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AP[®]

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AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Question 3: Comparative Analysis**5 points**

(a) Define a political party system. **1 point**

Acceptable definitions include:

- A political party system is defined by the number of political parties that are able to win elections and govern.
- A political party system is defined by the power, influence, or strength of political parties and the degree of competition between parties.

(b) Describe two different examples of political party systems, each one within a different AP Comparative Government and Politics course country. **2 points**

Acceptable descriptions include the following (max one point per country):**China**

- Single/one-party system – In China, only the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is allowed to govern.

Scoring Note: Responses that say “No other parties are allowed in China” earn no credit. Parties other than the Communist Party are allowed to exist but not govern.

Iran

- Iran lacks a formal political party system as parties operate as loosely formed political alliances.

Mexico

- Multiparty system – In Mexico, current rules allow multiple parties to win elections and govern.
- Dominant party system – Under the PRI/Before 2000, the rules allowed other political parties to compete, but only one party controlled the government in Mexico.

Nigeria

- Multiparty system – In Nigeria, there are rules that allow multiple parties to win elections and govern.
- Two-party system – In Nigeria, two major parties, the APC and the PDP, regularly win elections and govern.
- Dominant party system – Under the PDP/Before 2015, the rules allowed other political parties to compete, but only one party controlled the government in Nigeria.

Russia

- Dominant party system – The rules allow other political parties to compete, but only one party, United Russia, controls the government in Russia.
- Multiparty system – Under Yeltsin/Before 2001, multiple parties existed and won seats in the legislature.

United Kingdom

- Multiparty system – In the United Kingdom, there are rules that allow multiple parties to win elections and govern.
- Two-party system – Two major parties, Conservatives and Labour, regularly win the most seats in the legislatures and are able to form the ruling government.

Scoring Note: The United Kingdom can be called a multiparty system, a 2-party-plus system, or a 2-½ party system.

- (c) Explain how the political party systems shape political efficacy in each country described in part (b). **2 points**

Acceptable explanations include the following (max one point per country):

- In the UK/Mexico/Nigeria, multiparty systems increase efficacy because they offer more than one viable option for diverse interests to be represented.
- In UK/Nigeria, the two-party system limits efficacy because there are limited options for representation and minority voices.
- In Russia's/Mexico's/Nigeria's dominant party system citizens lack efficacy because it is clear which party will always win elections and dominate the system.
- Russia's/Mexico's/Nigeria's dominant party system gives the appearance of a competitive party system so citizens may feel political efficacy.
- In China's single party system efficacy is limited because there are no viable alternative options.
- In China's single party system some citizens may have political efficacy because the party system allows for participation through party institutions and organizations that have real power.

Total for question 3 5 points

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

(A) A political party system is the structure in which political parties are formatted within a country, so that it may be competitive, varied, or corrupt and lacking competition. Political party system is the balance or lack-thereof of party competition in government.

(B) Mexico has a multi-party system, wherein many political parties compete for a genuine chance at representation in government, and some of these parties include PRI, PRD, PAN and Morena. This comes after Mexico emerged from PRI party domination in the 1970s. China, however, represents a one-party system wherein the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) absolutely dominates government and does not allow for any oppression or genuine competition. This differs from Mexico, which was formerly a dominant-party system under PRI, then became a multi-party system model.

(C) Mexico's multi-party system bolsters political efficacy in Mexican people by providing them authentic range of choices and competition (however, corruption and executive failure to address violence/cartels diminishes this efficacy gained from the multi-party system). In China, political efficacy is highly diminished with the lack of choice and competition, however the Chinese government sought to appease its citizens with control and minor competition in local/regional elections. Mexico's multi-party system boosts political efficacy while China's one-party system diminishes political efficacy.

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Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

A political party system is the way in which political parties are organized and function in a regime. Russia has a dominant party system, which is a system that contains multiple parties, but one party possesses most of the power. In Russia, Vladimir Putin's United Russia party is the dominant party. Other parties receive very little power, and some, like the Communist party and the Liberal Democrat party function as proxies. Their goals align with United Russia, but they ~~are~~ are made distinct to create an illusion of diversity. United Russia retains power using these proxies and by manipulating elections. The United Kingdom possesses a two-party system, ~~wherein~~ wherein multiple parties exist, but two specific parties hold most of the political power. The domination of the majority parties is high, but not necessarily absolute. The UK's dominant parties, the Conservative party and the Labour party, represent conflicting interests, primarily in regards to economic policy. These parties became the majority through the UK's ~~single-member~~ single-member district plurality election style, which causes two parties to gain gradually increasing votes each election cycle, while other parties fall behind. Though both party systems can harm political efficacy, the party-dominant system ~~is far~~ has far more impact. The manipulation of Russian elections by

