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Examiners' Report

June 2017

GCE Government and Politics 1
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Introduction

Principal Examiner Report 6GP01 01 June 2017

A well-established view emerged from many Assistant Examiners and Team Leaders that the summer examination paper was both accessible to all candidates and at the same time provides a platform upon which to discriminate and discern between differing levels of ability. As with all exams, preparation and revision beforehand are crucial to success. The old adage alliterating all the 'P's' rings true 'Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance.'

In terms of question selection question one on democracy proved the most popular first choice, followed by question four on pressure groups, electoral systems next and least popular (but an increased number on previous series) as has often been the case was political parties. However the question on political parties increased its mean or average score identifying that those who took this option were well prepared and scored well. Further detailed feedback on each question is set out in the wider report.

Key areas to develop

Several key areas were identified by Assistant Examiners for incorporating into teaching and exam preparation.

- It is crucial on all part (a) which is composed of AO1 marks alone – that the knowledge and understanding is both precise and clear as there is no leeway to credit information which is incomplete or unclear.
- On part (b) building on the advice above it is the clarity and scope of the AO1 which sets the level of mark. For instance even though there is a clear directive in both (1b) and (2c) for three points – crucially it is the quality and scope of the response which determines the reward and the level. Hence for instance three points may be raised but that does not guarantee automatic entry to the top level.
- Sound advice in relation to part (c) is for candidates to read all choices available on the paper and then question selection must depend on confidence and competence on the (c) section given that it delivers and contains the majority of the marks.
- Allied to improving performance on part (c) is the manifest improvement which Assistant Examiners note where and when candidates have given time to a brief plan in order to garner their thoughts and set out goals; it does make a significant difference.
- Timing across question completion does not appear to have caused any difficulty. Furthermore the order of question completion remains in the domain of the candidate, however it is appreciated if candidates comply fully and place the responses in the set clip areas of the answer booklet, this is acceptable.

Question 1

1a) Outline three aspects of liberal democracy.

This question wanted the candidate to describe liberal democracy as it appears in the specification as a key term. Most had no trouble explaining free and fair elections. A number of candidates did refer to universal suffrage, but did not fully develop the concept. Diversity in political choice was rarely mentioned. In terms of the liberal elements, most candidates did refer to freedom and human rights and some enhanced this with reference to the ECHR or HRA. Excellent answers referred to both the liberal and democratic aspects, while poor answers did not understand the concept. Stronger candidates were able to draw out the use of liberal democracy from across the globe – often citing the constitutional arrangement which exists in the United States.

1b) Identify three ways in which legitimacy is obtained in a representative democracy.

The concept of legitimacy was widely appreciated and understood and reference could be made if suitably done to illegitimate actions in a representative democracy. A small minority of candidates ignored the need to link legitimacy to representative democracy which was crucial. The main problem which affected a good number of candidates – and accounted for the reason why marks were restricted – was a total reliance on elections as the only means of gaining legitimacy in a representative democracy. Invariably this meant describing local national and regional elections or using a General Election and then discussing and trying to make the election of MPs a separate point – which it was not. Elections and referendums were the most common two methods and often candidates ran out of ways after these two examples.

1c) To what extent does the use of referendums weaken or improve representative democracy?

Referendums are popular with candidates and this may have been a major factor in the numbers choosing this question.

The main issue here was whether a candidate related referendums to representative democracy rather than to democracy in general. So, many answered by talking about whether referendums were democratic or not, rather than whether they undermined representative democracy or supported it. This is an issue of focusing on the actual question, not the one the candidate hoped for. Those who did focus successfully were well rewarded; those who did not remained firmly in level 2.

The best responses did pay attention to the representative democracy point, and there were a number of excellent responses.

This is a well-informed response – with a good start on the (a) and (b) section but falling short of that ability on part (c)

Chosen question number: Question 1 Question 2

Question 3 Question 4

(a) One aspect of Liberal democracy is the freedom of speech and a fair press. ~~the~~ Liberal democracy is built upon a foundation of tolerance for dissenting views and free debate meaning that freedom of speech is imperative to maintaining such a system. It is why the UK does not have stringent laws ~~but~~ criminalising genocide denial as other states such as Germany do.

Another key aspect of Liberal democracy is the protection and empowerment of minorities. A situation in which the majority of the populace hold all political sway is considered a tyranny of the majority. To prevent excesses in this situation Liberal democracies are characterised by stringent anti-discrimination laws upon the public and private sectors as well as legislation which enables universal suffrage which was granted in the UK in 1918.

Another aspect is the peaceful transition of power. A Liberal democracy is not an unstable state characterised by military coups and other anti-democratic forces.

((a) continued) meaning that the transition of power after elections is always peaceful, as seen in the UK which has not witnessed a period of authoritarian rule since the ~~great~~ ~~Rev.~~ Glorious Revolution of 1688.

(b) continued) A further way in which legitimacy is obtained in a representative democracy is international recognition of the government. This sanction is essential to allowing a state to dictate its own foreign policy and join organisations such as the EU or NATO. It is in essence the ~~trust and validity~~ recognition of a sovereign power that a government is legitimate and acts on behalf of its people. The UK government's decision to trigger Article 50 to begin the process of leaving the EU was viewed as legitimate as the House of Commons is a recognised legislative body internationally.

(c) A representative democracy is a system in which ~~representatives~~ representatives are ~~with~~ elected whilst the government is held to account in a general election to represent the views and aspirations of the electorate. This stands in contrast to the notion of direct democracy which is ~~the~~ system in which constitutional changes and amendments as well as general policy are dictated by the people via referendums, petitions, and propositions. ~~the~~ Features of direct democracy are being used increasingly in representative democracies such as the UK with varied results.

