

Examiners' Report
June 2012

GCE Government & Politics 6GP03 3C

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Introduction

Most candidates found this an accessible paper and the few weak answers came from the obviously under-prepared. There was a roughly even spread of answers across the long-answer questions, with the Electoral College question proving, slightly surprisingly, to be the most popular. The spread among four of the five short-answer questions was also fairly even, but only a relative few opted for the question on immigration reform.

The usual and predictable weaknesses in answers were present; many candidates still introduce their short answers with an unnecessary summary of the points they are about to make, or, more puzzlingly, if the question asks about criticisms, an irrelevant summary of positives. There is a tendency to narrate, rather than analyse, so that answers to question five were frequently prefaced by (or consisted in their entirety of) a history of campaign finance reform or answers to question eight by a detailed description of the workings of the Electoral College.

Key terms in the question were sometimes overlooked, so that for example points made in answer to question one, which asked about criticisms of pressure groups activities, were frequently either not criticisms or did not relate to activities.

Question 1 (b)

This was a popular question and answered well by the majority of those who attempted it. As mentioned above, some weaker answers failed to appreciate the significance of the term *activities* and wrote for example about pressure groups' lack of internal democracy, or indeed the term *criticised*, when they cited the greater influence of pressure groups with large memberships, or attempts by pressure groups to influence the Supreme Court via *amicus curiae* briefs.

Most candidates focused on activities connected with Congress, with revolving door, iron triangles, and campaign contributions being extensively covered. As usual with pressure group answers, candidates were more or less completely dependent on textbooks for examples, with the consequence that discussion, for example, of the veterans' iron triangle inevitably sounded dated.

An interesting point made by some stronger answers was that pressure groups' promotion of wedge issues makes consensus-building difficult, and contributes to an adversarial political culture.

From the very beginning of the US democracy the founding fathers in particular, expressed concerns regarding the ~~democratic~~ possible negative effects of pressure group activity. Almost three hundred years later these concerns remain, although reasons for them differ.

Perhaps the most prominent criticism of pressure groups of late, is their increased role in political elections and the concerns this gives rise to, ~~that~~ regarding the disproportionate influence of the wealthy over the interests of the public. Reaching a peak in 2008, ^{wealthy} pressure groups have effectively been enabled to "buy" the ~~right~~ support of congressmen (the house of representatives in particular) by providing them with campaign funds. Indeed so influential are some groups like the NRA, that they can afford to fund candidates from both major parties.

Finally and ~~arguably~~ a criticism that is perhaps least spoken about, but most dangerous, is that the activities of pressure groups serves to undermine political power and more importantly knowledge, to a ~~great~~ ^{small} elite groups ~~own~~ ^{owning} interests. Particularly worse in "iron triangles", ~~for~~ ^{strong} bonds between three branches of US politics, (the congressional committee, the a pressure group and a relative governmental department) the recent success of pressure groups like ~~have~~ ^{clear} ~~consider~~ ^{clear} status over their ~~modest~~ ^{clear} in the health care debate, with chairman of the senate health committee ~~effectively~~ ^{effectively} blocking all other interests over the corporate group PHARMA, suggests that this criticism is very much to use.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a very typical low Level 3 answer. It makes three clearly-explained points, all of which are explicitly linked to the title and which are supported by evidence. To move up further towards full marks, it would need to show a more obvious attempt to evaluate its points and evidence.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Introductions - a lot of candidates seem unable to resist beginning their short answers with an opening paragraph which 'sets the scene', as this candidate does here.

As this example illustrates, these introductions almost never say anything which can be rewarded, and in an exam where every second is precious, it is much more productive to get straight into your first point.

Question 2 (b)

Perhaps a little surprisingly, this was the most popular short-answer question and the overwhelming majority were able to mention at least one group, and most, two or more.

Weaker answers could only list the groups, with a sometimes rambling discussion of the history of who had supported the Republicans and Democrats, whereas stronger answers were able to explain the reasons for their support using recent evidence; a number of candidates, for example, cited the Republican 'War on Women' as a recent factor in alienating female voters.

A characteristic of a more sophisticated approach was to recognise factors which cause support to fluctuate, and some candidates cited the president's half-hearted attempts at immigration reform as likely to diminish Latinos' support in 2012.

