

Examiners' Report
June 2013

GCE Government and Politics 6GP01 01

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.



Giving you insight to inform next steps

ResultsPlus is Pearson's free online service giving instant and detailed analysis of your students' exam results.

- See students' scores for every exam question.
- Understand how your students' performance compares with class and national averages.
- Identify potential topics, skills and types of question where students may need to develop their learning further.

For more information on ResultsPlus, or to log in, visit www.edexcel.com/resultsplus. Your exams officer will be able to set up your ResultsPlus account in minutes via Edexcel Online.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk.

June 2013

Publications Code US036077

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Pearson Education Ltd 2013

Introduction

The collated view of the Assistant Examiners on the summer 2013 examination for 6GPO1 was that it was overall a fair paper with ample scope and choice for candidates. It was a platform for those who had revised and prepared, to do well and reach the higher level thresholds set on the paper. Indeed it was good to see many prepared candidates who had a breadth of political knowledge and rounded understanding apply this and critically analyse the questions set. Timing presented no significant problems for the vast majority who sat the paper. Common fault lines centred on a general underperformance overall for the extended c question on pressure groups, a full and detailed knowledge of party systems and for precise and accurate definitions of the key terms as defined on the specification. These will be noted by reference to each question and sub-section.

Question 1

1a) Generally a pleasing response, probably the best of all the Part A answers. Almost all candidates understood the concept of direct democracy and could provide a basic definition. It was a minority who were able to discuss the continuous and perpetual nature of direct democracy and secure maximum marks. The most common examples being cited to illustrate the concept was reference to Athenian democracy or referendums. A significant number of responses either developed a range of examples when only one was required and could be credited, some also relied exclusively on supplying examples with no corresponding definition of direct democracy.

1b) This was again a generally very well answered question with candidates being well prepared and well informed. The most common criticisms cited were the low participation levels, the narrow social/racial/gender mix of the representatives, party influence and the marginalisation of minorities but others ranged into discussions of Burkean representation and lack of trust. A high number of candidates accessed L3 marks here. The biggest weaknesses here were the numbers who based two or even three criticisms around the electoral system and the number who knew 3 weaknesses but who developed them very briefly and tended to score 3/4 and 1. There is a general issue on Part B responses as to the depth required to obtain good marks. Some candidates write endlessly and leave less time for Part C whilst others treat it almost as a Part A and fail to reap the rewards available.

1c) This was by far the most popular of the Part C questions and it was generally done very well. It is a standard question which should reward any well prepared candidate and very many scored well into L3 particularly for AO1. The most common measures were referendums, compulsory voting, and votes at 16 and e-democracy in all its many forms. Significant numbers could be well rewarded for codified constitution, House of Lords reform and further Devolution. There were a couple of issues that centres need to be aware of. Candidates must read the question. It asks for assessment and a good number knew the measures and gave their advantages but did not examine criticisms this meant underperformance for lack of balance/assessment. Further weaknesses included historical examinations of what has been done in the past and who did not update particularly with regard to House of Lords, Devolution and e-petitions. The question demands speculative insight not a reflective view of past improvements. A good number also included pressure groups and although it could be made relevant it is difficult to argue as to what could be done to make them more democratic.

This question scores well in parts a & b but then loses impetus and remains in level 2 for the c section.

(a) Direct Democracy is a system of political process in society which directly involves the citizens of that society. This means that instead of electing someone to make political decisions for you, the citizens themselves have a say in every matter that could be addressed by that society, such as whether or not to leave the E.U. Direct Democracy is based around direct input and participation, immediate participation and continuous input by the people and therefore it can be said to be the most democratic system as it gives all the power to the people. An example of direct democracy can be seen with the use of referendums, where the people

are given a decision to make on a particular topic, and they have a direct and unmediated input on which side to take.

- (b) one criticism of representative democracy is that it can lead to the problem of misinterpretation of the public's desires. Professional politicians are elected in order to best represent the wishes and desires of the people at large, who do not directly impact political proceedings, and therefore a lot of faith and power is placed in the hands of the elected officials. However, there can and has been instances where the best wishes or desires of the public have not been taken into account by the government and this encroaches on their right to democratic and representation on political matters. An example can be seen with Tony Blair's decision to enter into the war against Iraq, despite public outcry against it.

Another criticism is that politicians can and do have the power to mis-use their position. As can be seen from the scandal of the spending of taxes by MPs, politicians are elected into a position of power where it is remarkably easy for them to abuse this power. This not only goes against the principle of democracy itself, but it also restricts the public from being given the amount of political representation that they should be entitled to according to the British political system. This is a difficult problem to overcome as the accountability of the government with a first past the post system cannot be guaranteed, and the public are inevitably alienated with five year terms between general elections.

- ((b) continued) one other criticism of representative democracy is that due to the structure and nature of this system, the people are distanced from the politicians and this makes it hard for people to be able to voice their own particular issues or concerns as the elected politicians are busy with the

running of an entire country, which means that it may not necessarily be their fault for not addressing a problem, but it still means that the problem will go unaddressed. There is also then the fact that some of these issues may and will not be high on the priorities of the politicians and therefore will not be addressed.

- (c) There have been a number of measures that have been suggested to try and improve democracy in the UK, some of them are more specific than others, and some are indeed more likely to be achieved than others.

One example of a measure that could improve democracy in the UK is with the suggestion to lower the voting age. The current age of eighteen can be said to greatly misrepresent the views and opinions of an age bracket whose issues are not being addressed by parliament. However, by lowering the voting age from eighteen to sixteen, there could be a great increase in democracy in the UK. The first reason is that it would give people from that group a chance to actually have their concerns heard and considered in a legitimate political forum. Another is that these people are not like traditional people of this age, due to technology, media and education, sixteen and seventeen year-olds can now be said to have a clear and balanced understanding of political matters and therefore it can be said that their input would indeed improve the levels of democracy in the UK as they do possess the ability to contribute constructively. This point is indeed backed up by the issue of sixteen year olds paying taxes, attending, having children and going to fight for their country, therefore the right to vote seems intrinsic to their rights and democracy itself. However, there is indeed the point to be made that this is not true of all sixteen and seventeen year-olds, and indeed it would seem prudent to make the point that a lot of these people do not care at all as to whether they vote, which could lead to a decrease in the levels

((c) continued) of participation, and by extension democracy itself. Also, education is not of a high standard or a given assumption in all sectors of the country, especially not in political matters. Therefore, democracy could be undermined through the fact that those voting would not understand or fully comprehend the implications of their votes, and could negatively impact the votes of others who can be said to know the political system well and should be allowed to have a legitimate voting choice.