On one hand, ~~the~~ referendums improve the effectiveness of representative democracy as they can hold legislative assemblies and legislation to account. For example, two thirds of British MPs backed a 'Remain Vote' in the 2016 EU membership referendum in contrast to only 48% of the electorate as a whole. 70% of the constituencies of the ~~the~~ EU Labour Party even backed the 'Leave' side. This shows that representatives often act without the consent of their constituents ~~but~~ ^{but also} that referendums can be a way of holding negligent representatives to account.

conversely, referendums also have the effect of impairing the sanctions of government. For example, as the

((c) continued) 'Leave' vote won the 2016 EU Referendum with 52% of the vote, the government must now fulfil this proposition due to the politically binding nature of referenda. This means that the UK government has triggered Article 50 and begun the process of leaving the EU which will require a vast amount of time on the Parliamentary agenda due to the number of articles and treaties that must be settled such as membership of the common market and freedom of movement. This, as it takes up so much Parliamentary time, prevents British MPs from legislating upon other issues such as the ongoing NHS crisis thus showing the time consuming nature of the consequences of referenda.

Another point in favour of the effects of referenda upon representative democracy though is legitimacy handed to the government. For example, the Labour government of Harold Wilson held a referendum upon UK membership to the European Economic Community ~~in 1975~~ ^{in 1975} after the previous Heath administration had initiated the process of entering the market without consent from the people. The 63% of the electorate who voted in favour of remaining in the market ~~was~~ provided the legitimacy needed to continue the entrance process. This showed a clear mandate for government policy outlined via referenda.

((c) continued) despite this, referenda have a proven unreliability to affirm the legitimacy of the government due in part to poor and erratic turnout (the Welsh Assembly Referendum of 2011 witnessed a 35.6% turnout). The greatest dent in legitimacy though is clearly the knowledge and intentions of the populace. For example, the Swiss public voted in 2009 with 67% of the electorate to ban construction of minarets. This was despite the advice of the government, Catholic church, and civil liberty groups meaning that the electorate often cannot be trusted to vote in a manner which is informed and well intentioned.

Overall, I feel that referendums weaken representative democracy. This is because it is a form of direct democracy so contradicts the idea that a representative is the most informed and knowledgeable upon an issue meaning that it ~~also~~ undermines the authority of ~~the~~ legitimate representatives. I somewhat feel that they have a purpose in the UK where many majority governments are formed with simple majorities of the vote meaning that the legislature is sometimes acting in legitimacy but I ultimately feel that the erratic nature of the electorate, as shown in the 2016 EU referendum would undermine the decisions undertaken.



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Examiner Comments

a) This makes three points with the first two being clearer than the last one. b) This again merits full marks - the final point - though not in the indicative mark scheme is credit worthy. c) The top level is not maintained on this last section and level 3 is not obtained. The clarity of A01 not being fully clear.



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Examiner Tip

Do use mark schemes as a guide for exam practice, however note they can never be 'all encompassing' documents and Assistant Examiners will credit and reward material if relevant to the question.

This question does step up a level from the previous one

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

(a)

One aspect of liberal democracy is free and fair elections ^{with universal suffrage} where the electorate are ~~debarred or restricted~~ able to vote regardless of class, age, gender and wealth.

Another aspect of liberal democracy is the protection of human rights and civil rights, this means the electorate is always protected by their civil rights and ~~are~~ the government cannot overstep these.

Another aspect of liberal democracy is free media where the electorate is able to have free speech without the fear of being prosecuted and the media exposes faults of the government to hold them to account.

(b) One way legitimacy is obtained in a representative democracy is through elections. General elections, and local elections obtain legitimacy as the people are voting for their representative. Therefore, through elections legitimacy is obtained in a representative democracy.

Another way in which legitimacy is obtained in a representative democracy is through a parliamentary debate and vote. Legitimacy is gained because representatives are acting in the best interest of the people and are acting on behalf of the people. Therefore, through this legitimacy is obtained in a representative democracy.

A third way in which legitimacy is obtained in a representative democracy is through referendums. Referendums are used to allow the people to express their direct view without the use of the representatives. Referendums allow legitimacy to be obtained because the people put their views forward and a majority vote on it, therefore legitimacy

((b) continued) of the result is gained.

(c) Referendums are a form of direct democracy. Referendums are unmediated, direct, unlimited as the electorate are constantly involved and are known as the 'people's voice'. It can be argued that referendums strengthen representative democracy as well as weaken it.

It can be argued that referendums strengthen representative democracy as referendums help to keep a check and balance on government decisions and actions. Referendums enable the public to make the decision themselves without a representative. This helps improve representative democracy because ~~to~~ some representatives may not always represent the ideas of their constituents therefore through referendums the electorate are able to make sure their views are expressed without having to act through a representative. Therefore, this highlights how representative democracy is improved because the electorate's view is taken on directly. For example the EU referendum 2016 enabled the public to make the decision themselves as many 'remain' voters may have had a 'leave' MP or vice versa, therefore this enabled the public's view to be highlighted.

((c) continued) However, it could be argued that referendums do not strengthen representative democracy because referendums can be binding and the government may not feel that the referendum is the best decision. Referendum results can be binding on the government and therefore they have no choice but to follow the referendum because it has legitimacy. This could weaken representative democracy because the electorate who voted against the referendum are not being represented. For example MP Tulip Siddique ~~she~~ rebelled against Corbyn's three line whip on the EU (withdrawal) Bill as she felt she was not representing the views of her constituents if she followed the whip although the referendum was binding because of the majoritarian vote. Therefore, this highlights how referendums can weaken representative democracy as some MPs may not be representing the views of their constituents but the views of their party because of whips and the fact that referendums are binding.

