

Examiners' Report
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GCE Government & Politics 6GP01 01

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Introduction

There was unanimous agreement which emerged from Assistant Examiners that the summer Unit 1 was a highly accessible paper and provided a platform for candidates to achieve the top tier of marks. It was also effective in that it accurately discriminated those scripts which had researched and instilled contemporary and accurate detail into their responses. The need to be contemporary is at the core of Government and Politics and it is heartening to see how many candidates and centres do connect with current events and in the process richly enhance their responses and earn a justified reward. There was clear evidence, if that is needed, that reflection and reading examiner reports which highlight salient tips and advice does make a difference to performance. In terms of popularity Question 1 on democracy topped the poll. The detail on specific performance is noted below. Question 2 on pressure groups was next in terms of popularity – but often as a second not a first choice, again here there are issues which require focus upon to secure success and these have been noted for reference. Question 3 on political parties was the least popular – that is not a new trend but one which is slowly reversing, there were many excellent responses to this question and a significantly high amount of level three scores were awarded here, proof that it is an accessible and lucrative option to take. Question 4 on elections was in the main very well handled (a combination of Question 1 and Question 4 being the most common overall route). It is worth noting that the operative element of electoral systems is now more widely understood and the issue of incorrect labelling is the mistake of the few, however, as noted below there is a need to be more precise to advance and increase marks in this area.

Question 1 (x)

1a) Outline two ways other than voting in elections and referendums, in which people can participate in politics.

Candidates performed generally well on this question. Many cited joining political parties and pressure groups as two ways of participating and were credited accordingly. Full marks were rare as students usually did not go on to provide support to their chosen ways. They identified but did not provide enough detail in accompaniment. Electronic participation (e-petitions) and citizen juries were selected by a significant minority. A small minority of students argued that keeping informed about politics was participation but this was not credited.

1b) Explain three criticisms that have been made of referendums.

Again, this was generally a well-answered question. Most candidates were able to give three valid criticisms of referenda. A small number of candidates wasted time giving an over-developed definition of referenda, rather than quickly addressing the question at hand. Some excellent answers were very well-worked, with a developed explanation of the limitations. A significant minority did have underuse of referenda as a criticism, which was not rewarded. In a similar fashion many berated referendums in the UK with the mistake that Governments can choose the wording which is incorrect and not again rewarded. The very best answers included concrete examples. Most usually these examples were used to exemplify problems regarding voter turnout or tyranny of the majority.

1c) Assess the strengths of representative democracy as it operates in the UK.

This question produced a wide variety of answers because there were so many different and acceptable interpretations of 'representative democracy' and its key elements. Few got the wide range of elements listed in the mark scheme and many focused on a much narrower range of issue such as:

The issue of representative democracy v direct democracy

The issue of the value of having 'expert' MPs to decide in Parliament rather than the voters. Many only focused on Parliament and failed to consider the wider aspects of representative democracy such as devolved assemblies, diversity, civil liberties etc.

Many did not actually 'assess' the strengths and only gave the strengths themselves which meant that many AO2 marks were lost in the process

In a similar fashion many divided the response into the strengths versus the weaknesses of representative democracy and as noted previously there is credit here but it was often a tangential approach to adopt.

This script is a clear level 2 response. There is a lack of detail and description, it is at times brief.

(a) People can also participate through pressure groups. They can have their say on a particular topic and help make the government aware of them. They can also join in with rallies that may take place. For example, the campaign or march of university students. They were trying to get the university fees lowered and so they decided to let the government know their opinion by making a public display.

(b) One criticism of referendums is that they are not binding which means the government doesn't need to listen to what the results are telling them. This means that they won't produce an outcome that is solely based on the public's opinion. This can put people off joining in with referendums as it can be seen as what is the point, in participating in them.

Another criticism is that the government decide what referendum should be held and when. This means if they are confident that the result will be in favour for them then they will hold one. They held a referendum in 2011 asking whether we should change electoral systems from FPTP to AV. The results of this was no. The government wouldn't have or wanted to change the system as it is a majoritarian system and would have meant they wouldn't be in power anymore. They put referendums on to please the public and make sure that participation is increasing.

Another criticism is that they are held so rarely that they don't have a major impact on the public and so the public aren't able to express their views on a matter unless the government allows them to. And their opinions don't count as the government doesn't have to take their opinion into account.

((b) continued) When making decisions.

(c) Representative democracy is used in the UK and most other countries. One reason it is used is because it allows people to be involved and have their opinions respected without taking up too much time. If everyone had to voice their opinions themselves then it would take a lot more time when debating policies and ideas. ~~As~~ With the amount of parties and pressure groups in the UK it is easy to be able to make sure that the majority of people's opinions are represented.

The political education in the UK is varied and so some people don't understand anything to do with politics. It would be seen as unfair and could create tyranny of the majority if direct democracy was used. By ~~used~~ using representative everyone's views are respected and it creates an even balance between people with high and low political education. It can also be seen as to help with educating people on politics and how it works.

It can also help to increase participation as people will want to make sure that they are electing and trusting someone who represents their ideas. and will be able to debate properly on their behalf. This means people will be inclined to join in with elections as they will want to try and ensure that the party or candidate they want is elected.