Generally those towards the left of the political spectrum support Democrats, this tend to be the lower working class as they the Democrats are leaning on big government and helping providing welfare this can be shown in the 6 for Ob campaign lead by Nancy Pelosi in which she there was 6 clearly liberal agendas including affordable health care, also the 100-hour plan which devoted the first 100 hours in Congress to liberal agendas. More recently Obama's health care act is a clearly liberal agenda in which ~~poor~~ would provide healthcare for the ~~poor~~ poorest in the U.S.

Gay's and Lesbians may vote for the Democratic party as Democrats are seen to be more pro-gay rights, this has been shown, by President Obama & Vice President Joe Biden's open backing of gay rights, Obama is the first president to openly approve of gay rights which would

gain him support from many homosexuals, also the repeal of the 'Don't ask, don't tell' policy allowing homosexuals to be openly homosexual in the armed forces will gain democratic support for the Democrats a support.

Ethnic minorities are more likely to vote Democrat. African Americans are most likely to vote Democrat, as seen in the 2008 elections with 90% of African-Americans voting for the Democrats, this could be due to their policy of affirmative action or the because some liberals believe reparations should also be paid to African Americans. Latinos although side with Republicans on social issues are more likely to vote Democrat as they are more sympathetic to Latinos, this is shown in Obama's nomination of Sanya Sotomayor to a Supreme court position or by Obama's proposal of the ~~DREAM~~ DREAM act which would have given citizenship to many Latino illegal immigrants.



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Examiner Comments

This is another typical example of a low Level 3 answer. There are three well-explained points, all supported by recent evidence. To move towards full marks, the analysis would need to be a little more subtle and detailed.



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Examiner Tip

Keep up with the news - each of the three points in this answer is supported by examples of actions or policies of the Obama administration, including at least one from the last 12 months. It gives the answer a freshness and immediacy, which is impossible to convey if you just rely on textbooks.

Question 3 (b)

The addition of immigration reform as a possible topic for questions in the racial politics topic has been extensively signalled in examiners' reports, but this question was by a considerable margin the least popular short-answer question.

Most answers seem to have at least a basic knowledge of the Dream Act and the criticisms of it (perhaps because of its coverage during the Republican primary debates; a number of candidates mixed it up with the Texas Dream Act). Good answers were able confidently to discuss earlier attempts at reform and the two parties' approaches.

This was one of several questions where many candidates favoured a narrative approach, and they would have improved their answer by focusing sharply on the demands of the question, rather than giving a description of the various reforms.

Conservatives have tended to criticise any attempts at legalisation of immigrants since 2000, because most conservatives see immigration, particularly the estimated 11 million immigrants living in the USA, as a problem. They would tend to emphasise the economic and social problems of legalising immigrants, for example they argue it would undercut other American citizens in terms of jobs, and if immigrants did not learn English there would not be a 'unifying language'. The main attempts at reform since 2000 that have therefore been criticised by this question ~~is~~ the DREAM Act, which had been introduced in a variety of forms since 2000. The 2010 version planned to allow immigrants who had been brought to the USA as children, had graduated from a US High School and had completed several years of higher education or in the military to then qualify to begin a process of legalisation. Although this ~~is~~ has ~~nothing~~ little resemblance to full legalisation, groups such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), who

wants even legal immigration reduced to 300,000 a year, still have majority criticised it.

On the other hand liberals and some branches of conservatism have massively criticised attempts to reform immigration by 'attrition through enforcement'. This is the concept that, if there are few benefits for immigrants, they will leave out of choice in what Kris Kobach, a conservative immigration opponent, calls 'self-deportation'. The best example of this since 2000 is Arizona's SB1070 measure, which not only involves harsh punishments for those employing housing or transporting immigrants, but also requires law enforcement officials to check the legal status of anyone they have 'reasonable suspicion' of being an illegal immigrant. While Mitt Romney called this measure a "model" for the nation, judicial conservatives such as Newt Gingrich have criticised it, because they recognise that immigrants are necessary workers in many industries such as agriculture, and Gingrich called 'self-deportation' 'unrealistic'. Similarly liberals have opposed these sorts of measures as well as increased border security, for example 2008-10 border security spending rose by \$2 billion and deportations rose by 34,000, because they recognise the economic benefits of legalising immigrants, who would pay tax once legalised, and many liberals also wish to present their 'pro-immigration' stance as a 'contrast issue' to Republicans, in an attempt to maintain

the high levels of Hispanic support, with 61% of Hispanics voting Obama in 2008. In the same vein, some conservatives have criticised over-harsh measures because they have alienated the Hispanic vote, so in April 2012 only 37% of Hispanics had a favourable view of Romney. As such GOP Congressman Marco Rubio of Florida, a state with a high Hispanic population, has ~~introduced~~ ^{proposed} his own version of the DREAM Act, although this again has been criticised by liberals for not going far enough.