It can be argued that referendums strengthen representative democracy because they can stop divisions and conflict within the government

((c) continued) therefore strengthening representative democracy. Referendums may be used if there is a division within the government on a certain issue and the government can not resolve it. By holding a referendum the electorate is able to express their views and the conflict is resolved because the electorate makes the decision. For example in the 2010 election there was a division on electoral reform as the Lib Dems were for it and the Conservatives against it. A referendum was held and the majority voted against electoral reform which highlighted that the electorate did not feel it was needed and it ended the division within the party. Therefore, this highlights how referendums can improve representative democracy as they can prevent ~~the~~ conflict and divisions within a party.

However, it can be argued that referendums can weaken representative democracy. If they have a low voter turnout. Some referendums may have a low-voter turnout which would decrease the legitimacy of the referendum because it is not the voice of the many. For example the London Local ~~Authority~~ Authority.

((c) continued) Referendum had a low voter turnout of less than 40% as well as the Welsh Assembly Referendum which had a 43% voter turnout. Therefore, the outcome of these referendums can be questioned because they may have taken place at the wrong time of year and many felt that they didn't need to vote. However, this can weaken representative democracy because the government and MPs are representing and supporting a cause that ~~is~~ has a low level of legitimacy because the turnout was low. Therefore, representative democracy is weakened as the representatives may not actually be representing the views of many because of low voter turnout.

It could be argued referendums strengthen representative democracy as they provide legitimacy ~~to the~~ for the government. A referendum is the voice of the people, therefore their views are expressed directly. Through referendums the government ~~can~~ takes on the result of the referendum and act in the best interest of the people in regards to the result. For example the Scottish Devolution referendum

((c) continued) had a turnout of 85% and the EU referendum had a turnout of 72%. Therefore the result of the referendum had legitimacy and the government put forward plans to respect the result. For example the Conservative Party attempted to trigger article 50 without Parliamentary vote as they argued the referendum was the voice of the people and provided full legitimacy. Therefore, this highlights how representative democracy is strengthened because the government acts in the best interest of the people as the result provides full legitimacy.

However, it could be argued that referendums weaken representative democracy as they may cause more divisions and conflict within the government and Parliament. For example the 2016 EU referendum has caused divisions over a 'hard' or 'soft' Brexit which has led to divisions in parties and the loss of some of the electorate's trust as they felt that they have not been informed properly. Therefore, this highlights how representative democracy is weakened as the electorate loses trust in the government and more divisions can be caused.

In conclusion, it can be argued that referendums strengthen representative democracy as it is the voice of the people and the government has legitimacy to act in the best interest of the people.



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Examiner Comments

a) Full marks here - clear definition of three aspects of liberal democracy
b) Clear and detailed but just falling short of full marks for AO1
c) Here there is both range and depth - and it was awarded full marks - what more could be produced in the given time frame?



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Examiner Tip

This candidate has made sure that the Part (c) counts – and it is the ‘load bearer’ of marks. Note that near full marks are obtained on (a) and (b) and it is quality that hits the spot.

Question 2

2a) Outline the differences between left wing and right wing political ideas.

The best answers directly compared right and left wing ideas and used plenty of illustrative political vocabulary. Around half of answers described one type (or wing) than the other, without drawing direct comparisons. This approach sometimes resulted in separate ideas being outlined without coverage of the opposite, damaging the candidate's attainment. A significant number of answers linked the differences to current policies of Labour or Conservative parties. Better informed candidates were able to delineate the opposing views of human nature and mentioned thinkers such as Hobbes and Rousseau. Poor answers only referred to communism and fascism and went on to describe these.

2b) Explain how parties differ from pressure groups.

Many candidates found this to be a very accessible question and as such were able to get into Level 3 for A01 and A02 by looking at differences such as narrow and wide focus of policy/ideas, standing for election and accountability. They were supported with examples and made reference to consequences of illegal action and why political parties do not pursue this course of action. Candidates who did not score highly got bogged down with the classification of pressure groups and did not make any meaningful comparison to parties. Again this question shows how examples can be a platform for both AO1 and AO2 marks.

2c) Is the current Conservative Party more influenced by One Nation principles than Thatcherism?

This response was awarded a range of marks across all A0's - candidates who achieved Level 3 across the board demonstrated a sound understanding of Thatcherism and one nation principles, referring to noblesse oblige, paternalism, Disraeli and then to neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism. They also referred to recent policies of Cameron and May, with clear reference to the 2017 manifesto, the recent General Election serving to help the contemporary informed candidate. There was also good reference to Grammar Schools comparison of the Same Sex Marriage Act and S26 of the Local Government Act 1988 to demonstrate a more One Nation approach. A significant number of candidates seemed to think that One Nation Conservatism originated with Cameron. Some candidates moved away from ideas/policies and compared May and Thatcher as female prime ministers - particularly focusing on style/image. It was disappointing how few candidates really understood Thatcher's position on the EU - almost all considered a hard Brexit to be consistent with Thatcherism without any awareness of her appreciation of the free market elements, her position on the last EEC referendum or the Single European Act which she was instrumental in creating and supporting.

This is an example of an excellent response and proof how many candidates excel on the topic of political parties.

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

(a)

Left wing ideas are rooted in the idea of equality with a suspicion of capitalism and a belief that the inequalities perpetuated by capitalism need to be moderated by the state. Jeremy Corbyn's plan to invest £20bn into the NHS and £8bn into social care echoes the historically left policies of a commitment to the welfare state. His plans to renationalise the railways and ~~and~~ reverse the privatisation of the royal mail is also symbolic of a left wing interest in a larger state and nationalisation. By contrast right wing ideas are centred around the ~~the~~ ideas of individualism and self-reliance.

(a) continued) with, therefore, a more limited state. Theresa May's plan to introduce means-tested winter fuel allowance is symbolic of this. ~~Left~~ Right wing ideas also focus on ~~deregulation~~ the free market, such as reducing corporation tax to 17%.

