

AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
2014 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 7

6 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for a definition of a unitary system.

Acceptable definitions include:

- In a unitary system, political power resides in the national government, with little or no power delegated to local governments.
- In a unitary system, political power resides in the central government, and local governments do not have constitutional status.

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct description of how Great Britain has decentralized power since 1997.

Acceptable descriptions may include:

- Great Britain has devolved power to regions, specifically Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as London.
- The national parliament has passed reforms devolving policymaking power to regional governments in certain areas, including health, education, judicial issues, and some taxation.

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for a definition of federalism.

Acceptable definitions are:

- In a federal system, the central and subnational governments share power.
- In a federal system, national and subnational governments are established by the constitution with certain enumerated powers.

Part (d): 1 point

- One point is earned for a correct explanation of how Mexico's political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000.

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Question 7 (continued)

Acceptable explanations may include that prior to 2000:

- The Mexican president was very powerful. Most governors of states came from the same party as the president and had to do the president's bidding.
- Due to the dominance of the PRI, the president and the central government had significant informal powers over governors and other regional officials.
- Revenues were highly centralized. Although some powers were transferred in the 1980s to the local level, funding was not. Some revenue was given to municipalities in the 1990s, but states were unable to bring in their own tax revenues.
- The *dedazo* allowed the president to select his successor without input from the states.

Part (e): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of an advantage of decentralization for public policies, and one point is earned for a correct explanation of a disadvantage of decentralization for public policies.

Acceptable advantages of decentralization may include:

- It allows for policy innovation at the local level.
- It ensures that local policies serve local needs.
- It allows for competition between states or regions that improves policies.
- It promotes political efficacy, political participation, or democracy at the local level.
- It decreases costs at the central level or local level.
- It acts as a local check on central power.
- It allows for better representation of local ethnic and other groups.

Acceptable disadvantages of decentralization may include:

- It allows for policy incoherence or contradictory policy between regions or between federal and local governments.
- It makes federal or local policy implementation slower, inefficient, or more difficult.
- It allows for inequality between regions and undermines national unity.
- It leads to corruption at the local level.
- It increases competition for resources among regions and exacerbates ethnic and local tensions.

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

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

7 A

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

7. Both unitary and federal systems may decentralize power.

- (a) Define a unitary system.
- (b) Describe how Great Britain has decentralized power since 1997.
- (c) Define federalism.
- (d) Explain how Mexico's political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000.
- (e) Explain one advantage of decentralization for public policy. Explain one disadvantage of decentralization for public policy.

A unitary system is one where the central government makes all (or has the power to make all) of the decisions. There is no separation of powers among divisions of government (national, state, or local) in a unitary system as the national government has all the power.

Great Britain has decentralized or devolved power^{since 1997} by letting regional legislatures make decisions for that region. For example, ~~the Scottish and Welsh~~ Scotland and Wales both have legislatures that can pass taxes or any other law. This decentralizes power from London and gives it to regional governments. However, in this unitary system, London still has the right to take away those regional legislatures at any time.

Federalism is a system where power is constitutionally divided among National, State/Regional, and local governments. Certain powers are reserved for the central government and certain power is reserved for state governments that cannot be taken away.

Mexico's political system limited decentralization prior to 2000 because of the constant rule by the PRI party. The PRI party, through force, corruption, and patron-clientism remained in power (through the presidency) for much of the 20th century in Mexico. Since the PRI wanted to have as much sway over policy in Mexico as possible, they didn't devolve any powers to regional governments in Mexico. Mexican state legislatures and governors were unable to pass laws contrary to the position of the PRI central government. Not until a PAN candidate broke the PRI state did Mexico finally begin to decentralize in 2000.

An advantage of decentralization of public policy is that often regional governments know

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Question 7 is reprinted for your convenience.

7A3

7. Both unitary and federal systems may decentralize power.
- (a) Define a unitary system.
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 - (c) Define federalism.
 - (d) Explain how Mexico's political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000.
 - (e) Explain one advantage of decentralization for public policy. Explain one disadvantage of decentralization for public policy.

What's best for the citizens of that region. National governments can be removed from the daily struggle of citizens across the country and that's where regional (or even local) governments and legislative bodies are the most beneficial.

A disadvantage of decentralization could be that if regional governments are allowed to make their own policy, the ~~National/Federal~~ ~~government may have difficulty~~ citizens moving from region to region would have to learn new laws and possibly require additional documentation. Additionally, decentralizing power may fragment a country (for example the UK has become more fragmented as it has devolved more power to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland).

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

7. Both unitary and federal systems may decentralize power.
- (a) Define a unitary system.
 - (b) Describe how Great Britain has decentralized power since 1997.
 - (c) Define federalism.
 - (d) Explain how Mexico's political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000.
 - (e) Explain one advantage of decentralization for public policy. Explain one disadvantage of decentralization for public policy.

Many countries have a unitary system in place. A unitary system is a type of government structure in which power is held by the ~~the~~ national government. There may be state or local governments, but most of the power resides in the national government.

Unitary systems may decentralize power. Great Britain, a country with a unitary system in place, has decentralized power since 1997 by devolution. Devolution is when the national government gives lower government some power and authority, often in certain areas. Great Britain is made up of four countries: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Great Britain has devolved power to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, therefore decentralizing power.