Therefore immigration reform attempts ^{since 2000} have been criticised, in general, by most conservatives for involving too much legalisation and too little border security, whereas liberals and some fiscal conservatives have criticised self-deportation measures such as Arizona's SB1070 and Alabama's HB56 for being unrealistic and not taking into account the economic benefits that the legalisation of 11 million estimated illegal immigrants could bring.



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Examiner Comments

This is an example of a full-mark answer. Full marks does not mean that it says everything there is to be said on the topic, but rather that it is as good an answer as an 18 year old could be realistically expected to produce in 15 minutes in an exam. It is sharply-focused on the title, shows a comprehensive and confident knowledge and explains the various criticisms with intelligence and flair.



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Examiner Tip

Read widely - what comes over more than anything in this answer is the sense that the candidate is completely comfortable discussing these quite complex issues; s/he is not repeating something they have learnt by heart from a single book. This can only come through reading as much and as widely as you can.

Question 4 (a)

This was apparently a straight-forward question but many candidates found it difficult to make the necessary distinction between a pressure group's methods and what makes it successful, and what it is specifically about the U.S. system that gives pressure groups such significance.

Consequently, their answers discussed methods such as postal blitzes, and also pressure group functions such as participation and education.

Perhaps as a consequence of their uncertainty as to what exactly the question was asking, some candidates reproduced significant sections of their answers to question 1.

Weaker answers also stood out by showing minimal knowledge that was distinctive to the US, and some were indistinguishable from Unit 1 answers. Stronger candidates recognised the requirements of the question and identified access points as a key factor, along with the weakness of parties and the cost and multiplicity of elections.

One of the most important factors that explain give pressure groups such a significant role in the US politics is the ~~nature~~ nature of US government and its structure. To avoid tyranny, the Founding Fathers made sure there was a separation of powers and so the three separate branches of government, executive, legislative and judiciary leave various access points for pressure groups to play a significant role. For example in the case of *Citizens vs. Bollinger*, various pressure groups sent in over 350 amicus curiae briefs, and the same was done in the case of *Lawrence vs. Texas*, and these are significant because they are known to help judges make their decisions.

Another factor is that of the nature of US society. The fact that the US is so diverse, for example John F Kennedy once called the US 'a nation of immigrants' means there are various different groups

or sections of society that want to be represented in government. For example there are institutional pressure groups who represent different sections of society for e.g. Labor, Veterans Affairs, and pressure groups that represent specific causes e.g. The National Rifle Association^(NRA) and Moms Against Drink-Driving (MADD), as a result each of the different groups, ~~as~~ seeks representation and a say on their rights as part of that group and thus put pressure on the government to do.

~~Another~~ The weakness of political parties in the US is another factor that explains why pressure groups have a significant role in the US. Although there are two known parties, The Republican Party and The Democrat Party, there is no strict party ideology, party whip or structure as in the UK and there are in fact various factions of both parties such as the Fiscal Conservatives and Blue Dog Democrats. As a result, ~~as~~ pressure groups such as The Taxed Enough Already Party (which is seen as both a party and a pressure group) exists in order to fill this gap and represent all the specific political and social ideologies throughout government.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This is another low Level 3 answer. Unlike a number produced for this question, it shows a very clear understanding of exactly what the question is asking, and looks in turn at access points, the nature of US society and the weakness of the political parties.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Be sure what the question is asking - this question asked about the factors which give pressure groups a significant role in US politics; it was not asking about pressure group methods or functions, which many candidates took it to be. If you are unsure what a question is really about, it is probably better to leave it alone.

Question 5 (c)

Campaign finance is a complex and technical topic and it was pleasing to see how many strong answers there were to this question. Even weak answers were generally able at least to make reference to the Supreme Court's role, and knew that 'soft' money existed and had been a significant issue, even if they could not explain why.

The stronger answers often had a detailed knowledge of the relevant judicial decisions, particularly of course *Citizens United*, as well as full some discussions of the various legislative attempts to control election finance. A number made the logical point that since legislation is the responsibility of the main beneficiaries of campaign finance, it is unsurprising if there is little imperative to reform it.

A number of attempts - such as the Federal Election Campaign Act (1972) and the Bi-Partisan Campaign Reform Act (2002) - have been made to reform campaign finance, but a number of factors have made them of little consequence in the long term.

