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Examiners' Report

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GCE Government & Politics 6GP03 3C

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Introduction

This year's group of candidates are the lucky ones. Once every four years, groups experience a presidential election taking place and a new president launching them into the role. With this knowledge of both, candidates were able, in almost every question, to use this on this year's 3C paper. Examiners are always impressed by the hard work that teachers put in to keep their candidates up to date, and it was certainly rewarded by some really impressive answers.

Of the 15 mark questions, the affirmative action question proved perhaps the most challenging. Under-achievement here was almost always attributable to candidates not paying sufficient attention to its wording, and reproducing an answer they had prepared for a similar but different question. This emphasises the importance of the oldest exam advice, namely to *answer the question*. Another issue with this topic is the use of statistics, and more than most, it seems to invite candidates to pepper their answers with unattributed and unverifiable percentages which can be given very little reward.

The best 45 mark answers were found in the question on presidential elections which allowed candidates to demonstrate more of their individual judgement than either of the others. Pressure group questions almost invariably elicit a more or less formulaic answer, in which candidates rehearse a very familiar list of sub-topics – revolving doors, iron triangles – with more or less dexterity. In contrast, almost every candidate who answered the election question could come to some sort of judgment as to whether Trump's personality or policies contributed more to his victory and it made for a more interesting and effective answer.

Question 1

See examiner comments below.

This was a popular question and most candidates could clearly outline three policies of the Obama administration, most frequently "Obamacare", the 2009 stimulus bill, and gun and immigration policies. Discrimination between Level 2 and Level 3 answers turned on the level of detail with which the policy was explained and the understanding which linked it to Democratic traditions. There were some impressive answers at the top end which were able to cite the policies of previous Democratic presidents as establishing or maintaining traditions. Weaker answers tended to describe three policies in outline and define them as Democratic, as the Democrats had overwhelmingly voted for it or the Republicans had overwhelmingly voted against it. In fact, some answers spent more time discussing why Republicans have opposed a given policy rather than why Democrats supported it. There was some confusion around the issue of gay rights and quite a few candidates claimed that President Obama had legalised same sex marriage personally. The mechanisms of 'Obamacare' were not well understood and a lot of candidates thought it is a direct equivalent of the UK NHS. Some candidates ignored the request for **three** policies and discussed four or five which inevitably worked to their disadvantage. Either through a desire for "balance" or because they had run out of material, some answers tried to show that Obama's policies were *not* part of the Democratic tradition, which could not be rewarded.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3

Question 4

Question 5

①
One major policy of the Obama administration that could be seen as a traditional democratic policy is his flagship piece of legislation, the Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act, which established an individual mandate for healthcare, and ~~for~~ gave 20 million people who had previously been uninsured health insurance. The act, which passed in 2010, also expanded the Medicaid, which reflects how coherent it is with traditional democratic policy, as Medicaid, along with Medicare, was signed into law by Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968. It also matches

similar attempts by Democrats to push public healthcare initiatives, like the attempt made in the 1990's by then First Lady Hillary Clinton to pass a healthcare reform bill.

Another Obama administration policy that matches traditional Democratic values, is the 'Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform' act passed in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, and introduced regulations on the banking industry that intended to prevent further recklessness that the administration felt had been responsible for the crisis. This matches the inter economic interventionism of the Democratic party, in line with the philosophy of John Maynard Keynes, that was reflected in the post by Harry Truman, or Democratic President's nationalisation of the steel mills in 1952, or the 'New Deal' interventionism of ~~the~~ another Democrat, President Roosevelt in the 1930's, in the wake of the wall street crash, which included measures like increasing the powers of the federal reserve to prevent further financial crises.

Another major ~~change~~ ~~to~~ policy introduced by the Obama administration was the immigration reform agenda that led to his executive order known as 'DACA', deferred action for childhood arrivals, which ~~established~~ ordered federal immigration officials (ICE) to not detain and deport those who had been brought ~~into~~ into America illegally by their parents whilst minors, and instead to focus their efforts on the deportation of criminal aliens. This reflects a ~~of~~ Democratic tradition of seeking to reform the immigration system in America, following the 'rainbow coalition' of Democrats under Clinton and Obama, where the Democrats had championed ~~the~~ a coalition of minorities including Hispanic Americans who are often the most vocal champions of reform. It also reflects the ~~of~~ pro immigration stances of former Democratic presidents like Carter, or Roosevelt.



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Examiner Comments

This answer is unusual in the precision of its knowledge: in particular, very few candidates were aware of the different elements of "Obamacare" explained here. It is hard to see how in 15 minutes this question could be answered any better and full marks were awarded.



