

Examiners' Report
June 2016

GCE Government & Politics 6GP03 3C

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Introduction

Examiners reported that this year's paper represented a fair test, and candidate performance was consistent across all questions, with the exception of question 4 where some struggled. There is always a lot going on in US politics but in a presidential year there is more than usual, and many candidates drew on what they have been reading and watching in their answers.

One message that comes across in the comments below on individual questions is the need for candidates to *answer the question*: despite all the efforts of teachers, candidates too frequently answer the question they have prepared rather than the one in front of them on the paper.

There are different views on the role of an introduction to an essay but in an exam answer there is no point in candidates summarising the points they then go on to make in the body of the essay: they cannot be rewarded twice and the summary takes up time that could be spent more productively elsewhere.

Question 1

Many candidates were clearly well prepared for a Latino question and there were a number of very good answers. The most effective and simplest structure was to look at each issue in turn; some were evidently hoping for a question either on why Latino voters support the two main parties or why they are an increasingly important voting group, and decided to reproduce that answer in any case. Points about issues emerged from this structure but a direct focus on the question is always better. Immigration is obviously a key issue: quite a few candidates wrote as though illegal immigrants have the vote, although some made the broader point that politicians' attitudes to illegal immigrants are often taken as signifying their attitude towards the community of which immigrants are a part. If candidates knew one thing about the 2016 campaigns, it was Donald Trump and his 'great wall', and it frequently featured here. It was the sign of a better answer that Latinos were not treated as a homogenous whole, and there was a recognition that different issues might be important to different groups. Many referred to the Catholic background of most Latinos pre-disposing them against abortion rights, but the point was well made that, since most also vote Democratic, it could not be the most significant issue. Same sex marriage was often cited in the same connection but, according to most opinion polls, Latino attitudes have tracked those of the rest of the population and it would be a significant issue for only a few.

• Immigration ✓ • Education • Welfare ✓ • Social policy.

The issue most often associated with the Latino community is undoubtedly immigration. On the campaign trail Barack Obama promised to undertake comprehensive immigration reform, a pledge that will have been well received by Hispanics, some of whom are personally affected by that issue. Ultimately in 2010 Obama's flagship immigration policy the DREAM Act was defeated by a Republican filibuster. Surprisingly, this failure did not cost him in 2012 due to Mitt Romney's gaffe regarding 'self-deportation' - Hispanics often interpret a politician's attitude towards their community via their stance on immigration. Time will tell if the words of Donald Trump will push Latinos into the arms of the Democrats in 2016.

Hispanics are not a 'one issue group' though, and many other factors could impact the way the vote. Many Hispanics come from low income households and therefore are receptive to

policies that bolster the welfare state. As 1 in 4 Hispanics on average do not have health insurance, the Latino community is likely to have received the Affordable Care Act of 2012 well.

Furthermore, in a recent poll, 49% of Latinos said that education was 'very important' and as such, they are likely to support affirmative action programmes that aid young Hispanics in gaining admission to college. As such, Bill Clinton's 'mend it, don't end it' plea for affirmative action in the aftermath of the Peña v. Adarand Construction Supreme Court ruling would have been popular amongst Hispanics.

Issues that influence Hispanic voting are not exclusively the territory of the Democratic party. Hispanics in general can be a religious (mainly Catholic) community and therefore hold socially conservative views. For example, the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell by the Obama administration may have caused the Latino vote to move to the Republicans.



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Examiner Comments

The strengths of this answer are its intelligence and command of detail, and the first side especially shows considerable knowledge of how immigration has featured in recent elections. The candidate does not imply, as many did, that illegal immigrants are able to vote, but could explain a little more fully why immigration does matter to many Latinos. There is also good supporting detail on the second side, although the 'mend it don't end it' speech is a little ancient now. Altogether, a good low Level 3 answer.



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Examiner Tip

Short answers often read like a list and one of the pleasing features of this answer is the way in which the candidate links and qualifies their points. Thus the opening sentence isn't simply 'The first issue...' but rather 'The issue most often associated with...'. The second point is introduced with "Hispanics are not a 'one issue group' though...". This gives the impression that the candidate has not just learned a series of points by rote but thought about and evaluated them.

Question 2

The role of pressure groups has been extremely controversial due to the 'revolving door' between congress and lobbyist employed by pressure groups. An example of this has been Eric Cantor who was house majority leader defeated in the 2014 midterms joining the firm molis and so far an annual salary of \$3.4 million. This use of Washington contacts to infiltrate congress has been widely criticised for being 'elitist' and taking away from the pluralist democracy envisioned by the founding fathers. The revolving door syndrome and the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal has led to tighter restrictions on pressure groups and the introduction of the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (2007) which shows that scandals such as this have been important in increasing the controversy of pressure groups.