One of the main reasons why reform has been hard to achieve is the rulings of the Supreme Court, which have consistently minimised the effects of legislation. For example, in *Buckley v Valeo* (1976), the court ruled that personal wealth is exempt from campaign finance restrictions, which diluted the impact of the Federal Elections Campaign Act (FECA) by reducing the cost of elections, and gave a huge advantage to those running for office who are very wealthy. More recently, the Supreme Court lessened the impact of the Bi-partisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) by ruling in *Citizens United v FEC* (2010) that organisations could spend money on advertisements not specifically raised for the purpose, and by declaring the ban on pressure groups airing ads within 60 days of a general election and 30 days of a primary unconstitutional. Using this precedent, a lower district court ruling - in *Speechnow.org vs FEC* (2010) -

allowed for the establishment of 'super PACs', which can raise and spend unlimited amounts of money on advertising as long as they do not donate directly to candidates, which has effectively rendered all attempts to reduce the size of donations obsolete.

Campaign finance reform has also been difficult to achieve due to the ability of groups to find loopholes in the system. For example, technical alterations to the FECA in 1979 led to groups spending huge amounts of 'soft money', which was money used to educate the public and encourage participation, but was used in such a way as to promote one candidate over another. Even though soft money was outlawed by the BCRA in 2002, groups quickly noticed that the ban did not apply to non-party organisations; trade unions subsequently established '527s', which allowed them to spend large amounts of ^{soft} money in 2004. However, the inability of 527s to co-operate with parties reduced their effectiveness and they were consequently far less visible in the 2008 elections.

Reform has also proved difficult to achieve due to the need to strike a balance between public and private financing of elections. Whilst it is widely accepted that private financing reduces the ability of those without wealth or connections to run for high office, it has been successfully argued that extensive limitations on private funding violate individual freedoms. Furthermore, candidates themselves have reduced the effectiveness of regulations; for example, by declining public funds for his campaign in 2008, Barack Obama may have

undermined the ability of other, less charismatic candidates to do the same, as it now appears to be a sign of weakness.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is another example of a top Level 3 answer. It identifies two main factors, the decisions of the Supreme Court and the ability of groups to find loop-holes in legislation. It discusses them lucidly and accurately. It then discusses two further factors in less detail - altogether an impressive answer.

Question 6

This question drew proportionately more weak answers than the other two long-answer questions, probably because a lot of candidates came into the exam wanting to answer a question on race but were unsure what to make of the term *political will*.

These weaker answers quickly became, in many cases, a general discussion on the nature and impact of affirmative action, often shading into a more general discussion still of the position of African Americans in USA, both historically and in the present. Many of these answers also used an excessively broad definition of affirmative action, and brought in the *Brown* decision, the Civil Rights Act and bussing as examples, to name just three.

At the other end, there were some impressive answers, which showed an intelligent engagement with the question and the issue of political will. These answers discussed both evidence for and against the failure of affirmative action and linked both of these perspectives to political will. Relevant Supreme Court cases seemed less well-known than they once were, which was a pity as the role of the court was clearly relevant.

Affirmative Action is a name given to programmes associated in helping and given opportunities to african americans in education and the workforce. It was firstly introduced for african americans but is not targeted at other ethnic minority groups in America. Some argue that affirmative action has failed in America, however there are different factors that may have caused this to take place. The lack of political will, from not only the president but other branches of government and states with their individual rights and laws. However there are also other factors which suggest that there are not the only factors but most importantly, evidence to

suggest that affirmative action has not failed at all.

Firstly, there is evidence to suggest that it has primarily failed due to the lack of political will. Before President Obama was elected as President, Bush, a Republican did not believe in affirmative action and neither did most of the Republican Party. They believed that affirmative action should not be used because ethnic minorities are not the only Americans in the country needing help from the government. Republicans such as Bush junior and Bush senior believed that it was unconstitutional and un-American to have affirmative action in the US. America is a land of opportunity and if you work hard without any special treatment, you will succeed. Therefore the fact that the Republican Party had such control before presidents such as Bill Clinton and President Obama suggests that the lack of political will to enforce affirmative action is a major reason to why African Americans (31% of them) are living under the poverty ~~line~~ line, compared to 11% of white Americans.

Moreover, there are other reasons linked to the lack of political will to enforce AA which may have resulted to it failing. The fact that Presidents such as George W. Bush and George W. Bush were unwilling to support AA and enforce it may

Have led to states not believing in the effects of affirmative action. This has led to several states in America such as Michigan and California to make AA illegal and no longer used in the work place or in education.