((c) continued) On the other hand, it can also decrease participation due to political apathy, or as people aren't interested in politics as they don't need to be involved. As the people are rarely involved, they might become bored and uninterested with what's happening in politics.

Another reason it may decline is due to the fact that people may feel that their views are not being properly represented. If they feel that their ideas and opinions are being taken into consideration then they may feel there is no point in participating and may not feel as close to their MP.

Representative democracy is seen as the best form of democracy and works well for the UK as there are so many parties and pressure groups that the majority of views are represented.



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The (a) section rolls up pressure group membership and does not make two distinct points. Here and on other (a) sections marks were lost because they fell short of the task required.

In (b) the rare occurrence of referendums cannot be considered to be a valid criticism - hence it cannot obtain level 3.

In (c) we are hit with brevity and no real development of points.

Often it works to briefly read back over a response. If you can clearly see from the answer the original question then you can be sure to be on the right track.

This response in contrast to the other one selected previously shows a clear improvement, it combines examples with detailed political knowledge.

(a) One way in which people can participate in politics is by being a member of a political party. This means that they are aware of the activities of their chosen party and are kept aware of what is going on in politics.

An example of this is the Conservative Party, who have a membership of around 100,000 people currently. This demonstrates how party membership can help people participate in politics.

A nother way people participate in politics is by signing petitions and e-petitions. This means that, by doing this, the public is kept aware of the plans the Government has for the future and are able to express their opinions on the matter. An example of this is the e-petition on the Parliament website opposing the proposed NHS reforms of 2012. This has around 125,000 signatures, which means that people are able to be kept aware of the Government's plans for the NHS and are also able to express their opposition to it. This demonstrates how petitions and e-petitions help people to participate in politics.

(b) One criticism of referendums is that they can lead to a 'tyranny of the majority'. This means that, as a form of direct democracy, the majority can often oppress the minority because they will earn more votes. An example of this is the 2008 anti civil-marriage referendum in California, where the non-homosexual majority voted to remove civil-marriages, oppressing the rights of the homosexual minority. This demonstrates how referendums can lead to a tyranny of the majority.

Another criticism of referendums is that they do not do enough to increase democratic participation. This means that democracy and voter awareness is not improved just because they get to vote on legislation. An example of this is the AV referendum in 2011, where voter turnout was only 35%. This demonstrates how referendums do not improve democracy.

A third criticism of referendums is that they have recently been seen as illegal ways of ~~increasing power~~ ^{causing violence}. This means that a referendum can be used to defy a Government by its people and can create conflict in the area. A recent example of this is the referendum in Crimea in the Ukraine, where voters voted in favour of joining Russia. This was accepted by Russia, but

((b) continued) rejected by Ukraine and much of the Western World, which is now in a heavy tension with Russia and could lead to further conflict in the future. This demonstrates how referendums can cause violence and conflict.

- (c) The strengths of representative democracy in the UK include engaging the public in politics through elections, holding Governments to account and allowing the whole country to have a say in Parliament ~~be run with the same laws~~, preventing conflict between different areas of the country.

The main strength of representative democracy in the UK is that it consistently engages with the public. This means that the public is always aware of political events in the UK and are always able to influence how things are run. This is done through the frequent amount of elections held in the UK. Since 2009, there have been elections every year in the UK, including the 2010 general election, the 2012 mayoral and London assembly elections and the upcoming 2014 European and local elections. This offers voters a consistent way to engage in politics by having their say on who should run the country. However, it can be argued that these elections do not do enough to engage with the public, as demonstrated by poor levels of turnout in recent elections, such as only 63% in 2010 and only around 19% at the 2012 police commissioner elections. Despite this, however, the fact that these elections exist and offer the public a frequent chance to have their say means that this is a very good strength of representative democracy.

(c) continued) Another strength of representative democracy is that it holds Governments to account. This means that no Government gets too powerful that it effectively becomes a dictatorship. An example of this is John Major's Government, who were punished by the public in 1997 for a poor economy in the early 90s with a crushing election defeat to Labour. However, it can be argued that not enough is done to hold Government and MPs to account. For example, despite massive protests in 2003 over the Iraq war, Labour still won a majority in the 2005 election. Also, the UK has no form of recall system, such as was used in 2003 in California to replace the Democratic Governor with Arnold Schwarzenegger. This means that, despite vast public outcry, MPs who were exposed in the 2009 expenses scandal got to keep their jobs until the following year's election. Overall this strength of holding to account is still a good strength of representative democracy, but more could be done to improve it.

The third strength of representative democracy is it allows all areas of the country to have a say in Parliament. This means that no area is left underrepresented. For example, Scotland and Wales have MPs in Parliament, which means they are able to bring issues affecting them to the attention of the House. While it can be argued that this also leads to rule by a party that was not elected for, such as in Scotland where

((c) continued) there are no conservative mps and only a few Lib Dem's, this is still a good strength as it allows all views from the country to be heard by the Government.