- (b)
- ① seek gov
 - ② issue
 - ③ membership

Political parties seek to exert influence by electing representatives to office with the hope of joining a government, whilst pressure groups aim to exert influence by influencing government. For example, the Green Party and Greenpeace share similar goals, but the Green Party put up representatives in constituencies. Greenpeace hold public demonstrations and launch campaigns such as their 2011 sustainable fishing

campaign to try and convince the government to act in a certain way.

Whilst political parties cover a broad range of issues and have members who share a broad

((b) continued)

ideology, pressure groups are normally more narrow-issue focus. ~~the~~ political parties may choose to focus on issues they believe reflect the will of the electorate and will therefore be more likely to get them into office, whilst pressure groups may have a more niche or ~~less~~ less mainstream goals. For instance groups such as the Howard Committee for Penal Reform or Liberty's 2005 "Charge or release" campaign focus on ~~the~~ prisoners rights - an area a party may be reluctant to put at the forefront of its policy agenda due to public receptibility.

Parties tend to have broader membership, whilst pressure groups may have a more exclusive membership, attracting people who are united around a specific issue. The Labour party has

over
(b) continued) 500,000 members, all of whom have very different backgrounds. By contrast, the BMA is open only to those with a medical profession or the National Union of Teachers ~~only~~ is only open to teachers. These sectional groups are particularly different to parties, looking to benefit the interests of their members rather than campaigning on ~~their~~ goals they believe will benefit society as a whole.

(c) The modern Conservative party ^{is} undoubtedly ~~more~~ very different from the era of Thatcherism, adopting more socially liberal policies and, in many cases, taking a more, ~~or~~ benevolent, One Nation approach to welfare. However, whilst some policies may have ~~been~~ moved away, the party's policies are still fundamentally rooted in the same beliefs of a unregulated market, deregulation and a commitment to capitalism that underpinned the era of Thatcher.

The area in which the party has ~~perhaps~~ perhaps most moved towards a One Nation approach is on social policy. Cameron made it a priority to rid the party of its 'Nasty Party' image ~~etc~~ and Theresa May has continued this approach in her declaration of a 'shared society'. This contrasts greatly with Thatcher's belief that

((c) continued) "There is no such thing as society. Furthermore in 2013, under Cameron, the same sex marriage act was passed - demonstrating a commitment to move socially liberal policies that are greatly different to Thatcher's approach which saw the implementation of the ~~to~~ Section 28 of the Local Government Act. Having said this, Cameron, and May's vision was not wholly shared by the whole party, especially groups such as the Cornerstone group who aim to continue Thatcher's legacy. 129 MPs voted against the gay marriage bill - highlighting the party is not uniform in its commitment to a one-Nation social policy.

In terms of welfare and state provision, the party has somewhat adopted a more one-nation approach, but the majority of the party remain committed to a Thatcherite approach.

(c) continued) of rolling back the frontiers of the state. Theresa May has expressed a commitment to state services, pledging £4bn to schools and £8bn to the NHS. Furthermore when Cameron attempted to make cuts to Personal Independence Payment in 2016, Ian Duncan Smith resigned from the cabinet in protest - highlighting that a one-nation approach has even reached the top-tiers of government. Having said this, the overall approach of the party is inherently Thatcherite, attempting to reduce state influence. May's fixed term council houses, in which council houses can be privately bought after 10-15 years strongly echo Thatcher's right to Buy schemes, which saw the selling off of 1m council houses. May has also ^{planned to introduce} ~~introduced~~ a means-tested winter fuel allowance and ~~will~~ introduce a means-tested winter fuel allowance - reducing

((c) continued) state provisions

~~The party~~

The party is fairly unanimously committed to a Thatcherite economic policy. With the aim of creating a high-wage low tax economy. This contrasts with the ~~old~~ more centralised, paternalistic state One Nation Conservatives envisioned. The party has long been committed to reducing the deficit through cuts. Cameron announced £2bn of efficiency savings, whilst May has expressed plans to eliminate the deficit by 2025. May's plans to cut corporation tax echo Thatcher's deregulation in the business market whilst she has also pledged in the 2017 manifesto to not increase VAT. ~~May has~~ ~~PLP~~ This low tax, high wage economy is a more Thatcherite approach which the party has clearly rallied behind.

Whilst the party's policies are not entirely in ~~line~~^{line} with Thatcher and do show some One Nation elements, the party is still rooted in a Thatcherite ideology - but one that has been adapted and tailored to a modern day Britain.



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Examiner Comments

This response scored full marks across each section of the question; it did so with ease and style.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Political parties and their workings are at the heart of our representative democracy and are a key foundation for A2 politics across all options.

There are several 'fault-lines' in this answer.

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

(a) Outline the differences between left wing & right wing political ideas.

Even though left wing parties like Labour and right wing parties like Conservative have some consensus political ideas; the main differences between left & right political ideas is that left wing political ideas, all concerned with welfare and ~~the~~ public policy; such as the National Health Service (NHS) and the benefit system introduced under a Labour Government. Whereas, right wing political ideas focus on the state of the economy; typically reducing and maintaining a low taxation rate. Similarly, right wing politics is concerned with the security and defence of the country whereas left wing political ideas would disagree with a huge government spending on defence and prefer to use a less violent approach.

In addition, left wing politics would

((a) continued) Typically support the European Union and the Single Market whereas right wing politics may differ and support free market economics, such as the trade agreements between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, the U.S.A. president during 1981 - 89.

(b) Explain how political parties differ from pressure groups. (10)

<u>PLAN</u>	<u>Pressure groups</u>	<u>Political parties</u>
- unelected. ✓	- elected. ✓	- attempt to win ✓
- Can have policies yet cannot be given a mandate. ✓	- attempt to win ✓	Political power
- limited knowledge.		of govern.
		- Can fulfil mandate.

The main distinction between pressure groups and political parties is that pressure groups attempt to influence, whereas political parties want to govern and win political power.

