

2010 AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

8. Political competition and transparency are key concepts that political scientists use when evaluating political systems.
- (a) Describe political competition, and describe transparency in the context of politics.
 - (b) Explain the function of Iran's Guardian Council in the electoral process. Explain the function of Mexico's Institute of Federal Elections (IFE) in the electoral process.
 - (c) Compare transparency in the electoral process in post-1979 Iran with transparency in the electoral process in post-1985 Mexico.
 - (d) Compare political competition in the electoral process in post-1979 Iran with political competition in the electoral process in post-1985 Mexico.

STOP

END OF EXAM

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Question 8

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for an accurate description of political competition.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- when there is more than one political group or candidate that can contest an election and have a chance of winning
- when there are a limited number of hurdles for entering into meaningful electoral competition

One point is earned for an accurate description of transparency in the context of politics.

Acceptable explanations include:

- when citizens can access information about government decisions and decision-making processes
- when political decisions and processes are openly explained and visible to the citizenry

Note: Discussing government openness as a description of transparency is acceptable. Transparency is citizens' ability to access that information, *not* citizen awareness of information.

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for an accurate explanation of the function of the Guardian Council in Iran's electoral process.

Acceptable explanations include:

- vetting candidates for the legislative and presidential positions
- supervising the overall quality of the elections, including monitoring electoral fraud
- nullifying election results if they are deemed fraudulent; approving the results if they are not

Note: The Ministry of Interior (MoI), *not* the Guardian Council, organizes and administers elections. The Guardian Council's role in overseeing elections is a broad supervisory one.

One point is earned for an accurate explanation of the function of the Institute of Federal Elections (IFE) in the electoral process.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- organizing elections of the president and the Congress of the Union
- registering voters and parties
- giving all parties access to the media
- setting the ceiling for campaign expenditures
- allocating public funds for campaigns
- recruiting and training citizens to run polling places
- confirming the electoral results (counting votes and certifying results)

Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for an accurate comparison of transparency in the electoral process in Iran and Mexico.

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Question 8 (continued)

Acceptable comparisons include:

- Over time, transparency has increased in Mexico, while it has not increased in Iran.
- The electoral process in Mexico is more transparent than the electoral process in Iran.

Note: To earn the point, the response must accurately compare transparency in the electoral process in Mexico with transparency in the electoral process in Iran. Comparisons within countries (over time) that do not also compare across countries do not earn a point.

One point is earned for an accurate discussion of transparency in the electoral process in Iran and Mexico.

Acceptable discussions include:

- In Mexico, the establishment of the IFE has facilitated access to decision making about those eligible to be candidates .
- In Iran, there is no formal mechanism for citizens to demand access to Guardian Council decisions and decision-making processes with regard to vetting of candidates.

Note: To earn the point, the response must accurately discuss transparency in the electoral process in *both* countries.

Part (d): 2 points

One point is earned for an accurate comparison of political competition in the electoral process in Iran and Mexico.

Acceptable comparisons include:

- In terms of overall trends, political competition increased in Mexico between 1985 and 2010, while it did not increase in Iran between 1979 and 2010.
- There are more political parties or groups competing in elections in Iran, but the electoral process in Mexico is more competitive than the electoral process in Iran.

Note: To earn the point, the response must accurately compare political competition in Mexico to political competition in Iran. Comparisons within countries (over time) that do not also compare across countries do not earn a point. In certain periods in Iran (e.g., the 1997 election) there was greater political competition than in others.

One point is earned for an accurate discussion of political competition in Iran and Mexico.

Acceptable discussions include:

- In Mexico electoral law reforms have provided opportunities for more meaningful competition.
- In Iran there is no guarantee of meaningful political competition.

Note: To earn the point, the response must accurately discuss political competition in *both* countries.

A score of 0 is earned for an attempted answer that merits no points.

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