In conclusion, the strengths of representative democracy in the UK are all fairly good, with frequent engagement of the public arguably being the biggest strength.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- a) This is a very good answer and merits full marks. The second paragraph is especially strong.
- b) This remains in L2 for both AO1 and AO2 the limitation is the last paragraph which can be misleading.
- c) This is a good example of a response which just enters L3 for all assessment objectives.

This response is not especially long but it shows how easy it is to collect marks if the focus of the question is strongly displayed in the text.

Question 2 (x)

2a) What is pluralist democracy?

It is clear that many centres teach pluralism, elitism and pluralist democracy and note how power is distributed. Few centres avoid these key terms. However, a significant number of candidates fail fully to link these concepts accurately to pluralism and in particular here pluralist democracy to their relevance to pressure groups. It was very common to see the sole link of pluralist democracy to toleration. There is a link here but it is more peripheral than core. While this term (pluralist democracy) lies within the pressure group section of the specification it is here that there is most synergy and connection, yet so many refuse to make this clear and present link and profit fully from it.

2b) Using examples, explain three reasons why pressure groups may fail to achieve their objectives

This proved for many to be the poorest performing (b) section of their script. The fault was clear, many candidates could only relate to success of pressure group activity they could not comprehend or describe failure. All too often failure was simply paraphrased as an absence of success. The requirement of examples was a clear test of knowledge and again many provided only evidence of success. There are a multitude of examples of pressure groups failing to secure their objectives but for a huge number that knowledge and understanding was absent.

2c) To what extent do pressure groups undermine democracy?

All Assistant Examiners noted that this (c) section proved accessible for the vast majority of candidates, a clear balance was provided and there was a range of arguments cited on both sides of the debate. To excel at this the candidate who weaved accurate and relevant examples into their response reaped a considerable dividend. The examples allowed a higher level of analysis and reflection.

This is a good example of a candidate who does know about politics but does not fully appreciate the question and the response is at time tangential to the question.

(a) A pluralist democracy is that where there is a wide variety of ~~as~~ parties ~~or~~ in the UK, we have a 2 and a half party system as government is ~~predominantly~~ predominantly dominated by conservative, Labour and the Liberal Democrats, this shows that it may not have a very pluralist democracy as compared to Northern Ireland who have a multi-party system. This issue with pluralist democracy is that it may not necessarily lead to a

You should start the answer to part (b) on page 5

(a) continued) stable government as there are too many parties to choose from which creates coalitions. However, it ensures that everyone's needs are represented.

(b) Pressure groups may fail to achieve their objectives because they may be an outsider pressure group. If the aim of a pressure group is to effect policy decisions, working outside the government won't help. This is highlighted by Greenpeace, although their aim may not be to effect policy change, their militant behaviour means that governments rarely take note of their actions. Whereas insider groups such as NFU sit on standing committees and are very active in helping amend and critique legislation with regards to farmers.

((b) continued) Another reason as to why pressure groups fail to achieve success is because of their funding and organization, although they don't have to be formally organized like a political party, a certain degree of organisation is required otherwise it could lead to factors within the group this is highlighted with the snowdrop campaign, dispute between leaders ultimately lead to the downfall of the pressure group.

Funding is also important as if a group doesn't have the funds to put on big displays and

((b) continued) publicize their issue
they won't get
anywhere, this is
highlighted in the
booked off campaign
where they are funded
by celebrity Hugh
Grant, without funding
and sponsorship a
pressure group cannot
do anything

(c) Pressure groups undermine democracy as they are working outside the political system, the government has been elected by the people and so they make the policies and legislation. So it shows pressure groups interfering with the democratic process for their own gain. However, it could be argued that they aid the process as groups such as BMA helped the government with the NHS reform. They undermine democracy because some groups are trying to interfere with the democratic process where ~~representatives~~ representatives have been

((c) continued) democratically
elected by the people.

Pressure groups also are
~~seen to undermine~~
~~democracy~~
democracy because
they expect to influence
change by acting illegally.
This is predominantly
highlighted in Greenpeace's
militant behaviour. They
are expecting to
make the world more
~~environmentally~~
friendly ~~but~~ ~~less~~ by
acting in a militant
way.

Pressure groups can be
seen to undermine
democracy because of
their organisation and
operation, if a pressure
group has got more

((c) continued) Funding of a certain celebrity endorser. This means that they are going to have more of an impact even though they may not be largely supported. This can be shown by Hackadot, they are sponsored and supported by Hugh Grant which means that they may have a bigger impact even though pressure groups with four more supporters have failed such as the anti-war coalition, millions turned up to protest against the war but ~~and~~ nothing was done.

It could also argue that pressure groups are discouraging political

((c) continued) participation in the sense that voter turnout is ~~at~~ very low, just over half the population turned out to vote. And so it could be seen that instead of encouraging people to get involved in politics, they are discouraging people in the sense that they would rather join pressure groups than vote in general elections. This could be counter-argued that they encourage political participation because people are only supporting the cause they believe in.

Overall, I believe that pressure groups do

((c) continued) ~~undermine~~
democracy, but help
it. It educates people
in the politics and
fills the void where
people feel they are
no longer being represented
properly by the political
parties. However, they
can be regarded as
undermining democracy
as they have ~~gotten~~
power which hasn't been given
to them by the people.
But this power was
given to them so they
could help democracy
but by being apart
of the legislative process
and ensure that ~~all~~
everyones views are
put across, and
making sure everyone
is represented.