However, the lack of political will has not been the only reason to why affirmative action has supposedly failed in America. A lot of politicians, not only in the Republican party believe that affirmative action is no longer needed in America because the country has all the constitutional framework to protect ethnic minorities and civil rights, and affirmative action actually gives an advantage to them over white Americans in the same position as them. African Americans have been successful in entertainment such as Oprah, in sports such as Lamar Odom and in politics such as Barack Obama. Therefore AA has failed, not only because of the lack of political will to enforce it but because it is no longer needed in America.

There has not only been a lack of political will from previous executives but from the Supreme Court itself. For example, the Supreme Court ruled affirmative action unconstitutional in several cases. For example, in the *Bakke vs University of California* case, quotas

used to favour ethnic minorities was ruled unconstitutional as it was favouring African Americans with lower grades than white Americans with better academic results. Therefore the fact that not only one case but several cases, such as the Seattle School, Mendell vs Kentucky Board of Education have ruled AA unconstitutional in the Supreme Court suggests a lack of political will to defend such programmes at the expense of the civil rights and liberties of white Americans.

These cases also lead to the lack of political will of states to enforce affirmative action. For example after the Seattle vs Board of Education case in Washington, AA was made illegal in the entire state. Moreover, California and Florida are also two other states which have ruled against the use of such programmes.

However, despite the lack of political will being one of the main reasons to why AA has failed, there are also several other factors. For example, public inertia. It is very difficult to change the mentalities of US citizens regarding ethnic minorities, primarily because of the history of African Americans in the US in the 1920's to 1960's. Despite the being affirmative action, businesses may be more willing to hire a white American in a worst situation than a black American regardless of colour. AA has been seen as reverse

discrimination in America and therefore has not been supported by a majority of the population. AA might have failed because of the lack of support not only by white Americans but Black Americans and Hispanics who do not wish to receive special treatment due to the colour of their skin. Furthermore, AA has also had adverse effects in the sense that they have caused African Americans not to work as hard and for white Americans to hold a grudge towards ethnic minorities.

AA has also failed because it is difficult to change the way people think. There are racial profiling and prejudice regarding certain ethnicities as continued to take place. For example, the 17 year African American boy Jermayn Shott in Florida got walking across a so called "white" neighbourhood.

Despite there being evidence to suggest that AA has failed due to ^{alack of} political will, other evidence suggests that it has not failed at all. The % of African Americans in the US finishing high school and attending college/university has greatly increased. Furthermore despite the Supreme Court ruling AA unconstitutional in certain cases they have ruled it constitutional. For example the Grutter vs

Bollinger case was ruled constitutional as it looked at applications on a more individual base.

The fact that America now has the first African American president suggests AA has not failed and Obama himself may have had more opportunities that led him to be president because of Affirmative Action itself.

The lack of political will not only from the government but from the public to elect ethnic minorities may also play a role to why AA has failed. For example, there are only 41 African Americans in Congress, 27 Hispanics and 9 Asians. The fact that the political will of the majority of citizens is unwilling to elect ethnic minority representatives and senators may have had a domino effect on affirmative action actually being enforced. For example the majority of African Americans are Democrats who support AA with 95% of them voting for Obama in 2008. Therefore the fact there are no black senators suggests there are less people supporting and enforcing AA across the country thus allowing it more likely to fail than to succeed.

*

Overall, affirmative action has failed to a certain extent in America because of the ^{lack of} political will to support and enforce AA across the country. However, the lack of political will is not the only

factor to have lead to AA failing, but public inertia has also played a big role in the outcome of AA. 31% of african americans still live below the poverty line compared to 11% of whites, 8% of them are still unemployed compared to 4% of whites and 53% of african americans still have no healthcare compared to 39% of white. Thus, whether republican or Democrat it is impossible to deny these statistics, however the way different political parties suggests to fix this inequality varies hugely amongst them. However, the fact that a black president was elected for the first time ever in America, has been a milestone in the history of African Americans and Obama does have the political will to enforce AA and make sure that racial divisions ^{in America} are overcome...

* Pressure groups against AA have also played a part in the failure of AA in America, campaigning for equal rights to ALL americans.



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Examiner Comments

The strengths of this answer are its consistent engagement with the question and its logical structure. There are a number of points which could be more developed and detailed, but at each stage, the reader knows exactly where it is going. It is in low Level 3 for all Assessment Objectives.



