

**COMPARATIVE POLITICS
QUALIFYING EXAMINATION
Department of International Studies
Fall 2013**

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR STUDENT NUMBER ON YOUR EXAM

Instructions: Ph.D. students have eight (8) hours to complete the exam and must answer the mandatory and three (3) optional questions. M.A. students have four (4) hours and must answer the mandatory and two (2) optional questions. You must email your exam to Dr. Yaffe (l.yaffe@umiami.edu) immediately upon completion.

MANDATORY QUESTION

1. In their article “Debating the Direction of Comparative Politics” (*Comparative Political Studies*, 2007) Munck and Snyder define Comparative Politics as a “rich and diverse field that cannot be accurately characterized on the basis of just one dimension or even summarized in simple terms.” What do they mean by this definition, and what explains the field’s complexity? What are the ongoing debates about the direction of comparative politics in terms of the scope, objectives, theories and methods of research? What is your view on these debates? In your opinion, what are the trends that will likely characterize the field’s evolution in the near future?

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

Methodology

2. In “Debating the State of Comparative Politics: Views from Qualitative Research” (CPS 2007), Mahoney claims that “One may be skeptical of the validity of generalizations made from case-study and small-*N* researchers.” What factors explain this skepticism and what recent methodological advances have made small-*N* studies more robust? In addressing these questions explain the rival methodological approaches that characterize contemporary Comparative Politics. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each methodological approach? Is there, in your view, an ideal research approach to Comparative Politics?

Democracy and Modernization

3. Is there a clear and stable relationship between democracy and development? Or does this relationship vary by historical period and case context, especially the regime type prior to democratization? There is a long-standing debate about the social and economic correlates of democracy. In 1959, political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset famously argued that modernization caused democracy. Subsequently, other scholars have replicated this same finding—democracy is correlated with development. However, more recently Adam Przeworski and his coauthors presented strong empirical evidence that development does not cause democratization. Rather, they argue, development reduces the likelihood of democratic breakdown. Subsequently, other scholars have reaffirmed the classic Lipset-Aristotle position.

Who, if anyone, is correct? Citing the major contributors to this debate, your task is to review the theoretical and empirical studies and to adjudicate the findings in the contested field of democratization studies.

Domestic Politics and International Trends (Choose only one)

4. Beginning in the 2000s, new extra-hemispheric actors began to play an increasingly important role in Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, China has expanded its presence in the region, driven by a dramatic surge in trade. In the last decade or so, we have seen the emergence of a new body of literature on Sino-Latin American relations. Please provide an organized and well-structured review of the debates that have dominated the study of China's relations with Latin America. Who are the most important authors and theories involved in these debates?
5. National and regional integration have been two of the unfinished tasks in the history of Latin America. Two centuries after the call made by Simón Bolívar of a united Latin America, his dream is far from reality. Labels such as “Community”, “Union”, “Common Market” and “Alliance” have not translated into any substantive degree of dense integration. Why? National identity (a constant in the inquiry of intellectuals, scholars and politicians) seems also to be incomplete, eroded by economic inequality, social exclusion, and distrust for both democratic and autocratic political regimes. Why? Offer an analytical map of Latin America today by interpreting these interrelated issues (regional and national identity) and evaluate the possible future integration scenarios in the region. In formulating your response, take care to cite the major authors’ contributions to contemporary debates in Latin American comparative politics.

Failed States, Revolutions and Civil Wars

6. Revolutionary movements and civil wars have been the subject of study and permanent debate among CP scholars. Theories developed by Moore (1966), Skocpol (1979), Wickham-Crowley (1993), and Woods (2003), among others, address the conditions that precipitate the outbreaks of civil wars or revolutions. No consensus has been reached, as some scholars prioritize economic factors, whereas others stress the role of institutional and social factors, and others focus on ethnic cleavages. Write an essay surveying this literature, identifying the most influential authors and their arguments, theoretical approaches and methodologies employed. In your view, what is the current status of the debate in the social sciences on the causes of revolutions and civil wars? What are the main factors that differentiate civil wars and failed states?

