resources and limited continuity in membership (e.g., the House of Lords rules oblige members to be rotated off a committee after four years, although from direct observation of the work of its committees this does not seem to weaken them). Also, the number of reports they issue massively exceeds the time available on the floor of the House to debate them and, despite increased efforts by the committees to publicize them, not all reports achieve much media coverage.

A new Brexit committee, with an above average membership and a careful balance of members to reflect conflicting views, was created after the 2016 referendum. However, this did not prevent the topic from splitting the House of Commons, with large parts of 2019 marked by complete political paralysis.

Media

The main TV and radio stations in the United Kingdom – especially those like the BBC that operate under a public charter – provide an extensive array of high-quality news services. Government decisions feature prominently in this programming, and information and analysis on government decisions are both extensive and held to a high standard. There is substantial competition for viewers, in particular between the BBC, ITV, Sky and Channel 4. In addition to news programs, all provide in-depth analysis programs on politics and policy in a variety of formats. The Today Programme on BBC Radio 4 is well known for its highbrow political analysis and scrutiny, and often sets the tone for political debates. Newsnight is the flagship political news program on the BBC and there are several other political shows on which politicians can expect robust scrutiny.

The style of interview on these programs is often explicitly not deferential, and even quite confrontational – especially toward ministers. This is justified by

the need to hold politicians and especially government ministers to account. Local radio and press also have a tangible influence within their localities and an increasing number of people resort to online services, most notably BBC Online, as a source of information on government.

Scandals both in the private sector (News of the World) and the public sector (BBC) may have cost some credibility but have so far had no recognizable influence on the functioning of the media system as a whole. Despite political pressure, The Guardian newspaper played a crucial role in the global surveillance disclosures of 2013 and was awarded the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for its efforts.

Parties and Interest Associations

Intra-party
Decision-Making
Score: 6

A distinction needs to be made for all major parties between the election of the leader, on which party members have a say, and the selection of other personnel or decisions over major issues, for which there are generally much more restrictive procedures. The selection of parliamentary and local council candidates usually involves local party members. Annual party conferences notionally have a major role in settling policy positions, but in practice it is party leaders that have the most significant role.

The Conservative Party restricts decision-making to party members. In most cases, a number of selected delegates participate in the most important personnel and issue decisions. Central party influence over candidate selection has varied in recent years. David Cameron introduced a "priority list" with at least 50% women and significant representation from ethnic minorities, from which all target seats and Conservative-held seats were supposed to be selected. In the run-up to the 2010 election and in the wake of the parliamentary expenses scandal, this requirement was relaxed. After the general election, selection rules reverted to the post-2005 procedure. The party leader is elected by a poll of all party members, who choose from a shortlist of two candidates nominated by Conservative Party members of parliament after a series of votes to eliminate other candidates. When the Conservative Party holds a majority in Parliament, the parliamentary Conservative Party is obliged to nominate the incumbent party leader as prime minister. Boris Johnson successfully used this mechanism to replace Theresa May in 2019.

The Labour Party also restricts decision-making to party members, although trade union influence remains strong. In most cases, a number of selected delegates participate in important personnel and issue decisions. Central party influence over local candidate selection has varied. Since 1988, there has had to be at least one woman on every shortlist. Since 2001, candidates require the

approval of the central party's head office prior to selection by their respective constituency Labour Party. Some political allies of the current leader, Jeremy Corbyn, favor a return to mandatory reselection, which would increase the influence of the left-wing within the party and is therefore highly contested. The Labour Party's selection process for party leader was changed prior to the election of Jeremy Corbyn. Previously the old electoral college voted for the party leader. The college consisted of the Parliamentary Labour Party, constituency Labour parties, and the trade unions and affiliated organizations. Each group had one-third of the total vote. Since the procedural change, the choice is now based on a "one member, one vote" system. In addition, "registered supporters" were able to vote by paying £3, an amount increased to £25 in 2017, to be entitled to vote as well. The winning candidate must secure at least 50% of the vote. Consequently, the election process can take several rounds, as the candidate with the fewest votes after each round drops out, and their second preferences are redistributed to the remaining candidates, until the winning candidate has reached the required quorum.