Pressure groups are ~~structurally~~ non-elected organisations which usually have a specific policy area or concern in which they try to influence or change the mind of government officials or political bodies. On the contrary, political parties are elected through the democratic elections in the UK.

Secondly, another differentiation between pressure groups and political parties is that once elected, a political party has

(b) continued) the authority and democratic legitimacy to fulfil the policies within their manifesto; this is called a mandate. Whereas, even though pressure groups can have their policies written, they do not have a mandate and arguably lack the power to fulfil their policies. In relation to political parties' manifestos, they have a broad plan for policies such as healthcare, immigration, defence; yet pressure groups, in particular ~~from~~ sectional groups, are concerned solely with one area of public policy, such as the Farmers Union or Forest; Protecting the rights of smokers.

(c) IS the current Conservative party more influenced by One nation principles rather than Thatcherism? (20)

PLAN: Thatcherism

- Low taxation rate. → maintain.
- Free market → Big Brother.

It can be argued that the current Conservative party aren't more concerned with One nation principles rather Thatcherism. The Conservative party today maintain a low taxation rate throughout the UK similar to Margaret Thatcher's policies throughout the 1980's. Thatcherism ideologies supported the reduction of a government and its spending through new federalism, similarly supported by Ronald Reagan at the time; whereas now the government spending has increased therefore the argument of conservative party being influenced by One Nation principles could be argued.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Here the candidate has a timing issue. Too much time on part (a) and part (b) which ultimately robs part (c) of due time and care.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Precision and brevity are fine on parts (a) and (b) - where answers can be to the point and need not be extensive to gain top marks.

Question 3

3a) How does the Additional Member System (AMS) operate?

At its core this is a question about the mechanics or operations of the AMS electoral system. It was not about 'where' but 'how' the system operates. Candidates usually managed an accurate description of the AMS system and were clear on the FPTP and the Party List element. Better answers referred to the percentage split between both systems when discussing division of seats. Very few candidates referred to the D'hondt method and candidates who scored zero invariably discussed STV or AV by mistake. Some candidates restricted themselves to three marks by only discussing the FPTP and the list element without any clear development.

3b) Where and why have proportional systems been used since 1997?

Candidates invariably found this the most difficult section of question three and as a consequence there was a wide range of answers across all AOs. The 'why' aspect of the question caused more difficulty than the 'where' element. For example, most candidates could state where PR systems were used, and stronger responses that achieved Level 3 referred to the Good Friday Agreement and divisions between loyalists and republicans. Most managed to mention that PR was part of the framework for devolution. However a significant number of candidates went onto explain the workings of the systems and could not gain any credit. Many answers that remained firmly in level 1 had a limited understanding of PR systems or simply explained the wrong system or provided a discussion of AV and SV majoritarian, not proportional systems.

3c) Should the 'first past the post' electoral system continue to be used to elect the House of Commons?

This question provided numerous candidates the opportunity to display their understanding of first past the post and its crucial advantages and disadvantages in operation. The more able and thus higher rewarded candidates came to this question armed with key data and figures surrounding the system: for instance, the lack of a 50% margin, not only for elected governments but also individual MPs in their constituencies. There was widespread discussion about dis-proportionality and the most often cited examples were UKIP winning 12.6% of the vote and only obtaining one seat. This was often compared to the SNP who won 56 seats on 4.6% of the vote. Stronger candidates used this example more effectively and linked it to concentration or widespread support. A minority of candidates scored lower as they often made too much of the comparison between FPTP and PR models with lengthy discussions, and this strayed from the remit of the question.

This is an uneven response with a lack of correct detail and information - especially in parts (a) and (b).

Indicate your first question choice on this page.

You will be asked to indicate your second question choice on page 13.

Put a cross in the box indicating the first question that you have chosen. If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: **Question 1** **Question 2**

Question 3 **Question 4**

(a) The AMS system involves ~~the~~ choices on the polling card whereby the voters are required to indicate the candidates they wish to vote for in an order of priority. Voters do not have to vote for all candidates on the card, however they may vote for as many as they wish. If a candidate gains 50% of votes then they are elected. However, should this not be the case then the candidate with the fewest amount of votes is eliminated ~~and~~ and their second choice votes are applied to less popular candidates in an effort to benefit them. This process is repeated until there is a majority.

(b) Firstly, proportional electoral systems have been used in Scotland because of their fairness. For example, to award seats in proportion to votes would ensure democracy in that everyone's vote is of equal value, whereas under other electoral systems a vote for a large party such as the Conservatives would gain them more seats than a vote for a smaller party such as the Green Party. Proportional representation eliminates discrimination in electoral systems.

Secondly, proportional representation may be adopted to ensure all votes are of equal value, and to benefit all parties equally. For instance, votes are of different value when one votes for a party that is secured seats as opposed to another party who is not. This can also encourage tactical voting. Proportional representation eliminates tactical voting and ensures all votes have equal value which ensures everyone's political participation is equal, which is the basis of our democracy.

(c) First past the post is an unfair electoral system of which should be discontinued for elections in the House of Commons: it is only possible to have a two-party system under this electoral system because it fails to be able to accommodate more than this number. Furthermore this electoral system is highly discriminatory against smaller parties and often fails to achieve an absolute majority, which has not been achieved since 1931. Thus, an alternative - such as the much more fair Supplementary Vote - must be sought.

Firstly, first past the post has consistently failed to give parties seats in the House of Commons in a quantity that is even in the slightest of proportion to the votes they received. This was most prevalent in the 2010 General Election whereby the Liberal Democrats clearly gained a large 23% of votes. However, they only received 8.1% of seats in the House of Commons. This demonstrates first past the post's incapability in its entirety to deliver a result that resembles proportional representation: the larger parties are clearly prioritised over the smaller ones which is wholly discriminatory but also denies them seats in the House of Commons. A few more Conservative seats would give nothing of note in terms of representing the British people more fairly, whereas even a smaller increase in Liberal Democrat seats in proportion to the 23% of votes they received would result in a different

((c) continued) outcome to vote decision made in Westminster.