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Examiner Tip

This answer does not waste any time with an introduction, outlining the points which will be made later on but gets straight into answering the question. This is an effective approach as you cannot be rewarded twice for the same material.

Question 2

Most candidates could identify at least three different methods used by pressure groups, and it was the relevance of evidence and the intelligence of the explanation which determined how highly they could be placed. In order to achieve Level 3, answers needed to offer a judgement on how effective these methods were. A lot of answers cited "iron triangles" as a method and, while this was certainly rewardable, many candidates struggled to explain with any precision how exactly a group might use one to influence the executive. A surprisingly large number of candidates claimed that a method of influencing the executive was to influence another branch, for example by lobbying senators for or against a judicial nominee or bringing an action in the legal system. At the lower end, answers tended to be very generalised and not well linked to the executive branch, often straying into an answer that was more about Congress, and a number used the "Dirty Dozen" list as an example of an attempt to influence the executive. A few candidates did not appear to understand the term 'executive' and wrote about all three branches of the federal government.

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3
 Question 4 Question 5

Perhaps the most direct method of influence involves pressure groups lobbying the President himself. When President Trump first announced his shortlist for nominees to the Supreme Court, the conservative 'Federalist Society' attempted to influence the Republican President's final choice. By ^{all} ~~many~~ accounts, however, Gorsuch was not their first choice perhaps suggesting the limitations of any lobbying effort especially when the group has no ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~link~~ specific links to the President, ^{as} ~~as~~ the Christian Right did within the Bush administration. Such a lobbying effort is made more effective if it is ~~done~~ ^{done} by a group which has supported the President through election ~~emmy~~ efforts. For instance, Matt Zuckerman argued that President Obama refused to support Snet-

'neutrality', because of AT and T's links to
his 2012 fundraising efforts where it was
the largest single donor.

Pressure groups also attempt to
influence the executive through 'regulatory capture'.
There ~~has~~ been suggestions ^{that} that federal
regulator within the executive have too cosy
of a ~~and~~ relationship within the industries they are
tasked with scrutinising. Most especially, Pfizer was
reprimanded ~~by~~ by Nancy Pelosi after it emerged that
Pfizer executives had ~~been~~ ^{of} engaged ^{former} members
of the Food and Drug Administration. Such a
'revolving-door' of employees is effective at influencing
the executive because these former federal employees
often have insider contacts and ~~information~~ information.
Nevertheless, the Honest Leadership and Open Government
Act ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~being~~ ^{was} implemented
with the purpose of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~disincentivising~~ ^{discouraging} reducing
the 'revolving-door' issue by providing a mandatory
cooling-off period. Such the legislation though,
has largely failed ~~to~~ to reduce
lobbyists in that aid in a process
of regulatory capture, with Pfizer's
lobbyists budget increasing year on year
for the last two decades.

Finally, pressure groups make effective use of iron triangles. The term denotes the relationship between legislative House and Senate Committee, Pressure groups and federal bureaucracy. Pressure groups attempt to ~~the~~ ^{influence} the executive ~~the~~ bureaucracy by promoting the department's interest in Congress, thus promoting their own. Such a method, however, may only be effective if the pressure group can successfully exert influence on committee members. By all accounts though they can, with ~~for~~ ^{forming} ~~unions~~ ^{effectively} lobbying for ~~ethical~~ ^{ethical} ~~subsidies~~ ^{subsidies} to remain ~~and~~ ^{by endorsing} candidates who support such a move. In turn the ~~for~~ ^{for} agricultural department is rewarded with increased funding and thus prestige.

In conclusion, it would seem that pressure groups are generally effective at ~~the~~ lobbying the executive yet it is worth noting that much of this lobbying ~~relies~~ ^{relies} upon strong relationships between pressure groups and the executive which are often dependent upon political ~~relationships~~ ^{relationships} and affiliations.



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Examiner Comments

One of the merits of this answer is that it is firmly focused on the executive, when many answers reproduced what read like generic pressure group method answers which were as (or more) applicable to Congress as the executive. It struggles slightly to explain convincingly the exact relationship between a pressure group and the executive exercised through an "iron triangle" but it is nevertheless a solid Level 3 answer.



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Examiner Tip

If the question asks you to *assess* a pressure group's methods then you must offer a judgment based on evidence of its likely success – it isn't enough simply to describe how the method works.

Question 3

This question was popular and most candidates were able to come up with at least three factors which explain low voter participation in the US, some more convincing than others. As is true of affirmative action answers, factors which could be supported by evidence of policies and politicians, e.g. the introduction of ID requirements by some Republican states, were always stronger than those which relied on ascribed psychological states, e.g. that voters don't understand what the midterms are about. Some candidates saw this question as an outlet for all their knowledge of the Electoral College and went into more detail than could be rewarded. The frequently made claim that the Electoral College suppressed turnout in 'safe' states was hardly ever supported by any evidence. This was a question where candidates reached Level 3 more frequently through four reasonably developed points than three detailed ones. Weaker answers tended to become repetitive, blurring together points on voter apathy/disillusion/fatigue/incomprehension.