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Examiner Comments

- a) This takes a very tangential approach to the question - but it is covered in the mark scheme by connection to competition between groups. It gains two marks.
- b) Here the response drifts and tries to substitute success factors which is not in the remit of the question. The examples are limited which hits at the AO1 score however the AO2 is more robust.
- c) A lengthy answer and it does raise valid points. It secures L3 for AO1 but falls into L2 for the other AOs.

This shows an improvement on the previous response. It is shorter but focused and provides good examples as required for the (b) section.

(a) Pluralist democracy is a system of democracy where a variety of different ^{political} opinions and views are allowed to exist and compete. ~~in a political system~~ It involves the dispersal of power over many different bodies, such as pressure groups and political parties in the UK. It requires that decisions are not made by a select few and that there are many different sources of power.

(b) Firstly, a pressure group may fail to achieve its objectives because of its status. Large and well known pressure groups such as Greenpeace, have achieved a large number of supporters and as such find it relatively easy to raise attention to issues. A smaller pressure group, however, such as Fathers 4 Justice, is less well known, perhaps due to it being a sectional group and focusing on a small area of society, so finds it harder to use action on the issues they highlight. Similarly, an insider pressure group, one that is affiliated with the government such as the National Farmers' Union, will find it easier to guarantee action on their issues than an outsider group such as the Animal Liberation Front.

Secondly, the funding a pressure group receives ~~is~~ often determines its success: a group with a lack of funding will not have enough money to campaign efficiently. Often the nature of the pressure group dictates this as it determines who they receive funding from. For example, a group such as the Confederation of British Industry has members who have a vested interest in its issues: big company bosses. These people will obviously have the money to fund their pressure group, making it successful. A pressure group may fail to achieve its objectives if it does not have this funding. An example of this might be a charity like Shelter, who often have to work very hard to receive funding.

(b) continued) Lastly, the political climate in which a pressure group operates affects how likely it is to achieve its objectives. For example, a pressure group like Republic are in favour of a democratically elected leader of the UK, but they operate at a time when 80% of the public are in favour of a monarchy. Therefore, they will find it hard to achieve their objectives in the short term.

(c) Pressure groups are a vital part of any political system that describes itself as pluralist, and especially in the UK as the sheer number of them (over 7000) means a massive dispersal of power. However, it is arguable that there are some ways in which they undermine the UK's democracy.

Firstly, pressure groups could be described as enhancing democracy rather than undermining it for the reason stated above: a large number of pressure groups, ~~many~~^{some} of them large in size such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds with 1.2 million members, enhances a pluralist democracy by drawing power away from the executive and hence preventing, to some extent, elitism.

Secondly, pressure groups could also be said to enhance democracy rather than undermine it as they provide an alternative outlet for the political views of people who may not necessarily agree with any one political party, hence increasing participation. A group such as the Freedom Organisation for the Right to Enjoy Smoking Tobacco (FOREST) could argue that it does just this: provides a voice for a minority view that may not necessarily be on the agenda of the government. However, an alternative opinion would be that pressure groups ~~also~~ undermine democracy by decreasing active participation. It is arguably much easier to simply join a pressure group and count that as participation

((c) continued) ~~rather~~ than join a political party. This is reflected in the decline in political party membership - a mere 1% of the UK's population, with membership of all the political parties combined being less than the membership of the RSPB alone. The problem with this is that it shows a lack of engagement with politics and more engagement with groups who they feel express their views but don't ^{necessarily} encourage active campaigning.

Another case for pressure groups undermining democracy is the undemocratic structure of many pressure groups. It has been argued, for example, that Greenpeace is elitist in its higher levels, acting out of the ~~the~~ without a mandate from its members. Similarly, many groups, such as the NSPCC, do not have a democratically elected leadership and as such lack the legitimacy that an elected body such as the House of Commons has.

~~The~~ ~~point~~ ~~is~~ ~~that~~ ~~the~~ ~~main~~ ~~argument~~ ~~for~~ ~~pressure~~ ~~groups~~ ~~undermining~~ ~~democracy~~ ~~is~~ ~~to~~ ~~do~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~views~~ ~~they~~ ~~represent~~. For example, a pressure group representing the wealthier classes, such as CBI, will inevitably gain more power than a pressure group ^{that is maybe lower but is} representing less well-off sections of society, such as Shelter. While this is also true to a certain extent in the electoral system, it is not to the same extent and there are checks, like elections, to prevent it.

((c) continued)

In Conclusion, ~~it~~ this seems to be a strong argument for pressure groups undermining democracy, mainly because they have widely undemocratic structures, are often elitist and occasionally lack a mandate.



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- a) Three distinct points are made here which gain 3 marks.
- b) This gives three valid explanations with relevant examples and is a clear level 3 response.
- c) This is a good example of a response at the entry levels to all the L3 assessment objectives.

This is a long response; a sharper more focused response can at times deliver more in terms of marks.

Question 3 (x)

3a) Outline two ways in which political parties differ from pressure groups.

