**Fforde**

**Storia contemporanea**

**2019-2020**

Exam.

Theses

**Book:**

**M. Fforde, Storia della Gran Bretagna 1832-2002 Laterza, Roma-Bari 2002**

**Chapters on the state (section 1) and politics (all).**

**We will study the evolution of British political system, concentrating on its parties.**

**Revision at end of course for examination: in particular political parties during a specific period – I have divided into five.**

**Dispense:**

My notes

**G**eneral Election Results 1832-2005

Article on Brexit

Article on decline of two-party system.

**Films:**

Churchill 2

The Iron Lady 2

The King’s Speech 2

Gandhi 2

**A. Introduction**

**1. A special political culture.**

Political liberty consolidated in eighteenth century. Parliamentary democracy – strong culture. The indicative 1930s.

No revolutions; coup d’etat. Why?

Political culture exported to USA, Canada, Australia, NZ. Other parts of Empire more problematic but consider India and Hong Kong.

How did this political culture come about? Is this the key to Brexit? The nation state.

A comparative perspective.

**2. A special island history: separate development.**

Separate from continent: continent threat: Armada, Napoleon, Hitler, Cold War.

Global not continental Empire. Navy. Anglo-Saxon identity.

Protestantism. Churches of State.

Not absolutism: Cromwell and Civil War; 1688.

Localism.

**A special economy: the industrial revolution; City of London.**

**A special empire and world role**

**The United Kingdom and its components (Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, islands; devolution first blair government).**

3. **Constitutional arrangement**

Not a federal state.

No referendums until 1972

No written constitution.

No anti-democracy, anti-system parties.

**Also many problems addressed prior to 1832: monarchy, nation state, Church. Civil War and 1688.**

**A pioneering nation: in politics as well?**

**B. Overview**

The chronology of political parties and movements:

Democratisation 1832-1918: from small local constituencies to large ones and national platform; emergence of mass parties and partisan alignments with bipolar system: newspapers and the platform, but Labour Party. 1918-1945: emergence of two-party system; 1945-1974 classic two-party system with mass parties: decline of two-party system and mass parties and rise of professional politician whereas elites in nineteenth century. Relative political stability and no revolutions or coups.

Profound changes.

**Early and Mid-Victorian**: parliamentary based. Movements: Chartism, anti-corn law league, Irish independence and land leagues. Platform but concentrated on parliament. Bi-polar and beefing up of party loyalties (before independents). The need to register of 1832 Act – very important until 1918. CP (split 1946) and Liberal Party (broader coalition). Uncontested seats very high. People in H of C elites.

**Late-Victorian to 1918**: 1867 and 1884-5 Acts and popular electorate; 1872 secret ballot. End of House of Lords 1911. Mass parties, trade-union labour party, issue pressure groups, newspapers and platform. Bi-polar system: CP and LUP, LP and LaP, Irish party (1874). Voting in H of C and partisan votes. Decrease in uncontested seats but still many in 1910. Local elections and importance of local government. People in H of C elites (except Irish) but trade unionists with Lab Party. Introduction of salaries for MPs in 1911. Prestige and legitimacy.

National government 1915, 1918-22 Coalition.

**1918-1945**: Full electorate. Mass parties and labour party; newspapers, platform and radio. Decline in uncontested seats. Irish go in early 1920s. End of Liberal Party. Formation of Two-party system. Failure of extreme parties. Strong democratic culture. Prestige and legitimacy.

National Government 1931; national government 1940-1945. Like 1915-1922 sign of affinity and agreement.

**1945-1974**: Full electorate; mass parties; professional politicians more and more but still a lot of TU MPs; classic two party system ; the impact of TV. Political pressure groups

**1974-2002**: Full electorate: decline of mass parties; rise of Lib Party; SDP and the LDP; rise of SNP and Welsh nats; SNP in 2010; coalition 2010. UKIP and 2014 European elections. Rise of professional politicians. Decline of prestige of political institutions and parties: Brexit. Later on rise of internet and decline of newspapers. Online political pressure groups – five stars in Italy.

**Ideology**

Agreement and affinity on basic points: national governments.

No anti-system parties.

Democratic and constitutional reform agreements: CP 1867 and 1918.