Another point is that compulsory voting has been suggested to improve democracy. This can be said to improve democracy through the increase in participating all members of that society, which would help as the participation in 2002 was at 59%. This could therefore allow a more accurate and reflective view of the political desires of the community to be voiced and therefore result in a more legitimate and effective government. However, it must be said that the nature of democracy is such that it would in fact work to undermine democracy if it was compulsory to vote as the nature of democracy is to be able to change whether or not you wish to vote. Therefore, we must make the point that this would end up reducing democracy to the will of increasingly popular disenfranchisement through being forced to do something.

Therefore, I conclude that there are a number of points to make around arguably implementing such new suggestions, but it depends upon convincing the public, and it must be said that these 'improvements' do seem to either be in fact ineffective or actually undermining democracy and therefore should not be implemented.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- The definition and example are clear and unambiguous and this merits full marks.
- The question enters Level 3 for AO1 - not at maximising as there is a slight overlap in the first and last points raised.
- This only makes two points but it does exploit them very well. It is thus limited to Level 2 and is a mid-range Level 2 for the remaining AOs.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Timing and pace is important. The content for part c is not much less than part b: this can lead to underperformance - there are more marks to gain from the c section than the b section: hence spending time on where you extract marks is vital.

(a) Direct democracy is a form of democracy where the individual ~~votes~~ has input directly into decision making processes, e.g., a referendum. They may wish to elect representatives who are told exactly how to vote and any political decisions made are representative of the views/opinion of the masses.

(b) One criticism of representative democracy is that the nature of the system leads to power being too highly concentrated in one location (Commons)*
Another criticism of representative democracy is that the elected representatives are not a well balanced / realistic reflection of the demographics of the electorate. Many / most MP's are white, middle class, middle aged men who have been privately educated. Women and ethnic minorities are not sufficiently represented.

A final criticism of representative democracy is that many elected MP's have no wife

skills or awareness of "reality" as they lead their whole career in politics, they do not have any other experience in any other job roles. This, in combination with the unbalanced demographic

((b) continued) reflection suggests that those who are elected to represent the electorate cannot fully do so as they cannot understand or relate to the general public.

* This means that power is not spread throughout various channels and could potentially lead to the electorate's views being completely dismissed and total power remaining within parliament

(c) ASSESS THE VARIOUS MEASURES, OTHER THAN ELECTORAL REFORM, THAT HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED TO IMPROVE DEMOCRACY IN THE UK (25)

INTRO: various measures suggested democratic deficit.

P1: compulsory voting / alternative voting
↳ Australia

P2: lower voting age
↳ larger electorate - still low turnout?

P3: Referendums

↳ direct ↳ 1997 Welsh assembly
SD: 1%

P4: more towards liberal
democracy

P5: more emph ↳ human rights

Parl Election Broad. culture - ELHR

PM & BBC3

↳ THE PEOPLE.

CONC: more could be done

((c) continued) It has been suggested that more could be done to make the UK more democratic. To a certain extent, the UK is democratic through things like local / national elections, pressure groups and their actions and attempting to get the electorate more involved politically. However, it could be argued that more should be done to improve the democratic state of the UK. *The 2006 POWER inquiry did find that there is a democratic deficit of sorts.

One idea suggested is the use of alternative voting methods. The potential introduction of e-democracy is one way the democracy within the UK could be improved. For example, an online vote / application or an SMS answer would make

political participation more accessible for all and therefore improve democracy. Another suggestion

((c) continued) idea to improve democracy is ~~to~~ to either lower the voting age or to make voting compulsory. Lowering the voting age to 16 seems like a logical step to improving democracy as it ~~thru~~ ~~the~~ ~~abx~~ widens the electorate and gives the people more power and a greater majority and therefore improving democracy. Those who are aged 16 ~~are~~ have many adult rights and are viewed as mature enough to marry, live alone and start a family so why not vote?***

By making voting compulsory, ~~is~~ similar to Australia, it would mean that everybody has their views/opinions heard and also creates a more legitimate government. It would also mean that competing parties would not be able to specifically target a group

((c) continued) of people to earn their vote (grey vote / pink vote etc) ~~and~~ which would be more democratic as it emphasises the importance of the entire electorate, not just strong minorities.

Another possible idea to further ~~can~~ improve democracy in the UK is the recent extensive use of referendums. It may be argued that the use of referendums is the most democratic form of political participation as it is the closest ~~that~~ reflection of the origins of democracy in ancient Greece. Of recent years referendums usage has increased, especially between 1995 - 1997 where there were more than ever before. This is one way to improve democracy as it allows the individuals in the UK to have a direct vote (yes/no) on an political

((c) continued) issue that will affect them.

For example, the 1997 referendum on a Welsh assembly led to a ~~devolved~~ devolution of power to Wales. The devolution of

power is especially improving the democracy in the UK as it concentrates power more directly to the electorate. Finally, more emphasis has been placed upon creating awareness of politics which leads to more democracy. The things such as the televising of Prime Minister's Question Time, political Party Broadcasts and political debate programmes on BBC3 lead to more awareness, more discussion and therefore more democracy.

Overall, there have been steps taken towards a more democratic UK, and electoral reform (separation of powers, Lords reform act) played a great part, but more could still ⁽²⁵⁾ be done to improve democracy in the UK further.

(Total for Question = 40 marks)



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- a) This section is not well written or composed and only gains credit for individual input and for the example of referendums.
- b) This takes a legitimate but different route in its criticisms of representative democracy. Nevertheless it does raise three points and the AO2 achieves a maximum given the precise and correct manner it delivers this.
- c) Level 3 for AO1 and AO3 but the level of assessment - is within Level 2 in the response for AO2.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

This candidate has planned part c - a bit on the lengthy side but it is effective in garnering thoughts before the execution of the response.

(a) Direct democracy is a form of democracy wherein the people are the government, it was used in Ancient Greece (c. 500-322 BCE) but at that point slaves women + 'immigrants' were excluded. It is + thus is unmediated, it relied on popular participation in mass meetings approximately 40 times per year and was continuous. "One form of direct democracy now used to supplement the UK's representative democracy are referendums, in these the electorate public are posed a question (such as with the 2011 AV referendum) usually regarding constitutional reform and are required to answer Yes/No to endorse or and/or decide policy, this is ad hoc and are Ad Hoc.

(b) One criticism of representative democracy is that the doctrine of the mandate used in elections allows the possibility of self serving representatives. This is particularly applicable given that (firstly, no party or party leader can be obliged to carry out its manifesto after winning office) the majority of the UK's MP's are socially unrepresentative (mostly privately educated, middle-class, middle-age, university attending men). In brief, there are insufficient controls to ensure a gov. 'For the people, with the people, by the people.' - Lincoln

Another criticism of representative democracy is that it is not continuous^{and is mediated}, elections are held every 5 years (fixed term parliaments) and particularly with voter instability + de partisan dealignment, the UK's system of government is

prone to constant turmoil + volatility as governments change hands + 'rascals are kicked out' meaning any progress made in half a century can be equally reversed by the opposition, due to the Supreme power of Parliament (No Parliament can bind its ~~predecessors~~ ^{successors} or be bound by its predecessors).

