

Comparative Politics Comprehensive Examination | August 2022

Majors: Please answer three questions from at least three different sections.

Minors: Please answer two questions from two different sections.

In each essay, you should:

- **Answer the question** that is asked. Refine if necessary but do not expand. If you find questions ambiguous, clarify how you interpret the question.
- **For all questions:** Unless clearly not relevant for the question, you should discuss at least two theoretical accounts and at least two bodies of evidence as they relate to the theories.
- **Be critical:** Include critical assessments of the theoretical and empirical literatures that you discuss.

Section I: Approaches

1. In recent years, scholars in “historical political economy” have turned to historical data to answer questions of central importance to the discipline. Analyze at least three works in this genre that shed light on the theoretical and empirical strengths and weaknesses of this research program.

Section II: Primitives

2. In what ways, if any, do changes in a society's economy create changes in the value orientations that are prevalent in that society?
3. Collective action problems are widespread in society. Choose one specific context in which a collective action problem is present and discuss two distinct theoretical perspectives that have helped us understand how this problem gets solved (or not) in this context. Which of the two frameworks is more useful and why?

Section III: Political Structures

4. Scholars have identified conditions under which both democratic and authoritarian governments can be held accountable. Do these arguments fundamentally tap into the same logic across regimes or are there different accountability logics at work for different regime types?
5. When does electoral reform occur? Will it always benefit incumbents relative to other candidates/parties?

Section IV: Outcomes I

6. To what extent can theories of revolution and regime change help us understand the sharp rise in support for anti-democratic parties within democracies?

Section V: Outcomes II

7. Are the factors that explain differences in political participation across countries the same as the factors that explain differences across time?
8. Historically, major episodes of rapid national development (e.g., 19th century U.S, East Asian Tigers, China after 1978) were accompanied by vast and endemic corruption. Given your understanding of research on the relationship between development and corruption, which theoretical accounts receive less support and why.

Section VI: Outcomes III

9. Suppose you care about the welfare of all poor people. In which (if any) contexts would you expect gender quotas to help to this end?

Section VII: Wild Card

10. Due to demographic shifts the gap between the age of the median voter and the median electoral representative is expanding more rapidly in some countries than others. Pick two substantive topics in comparative politics and explain when and why age-gaps in representation are more likely to be problematic.