Other countries have a federal system in place. ~~Federal~~ In federal systems, power is shared between the national government and state governments. The federal system is often used in countries with large geographic areas.

Like unitary systems, federal systems may also decentralize power. Mexico's political system has limited the ~~dem~~ decentralization of power prior to 2000.

7C1

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

7. Both unitary and federal systems may decentralize power.

- (a) Define a unitary system.
- (b) Describe how Great Britain has decentralized power since 1997.
- (c) Define federalism.
- (d) Explain how Mexico's political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000.
- (e) Explain one advantage of decentralization for public policy. Explain one disadvantage of decentralization for public policy.

Both a unitary and a federal system may decentralize power.

- A) Though the actual definition of a unitary system is where the legislative branch and the executive branch are fused, and it is lead by the Head of the Government. An example of this could be the prime minister of any parliamentary system run country like Great Britain, where gridlock is non-existent, only in the case a coalition government is formed.
- B) Great Britain has decentralized some of its parliamentary power since 1997 by allowing some power to be ~~devote~~ devolved from the center in the government to regional governments like Scotland, N. Ireland, and Wales. This act that has been going on since 1997, has allowed for these regional parliaments to thrive, and those countries to allow them to make decisions and enact laws/ pass laws through their own terms without much meddling from the rest of the United Kingdom.
- C) Devolutionism can be described as a government structure where there is separation of powers between three separate branches. Those three branches usually headed by a President, and harbors all five aspects of a democracy, ~~as is avoided~~

- D) Mexico's political system has been limiting the decentralization of power prior to 2000 by passing laws/acts in order to better the political playing field. In Mexico currently, the parties are required to support 30% of female candidates whereas in the past, it was almost unheard of a woman getting into politics.
- E) In a decentralized form when it comes to public policy the one advantage is that laws/policies can be passed with ease. This is usually because ~~power~~ power is slowly devolved to our countries in a unit in the practice of devolution. Though one big setback/disadvantage, would be the act of a gridlock. Since opposition parties who have polarizing ideals can limit what gets passed and what does not. An example of this would be if England (the United Kingdom) tried/and formed a coalition government with the majority and minority party leaders, their ideals clashing, and policy would be set back and backed up.

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Question 7

Overview

The intent of the question was for students to examine unitary and federal systems and to consider how they may decentralize power. The skills tested were conceptual, descriptive, and explanatory: to define, describe, and explain. Students had six specific tasks: to define a unitary system, to describe how Great Britain has decentralized power since 1997, to define federalism, to explain how Mexico's political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000, to explain one advantage of decentralization for public policy, and to explain one disadvantage of decentralization for public policy.

Sample: 7A

Score: 6

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for correctly defining a unitary system as “one where the central government makes all (or has the power to make all) of the decisions.”

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for describing how Great Britain has decentralized power since 1997 “by letting regional legislatures make decisions for that region. For example, Scotland and Wales both have legislatures that can pass taxes or any other law.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for correctly defining federalism as “a system where power is constitutionally divided among National, State/Regional, and local governments.”

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for explaining how Mexico's political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000 with reference to how “the PRI party, through force, corruption, and patron-clientelism remained in power (through the presidency) for much of the 20th century in Mexico . . . Mexican state legislatures and governors were unable to pass laws contrary to the position of the PRI central government.”

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining one advantage of decentralization for public policy with reference to how “often regional governments know what's best for the citizens of that region. National governments can be removed from the daily struggle of citizens across the country and that's where regional (or even local) governments and legislative bodies are the most beneficial.”

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining one disadvantage of decentralization for public policy by stating that “if regional governments are allowed to make their own policy, citizens moving from region to region would have to learn new laws and possibly acquire additional documentation.”

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Question 7 (continued)

Sample: 7B

Score: 3

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for correctly defining a unitary system as “a type of government structure in which power is held by the national government. There may be state or local governments, but most of the power resides in the national government.”

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for describing how Great Britain has decentralized power since 1997 by stating that “Great Britain has devolved power to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, therefore decentralizing power.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for correctly defining federalism by stating that “power is shared between the national government and state governments.”

In part (d) the response did not earn a point for explaining how Mexico’s political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000.

In part (e) the response did not earn a point for explaining one advantage of decentralization for public policy because it is not linked decentralized policymaking.

In part (e) the response did not earn a point for explaining one disadvantage of decentralization for public policy because it is not linked decentralized policymaking.

Sample: 7C

Score: 1

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for correctly defining a unitary system.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for describing how Great Britain has decentralized power since 1997 “by allowing some power to be devolved from the center in the government to regional governments like Scotland N. Ireland, and Wales.”

In part (c) the response did not earn a point for correctly defining federalism.

In part (d) the response did not earn a point for explaining how Mexico’s political system limited the decentralization of power prior to 2000.

In part (e) the response did not earn a point for explaining one advantage of decentralization for public policy because it is not linked decentralized policymaking.

In part (e) the response did not earn a point for explaining one disadvantage of decentralization for public policy because it is not linked decentralized policymaking.