* For example - Individual & Collective Ministerial Responsibility are not binding merely conventions, increasingly disregarded.

You should start the answer to part (c) on page 8

((b) continued) A third criticism of representative democracy is of the institutions which uphold it. Firstly Parliament, with its sovereignty and lack of codified constitution possesses the legal right to withdraw ^{or impose on} our rights and civil liberties (i.e., this allows for misrepresentation). Secondly MP's of constituents are bound by a variety of factors including party unity + discipline (on matters of supreme importance, parties register a 3-line whip requiring absolute commitment for Ministers + MP's) they are therefore torn between the representing constituents based on their Supreme knowledge (Burkean Representation), ~~it's~~ going with their party (Doctrine of the Mandate) or reacting to constituents demands. Of course, MP's are thus further (usually) inclined to support their party at risk of loss of position as the PM can promote/demote loyal MP's.

((c) continued) The Expenses Scandal, 'Cash for Honours', 'Cash for Questions' and 'Cash for influence'

Scandals under Major, Blair and Brown ~~have~~ amongst other claims of a ^{crisis} ~~participation~~ have dragged the ~~democracy~~ the UK's 'democracy' into question and probed many suggestions on how it may be improved.

One suggestion is the notion of compulsory Voting wherein every individual (18+) ~~is~~ would be legally required to vote (or tick a 'none of the above' option) as in liberal democracies such as Australia (due to falling turnout - 1922). This would strengthen democracy because true democracy requires not only that all can vote, but that all do, particularly given that the poor + disadvantaged are strategically less inclined to cast votes and are simultaneously the most in need of help representation. However this notion is prone to criticism on equal fronts given that ^(undemocratic) compulsion even in the name of democracy, remains compulsion and peoples right to vote is arguably equally as their right not to ^{this} ~~they~~ may be their way of expressing their dissatisfaction with the choice of representatives available or the ^{(c) continued} political system in general and that requiring all vote by law would simply make for a cosmetic democracy, congealing the causes of low political participation but failing to address the root of the problem.

((c) continued) being amongst others at elections or referendums to a series of push-button decisions resembling those of voting in the X-Factor or Big Brother. The main advantage is though is that it would most certainly enable easier ^{convenient} participation and so reducing the cost of referendums + the alike allowing them to be hosted more frequently + would almost + certainly (as has been seen with online petitions) increase + promote political participation and education (FOI Act 2000). However many claim this as an impossibility in the name of due to the fact, it is hard to square with democracy in that access to technology is not universal + would create a gap between the 'information rich' + 'technically poor'.

The Liberal Democrats however have long promoted Constitutional Reform as a means to improve democracy within the UK. Suggestions like those for example of an 80% elected House Of Lords (and indeed Blair increased democracy in his reign by ~~of~~ removing Hereditary Peers) however many have also claimed this would create confusion as to which house ~~is~~ dominates and would create political tensions

((c) continued) across parties and possibly practices within parties due to the rivalry it would provoke as the HoL would see themselves further representative (particularly if PR was used in their election).

In conclusion, other proposals such as the lowering of the voting age may prove more applicable however aspects of e-democracy may do well to be further considered ~~such~~ as and ways to prevent electoral malpractice investigated. As the UK's democracy is in need of urgent surgery with less than 1% of people belonging to a political party constitutional reform may be the best resolve, for example Lip Denis propositions for an entrenched bill of rights of furthermore the adoption (as the UK is one of the 3 liberal democracies lacking) of an entirely codified Constitution.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

- a) This fails to attain full marks as we cannot over-reward the use of more than one example. We can credit however both examples where political concepts are clarified as this does.
- b) This attains full marks. It covers more than the required three criticisms (and this is not a requirement to do so) - however the clarity and scope of the answer is excellent drawing as it does on a wide political background.
- c) Again full marks - we have to consider what is achievable in the time allocation and this is a composed and mature reflection on the topic - true there is more out there but this is a good performance and merits the mark.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

This response should serve to illustrate how obtaining full marks is not either a herculean or impossible task.

Question 2

All assistant examiners note the underperformance on this question in the (a) and (b) sections. Pressure groups remain a popular choice and once again popularity has not been matched by performance – it was invariably the case that if this was one of the two chosen questions it was the weaker of the answers.

2(a) The fact that a maximum mark here was a rarity provides a testament of the struggle candidates found themselves in. It was not uncommon to see this left blank – evidence that the concept and knowledge of power distribution amongst pressure groups is not understood. Many gave a depiction of elitism but could in no sense relate this to pressure groups – the connectivity, the core command of the question, was ignored. Many felt that it was a question surrounding insider or outsider status of pressure groups and could only pick up marks if linkage was made: invariably this was weak. Hence a repeat of an often made recommendation – examine the nature of the specification on pressure groups, the spread of power and the concepts of pluralism, elitism and pluralist democracy are core to the area and if this is not mastered high marks will consistently be off limits for many candidates.

2(b) This was probably the part (b) response that was done best of all on the paper. For a well prepared candidate this should and indeed largely did not pose any significant problems. The vast majority knew three ways pressure groups exerted influence and most of them could illustrate with relevant and up to date examples. A pleasing number discussed insider groups and lobbying, most included a variety of forms of direct action. Stronger candidates examined how the methods used reflected their insider/outsider status and a few mentioned the courts. The only issues here were the candidates who technically did not look at ways groups exert influence but at such issues as wealth/numbers without relating it directly to the question and who did therefore gain less reward. A minority did repeat the same point or method of influence – this often being three models of direct action; this obviously limited the reward obtained.

2c) The message which comes through from almost every Assistant Examiner was the 'disaster' which befell many candidates on this (c) section. Perhaps there are a variety of reasons why this occurs – the most common criticism being that blatantly the simple commands as set out on the paper were ignored and candidates wished to speak in generic terms about pressure groups without the steer of the question! This should not have been a difficult question, it was a good question which could differentiate effectively and the mark scheme clearly outlines the material required. However the question was done poorly. Some candidates knew what was required, read the question and scored high marks. Generally however candidates, even otherwise good candidates, tended to largely miss the focus of the question and scored low/mid Level 2 whilst weaker ones could often be in Level 1/ threshold Level 2 whereas such candidates were scoring top L2, entry L3 in Q4c. Very many candidates basically looked at the factors involved in pressure group success or lack of it and gave generic responses including finance, insider/outsider, support of government etc. The typical answer included the generic factors but also looked at growth in numbers of pressure groups countered by chequebook membership which of course were relevant to the question but with little more and which therefore tended to end up in mid Level 2.