One of the main reasons why pressure

Groups have been controversial is due to the disproportionate minority influence they have on legislation. The 'Monsanto Protection Act' (2013) was orchestrated by the Monsanto group to make farmers of genetically modified food to be immune to judicial scrutiny. (Controversial) influence in legislation such as this has increased the idea of 'iron triangles' existing in congress such as the one between the committee on agriculture, ~~and~~ the US federal agency of agriculture and the American Farmer's bureau. Solid relationships such as this undermine the scrutiny which should exist in congress for bills.

Finally pressure groups have been controversial due to their influence regarding direct democracy. With the use of initiatives and referendums pressure groups have been able to fund campaigns on propositions sympathetic to their cause. An example of this is the proposition S22 regarding the labelling of genetically modified food which was heavily funded by the campaign 'no to S22' which use \$22 million dollars

to effect the outcome of votes against this proposition. With the backing of financial means pressure groups where money seems to buy influence have increased the controversial nature of pressure groups.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a very typical low Level 3 answer. The analysis could not be called sophisticated but there are three clear and well explained points, all supported by relevant contemporary evidence. The answer could be improved by stronger linking – the structure is rather list-like – and more fuller explanation, e.g. in the first paragraph the term 'elitist' could be defined and expanded



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Short answer structure – three different points clearly made in separate paragraphs work well as a structure for 15 mark answers.

Question 3

As the Iowa caucuses had taken place less than six months before the exam was taken, it was to be expected that many candidates would have some knowledge of the caucus process, and its merits and drawbacks compared to candidate selection by primary. Some candidates in fact took the question to be about the Iowa caucuses specifically rather than the caucus process in general, and wrote unrewardably, for example, about issues created by frontloading. Weaker answers were unsure about some of the details and seemed to believe, for example, that the candidates were present at the caucuses, while others claimed that they were the preserve of 'party bosses', and there were the inevitable references, beloved of many candidates every year, to 'smoke-filled rooms'. It was often stated that caucuses were advantageous in large states with small populations, although it was rarely explained why this should be so. Although the focus of the question was caucuses, it clearly required a comparison to primaries, but many answers mentioned primaries only in passing and made a comparison only implicitly. Stronger answers differentiated between different types of primaries and often showed knowledge of some the quirks of caucuses, such as the use of a coin toss to decide the winner in the event of a tie.

Firstly, caucuses are better than primaries as they provide time and allow debate. Primaries do not serve this function. Caucuses allow lengthy debate on topical issues: for instance in 2016, the focus of caucus debate was focused on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender rights, terrorism (ISIS) and the minimum wage to name a few. This is perhaps why the Times labelled caucuses as "Democracy at its earthenest" as it has an undeniable educational quality.

Secondly, caucuses allow voters to express second and third ~~and~~ ~~and~~ preferences. Thus they are allowed to stand and support a different candidate if their favoured is in effect "knocked out" the round. ~~But~~ Primaries on the other hand do not offer this ~~luxury~~.

Thirdly, caucuses are excellent for states such as Iowa & which have disperse populations and too do not allow so called "wreckers" that are ^{is} evident allowed in open primaries. For instance in 2012, Obama encouraged voters to support Santorum instead of his rival Romney.

Despite these concerns I would argue that primaries are in fact a better selection system. The promotions of caucuses have been & exaggerated.

Firstly caucuses cannot be "Democracy at its earthiest" as it does not contain a vital secret ballot, which protects the individual from peer pressure and the who "shouts louder" succeeds mantra, which was evident in 2008 as Obamas supporters were described as "ratty" by The Times.

Secondly turnout is significantly lower in caucuses, in 2012 GOP

~~the~~ Iowa caucus turnout was only 20.2%. This because of the length of the caucus - that yes does

allow debate but deters the ordinary working electorate sector from voting.

The primary system is simple and quick. In 2016, the GOP primaries have reached a high 30% turnout.

Moreover, even the Iraqi government rejected the use of caucuses on the terms of it being too "undemocratic"!

Finally although "wreckers" are an issue, ~~it does provide~~ they are not the majority in no means. Modified and open primaries allow a greater range of ~~the~~ the electorate to vote, not only increasing the turnout but allow a more moderate candidate to succeed that better reflects the nation. Rather than the extremities that found in caucuses (as the committed candidates who have the time to turn out are usually more extreme).