**The Conservative Party**: the Right: Existed 1832; now in government: continuity. Pragmatic and not reactionary. Able to embrace reform. Has been transformed because moved with times (**show them my book**). Its identity:

Conservative but pragmatic re constitution.

National identity and imperial identity. Armed forces.

Unionist. Hence alliance with Liberal Unionist Party.

Small state; free-market methods; property rights; anti-bureaucracy; But moves with times.

**The Liberal Party**: dominant on Left until 1920s when replaced by Labour Party.

Democratisation; constitutional reform; social reform – Edwardian period; home rule Ireland and sympathetic to Scotland and Wales. **The Liberal Unionist Party** – fused 1912.

1832-1914 increasingly anti-aristocratic; land question.

Less national and imperial.

Hit at general election 1924. Electoral revival 1974 onwards. Now Liberal Democratic Party – coalition 2010-2015.

**The Labour Party**: created 1900; first government 1924, then 1929-1931; first majority government 1945-1951. Very much product of mass trade unionism.

Democracy; questioning about national power and empire. Strong social reform.

Irish Nationalist Party: majority 1874; independence early 1920s.

SNP 1974 and especially post-2002. Centre-Left.

WNP 1974 but welsh speaking areas. Centre-Left

Ulster Unionist and DUP. Right

UKIP and 2014 elections. Right.

**Small number of parties: the vital importance of first past the post electoral system.**

**Comparative perspective.**

**Part One: the Context in which political parties and movements operated.**

1. Mass society

2. The Big State: important because since 1979 very big issue.

3. The Advance of Democracy

Parliamentary franchise: 1832, 1867, 1918, 1927, 1948

Business vote until 1948

House of Lords

Local authorities

The Monarchy (**film King’s speech**)

4. The Electoral System

The idea of local communities. Universities.

First past the post

Single and multi-party system

Uncontested seats

5. Systems of communications and interaction with electorate.

6. Elites 1800-1914; trade union MPs; post- 1945 professional politicians and women (**film Churchill**)

7. The Empire and Foreign Affairs **(film Ghandi)**

**Part Two: The key stages of development**

**1. Early and Mid-Victorian 1832-1870**

**a. The electoral system**

Complicated system of suffrages. But

1. Prior to 1832 about 10% of adult males. No female suffrage.

1832-1867 about 20%. But need to register so down to 15%

**1867-1884: 35% of adult males registered. The working classes after 1867 a majority of the electorate**.

2. Not single-member. **See Table 1. First past the post; two member two votes, one member one vote**

**The idea of representation of local communities.**

**3**. Vote was open: secret ballot only 1872.

5. Uncontested seats: **See Table 2**.

6. Local authorities: municipal councils (1835), poor law committees (1834), health commissions (1848), school committees (1870) elected by ratepayers; underpinning continues post 1870.

Theme is democratisation but House of Lords keeps veto.

Monarchy fading under Queen Victoria.

**b.** **The parties: number and structure**

1. Move from presence of independents to major institutions. **See Table 3.**

2. Few groupings. **See Table 3.** Nascent bipolar large blocs.

3.Parliamentary groupings.

These were elites. 1874. MPs: 33% landowners and rentiers; 25% professionals; 25% industry and commerce; 18% army and navy officers. **The importance of landed classes: also House of Lords.**

4. The vital point was need to register in 1832: **stimulus to organisation of parties outside Westminster**. Leading towards: 1867 CP and National Union – 1875: 470 local associations; 1877 LP National Liberal Federation. Also central organisation: Carlton Club 1832; Reform Club 1836.

Parties concentrated in parliament; power concentrated in leadership, but rested on consent: e.g. corn laws. House of Lords also parties. Moves towards mass parties through 1832

Discipline in hands of whips.

**c. The parties: conflict, electoral bases and ideology.**

1. Relatively low levels of ideological conflict.

- Partisan votes 1836-1871. **Table 4.**

- Uncontested seats. **Table 2**.

- Large numbers of different governments.

2.

**The Conservative Party**

South and East and counties. England

Pro aristocracy and gentry, Anglican Church, Constitution (monarchy, House of Lords, existing suffrage), Union with Ireland, Scotland and Wales, free market but question of Corn Laws, rights of property, low taxation, low state, national prestige, Empire, strong armed forces.