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Examiner Tip

Signpost the direction in which you are going - use the first sentence of each paragraph to make it completely clear to the reader what you are about to say, and how it relates to what has gone before and to the title. Even if you do not know very much, you will receive credit for the clarity of your argument.

Question 7

As usual, the best answers in the paper were produced on the topic of parties and there were some very impressive answers, which showed a detailed and sophisticated understanding of the state of the two major parties.

Parties are a topic more than any other where the best candidates are able to leave their textbooks behind and draw on their knowledge of recent developments. It is puzzling that centres do not steer more of their candidates towards the party questions. Both the tensions within the Democratic Party over the policies of the Obama administration - such as health care, and more recently, the Keystone pipeline - and the divisions within the Republican Party exposed by the recent presidential primary, were well-explored.

Most candidates made some attempt to advance a comparative argument, in some cases (perhaps understandably) changing the judgement during the course of the essay, whilst others just made a brief statement of comparison in the conclusion.

R.	D.
Scowzafava - moderates	Blue Dogs 47
Scot Brown - Massachusetts	Progressives
Bob McDonnell - Virginia	Obama: blocked by own party
Tea Party	(Clinton
Dick Lugar - Richard Mourhead	Liberals.
Fiscal Cons	
Social Cons: Baucus, Santorum	

Recent years have seen different factions of each party become more and more vocal. What has been seen as a culture war in the USA, where views on issues such as guns, homosexuality and abortion are hotly contested, has led to huge splits not just between the parties, but inside the parties as well.

The aggressive rhetoric and tactics used by the Republican party between factions of the party would suggest that Republicans are the more ideologically ~~moderates~~ divided party. Essentially the party is divided between the socially conservative and the fiscally conservative, with moderates also fighting to make themselves heard. The viciousness of the attacks on Romney during the 2012

primaries, where he was accused of being a "flip-flopping" moderate, highlights this increasing divide in the Republican party. Recently, social conservatives have enjoyed a string of success. Rick Santorum and Michelle Bachmann, although ultimately unsuccessful in the 2012 primaries, are two very socially conservative politicians who both had success: Bachmann winning the Ames Straw poll in April and Santorum winning the Iowa primary. Elsewhere, Bob McDonnell became the governor of Virginia, and uses his power of veto to with-hold state-funding for abortions. An example of the battle waging in the Republican party between social conservatives and any other competition can be seen in Dick Lugar's defeat to Richard Mourhead in Indiana. Lugar was criticised for being a moderate and for being prepared to compromise with the Democrats. Also the fate of Dede Scozzafava is evidence of the huge ideological divide in the Republican party. Scozzafava, a liberal or moderate Republican who openly supports gay marriage was running for New York when the socially conservative wing of the GOP targeted and defeated her. As a result, there has been a term coined for when the conservative wing targets a moderate of their own party: the moderate has been 'Scozzafavad'. The presence of a very right wing media in Fox News, and social commentators such as Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly and Anne Coulter again emphasises the extreme ideological differences in the Republican party. Whilst in reality only 22% of the entire nation are against abortion, the huge media attention around vocal pro-lifers in the Republican makes it seem like

much more. A 'War on Women' can be seen as being waged by a small faction of the Republican party, with Rush Limbaugh adding further fuel to the fire by branding student Sandra Flute a "slut". This is evidence of how an ideologically extreme section of the Republican party has been allowed to speak very loudly.

The Proposition 8 decision to ban gay marriage in California and the SB1070 in Arizona making people carry papers to prove that they are not illegal immigrants is very conservative, and once again highlights the increasingly divided Republican party. The SB1070 was re-called by a majority of 54%, showing the divide ideologically within that state alone.

The success of the Tea Party and other fiscally conservative factions of Republican and the struggle for power within the Republican party again shows how divided the Republican party is. An attempted coup to take over the Republican party in 2010 failed with Ken Buck and Sharon Angle, despite the success of Marco Rubio, Rand Paul and Pat Toomey. The support for, and opposition against, the Tea Party shows the ideological divide in the Republican party, especially on economic policy. Where some see them as being the only solution to solve national debt, other Republicans will criticise them for only having the interests of the rich in mind, and point to the endorsement by the Koch brothers to the Tea Party; two of the richest men in America.

