

AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 7

8 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly identifying the PRI as Mexico's historically dominant party AND for identifying Mexico's current party system as multiparty.

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for EACH correct description of a reform that facilitated Mexico's transition away from a dominant party system.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- The establishment of the IFE
- More autonomy and strength for the IFE
- The elimination of el dedazo
- A series of electoral reforms to encourage minority representation
- Privatizing state-owned corporations, decreasing patronage
- Decentralization reform, reducing PRI power at the subnational level
- Zedillo's decision to use primaries for the PRI

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly identifying United Russia as Russia's current dominant party.

Note: A response merely stating "Putin's party" does not earn a point.

Part (d): 2 points

One point is earned for EACH correct description of a reform that allowed Russia to establish a dominant party system.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Increasing the threshold
- Instituting election rule changes that encourage dominant party selection by candidates
- Eliminating gubernatorial elections or appointment of governors
- Creating unequal access to media
- Raising registration requirements for parties
- Allowing only legally registered parties to run for office
- Using selective court decisions to disqualify candidates

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Question 7 (continued)

Part (e): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of how a dominant party can promote political legitimacy.

Acceptable explanations include:

- Promotes stability
- Brings about policy continuity
- Creates more efficient policymaking, reduces gridlock
- Gains a majority of votes in an election
- Boosts nationalism
- Creates a better investment environment
- Enacts necessary reforms

One point is earned for a correct explanation of how a dominant party can hinder political legitimacy.

Acceptable explanations include:

- Limits competitiveness or voter choice
- Increases chances for authoritarianism
- Undermines checks and balances
- Reduces representativeness or popular voice
- Undermines the opposition
- Encourages corruption

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

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

Country Context: We suggest that you spend approximately 40 minutes (20 minutes each) on questions 7 and 8.

7. Party systems in Mexico and Russia affect the political legitimacy of each state.

- (a) Identify Mexico's historically dominant party, and identify the type of party system Mexico currently has.
- (b) Describe two reforms since 1980 that facilitated Mexico's transition away from a dominant party system.
- (c) Identify Russia's current dominant party. *UR*
- (d) Describe two reforms since 2000 that allowed Russia to establish a dominant party system.
- (e) Explain how a dominant party system can promote political legitimacy. Explain how a dominant party system can hinder political legitimacy. *Stability reduced competition - No new ideas*

a) Historically, the dominant party in Mexico has been the PRI, but today Mexico has a multiparty system with 3 major parties: the PRI, the PAN, and the ~~PRD~~ *PRD*.

b) One ^{since 1980} reform that enabled Mexico to move away from a dominant party system was that presidents no longer chose their successor. PRI presidents would always choose another PRI member to replace them, causing the dominant party system to continue, but when this practice stopped, it allowed for a candidate from a different party, the PAN, to be elected. Another reform was introducing *proportional* representation into elections rather than solely single member district plurality. This allowed other parties besides the PRI to gain seats in the legislature, helping to create a multiparty system.

c) Russia's current dominant party is United Russia.

d) One reform since 2000 that allowed Russia to establish a dominant party was increasing the threshold needed by a party to gain seats in the legislature, to

7%. This high increase from 2% prevented smaller, regional parties from gaining any seats, and only allowed for major parties, like United Russia, to gain the seats. ^① ~~Another~~ reform

e) A dominant party system can promote political legitimacy by providing stability. The government is not constantly changing ^{ideologies} after each election in a dominant party system, allowing citizens to be more comfortable with the government and know what to expect policy-wise because of the similar ideologies of the former and current executives and legislature of the same party. A dominant party can hinder political legitimacy by reducing competition among parties and preventing new ideas of a different ideology. Because there is ~~very~~ no diversity in parties, each passing government in a state will think similarly and pass policies that go along with their party's ideology. There is very little room for new and different ideas in a dominant party system, which could upset citizens and hurt political legitimacy.

① Another reform is that the president now appoints representatives of the 83 regions to the upper house rather than them being elected. This has allowed President Putin to appoint other members of United Russia to the

Question 7 is reprinted for your convenience.

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legislature, which increases the party's dominance
in Russia.

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- Identify Mexico's historically dominant party, and identify the type of party system Mexico currently has.
 - Describe two reforms since 1980 that facilitated Mexico's transition away from a dominant party system.
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 - Explain how a dominant party system can promote political legitimacy. Explain how a dominant party system can hinder political legitimacy.

The PRI was Mexico's dominant party for a long time, most of the twentieth century. Currently, Mexico has a coalition system, with multiple parties that can coalition together to form the government.