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Examiner Comments

The strength of this answer is the sense of close engagement with the question. Throughout the answer, the strengths and weaknesses of caucuses and primaries are compared and the evidence for and against intelligently evaluated, for example, that 'wreckers' are by no means the majority. It is not completely comprehensive – the point that caucuses attract more ideological voters, which some answers made a lot of, is only added at the very end - and the point that caucuses are 'excellent' for states with dispersed populations is left unexplained. Nevertheless, a very good answer.



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Examiner Tip

Answer the question – this is the oldest exam advice going but it is still routinely ignored by many candidates. You need to make it clear to the examiner that you are answering the question on the paper and not the one you hoped would come up. This candidate makes it clear throughout the answer that s/he is answering the question by consistently comparing primaries and caucuses.

Question 4

Given that they were taking a politics exam, candidates should not have been too surprised by a question on affirmative action which asked them about its political impact. Nevertheless, many preferred to answer their own question and wrote instead about its wider effects on society, relying either on a range of 'statistics' on, for example, black graduation rates or on anecdotes about white patients' reluctance to see black dentists. Quite a few also wanted to rehearse the arguments for and against affirmative action. Unfortunately, this all meant that in some cases there was very little to reward, while many others relied solely on the effects of affirmative action on minority representation in the three branches of government. Examiners interpreted the term 'affirmative action' as broadly as possible but, unfortunately, it could not be stretched to reward the many references to *Brown v Topeka Board*, nor could discussion of the civil rights movement and the subsequent legislation be rewarded. Stronger answers would typically devote a paragraph to the contribution of affirmative action to partisan polarisation, a paragraph to its effect on the Supreme Court and a final paragraph on state propositions. Many candidates would undoubtedly have had this knowledge but were unable to see how to deploy it.

Executive Order, initially introduced by President John F. Kennedy in executive order 10925 in 1961, has had a resonating impact on the American political system. The Democrat pursuit of Executive Order has led to a strong support of African Americans for the party, seen in the 2012 election where Obama received 95% of the black vote (according to Gallup). Though Nixon's 'Philadelphia Plan' showed a Republican attempt to achieve better racial equality in 1970s America, Reagan the Reagan's administration's negative association has damaged the party's image. It is likely that 2016 will see a similar level of support for the presumptive Democrat nominee Hillary Clinton (who has already received endorsements from notable black figures including popular culture artists such as Beyoncé) — the Republican presumptive candidate ^(Donald Trump) has been heavily criticised for his racist remarks, most recently in his questioning of Judge Lurie's ~~effectiveness~~ race in relation to his ~~effectiveness~~ ability (June 2016).

Executive Order has also played a key role in the Supreme Court, and has been a subject of much controversy over the past 70 years. Repeatedly splitting the court with US

rulings, Annunzio's Action is one of the most observed areas. With rulings such as *Gonzalez v Bollinger* and *Groff v Bollinger* in 2003, and an expected ruling on *Fisher v Texas* by the end of June 2016, it has split the court more clearly into the loose constructionists and strict constructionists. ~~Maybe~~ The Justices themselves have repeatedly queried comment on the subject, with Justice O'Connor stating that she believed it would no longer be needed in 2028 and Chief Justice Roberts stating in 2005 that he believed "the way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race." Perhaps the most controversial in recent years being Justice Scalia's comments in 2015 ^{regarding *Fisher v Texas*} which Senate minority leader, Harry Reid, described as 'racist.' It will be interesting to see how the new Supreme Court Justice, filling the vacancy after Justice Scalia's death in 2015, will affect the court's ideology and thus Annunzio's Action cases - especially if the court decide not to rule on *Fisher v Texas* as an incomplete court.

Annunzio's Action may be credited for the diversity of the 114th Congress - the most diverse Congress ever to sit in American history. With ~~10 African Americans~~ 2 African Americans in the Senate and 86 in the House of Representatives, African-Americans have unprecedented representation. This may also be reflected in growing ethnic minority representation in the executive department - not only is Barack Obama the first African American president, his 2009 ~~was~~ cabinet was 7/15 ethnic

minority, and the appointment of Loretta Lynch as Attorney General in 2015 was the first black woman to be appointed to a 'top tier' position in the executive. However, affirmative action has been criticised by leading senators including Ted Cruz, who said in an interview in 2015 that many people assumed he had had such success and had graduated from Harvard Law school as a result of the preferential treatment. It continues to be a major dividing factor between the two main parties in America, and will continue to have a political impact for years to come.



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Examiner Comments

This was one of the best answers seen to this question and it is impressive in its clear focus on the question and intelligent handling of detail. It is likely though that many, perhaps a majority, of the candidates who struggled would have known the same 'facts' as the writer of this answer, but failed to recognise how they might use them.