Secondly, first past the post as an electoral system causes many seats to be wasted. For instance, many votes go towards a party or candidate of whom has no chance of winning, whereas many votes are also wasted on those whose seats in the House of Commons are not definitely secured. The Green Party received 1.0% of votes in the 2010 General Election, yet only received 8 seats in the House of Commons. In comparison, if first past the post used a method of proportional representation, this number should have been increased by at least six times. More seats for a large party means next to nothing; one seat for a smaller party would be tantamount to a party like The Green Party.

Contradictorily, it may be argued that first past the post is easy and simple to operate and understand, thus meaning it is unnecessary. For example, the voter need only place an 'x' in the box for the party they wish to vote for. This simplicity thus may secure a larger involvement in elections for the House of Commons because of its accessibility. This gives everyone an opportunity to participate, which is one of the main principles of our democracy.

In addition, one may argue that the argument against

((c) continued) First past the post is irrelevant following the 2011 referendum concerning the alternative vote. For instance, an overwhelming majority of people - although the turnout was rather low - wanted to remain using the first past the post electoral system. This could be because the alternative vote is not understood amongst the general electorate in the way that first past the post is, illustrating further that it would damage political participation for us to change our electoral system.

In summary, I deem the arguments against electoral reform in that for the House of Commons weaker than those supporting the benefits of a system such as the supplementary vote where a majority is guaranteed and smaller parties are less neglected.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- a) This response addresses the wrong system, and therefore cannot be credited.
- b) Here we have a brief coverage of where and one reason why: since the explanations in the two paragraphs are very similar, this remains at level 1.
- c) This is a stronger response, with balance and some example. However it has insufficient range and depth to achieve level 3 but it is the higher end of level 2

As noted, although parts (a) and (b) do not have to be extensive - they must be factually correct to gain marks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

This second response does address and focus on the right systems and gives clear detail.

(a) AMS is a proportional system used in elections for Scottish parliaments and Welsh assembly. It is a mixture of constituency representation and ~~fee~~ proportional representation. A voter casts 2 votes, one for their local constituency MP and one for a political party. A certain % of the seats ~~for~~ are filled by FPTP where the MP with the most votes fills that seat. Once all the constituency seats are filled by FPTP, the remaining seats are 'topped up' using the regional list system where the % of votes directly correlates to the % of seats and this is done with the second vote for the party. The seats are filled by a list of MPs the party put forward. If a party gets 1 top up seats then the first person on the list gets the seat, if the party gets 10 then the next

((a) continued) 10 get seats.

(b) STV has been used in Northern Ireland to vote for their assembly since 1998 when it was created. This is because the Good Friday agreement that proposed the referendum for the creation of the assembly stated that both unionist & nationalist parties must be in the government in order to represent all views. This led to the implementation of STV due to its high proportionality and likelihood of coalitions because of the multi-member constituencies. STV also requires a candidate to have a certain majority meaning they have legitimacy. This can be seen to be successful as both the DUP & Sinn Féin have always been a part of the government.

Regional list has been used to vote for members of the European parliament in England, Scotland & Wales. Regional list is completely proportional meaning that smaller parties are able to get more seats meaning their voters views can be heard across England. This can be seen where UKIP got 24%.

((b) continued) of the vote in the 2014 and so got 24% of seats which was the largest party.

AMS has been used to vote for Scottish & Welsh Assemblies to create a reasonable degree of proportionality whilst also maintaining the constituency link. 66% of seats in Wales filled by FPTP with 36% in Scotland meaning that the people of Scotland and Wales' views are more widely represented in parliament due to the proportionality whilst also have a strong constituency link. This came about because of the desire to avoid a two party system like Westminster when the countries were finally given the chance for their own power in devolved assemblies after all referendums came back with a yes vote.

(c) The First past the post (FPTP) has been used in Westminster elections since their beginnings. However it has received many criticisms for its disproportionality and lack of representation when electing MPs to the commons. Whilst it is able to maintain strong and stable governments, it flaws ultimately outweigh its advantages.

one reason FPTP should not be used in Westminster elections is because of the levels of disproportionality it achieves. This means that some parties who have large membership or geographically centred support do better than smaller, widespread parties. This can be seen in the 2015 general election when UKIP received 12% of the vote (4 million) however only one seat in the commons due to the dispersed nature of their supporters. This was countered by the SNP who received only 4% of the national vote but gained 56 seats as all their support from Scotland. This is important as it shows the levels of disproportionality in the house of commons as 4 million UKIP voters are not having their views properly represented.

((c) continued) one reason FPTP should be used to elect the TL-of-C (house of commons) is because it creates a strong and stable single party government. This is positive because a government majority will make it easier for the party to push their policy and legislation through that their voters voted for. This can be seen with Tony Blair's two landslide victories in 1997 (178) and 2001 (108) in which he was not defeated in the TL-of-C. This shows that FPTP enables government to implement the change they promised. However FPTP does not always create a majority with 2 coalitions (1972 & 2010) and 3 wing parliaments since 1945.

one reason FPTP should not be used in TL-of-C elections is because of the lack of representation it allows. The 'whoever gets the most votes wins system' means that an MP can be elected with less than 50% of the vote meaning that more people will have voted against them than for them and yet they represent

((c) continued) everyone. This can be seen through the 2015 general election where 49% of MPs winning with less than 50% of the vote and indeed one MP being elected with only 29% of support from his constituency. A voting system like AV or STV would ensure that the candidate had a majority of votes meaning that more people were being represented.