The ruling party of Mexico toned down its oppression of other parties over time. They also quit using vote fraud, instead offering free and fair elections. These two changes helped lead to their transition to a multiparty system.

The dominant party in Russia is United Russia, Vladimir Putin's party.

Since 2000, the Russian government has nationalized many formerly private industries. This led to many business executives supporting the ruling party, because they are now comfortable with the way Russia is handling nationalized industry. Russia's crackdowns on internet freedom have also helped establish their ruling party's dominance. Russian internet users are not exposed to other countries' viewpoints and are isolated with their own politics.

A dominant party system avoids much of the debate and

reflection that takes place in multiparty systems' lawmaking processes. This can lead to quicker action on important issues, which would be popular among citizens and increase the government's political legitimacy. However, a dominant party system very rarely represents the views of all citizens, especially minority groups. For example, the Russian government does not represent the interests of Siberian people or gay people very well. This leads to decreased political legitimacy.

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 - Describe two reforms since 1980 that facilitated Mexico's transition away from a dominant party system.
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 - Explain how a dominant party system can promote political legitimacy. Explain how a dominant party system can hinder political legitimacy.

A) The dominant party in Mexico that had extended for over seven decades until the election that made Vicente Fox president, was the PRI. Mexico currently has a two party system consisting of PRI and PAN.

B) Two reforms that transitioned away from a dominant party system include making the patron-client system illegal and the implementing of government officials based on convenience illegal.

C) Russia's current dominant party is United Russia.

D) Two reforms that allow this to occur is Putin's law stating that there must be presidential term limit that must be placed after his presidency and the ability for the president to pick the prime minister.

E) A dominant party system can promote

7C 2/2

political legitimacy because they can follow the rules of the constitution as well as be fairly voted in through popular vote; however, political ~~legitimacy~~ ~~can~~ party dominance can hinder legitimacy by being in power through the patron-client system as well as corruption.

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Question 7

Overview

The intent of the question was for students to examine party systems in Mexico and Russia and consider how a dominant party system impacts political legitimacy. The skills tested were conceptual, descriptive, and explanatory: to identify, describe, and explain. Students had six specific tasks: to identify Mexico's historically dominant party and its current type of political party system, to describe two reforms since 1980 that facilitated Mexico's transition away from a dominant party system, to identify Russia's current dominant party, to describe two reforms since 2000 that allowed Russia to establish a dominant party system, to explain how a dominant party system can promote political legitimacy, and to explain how a dominant party system can hinder political legitimacy.

Sample: 7A

Score: 7

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying Mexico's historically dominant party as the PRI and identifying the type of party system in Mexico as "a multiparty system." In part (b) the response earned 1 point for describing one reform that since 1980 has facilitated Mexico's transition away from a dominant party system as "[p]resident's [*sic*] no longer chose their successor." In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing that a second reform "was introducing proportional representation into elections rather than solely single member district plurality." In part (c) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying United Russia as Russia's current dominant party. In part (d) the response earned 1 point for describing one reform since 2000 that allowed Russia to establish a dominant party system by stating, "increasing the threshold needed by a party to gain seats in the legislature to 7%." In part (d) the response does not correctly describe a second reform that helped establish a dominant party in Russia. In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining how a dominant party system can promote political legitimacy by "providing stability." In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining how a dominant party system hinders political legitimacy "by reducing competition among parties and preventing new ideas of a different ideology."

Sample: 7B

Score: 4

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying Mexico's historically dominant party as the PRI and identifying the type of party system Mexico currently has by stating it has "multiple parties." In part (b) the response does not correctly describe a reform that facilitated Mexico's transition away from a dominant party system. In part (c) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying United Russia as Russia's current dominant party. In part (d) the response does not correctly describe a reform that allowed Russia to establish a dominant party system. In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining how a dominant party system can promote political legitimacy because this system "avoids much of the debate and reflection that takes place in multiparty systems' lawmaking processes" and "can lead to quicker action on important issues." In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining how a dominant party system hinders political legitimacy because it "very rarely represents the views of all citizens, especially minority groups."

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Question 7 (continued)

Sample: 7C

Score: 2

In part (a) the response does not correctly describe the party system Mexico currently has. In part (b) the response does not correctly describe reforms that helped Mexico transition away from a dominant party system. In part (c) the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying United Russia as Russia's current dominant party. In part (d) the response does not correctly describe reforms that allowed for the establishment of a dominant party system in Russia. In part (e) the response does not correctly explain how a dominant party system can promote political legitimacy. In part (e) the response earned 1 point for correctly explaining how a dominant party system hinders political legitimacy by "being in power through ... corruption."