Pragmatism of Conservative Party. Not narrowly reactionary. Examples. Absence of revolution.

**The Peelites**

Split 1846, Gradually absorbed into Liberal Party. More moderate wing of

**The Liberal Party (coalition).**

North, urban, Scotland and Wales.

Three tendencies: Whigs, Liberals and radicals.

Whig: 1688, aristocratic government, political liberty, concessive reform: pragmatism

Liberals: democracy, free trade, free market, local government, cautious social reform

Radicals: anti aristocracy, doubts re Empire, national self-determination.

**The Irish Nationalists**

1832, 1841, 1847, and then 1874. Independence and land reform. Identification with Catholicism.

**Conflict Issues:**

- Corn Laws 1846

- Franchise Reform

- Ireland.

- Religion: Brief Survey of Religion. Disestablishment of Irish Church 1869. Education Act 1870 compromise.

- Poor law and factory legislation.

Moderate political spectrum with strong dose of pragmatism in Conservative Party and Liberal Party; responsive: franchise reform, social reform. Parties and political system able to move with time.

Legitimacy of the state. Prestige of governing classes.

Localist state; local communities represented through constituencies.

Absorption of people inside system; growth of parties helps this.

**The year 1848: comparative perspective.**

**2. Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain 1867-1918**

Very Big Changes: Hardening of party loyalties, partisanship, uncontested seats, mass parties growth; universal suffrage 1918. New model of Labour Party – new development.

**a. The electoral system. Democratisation**

1.

1867: 35% adult male registered.

1884-5: big increase. 1911 about 60% of adult males on register; about 73% of electorate w-class (80% of population).

1918: universal male franchise; women over age of 30 (abolished 1928).

Secret ballot 1872.

2. Move with 1884-5 towards single member. See **table 1**

3. Decline in uncontested seats: **See Table 2**.

4. House of Lords loses veto in 1911

**b.** **The parties: number and structure**

1. Bipolar but: **See Table 5.**

Liberal Unionist Party. Ireland. Electoral pact with CP. Fuses with CP 1912. External support then coalition with CP.

Labour Party product of mass trade unionism. Electoral pact with LP. External support for Liberal Party 1910-1914.

Apart from Irish Nationalists note absence of small parties.

2. Still elites with exception of Labour Party and INP.

3. Mass Parties1 1867 CP and National Union – 1875: 470 local associations; 1877 LP National Liberal Federation; Central Registration Offices: Conservative 1870. Liberal 1874. But power concentrated in parliamentary leadership.

4. Mass of pressure groups. Primrose League example.

5. Newspapers. The platform. Mass society.

**c. The parties: conflict, electoral bases and ideology.**

1. Higher levels of ideological conflict.

- Partisan votes 1890-1903. **Table 4.**

- Decline in uncontested seats. **Table 2**.

- Far fewer different governments 1870-1914 compared to 1832-1870

**The Conservative Party**

South and East and counties. England, especially rural England.

Pro aristocracy and gentry, Anglican Church, Constitution (monarchy, House of Lords, existing suffrage), Union with Ireland, Scotland and Wales, free market but rights of property, low taxation, low state, national prestige, Empire, strong armed forces.

Pragmatism of Conservative Party. Not narrowly reactionary. Examples. Absence of revolution.

**The Liberal Unionist Party.**

**Whig section of Liberal Party and small group of radicals.**

**The Liberal Party (coalition).**

North, urban, Scotland and Wales.

Radicalisation of Liberal Party.

Three tendencies: Whigs, Liberals and radicals: Big break away of Whigs 1886.

Liberals: democracy, free trade, local government much more advanced social reform (OAPs, NI), especially land question.

Radicals: anti aristocracy, doubts re Empire, national self-determination, land question and social reform.

**The Irish Nationalists**

1874 absolute majority in Ireland. Independence and land reform. Identification with Catholicism. Supports Lib Party 1892-5; 1910-1914. Sinn Fein in 1918 more radical.

**Conflict Issues:**

- Ireland

- Franchise Reform – Liberal measure

- House of Lords

- Welsh disestablishment

- Taxation: tariff reform; 1909 Budget; 1914 Budget.

Tariff reform empire question.