Chosen question number:

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Question 5

Low voter turnout in US elections is as a result of election type. For example primary elections have an average voter turnout of 34% in 2016. This is as a result of ^{only} party members being ~~only~~ allowed to vote in a number of primary elections. Therefore along with that following the first primary in New Hampshire turnout begins to fall as the result of which candidate will be nominated is usually determined before the end, with the final primaries averaging 12% voter turnout. This therefore means that ~~by~~ there is no major incentive to vote, resulting in low turnouts.

Secondly voter turnout can be low due to safe seats. For instance gerrymandering is a process which creates this issue because districts redraw their boundaries in order to ~~gain~~ guarantee the

Congressman is elected, in a process called packing. By doing this there may be an entire district of African American voters, where 88% of which

voted for the Democrats in the 2016 election. This would reduce the incentive for voters to turnout as they will feel they have very little influence on the election outcome. For example Hawaii is seen as a safe Democratic seat as a whole, and as a result it had the lowest turnout of 46%. Or to highlight this point on average in the 2016 election swing states had on average of 13% higher turnout than safe seats.

Low turnout can also be caused by the demographics in the area. For instance it is estimated that 2/5 Hispanics living in America know or are friends with an illegal immigrant. As a result of this turnout amongst Hispanics tends to be low, with it averaging only 49% in the 2016 election. Along with that African Americans typically have lower turnouts than white Americans. This is often as a result of voter ID laws, such as the ones in Texas. For example to vote people have to

present two types of ID such as a drivers licence on a passport. This hinders many African Americans as they are generally poorer,

therefore the African Americans who can't afford to have these IDs can't vote. This is shown by the lower African American turnout rate of 53% in 2016 compared with 65% white Americans.

Voter turnout can also be affected by wealth as typically wealthier people have more time. A Primary Caucuses are a long voting process and as a result only attract older wealthier people, with an average turnout rate of 10.6% in 2016. This is clearly proven as in 2016 72% of people earning over \$150,000 voted, which is far higher than the average 55% overall turnout.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This sort of question lends itself to a very straightforward structure, and nearly every answer was structured like this one – one factor affecting voter turnout per paragraph. One or two sentences read slightly oddly, for example the reference to "friends of illegal immigrants", but overall there is sufficient detail in the explanation to place this in the bottom of Level 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Be sparing in your use of statistics – even for a question like this, which could draw on statistical evidence more than most. Too many unattributed statistics look unconvincing.

Question 4

This question was not the best answered on the paper, surprisingly since the same issue, the failings of affirmative action, has appeared in different guises at least twice before. The main problem candidates had was focusing on the key term of the question, "racial inequality"; instead they often offered general criticisms of affirmative action or factors which explained why it has not led to a colour-blind society. In both cases, the link could be made to racial inequality but it frequently wasn't. Another less successful approach was to provide detailed evidence of the current state of racial inequality without attempting to explain why affirmative action has failed to provide a remedy. Candidates frequently brought in the Ferguson riots and allegations of racism on the part of the police, but again it was rarely linked convincingly to racial inequality. Stronger answers focused on politicians and political events, showing how a lack of political support at the federal level, decisions by the Supreme Court and actions at state level have all combined to undermine the effectiveness of affirmative action. Others argued that affirmative action has not been in place long enough, was not radical enough and that its original purpose was to tackle equality of opportunity, not produce equality of outcome. Quite frequently, answers began with a sometimes quite lengthy paragraph defining affirmative action which was really a waste of the candidate's time. Some answers argued that AA *had* ended inequality, just as some question 1 answers had that Obama's policies were not part of the Democratic tradition, and this could not be rewarded.

Chosen question number:

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Question 5

One reason affirmative action has failed to end racial inequality is because of the numerous Supreme Court cases which have contributed to making the implementation of affirmative action policies very difficult, usually because of their ambiguity. In the 2003 'Bollinger' court cases for example, 'mechanised' affirmative action policies were declared unconstitutional but 'individualised' policies were allowed. This has been a theme in many affirmative action cases, most recently Texas v. Fisher (2016) and has made it increasingly difficult to implement constitutional affirmative action policies.

Secondly, the policy hasn't had long enough to reach its goals. Affirmative Action arguably only became widespread in the 1990's under Clinton and has therefore

not had a chance for its integration policies to start producing results. In 2003 Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote that affirmative action policies should have produced racial equality by 2028, and if they haven't then they should be scrapped altogether.