Comparative Political Economy

7. Have globalization and the acceleration of international integration of markets in goods, services, and capital seriously eroded state power and national autonomy? Does the welfare state belong to a previous era? Is it out of step with globalization? Or do the challenges that welfare states have to address remain vital and have, in some instances, intensified (e.g., poverty, inequality, racial segregation, lack of access to public goods, etc.)? Has globalization, rather than weakening state power, actually

increased the scope and intensity of social welfare policies, and contributed to the continuing vitality of democracy and partisan politics? Your task is to address these questions examining these diverse viewpoints and explaining what empirical evidence and operational indicators you believe are most relevant to adjudicating rival arguments about states, democracy, and partisan politics under conditions of rapid globalization. To illustrate your answer, compare and contrast the European vs. Latin American welfare states.

Civil- Military Relations

8. The recent comparative politics literature on civil-military relations focusing on the quality of democratic governance in new civilian regimes has examined the mode and the legacies of transition from authoritarian rule as the key explanatory variables. What are the main theoretical hypotheses generated by the rival literatures? To what extent have predictions about post-authoritarian politics based on either (1) path dependent (structuralist) expectations, (2) the role of factors rooted in values and tradition (culturalist), or (3) more short-term, contingent (rationalist) perspectives been sustained? Are there other factors at work that may alter civil-military relations in ways not anticipated by the contending analyses of civil-military relations in the new democracies? In addition to citing the most important contributions, you should also mention the literature focusing on specific cross-national comparisons of at least two different geographical regions.

Transitional Justice

9. Most scholars agree that transitional justice (TJ) is a response to systematic or widespread violations of human rights which typically include judicial and non-judicial transitional justice mechanisms (TJM) such as criminal prosecutions, vetting, lustration, amnesties, truth-telling, reparations and institutional reform, etc. The main goals of TJ are to bring closure to past violations of human rights, facilitate national reconciliation (civic trust), and advance the conditions that can enable a transition to democracy and/or sustainable peace. While there is now considerable scholarship on TJ, the field is still in its infancy, particularly in terms of empirical findings. One of the exceptions is Kim and Sikkink (2010) who offer evidence that prosecutions during civil wars may even lead to greater improvements in human rights protection than prosecutions in times of peace. In contrast, Olsen, Payne and Reiter (2010), using data from their Transitional Justice Database, find that when deployed alone, single TJ mechanisms do not have statistically significant positive effects on democracy and human rights. Despite its embryonic state, TJ is increasingly encouraged by the UN and by international donor agencies using two main core assumptions: (1) The more TJMs, the more democracy; and (2) The more TJMs, the more peace. Using at least two examples of any of the emblematic countries that have used TJMs (i.e. Argentina, Chile, Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Africa or Rwanda, to name a few) discuss the theoretical and empirical merits of TJMs and their impacts on the main goals of TJ.

Welfare Regimes and Gender

10. Over the past two decades a large literature has developed in the field of comparative politics on gender and welfare regimes. It has focused on explaining variation on policies and policy outcomes related to gender roles, work and family in advanced industrialized countries, and in doing so has also modified welfare state theories more broadly. Recently, we have seen an emerging body of literature addressing welfare regimes, and gender and welfare regimes, in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. Discuss whether and how the findings of the literature on advanced industrialized countries can help us understand welfare policies in other regions, and whether and how they may need to be modified to capture the diverse realities of Latin America, Asia, and/or post-communist Europe, drawing on the emerging literature on these regions.

Institutions

11. The different variants of the so-called “new institutionalism”—rational-choice (RI), historical institutionalism (HI), sociological institutionalism (SI) and discursive institutionalism (DI)—do a reasonably good job of bringing institutions “back in” and providing persuasive accounts of stability and continuity in more institutionalized polities. However, critics claim that institutionalist theories are largely incapable of providing persuasive accounts of processes of dynamic change, such as revolutions or other major historical transformations. Taking care to identify the key authors and arguments, your task is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the rival explanations for stability and change articulated by each variant of institutionalism.

Participation and Civil Society

12. Led by social scientists such as Robert Putnam, “neo-Tocquevillians” have argued that there is a positive and universal relationship between civil participation and democracy. This idea has nurtured a vast literature on the topics of civil society, social capital, new social movements, and the public sphere, to name the most popular ones. However, the social capital thesis has been challenged in recent years by scholars with various disciplinary backgrounds who argue that the relationship between civic engagement and democracy is not necessarily positive nor a universal one. They have argued that “making democracy work” is more complex than simply fostering civil society participation. Please address this debate in its various dimensions. Be sure to cite the most influential authors and to illustrate your analysis with relevant empirical evidence.