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Examiner Tip

Affirmative action is an important topic in the 'Racial and Ethnic Politics' section of the specification and when answering questions on it, avoid statistical and anecdotal evidence as far as possible, as it is rarely convincing.

Question 5

Most candidates had little difficulty assembling a range of points to use in answer to this question, which was generally well done. Weaker answers went awry in two different ways: they either made points which aren't part of the theory of party decline, such as low election turnout, or to evidence which wasn't correct, and claimed, for example, that split-ticket voting is on the rise or party control in Congress is on the decline. The continuing existence of factions within the major parties was also cited as proof of party decline and, as always happens with questions in this area, some candidates focused on the decline or revival of individual parties. There was plenty of evidence from this year's politics for stronger answers to draw on, and the success of Donald Trump and near success of Bernie Sanders (a number of candidates referred to the Democratic primary being 'stolen' by Hillary Clinton) was used as evidence of parties' decline (since the party 'establishment' had wanted neither) and their continuing relevance (as both had run in a major party primary rather than chance running as an independent). The injunction to 'assess' in the question required candidates to give some sort of judgement on the validity of the argument they were explaining, and the best answers made three points for decline and countered each one directly with a short piece of evidence: the use of 'super-delegates' was often used in this context, although there were surprisingly few references to the controversies surrounding their role in this year's Democratic primary.

One argument that supports the theory of party decline is that parties no longer play a role in candidate selection, one of its traditional functions. Parties previously would nominate candidates for election, but now we have seen that it is the voters that do this. For example, in 2012 the Republican party nominated Mitt Romney, but in the recent 2016 election we have seen that outsiders such as Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump have entered the race, suggesting that parties have little influence over candidate selection.

Another argument for party decline is that there is now an increase in candidate and issue-centred voting. Nowadays, it isn't the party, but the candidate that is seen as more important in elections. Voters tend to vote for the candidate who they prefer rather than consider what party they are from. In 2002, George Bush's campaign slogan was 'God, Guns & Girls' and this made him very popular in the race which shows that elections are now focused on the candidate and

the issue that they are fighting for rather than parties.

However, it has been argued that party decline has been exaggerated. It has been suggested that the death of the Republican party was following the Watergate Affair and Nixon's resignation, but just six years later, a Republican controlled the Executive again. It has also been suggested that the death of the Democratic Party was due to the left-ward shift of the party in the 60's, 70's and 80's, but was resurrected after the Clinton - Gore ticket of 1992. This shows that party decline has been exaggerated or although in the past there may have been party decline, recently we have seen parties grow in importance.

Also, we have seen that nationalisation of campaigns has led to an increase in importance of parties in mid-term elections. Newt Gingrich's Contract to America was a ten-point policy programme which the Republican agreed to bring to a vote in the House if they won the House of Representatives in the mid-term election, which they did. Similarly, the Democrat Party's 'Six for Ob' agenda was also used to win control of one Congress in 2006, after being the minority.

party for 12 years. This campaign was also successful, which shows that parties have not declined, and instead have been renewed.



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Examiner Comments

There are two approaches to 'assess' questions – the first adopted by most candidates is to add a qualifying judgment at the end of each paragraph, and the alternative seen here is to structure the answer as a mini-essay in two halves – both are equally valid. This is a typical top Level 2/bottom Level 3 answer: the analysis is a little basic at times but there is also some good detail, for example the references to the 'Contract with America' and 'Six for 06'. The third paragraph is not totally unrewardable, hinting as it does at greater ideological coherence, but it is certainly not the strongest.



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Examiner Tip

'Assess' – remember if the questions ask you to assess, you must comment on the significance of the points you make, for example their importance relative to each other, their changing significance over time, or the existence of evidence which weakens them.

Question 6

Although this was a question that had not been asked before, stronger candidates were able to recognise that, with a little tweaking and reordering, they could readily make use of a lot of the material they had prepared. Typically these candidates would devote two or three paragraphs to Congress and then move onto other branches of government, quite frequently also discussing the potential of state governments as a route for pressure groups. Others lacked the knowledge to move away from their prepared answers and focused either on factors determining success, such as wealth or membership numbers, or methods, such as lobbying. Along the way they made points which were certainly rewardable but their answers lacked the consistent engagement with the question required to achieve high marks. Even where there was recognition that routes were the key term of the question, many responses did not address the issue of success: they would describe, for example, different ways a group might influence the Supreme Court, such as test cases or amicus briefs, without considering how likely they were to have the desired effect.