The weakness did surprise almost all assistant examiners. The answer to the question as outlined in the mark scheme including growth in access points, membership, internet/ media, growth in promotional groups on the one side as opposed to economic downturn, end of corporatism, chequebook membership should have been well known.

Many of the criticisms levied about performance in the report are borne out here in this response.

(a) elitism is the suggestion that businessmen, the media and politics itself run things and

the population don't. It is linked with pressure groups because some pressure groups are run by the elite for example CBI and don't let minority pressure groups have their say.

(b) One way a pressure group exerts influence is by protests or demonstrations. For example the student unions in 2010 protested in London because of the rise in tuition fees. They did this to ^{try to} influence the government to reduce them.

Another way a pressure group exerts influence is through e-petitions. Pressure groups do this online on the government website and if the petition reaches a certain amount of signatures it sparks a debate in the HoC.

Another way a PG exerts influence is through celebrity involvement for example Jamie Oliver or Elton John. ~~By~~ Getting the celebrities allows these pressure groups to get media attention and therefore more support.

(c) To what extent is pressure group power in decline?

A The power of a pressure group is often influenced by the size of the pressure group, the finance of the pressure group and the media support of

a pressure group. The power of a pressure group is in decline because ~~the~~ at the end of the day the government still ~~has~~ is the ultimate decision maker, ~~at~~ the most a pressure group can do is try to influence the government and also there are far more pressure groups that fold rather than become successful. Some people may say that pressure groups power isn't in decline because pressure groups have a wide support and they also give minorities a voice which would normally be ignored.

The power of a pressure group ~~is~~ in decline because the government is the ultimate decision maker and the pressure can not make any decisions ~~about~~ that will be legally binding whatsoever. There are many examples of pressure groups who have protested and demonstrated alot but have never had any success. An example of this is in 2003 when

((c) continued) a pressure group went on a march to protest the war in Iraq, however this had very little effect as the government decided to stay fighting in Iraq ~~which~~ ~~was~~ proving that they are the ultimate decision maker. This shows that pressure groups power is in decline because no matter how they try to get the government to change their mind, a bit of legislation or make new legislation the government can just decide to say no, proving that the pressure group has no real power.

An argument ~~for the pressure~~ that suggests that ~~the~~ pressure groups power isn't in decline is that pressure groups have a wide set of support that the government cannot afford to ignore. The government cannot afford to ignore these pressure groups that have large support because in some cases the pressure groups have more support than the ~~political~~ ^{governing} party. This shows that ~~the~~ people believe that the pressure groups issue is more important to the people than the political party. An example of a pressure group who has more support than the conservatives is CBI. CBI have 200,000 members whereas conservatives have

((c) continued) 130,000. This should make the pressure group quite powerful because it should be easier to get the government to listen to what they have to say. Another example of a pressure group with large support is RSPB, who have 1,000,000 members. This is more than Labour and the Conservatives combined. Because of this RSPB have been able to get 200 nature resorts that are home to 80% of the country's rarest birds and they have managed to get a UK headquarters. This suggests that pressure groups power isn't in decline because they have more members ~~that~~ than the top two political parties which pretty much forces those parties to listen to the pressure groups issues.

Another argument that suggests pressure groups power is in decline is that the most a pressure group can do is influence the government. This doesn't make them powerful because the government doesn't have to take any notice of them. An example of where a pressure group have tried to influence the government is recently

((c) continued) the student unions have ~~protest~~ marched through London to protest the rise in tuition fees. This had no influence on the government and therefore this pressure group have proved that they are unsuccessful and that they don't have much power.

~~Another~~ One last argument that suggests that pressure groups power is in decline is that ~~through~~ the influence of the internet has led to pressure groups being able to act quickly and receive greater support. It also allows them to increase public participation and educate the public that otherwise may be ignored. An example could be ~~RSPCA~~ Amnesty International who have over 3 million members worldwide and on their homepage on the internet you can become a member, find out what issues they try to solve and you can also donate. This quickly increases the membership size of the pressure group, the finance of the pressure group and at the same time educates the

people on political issues and increases public participation. This proves that pressure groups power isn't in decline because they make more people be able to put pressure on the government to make decisions on these pressure groups issues.

To conclude I would suggest that pressure group's power isn't in decline because with the influence of the internet and the media, pressure groups are able to a very wide support which in some cases is much larger than the support of political parties which forces those political parties to listen to the issues. ~~Over~~ These political parties will most likely listen to what the pressure groups say so that they can influence members of the pressure group to vote for them in the next election.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- a) This is a skeletal response and only earns 2 marks; there is a lack of precision.
- b) This response does cover three ways - all of which are correct - however there is limited development of this to advance within level 3.
- c) The core issue with this response is that first it tends to repeat points - but secondly and more importantly it fails to fully address the content of the question - and this causes damage for AO1.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Invariably there is a tendency to repeat in an examination a question completed in class or for homework - and this is not the question facing the candidate in the exam! Read and re-read the question and tailor the response to it - not the question you desire but the one which is there!

This response does show an improvement on the previous one but still has scope to develop in the (c) section.

(a) Elitism is the counterargument to pluralism, and the theory is that power is held and contained in the hands of an elite few powers. The most powerful pressure groups are usually the wealthiest and most privileged, meaning they are easily able to exert influence on government. This applies~~s~~ most to insider groups.

Insider groups enjoy regular consultations with govt. ministers and other professional bodies inside the corridors of power, ultimately affecting the policy making process. It can be argued that this is a form of elitism by a pressure group, as government has listened to the minority view,

((a) continued) possibly over the view of the wider public majority.

It is arguable that the fact the gaming industry received a tax break is elitism, as they were able to use (the theory of globalisation to relocate production and investment) methods as a form

of leverage over the government.
Maybe this is also a form of
tyranny of the majority

(b) ~~Direct action~~, parliamentary parties
Public opinion, ministers + civil servants.

Pressure groups seek to influence
government over particular matters
of importance to them. They use
different methods of exerting
influence.

Direct action is a method most
commonly used by outsider groups,
however insiders may also use it.

Direct action can take the form
of protests, stunts, campaigns and petitions,
in order to indirectly exert pressure
on the government. Civil disobedience
is also a form of direct action, which
is described as breaking the law
which is justified due to higher law,
such as moral, ethical, political or religious
reasons. Direct action seeks to
catch the eye of the mass media
and wider public eye. An example
of direct action is The occupy
movement, which sat in the door
(b) continued) of Topshop, due to tax reasons.

Another way PG's may exert influence is through Ministers and Civil servants. This method is regarded as being only available to insider groups, as only insider groups enjoy access to the corridors of power. Ministers and Civil servants work at the heart of the core executive, and are involved in the policy making process, so if a group can exert influence onto a sympathetic body, they may have a chance of affecting government policy. An example of this is the National Farmers Union (NFU), who regularly consult with the Department of Rural Affairs.