The Democrat Party, too, has an ideological divide. Arguably this divide is less clear because the Democrat party is much harder to define. Nonetheless, the Blue Dog faction of the Democrat party is the most Conservative faction, and is relatively well supported with 47 Democrats in the House being Blue Dogs giving this faction some voice. As with the social conservatives in the Republican party polarising to the right as a reaction to the political and economic climate, there has been a faction in the Democrat party, the Progressives, who have polarised to the ~~right~~ ^{left}. Obama himself is ~~one of~~ the most liberal president ever, arguably even a socialist, with his Obamacare health reforms and housing development projects. However, the opposition in his own party to his liberal policy is evidence of the substantial ideological divide in the Democrat party, with Congressmen and Senators from the Democrat party blocking Obama's health reforms. Clinton, another socially liberal president, also faced similar opposition from within his own party. The resilience shown to such liberal policy, as ~~was~~ offered by the ~~the~~ Clinton and Obama administrations, is evidence of the ideological difference in the party. Clinton's DLC was also criticised for not being conservative enough, and opposition from his own party accused the DLC of only winning support when its opposition was weak.

Whilst some factions of the Democrat party are very liberal socially ~~and~~ whilst believing in a large federal government with a regulated market; there are opponents who cherish their socially liberal ideology whilst also seeing ~~the~~

a fiscal policy reliant on a small government with a free and unregulated market. Most of the ideological divide within the party stems from economic party.

So whilst there is clearly division ideologically in the Democrat party, they have not yet witnessed the extent of the divide within the Republican party. The 2009 defection of Arlen Specter from Republican to Democrat, citing the new wave of radical ~~conserv~~ social conservatism as his reason, is evidence of the huge divisions in Republicans. The sheer viciousness and aggression shown by each faction to their opposition, such as seen by 77% of Romney's Super PAC 'Restore Our Future's' advertising being negative [showing that even the 'moderates' are on the attack] makes me conclude that the Republican party is the more ideologically divided.



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Examiner Comments

This is a not untypical response to this question, in that it shows a detailed and largely accurate knowledge of the fortunes of different groups within the two parties, whilst offering only a fairly limited discussion of the nature of the ideological divides between them. Clearly, everything the candidate writes is relevant and rewardable, but ideally there would be a little more on the ideas behind the various groups. Nevertheless, it is overall a low Level 3 answer.



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Examiner Tip

Conclusions - a conclusion is an important part of an essay, and gives the writer's definitive answer to the question set. This candidate does this and sums up the main arguments which support it.

Question 8

There was a sense in many answers to this question that candidates were pleased to be discussing such a familiar topic as the arguments surrounding the Electoral College. However, few brought any degree of sophistication to their answers, or gave any indication that they had thought about the issues for themselves. An inordinate amount of time was often given to peripheral issues, such as faithless electors.

It was asserted frequently that the Electoral College *protects the voice of the smaller states*, as though this was a self-evident good that needed no further justification. Only rarely was a link made to its original conception, or to how a national popular vote would be seen by some as undermining the federal identity of the US.

Nearly all answers, however strong or weak, were primarily focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the Electoral College itself, and were unaware of the specific weaknesses of the national popular vote. A good number of candidates were keen to discuss alternative systems to the Electoral College other than the national popular vote, such as 'Maine-Nebraska', possibly because they were uncertain of what exactly the national popular vote is; this would be surprising, given that it is specifically mentioned in the notes of guidance for this topic available on the Edexcel website.

For a significant number of candidates, memories of electoral reform in Unit 1 seemed not too far away, and they referred to the possibility of a coalition being formed, should no candidate achieve 50% of the vote. Similarly, many discussed the effect of reform on minor party candidates, and whether a reform might be fairer or less fair on them than the current system, with no recognition that only one office-holder is to be elected.

It is clear that the Electoral College does not accurately represent the vote of the American people with Obama securing 52% of the popular vote in 2008 but 62% of Electoral College votes, more importantly the 2000 election saw George Bush elected President despite Al Gore achieving more of the popular vote. However, there are those who argue that the Electoral College uphold the will of the founding fathers and thus should not be altered or replaced. Ultimately it is clear that the Electoral College is highly undemocratic and thus should be replaced by a national popular vote as is the preferred option of the American people.

Advocates of the Electoral College system argue that it prevents mob rule as wielded by the founding fathers since electors cannot be bound

and that if popular passions were to lead to the election of an ill-suited candidate such could be prevented by the electors.

