

**AP<sup>®</sup> COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
2006 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 6**

**4 points**

**Part (a): 2 points**

One point is earned for each of two correct discussions of reasons why leaders of unitary systems might choose to decentralize power.

Acceptable discussions may include:

- To pacify political rivals (intra- or interparty rivalry; devolution in the United Kingdom as an example).
- To prevent revolution.
- Imitation of another country or system/demonstration effect.
- Ethnic/regional/national cleavages.
- Domestic pressure.
- External/international political pressure.
- To increase legitimacy.
- To increase political participation.
- Policy efficiency (such as distribution of services and tax collection).
- Local leadership deterioration.
  - To increase accountability of local leaders (e.g., China).
- To make democracy less remote.

**Part (b): 1 point**

One point is earned for a description of one method used by leaders of unitary systems to decentralize power.

Acceptable descriptions may include:

- Give more power (autonomy, administrative implementation authority, fiscal) to subnational or local levels of government. (Responses have to specify where power is going to receive the point.)
- Devolution. There must be at least a minimal definition (giving more power to lower levels of government) or an example (United Kingdom—Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) to earn the point.

**Part (c): 1 point**

One point is earned for a description of how a decentralized unitary system differs from a federal system.

Acceptable descriptions may include:

- Power can be taken away in a unitary system (by the central government).
- Subnational governments' powers are not constitutionally protected.
- In a unitary system decentralization is not necessarily symmetrical, whereas it is symmetrical in a federalist system (all parts are treated equally).
- Local legislature/government can be dissolved in unitary systems but not in federal systems.

A score of zero (0) is earned for an attempted answer that earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is earned for a blank or off-task answer.

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

(a) Leaders of unitary states may often try to decentralize their power so that they can increase government legitimacy or decrease the burden of the central/national government. The importance of legitimacy is incalculable when speaking of it in contrast to politics. Without legitimacy, leaders create a poor political atmosphere in which they are more likely to be overthrown. The transition to a decentralized unitary system allows for the head of government to show the people of the state that the government is most authoritative, and it increases the ~~prop~~ probability that the leader will gain more public support. A transition to a decentralized unitary system also allows the government to distribute the burden of distributing resources or maintaining internal stability to subsidiary regions. This decreased burden allows the leader of the government to focus their energy and time on important issues such as foreign policy and economic growth.

(b) Leaders of unitary systems often appoint governors to ~~manage~~ establish and maintain a local government that is able to fulfill the individual needs of a particular region or city. The local/regional governments can develop region specific economic or institute certain rules that are necessary for that region. Furthermore, the ~~governments~~ local governments can ensure that the policies of the central government are being implemented properly. They serve a bureaucratic role.

(c) The primary difference between a decentralized unitary system and a federal system is that in a federal system there is a statutory basis for a balance of power between the federal government and the state governments. In decentralized unitary systems, the oligarchs or leaders of the nation are still in absolute control, but they relinquish some of this decision so that they are not burdened with the massive tasks that local governments are able to efficiently handle.

Question 6

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

6B

- a) One of the reasons for leaders of unitary systems to decentralize power is to increase political participation. If the power is distributed, people will have more chance to participate in politics. This will increase the happiness of the citizens thus creating more confidence in the leader. Another reason for leaders to decentralize power is because to provide effective means of ruling. If power is separated, parts that have more knowledge on a subject can provide effective service on the subject.
- b) One method used by leaders of unitary system to decentralize power is by creating regional governments. In Russia, "super-regions" were created, in U.K. Wales devolved for its own parliament. By dividing the power with sub-gov. based on regions or boundaries is a method of decentralizing.
- c) Decentralized unitary system differs from a federal system in way that the decentralized power still belongs to the one strong centralized location. While in federal system, each govt. has its own power to rule and govern differently and only united to other govt. by the federal govt.

6

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

6C1

(a) Unitary leaders may choose to dissolve power based on better representation of the people, or easier control of the people. If a unitary system gets ~~big~~ bigger ~~it is more~~ it is increasingly difficult to control. The United Kingdom works well as a unitary system because of its size where as the United States would not function as well in a unitary system because it is larger. Factions might also cause unitary systems to ~~dis~~ decentralize power if the northern area of a country wants to speak French and the southern area Spanish then the unitary leaders might decentralize the power of an established language in order to keep the country together.

(b) In the United Kingdom, which is a unitary system, Tony Blair used devolution to decentralize power. In doing so he allowed Scotland to create its own parliament. Devolution is one method that a unitary leader can use to decentralize power. Devolution is when power is granted or allowed

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

6

6C2

to a specific sector. Although the unitary government still has the final say. The U.K can dissolve that Parliament at any time.