A third way PG's use to exert influence is ~~the~~ public opinion. The wider public and mass media can provide indirect pressure on government. This method is also used most widely by outsider groups. This is also one of the most effective methods, as political parties will not go against the majority usually, as they may not get elected back in.

(c) To what extent is PG power in decline

* Plan *

Thatcher - TUs.

- end of corporatism -
- decline of meaningful & active participation
- RSPB - national Trust
- apathy

end of plan

Many people argue that since the rise of cause groups, such as Greenpeace, Pressure Group power has rose. However there is also an argument against this, and I will evaluate the extent to which pressure group power has declined in the UK.

~~It~~ Possibly the most important argument for pressure group power in decline is the end of corporatism. Corporatism is the idea that PG's will regularly consult

((c) continued) with government over matters of their concerns, due to their economic position within society. Corporatism was most prominent throughout the 1960's, and came to an end

in the 1980's when Margaret Thatcher took political office. She put an end to what was referred to as 'Beer and Sandwiches at number 10' and was particularly suspicious of the trade unions, ~~so~~ so placed regulations on them.

Another argument that pressure group power has decreased is that there is a decline in active and meaningful participation. The membership in ~~party~~ groups may be high, however people often subscribe to 'chequebook groups' which only require donations and funding to operate. Protests, Campaigns and other forms of direct action have decreased, which may be due to Blair's constitutional reforms,

((c) continued) which have been referred to as having 'seriously curbed our civil liberties' This is contrasted with the rise of the cause groups such as Greenpeace, which seek to promote causes. It has been suggested that the decline of participation may be down to apathy of the nation, or maybe simply the electorate has not been mobilized and educated

enough.

I would argue that overall, PG power has not decreased but increased, as group membership is higher than ever, with the National Trust having over 3 million members.

Also globalization plays an important role in PG power, as it gives them leverage. It would be interesting to see whether more groups will become more or less powerful in years to come.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

- a) This is a detailed and comprehensive response and merits full marks. A clear set of linkages are established.
- b) The response here enters L3 in that three reasons are advanced but the answer has fallen on the third reason which is less well developed.
- c) This does try to tackle the question 'head - on' and earns AO1 marks in the process although the AO2 and AO3 do not attain that level.

Question 3

This is a good response, it is up to date and well informed. A top grade response

(a) Factionalism applies to political parties because it is the term used to signify when there are separate branches to the party. Factions can be large or small and may be in line with the party's traditional ideology. For example the Common Sense Group in the Conservative Party, with members such as Owen Paterson. Contrastingly, factions can be generally against the policies and ideas of the party's leader - this applies to some extent to the 'Conservative Way Forward' which wants to return to Thatcherite policies or the relatively young 'Blue Labour', the right-leaning wing of the Labour party.

(b) One function of a political party is to represent the people. They are bodies of like-minded individuals who stand for public office in order to represent constituents at Westminster or in other assemblies. Through this function, parties enable themselves to develop a strong link with the people, as it is their role to protect their interests and express them on their behalf whilst in the legislature. This applies to most major parties, including smaller ones such as the Green Party or UKIP, both of which have gained constituents at a national and local level.

This function is similar to the role they

have in providing personnel for the government. Parties engage at a local level, for example the Grassroots Tories, who aid in the political system by providing candidates for election. It is the job of the parties to ensure the candidate will be suitable if elected and fundamentally if they will follow the party's line.

A final role of a political party is to educate the populace. This is quite different from the other reasons because it is not necessarily part of the political process and the aim of

(b) continued) gaining election. Parties engage the public through educating them about the political system - therefore increasing their political awareness. An example is the Green Party, which focuses on teaching people about the environment. This is an important function because without an ability to increase political participation, the other roles of the party would be redundant as so few people would be interested in voting at all.

(c) Margaret Thatcher led the Conservative Party from her succession to Edward Heath in 1975 until her end as Prime Minister in 1990. Throughout this period she rebranded the party, moving it in line with the emerging New Right Movement. Thatcherism continued well into the 1990s, but it could be argued that the current party has moved itself away from the policies of the late Iron Lady. Firstly, it could be said that the Conservatives

have abandoned Thatcherism through the return of One-Nation Toryism. On his leadership election, David Cameron proclaimed himself a One-Nation Tory, and has employed many policies as PM which relate to the Big Society, for example free schools and the 2012 Police Commissioner elections. These policies are extremely different from Thatcherism because Mrs Thatcher herself said there was 'no such thing as society'. This shows that the conservatives have abandoned Thatcherism because they have made use of an idea originating from the Disraeli years, and one which Thatcher vehemently scratched out from the party's manifesto.

((c) continued) However, this argument has a weakness is that it was necessary for Cameron to return to One-Nationism because of the rising level of consensus politics since Blair's 1997 election. This means that they abandoned Thatcherism to a small extent because it was only necessary to change the party in response to labour.

Another main argument that would suggest the conservatives have not moved away from Thatcherism is seen in Cameron's return to an authoritarian approach to crime. Although he had been criticised for his 'bug a hoodie' approach, the events of the 2011 London Riots sparked a change in law and order policies, mirroring those taken by Thatcher. This means that the party has not abandoned

Thatcherism because he ~~egregious~~ lives on the tougher attitudes towards youths offenders.

However, this argument can be seen as not very strong because Cameron's policies have been fundamentally lenient on crime. His 'Big-~~Up~~-a-~~ladie~~' approach as well as the selection of veteran Tony ~~Wat~~ Kenneth Clarke as former Justice Secretary shows that although there has been developments, Cameron's conservatism will always ~~be~~ contrasting to Thatcher's.

((c) continued) In contrast, one may argue that Conservatives have completely abandoned Thatcherism because of the increased level of focus on avoiding lower levels of taxation. Whereas Thatcher was confident in her ^{neoliberal} approach to reducing taxes - especially for higher earners, the Conservatives have ~~slowly~~ changed this policy to say that taxation levels should not threaten the successful reduction of government debt. Cameron had ~~been~~ concentrating on reducing the deficit that he failed to draw parallels with Thatcher's complete trust on a fully free market.

However, this reason is weakened because it was necessary for Cameron to change his economic policy due to the immense pressure from the recession that he inherited from Brown's government. This means that they have not truly abandoned Thatcherism as it may only be a temporary change as a response to an economic crisis. This is therefore quite similar to other reasons for

Why Thatcherism has not disappeared; because the party was required to make changes in response to the altering political environment.

A final reason for why the Conservative

((c) continued) Party ~~to~~ may ^{not} have completely abandoned Thatcherism is that there is still an element of Euro-skepticism. Thatcher was a greatly very nationalistic and became apprehensive towards the EU towards the end of her premiership. This is the case with most current Conservatives who are generally against Britain's position within Europe, especially for people such as Cameron himself and, to an extent, William Hague. This is an important reason because it shows Thatcherism continues through foreign policy, although there is a weakness in that there ~~are~~ are some EU-friendly Tories such as the aforementioned Ken Clarke.