- Social reform. OAPS; national insurance 1911; land question.

Moderate political spectrum with strong dose of pragmatism in Conservative Party and Liberal Party; responsive: franchise reform, social reform. Parties and political system able to move with time.

But with conflict importance of National government 1915-1918; and then coalition 1918-22. Affinity of basic outlook. Suspension of 1911 Parliament Act for great war.

Legitimacy of the state. Prestige of governing classes.

Absorption of people inside system; growth of parties helps this.

Growth of state becoming more collectivist.

**Film: Churchill.**

1918-1948

A. Electoral context:

Full universal suffrage; women equalised with men 1928.

1948-9: end of multi member seats; university seats: business vote.

1945 Ratepayers franchise for local authorities.

End of uncontested seats (table 2).

No reform of House of Lords.

No reform of first past the post electoral system.

Monarchy emerges in modern form: film The King’s Speech.

B. Towards Two-party system rather than bipolar

See table 7

Big major groupings.

Removal of Irish Nationalists. But NI parties and politics continues.

Failure of Communist Party and Union of Fascists: the significance of national governments.

The decline of Liberal Party and Rise of Labour:

- Split 1915-1922; 1931.

- Move of many Liberals to Labour. Lab gvts 1924; 1929-31.

- Electoral system See table 7

- Weakness of party machinery: 1924 only 339 candidates for 615 seats. The Labour Party could count on mass trade unionism.

D. The parties

- CP and Lab P maintain mass structures; have to adapt to the radio, cinema. But Lab Party has mass trade unionism.

Conservative Party more south, rural England; Labour more industrial, Wales, Scotland, urban. But both inter-class parties.

The significance of national governments.

D. Conflict issues

Conservatives dominate governments.

Old Ireland and Welsh disestablishment goes.

Tariffs introduced, especially early 1930s.

Agreement on social reforms such as housing, OAPS. Preparing ground for welfare state.

Power of trade unions: general strike 1926 and CP’s law of opting in. Moderation of TUs after 1926.

The impact of 1929-31 and formation of national government: reorganisation of industry.

Foreign policy, especially appeasement 1933-1939: Anglo-German naval agreement; Munich; Polish guarantee. Churchill.

Formation of national government 1940.

**1945-1974**

Universal suffrage; single constituencies post-1947-8; no uncontested seats essentially

1945-1960 major political and constitutional changes in Italy, Germany and France (Japan).

The impact of war: no need to change.

No constitutional change in UK except 1947-8 and life peers late 1950s.

No change of electoral system.

No new parties such as DC or Gaullist Party.

Two party system. See table 15.1, n. 8.

But see electoral performance of Liberal Party in 1974, also Scottish and Welsh nationalists.

See distorting effects of first past the post system in 1974. Table 15.1.

**Chief areas of difficulty between parties**:

- Role of state in economy and society but ‘Butskellism’. The importance of 1945-1951: nationalisation and welfare state. This chief area of division; also question of taxation.

- The role of trade unions: in place of strife Lab gvt Wilson; Heath government’s legislation and miners’ strike. Later Thatcher but decline of mass trade unionism post 1979, natural process,

- Foreign affairs and Empire: relative agreement. Rhodesia not Algeria. Quick exit India, then Africa 1957-1970.

- The European question.

General background looking forward to Brexit. Not part of CECA, Treaty of Rome, but EFTA, then changed idea with two requests for application in 1960s. Opposition of de Gaulle. Entered 1 Jan 1973 but strong votes against 1972 in parliament. Referendum 1975.

Example of divisions and uncertainties: continued in 1980s and 1992 with divisions in both parties.

**1974-2016**

Decline of two-party system: rise of Liberal Democratic Party and Scottish National Party. See article in dispense. See table of election results.

Decline of legitimacy of parties: see decline in electoral turnout.

First past the post electoral system and its distorting effect.

But European elections different system.

The nature of Thatcherism.

The radicalisation of Labour Party 1977-1983; the nature of Blairism.

The special case of parties in N. Ireland.

Parties in Scottish and Welsh parliaments after devolution legislation.

Parties in European parliament.

The rise of UKIP: especially 2014 European elections.

The political conflict areas of Europe, the role of trade unions, the role of the state in the economy and society, taxation and local taxation.