Affirmative action policies haven't generated much attention from politicians since Bill Clinton. Obama, for example, made very little comments on the policies and on race in general. Therefore because the policy hasn't had much widespread / high profile support it hasn't been able to be implemented thoroughly and by extension, has not been able to produce racial inequality.

Finally, the policy of affirmative action doesn't seem to have one cohesive goal or an endpoint, so there is confusion over how the policy can be used to achieve racial equality. Liberals tend to be associated with using the policy to create equal results, meanwhile conservatives favour it being used to produce equal opportunities. Therefore, because there isn't unity over what the policy is aiming to achieve, it hasn't been able to be implemented effectively and therefore hasn't been able to achieve racial inequality.



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Examiner Comments

This is a typical low-mid Level 3 answer to this question: there are four distinct points, all explained clearly, with some degree of supporting detail. To move closer to full marks, there could be perhaps another Supreme Court like *Bakke*, and more on what politicians other than Clinton have said and done.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

When writing about affirmative action, try to focus on the politics surrounding it rather than speculating what, for example, the white patients of a black dentist might be feeling.

Question 5

This was a popular question and probably the best answered of the 15 mark questions. Candidates tended to adopt one of two approaches and weaker answers often focused on describing different factions within the Republican Party, very often social conservatives, fiscal conservatives and 'moderates', with little or no indication what they might be divided about. This wasn't wholly surprising, as most of the fiscal conservatives in the Republican Party *are* social conservatives after all, and vice versa. Stronger answers often showed an impressive knowledge of the splits over policy that have emerged under the Trump administration, both over Trump himself and the policies he has proposed. They then went right up to the attempts to pass the American Health Care Act and the different reasons of the Freedom Caucus and the Tuesday Group for not supporting it. The question asked about current divisions and, while references to the compassionate conservatism of George W. Bush could receive some reward, it is a stretch to describe the divisions between compassionate conservatives and others as "current".

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2 Question 3
 Question 4 Question 5

One of the current divisions in the Republican party is what is commonly regarded as 'wall street Republicans'. These are Republicans who are conservative fiscally but hold more liberal stances on certain issues and are more likely to work along bipartisan lines. An example is former Senator Olympia J. Snowe of Maine who looked for a time to be the only Republican intending to vote for the Affordable Care Act but ultimately voted against. Snowe left the Senate in 2013 citing partisan divisions and her fears the US was moving to a Parliamentary type system wherein lawmakers simply vote along party lines with no real thought. More centrist Republicans like these have drawn ire from more traditionalists who have denounced them as 'Republicans in name only' or 'RINOs'.

A notable division within the Republican party is the liberty caucus and tea party. Whilst being conservative on the economy they are differentiated by being highly conservative on social and foreign policy issues as well. An example of this is Texas Senator and GOP

nomination runner-up Ted Cruz whose grassroots support actually saw him beat Texas lieutenant governor in his bid to become Senator. Cruz is an example of the more traditional and conservative division of the Republican party because of stances he has taken like promising to repeal gay marriage on his first day in office as President via executive order or to "relentlessly carpet bomb ISIS" during his 2016 run to be the GOP nominee.

Finally there is the libertarian division of the Republican party. Whilst it is the smallest of the three it has had important members such as Ron and Rand Paul both Kentucky Senators and both having lauded failed bids for the 2008 and 2016 GOP nominations respectively. The libertarian division believes government intervention should be absolutely minimal opposing vehemently the 2010 Democrat proposed Dodd-Frank bill to regulate banks but also voting with Democrats against issues like higher government surveillance and defence spending simply due to their belief the power of government should be restrained wherever possible.

In conclusion 'Wall Street' Republicans are conservative fiscally but more liberal socially exemplified by Republican Senator John McCain who stated he felt action on

climate change still needed to be taken following President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris agreement. Additionally tea party Republicans are conservative fiscally and socially like Sarah Palin, the 2008 Republican VP nominee who has been active in her campaign to preserve the second amendment. Finally there are the libertarians who are defined by their small government stance exemplified by Rand Paul's denying of high interventionist defence spending by saying during a GOP debate "ISIS rides around in US humvees."



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Like many answers to this question, this answer shows a quite detailed knowledge of some names and factions within the modern Republican Party. What it could do better is make explicit the divisions between them, but nevertheless it does enough to get into the bottom of Level 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Conclusions rarely add much to short question answers and the conclusion in this answer doesn't even conclude, but adds some new material. An actual conclusion is necessarily repetitive and you can use the time more profitably on your next question.

