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# AP Comparative Government and Politics

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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**AP<sup>®</sup> COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**  
**2017 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 8**

**6 points**

**Part (a): 2 points**

One point is earned for correctly identifying a governmental constraint on media freedom in China AND one point is earned for an explanation of how it helped sustain the authoritarian regime in the past decade.

Acceptable identifications may include:

- Government censorship
- State control of the media
- Prosecution or intimidation of journalists
- Denying entry to or expelling foreign journalists

Acceptable explanations may include:

- To prevent emergence of dissent or opposition
- To prevent challenges to regime legitimacy
- To maintain regime support
- To prevent mobilization of opposition

**Part (b): 1 point**

One point is earned for correctly explaining why China has allowed some media freedom in the past decade.

Correct explanations include:

- Increasing legitimacy
- External pressure
- Allowing criticism of local officials
- Reducing corruption at the local or national level
- Difficulty in controlling the media, given modern technology

**Part (c): 1 point**

One point is earned for correctly explaining how the media has helped sustain democracy in Mexico in the past decade.

Acceptable explanations may include:

- Providing a check on government actions
- Providing accountability
- Ensuring fair elections
- Ensuring a voice for the opposition
- Encouraging citizen participation

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**Question 8 (continued)**

**Part (d): 1 point**

One point is earned for correctly describing one nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in Mexico in the past decade.

Correct descriptions may include:

- Increased violence against journalists by nongovernmental actors
- Intimidation by drug cartels
- Consolidation of media by private owners
- Limited access to media such as the Internet

**Part (e): 1 point**

One point is earned for correctly explaining why democratic regimes place constraints on media.

Correct explanations of why constraints are necessary in a democracy may include:

- To protect minority rights
- To protect national security
- To prevent libel and slander
- To prevent the encouragement of violent activities
- To maintain moral standards

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

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

8. The media serves an important function in all political systems.

- (a) Identify one governmental constraint on media freedom in China in the past decade AND explain how it helps sustain the authoritarian regime in China.
- (b) Explain why China has allowed some media freedom in the past decade.
- (c) Explain how the media helps sustain democracy in Mexico.
- (d) Describe one nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in Mexico in the past decade.
- (e) Explain why democratic regimes place constraints on media.

a) One governmental constraint on media freedom in China in the past decade has been on internet browsing capabilities, as the country has created the "Great Firewall", a filter system that limits what citizens can find on the internet. This filter helps sustain the authoritarian regime in China by allowing the Chinese Communist Party to limit citizens' access to websites and information about democracy and the west. This helps maintain the authoritarian regime by limiting the information most citizens have about other forms of government, therefore limiting their ability to try and change the regime.

b) China has allowed some media freedom in the past decade because it provides more legitimacy for the regime. By allowing some topics that do not seem threatening to the authoritarian regime (such as environmental issues) to be discussed, the people feel as though they have more opportunities for instigating change in China, although this may not always be true in actuality.

c) The media helps sustain democracy in Mexico because it is ~~not~~ relatively free and acts as a watchdog of the government. Mexico's ~~government~~ media publishes stories about government practices so that the citizens know what is



occurring in their governments. Then, citizens can try to limit these actions of their government by voting new officials into office or protesting the current government. Thus, democracy is sustained because the people remain in control of their government.

d) One nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in Mexico in the past decade has been by drug cartels, which may try to limit what stories the media publishes about their actions. Cartels have also been known to kill journalists, intimidating other journalists to not publish stories that portray the cartel's negative and/or illegal actions.

e) Democratic regimes can place constraints on media for a number of reasons, including protecting private citizens and protecting national security interests. Democratic regimes often have ~~known~~ slander laws which limit how the media may depict citizens who are not public figures in order to protect citizens' private reputations. Additionally, democratic regimes may limit the media to protect armed forces that may be in combative and secretive locations. By constraining media publication on sensitive troops' information, the regime can protect the troops from having their positions revealed to nearby enemies.

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8B.

8. The media serves an important function in all political systems.

- (a) Identify one governmental constraint on media freedom in China in the past decade AND explain how it helps sustain the authoritarian regime in China.
- (b) Explain why China has allowed some media freedom in the past decade.
- (c) Explain how the media helps sustain democracy in Mexico.
- (d) Describe one nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in Mexico in the past decade.
- (e) Explain why democratic regimes place constraints on media.

