

How democratic is the uk?



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How democratic is the UK? Democracy is a difficult concept to define, but as a simplification and a conventional definition, it is the people's right to choose and the right to say how the country is run. Democracy falls into many categories and comes in various different forms. One form is when power is in the hands of the population as a whole and political decisions are made themselves, this is known as direct democracy. An example of a direct democracy currently present in the UK is a referendum.

Another form is representative democracy; in this case citizens will vote for representatives to create decisions for them and their responsibility is handed over to the representative to make decisions for the country. The representatives are also accountable to the electorate. The democratic elections are a crucial part of UK democracy. A core feature is free and fair elections. They are based on universal suffrage, which is when anybody eligible to vote has their own freedom of choice on which party to vote for without any influence.

Your elected vote is also kept secret; this process is called the secret ballot. This prevents intimidation from other people and it prevents judgments made on your electoral choice. However there are four groups of people who are 'unenfranchised', these people are the homeless, imprisoned convicts, the mentally incapable and the lords. If you aren't in any of those categories and you satisfy the requirements established by the law, you are then eligible to vote with the free rights of your own electoral choice. Under First Past The Post (FPTP) voting takes place in single-member constituencies.

Voters put a cross in a box next to their favored candidate and the candidate with the most votes in the constituency wins. All other votes count for

nothing. It's clear and simple with clear choices and a simple outcome. It allows the voter to clearly express a view on which party they think should form the next government. However, FPTP can be questioned, as it's not entirely democratic. Representatives can get elected on a small proportion of public support as it doesn't matter by how much they win, only that they get more votes than the other candidates which in effect wastes huge numbers of votes, as votes cast in a constituency for losing candidates, or for the winning candidate above the level they need to win that seat, count for nothing. FPTP is also disproportionate and biased towards labour or conservatives. This means the votes are of unequal value. Labour votes are inflated and Liberal Democrats votes are deflated. This therefore means the smaller parties have a significantly depleted chance of winning the votes and it will therefore tend to produce a two-party system, which in turn tends to produce single-party governments.

Encouraging two party-party politics can be good, but in a multi-party culture, third parties with significant support can be greatly disadvantaged, which means that it goes against the democracy of the UK. Consensus politics is when two major political parties, for example, the Conservative Party and Labour Party, are in agreement, or consensus, over certain basic government policies. The two parties still have small variations but they aren't significant. They do this to gain voters from the middle ground. It reduces electoral choice because both parties share similar ideologies; it makes everything too similar without distinct variation.

UK citizens have shown an obvious enthusiasm to vote for third parties and to clinch a form of political pluralism, which runs directly against the way

FPTP operates. FPTP tends to produce a two-party system, which in turn tends to produce single-party governments. However, in a multi-party culture, third parties with significant support can be greatly disadvantaged. This is why FPTP doesn't work as well as it used to have done. As the UK is changing in terms of politics, more parties are getting involved however these parties have little or no chance in gaining support because of the unequal voting value.

This is why I think the UK needs to improve on the FPTP system because it's restricting it's full democratic potential. The UK Parliament is built up of two Houses – the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Commons has 646 MPs. The political party with the majority of MPs in the House of Commons forms the Government. The House of Lords has approximately 700 unelected members who examine the work of the House of Commons. The UK Parliament is the main democratic body in the UK and is comprised of three parts: the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the Sovereign. The UK is a parliamentary democracy and unlike many other democracies it does not have a written constitution. A deliberative assembly is an organization comprising members who use parliamentary procedure to make decisions. A mass meeting, which is an unorganized group meeting open to all individuals in a sector of the population who are interested in to engage in long and careful concern about a subject proposed by the meeting's sponsors. This can include meetings to discuss common political concerns or community interests.

This helps towards the democratic process of UK parliament because it in cooperates everybody's opinion. Parliament is essential to the democratic

process in the UK because it is elected by the popular vote, which is therefore democratic, however it has been criticized for being undemocratic because the 2nd Chamber is entirely unelected. This weakens the representative role of parliament. Party discipline also prevents MP's from using their own judgment in representing their constituents; it also restricts freedom of debate and voting in the House of Commons.

Also Parliament's ability to scrutinize the executive is weak because the government of the day usually has majority control of the House of Commons. Overall, Parliament is strength because it does solely represent the population. However the 2nd chamber is entirely unelected, which does weaken the representative role of parliament but that can be an improved. However, parliament does not govern, its role is to check or constrain the government of the day and it also discusses the policies. Parliament calls the government to account on policies.

For those reasons it's not entirely significant that the 2nd chamber is unelected. Another core feature of UK democracy are pressure groups. They enhance democracy in the UK, because they give a political voice to minorities that are ignored by the majoritarian parliament system. They also provide a way in which citizens can exert influence between elections and they also enhance political participation. However pressure groups don't have legitimacy and since pressure groups are unelected, they aren't representative of the majority of the population. Some pressure groups have powerful, but unrepresentative leaders who may not be representative of anyone but themselves. Some leaders do not reflect the opinions of their organization's members. However, pressure groups are enormously

enhancing of the UK democratic system because it gives a political voice to minorities. They allow the population to politically participate and put pressure on the government on issues, which they may turn a blind eye to. This in my opinion is strength of the UK democratic system. Other parts of the UK democratic system enhance democracy in the UK, such as referendums, devolution, the E.

U and civil rights. A referendum is a direct vote in which an entire population is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal. This increases political participation and involves the whole population. However, they can be non-binding. This means the government may not have to do what the results show. Devolution is also another feature of the UK democratic system that increases democracy in the UK. Devolution is the transfer of power from central government to subordinate regional institutions.

This means they pass down the powers or duties down from a higher authority to a lower one. This gives the constituent nations of the UK their own political voice. It refined representative democracy by allowing voters in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland separately to express their views about national issues. It also widens the opportunities available for political participation. However the effectiveness of devolution in promoting democracy can be questioned because it has limited powers. Devolution stops well short of 'home rule' or full self-government.

Although the powers of devolved bodies have, in some cases, widened, major economic and foreign policy decisions are still made at Westminster. Devolution has also done nothing to advance representative democracy in England, which is where 84% of the UK's population lives. In my opinion

referendums are effective in enhancing democracy in the UK because it increases political participation and it allows for a raw opinion on what the public think about particular issues. However, the government can't be held accountable because they're not the ones making the decision in a situation where a referendum is used to decide a particular proposal). Devolution however is ineffective in some cases because it doesn't advance democracy in England, where 84% of the UK's population lives. However, it does allow for the smaller areas of the UK to focus on particular issues that may be affected by local problems rather than national problems (for example rural areas in Wales). To conclude I think the UK is democratic to a certain degree. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and everyone has the right to free and fair elections.

However the UK is being limited by certain blockages in the democratic system such as FPTP. Issues with FPTP can be resolved to allow the UK to reach its full potential of democracy. In a multi-party culture, third parties with significant support can be greatly disadvantaged. This is why FPTP doesn't work as well as it used to have done. As the UK is changing in terms of politics, more parties are getting involved however these parties have little or no chance in gaining support because of the unequal voting value.

Strong points in the UK democratic features are pressure groups. They enhance the democracy in the UK, they allow the population to politically participate and put pressure on the government on issues, which they may turn a blind eye to. This in my opinion is strength of the UK democratic system. Referendums are also effective in enhancing democracy in the UK because it increases political participation and it allows for a raw opinion on

what the public think about particular issues. So, to a certain degree, I think the United Kingdom has a strong democratic system.