**8 Mark Source Question**

A comparison that can be made between the flexibility of the UK and US constitutions relates to the theme of the sort of constitution that each country uses. Source A states that “the UK constitution is unusual in having an ‘uncodified constitution’” and goes on to explicate that this means that the constitution is not set within a single document, rather over a number of sources e.g. in Acts of Parliament. Source B then states that the US constitution is codified in that it is “a single document, running to no more than 7,000 words – which contains the country’s constitutional arrangements”. The Source also states that “all aspects of the US political system must comply with this and no changes to the system can be made, or legislation passed that contradict this arrangement”. This shows that the UK constitution is more flexible in this regard as changes can be made, albeit gradual, and the constitution can be adapted to suit society as it evolves and changes. However, the US constitution leaves lawmakers constrained to only making changes that do not contradict the written constitution, ultimately meaning that it is not as flexible as the UK constitution in this aspect.

A second comparison that can be made between the constitutions of the UK and the US is related to the theme of nature. Source A states that the UK constitution is “conservative in nature” and therefore is reflective of “the incremental and gradual changes that have shaped our system of government” and has been crucial in maintaining institutions such as the Monarchy. Source B states that the US constitution is a “liberal document” because it is based on “core liberal ideas such as freedom, rights, and democracy”. Consequently, many key features of the constitution remain effectively unchanged since the founding of the US. This shows, again, that the UK constitution is more flexible as by nature, it is able to change and be adapted much more than the US constitution that rarely changes or evolves due to its nature.

Lastly, a final comparison that can be made between the constitutions of the UK and the US is in relation to the theme of adaptability. Source A states that the UK’s constitution “means that it can respond to major changes in society quickly and easily merely by-passing legislation” and this is exemplified when the constitutional arrangements of the UK were reorganised as a result of the passage of the Scotland Act (1998), leading to the creation of the devolved Scottish Parliament. Conversely, Source B explains that the creators of the US constitution thought “there would be no need to amend the constitution, however they wanted to make doing so a time-consuming and difficult process”. As a result, in over 200 years, only 27 successful amendments have been made to the US constitution. This shows that because of the structure and barriers put in place by the creators of the US constitution that it becomes extremely difficult to make changes, shown in the minute number of successful changes in a long period of time. However, when compared to the UK these societal changes are met with swift changes in legislation which again shows that the UK constitution is more flexible.

Overall, it can be concluded that the UK constitution is much more flexible than the US constitution. Over many years the UK constitution has been able to change, however in the US, it remains fixed and an arduous process to change due to its principles and structure. The very nature of the UK constitution also allows for steady, constant change to keep with society as it evolves, even though it may be gradual. On the other hand, the US constitution is very set on its traditional values which makes it even harder for change to occur. Therefore, it can be concluded that the case for the UK constitution being more flexible than the US constitution is strong.