Question 6

For many candidates, pressure group questions seem to be the default option, and they will have been pleased to see this relatively straightforward version. Most answers reached at least the middle of Level 2 although, as is always the case, there were fewer outstanding answers than there would be for a parties 45 mark question. There was a tendency for candidates to have more to say on why pressure groups have too much power and some focused on whether pressure groups had power at all without considering whether it was too much or not. The factors which explained excessive pressure group power were typically iron triangles, the revolving door, lobbying, campaign finance and the numerous access points in the US system. A surprising number of answers claimed that pressure groups had too much power over the court system through test cases and amicus curiae briefs. Likewise, it seemed an odd argument that attacks on abortion clinics showed pressure groups had too much power. On the counter argument, stronger answers considered the restrictions on pressure groups, how they use the courts to protect minority rights through test cases and how groups play other crucial functions within US democracy.

Chosen question number: Question 6 Question 7 Question 8

Pressure groups have had an astonishing rise to power in the past few decades with many beginning to wonder if the groups simply have too much power. Considering their ability to influence policy making and election campaigns, this is certainly true, but it should be remembered pressure groups have many positive effects and not all are groups are equally powerful

Pressure group influence in policy making is increasingly apparent. In 2012/13 the NRA, with just 4.5 million members, successfully blocked a law that would have required background universal background checks for gun owners. What made this more surprising was the fact that 92% of the public backed this law, according to one poll. Such influence is not exclusive to gun rights, PHARMA has spent \$2.3 billion in lobbying from 2005-15 and in that time it has contributed the defeat of 119 laws that would have limited pharmaceutical prices. Thus Both these groups have a tiny membership

and work against the interest or opinion of most Americans and they are successful in this regard; they are inherently distort as they concentrate power in a few hands, or give a minority power over a majority. This influence is also arguably unacceptable in a modern democracy, though we do suffer from it too with one farmer union being part of a permanent member of a agricultural advisory board. Thus, there is strong evidence to support pressure groups being too powerful.

Another reason why pressure groups arguably have too much power is because of their fundraising ability. In 2016 single candidate super PACs raised \$1.79 billion and spent at least \$1.1 billion. Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton collectively raised \$2.3 billion and spent at least 98% of that amount. Congressional election spending in 2016's elections was \$4 billion. With such high amounts of money being raised and spent, the ability of Super PACs (political-action-committees) to raise and spend unlimited amounts of money makes them incredibly influential and far more likely to respond than they are to a individual donor who rarely makes donations in excess of \$2,000. This is a much money in the American political system is unique, total spending in 2015 the 2017 snap election was roughly \$130 million, the 2015 Brexit referendum was \$142 million. This unique ability to raise and spend money gives candidates the pressure groups the power to seriously boost a candidate's campaign, perhaps even making them win and candidates who, for example, accept donations from PHARMA or the NRA are far more likely

to vote in their favour, and that is very few individuals have such power. Therefore, pressure groups are simply too powerful considering their elitist nature and unfair influence.

However, the level of power pressure groups have can be a good thing as much as it is a bad thing. The ACLU (American civil liberties union) was a driving force behind the court suspension of Trump's 'Travel Ban' and behind the ruling at *Obergefell v. Hodges* where it sponsored the case and provided 'amicus curiae' briefs. In both cases, the ACLU exercised its influence for the benefit of minorities, in the same way the NRA contributed to the *District of Columbia v. Heller* case in 2008 which covered its membership. ~~gun owners~~ affected the membership, gun owners. Both pressure groups exercised their power for the good of ~~minorities~~ a minority groups: gays, immigrants and gun owners. This ability to exercise freedom of speech (association) and to represent minorities supports the argument that pressure groups are not too powerful since they need the power they have to do their job correctly. Obviously the influence of groups like the PHMA is excessive but it is only possible because those elected officials chose to listen and follow orders and any group, from the ACLU to the AFL-CIO can arguably reach such a point of influence. ~~Pressure Groups are~~ Therefore it can be argued Pressure Groups ~~and they~~ have proper power proportionate to the level the extent they are inhibited too by elected officials and elected officials are simply listening too much.

Another argument against pressure groups being having too much power is the fact that there are numerous pressure groups that are powerful. For example, pro-life groups have millions of members and millions of dollars at their disposal yet they have never over-turned Roe v. Wade, even after 40 years of campaigning and lobbying. The Brady

campaign emerged in 2012 following the Sandyhook massacre yet even with public support, it failed to see an gun rights legislation turn into law. Pressure groups promote pluralism

not ~~they~~ because they encourage opposing viewpoints to argue ~~organise~~ and argue their case but not all get to exercise as much as others. Pressure groups with power

constantly change, anti-gay marriage groups dominated in the 90s, shown in the passage of DOMA which banned gay marriage,

yet in 2015 gay rights groups took their place, shown in the Obergefell v. Hodges ruling which banned states from banning gay marriage. Available funding is heavily tied to support and

numerous other factors. It is wrong therefore to say ~~so~~ pressure

groups have too much power in the US, some certainly do but most are heavily restricted in what they can do, it depends on who the elected officials are.