However due to the ~~Primary system~~ ^{and increasingly polarized} nature of America which is ~~largely~~ ^{incredibly} diverse

of America which is becoming increasingly liberal and the republican conservative it

is incredibly unlikely that an ill equipped socialist candidate would be elected

on a popular vote. More over the election of a national popular vote would end the issue of Rogue electors seen in 1968

with an elector voting for pro segregationist George Wallace and more recently in 2000

when a DC elector abstained from voting in protest to ~~congress~~ ^{DC's} lack of representation

in congress, ethnically decreasing the representation of the people of the far west. Such is clearly

undemocratic as such electors inaccurately represented the views of thousands of citizens.

While supporters of the ~~system~~ Electoral College may highlight that the success of George Wallace who winning five southern states collected 45% of the vote

highlight the need for unbound electors as argued it is clear that not only

vote is 13% not enough to have won a national popular vote but segregation will be a crucial issue of the time, it is foreseeable that a similar matter will occur in modern day ^{and} America.

A further argument in support of the electoral college and thus opposed to the national popular vote is that it upholds federalism and thus preserve the voice of the small states. This is achieved through the allocation of electoral college votes in proportion to representation in congress, with each state regardless of size being granted equal representation in the senate and thus two electoral college votes. Therefore sparsely populated states such as Alaska achieve 0.6% of ECV's but have only 0.2% of the population such is the detriment of larger states such as California with 10.2% of ECV's but 11% of the population. It is obvious that such is clearly undemocratic and undermines the notion of 'one man, one vote' since residents of small states have a greater weight to their vote.

Those who support small state overrepresentation suggest that it leads to a election

Campaign that focuses across the entire nation and does not ignore low population states leading to a more informed and politically active electorate. However it is clear that the ~~state~~ state focus of the electoral college actually inroads voter apathy. While the Red/Blue divide is no longer an obvious cult one was highlighted in 2008 with Obama's 50 state strategy, safe states do exist. Georgia and Texas are Republican while California is strongly Democrat. Thus due to the winner takes all nature used by all but two states (Maine and Nebraska) it is pointed for many members of the electorate to cast their vote or for presidential campaigns to rally support. Such would not be the case with a national popular vote introduced since, in many states where the margin is large there is still a significant proportion of voters cast for the opposing party. For example Bush received 44% of the vote in California in 2004. It is clear that were a national popular vote to be introduced then election campaigns would be for wider

reaching leading to an (el) apathetic
more informed American citizen.

A further possible of the electoral college
as argued by its supporters is that
it encourages a 'two horse race'
and resultantly the president normally
achieves a majority of the vote, giving
them a clear mandate on which to
govern. However there are many flaws
to such a claim, notably of the last
37 presidential elections only 25 have achieved
over 50% of the popular vote. Moreover
as shown through the obstructive
Republican Congress and limitation of Healthcare
Reforms the mandate is often not respected.
While the introduction of a national
popular vote is likely to decrease the
share of the vote possessed by the
eventual winner, since it will provide
more accurate trial party representation
ie - Ross perot in 1992 who achieved
19% of the vote yet not one electoral
college vote but remains to be more
democratic and a weakening of
the two party system may reach

and selection
to be emergence[↑] of more moderate
candidates with wider appeal
at the primary stage.

Ultimately it is clear that the Electoral
College should be replaced by a
national popular vote. It is a huge
blight on the USA's claim to be
democratic that in 2000 Al Gore despite
possessing 48.7% of the vote opposed
to Bush's 47.9% was forced to announce
his own defeat in counting the
unrepresentative Electoral College votes.
Moreover a national popular vote would
lead to less voter apathy and
increased participation therefore increasing
validity America's claim to be
'the land of the free'



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Examiner Comments

This is one of the better answers produced for this question. Inevitably with a topic like the Electoral College, the arguments will be familiar and the range of examples limited, but at least this candidate is engaging with the arguments and there is the sense of a mind at work, rather than the mere repetition of what has been learnt. S/he also considers the issue of swing and safe states, which is surely one of the principal arguments against the Electoral College, but was strangely omitted in many answers. Overall, this answer would a low Level 3 on all Assessment Objectives.



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Examiner Tip

Introductions - although it need be no more than two or three sentences, an introduction is a vital part of an essay. In the introduction you set out the nature of the debate the question raises and give your answer to it, and this introduction does both successfully.

Paper Summary

Some key points for candidates to remember:

- Read each question carefully and make sure you have identified the key issues it raises
- Avoid introductions in short answers and get straight into your first point
- Plan your essay answer and make the structure clear
- Follow the news and keep up-to-date with US politics

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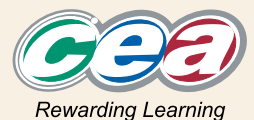
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