



## AP<sup>®</sup> Comparative Government & Politics 2003 Sample Student Responses

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Question 1

Although China's development has been characterized by a focus on economic reform, China has taken some steps towards political liberalization. One indication of this change is the opportunities Chinese citizens now have to participate in politics.

One example of political participation in China is local elections. Recently, local elections have been held, allowing the Chinese to select local leaders. Local government, although not too powerful in the larger scheme, can influence decisions that directly affect their regions. Chinese citizens use this means of political participation, however limited, to influence ~~politics~~ politics on a smaller scale.

On a national level, there has been increased liberalization within the National People's Congress. In the past ten years, membership has been extended to include reformists and <sup>the</sup> business classes, ~~membership~~ <sup>participation</sup> is no longer restricted to members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). ~~By~~ The Congress has become more representative of Chinese society - the new business class created by economic reforms is now be involved in government. Of course, their membership in the Congress does not seriously impact Chinese policy; in spite of these measures

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of political participation, the CCP still had all 'real' power in Chinese politics. The People's Congress, although the main organ of government according to the Chinese constitution, is really just a rubber stamp for policies created by the Politburo of the CCP.

However limited these means of political participation are, they are still used. The fact is that Chinese people do participate in local elections, and that ~~the~~ capitalist, reformist ~~to~~ ~~business people~~ businessmen now sit next to their communist counterparts in the National People's Congress.

The increased political opportunities can be accounted for by two factors: foreign and domestic pressures for reform. ~~China~~ China has found it difficult to shut out foreign ideas while accepting ~~the~~ foreign money and goods. ~~The CCP has~~ ~~also~~ ~~been~~ The younger generation of Chinese in particular are increasingly influenced by western models, and put pressure on their government to reform. The CCP also faces pressure directly from ~~its~~ its trading partners, who threaten to decrease trade unless China is more accommodating to its citizens (i.e. less arbitrary).

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Question 1

arrests & punishment for speaking against government

The increased level of Chinese citizen participation in China can only lead to a desire for more political liberties and influence. It is likely that the CCP will <sup>have to</sup> continue to relinquish power if it wishes to remain relevant in today's increasingly ~~political~~ democratic liberal world.

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Certainly, the People's Republic of China, even in its official name, has often been considered an ironic, perhaps even paradoxical sort of government; one that claims to be run by the people and for the people, but one nonetheless that has, over several decades, forcefully repressed not only the freedom of new thinking but also the natural right to participate in the machinations of government. However, at snail's pace to be sure, this trend is beginning to reverse its course and observers of Chinese politics will now perceive a marked shift towards greater political participation, especially since the end of the Cultural Revolution and the ascension of more reform-minded leaders like Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and now, Hu Jintao.

Perhaps one of the newest and most observable forms of political participation has been the ability for citizens to elect their local leaders. Admittedly, this form of free elections has not risen significantly high up the hierarchical ladder, but at least at the village and municipal levels, ~~these~~ denizens of China are now getting the opportunity to vote. This new form and one of the first tangible forms of real political participation has resulted from loose interpretation of China's latest Constitution, which somewhat ironically is considerably older than this policy. One could argue that the increasingly open

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nature of <sup>the</sup> Chinese economy has recently facilitated the opportunity for citizens to become more participatory. Since Deng Xiaoping's presidency and the reforms, especially economic, that came with it, a few Chinese citizens have begun to experiment with limited forms of domestic capitalism or free enterprise. While China is decades away from being capitalist, the ~~economic~~ softening of economic regulations have given local entrepreneurs the ability to shape the present and the future course of China's currently burgeoning economy. Subsequently, these select citizens are affecting China's government for the gigantic nation is now heavily reliant on its economic prowess and ~~the~~ the government is beginning to revolve around it.

Clearly ~~eventually~~, China is changing, but one might justifiably ask exactly what the impetus for this change has been. Overall, two major factors have played significant roles in shaping the increased opportunity for political participation: leadership and the relative importance of China's economy. Firstly, those who are now reaping the benefits of increased participation owe a great deal to Deng Xiaoping and his successors. Deng realized that the Cultural Revolution and oppressive rule of Mao Zedong had placed China in the doldrums, struggling to

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support its population and striving to control the increasingly educated populace. With the reforms of Deng and those who would come to follow him, China progressed from pure totalitarianism to a still tenuous government, but one with a backbone built on the economy. The success of the economy enabled people to gain power and has even allowed for a medium of political liberalization. On a similar note, it is the now powerful economy of China that has given it clout worldwide, especially with regard to trade. The result at home in China, though, has been increased openness and thus more political participation. The result of greater political participation in China has been a greater share of the government belonging to the non-party-elite, thus bringing China one small step closer to <sup>truly</sup> being a republic of the people.

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Chinese citizens have had more opportunities ~~to~~ to participate since the initiation of reform. One form of political participation is a protest. Although informal, a protest is a great way to take part in politics. The Chinese are allowed to protest peacefully, and have done so. Another form is voting. They have been given the right to vote. Voting is a very direct way to get something accomplished. 2 factors account for the increased opportunities for political participation. Now that the Chinese have tasted the good life, they do not want to go back. Any freedoms taken away will infuriate the Chinese people. Also, they have just had a taste of honey and now want the whole jar. They are going to continue to demand more and more liberties and ways to participate in ~~politic~~ politics. Only when China is a true democracy will this ~~many~~ practice come to an end. The people in charge of power will have to keep relinquishing it, and I don't think that they ~~want to do that~~ want to do that. China is on the road to another revolution unless it creates a stronger more centralized constitution with increased rights for its people.