
AP Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free Response Question 6

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AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 6

5 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct identification of one social cleavage and one economic cleavage that commonly occur in societies.

Acceptable identifications include:

- Social cleavages including: religion, ethnicity, class, gender, urban/rural, age, education, region
- Economic cleavages including: class, urban/rural, wealth, elites/masses, education, region

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct explanation of how leaders can use cleavages to strengthen a government's hold on power.

Acceptable explanations include:

- Reward core constituencies for their support of government leaders and/or policies.
- Use the existence of the cleavage to justify maintaining or increasing the government's hold on power.
- Increase legitimacy in the government because of its handling of the conflict caused by the cleavage.

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct explanation of how cleavages can undermine regime stability.

Acceptable explanations include:

- Creates conflict, which threatens regime stability
- Undermines sense of national identity, which lessens regime stability
- Weakens state's ability to enforce law and order
- Creates polarization, which challenges state legitimacy

Part (d): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct description of an action governments take to address the negative consequences of the social cleavage identified in (a).

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Use of a federal system or devolution or autonomous zone to share power with local groups
- Promotion of a national identity or nationalism to unify the state
- Use of a proportional representation (PR) or mixed election system to create a multiparty system
- Employment of a quota system to ensure representation of multiple groups
- Passage of civil rights legislation to protect groups from discrimination
- Expansion of welfare programs or educational opportunities to change group status
- Deployment of force to repress or eliminate the cleavage

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Question 6 (continued)

Part (e): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct description of a different action governments take to address the negative consequences of the economic cleavage identified in (a).

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Use of tax or subsidy policies to decrease the cleavage
- Expansion of welfare programs or educational opportunities to reduce income inequality
- Establishment of job training programs and/or patronage positions to lessen the wealth gap
- Development of infrastructure projects to diminish regional or rural deficiencies

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

A score of dash (—) is earned for a blank.

GA₁

Conceptual Analysis: We suggest that you spend approximately 30 minutes on question 6.

6. Social and economic cleavages often divide society and can have both positive and negative political consequences.
- Identify one social cleavage and one economic cleavage that commonly occur in societies.
 - Explain how leaders can use cleavages to strengthen a government's hold on power.
 - Explain how cleavages can undermine regime stability.
 - Describe one action governments take to address the negative consequences of the social cleavage identified in (a).
 - Describe a different action governments take to address the negative consequences of the economic cleavage identified in (a).

6a) One social cleavage is that of people having different ethnicities in a country. One economic cleavage is that of people who have different levels of wealth and are separated by classes because of wealth.

b) Leaders can say that, because of cleavages, they need a strong government to maintain order and preserve rule of law to prevent unrest or violent conflicts to arise from such cleavages. An example of this is Nigeria needing a strong government to prevent the Igbo and Yoruba tribes from having open conflict.

c) Cleavages can result in the people in a country in attempting to consolidate power for their group in a cleavage possibly through violent rebellions expressing their discontent in a government

that does not reflect their group's ideals. An example is Boko Haram as the Hausa/Fulani tribe wish to establish an Islamic state while the national government of Nigeria has to remain secular.

d) One action can be to reserve seats in the government's legislature to an underrepresented ethnicity group so they do not feel discriminated against or underrepresented.

e) One action ~~to~~ ~~can~~ can be to implement distribution of wealth programs, which can be done ~~to~~ through progressive income taxes, to balance out or reduce socio-economic inequality in a country between different classes.

Conceptual Analysis: We suggest that you spend approximately 30 minutes on question 6.

6B,

6. Social and economic cleavages often divide society and can have both positive and negative political consequences.

- ☒ Identify one social cleavage and one economic cleavage that commonly occur in societies.
- ☒ Explain how leaders can use cleavages to strengthen a government's hold on power.
- ☒ Explain how cleavages can undermine regime stability.
- ☒ Describe one action governments take to address the negative consequences of the social cleavage identified in (a).
- ☒ Describe a different action governments take to address the negative consequences of the economic cleavage identified in (a).

one common social cleavage that commonly occurs in societies is one of ^{religion} ~~gender~~ one economic cleavage that commonly occurs is the rich & the poor.