Overall, some pressure groups do have too much power

their ability to influence the voting of elected officials, as well as who is elected, is excessive and undermines

Overall, some pressure groups do have too much power. Their ability to influence does the voting of elected officials, as well as who is elected, or excessive and undermines democracy by concentrating power in the hands of a few. Even though most groups are very limited in what power they can exert, even one group with such excessive influence is one too many.



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Examiner Comments

The strengths of this answer are the clarity of the explanation and the confident handling of the detail in the evidence, and these are sufficient to place it in mid-Level 3.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

When writing about pressure groups at A2, it is important to avoid giving the impression that you are just recycling your AS essays by showing detailed awareness of the US context, as this answer does.

Question 7

A question on the outcome of presidential elections was probably not too hard to anticipate and many candidates seemed well prepared. The question did ask about elections – plural – which meant that candidates had to refer to more than just 2016, and answers which didn't stayed in Level 2. The fact that Clinton won many more votes than Trump posed a slight problem for candidates insofar as both candidates could be seen as 'winners' and consequently it became more complicated to argue that any given factor was particularly decisive one way or the other. The formulation of the question obviously preceded the nomination of the two main 2016 candidates, but the three factors named applied very well to them, particularly personality, and there were a lot of very full answers. There was a lot of impressive detail on elections prior to 2016 and the strongest answers were able to show that different factors were the most important depending on the individual circumstances of different elections, using comparisons between them to make the point. Weaker answers tended not to cover each of the three factors and to focus on one election only.

Chosen question number:

Question 6

Question 7

Question 8

Personality, campaign finance raised and promised policies are all important factors in determining Presidential races. Whilst it is difficult to know precisely why people voted the way they did, it seems that, whilst campaign finance is always important, the election of Trump in 2016 showed that personality and policies are perhaps more important if the media can be successfully utilised.

There is no doubt that personality is a crucial factor for voters, as demonstrated repeatedly in recent elections. This was demonstrated in 1996 when Bill Clinton defeated Bob Dole. Clinton was still able to portray his image of being fresh-faced and he was a smooth operator, firmly gripping it is not Senator Dole's age that worries me,

it is the eye of his ideas I questioned. ~~But~~ Dole, on the other hand, made a series of 'convenient' (Michelle Post) missteps and was a poor, rambling public speaker, and this combination certainly aided Clinton's victory. This was also seen in the recent 2016 elections to some extent. Although he received a plethora

of negative press for his comments and behaviour, notably calling Mexicans 'rapists' and boasting that he could sexually assault women, Trump still arguably won the personality war with Clinton, as he continually attacked her for being a 'criminal' due to the FBI injecting into her and this led to her being demoralised even more than Trump was. Thus, personality has played a role in recent elections, although Trump's victory does suggest more important factors must be in play.

Campaign finance, until the 2016 election, looked to be a crucial factor in deciding a candidate's run for Presidency. This was most clearly demonstrated by Obama in 2008. He declined receiving funds, (for every \$250 donated the FEC matches it but there are limits on donations), which would have generated him \$65 mil and

instead encouraged his supporters to donate money, some and all donate very small amounts. He also used fundraising, where small groups could donate, which earned him \$65mil alone. He overall generated over \$700mil including over \$150mil in September '08 alone, over \$400 mil more than opponent McCain, and this

surely helped him to his comfortable victory as more campaign finance allows for more advertising, field offices and spreading of policies and messages. Obama also raised \$100mil more than Romney in 2012 and did so earlier, by spring 2012 he had 136 field offices to Romney's 52, and had paid for positive ads which aired 200 times in Ohio (the bell-wether state), alone. However, Clinton raised much more money than Trump both individually and through Super-Pacs (such as Prior Action USA which raised \$192mil, eventually raising \$567mil directly to her campaign compared to Trump's \$364mil, yet it was not successful. This may be down to the fact that Trump raised received more than \$5bn worth of free media coverage as a result of his controversial behaviour. Hence, whilst campaign finance continues to be important with Super Pacs now dominating spending

huge sums to support a candidate (American Crossroads spent \$110mil in 2012 & \$91mil on advertising & \$1.4bn was spent in total in 2016), Trump proved it is not decisive.