Introduction - Elitism

, not only is it widespread, its easy
Conclusions - most widespread
and most used

Para-1 - discuss congressional influence

- Iron triangles and revolving doors

Para - donations and money access points - campaign finance

Jack Abramoff
Bill Tauzin

para-2 = direct action - occasionally works
and gets violent most times

effectively dead
McCutcheon vs FEC
Citizens United vs IEC
Super PACs
527 groups

para 3 - Judiciary - Amicus curiae briefs

- ACLU vs Reno

laws set into precedent
are harder to get rid of
= more effective
doesn't happen as often

Since its creation, the founding fathers intended for America to be a nation of equal right to speak. This Pluralistic belief has continued in the form of some of the most influential groups in America. Pressure groups seek to exert influence whenever they can, Congress being one of many avenues for access points that lobbyists can use to change/influence policy in their favour.

It is widely agreed that lobbying congress is the most effective way to influence policy*. This makes a lot of sense given the number of "legislative czars" available to influence, committee chairs being some of the most important decision makers behind the passage of a bill. ~~From this it follows that as long as a lobbyist can gain support from a prominent chair in the passage of a bill, it will make~~ The amount of money k street lobbyists spend on congressional lobbying indicates the extent of its effectiveness, the US chamber of commerce spending more than \$100 million on lobbying alone. Although it can be argued that not every PG has enough money to lobby to this extent, the role of persuasion by the likes of ex congressman Billy Tauzin have drastically changed and in some cases even stopped bills being passed that would otherwise harm their interests. The large number of access points make congress a good choice for PG lobbyists to target, particularly as congress is where the laws themselves are made - making it successful to a very large extent to PGs.

* Because of the large number of access points and the proximity to the lawmaking process itself.

The role of money and perks afforded to those in congress make it an excellent target for lobbyists. Ted once remarked that "America has the finest congress money can buy" and to an extent he was correct. Jack Abramoff was infamously known for the gifts, perks and benefits congressmen would receive if they supported him, once even remarking his involvement with over 200 separate committees.

The revolving door syndrome leads many congress workers to take on lobbying work (after the mandatory cooling off period - McCain Feingold act) which suggests that congress is susceptible to persuasion in particular. Although efforts have been made to try and restrict the perks and financial contributions made to congress through legislation such as the Bi-partisan campaign reform act, further ~~to~~ rulings such as citizens united vs FEC and McCutcheon vs FECS have all but eroded these restrictions - groups such as Super PACs, 527 groups and powerful individuals all aiming to influence congress in particular. The relative ease at which this can be done makes congress ~~the~~ the most successful place to lobby. The "cash operated congress" working to a large extent.

The unique relationships between congress workers (usually senior staff), executive departments and powerful organisations (known as Iron triangles) are a mutually beneficial union that aids in the creation of policy with the exchange of expert political advice - Although many liberal associated Democrats would argue that this system is elitist, the mutual benefit for all involved make it a very successful venture for PGs. Insider work such as this is the ideal way to influence policy, making it successful to a great extent.

However, influencing congress is not the only way that PGs can exert influence.

~~The~~ Influencing the supreme court can be incredibly useful, particularly for groups that exist to defend a constitutional amendment. The pro 1st amendment ACLU have provided Amicus curiae briefings for ~~and~~ countless cases in which the right to free speech was compromised, winning the support of Ruth Bader Ginsburg (supreme court justice) in the 1997 ACLU vs Reno case (9-0 for ACLU). Influencing the S.C like this can be beneficial thanks to the permanence of rulings set as precedent, in some ways making them more effective than lobbying ~~to~~ congress. However, the opportunity to lobby rulings is less frequent and does not

always benefit a PG to do so meaning that it is less visible than congressional lobbying. Whilst it's still successful, it's less so.

Direct action is typically reserved^x as a last resort for grassroots activism, a large protest movement, such as occupy wall street and historically the NAACP march on Washington (as well as the anniversary march) have occasionally been proven to work. However, ~~as~~ many groups are known to be violent, making them less influential to policy makers. Overall this is not a very effective strategy, only occasionally successful - not to a very large extent as a strategy over congressional lobbying.

In conclusion, lobbying congress is widespread due to the numerous access points, proximity to lawmakers, the susceptibility of persuasion and the employment of funds - a combination of these factors make it the most convenient place to lobby as well as the most successful for PGs.



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Examiner Comments

A pleasing feature of this answer is that the candidate does not only explain the different methods available to pressure groups but considers the extent to which they are likely to be successful. Its weakness is that it deals with the Supreme Court relatively cursorily and the executive branch not at all.