Almost all candidates were able to point out two differences between political parties and pressure groups with the key differential being between those which merely mentioned the differences and those which added some detail. Issues of limitation were present as was noted in how 1a) had been handled. Despite some minor issues many responses here went on to receive full marks.

3b) Using examples, explain the difference between left-wing and right-wing political ideas.

It is clear that candidates are now much more secure in their understanding of left and right wing political ideas. Not only can they explain these concepts with clarity they can link them to wider political conceptual awareness. Few mislabelled each political wing. Many made reference to mainstream political parties in demonstrating their knowledge. A few candidates were confident enough to discuss how political parties themselves do not adhere to fixed stances and change their bias from left to right as suits their electoral prospects.

3c) To what extent are the major parties internally divided over policies and ideas?

It was pleasing to see that very few answers missed the 'internal' aspect of this question, as had been seen before on previous series, so most answers were well tailored to the question. Successful answers discussed historical divisions within the Labour and Conservative parties and touched on how these manifest themselves now, either through greater unity or disunity between the factions of the main two parties. There were quite a few excellent answers here that used lots of recent policy examples to illustrate the divisions, as well as named factions within the current parties. Most candidates were able to discuss divisions within the Conservative Party especially over the EU and social policy such as gay marriage or the family in general. Labour and Liberal Democrats presented much more of a problem for candidates with many falling back on a discussion of the differences between old and new Labour and ignoring divisions in the Liberal Democrats. There were some very good responses which examined factions within parties and which also then went on to explain ideas and policies associated with these factions. In the Conservative Party, the most common examples here were one-nationists and neo-liberals, in the Labour Party, new Labour and the Campaign group and in the Liberal Democrats, social liberals and orange book liberals. This response clearly raises the bar on the previous response. It is constant level three throughout the answer.

(a) Political Parties can differ from pressure groups because firstly, Political parties usually represent a wider range of ideas and policies. Most pressure group such as Trade Unions, ~~After~~ ^{the} Institute of Economic Affairs are to support and increase awareness for ~~small~~ specific ideas. IEA support economic liberalism but after that don't support anything else with as much passion. Unlike parties who usually have a broad spectrum of ideas they support and usually have very few ~~limited~~ consistent policies.

Secondly, Political Parties are usually in a chance of winning seats in elections. There is no reason why a pressure group could gain seats in an election but overall have little chance of gain a seat in parliament. As pressure groups have little scope on issues then this makes them more unelectable as large parties are likely to win elections due to their larger scope in political landscape.

One difference between left and right wing politics is their view on society. For example, Traditional Conservatives would say that overall society is 'organic' and ~~we are interconnected~~. And that the wealthy and prosperous must dedicate themselves to helping the less fortunate in society by individual perseverance. Whilst the left would disagree, and say that overall society is a collective society and that society benefits from a collective effort from all society.

Another difference ~~is~~ between left and right politics is their approach on the economy. Left of politics would believe in ideas such as nationalisation and owning of the means of production by the people. If business are owned by the state and people then all the benefits will be distributed within society and will prevent exploitation of workers. Whilst those on the right would say that ~~the~~ the economy should be owned by the individuals and not be interfered by the government. The economy is organic and therefore will sort itself out. And this will then encourage aspiration in society to do better as they

((b) continued) Could achieve the successes seen in the free-market.

Also another difference between right wing and left wing politics would be their view on the state. Left would ~~say the bigger~~ support the idea of a bigger state. A large state would see the government running the means of production and also an extensive welfare or social security state. This would be justified on grounds that within society socialism must increase equality ~~within~~ of wealth and opportunity within society and by having a large state then this is possible. Whilst on the right, pre 1950 and post 1979, conservative policy has not favoured a large state, whether that be privatisation or a smaller welfare state. This is justified by the right as it as it creates a reliance on the state and that individuals must take care of these own problems and it shouldn't be the state's responsibility.

10
a

(c) Both Labour and Conservatives have large party divides and divides which have existed for a long time.

Both Labour and Conservative have internal divides this can be seen clearly within Labour when looking at Old and New Labour.

Old Labour, with a much more Socialist and left ideas. Old Labour would want more radical state expansionary policies such as the extension of nationalisation and increase in taxation for larger distribution of wealth in society. Whilst New Labour or Blair's Labour have a more accepting views of free market economics and would like to use the success of free market economics to generate a greater opportunity of equality within society. ~~The Labour Party~~ ~~Arguable~~ New and Old Labour are still supporting the idea of equality of opportunity but going about achieve it differently. New Labour using the free market whilst Old would prefer greater state control on business and production to achieve it. This shows that there ideas are the same but the policies to achieve this are different which cause internally divided

((c) continued) over policy.

The largest divided in the Conservative Party is arguably that of Thatcherism Vs 'one nation' Tory. ~~David Cameron~~ would Under the post-war consensus 'one nationism' flourished until 1979 and the rise of Thatcherism. Arguably, the Conservative Party is moving towards 'one nationism' again but yet Thatcherism is still economically entrenched within the right. Thatcherism believes in a free-market approach to society supporting and a smaller state and a huge emphasis on individual perseverance. This contrast with the modern one-nation Conservatives would agree on a free-market economic approach but also that the government should support increasing opportunity within society. Unlike the Labour split of old and new where the party is split on policy. The Conservative party believe that are split on ideological approaches on society. These economic policies all support free-market economics, but as much as this would show there is a strong ideological approach within the Conservative Party.

