

COLUMBIA COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS | JANUARY 2015

Instructions: The exam has two parts.

- Part I contains general theory question with no specific regional focus.
- Part II also asks general question, but requires you to demonstrate substantial knowledge of a country (or countries) from your regional specialty.

For both parts, you should:

- Include critical discussions of the theoretical and empirical literatures you deem most relevant.
- Answer the question that is asked. Do not simply offer a literature review.
- If you answer two or more related questions you must draw on distinct literatures or arguments.

Majors in comparative politics must answer *two* questions from Part I *and one* question from Part II.

Minors in comparative politics must answer two questions at least one of which must be from Part I.

Part I

1. In hopes of improving causal inference, there has been an increase in the use of experimentation by scholars in comparative politics. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this analytic move? In your answer be sure to discuss more and less successful examples of the use of experiments in comparative politics.
2. Why does civil war occur in some countries, but not others?
3. Why do authoritarian regimes survive in some places but not others? Discuss with reference to at least two theories and two cases or empirical analyses.
4. What theories best account for variation in state capacity? Outline at least two accounts and evaluate in light of evidence.
5. Describe and evaluate two competing arguments for why proportional electoral laws are chosen, and discuss the implications, if any, of each argument for arguments that use PR as an explanatory variable to account for some outcome of interest (eg corruption, growth, stability).
6. Does inequality speed or prevent democratization? Outline theoretical arguments in favor or against and describe the evidence supporting these accounts.
7. Has the insight that ethnic identities are socially constructed contributed to our understanding of some outcome of interest in comparative politics?

Part II

1. How well can existing theories of collective action account for variation in the incidence of popular protest? In your answer, be sure to discuss two countries.
2. To what extent and in what ways does value change among the mass public contribute to changes in the issues that shape party platforms and voter choice? Discuss relevant theory and illustrate with reference to specific cases.
3. Why do parties employ programmatic platforms in some places but rely on clientelistic strategies in others? Discuss theoretical accounts with reference to at least two cases.
4. What accounts for variation in the extent to which countries have scaled back the welfare state over the last two decades? Please answer this question in light of experiences in one or two regions.
5. What accounts for changes in party systems? Discuss with reference to changes in the number or distribution of parties in at least two cases.
6. Why do governments sometimes implement inefficient economic policies? Discuss with reference to two countries or regions.
7. What accounts for variation in the amount of redistribution across states? Critically discuss two or more theories that purport to explain variation in the amount of redistribution across countries.
8. Provide two competing explanations for the adoption of market-oriented policies? Describe empirical measures to assess the explanatory power for these theories with reference to the experiences of countries in at least one region.
9. Explain this picture
[identify a major political **change** that is illustrated by the image and provide an explanation for that change drawing on theory and case specific evidence]