Association Competence (Employers & Unions)
Score: 7

Major business associations propose practical policy solutions, which are rooted in a realistic assessment of the circumstances in which they will be carried out. Until recently, the polarization between the major parties had diminished, especially in the field of socioeconomic policy matters. However, this is again widening. Even so, and especially with the Brexit decision, there is little incentive for business associations or trade unions to engage in wishful thinking if they want to be taken seriously in the national policy discourse. However, some economic interests do propose somewhat more provocative ideas.

The United Kingdom's forthcoming withdrawal from the European Union has led to some more assertive stances both from business (concerned especially about threats to its EU market access and curbs on skilled immigrant workers) and unions (notably around protections deriving from EU rules). Some business groups are, however, more concerned about what they perceive as excessive regulatory burdens associated with EU membership. Although British business associations are divided over Westminster's political ties to Brussels, access to the single market is at the very heart of Britain's economic interest, namely their world leading financial and insurance industries. Overall, the influence of economic interest groups is relatively low-key, though not insubstantial. Several international businesses, such as Airbus and certain Japanese investors, were vocal during the Brexit debates. Though several more international businesses (e.g., Nissan and BMW) have made it clear since the referendum result that a version of Brexit that threatens to disrupt their densely woven supply chains across the European Union's internal market will negatively affect their British production facilities.

Association
Competence
(Others)
Score: 8

The United Kingdom has a tradition of close scrutiny of policy proposals. The quality and realism of policy proposals determines the degree to which any interest group is taken seriously in the country's national political discourse and there are many NGOs that have had a tangible impact on policy thinking. Green interest groups in particular have helped to shape the policies of successive governments. There are vocal campaigners for rural interests, while both sides of the migration debate have been nourished by interest groups.

There is an abundance of NGOs with often-narrow policy agendas that tend to be pushed forward without much consideration of the wider ramifications of the pursuit of their issue. By the same token, the diversity of such bodies allows a wide range of proposals to obtain a hearing.

Independent Supervisory Bodies

Audit Office
Score: 10

The National Audit Office (NAO) is an independent office funded directly by parliament. Its head, the comptroller and auditor general, is an officer of the House of Commons. The NAO works on behalf of parliament and the taxpayer to scrutinize public spending and is accountable to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Ombuds Office
Score: 8

The system of ombudsmen has been expanded over the last years. There are now four different ombudsmen that handle complaints about the civil service in each country within the United Kingdom, namely the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Northern Ireland Ombudsmen and Commission for Local Administration in England. Further, there is a Parliamentary Health and Service Ombudsman (PHSO) who mainly deals with complaints concerning the National Health Service in England and a Housing Ombudsman who looks at complaints about social housing. However, all ombudsmen's offices are limited in staff, resources and access to information. For example, ombudsmen have no formal power to see cabinet papers.

A parliamentary consultation in 2015 recommended the merger of ombudsmen into one integrated office of the Public Service Ombudsman (PSO). A draft of that bill was published by the government in December 2016, and was examined by the Housing, Local Government and Communities Committee in an inquiry published in March 2017. It has, however, still not come into force.

Citation:
https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-service-ombudsman

Data Protection
Authority
Score: 8

The United Kingdom was among the early adopters of personal data protection legislation. The Data Protection Act 1984 set standards for the use of digital data by the government, private businesses and individuals. Since 1998 (following the Data Protection Act 1998), the data protection regime has been shaped by EU law. The United Kingdom has adopted the European Union's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) into primary law (through the Data Protection Act 2018) meaning that the approach to data protection and information governance developed by the GDPR will be maintained after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union.

The central body authorized to enforce data protection legislation in the United Kingdom is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO is a non-departmental public body which reports directly to parliament and is sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The office has a wide array of data protection responsibilities defined by the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and the General Data Protection Regulations, among other legislation. Given the devolution of powers, a similar function also operates in Scotland. The ICO publishes its actions and fines. The ICO recently received a lot of media attention for its inquiry into the business practices of the data processing firm Cambridge Analytica. However, the ICO has no authority over any security agency in the United Kingdom, which are rumored to be proactively collecting a wide range of UK citizens' personal data.

In October 2018, Elizabeth Denham, the UK Information Commissioner, was appointed the Chair of the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners.

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