The largest current split within a party

((c) continued) Would be that of the Pro Europe and Anti-Europe. The Europe Question for the Conservative Party is a split which even splits that of one man, Mr Thatcherism. Many anti-Europeans would say that it is not of any economic support to Britain and that Britain gains no interests from staying in Europe. This has placed pressure on David Cameron ~~as he~~ and his more liberal Conservatives who would want to stay in Europe. This is by far the largest split in any party in British Politics. Pro + Anti Europe Conservatives are split both on policy and ideology. This is the best evidence that internal divisions exist in a party.

~~It is clear~~

It is clear that tensions do exist in parties and that some or more dividing men others.

But yet it could be argued that there isn't as much division as you'd think within a party. For example Ed Milliband suggested the nationalisation of some key

(c) continued) reveals within in the real industry. That shows that there are some agreements within in the Labour party. Also within the Labour Party old and new agree very much on the idea that education and the NHS are ~~the~~ skills to be ring fenced and supported.

As with the Conservative Party, most Conservatives have a strong agreement on free-market economics and the efficiencies of privatisation and a smaller state.

Overall it's very conclusive that there are large divides within parties but often not as visible due to common pursuing of the same goals. Seen with New and Old Labour and the pursuit of equality of opportunity. It be said without these common goals the extent of which they were divided would be large but with common key interests then it is reduced the amount of which they seem divided.



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Examiner Comments

- A full response packed with accurate detail.
- This is level three, it does so with ease. Although it makes reference to political parties it has a well-grounded view of the political spectrum.
- Handles the basic divisions in two major parties.

The two examples here in the report on Q3 establish and show how accessible the section of the specification is on political parties, covering as they do key and relevant concepts and realities in UK political life.

Question 4 (x)

4a) Outline two functions of an election.

Alongside 3a) Assistant Examiners felt that this was the highest performing a) question. Many accurately provided two functions which elections serve, the most common being choice, accountability and education. Support in developing these points was reasonable – but the key point in the introduction still applies to this question, all too often clear functions were identified but the sparse development with supporting detail meant that many failed to reach full marks.

4b) Explain the workings of three electoral systems used in the UK.

Most candidates attempted three distinct systems, and were able to explain at least one or two well. The major pitfalls were an over focus on evaluation of the systems, and the occasional confusion between the systems and their names (especially the similar sounding, but very different, SV and STV). A moderate number of candidates showed awareness of the d’hondt method and droop quota but only the strongest were able to explain them. A core demand of the specification is that candidates have a working knowledge of how several different electoral systems operate, this then leads on to the more demanding extended questions which then goes on to evaluate and criticise them. The working knowledge is a key foundation.

4c) Assess the advantages of the various electoral systems used in the UK.

Apart from a few responses which chose to treat the question as one concerned with the advantages and disadvantages of the FPTP system, the principle difficulty for candidates here was in the assessing of the advantages. This meant that many responses failed to consider the context and outcomes of the use of the various systems and merely examined the systems theoretically. However, there were a considerable number of responses which did manage to assess the advantages of the FPTP for Westminster, STV for Northern Ireland and CRPL system for the European Parliament. There was also some very impressive and accurate knowledge of recent regional elections in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as local mayoral elections. Crucial to a high mark here is the results which these different electoral systems have manufactured – again up to date information which via the internet is now readily accessible and available.

This is a really good response and the candidate has maintained a high level of application throughout the answer.

(a) Elections are the main way in which people participate ~~part~~ in politics. Elections serve a number of functions. One function of an election is that they serve to transfer power from one government to the next peacefully. Elections are the main way in which governments are formed and the government is formed out of the majority in the House of Commons. The leader with the largest majority and largest number of seats becomes prime minister and the Prime Minister elects their ministers in his/her government.

Another function of an election is that they ~~can~~ serve to educate citizens on political decisions. Elections ensure that the people are aware of the fact that they have a duty to obey the law and respect their system of government. Elections also make the government publicly accountable and ultimately removable. Elections give the people final control of the government and

(b) One electoral system used in the UK is the First Past The Post system. This is used in Westminster to form governments and so is sometimes referred to as the Westminster electoral system. First Past The Post (FPTP) operates ~~in~~ in a very easy and simple way. ~~On~~ On the ballot paper, there ~~are~~ is one column. Voters must mark an 'x' beside the candidate that they wish to vote for. Each person gets one vote and this reflects the principle of 'one person one vote.' The candidate who receives the most votes receives a seat in the House of Commons and the party with the most seats forms a government.

Another electoral system used in the UK is the Supplementary Voting System (SV). SV is a shortened version of AV. Under SV, there are two columns on the ballot paper. One for voters to mark their first choice and one for voters to mark their second choice.