In conclusion, the Conservative Party has abandoned Thatcherism to a large extent because even though it may not have been fully desirable, the conditions of the political system forced them to become less dogmatic and more central.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- a) A concise and comprehensive answer and merits full marks.
- b) This consistency continues into the next question - three functions supported by accurate examples which enhance the knowledge and understanding.
- c) Not full marks here and there are minor inconsistencies but this merits a level 3 reward.

From one end of the spectrum to the other, here is a response which fails to address accurately the question.

(a) Factionalism restricts parties as to what powers they have. It distinguishes the powers of the party to the party leader. It also restricts them as to what ideologies can be put in place and which ones can't. Therefore making them ~~not~~ not as powerful as it draws back their powers by holding people to account.

Political parties have three main functions. Firstly they want to appeal the electorate when approaching a new election. They may do this by having a convention in which voters can go to, to listen to their ideologies. For example, David Cameron held a convention in his constituency ~~in~~ in ²⁰⁰⁹ ~~2009~~ before the vote. Furthermore, once a political party is in power, they wish to make amendments to the current government in changing laws through debate. For example, David Cameron

((b) continued) and Nick Clegg - the coalition government - held that a referendum would take place once they were in power concerning ~~Europe~~ Europe. Instead in prime minister's questions on Wednesday, Nick Clegg said "we will have a referendum once the rules have changed." ^{backbench} MP's of

the Conservative and Liberal Democrat party were not happy by this. This shows that parties in power want to make amendments to impress and support their voters. To continue, political parties also want to change the rule of law. For example, since the Human Rights Act 1998, the European Court of Human Rights was put in place in 1998, there have always been debates over them taking others - terrorists - rights over the innocent people in this country. For example, the 9 Afghan asylum seekers that hijacked a plane were allowed to stay in this country once they served their sentence, as in line with the Human Rights Act 1998, they would suffer torture, which breaks the rule of a

(b) continued) right to life. This rights Tony Blair said 'it was an abuse of common sense.' Therefore, this highlights parties wish to amend law.

(c) The Conservative party on one hand has abandoned Thatcherism due to their coalition partners the Liberal Democrats, therefore they would have to amend their ideologies to an extent. Furthermore, one of Conservatives ideologies was to create a more 'closer' community' which ~~was~~ had been expressed as the phrase used Conservative due to them

Working together it is seen as a Labour point of view. In addition to that, the Conservatives have created over 14,000 apprenticeships in the last few years which again could be seen as a red conservative, which avoids the path of Thatcherism. The Conservatives have also not opted out of Europe which was a major issue when Thatcher was in power as she was very anti-Europe. Now Conservatives are instead making changes to the law and the ~~budget~~ contribution to the budget. However, some members of the Conservative party do not agree with staying in Europe. One Tory MP stated on Prime Minister's questions on Wednesday, that she will run as a

((c) continued) Separate party group, still Conservative but anti-Europe Conservative. This highlights that Thatcherism still exists within the Conservative party.

On the other hand, ~~the~~ the Conservatives still have a lot of ~~Thatcherism~~ Thatcherism in their views. For example the NHS. Thatcher wanted to privatise the NHS and in some areas did happen. Now David Cameron in 2012 wanted to do the same, however, the Liberal Democrats opted against it as their constituents were not happy about it and did not agree.

Furthermore Cameron had introduced the ~~the~~ Bedroom Tax, which meant that anyone who is living in a Council owned house and has underoccupancy, they will have to pay from £14 - £20 a month for that room. This can be seen as Thatcherism as she brought in the ~~poll tax~~ poll tax. ~~and~~ Furthermore, Thatcher also allowed people who lived in Council owned houses to buy them if they wanted. This stopped money going to Councils and going to the government

((c) continued) instead. Cameron had also done something similar by introducing this bedroom tax. The issue of Europe had existed since ~~we~~ ~~we~~ we first joined it. However, Thatcher wanted us to be separate. David Cameron also had the same views as in his mandate he said he wanted to come away from Europe. The Liberal Democrats also had a similar idea but when the vote in the House of Commons took place in 2012, the lib dems ~~voted~~ ^{rebelled} against their coalition partners and voted with Labour instead.

Overall the Conservatives to an extent still ~~are~~ hold Thatcherism in their party however, this can be restricted due to their coalition party and to do with the way the electorate is changing.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- a) There is nothing here to credit - the candidate shows no knowledge or understanding of factionalism as it applies to political parties.
- b) There is a lot written here but sadly not very much of this answers the question and there is very little that touches on to the mark scheme.
- c) This section does demonstrate some improvement however, it lies within the lower levels of performance.

The last example lies in between the previous two showing some good understanding but at the same time contains elements of confusion.

(a) Fractionalism describes the different fractions within political parties and the different ideas they have. This can be seen in both the Labour and conservative party. Within the Conservative party there are three main fractions, firstly the David Cameron Supporters which believe in his main policies such as keeping direct taxes low as possible this is supported by David Cameron MP and Ed Balls MP. Another fraction is the new right 'Thatcherism' fraction which support many of Margaret Thatcher's ideas. And the last fraction within the Conservative party is Traditional conservatives which believe in traditional conservative views such as view against cultural diversity. Supported by Lord Berrill.