Leaders can use cleavages to strengthen governments hold on power by appealing to one cleavage so they maintain power, or making sure cleavages stay split, also to increase / maintain power.

Cleavages can undermine regime stability because they can promote violence as seen w/ violent groups in Nigerias ^{Houssa Fulani} ~~Bakura~~, Igbo & Yoruba ~~in~~ regimes.

one action governments take to address the negative consequences

6B₂

as mentioned in (a). Would be by representing all of the social cleavages. For example, Nigeria's social cleavage is the Islam ~~Islam~~ Hausa Fulani, & the Christian Igbo & Yoruba in the South. Nigeria represents these groups by having to ~~maintain the~~ elect a president alternating between Muslim & Christianity.

~~with~~ A different action governments take to address the negative consequences of the economic cleavages like rich & poor would be by trying to reduce the gap. This could be by having quotas, increasing welfare based programs or things of the like.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

Conceptual Analysis: We suggest that you spend approximately 30 minutes on question 6.

6C1

6. Social and economic cleavages often divide society and can have both positive and negative political consequences.
- Identify one social cleavage and one economic cleavage that commonly occur in societies.
 - Explain how leaders can use cleavages to strengthen a government's hold on power.
 - Explain how cleavages can undermine regime stability.
 - Describe one action governments take to address the negative consequences of the social cleavage identified in (a).
 - Describe a different action governments take to address the negative consequences of the economic cleavage identified in (a).

a Gun rights is an example of a prevalent social cleavage and ^{different} opinions on tax rate are ~~social~~ economic cleavages.

b By shaping their platform to correspond with specific cleavages, governments can rally the support of citizens. ~~by~~ They can also attempt to avoid certain topics to keep from losing support where there are cross-cutting cleavages in their supporters.

c If too many cleavages are coinciding, especially in a regime that uses a first past the post system, large groups of citizens will be entirely unrepresented by their governments. This could lead to ~~for~~ pushes for reforming the regime or even revolt from citizens.

d Governments can attempt to compromise on the issue in an effort to sate both

6C2

ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 6

sides of the cleavage. In the example of gun rights the government may choose to limit the sale of weaponry to only qualified individuals, or may restrict public access to specific armaments.

e Governments may choose to avoid the cleavage, refraining from favoring either side in an attempt to keep from enraging them. In the case of tax rates the government may choose not to reduce taxes, as called for by one side, nor raise taxes, as requested by the other side. Refraining from taking action on the topic may prevent backlash and cause citizens and politicians to focus on other issues, but it may also escalate dissatisfaction with the government on all sides of the issue.

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2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 6

Overview

The intent of this question was for students to compare government responses to both social and economic cleavages. The skills tested were descriptive and analytical. Students had five specific tasks: in part (a), to identify one social cleavage and one economic cleavage that commonly occur in societies; to explain how leaders can use cleavages to strengthen a government's hold on power; to explain how cleavages can undermine regime stability; to describe one action governments take to address the negative consequences of the social cleavage identified in part (a); and to describe a different action governments take to address the negative consequences of the economic cleavage identified in part (a).

Sample: 6A

Score: 5

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for the identification of “different ethnicities” as a social cleavage and wealth as an economic cleavage. The response is clear with specific examples that demonstrate an understanding that a social cleavage is a deep division between groups in society, and an economic cleavage is a deep division between groups based on income or access to resources. Some acceptable responses for social cleavages include religion, class, and age. Some acceptable responses for economic cleavages include class, urban-rural, and region.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for explaining that leaders can use cleavages to justify their need for “a strong government to maintain order and preserve rule of law to prevent unrest or violent conflicts to arise [*sic*] from such cleavages.” The response clearly demonstrates an understanding that leaders might use the existence of the cleavage to justify maintaining and strengthening the government's strong hold on power. Additional acceptable responses include leaders rewarding core constituencies for their support, thereby strengthening the government's hold on power, and leaders managing the conflict caused by the cleavage in a way that increases legitimacy, which strengthens the government's hold on power.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for explaining that cleavages can undermine regime stability “through violent rebellions.” The response clearly demonstrates an understanding that conflict can undermine regime stability. Additional acceptable responses include that the cleavage can undermine a sense of national identity, which lessens regime stability; that the cleavage can weaken a state's ability to enforce law and order; and that the cleavage can create polarization, which challenges state legitimacy.