(c) A decentralized unitary system still differs from a federal system because of the fact that the central government still has the final say. Also in a unitary system the executive and legislative branch are one whereas in ~~an~~ a federal system they are separate. Unitary systems still lack local and <sup>or</sup> state governments that are a key aspect of federal systems.

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## 2006 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 6

#### Overview

The intent of this question was to examine students' understanding of unitary and federal systems and to test their ability to accurately apply the concepts. Students were asked to discuss why leaders of unitary systems might decentralize power, explain one method of achieving decentralization, and describe the difference between a decentralized unitary system and a federal system.

#### Sample: 6A

##### Score: 4

In part (a) the response states that "Leaders of unitary states may often try to decentralize their power so that they can increase government legitimacy or decrease the burdens of the central/national government. The importance of legitimacy is incalculable . . . Without legitimacy, leaders create a political atmosphere in which they are more likely to be overthrown" (1 point). The response correctly discusses legitimacy as one reason why leaders might choose to decentralize power. The response continues the discussion, stating, "A transition to a decentralized unitary system also allows the government to distribute the burden of distributing resources or maintaining internal stability to subsidiary regions. This decreased burden allows the leaders of the government to focus their energy and time on important issues such as foreign policy and economic growth." Thus, policy efficiency is a second reason why leaders of unitary systems might choose to decentralize power (1 point).

In part (b) the response states, "Leaders of unitary systems often appoint governors to establish and maintain a local government that is able to fulfill the individual needs of a particular region or city." The response has described giving autonomy to local areas as a method of decentralization and therefore earned the point.

In part (c) the response notes, "The primary difference between a decentralized unitary system and a federal system is that in a federal system there is a statutory basis for the balance of power between the federal government and the state governments. In decentralized unitary systems, the oligarch or leaders of the nations are still in absolute control, but they relinquish some of their decisions." The response accurately describes one difference between the two types of systems (1 point).

#### Sample: 6B

##### Score: 3

In part (a) the response states, "One of the reasons for leaders of unitary systems to decentralize power is to increase political participation. If the power is distributed, people will have more chance to participate in politics." The response contains an appropriate discussion of increasing political participation as one reason why leaders of unitary systems might choose to decentralize power (1 point). The discussion continues, noting that, "Another reason for leaders to decentralize power is . . . to provide effective [*sic*] means of ruling. If power is seperated [*sic*], parts that have more knowledge on a subject can provide effective service on the subject." This discussion of policy efficiency as a reason to decentralize power earned the second point.

In part (b) the response states, "One method used by leaders of unitary systems to decentralize power is by creating regional governments . . . in U.K., Wales devoluted for its own parliament." The response accurately describes the creation of regional governments and devolution as methods used to decentralize power (1 point).

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## 2006 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 6 (continued)

In part (c) the response states, “Decentralized unitary system differs from a federal system in way that [*sic*] the decentralized power still belongs to the one strong centralized location.” This statement is too vague and does not accurately describe a specific way in which a decentralized unitary system differs from a federal system. The statement about the distribution of power in federal systems reflects some misunderstanding. In a federal system regional governments may have various connections with each other aside from the federal government; the national constitution is one example. Therefore the response earned no points.

#### **Sample: 6C**

#### **Score: 2**

In part (a) the response discusses decentralization as a means of enabling leaders to control a population; however, this is not a valid reason why leaders of unitary systems might choose to decentralize power. Therefore the response did not earn the point. The response continues, stating, “Factions might also cause unitary systems to decentralize power if the Northern [*sic*] area of a country wants to speak French and the southern area Spanish then the unitary leaders might decentralize the power of an established language in order to keep the country together.” The response correctly discusses regional linguistic differences as one reason why leaders of unitary systems might choose to decentralize power (1 point).

In part (b) the response states that “Tony Blair used devolution to decentralize power. In doing so he allowed Scotland to create its own Parliament.” The response describes devolution as a method of decentralizing power and provides an accurate example (1 point).

In part (c) the response states that a decentralized unitary system differs from a federal system because “the central government still has the final say.” This statement is vague, and it can be true of both decentralized unitary systems and federal systems. The response continues, saying that “in a unitary system the executive and legislative branch are one where as [*sic*] in a federal system they are separate [*sic*]. Unitary systems still lack local and or state governments that are a key aspect of federal systems.” Both statements are incorrect, so no points were earned in this part.