Question 7

This was the least straightforward question on the paper for examiners to mark because many of the answers were very similar. Whereas the answers to questions 6 and especially 8 elicited a variety of approaches and evidence, the great majority of candidates reproduced the same structure and the same three or four points for and against the Electoral College, and the discriminating factor was solely the quality of the analysis, which itself often relied heavily on the textbooks. Possibly the single most frequently made point concerned the alleged over-representation of small states – almost invariably Wyoming – compared to the larger, and examiners saw a variety of mathematical representations of the relationship. As was true of answers elsewhere on the paper, some candidates still seemed to be thinking in UK terms, so that there were lots of references to the Electoral College producing a stable government. Nearly every candidate argued that Ross Perot had been hard done by in 1992, but only a few seemed to have worked out that, in an election for a single office-holder, any electoral system must inevitably produce a large number of 'wasted' votes. Some answers unrewardably extended the discussion to the primary season, and a few unfortunately concentrated on this exclusively. A very few candidates made the quite telling point that the WTA system, which is responsible for a good proportion of the Electoral College's alleged merits and failings, is not stipulated anywhere in the constitution, and it is the responsibility of the states to adopt whatever system they choose.

The Electoral College is the final stage in a long and arduous race to be President. Every single one of the 50 States will vote in the same way that their electorates did. Proponents of the Electoral College defend the manner in which it delivers decisive victories, whilst its critics argue that it has led to influence being unevenly distributed and the American electoral system being utterly dysfunctional.

One of the chief criticisms of the Electoral System is the undue amount of influence that it affords to States with small populations. For example, Ohio has the same number of votes in the Electoral College as the bottom 6 States in terms of population, despite its own population being three times greater. The manner in which votes are distributed, therefore, is unfair. This ~~is because, the E~~ means that a vote cast

by an Ohioan carries a third less weight. Likewise, for every vote cast in Wyoming there is the vote of four Californians. Critics say that the Electoral College has meant that not all votes are of an equal value, which is blatantly undemocratic.

However, the Electoral College does protect small states at the same time. A popular national vote, for instance, would not see candidates focus their attention in heavily populated states like Texas and California. Electoral College votes thusly give each and every state value to the candidates.

The problem with this, however, is that it leads candidates to focus on just a select number of 'winnable' swing states. In the 2012 presidential election only 18 out of 50 states were actually visited by the two main candidates. \$100 million was spent on advertising in Ohio whereas very little

was spent in California, a solidly Democratic State since 1988. Questions, therefore, can be raised over the extent to which candidates have campaigned to win the support of all Americans.

Indeed, the fact that every State but Maine and Nebraska allocates its Electoral College votes on a winner-take-all basis also means that anyone that has voted for the other party is not rewarded.

Candidates seemingly assume that certain States will vote for them regardless of their campaign strategy, as a Republican might for Kansas and a Democrat might for New York.

One of the biggest problems with the Electoral College, following on from the previous point, is that it is unfair to third parties. Ross Perot famously won 18.9% of the vote in 1992 and yet he was not rewarded with a single Electoral College vote. Indeed, if the Electoral College was abolished because it was 'no longer fit for purpose' then US democracy may very well be strengthened by an increasing

number of third parties.

However, the prevention of a proliferation of third parties could instead be viewed as a reason to continue using the Electoral College. This is because there is a greater chance of the winning candidate securing 50% or more of the vote, which thereby increases his or her legitimacy as President. The likelihood of this occurring with no Electoral College in the presidential election is far less. Indeed, critics of the Electoral College often argue that it suppresses the will of the people, highlighting the 2000 result when Al Gore lost despite having more votes nationally than George W. Bush. This is, however, a rare occurrence, having happened only that time in the 125 years before that.

A less significant criticism would be that the Electoral College can serve to distort the vote. For example, in 2008 Barack Obama won 52% of the vote and yet he came away with 68% of

the Electoral College votes. It would appear, therefore, that the apparent size of his victory was magnified, which is unfair to his opponent John McCain. Sindy in terms of the manner in which he lost.

Nevertheless, the Electoral College could be deemed to still be fit for purpose from an administrative point of view. It is significantly easier for the 50 States to manage ~~that~~ their own elections rather than it would be to have some national body manage voting for 320 million people. If a recount needed to take place, for instance, it would take far less time to do it at the state level.

Indeed, it could be argued that the Electoral College must remain in operation because it is a vital means by which federalism is sustained.

The danger remains, however, over the deadlock procedure that comes into effect if

No candidate has 270 Electoral College votes. The President is consequently chosen by the House of Representatives, voting in State blocks, whilst the Senate elects the Vice-President. There is the danger that the two people selected may be of different parties, if the two chambers of Congress are in control of opposing parties. This would be grossly unfair to the electorate. It has been argued that this could be replaced with a national vote, settled by a runoff election if 50% is not attained.