A reason that FPTP ~~isn't~~ would be better than other systems is the ease of use. A voter simply has to place one tick in a box for the candidate they wish to vote for. This is a well-known and easy to understand for the majority of the ill-informed electorate whereas a more complicated system such as STV or AV where one must rank the candidates may confuse many voters and end up in an increased of spoiled ballots where the votes have been wasted. A more complicated system might also put people off voting leading to a decline in participation. However it can be seen that all electoral systems are

((c) continued) complicated and others like STV or AMS would be easy to explain.

Ultimately it can be seen that the levels of disproportionality FPTP achieves in the TL-of-C makes it unfit to be the voting system. Whilst majority governments are desirable, the 2000 coalition shows they are not inevitable and so proportion and representation are more important. Therefore it can be seen that the UK should switch to a more proportional system.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

- a) This is a thorough answer, clearly outlining the workings of AMS and reaching full marks.
- b) The candidate has chosen a good approach to this question, taking each system in turn and explaining why it is used. The content on STV is particularly well detailed and explained. Although the other paragraphs are not as thorough, there is enough here to gain full marks.
- c) This answer meets the requirements for level 3. It outlines a number of points on both sides of the debate, explains them and uses appropriate examples

As noted in previous examiner reports, examples serve to deliver both AO1 and AO2 marks.

Question 4 (x)

4a) Outline the differences between elitism and pluralism.

Assistant examiners noted with pleasure that in this series a vast majority of candidates knew both the concepts of pluralism and elitism. The more able ones did directly as the question demanded and carried out a comparison surrounding the differences between each; less perceptive candidates tended to describe each concept and here the differences were not as explicit. Some candidates brought in pressure groups to their response but this was not essential to gain full marks.

4b) Using examples, explain three limitations on the effectiveness of pressure groups.

For many candidates this produced marks which did not reach Level 3 and the reason was that the commands of the question were ignored and often diverted. The core requirement was to show pressure groups struggling and in some sense limited by key factors via the use of examples. However a large number of candidates chose to cite success factors and successful pressure groups rather than clearly state the absence of these factors as a limitation. The correct answer was to define a strong and determined Government facing such factions as Stop the War, Junior Doctors, or demonstrating a general distaste for methods and tactics adopted by such pressure groups, e.g. F4J, Student Protest against rising tuition fees.

4c) To what extent do pressure groups encourage both responsive government and political participation?

As with (b) above, many took their answer word for word from the specification and thereby failed to capitalise and gain marks. Many candidates reverted to a dichotomy considering if pressure groups are good or bad in themselves and in relation to democracy – some marks were possible but advancement of marks was severely restricted if this was the approach adopted. Straightforwardly the question asked two core issues firstly: do pressure groups engage governments and make them react or not? Then secondly: do pressure groups actively produce political participation or not? Weaker candidates often only fully addressed one aspect of the question only.

Many candidates chose pressure groups but failed to develop a full understanding of the demands and scope of the specification and therefore gained low level marks.

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

(a)

There are a few differences between pluralism and elitism. For example pluralism is where power is spread among lots of different groups and is fair.

However elitism is where only a few people have the power in their hands which means it isn't as fair and less people have a say.

Pressure groups are groups of like-minded individuals with the same intention or interests. They seek to influence government policy and change or appoint laws.

One limitation of how effective the pressure groups are is wealth. This means that if a pressure group doesn't have a particularly large amount of funding then there is less that they can achieve. This is

because there isn't enough money to fund the things they wish to do.

Size is also a limitation. If a group is of a large size then they are more influential as they have a larger area of coverage and voice more people's opinions which the government cannot ignore. So the smaller the pressure group the less effective they are. An example of this is the Snowdrop campaign in 2005 in which

((b) continued) decided to start a petition in the pressure group to ban handguns in the UK after a school shooting in Dunblane. They received 50,000 votes passing a law.

Another limitation is whether they are an insider or outsider group. If they are close with government then they are ~~an~~ more effective as they have people in power listening to them.

(c)

Pressure groups are said to ~~either~~ encourage a responsive government and political participation.

This is somewhat true as pressure groups do usually allow people with no political experience to join and help ~~efect~~ their cause. People can participate through pressure groups in many ways which help participation. ~~one~~ Petitions and lobbying are a few ways that people can participate. This is very good as some people usually would leave an issue, but through the easy access into pressure groups anyone can take part. However sometimes participation through pressure groups is bad. When some extremist groups use direct action then the pressure groups become seen as a hassle and not seen as serious.

Pressure groups help to create a responsive government as it lets the government see what people really want. Because pressure groups are mostly easy to join if an issue has just occurred then lots of people will join as they care about what has happened. If a pressure group has a large amount of members then it will be seen by government and they will want to help those people in order to stay in power. This means they are more responsive.

Another way that pressure groups encourage political participation is by voicing the opinion of many people that need to be heard. Once people do this then government realise how important something is to them and they then help by listening to the people.

Overall pressure groups do encourage political participation and a responsive government mostly through voicing opinions of a large number of people.



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Examiner Comments

Many factors limit this response. On part (a) the definition is weak and fails to show differences as requested. On part (b) it does not address the question and fails to give clear examples of where and how pressure groups are limited. Part (c) again skirts around the question and is a weak response.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

There are more pressure groups who fail rather than succeed and thus there is a need to understand their impact in the widest sense possible. Revision and understanding of the key terms on pressure groups is vital to score well on this section of the specification.

This is an example of a much clearer response.

Chosen question number: **Question 1** **Question 2**

Question 3 **Question 4**

(a) Pluralism refers to a wide range of ~~interest~~ ^{interests} & voices and dispersal of power represented by, for example, pressure groups. Whereas elitism is all about power in the hands of the few meaning that decision making is more effective and pure ~~institutions~~ ^{institutions} companies we need to be made.

