

The uk has a multi party system rather than a two party system

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The UK has a multi-party system rather than a two party system. Discuss. A political two party system is one where two parties have complete dominance over voting, in terms of seats and the general vote. The multi-party system however describes a system where more than two parties have the ability to win role as government. In this essay I will give a balanced argument on whether Britain is a two party, or multi-party system.

Throughout a significant period in history, 1945-79, a two party system was obviously predominant; the Labour and Conservative parties being the only two with the possibility of achieving majority vote and therefore forming a government. People voted for the party which represented their social class e. g. Conservative for middle class and Labour for working class. The clear distinction between which social classes would benefit from the two parties rule kept these two parties as a high percentage of the vote. In the elections leading up to 2005 Labour and Conservative seats were a significantly high number compared to other parties e. . in 1992 Conservatives had 336 seats, labour-271 and other parties 44, meaning no other party had a real chance of winning, no matter what the vote favoured, which incidentally also supported the two dominant parties with 41. 8% Conservative votes, 34. 2% Labour votes and only 19% of votes for other parties. The structure of the House of Commons also supports this idea because the two main parties sit on opposite benches in parliament, creating a government vs. opposition system, where the two main parties move between these two seats, currently with Labour as the opposition.

The first-past-the-post voting system also supports this idea because it doesn't allow smaller powers a chance for a place in power, as they don't

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have enough MPs in comparison to stronger parties. Although, the Liberal Democrat's seats in parliament have increased significantly, if it weren't for the voting system, their numbers are likely to have doubled. Although people have started to look towards more minor parties such as the Green Party who want to deal with important current issues such as war, as well as their main focus-the environment, these parties are still not gaining enough votes or seats to make them significantly prominent.

This leaves the continuation of two ruling parties. It could be argued, however, that the two party system which was once in place is declining, meaning more parties have a realistic chance to achieve role as government. In the last thirty years the support for the Conservative and Labour parties has been gradually decreasing, leaving them with only 67% of the vote at the 2005 general election, which was the smallest percentage they'd gained since 1918.

This is an example of partisan dealignment because the working class started to transfer their party support to Conservative instead of Labour. The Liberal Democrats support was significantly increasing, leaving them with 22% of the vote in the 2005 election as well as 62 seats. Their seat numbers had been increasing since 1974 when they only had 14 seats in parliament, suggesting a change in the dominance of only two parties. Today, the Liberal Democrats, who haven't been considered a main party since, are currently the weaker part of a coalition government, with Labour in opposition.

This shows a clear end to the two party system, with three parties in significant places of power. Despite the two party voting system which has been practiced in different regions since 1997, a multi-party system still <https://assignbuster.com/the-uk-has-a-multi-party-system-rather-than-a-two-party-system/>

exists in the House of Commons because three parties currently have the majority of party power, meaning that it is the main structure of the UK party system. The current coalition government includes the Liberal Democrats who have not recently been considered as one of the two major parties.

This shows that the two party system is no longer in place; which suggests that in the future more coalition governments could completely eliminate the two party system for good. Although it can be argued that the UK has a multi- party system at government level, a two party system seems to exist in different regions. For example, the two dominant parties in London are Conservative and Labour, whereas in the rural South it's Conservative and Liberal Democrats.

Therefore as a country the UK does not represent the two party system or multi- party system, examples of both can be seen in different political areas. To conclude, a balanced argument can be drawn in response to this statement but I personally believe, although in the past a continuing trend of a two party system has existed, today this system is declining, with Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrats as the primary parties.