

AP Comparative Government Comparisons

Legitimacy

Britain – huge due to tradition and gradualism

Russia – yes, 1993 Constitution, 2000 transition from Yeltsin to Putin

China – stable, military forces legitimacy, but citizens see it as corrupt

Mexico – legitimate through PRI in the early 20th century; legitimacy from the 1910 Revolution and revolutionary leaders (Zapato, Villa, Cardenas)

Iran – legitimate through theocracy; 2009 election questioned legitimacy

Nigeria – no, corruption

Social classes

Britain – nobility; Labour Party leadership from labor unions

Russia – nomenklatura (Communist Party chooses who to give jobs to); Putin broke up oligarchs

China – CCP, Politburo; nomenklatura; lots of peasants

Mexico – PRI ruled until 2000; huge rich/poor cleavage

Iran – clerics rule

Nigeria – military power; ethnic divisions

Elections

Britain – FPTP; PM calls general election

Russia – proportional in Duma, FPTP in Federation Council

China – no national elections; government approves local candidates

Mexico – non-renewable sexenio; combo of FPTP and proportional

Iran – Majles, president, Assembly of Religious Experts

Nigeria – FPTP; lots of voter fraud

Military

Britain – gov. control

Russia – increasing in strength

China – People's Liberation Army; CCP controls it

Mexico – fights drug wars; mandatory service

Iran – Revolutionary Guards are loyal to shah

Nigeria – political power

Ethnic conflict

Britain – Irish and Muslims

Russia – Chechnya

China – Buddhists in Tibet

Mexico – Mestizo v. Amerindian

Iran – Sunni v. Shiite, Persian v. Azari

Nigeria – three major ethnicities in conflict

Political parties

Britain – Labour (poor, liberal); Conservative (rich, rightist); Liberal Democrats (centrist)

Russia – United Russia (Putin); Communist Party (Zyuganov); Liberal Democrats (Zhirinovskiy, nationalism); Fair Russia (Mironov)

China – CCP domination

Mexico – PRI (Calles, centrist, corporatist structure, patron-clientelism); PAN (Calderon, rightist, strong in north); PRD (Obrador, leftist)

Iran – parties form around personality; reflects factionalism

Nigeria – divided by ethnicity

Constitution

Britain – none; govern by tradition

Russia – 1998

China – 1982, mentions CCP; unitary

Mexico – 1917; federal system

Iran – 1979; amended in 1989 to include the Supreme Leader (non-elected)

Nigeria – 1999; similar to U.S.

Government structure

Britain – unitary, becoming more federal (Welsh Assembly); constitutional monarchy; parliamentary democracy

Russia – presidential republic; dual executive; close to unitary; sovereign democracy

China – democratic centralism

Mexico – presidential republic, powerful president

Iran – unitary, theocratic republic

Nigeria – presidential republic like U.S.

Modernization

Britain – developed

Russia – developed, rapid movement to democracy and free market

China – move to mixed economy; developing; guanxi

Mexico – newly developed; legitimate gov., national identity

Iran – much poverty, newly developed; nuclear technology

Nigeria – developing; low GDP per capita

Corruption

Britain – none

Russia – black market, mafia

China – corruption came with mixed economy

Mexico – massive voter fraud; drug trade; camarillas

Iran – corruption, voter fraud

Nigeria – massive corruption; prebendalism

Religion

Britain – Anglican Church (official)

Russia – legal; majority is Orthodox

China – atheist; persecutes dangerous religious groups (Buddhists, Falon Gong)

Mexico – majority is Roman Catholic

Iran – mostly Shiite; Baha'i persecuted

Nigeria – north Muslim, south Christian

Social cleavages

Britain – nobility v. working class; noblesse oblige

Russia – wealth; oligarchs v. middle class v. lower class

China – urban v. rural; migration to cities

Mexico – urban v. rural, north v. south, Mestizo v. Amerindian, rich v. poor

Iran – rich v. poor, reform v. conservative, Sunni v. Shiite

Nigeria – ethnicity, religion, language, region

Executive

Britain – PM is head of gov, Queen is head of state

Russia – PM is head of gov, president is head of state

China – premier is head of gov, president is head of state

Mexico – president is head of gov and state

Iran – president is head of gov, Supreme Leader is head of state

Nigeria – president is head of gov and state

Legislative

Britain – House of Commons with all power, House of Lords with no power

Russia – Duma dominates, Federation Council has little power

China – unicameral; true authority with CCP; CCP standing committee

Mexico – bicameral; Chamber of Deputies and Senate

Iran – unicameral; Majles elected; Guardian Council; Assembly of Religious Experts; Expediency Council

Nigeria – bicameral; House of Representatives and Senate

Judicial

Britain – Supreme Court; common law

Russia – Constitutional Court for judicial review, Supreme Court for criminal and civil cases; code law

China – Supreme People's Court; code law; recent reforms give more autonomy to courts

Mexico – code law; Supreme Court of Justice with theoretical judicial review

Iran – code law; judges must be clerics; appointed by Supreme Leader; sharia (Islamic law) and qanun (Majles non-sacred statutes); Supreme Court, Revolutionary Court, Clerical Court

Nigeria – common law, tribal law, sharia law; Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, Sharia Court

Economy

Britain – mixed; Thatcher privatization; Blair's third way; oil is NOT important

Russia – command to market; weak since it depends on oil prices

China – command to mixed

Mexico – mixed; relies on U.S.; WTO, NAFTA; PEMEX

Iran – mixed; small-level private enterprises

Nigeria – mixed; parastatals, patron-client relations; huge oil business

Civil society – how citizens organize and define themselves and their interests

Informal politics – the impact that beliefs, values, and actions of ordinary citizens have on policy-making

Co-optation – means a regime uses to get support from citizens

Patron-clientelism – the state provides benefits/favors to a single person or small group in return for public support

Social capital – reciprocity and trust that exists among citizens and between citizens and the state

Liberal (substantive) democracy – competitive elections, civil liberties, rule of law, judiciary neutrality, open civil society, civilian control of the military

Illiberal (procedural) democracy – just competitive elections

Technocrats – military officers and civilian bureaucrats

Transmission belts – interest groups have no autonomy from the state; authoritarian

Corporatism – state and interest group autonomy mixed

Interest group pluralism – autonomy in the interest groups; democratic