(b) Pressure groups are limited by finance. Pressure groups without money cannot raise publicity or organise effective demonstrations. For example, the NUS representing students, lack the wealth the the British Bankers association or the Age UK may have. And this showed as the NUS campaigns of 2010-11 failed as tuition fees rose against the will of - highlighting how important money is when trying to put

Another limit of pressure groups is opposition - often opposition pressure groups. For example, FOREST have looked successful due to a greater pressure group - ASH, having more support - the government cannot ignore opposition to a group if it is greater - this is evident as FOREST failed to prevent the smoking ban in certain places - this shows how opposition limits pressure groups

Finally, lack of insider status in limits pressure groups as their desires may clash with that of the government of the day. For example the British Divers

(b) continued) Association failed to achieve insider status and came out of against a stubborn Labour Government. Similarly the NHS clashed with the policies of the Conservatives in 2010. This shows that the government's views will have a big impact on the success of pressure groups

(c) Pressure groups encourage both responsive government and political participation in a multitude of ways, they are involved in legislative decision making, they educate the electorate, and they represent minority interests giving people a voice. However they may turn voters away from politics or simply fail to have their desired influence.

Pressure groups encourage responsive government when they have insider status. This means the government will be in close contact with them when it comes to decision making. For example, the National Farmers Union advises the government on agricultural issues, the taxpayer's alliance will have large influence on the allocation of public expenditure, and sectional groups such as Age UK will give elderly members of society a voice. * By carrying out the functional representation and having a role in the different select committees, it is clear that pressure groups ensure that the government is responsive.

*ASH successfully influenced the government to ban smoking in public places in 2000

However, insider status doesn't guarantee success

Pressure groups also encourage a responsive government when they take direct action on an issue, raising publicity and support. If a large section of society are supporting a campaign, the government is pressured by parliament to listen to it. Furthermore, the fact that the government is held accountable in general elections every 5 years, means that they must keep voters on the same side as their party in order to prevent partisan disalignment. Many argue that this was a fundamental reason why Blair lost over 100 seats in the 2005 general election, as he ignored the Stop the War campaign. Other examples of pressure groups taking direct action include Fathers 4 Justice who are dressed as superheroes to campaign for fathers' right or the Anti-fur lobby. Unlike the countryside alliance who put 500,000 on the streets to campaign against the fox-fox-hunting ban and Stop the War put over 1 million on the streets. Through direct action, it can therefore be proved that enough popular pressure on the

((c) continued) government can lead to change - however not necessarily as much as may be desired.

Pressure groups represent give minority groups a voice, leading them to become engaged in participating in politics. For example, The Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Host Foundation both educate the wider public on matters which there may not be much public awareness of. This prevents a democratic deficit as many people will feel compelled to support such groups by donating or signing e-petitions. Therefore it is clear that minority groups such as Stonewall and the Multiple Sclerosis Society can act as a link to re-engage members of the electorate. However, minority groups are often outsiders and therefore lack influence, an example of this is SHELTER.

However, the fundamental reason why pressure groups fail to influence government is simply because they lack authority. Governments are elected by the people and are therefore legitimate whereas pressure groups simply play an opposition role in a pluralist society. This means pressure groups are rarely fully satisfied.

(c) continued) For example the British Medical Association managed to amend legislation for the Health and Social Care reform Act, 2012 but were still unhappy with many changes. In addition, Stop the War and the Countryside Alliance have both been ignored by the government as well as FOIPST - a pro-smokers group. This is a clear weakness of pressure groups: desire to make change is no matter how much support they gather, change is never guaranteed. Despite this, many agree that some pressure groups do succeed such as the ASH Pressure and, at times, Greenpeace.

Pressure groups may, however, prevent participation as they can then encourage political apathy, criticizing the political system, such as the electoral reform society, or even repelling voters through use of violent methods which is an accusation thrown out of PETA and ALF - in favour of animals - Many also agree the pressure groups may lack true internal democracy - for example Trade Unions and therefore keep voters away. However, overall

((c) continued) it must be argued that pressure groups encourage participation, for example membership or the purposes outlined tabled between 2002 and 2010.

Therefore, it is clear that while there are obstacles for pressure groups and they do lack authority and influence, they do make the government responsive and encourage participation mainly due to a great extent in particular due to direct action.



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Examiner Comments

Although part (a) is not expansive it does detail one difference; part (b) does adhere to the demands of the question and importantly (as requested) cites examples. The (c) section again keeps a clear eye on the requirements of the question and scores in Level 3.



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Examiner Tip

Questions on pressure groups will invariably demand the need for both political theory and political practice - the latter being achieved by examples. Pressure groups have to be understood amidst a competing political forum where more will fail than succeed.

Paper Summary

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

- Democracy questions are often done well. Centres have become adept at incorporating pertinent examples which act as a platform for both AO1 and AO2. We often see knowledge and understanding brought to this question from across the specification; it is not a requirement to do so to reach the top level but, an accessible means of doing so.
- Questions on political parties are rising in popularity. Recent events mean that the current changing political landscapes where party ideas are in flux make this a topic at the heart of classroom debate and discussion. It is good practice to link political ideas to policy to show how political principles bring forth corresponding policy.
- Questions on electoral systems often have at their core a requirement for the operational or 'mechanics' of how different systems function. Furthermore often as marks arise in part (a) questions which are AO1 sourced, then that detail has to be correct and precise. Secondly after we have seen differing electoral systems now in use for over 20 years in the UK there is a detailed base on which to evaluate these systems and offer critical insight into their use.
- Performance on pressure groups questions never matches the considerable numbers taking this option. This series however saw a clear majority more at ease with the key terms of elitism and pluralism. However there is still a need to focus more clearly on the extended (c) questions which require more than a simple binary analysis considering whether pressure groups are agents of good or evil in political society.

Grade Boundaries

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