

Examine the factors that create a 2 party system (Comparative: 12 marker)

1) Electoral System

- First-past-the-post means that other parties struggle to gain majority
- First one to gain the majority and due to the tradition of the main 2 parties, they are more enforced in the UK political system and as a result are more likely to be supported
- Other parties are newer and people are more wary of them and so don't vote for them
- Because the other parties do not have the ability to gain a majority, they are further disadvantaged because their support is more spread out and they never really have enough support to gain a majority for seats in the commons
- **eg:** UKIP gained 12.5% of voices in 2015 but only 1 seat
- Winner-takes-all system that has existed for a long time enforces this
- Winner needs the plurality of the vote and it's unlikely that people will feel enough confidence to vote for a third party as they feel like the third party won't win
- This means that in order for their vote to count, they vote for one of the 2 main parties that they feel have a better chance of winning
- Therefore this means that third parties never have the ability to gain enough significance in the US political system because they haven't got enough support to become the winner and so suffer in comparison to the 2 main parties
- **eg:** Independent party gained 4 million votes in 2016 but not even 1 electoral college vote

2) Political Spectrum

- There is the umbrella spectrum of the popular voters, which leaves room for only 2 parties
- Usually one party more right and one more left
- Only 2 options so people tend to vote either one way or the other
- Any other parties won't fit into the popular vote and therefore cannot gain enough influence to compete with the 2 main parties
- While the other parties do have a little more influence in the UK like the Liberal Democrats
- Usually their popular policies will be adopted by the 2 main parties and leave them with less voters
- Other parties can't challenge the 2 main parties because they are not in the popular vote

3) Electoral Funding

- Electoral campaigns cost millions to fund and because 3rd parties have a lack of support beforehand, they won't be able to gain enough money to properly campaign for votes
- In both countries, it creates a cycle:
 - Other parties don't have enough money so don't get enough votes
 - This means that there is less money for the next election
 - They will get less advertising and not enough people will know to vote them
- US: Democrats and Republicans
- UK: Conservatives and Labour party