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

United Russia creates an illegitimate democracy. Citizens see that the outcome ~~does~~ never changes, so they lose faith in their vote. The two-party system of the UK causes voters to lose faith in voting for third-party candidates, as the success of those candidates is very low. This forces voters into a binary choice where they may need to compromise either way. This only partially reduces political efficacy, as voting is only reduced to two options.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

- A) A political party system is a structure in which individuals with similar ^{political} interests organize to ~~run~~ run candidates in governmental elections and establish policy platforms and ideologies.
- B) The United Kingdom has a two party political system where two political parties control the functions of government by garnering electoral support. In the United Kingdom's Parliamentary elections most citizens will vote for the Labour or Conservative party, the two major parties, and legislative seats are divided based upon the results. The Prime Minister is then elected by the majority party.
- In China, there is a single party system, where one political party has complete control over the government. The Communist Party of China has elections but only to reaffirm the ~~control~~ CCP's control over the executive, legislature, and judiciary.
- C) The United Kingdom's two party system allows the two major political parties to dominate the Parliament, the most important branch. Their system of the Prime Minister being from the majority party increases efficacy because the legislature and executive will have similar policy priorities, minimizing political deliberations and slowing efforts to pass legislation or enact policies. China's ^{single} party system maximizes

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Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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efficacy for the controlling party. Without political and electoral dissent, the Communist party is free to establish whatever policies it deems appropriate. The president can easily establish policy without much, if any, push back. This system gives way to authoritarian control and very little political participation while the two party system of the UK allows for more participatory democracy and accountability in government.

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Question 3

Comparative Analysis

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

The intent of this comparative analysis question was to assess students' understanding of the concept of political party systems and their ability to describe and explain the impact of political party systems in countries studied in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course. The skills tested were descriptive and explanatory. Students first were expected to define a political party system. Then they had to demonstrate their understanding of political party systems by describing two examples of different political party systems, each one within a different course country. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of how political party systems in each of those two countries shape political efficacy.

Sample: 3A

Score: 5

(a) The response earned 1 point for defining a political party system as “the balance or lack-therof of party competition in government.”

(b) The response earned 1 point for describing an example of a political party system in Mexico as “a multi-party system, wherein many political parties compete for a genuine chance at representation in government.” The response earned 1 point for describing an example of a political party system in China as “a one-party system wherein the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) absolutely dominates government and does not allow for ... genuine competition.”

(c) The response earned 1 point for explaining that “Mexico's multi-party system bolsters political efficacy in Mexican people by providing them authentic range of choices and competition.” The response earned 1 point for explaining, “In China, political efficacy is highly diminished with the lack of choice and competition.”

Sample: 3B

Score: 4

(a) The response did not earn a point for defining a political party system. The definition it provides does not include an explicit reference to the strength and degree of competition between political parties that characterize a political party.

(b) The response earned 1 point for describing the political party system in Russia as “a dominant party system, which is a system that contains multiple parties, but one party possesses most of the power.” The response earned 1 point for describing the political party system in the United Kingdom as “a two-party system, wherein multiple parties exist, but two specific parties hold most of the political power.”

Question 3 (continued)

(c) The response earned 1 point for explaining, “Though both party systems can harm political efficacy, the party-dominant system has far more impact. ... Citizens see that the outcome never changes, so they lose faith in their vote.” The response earned 1 point for explaining that “the two-party system of the UK causes voters to lose faith in voting for third- party candidates, as the success of these candidates is very low.”

Sample: 3C

Score: 2

(a) The response did not earn a point for defining a political party system. The response describes the function of a political party rather than stating that a political party system is defined by the number of political parties that are able to win elections and govern.

(b) The response earned 1 point for describing that “the United Kingdom has a Two party political system where two political parties control the functions of government by garnering electoral support.” The response earned 1 point for describing that “in China, there is a single party system, where one political party has complete control over the government.”

(c) The response did not earn a point because it focuses on the efficacy of a parliamentary and a single-party system as opposed to explaining how party systems shape how voters feel that they can influence political affairs.