Indeed, it is very likely that the Electoral College has increasingly grown unfit for purpose since a time when there were only 13 States and it had more relevance. The manner by which it prevents democracy from being fully achieved in the US is also an issue, but it is true that some criticisms of the Electoral College are less significant. Many highlight, for instance, the 95 'rogue

electors' throughout history, but it should be pointed out that they have never decided an election and can be prevented with the passage of state legislation, as 24 States have already done.

The Electoral College is, therefore, somewhat of a flawed system that certainly needs to be reformed. However, the issue remains as to what it might be replaced with if it truly is the system no longer fit for purpose. On balance, there are just as many problems associated with a popular vote, the most viable alternative. These include the ~~the~~ decreased likelihood of a majority of the vote being secured, and the ~~a~~ subsequent issue of legitimacy, as well as the threat that is posed to the voice of small states. Consequently, the Electoral College would most likely be the best option for the immediate future, despite its drawbacks, until a fair system can be devised to take its place. Thus, even though the Electoral College is largely unfit for use in a democracy

today, political realities and practicalities
ultimately ~~require~~ require the continuation
of its use for the time being.



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Examiner Comments

The strength of this answer is the sense of engagement with the question: arguments are not presented as a list but are evaluated and linked. Many answers to this question read very similarly, as though the candidates were reproducing what they had learnt by heart from the textbook, whereas this answer has a personal voice.



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Examiner Tip

Try to bring out the connections between your arguments and give an indication of their relative significance. Your essay should read as an integrated whole rather than a list.

Question 8

Every year these reports record that, when it features, the party long answer is the best response on the paper, and there were again some outstanding answers. The polarisation of the two parties means the overlap between them is undoubtedly shrinking, but only a very few answers were entirely one-sided. A number of candidates went back some years to the presidencies of Bill Clinton ('the era of big government is over') and George W Bush ('No Child Left Behind' was most frequently mentioned) to find evidence of overlap and, looking to the present day, candidates found common ground in the allegedly 'hawkish' elements of President Obama's foreign policy. Some candidates cited the prominence this year of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders as evidence that the parties are further apart than ever, while others, referring more closely to their actual policy pronouncements, found there were a surprising number of similarities between them. The 'Blue Dog' caucus was frequently mentioned but was often given more space than its size and influence merit.

Tyranny of majority → Winner-takes-all provision

'An era of hyper-partisanship.' This thesis from Richard Brummstein in 2007 presents the idea that the two parties are very different in ideology and policy. However, when analysing the foreign policy, economic policy, ^{social} policy and immigration policy of the two main parties, significant comparisons can be made to suggest widespread similarities. Therefore, to assess the extent to which the ideology and policy of the two main parties differ, these 4 areas must be analysed.

Firstly, the two major parties could be seen as distinct in their foreign policy. The Republicans favour a 'hawkish' foreign policy, which involves intervention and the use of troops, whilst the Democrats prefer a 'dovish' foreign policy, advocating negotiation and peace. Indeed, this can be seen when comparing Bush and Obama. Obama ended the military occupation of Iraq and has made nuclear arms treaties with Russia and Iran, earning ~~the~~ him the 2009 Nobel Peace prize. His mantra of 'we will hold out our hand if you unleash your fists' shows a distinct

difference to Bush, who had been interventionist in Iraq and Afghanistan. The fact that the House's Iran Deal Resolution split entirely along party lines (245 Republicans for, 186 Democrats against), shows that the two parties are ideologically and practically distinct from one another in the foreign policy.

However, analysts have argued that Obama has many shared policy solutions to Bush. For instance, Obama has increased American intervention by increasing their naval presence in the Asia Pacific area, to combat the threat of a growing China. Equally, Obama has increased the use of drone strikes by 48% from Bush ~~and the~~ ~~administration~~ revealing an increase in interventionism. This led scholar Peter Keower to comment that 'the Obama administration is characterised by the continuation of the war on terror along this aggressive path. This prevents the idea that Obama's foreign policy measures have necessarily come as a result of continuing Bush's interventionist policies, and therefore that the two parties have significant overlap in policy in foreign policy.'

Ultimately, when determining the two week parties foreign policy, it can be summarised that whilst they remain ideologically distinct, in practice their foreign policy methods are very similar. Indeed, Obama's foreign policy appears to be Republican in all but name.

Secondly, it could be argued that the two main parties share similarities over their economic policy. Under the Bush administration, a the 'No Child Left Behind' legislation was passed, which increased the remit of the federal government to intervene in schools. Equally, Bush signed a \$543 billion 'Medicare D' package into legislation, sharing many similarities with Obama's Affordable Care Act as they both increased the accessibility of healthcare for the poor. This shows that in economic policy, particularly healthcare, the two main parties share similar ideas and policies.