However, the voter does not have to mark a second choice if they do not wish to. ~~SV~~

SV is used ~~for~~ for all mayors in the UK, notably the mayor of London, and is also used for Police Commissioners. If a

(c) The main electoral system used in the UK is ~~the~~ First Past The Post (FPTP). This is used in Westminster to form governments. One strength of FPTP is it creates a strong link between elected representatives and its ~~own~~ constituents. This is good as it ensures that constituents' ~~grievance~~ problems and grievances are properly addressed. Each representative represents a different geographical area. For example, the representative for ~~Westminster~~ Greenock and Inverclyde in Scotland is Duncan McNeil. Another strength of FPTP is that it tends to produce a clear winner with one party winning the majority in the House of Commons. This is good as it will most likely ensure a strong and stable government where the party is likely to remain in office for its full term without any major crisis, and is likely to have a ~~majority~~ ^{clear} majority supporting them in the House of Commons which gives them a clear mandate to govern and allows them to implement their manifesto commitments.

However, this does not always happen as seen in the 2010 election producing a coalition government consisting of the

((c) continued) Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats. Coalitions often lead to weak and unstable government who cannot govern ~~decisively~~ decisively and this may lead to breaking up. Another weakness of the FPTP system is that they discriminate against small parties with spread out support ~~and~~ who represent minority views and are ~~we~~ more in favour of large parties with concentrated support. This is because small parties with dispersed support rarely come top of the ballot in any constituency. This is a weakness because it means minority ~~minorities~~ ~~groups~~ groups find it difficult to get their points and views across.

Another electoral system used in the UK is Single Transferable Vote (STV). ~~It is~~ One ~~of~~ advantage of STV is that ~~it~~ there are no wasted votes due to the fact that voters rank candidates in order of preference and therefore ~~no votes are wasted~~ every vote counts for something. ~~Another advantage of STV is that it is~~ This therefore means that voter turnout will be high as the main reason for low voter turnout is

((c) continued) That people think their votes won't count. Another strength of STV is that there are no safe seats. This is good as safe seats often lead to MP arrogance.

However, the STV electoral system can lead to massive constituencies with lots of small parties. This is bad as it can lead to weak and unstable government. Another weakness is that it may increase donkey voting. This means that people ~~will~~ will often vote for the sake of it, without any consideration, just to use up all their votes as under STV you rank all candidates in preference order. This is bad as it will lead to many people gaining votes, not because they are liked, but because people wanted to use up their votes.

A third electoral system used in the UK is Supplementary Voting system (SVS). An advantage of SVS is that it is relatively easy for the public to understand. 98% of people who voted in the Police Commissioner said they found it easy. It also leads to less wasted votes as people have two votes and are likely to use them wisely.

((c) continued) However, this does not always happen as some people's votes may still be wasted if their votes did not fall into the top two categories. STV ~~method~~ ^{method} also ~~method~~ does not ensure that the winning ~~party~~ ^{party's} candidate receives an overall majority if ~~the~~ the scores have to be settled a second time round. (if nobody won 50% first of all), and this therefore means that the outcome may lack legitimacy.

To conclude, I believe that the different electoral systems in the UK have many advantages, and despite the fact that some disadvantages may occur from them, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and therefore I believe that ~~the~~ most of the electoral systems used in the UK ~~are~~ ^{quite} ~~very~~ democratic and work very well.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

- a) A full and articulate response which deserves full marks.
- b) Again this is a really good response; a little clouded on some aspects of STV in the last section but overall well done.
- c) This is a good response; importantly it advances beyond the entrance to L3 for all AOs and scores highly.

Look how well this candidate has used examples. This adds depth to the response and shows well founded political awareness.

By way of contrast this is clearly lower level response. At times it is brief and lacks precision.

(a) Elections have a variety of uses and functions. Perhaps the most fundamental function of ~~the~~ Elections is to make a government in a country more legitimate. Thus, it could be debated whether the UK coalition government of 2010 is fully legitimate as ~~with it being a coalition~~ it did not receive the majority of votes in the election. Secondly, elections ^{are} ~~is~~ a way of seeing what the people of the country want and therefore a part of democracy as a whole. The UK is seen as democratic as ~~that~~ it holds free, fair, and competitive elections.

((a) continued)

- FPTP

- AMS (scotish)

WORKINGS OF 3 ELECTORAL SYSTEMS UK

(b) The voting system of First Past the Post (FPTP) is used in general elections in the UK. It is a majoritarian system, that means the percentage of votes are not proportional to the number of seats. A voter only gets one vote, that is of a candidate standing for a party. The party itself chooses the candidate for each constituency who will stand. The voter marks the ~~press~~^{box} with a cross to cast their vote. The party that gets the most amount of votes in that constituency will be elected - they do not need to have a majority.

The ~~system~~ Alternative Member System (AMS) is used in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly amongst others in the UK. It is a mixed system - not ^{fully} proportional, but not classed as majoritarian either. This is because it uses the ~~system~~ majoritarian system of First Past the Post together with 'top-up' votes from the ~~the~~ Closed Party List system. A voter ~~has~~ has two votes - and can vote for a constituency MP and also a regional MP on their ballot paper. The First Past the Post system is used first, and then it is made

((b) continued) more representative with the list system.

The London Mayoral elections use amongst others the party list system. This ~~can~~ system can be used as a closed or an open list. Closed is used more regularly, and it involves a voter only voting for a party ~~and~~, with a list of MPs been decided before the election. In an open list, the voter gets the choice of voting for a candidate. The party list system is a ~~majoritarian~~ ~~system~~ proportional representation system.

± electoral systems Used in UK = FPTP = AMS

(c) A variety of electoral systems are used in the UK, including First Past the Post (FPTP) in General Elections. There are lots of advantages of many of the systems, however there are also disadvantages that need to be taken into account.

FPTP is a majoritarian system that is used in the UK for General Elections. It has been used in elections for a long time, and many advantages of it that exist. For example, FPTP has some of the strongest constituency links that an election system can have as the link between the people and the MP are strong. It is likely that in FPTP many more MPs take into account what their constituents want. ~~Another~~

Another benefit of FPTP is that it is very simple to use and has been used for a long time without there being many problems. The 2011 referendum set to the people determining if they wanted to change voting system to AV resulted in people saying 'no'. This could show how strong support is for the

((c) continued) system. It is not ^a proportional system, and ~~based~~ ^{is} based over the leading two parties, but people are comfortable with the system as it has served them well.

FPTP is also quick and efficient. It is easier for it to make a decision on the winner of an MP in a constituency, and the quickest ~~MP~~ ^{MP} results declared were under an hour ~~and~~ after voting finished on voting day in 2010.

As a system, it also rarely produces coalition governments. Until the 2010 Conservative - Liberal Democrat coalition, it had not produced a coalition since 1979. Having a single party government is often more stable and doesn't bring legitimacy into dispute due to lack of mandate.

Another voting system used in the UK for the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh assembly is AMS. This system is more representative than FPTP, and ~~this~~ ^{this} is a huge benefit. Although still a mixed system, the votes

• Additional member system (AMS)

((c) continued) cast are more representative to how many seats a party gains. In FPTP, the third party is severely under-represented with Liberal Democrats needing over 110,000 votes to elect a single MP whereas Labour only needing around 33,000 votes. This is diminished in AMS and as there are multi-member constituencies there are more chances that the third party will receive 'top up' votes.

The Party list system is also used, which has a number of advantages. It is probably more easy to use than FPTP - for example if a voter had trouble understanding a ballot paper with many different candidates or with a closed list it is simple as only the party needs to be chosen.

On an open list however, the party does not decide which candidates get elected from each party - the people. This makes the candidates more legitimate as they will have been elected on themselves and not just on their party.

((c) continued) The different electoral systems all have a variety of advantages to them, which are backed up with evidence such as the UK referendum on the changing of the voting system. The only ~~the~~ main disadvantage of the election systems ~~are~~ is how majoritarian they are, rather than proportional.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

- a) This gains 3 marks. It makes generic comments rather than being driven to describe the function of elections.
- b) Here we see FPTP and AMS very clearly described. The last paragraph contains errors but it was credited with one mark for the overview. It is an example where some credit can still be achieved if the operational material is correct despite the label being incorrect.
- c) This is a level 2 response for all AO's. It is not developed enough to advance further.

Paper Summary

There were five major areas commented upon by Assistant Examiners and these have been developed in reference to each question and sub-section in the body of the report. This gives an overview of common themes.

- Part (a) questions are all based on AO1 which is knowledge and understanding. Often it was not incorrect material, which restricted the mark but skeletal detail and depth. For example simple identification or simply naming of two other means of political participation or just naming two functions of elections is not enough to maximise marks. Material has to have some minimal depth to show understanding and detail – this was often a barrier. Likewise candidates are not expected to analyse or evaluate that knowledge just make sure that clear points are made. This was often a key discriminator and marks stuck at 2 or 3 out of 5 when only a little more effort would deliver full marks.
- Two of the (c) part questions had commands which included the request 'To what extent ...' and this proved no barrier to progress. By contrast two questions had the opening command to 'Assess' and were focused on one aspect of an issue (in question 1 the strengths of representative democracy in question 4 the advantages of various electoral systems) here many candidates simply treated this as requiring a balanced argument covering both sides – hence we had lengthy deviations into the weaknesses of representative democracy and the disadvantages of various electoral systems. It is correct that this would collect marks but it is not a direct focus on the remit of the question. By all means evaluate and criticise but restrict the focus to what are the demands of the question. In short evaluate and weigh up the strengths and weaknesses respectively.
- Current knowledge and accurate data does make a difference. This is point often made in the past but still crucial and pertinent. Things such as number of seats won in recent elections compared to the percentage of votes obtained. Specific outcomes of regional elections and turnouts – all add insight and value to the response.
- Pressure group questions still cause problems when we discuss pluralism and here this series pluralist democracy. Many candidates still have a very tangential understanding of power and its distribution and the point made in previous examiners reports have to be repeated once again. These key terms on this section need to be linked to pressure groups and show a working appreciation of their application.
- With regard to electoral and voting systems the problem of mislabelling is receding, but there are a number of areas to improve upon in terms of coming more fully to terms with the operative mechanics of the systems.

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