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for describing that one action governments take to address the negative consequences of an ethnic cleavage is “to reserve seats in the government's legislature to an underrepresented ethnicity group so they do not feel discriminated against or underrepresented.” The response clearly demonstrates an understanding that a way to deal with the negative consequences of ethnic cleavages is to create legislative seat quotas for the ethnic groups. Some other acceptable responses include promoting a national identity to unify the state, using election systems to create a multiparty system, or using devolution to give power to local ethnic groups.

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Question 6 (continued)

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for describing that one action governments take to address the negative consequences of a wealth cleavage is to “implement distribution of wealth programs, which can be done through progressive [*sic*] income taxes, to balance out or reduce socio-economic inequality.” The response clearly demonstrates an understanding that changes to tax policies will reduce the wealth gap. Additional acceptable responses include expanding educational opportunities, establishing job training programs, or developing infrastructure projects to decrease the negative consequences of the economic cleavage.

Sample: 6B

Score: 3

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for the identification of religion as a social cleavage and “the rich + the poor” as an economic cleavage.” The response is clear with specific examples that demonstrate an understanding that a social cleavage is a deep division between groups in society, and an economic cleavage is a deep division between groups based on income or access to resources. Some acceptable responses for social cleavages include ethnicity, class, and age. Some acceptable responses for economic cleavages include class, urban–rural, and region.

In part (b) the response did not earn a point for explaining how leaders use cleavages to strengthen a government’s hold on power. The statement “by appealing to one cleavage so they maintain power” does not clearly indicate how appealing to a cleavage helps the leaders to strengthen the government’s hold on power as required by the prompt.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for explaining that cleavages can undermine regime stability because “they can promote violence.” The response clearly demonstrates an understanding that conflict can undermine regime stability. Additional acceptable responses include that the cleavage can undermine a sense of national identity, which lessens regime stability; that the cleavage can weaken a state’s ability to enforce law and order; and that the cleavage can create polarization, which challenges state legitimacy.

In part (d) the response did not earn a point for describing an action that governments take to address the negative consequences of a religious cleavage. The statement “representing all of the social cleavages” does not describe a specific action that governments could take, such as implementing a quota system to ensure representation by multiple religious groups. In addition, the example used that “Nigeria represents these groups by having to elect a president alternating between Muslim + Christianity” is an agreement between political parties. The example used in the response does not address the prompt, which requires a description of a government action.

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for describing that one action governments take to address the negative consequences of a wealth cleavage is “increasing welfare based programs.” The response clearly demonstrates an understanding that changes to welfare programs will reduce the gap between rich and poor. Additional acceptable responses include expanding educational opportunities, establishing job training programs, or developing infrastructure projects to decrease the negative consequences of the economic cleavage.

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Question 6 (continued)

Sample: 6C

Score: 1

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for identifying one social cleavage and one economic cleavage. “Gun rights” is not an example of a social cleavage, and “differing opinions on tax rate [*sic*]” is not an example of an economic cleavage as required by the prompt. Differences in public opinion are not the same as deep socioeconomic divisions.

In part (b) the response did not earn a point for explaining how leaders use cleavages to strengthen a government’s hold on power. The statement that “[b]y shaping their platform to correspond with specific cleavages, governments can rally the support of citizens” does not clearly indicate how the cleavage is being used to strengthen the government’s hold on power as required by the prompt.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for explaining that cleavages can undermine regime stability when they “lead to ... revolt from citizens.” The response clearly demonstrates an understanding that conflict can undermine regime stability. Additional acceptable responses include that the cleavage can undermine a sense of national identity, which lessens regime stability; that the cleavage can weaken a state’s ability to enforce law and order; and that the cleavage can create polarization, which challenges state legitimacy.

In part (d) the response did not earn a point for describing a different action that governments can take to address the negative consequences of a social cleavage. “Gun rights” is not a social cleavage, and the prompt requires a government action taken to address a social cleavage.

In part (e) the response did not earn a point for describing a different action that governments can take to address the negative consequences of an economic cleavage. “[T]he case of tax rates” is not an economic cleavage, and the prompt requires a government action taken to address an economic cleavage.