However, there is significant evidence to suggest that these similarities are no longer relevant. The 2009 Affordable Care Act received numerous opposition, as did Obama's economic stimulus. Equally, 93% of Republicans signed the 'American Taxpayer Relief' in which they promised to vote against increasing taxes. This supports Brownstein's theory of 'hyper-partisanship' as the Republicans have remained united against the Democrats economic policy. Indeed, Bartley commented that the parties are ideologically divided, internally united, and both set on destroying the other. Bartley's comments can be seen with the 2013 deadlock, where not even the Super Committee on Deficit Reduction could ~~pass~~ formulate a budget, forcing the government into shutdown. This evidence shows conclusively that two parties remain extremely

divided on economic policy.

In conclusion, therefore, the two parties remain ideologically and practically divided in their economic policy, as they each advocate the role of big v. limited government.

Thirdly, it ~~can~~ ~~only~~ scholars argue that the two main parties have similarities over their immigration policy. ~~Ever since~~ ~~Obama~~ ~~took~~ ~~office~~ for example, 75% of Democrats and 57% of Republicans believe that Hispanic immigrants are not burdening the economy. This was manifested in the 2013 Immigration Bill, which was formulated by the bipartisan 'Gang of Eight'. Although it failed to pass, it ~~shows~~ reveals a growing consensus amongst the two main parties on how to deal with immigration.

However, against this argument is the fact that the bill failed to pass in the House, showing a severe lack of consensus. Equally, Obama's 2013 immigration executive order, which allowed 5 million immigrants to stay, was heavily criticized by leading Republicans such as Ted Cruz and Josh Rehn, who described it as 'executive overreach'. This shows that the Republican party favour stricter immigration standards than the Democrats. This is also evident in the emergence of Donald Trump in 2016, ~~where~~ his promise to 'build a wall along

The Mexican border has been heavily criticized by Democrats, such as Obama, who argues that it invites hate against American people. Overall, therefore, the actions of Obama and emergence of Trump present the growing ideological and policy solutions of each parties immigration policy.

In conclusion, therefore, whilst the 2013 attempt at immigration reform has showed consensus, recent actions, in particular the growth of Trump, shows that each party has a separate ideology and policy solutions when regarding immigration policy.

Lastly, it could be said that the two main parties are ideologically and practically different when comparing their social policy, in particular same-sex marriage and gun rights. For example, in the 2016 Orlando shooting at a gay nightclub, Obama prioritised the need for stricter gun laws to stop mass shootings. This was supported in social media by many leading Democrats such as Harry Reid and Hillary Clinton. However, on the other hand, Donald Trump has prioritised the need for stricter immigration controls to stop mass shootings, such as banning all Muslims from the country. This difference in approach to mass shootings needs a fundamental difference between the two parties; the Democrats believe in tighter gun controls whilst the Republicans give preference to the

2nd Amendment and ~~not~~ other relevant.

However, it could be argued they agree on same-sex marriage. After the case of *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), Obama's remarks of 'love is love' and 'this is a victory for America' were applauded by House Speaker John Boehner. However, against this is the fact that many Republican controlled states, such as Kentucky, have refused to issue same-sex marriage licenses, showing the two parties' differences.

Overall, therefore, this ~~also~~ shows that the Democrats and Republicans are fundamentally different in their approach to social issues.

In conclusion, I strongly agree with the premise that the two parties are distinct in ideology and in policy, as they've economic, immigration and social policy has caused major division in Congress and heavy criticism from one another. Whilst Obama's foreign policy may be considered the same in practice to Bush's, the Democrats' defence to non-intervention, & ~~accepted~~ with the differences across other policy areas, shows that overall, the parties ^{largely} have no significant overlap in their ideology and policy.



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Examiner Comments

This is a not untypical Level 3 answer. The amount of detail this candidate is able to use is hard to find for the other unit 3 topics and one of the reasons the parties question is often one of the best responses. Two features of this answer are the 'mini' conclusions which end each section and the references to the views of 'scholars'. They have their place in an academic work but add little that is rewardable to a 45 minute A level essay.

Paper Summary

Based on the performance of this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Provide short answer structures – three points developed fully or four points with less detail can both work equally well.
- With regard to introductions, don't waste time summarising points you go on to make later on.
- With regard to conclusions, all long answers need a conclusion when the main argument is restated.
- Be very sparing in your use of statistics.
- Unless the figures you are using are very well known or very easily checkable, always cite a source.

Grade Boundaries

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Ofqual



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