

The core executive:
the role of the prime
minister and the
cabinet in the uk's
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government is " the organization, that is the governing authority of a political unit," " the ruling power in a political society," and the apparatus through which a governing body functions and exercises authority. The Government is made up of the largest Political party in the House of Commons. In recent years it has been the Labour Party or the Conservative party. In the 2010 general election, there was no majority in the house of Commons, it was a hung Parliament as there was no majority by any party.

In the end a coalition government was found between the Conservative and Liberal democrats led by David Cameron. However, even though the Conservative-liberal coalition has majority in the house of commons and created a government. It doesn't mean there wont be problems in the existing government. Both parties have there different policies in which can end up in disputes on what the government as 2 parties should do. Some times a divide can happen for example when David Cameron and Conservatives vetoed treaty change in the EU. He said it was for the best for the nation.

However, the Deputy Prime minister Nick Clegg and Liberal democrats strongly disagree with David Cameron. This is one of many problems facing a government such as a Coalition government. The Government is not just political as there are departments in which the Politicians must run, the departments are run by Civil servants who work with the Minister / MP. A example of a minister of a department, Justine Greening is the minister for the Transport Department, she will have special advisers (Spads) which help her make decisions as head of Transport.

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The Civil servants help the government, but should have neutrality over which party becomes government, this can lead to departmental civil servants leaving / resign from there job. 2) A Cabinet Reshuffle is a series of changes to the personnel of the cabinet and the positions they occupy, instigated by the Prime Minister. The cabinet is theoretically the decision making body which rules the country, but under recent times the cabinet's power has transferred into the Prime Minister. This means that he can elect, remove or reshuffle the cabinet to best suit him or her and his or her interests.

Even though the cabinet has less power than the Prime Minister they can make the Prime Minister job harder if they don't cooperate with him or her. In history the cabinet has been reshuffled when a powerful leader i. e. Margret Thatcher and Tony Blair has stepped down and a weaker Prime Minister such as John Major and Gordon Brown will step up for the position. However, when the cabinet have been use to such powerful leaders Prime ministers, the Prime minister who replaces him or her will seem weak and the cabinet may undermined them. This happened to John Major as he had to reshuffle after minister undermined him.

He called the 3 ministers in the cabinet who undermined him " bastards" this included Michael Howard, Peter Lilley and Michael Portillo. By Reshuffling the cabinet, major asserted his power to remove the 3 ministers from the cabinet. Gordon Brown had nearly the same problem as Major after the reign of Tony Blair (1997-2007) ended and the strong leadership was not challenged and as it says in the extract Gordon Brown's Labour Cabinet

decided to act against him and Brown also reshuffled to assert his authority to the cabinet and to the rest of the government.

But reshuffling cabinet is not because of the Prime Minister asserting his power, in some circumstances cabinet minister will resign or leave and new minister for that department will have to be put in place, an example of this was when Dr Liam Fox (Defence Secretary) resign his post because of news related incident and a cabinet reshuffle was made as Phillip Hammond was promoted from head of Transport to secretary of Defence. In addition Justine Greening became the head of Transport in the reassignment of Phillip Hammond. 3) The Cabinet and the Prime Minister are the decision making body who control Britain.

But in theory the Cabinet should have the overall power as they are representing the Government and the whole country. Having a cabinet means that no one has supreme power of the country and the decisions should be made as a group so ministers can have a say on something that might effect them/ departments and other ministers could debate from other angles of view which other ministers might not of seen and it could have been a bad decision to make. On the other hand the Prime Minister or “*Primus inter pares*” in Latin but translated in English means “ the first among equals. The Prime Minister job was basically the head of the Cabinet and was the Government and Party leader. However in recent years more and more power has being transferred from the cabinet to the Prime Minister, but is that true? The Prime Minister role has changed in resent years as he has taken power away from the cabinet. The Prime Minister likes having power and by taking the power away from Cabinet and giving it to him or her they <https://assignbuster.com/the-core-executive-the-role-of-the-prime-minister-and-the-cabinet-in-the-uks-parliament/>

are becoming more obsessed with the power to the extent he or she can use it without informing the cabinet.

There are ways in which a Prime Minister can gain more from the Cabinet. The Prime Minister could also use 'Kitchen Cabinet' in which is an informal grouping of prime minister's senior ministerial colleagues. The Prime Minister periodically holds meetings with a small group of ministers, advisers and officials. In times of crisis, a select group of senior ministers may meet regularly to discuss developments and formulate policy. When this occurs, the group is often dubbed a 'Kitchen Cabinet' or 'inner cabinet'. No such institution exists officially, although Harold Wilson did create a short lived 'inner cabinet' in the 1968-69 to deal with the sterling crisis. 'War Cabinets' of senior ministers and defence chiefs were in place during the Falklands war (1982), military action in Kosovo (1999) and in Iraq (2003). On Black Wednesday, 16 September 1992, John Major held a series of meetings with senior colleagues to decide sterling's fate in ERM. This shows that the Prime Minister is dealing with the problems by himself without the Cabinet.

In addition Cabinet Committees are also used by the Prime Minister to make decisions by himself rather than a group in the Cabinet. A Cabinet Committee is when a Committee is appointed by the Prime Minister to consider aspects of government business. They include standing committees and ad hoc committees. An example of a Cabinet Committee is NSC (Nuclear Deterrence and Security) headed by the Prime Minister (David Cameron) in 2010 with only 7 other cabinet members.

When Cabinet Committee has agreed on a decision it will report to the whole Cabinet and the Cabinet will give agree and support it, this is where some people come up with idea that actually the Cabinet is only a 'rubber stamp' with the Prime Minister making the letter/ decision and the Cabinet accepting it and giving it there support. However, today, David Cameron the Prime Minister of the Conservative/ Liberal Democrat coalition has a not got the freedom to do such things like Kitchen Cabinet and Cabinet Committee as the Coalition is very fragile.

If the Prime Minister makes a decision by himself without consulting the Cabinet he could jeopardize the coalition, a recent example of this was when Cameron vetoed the EU Changes to ' save the city of London' however, the Lib-Dems did not agree to Veto and where fuming. This is why the PM has to be very careful when making decisions by himself. In conclusion to the question in that in modern times in fact it is the Prime Minister not the Cabinet, dominates the Core Executive.

In the last 30 years the role of Prime Minister has been more independent from the Cabinet but since 2010 the Prime Minister has to respect that the decisions by the cabinet as the Liberal Democrats are a part of the Government and Core Executive. So, the Prime Minister is not having the same independence like the Prime Ministers in the last 10 years. This is because of the Coalition. And the 2 Parties must work together so they can keep a good relationship between them, this is why the Cabinet is more important than it has been in the last 20 years. Michael Gill