Seemingly crucial then is the politics of the candidates. Given that Trump received so

much free press for his poor behaviour, the policies he was suggesting that people feared of through this media coverage must have been attractive. This makes sense given that Trump ran an anti-immigration campaign based on hate and fear in a time where 64% of Republicans (and) view immigration as a burden and increased terrorist incidents such as the Orlando shooting and the Paris attacks which combined with the style of news many Americans are exposed to, such as on Fox News, made Trump's suggestion of a Muslim ban and a wall very popular. Policy importance is not new though! Mitt Romney failed to take advantage of the unpopularity of Obama & after he had massively increased the role of the govt. with the Recovery Act and ACA and failed to increase real wages or massively increase

employment. This was because Romney failed to execute an 'echnya-shachi' strategy where he was very conservative on issues such as immigration and climate change in the primaries but then moved centrally for the campaign against Obama, which led him to be dubbed 'moderate Mitt' from the 'mitty middle' - for example he said he would further

regulate banks etc. The Republicans had spent 4 years attacking Obama for regulating banks & Wall Street. Previous policies have also been important. GWB lost the 1992 election largely because he had increased taxes & thereby lost his main '96 campaign promise of 'read my lips, no new taxes', and this provided the perfect platform for Clinton to steal votes with the phrase 'read my lips, no tax term'. GWB certainly benefited from his first term policies, in which he had strongly responded to the 9/11 attacks and had taken a patriotic nation into a war of vengeance, thus he easily won in 2004.

These policies, both promised and proved, have been criticised in recent Presidential elections.

To conclude, whilst personality is certainly a notable factor in Presidential elections, the election of Trump, who many of his own voters found unappealing as a person, proves that this is not the most important factor. ~~And~~ whilst media coverage can play a part, it is not the most important factor.



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Examiner Comments

Many answers to this question focused almost exclusively on the 2016 election and it is an impressive feature of this one that the first evidence it uses comes from 1996, as well as other elections subsequently. It is a solid mid-Level 3 answer.



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Examiner Tip

45 mark answers need an introduction and conclusion, but almost all your reward will come from the analysis in between, so don't spend too much time on them - the length in this answer is just about right.

Question 8

This was a new question and candidates who answered it would have been forced to think on their feet. The best answers were impressive in the way they combined knowledge of party policies and minority concerns. Candidates would have been aware that this question was testing the 'racial and ethnic politics' section of the specification but, given its wording, discussion of LGBT representation was rewarded. However, there is no definition of minority which would have made discussion of women's issues rewardable and neither was it possible to reward discussion of prisoners or any of the other non-racial "minorities" candidates chose to identify. Stronger answers were able to show that both parties had policies which did represent minorities, typically discussing "Obamacare", immigration policy and affirmative action for the Democrats, as well as Republican policies on immigration, attitudes to Cuba and social conservatism, which appealed to the interests of some minority voters. Weaker answers tended to focus on the representation of minorities within the different branches of the federal government, which was, at best, only a very partial answer to the question.

Chosen question number: **Question 6** **Question 7** **Question 8**

PLAN:

DEMOS

REPS

HISPANIC

ECON J
IMM J

CON ~
IMM X

WAGES

A.A. J

A.A X

LGBT

POWER J

X

~~The two major parties~~ Debate currently surrounds the extent to which both parties represent minorities, with some arguing that neither do so adequately. The Democratic party, however, are considerably more representative of minority voters versus the Republicans.

When considering the Hispanic and Latino minority, for instance, the Democrat's economic and immigration approach is far more representative of their

When considering the Hispanic and Latino minority, for instance, the Democrat's economic and immigration approach is far more representative of their typical attitudes versus the Republicans. ~~between~~ ~~politics~~ Due to how, generally, Hispanics are poorer, and are more dependent on government intervention and assistance, Hispanics tend to favor the Democratic approach to the economy - the 'safety net' approach - Democrats favor an increased role of the federal government in assisting citizens, rejecting, say, the Republican views of welfare and certain ~~the~~ subsidies creating an 'apathetic' and/or 'dependency' culture.

The Affordable Care Act, notably, has ~~represented~~ constituted a major life line for ~~many~~ proportions of the Hispanic community, who would have been unable to afford or receive medical insurance without it. The Republican's current proposal, the American Healthcare Act, on the other hand, is likely to result in the loss of insurance for many poorer families, thereby making it an unrepresentative party for Hispanics in terms of economic assistance and healthcare. Furthermore, the Democratic party is generally more in-line with Hispanic's views towards immigration. Considering many

members of the Hispanic community would have been required to pass through the rigorous and expensive citizenship process. The Democrats' support for greater and more streamlined citizenship avenues is more representative of their general attitudes; the work of the Obama administration, notably the attempted introduction of the DREAM Act, DACA and DAPA, illustrates clearly how more resonant the

Democrats are with Hispanics; this is contrasted with the, generally, more anti-immigration approach furthered by the Republicans. Whilst the Republicans have not always been strong opposers of greater immigration-enabling policies (for example, the moderate and libertarian support for 'legal' immigration), the ascendancy of President Trump has negated this history. Through his labelling of Hispanic immigrants as "rapists", and of "bringing drugs", alongside his repeated calls for a border wall (believing immigration floods the labour market and causes US-citizen unemployment), the

Republican's current stance towards Hispanics has been vastly at odds with many Hispanic communities. To say neither party adequately represents Hispanics, therefore, is untrue, as this undermines the strong economic and social policy

relationship established between the Democrats and Hispanics.