(a) The Chinese government's internet firewall restricts access to media by controlling what content the Chinese population is allowed to <sup>view</sup> or prohibited from viewing. As a result, most accessible media is either state-run or state-sanctioned.

(b) Increased media freedom increases political legitimacy by increasing the credence and value that constituents grant to media as an institution. For this reason, China has limited some restrictions on media recently.

(c) Non-state-run media sustains democracy by acting as a whistle-blower in calling out government corruption. By exposing the government's transgressions, media increases the government's transparency and consequently ~~also~~ sustains democracy in Mexico.

(d) The presence of nongovernmental drug cartels limits media freedom in Mexico. Particularly in cities with large cartel preferences, journalists



and other media workers face threats, violence, and other consequences for reporting on the reality of living in these areas.

(c) Democratic regimes have a vested interest in ensuring that their citizens are well-informed. Sometimes, this requires limiting the ability of media to perpetuate fake or inauthentic news reporting. As such, sometimes democratic regimes take steps to limit misinformation through media constraints.

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8. The media serves an important function in all political systems.

- (a) Identify one governmental constraint on media freedom in China in the past decade AND explain how it helps sustain the authoritarian regime in China.
- (b) Explain why China has allowed some media freedom in the past decade.
- (c) Explain how the media helps sustain democracy in Mexico.
- (d) Describe one nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in Mexico in the past decade.
- (e) Explain why democratic regimes place constraints on media.

a. One restraint on the media has been what can be looked up on the internet. It makes it to where no one can look up negative things about the regime.

b. China has allowed some media freedom in the past decade in order to improve on human rights.

c. The media helps sustain democracy by allowing the people to gain information about the government which is transparency.

d. One nongovernmental restraint on the media in Mexico in the past decade has been the drug cartels.

e. ~~The~~ They place restraints on the media because it sustains authoritarian regimes.



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## 2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 8

#### Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of the impact of media and control of media in authoritarian and democratic regimes, in particular China and Mexico. The skills tested were descriptive and explanatory. The students had six specific tasks: to identify a governmental constraint on media freedom in China in the past decade and to explain how that constraint helps sustain the authoritarian regime, to explain why China has allowed some media freedom in the last decade, to explain how the media helps sustain democracy in Mexico, to describe one nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in Mexico in the past decade, and to explain why democratic regimes place constraints on media.

#### Sample: 8A

##### Score: 6

The response earned 1 point in part (a) for correctly identifying “the ‘Great Firewall’” as a governmental constraint on media freedom in China. The response earned 1 point in part (a) for correctly explaining that China constrains media freedom “therefore limiting their ability to try and change the regime.” The response earned 1 point in part (b) for correctly explaining that more media freedom “provides more legitimacy.” The response earned 1 point in part (c) for correctly explaining that the media sustains democracy in Mexico because it “acts as a watchdog of the government.” The response earned 1 point in part (d) for correctly describing one nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in Mexico as “cartels have also been known to kill journalists, intimidating other journalists to not publish stories.” The response earned 1 point in part (e) for explaining that democracies place constraints on media for “protecting national security interests.”

#### Sample: 8B

##### Score: 4

The response earned 1 point in part (a) for correctly identifying that “the Chinese government’s internet firewall” is a governmental constraint on media freedom in China in the past decade. The response did not earn a point for explaining how a constraint helps sustain the authoritarian regime in China. The response earned 1 point in part (b) for correctly explaining that more media freedom helps sustain the authoritarian regime because it “increases political legitimacy.” The response earned 1 point in part (c) for correctly explaining that the media sustains democracy in Mexico because it acts “as a whistle-blower in calling out government corruption.” The response earned 1 point in part (d) for correctly describing one nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in the past decade as “drug cartels limits [sic] media freedom” because “journalists and other media workers face threats, violence, and other consequences.” The response did not earn a point in part (e) for explaining why democratic regimes place constraints on media.

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**Question 8 (continued)**

**Sample: 8C**

**Score: 1**

The response earned 1 point in part (a) for correctly identifying that “no one can look up negative things about the regime” due to restriction of the Internet as a governmental constraint in China in the past decade. The response did not earn a point for explaining how a constraint helps sustain the authoritarian regime in China. The response did not earn a point for explaining why China has allowed some media freedom in the past decade. The response did not earn a point for explaining how the media helps sustain democracy in Mexico. The response did not earn a point for describing one nongovernmental constraint on media freedom in Mexico in the past decade. The response did not earn a point for explaining why democratic regimes place constraints on media.