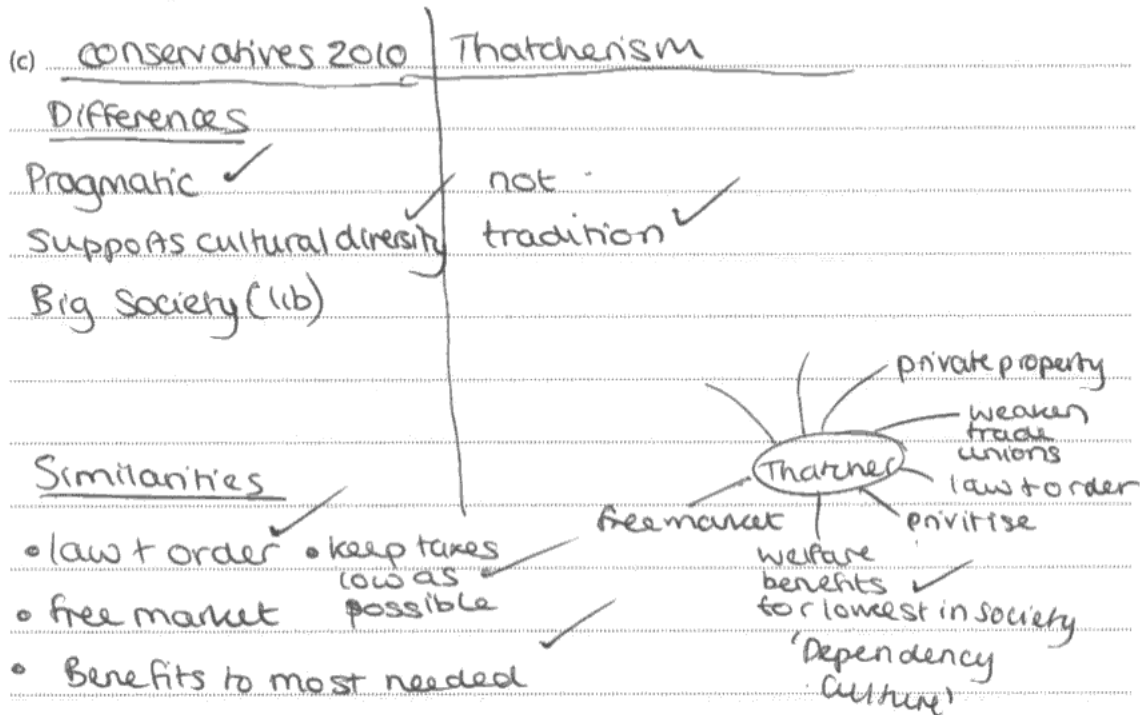
Within the Labour party there are also fractions such as One nation, Third way and (Blairism).

Third way is supported by ~~Ed~~ Ed Milliband. These shows how within a party there are fractions on different views the party should be run and ~~different~~ differing ~~views~~ policies.

(b) ~~Political~~ political parties allow for there to be a clear mandate to govern. This means that the political party in government can turn ~~there~~ their ~~mandate~~ manifesto of political policies / ideas into a positive political action and have the ability to have a clear / Strong mandate to govern. This can be seen when Tony Blair came to be the Prime Minister and allowed ~~his~~ him to have a mandate to govern. The advantage of this means that the government is strong and ~~staid~~ stable and ~~has~~ has clear power and accountability. Another function of political parties is they provide political education, this is done by political debates before voting, campaigning, television debates. This allows the citizens to be informed of the major issues of government and their clear political ideas each party has to offer. Therefore meaning people have a greater sense of awareness of politics and what is happening in government. This therefore might lead to more political participation within the country leading to better turnouts at elections, and if one party secures a huge majority this would lead to a very strong and stable government.

Finally political parties provide clear accountability. It means that ^{within} each constituency an individual knows who they can contact when they want to raise an issue

(1b) continued) or who is accountable for what within government. This is a huge advantage giving a good democracy and clear constituency links which is one of the main distinctions of the UK democracy, making it strong, clear and stable.



Thatcherism was developed in the 1980's when Margaret Thatcher came to power of the Conservative party in government. She radically defined politics and brought about many key policies and ideas.

The Conservative party under David Cameron (2010) has abandoned Thatcherism in certain aspects which include ^{the following}

~~Thatcherism~~ believed that Under David Cameron now there is a bigger support for cultural diversity and tolerance of different cultures within the UK, this supports immigration of EU nationals or other countries to the UK, e.g. Polish. This is one of the Liberal Democrat policies which Cameron has agreed to support. This is a more pragmatic approach as it's adopting to the current time and situation and going

((c) continued) Against Conservative beliefs. Therefore this policy has abandoned Thatcherism as they believe cultural diversity threatens the unity of the nation and will lead to increased crime within the UK and a breakdown of society. A recent policy brought in by David Cameron concerned with gay marriage within the UK would certainly abandon Thatcherism, as this policy goes against traditions. Conservatives traditional and new right believe in the traditional, nuclear family. By David Cameron bringing in this policy it shows how he is ~~about~~ abandoning Thatcherism and adopting a pragmatic approach and bringing the Conservative party up to date. Moreover by David Cameron adopting pragmatic approaches this would also go against Thatcherism as by adopting pragmatism is a traditional Conservative belief, by which the ~~also~~ create policies to adopt to the current time and beliefs. Another situation where Cameron has abandoned Thatcherism is his support for the 'big society', this is a liberal policy which he has adopted due to the coalition. This shows how it ~~abandoned~~ ~~abandon~~ abandons Thatcherism as it is not one of the beliefs they believe in and yet again been pragmatic, by helping society by the voluntary sector rather than taxing. However, there are many Cameron ^{policies} ~~policies~~ to where:

((c) continued) he does not abandon Thatcherism. This can be seen in his continued support of law and order to reduce the crime levels and prison places within the UK. They believe strong law and order leads to a safer and better society, ~~this~~ rather than focusing on individualism (which is supported by Labour). Another

policy which keeps with Thatcherism is the belief that ~~that~~ welfare benefits should only be for the very least privileged in society, they should be means tested and not universal. Therefore this reduces the 'dependency culture' which was a strong belief and policy of Thatcherism, showing this shows how conservatism now has not abandoned Thatcherism. Cameron also believes in keeping direct taxes low as possible such as income tax, this was one of Thatcher's main policies. This shows how Cameron has not abandoned Thatcherism as he is sticking to Thatcher's ideas about taxing. ~~He~~ Cameron still continues to support the free market, this allows the economy to fix itself without government ~~inter~~ intervention. Cameron also believes in strong laws about trade unions, as trade unions weaken the economy. This is one of Thatcher's main policies ~~at~~ which Cameron is still standing by.

In conclusion, ~~to~~ there are many policies which Cameron ((c) continued) is still faithful to and many which he is ~~abandon~~ abandoned. By abandoning Thatcher's policies he has become pragmatic and adopted policies which are in keeping with today and solves issues in today's society. Therefore leading to a successful government in keeping with today to solve issues and supporting the coalition.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- Provides some clear information - but at the same time there is an element of confusion.
- Just makes it into level 3 on AO1 the last function - although poorly constructed is credited - hence it satisfies the threshold criteria.
- A response that makes level 3 for AO1 and AO3 but fails to provide that level for AO2.

Question 4

This script is a clear example of a Level 3 response for all sections of the question.

(a) The single transferable vote (STV) electoral system is a proportional voting system. There are a number of multi-member constituencies and ~~for~~ parties can put up as many candidates as there seats to fill in each constituency. Voters vote preferentially by ranking candidates in order. Candidates are elected once they achieve a quota of votes, which is calculated using the Droop formula: $\frac{\text{total number of votes cast}}{(\text{total number of seats to be filled} + 1)}$. Once a candidate reaches the quota, any additional votes for him/her are redistributed according to second or subsequent preferences. If this process still leaves some seats unfilled, the candidate with the least votes drops out and his/her votes are redistributed according to second or subsequent preferences. This process is continued until all seats are filled.