Again, to say neither party represents the African American (black) minority is inaccurate too, as it disregards how the Democrats currently 'represent' Black issues considerably more so versus the Republicans. One notable area of representation, for instance, is over the topic of Affirmative Action. The Democrats, currently, favour Affirmative Action's implementation, believing that it fosters an 'equality of opportunity' that would not exist without it. Notably, both Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders during the 2016 Democratic primaries favoured Affirmative Action, with Sanders, particularly, desiring to eradicate the income inequality present across both race, class and gender. This is in stark contrast to the Republican party, who are firm believers that Affirmative Action programmes devolve into more quota systems, representing a form of effective 'reverse discrimination'; they too believe that Affirmative Action is, generally, Un-American, as AA programmes undermine the U.S. principles of equal and fair competition, and in the history of an 'aspirational' society. These views, therefore

and generally unrepresentative of poorer African Americans. A final means by which the Democratic party is considerably more 'representative' for the black minority is through their history - under Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Both the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act were passed; consequently, the Democrats

came to represent the party committed to bolstering the opportunities for African Americans, mirrored through their continued >80% support for the Democrats during Presidential elections (peaking at 95% and 93% in 2008 and 2012, respectively). Compare this to, say, the anti-Affirmative Action stances of the Republican Reagan Presidency in the 1980s, the Democrats are considerably more representative of blacks compared with the Republicans.

Finally, in regards to 'social minorities', notably the LGBT community, the Democrats are, again, considerably more representative than their Republican counterparts. The Democrats' commitment to upholding civil liberties, whilst simultaneously overturning the 'status quo' in favour of progressive ideals, they have become natural allies of the LGBT minority. This was illustrated, for instance, during the Obama administration - the repeal of the

'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Act, prohibiting openly homosexual individuals from serving in the military, and the President's personal support for Obergefell v. Hodges - making provisions on homosexual marriage unconstitutional nationwide - the Democrats have seen to be greatly

representative of LGBT issues. Of course, both the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and 'Defence of the Marriage Act' were introduced under the 'New Democratic' presidency of Clinton, indicating a potential divergence to LGBT commitment. Yet this should be viewed in ~~context~~ contemporary terms - the New Democrats are a fast dying wing of the Democratic party, favouring semi-conservative 'third way' social policies only to counter the dominance of the Republicans; the Obama Presidency, alongside the ~~firm~~ firmly LGBT-progressive stances held by both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, illustrates the Democrats' 'return' to a more representative approach. This is contrasted to the 'traditional values' of the Republican party, opposing LGBT rights and homosexual marriage generally, because of its grant to religious values. Again, therefore, the Democrats are wholly more representative of the LGBT minority versus the Republicans.

To conclude, the socially progressive and economically-interventionist approach of the Democratic party makes them a significantly more minority representative party versus the Republicans, whose support the more traditional values, and measures aimed to benefit minority voters, means their support 'representation' instead lies more closely to the white majority; this divide in representation has been only further exacerbated by the Trump presidency.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is one of the better answers to this question and the candidate intelligently adapts what they know to what the question is asking. It is more effective to choose a relatively small number of groups, as this candidate does, and go into some detail, rather than skim over a larger number when the answer would start to read like a list.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

"A lot about a little" is a maxim that can be applied to exam answers in many subjects - it is almost always better to analyse a few things in detail than a larger number superficially.

Paper summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following key pointers:

- Short answer structure – three or four separate points, one per paragraph, achieve the balance between range and detail.
- Answer the question – read the question carefully: for example, if the question asks you to 'assess', you must do more than simply explain, for example, a pressure group method, but additionally give a judgment on its effectiveness.
- First sentence of each paragraph – use this to show the connection with the previous paragraph by using an opening word like 'however', and that you are answering the question in front of you by repeating its key terms.
- 45 mark answer structure –two halves, or a series of arguments and counter-arguments can work equally well. If you choose the arguments and counter-arguments option, try to give the reader a sense of where your overall argument is headed.

Grade Boundaries

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