(b) A two-party system is a party system where only two parties have sufficient electoral or parliamentary strength to have a realistic prospect of winning government power, whereas a multiparty system is where no single party has sufficient electoral or parliamentary strength to have a realistic prospect of government power alone, blurring the distinction between major and minor parties in practice. A ~~two~~ two-party system is said to exist for Westminster elections, where the Labour and Conservative parties hold 85% of the seats in the House of Commons and have alternated in power since 1945. In contrast, a multi-party system is said to exist for Scotland, where the SNP, Liberal Democrats and Labour have all been represented in government since 1998. Similarly, Northern Ireland has a multi-party system in which no single party controls the Northern Ireland Assembly and governments consist of a grand coalition between the DUP and Sinn Féin. A two-party system ~~will normally~~ tends to produce single party majority governments, whereas multi-party systems create a strong tendency towards minority or coalition governments. Since 1945, all but two Westminster elections have given an absolute majority of seats to the winning party ~~because~~ because a two-party system

prevails for these elections, but the Scottish Parliament has seen a Labour minority, Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition and a SNP minority government, the current SNP majority government very much being an exception under the multi-party system that operates for devolved assemblies elections.

A two-party system tends to produce strong and stable governments able to drive policies through the legislature because the executive has majority control of the Parliament, whereas a multi-party system tends to encourage compromise, negotiation and consensus in politics because failure to do so

((b) continued) would result in weak and fractured government as

coalition partnerships break down. This can be seen by ~~the~~ the Scottish Parliament ~~disagreeing~~ ^{with} the Westminster government over university tuition fees prior to 2007 despite Labour being the largest party in both institutions ~~at the time~~, but the Scottish Labour party was in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats which opposed this policy, forcing them to split from the central government over this issue.

(c) First-past-the-post (FPTP) produces clear electoral choice for voters, who have a clear and simple choice between potential parties of government, each offering alternative policy programmes and contrasting ideological agendas. This helps to make elections more meaningful to ordinary citizens. In contrast, proportional representation (PR) systems may lead to confusion as voters have to rank candidates in order, e.g. STV. ~~Other~~ other hybrid systems such as the Additional Member system (AMS) produces two classes of representatives, leading to lower turnout and more spoilt ballot papers in Scotland and Wales where it is used.

FPTP is democratic because it produces a clear ^{electoral} mandate for the winning party to implement its manifesto policies, meaning that voters get what they vote for. In contrast, PR systems tend to produce coalition governments in ^{which policy is decided through} post-election deals not endorsed by the electorate and ~~made~~ agreed upon behind closed doors. This is undemocratic as the fate of the country should not be decided upon by a small political elite.

In the aftermath of the 2010 general election, the Conservatives were forced to ~~the~~ 'ring-fence' health, education and international aid spending to a greater degree to please the Liberal Democrats, while the latter was forced to ~~agree~~ agree to university tuition fee rises, something that they had campaigned against in their manifesto.

FPTP produces strong and effective leadership because the government nearly always has an absolute majority in the Commons. This allows it push through radical, reforming and controversial policies, e.g. nationalisation

((c) continued) under Attlee and privatisation under Thatcher. In contrast, ~~the~~ coalition governments tend to be weak and ineffective because policy is shaped by a variety of parties ~~and~~, with the ~~inevitable~~ result that radical measures tend to be 'watered down'. While some have argued that the current coalition government is fairly strong and robust and has pursued many radical reforms, e.g. introducing the Universal Benefit, it is nevertheless a two-party coalition formed ~~and~~ after a FPTP election. A PR electoral system is likely to produce multiparty coalition governments with greater ideological differences between the parties in government.

FPTP produces stable government because ~~then~~ it tends to produce single-party majority governments, whose members are united by common political preferences and ideological sympathies and are subject to a system of party discipline. In contrast, ~~the~~ PR produces coalition governments that are vulnerable to internal ~~and~~ coalition splits between the different parties, as can be seen by the failure of the current coalition government to redraw parliamentary constituencies and reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600 due to Liberal Democrat opposition. Minority governments can also be vulnerable to motions of confidence, as the Labour government of 1974-79 found out after the break-down of the 'Lib-Lab pact' in 1978. Of course, FPTP can also produce weak and unstable coalition/minority

governments, but these will be much more common under PR electoral systems as shown by the failure of any party to win a majority in the Welsh Assembly / Northern Ireland Assembly after their establishment.

((c) continued) FPTP produces effective constituency representation because a single MP represents a constituency, i.e. people who know represents them in Parliament and who to take their grievances to. Under PR systems, the link between constituents and representatives is significantly weakened because constituencies tend to be much larger, e.g. in STV or the Regional Party System (RPS) where the whole UK is split into just 12 regions.

FPTP may under-represent smaller parties, but this also limits the influence of small and extremist parties because they are 'shut out' from Parliament. PR systems may give these parties significant political power, e.g. UKIP has 12 seats in the European Parliament, and some minor parties may even find themselves continuously in government, e.g. the Liberal Democrats in Scotland and Wales to some extent.

Thus, FPTP should be continued for Commons elections since the proposed alternatives have numerous downsides. In fact, they may not even be more proportional? The most commonly proposed alternative, Alternative Vote, would have produced a majority of 245 seats for Labour in 1997 instead of 178 under FPTP.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- a) This is a precise and full response. It shows clarity and detailed understanding.
- b) Once again a pattern of precision continues and this section obtains full marks.
- c) Remaining at level 3 this response achieves threshold criteria for AO1- it has balance and shows critical insight for AO2 and the standard of communication is very good.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Look how the candidate has used paragraphs in the (c) section this helps to instil structure and aids communication - AO3 marks.

Paper Summary

There is much to reflect on in terms of performance this series where the mean overall score did improve by over two marks. There was an increased use of effective and precise examples in many responses – this not only shows knowledge and understanding (AO1) marks but crucially criticism and evaluation (AO2) marks on c sections.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following observations.

- A minority of candidates still have a weak grasp of key terms. The casualties are still present on elitism (in relation to pressure groups) and factionalism as applied to political parties.
- The issue of party system is not thoroughly understood by the majority of candidates and there exists a confusion between party systems and electoral systems and this needs greater focus and clarity.
- Higher calibre candidates as always tended to use more contemporary and informed examples which often served to lift their mark and thus their overall grade. Nowhere is this more apparent than on pressure groups. Candidates and centres who may avoid questions on political parties (for fear that the latter has a moveable base) fail to realise that the same demand is ever more salient with pressure groups and many provide too narrow an understanding of pressure groups in the current political framework.
- On questions which centre on elections – and to the same degree democracy the candidate who has at their fingertips accurate detail of recent elections can perform well. There is a myriad of facts to be drawn on which demonstrate a rounded and informed account of the outcomes – this still requires work – however the direction of travel is positive.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Ofqual



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE