Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics
September 2014

Instructions

The Comparative comp is an open-book written exam. Native English speakers are allowed 8 hours; non-native speakers and nursing mothers are allowed 9 hours. The questions are e-mailed to students at the beginning of the exam period and must be returned electronically at the specified time. Any exam returned late automatically fails. There is no guaranteed grace period; “8 hours” means 8 hours and “9 hours” means 9 hours. Only the DGS may make exceptions to this, and only in extraordinary circumstances, such as a power outage or server failure. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that his or her e-mail and computer are in good working order before the exam begins. Students are advised to save their work frequently.

The exam consists of three questions. No answer can be longer than 1,750 words. References and citations in the (Author, date) format will be expected, although without page numbers. All answers must be the student’s own work. The university’s Honor Code and conventional ethical standards for academic work apply. Students are advised not to use direct quotations or to copy tables or figures from anyone else’s work; if they do, the source absolutely must be documented to avoid charges of plagiarism.

Core

Answer one of the questions below.

A. Our field of comparative politics studies the domestic politics of individual countries, yet we know that influences from outside a given country can sometimes be the most important ones. What have been the most influential ways for analyzing international influences on domestic politics? Which major theories in comparative politics have done a good job incorporating international factors, and which have not?

B. Take a "classic of comparative historical research" (e.g., Skocpol, Moore, Lijhardt, Collier and Collier, Linz or another influential work) and analyze the case selection strategy of that book. For example, what was the explicit or implicit rational for choosing cases? Are there weaknesses in the selection strategy? Are there cases or kinds of cases which should have been included? (This is not an exhaustive list of things to consider. Depending on the work other questions might be relevant.)
Cross-Regional

Political Conflict: The cross-national quantitative literature on civil war relies on structural (GDP per capita or income inequality) and time-invariant (mountainous terrain) factors to account for the outbreak of domestic wars. Scholars have noted the paradox of explaining a dynamic process – the decision to go to war – with structural/time-invariant factors. How could theories of social movements and state repression, which emphasize social and political processes, contribute to outline a more dynamic explanation of the onset of civil war? Please discuss.

Cross-Regional

Political Parties: Some scholars have argued that political parties are vote or seat maximizers. Identify at least one pivotal work in this tradition. What is the logic for making what is obviously a simplifying assumption? Other scholars have argued against the assumption that parties’ sole objective is to maximize votes or seats. Identify some of these scholars and discuss the reasoning behind their arguments on this point.

Cross-Regional

Parties and Elections: Some scholars have argued that political parties are vote or seat maximizers. Identify at least one pivotal work in this tradition. What is the logic for making what is obviously a simplifying assumption? Other scholars have argued against the assumption that parties’ sole objective is to maximize votes or seats. Identify some of these scholars and discuss the reasoning behind their arguments on this point.

Area Studies

Answer one of the questions below.

A. What are the likely implications of the new government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is described by many as a Hindu nationalist party, for conflict and peace in South Asia? You can answer this question by concentrating on only one interstate or within-country conflict.

B. Does the fact that India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have all had women as Prime Ministers reflect adequately the position of women in society? In your answer please discuss the cases of at least two of the three countries.
Area Studies

**Institutions and Institutionalism in Latin America:** Under authoritarian rule, Chile (Pinochet), Peru (Fujimori) and Mexico (different presidents) had political systems with strong executives and weak checks and balances to executive power. Did presidents continue to have such unlimited power under democracy? Please discuss the different trajectories of presidential power in post-authoritarian Chile, Peru and Mexico and account for differences across countries.

Area Studies

**Identity, Ethnicity, Culture and Religion:** How can we account for the fact that religious institutions exercise such different levels of impact on contemporary democratic politics? Pick a single controversial issue and use it to answer this question from a comparative perspective in the cases of the UK, US, and Germany.

Area Studies

**Ethnicity, Identity, Culture and Religion:** “Diversity in ethnic, cultural and religious identities is the root cause of the rocky roads to democratization in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.” Comment on this statement.

Area Studies

South Africa has a single-party dominant system. Since 1994, only one political party in South Africa has formed governments. Of course, that party is the Africa National Congress [ANC]. In Kenya, no party has dominated the presidency or the parliament since the return multiparty elections there in 1992. Despite the fact that Kenya has had more party turnover in government/the presidency than South Africa, most observers and organizations consider South Africa to be more democratic than Kenya. Why might observers consider South Africa to be more democratic than Kenya? How can a country, ruled by only one party for over 20 years, be considered more democratic than a country where several parties have come into and gone out of power? What are the conditions that may explain why democratic institutions are more 'developed' in South Africa than in Kenya?
I. Question #1: (for all three students).

Please Respond to either #1 or #2

1. What are the theoretical frameworks explaining modernization? How would these theories help us characterize the relationship between economic development and democracy in modernizing countries? To what extent can previous paths to democracy help explain the different paths that are being taken in countries in the contemporary period?

2. In the “Notre Dame Comparative Politics Canon,” only 6 of 18 required readings are from the 2000s forward. (In contrast, the Methods Reading List has only 3 total works published before 2000.) Do you think that the Notre Dame Comparative Politics Canon should be updated? If so, please recommend 3 post-2000 publications for inclusion on the canon. Justify why they should be included. If not, explain why the existing works are superior to literature that has been produced more recently with at least 3 examples.

II. Question #2:

What does the so-called East Asian model of development imply for the general debates on: (1) the role of the state and markets in development; (2) trade policy for development; (3) the implications of democracy for development; and (4) the importance of human development? Evaluate briefly the extent to which these implications are relevant for low income countries of today.

Imagine that you could moderate a debate between Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, on one side; and Anthony Downs, on the other. The purpose of the debate is to determine which book—Party Systems and Voter Alignments or An Economic Theory of Democracy—is more useful for understanding the current state of party systems outside Western Europe. Further imagine that all three authors are alive and in their prime. You may ask them to address any questions you like in order to ascertain their areas of agreement and disagreement. Write a transcript of this debate, including the questions you put to them.

Aviner Greif claims that institutions can be studied as equilibria or as rules of the game. Use an empirical example to compare and explain the advantages of one approach over the other. Do any of these approaches alleviate some of the problems of studying institutions identified by historical institutionalists?
III. Question #3:

“It is argued that dictatorship is better at promoting economic growth and so supporting dictatorship today could be conducive to democratization in the future. Although general theorists such as Przeworski consider such a view ‘dubious,’ scholars of East Asia have demonstrated its validity.” Comment on this statement.

“Institutions Matter.” Using electoral institutions as examples, evaluate this statement by specifying the conditions when electoral institutions matter most and the conditions why they matter less than one would think. Use specific examples from the cases of Brazil, Venezuela and Bolivia. Identify a case where the choice of electoral institutions affected the fundamental trajectory of a state’s political and economic development.

Scholars of PostCommunist Europe have identified a phenomenon they call the "Regime Divide" that explains much of elite conflict, particularly in the early transition years. Building on the existing literature as well as your own insights, explain what the regime divide is. Can you suggest reasons why in some countries this divide has persisted longer than in others? You are encouraged to use examples from the region to illustrate your argument.
Part I: Core (Please respond to the following question.)

"King, Keohane, and Verba's Designing Social Inquiry attempted to establish a common set of methodological standards that would apply to both quantitative and qualitative research. A vigorous debate ensued. What conclusions do you draw from this debate? Can quantitative and qualitative research be evaluated by the same standards?"

Part II: Cross Regional (Please respond to the following question.)

Some theories of protest make no distinction between the peaceful or violent nature of the activities. They try to explain mobilization, whether that mobilization is violent or nonviolent. Other theories of protest are instead concerned exclusively with explaining violent mobilization or exclusively with peaceful political mobilization. Still other theories distinguish between peaceful and violent protest and focus on the factors that make one type evolve into another. In your view, should we seek to explain violent and nonviolent protest with the same variables and hypotheses? Are some variables useful for explaining mobilization, whether violent or nonviolent, while other variables are useful for explaining only one or the other? Which variables or hypotheses do you think are most convincing?

Support your answer with empirical examples from at least three different social movements, protests, or revolutions (or situations that were ripe for protest where protest nevertheless did not materialize). Be sure to provide clear definitions of all terms and concepts.

Part III: Area Studies (Please respond to the following question.)

“Ethnic and religious conflicts are as prevalent in China as in India and Pakistan. The only difference is that a stronger Chinese state has managed to repress identity expressions by minorities.” Comment on this statement.
Part I: Core (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question 1:

There is a lot of talk about “multimethod” research in comparative politics these days. However, at one extreme, some interpret this as a recommendation that everyone should use every major approach—quantitative, qualitative, and rational choice. At the other extreme, others suggest that researchers should continue to specialize in one of these approaches but make more of an effort to read other kinds of scholarship. Where do you stand? What would be the risks and potential benefits of going toward either extreme? Support your answer with at least four examples taken from the core or methods reading list that illustrate the pitfalls and benefits of multimethod research.

Question 2:

Seminal works are labeled as such because they introduce new ideas that influence future research. Sometimes the future research builds on insights that largely prove correct; other times the future research debunks the earlier findings. Discuss three seminal works in comparative politics, their initial contributions to knowledge, and the research they have inspired. (Cite specific work.) Which insights have endured until today, and which insights have largely proven wrong? In your opinion, are these works worthy of the attention they receive? Why or why not? What are the key unanswered questions remaining for the research agenda inspired by each work?

Part II: Cross Regional (Please respond to the following question.)

You are a new assistant professor at a good university and you have been assigned to teach a graduate class for the Fall 2014 semester: “Regimes and Regime Change.” Please provide a syllabus for the course including (1) a rationale for the course; (2) the most important reading assignments, in appropriate weekly sequence; and (3) some comments about why and how these assignments serve the objectives of the course.

Part III: Area Studies (Please respond to the appropriate question.)

Question A:

How should the similarities and differences among the political economies of Germany, France, and the UK be understood? As “varieties of capitalism” (CME vs. LME)? Are other interpretive schemes needed? In what ways, if any, have the similarities and differences you identify
influenced the ways that these countries have responded to the financial crisis over the past five years?

Question B:

“East Asian states share the same Confucian civilization but have different regime types. Culture clearly plays little role in explaining regime types, regime stability or regime change in East Asia.” Discuss this statement.
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics
May 21, 2013

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When answering each part of the comp, students are advised to consult the relevant grading standards for that part. The standards are available at http://politicalscience.nd.edu/assets/89297/compgradingstandards.pdf.

Part I: Core
Answer one of the two questions in this section.

A. Michael Coppedge has made the argument that an ideal comparative theory ought to be generalizable, thick, and integrated. Explain how scholars relying on field research methods can aspire to satisfy these standards. What specific challenges do they face, that scholars using formal methods, quantitative methods, or historical institutionalism do not, and how can they overcome them?

B. Consider the relationship between comparative politics and a neighboring discipline (such as economics, sociology, psychology, or history). What role has the selected discipline played in the development of our field? You should consider research questions, concepts, theories, research methods, and data or other information used in comparative politics. Given your analysis of the debts owed to this other discipline, what contributions derived from works in comparative politics that were not already present in the other discipline? Again, you should consider research questions, concepts, theories, research methods, and data or other information. Be sure to discuss at least three specific works from the canon list to illustrate your argument.

Part II: Cross-regional
In this section, please answer the question below. (There is no choice.)
A. Regimes and Regime Change
The democratization literature often makes reference to “waves” of democratization, especially the Third Wave. Of the dozens of hypotheses about democratization, which have the greatest potential to account for its wave-like nature? Which hypotheses, if any, would lead you to doubt the existence of waves of democratization? Which hypotheses, if any, fail to address waves? Refer to at least nine hypotheses in your answer.

Part III: Area Studies
In this section, please answer the question below. (There is no choice.)

A. Political Conflict in Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay)
Scholars of social movements and social protest in the developing world typically “apply” social movement theories produced in Western Europe and the United States to explain dynamics of protest in their own countries. If we test, rather than apply theory, do canonical explanations of social movements and social protest find strong support in Latin America? Please discuss Latin America’s authoritarian period and the post-authoritarian era. While we are expecting you to focus on the three countries of your choice, you may also use the cross-national quantitative literature on social protest in Latin America.
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When answering each part of the comp, students are advised to consult the relevant grading standards for that part. The standards are available at http://www.nd.edu/~mcoppedg/Field/CompRules.htm.

Part I: Core
Answer one of the two questions in this section. Any student may choose either question.

A. Use readings from the Comparative Methods Reading list to explain how theories developed within the Analytic Narratives approach can be falsifiable. Use other readings from the Comparative Methods Reading list and the Canon to discuss the limitations of research conducted within this paradigm.

B. Once upon a time, one of the key characteristics of comparative politics was that comparativists did field research.
   A) What is field research? Define the term and compare your definition to the one put forward by Wood (2007). How do you draw the line between field research methods and other research methodologies?
   B) Pick one major work from the canon (not discussed in Wood’s piece) that used field research and describe how it benefitted from the use of this method.
   C) Pick at least one major work from the canon that did not rely on field research and describe specifically how, if at all, it might have been improved had the author engaged in field research?
   D) What are the limitations of field research methods broadly? Are there some field research methods that are especially problematic, or some aspects of field research that can cause problems for scholarship?
Part II: Cross-regional
Answer one of the four questions in this section. Albarracin should answer A or B; Bagnulo should answer A; Konaev should answer B or C; Shin should answer B or D.

A. Institutions and Institutionalisms
Some variants of institutionalism emphasized the way formal institutions shape political outcomes. More recently, Guillermo O'Donnell, Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky, and Steven Levitsky and María Victoria Murillo, among others, argued that in contexts of weak formal institutions, an exclusive focus on formal institutions misses much of the action. (In some of his work, Douglass North also argues that informal institutions are important in explaining economic growth.)

What is an informal institution? Explain the difference between a formal and informal institution, and give some examples of informal institutions. Then discuss the validity and usefulness of the emphasis on informal institutions. Finally, in what real world contexts (countries or regions of the world) is it most important to pay attention to informal institutions, and why?

B. Regimes and Regime Change
Fifty years ago, modernization was the most widely accepted explanation for democratization. How has this approach evolved in the last half century? What are the most prevalent current variations on the modernization theme? Is there any school of thought about democratization that you consider superior to modernization and its heirs now? If so, what is it, and in what ways do you consider it superior? Back up your reasoning with references to empirical findings, whether from statistical testing or case studies.

C. Political Conflict
Scholars of political violence have consistently found a strong association between natural resource wealth and civil war. Yet there are significant disagreements about the type of natural resources that may be associated with civil war and about the causal mechanisms that account for this association. Drawing on cross-national quantitative studies and on qualitative cases from at least two world regions please assess the strengths and weaknesses of this literature and discuss its contribution to our general understanding of dynamics of political violence.

D. The State
Scholars often speak of strong states and weak states. How should scholars assess state strength? Anchor your analysis with two issue areas (democratic consolidation, economic development, human welfare, conflict resolution, or another issue of your choice) in two world regions.

Part III: Area Studies
Answer one of the three questions in this section. Albarracin should answer C; Bagnulo should answer A or C; Konaev should answer B; Shin should answer A.
A. The Political Economy of Advanced Industrial Societies
Write an essay that explains the roles that states play in advanced economies. Consider the political-economies in three countries (which can be from one world region or from more than one region). What are the similarities and differences in the roles of the states in these three cases? Does your answer validate Hall and Soskice’s (2001) emphasis on the contrast between liberal-market economies (LMEs) and coordinated-market economies (CMEs)? Does your answer validate alternative perspectives and works, such as those of Streeck (2012), Esping-Anderson (1990), or others? How have the roles of states changed over time? What understanding of institutional change does your answer employ?

B. Identity, Ethnicity, Culture, and Religion
Scholars have long debated the role played by certain elements of culture, such as ethnicity and religion, in shaping political outcomes, such as regime-type. Provide an assessment of the value of employing culture as an independent variable. Select a cultural variable seemingly relevant for political outcomes in your countries and make an argument for or against the use of cultural explanations. In particular, compare and contrast the utility of the cultural variable you have chosen for your three country cases.

C. Parties and Elections
Politicians can use different types of strategies to court electoral constituencies including making programmatic appeals and flaunting policy achievements. However, they can also employ clientelist and charismastic linkages. What factors shape candidates’, and parties’, choice of strategy to appeal to voters? Under what conditions will politicians rely primarily on programmatic linkages? Use empirical examples from your three countries to demonstrate different types of linkage mechanisms as well as the reasons for variation among the different strategies that parties and politicians employ to get votes.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics  
January 2004 (Annabella España-Nájera)

Answer one question from each of the three sections.

I. Core Readings.

A. Consider any research paper in empirical political science that you have written or any research project in empirical political science that you have undertaken while here at Notre Dame. (The paper/project could be one that you originally undertook in Comparative, American, or IR.) Please discuss this paper/project from a methodological point of view, drawing from the literature on research methods in comparative politics. What were the methods you employed? How can you justify these particular methods as the appropriate methods to address the issues in your paper/project? What methodological critique could be developed of this paper/project? Imagine the next stage of the paper/project. What new methods would be appropriate for the next stage?

B. Describe and evaluate the major arguments in the debate over “rational choice.” Begin by laying out the rational choice approach: what are its assumptions, what strengths does it claim, and what are its major contributions to Political Science? Next, explain the major objections to “rational choice,” both philosophical and practical. How convincing do you find these? Are there areas or topics that are more or less suited to rational choice, and if so, why? Lastly, do you think it possible to synthesize these different approaches into a single unified approach, or is one approach clearly superior to others?

II. Regimes and Regime Change (Cross-regional)

(1) Group all the works below into categories that you consider useful. The categories may be schools of thought, author’s purpose, methodological approach, degree of rigor, or something else, but not an uninformative set of categories such as dates of publication. You may specify any number of categories and may specify subcategories if you wish. (2) Explain briefly what it is about each work that led you to classify it as you did. (3) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each category of research on regimes and regime change. It would be good to choose a set of categories that can be meaningfully contrasted in this way. You may refer to each work in the “last name (date)” format, such as “Moore (1966).”

Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, 1966
Robert Dahl, Polyarchy, 1971
Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, 1978
Guillermo O’Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Transitions, 1986
Samuel Huntington, The Third Wave, 1991
Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 1996
Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development*, 2000

III. Institutions and Institutionalisms (Latin America)

Institutionalists studying Latin America now agree that a simple distinction between “strong” and “weak” presidents is not very meaningful. The literature now offers a more complex and varied set of criteria for judging a president’s ability to transform his or her preferred policies into law. What are these criteria? Apply them to three Latin American presidents (each one in a different country) and evaluate each president’s ability to convert policy preferences into law.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics  
January 2004 (Linda McCabe)

Answer one question from each of the three sections.

I. Core Readings.

A. Consider any research paper in empirical political science that you have written or any research project in empirical political science that you have undertaken while here at Notre Dame. (The paper/project could be one that you originally undertook in Comparative, American, or IR.) Please discuss this paper/project from a methodological point of view, drawing from the literature on research methods in comparative politics. What were the methods you employed? How can you justify these particular methods as the appropriate methods to address the issues in your paper/project? What methodological critique could be developed of this paper/project? Imagine the next stage of the paper/project. What new methods would be appropriate for the next stage?

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II. Identity, Ethnicity, Culture, and Religion (Cross-regional)

Levels of ethnic and identity-based violence increased significantly in post-colonial Africa and in the former communist sphere (East Europe and the former Soviet Union) after 1989. A mass of research and theory has subsequently been devoted to explaining this phenomenon. Analyze various competing explanations for the rise in so-called "ethnic conflict." What have we learned? Do the former communist cases suggest that we rethink earlier theoretical approaches? Focus on the literature in general, with reference where applicable to particular cases.

III. Social Movements and Revolution (Eastern Europe/Former Soviet Union)

As Marxist-Leninist regimes were toppled throughout eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991, observers were quick to applaud the democratic instincts of the social movements behind these events. However, as the 1990s progressed, the viability of many of these regimes' democratic successors seemed to be threatened by equally assertive social movements that espoused anti-democratic, xenophobic, and ultra-nationalist ideals. How can we explain this transition from one type of social movement to another? Is it merely an accident that "good" movements should be supplanted by "bad" ones? Or can political scientists point to deeper systemic and structural factors that led to this shift in ideals?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics  
January 2004 (Juan Andrés Moraes)

Answer one question from each of the three sections.

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II. Regimes and Regime Change (Cross-regional)

1. Group all the works below into categories that you consider useful. The categories may be schools of thought, author’s purpose, methodological approach, degree of rigor, or something else, but not an uninformative set of categories such as dates of publication. You may specify any number of categories and may specify subcategories if you wish. (2) Explain briefly what it is about each work that led you to classify it as you did. (3) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each category of research on regimes and regime change. It would be good to choose a set of categories that can be meaningfully contrasted in this way. You may refer to each work in the “last name (date)” format, such as “Moore (1966).”

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Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development*, 2000

III. Parties and Elections (Latin America)
Since the so-called third wave of democratization in Latin America (i.e., post-1978), two party systems (Peru and Venezuela) have collapsed; several others have exhibited very high electoral volatility (Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil from 1985 to 1994). Among the most two stable party systems (as manifested by low electoral volatility) have been those of Chile since 1989 and Uruguay since 1984. Why have these two party systems been markedly more stable than most party systems in the region? Please inform your answer by reference to the broader theoretical and comparative literature on party system (in)stability, volatility, and collapse.
University of Notre Dame
Department of Political Science
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics
January 2004 (Patricia Rodriguez)

Answer one question from each of the three sections.

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III. Association, Participation, Representation (Latin America)

On the surface, the landscape of political association, participation, and representation in Latin America has changed dramatically in the past quarter century. With some variation, the tendency in the past was for strong states to organize interest representation among producer groups and the working class, and for political parties of varying strength to selectively co-opt those who fell outside these categories through the exercise of state patronage or personal clientelism, or to ignore their interests altogether. More recently, state and party monopolies on political representation appear to have broken down and a plethora of identity-based groups in civil society have emerged to press the claims of their members. Write an essay that (1) characterizes systematically and comparatively across three Latin American cases the current status of the representation of functional and identity-based interests in civil society by states, parties, and independent organizations; (2) explains what brought about these changes (you may wish to address whether there is a common cause or distinct, national ones); and (3) identifies the consequences of this shift both for the effective representation of the interests of these groups as well as for the survival or competitiveness of some or all political parties?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics  
January 2004 (Mariana Sousa)

Answer one question from each of the three sections.

I. Core Readings.

A. Consider any research paper in empirical political science that you have written or any research project in empirical political science that you have undertaken while here at Notre Dame. (The paper/project could be one that you originally undertook in Comparative, American, or IR.) Please discuss this paper/project from a methodological point of view, drawing from the literature on research methods in comparative politics. What were the methods you employed? How can you justify these particular methods as the appropriate methods to address the issues in your paper/project? What methodological critique could be developed of this paper/project? Imagine the next stage of the paper/project. What new methods would be appropriate for the next stage?

B. Describe and evaluate the major arguments in the debate over “rational choice.” Begin by laying out the rational choice approach: what are its assumptions, what strengths does it claim, and what are its major contributions to Political Science? Next, explain the major objections to “rational choice,” both philosophical and practical. How convincing do you find these? Are there areas or topics that are more or less suited to rational choice, and if so, why? Lastly, do you think is it possible to synthesize these different approaches into a single unified approach, or is one approach clearly superior to others?

II. Regimes and Regime Change (Cross-regional)

(1) Group all the works below into categories that you consider useful. The categories may be schools of thought, author’s purpose, methodological approach, degree of rigor, or something else, but not an uninformative set of categories such as dates of publication. You may specify any number of categories and may specify subcategories if you wish. (2) Explain briefly what it is about each work that led you to classify it as you did. (3) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each category of research on regimes and regime change. It would be good to choose a set of categories that can be meaningfully contrasted in this way. You may refer to each work in the “last name (date)” format, such as “Moore (1966).”

Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, 1966
Robert Dahl, Polyarchy, 1971
Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, 1978
Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Transitions, 1986
Samuel Huntington, The Third Wave, 1991
Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 1996
Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development*, 2000

III. Political Economy--Developing Countries (Latin America)
Most Latin American countries today are well along the road to market reforms elaborated by the Washington Consensus more than a decade ago. Although reform proceeded in a fairly straightforward fashion in some policy areas across the region, in others, there was a good deal of variation in the pace, sequence, and above all, the design of the reforms. Taking the experiences of three Latin American countries, write an essay that (1) compares the design of the policy reforms in any two areas, and (2) explains what accounts for the evident similarities and differences in post-reform institutions and regulatory frameworks.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Exam in Comparative Politics (Kayhan)  
January 2005

I. Core question: Methods
   Please respond to one of the following questions:

A. In his “Letter from the President” of the most recent newsletter of the Organized Section in Comparative Politics of the American Political Science Association, Peter Hall asked, “How can a field so closely associated with such a weak methodology have accomplished so much?” His answer is that the success of the field rests on the ways it has moved beyond the comparative method, as defined by Lijphart, and the search for a few key causal variables, (1) to develop new theoretical perspectives on politics using ‘disciplined configurative’ inquiry; (2) identify the complex causal processes that lie behind political outcomes using ‘sequences of strategic interactions’ or the ‘feedback effects of path dependence’; (3) analyzing more cases by taking advantage of cross-national data sets and making increasing use of statistical methods; and (4) using more information from each case by moving beyond the ‘statistical worldview’ and examining cases intensively using ‘analytical narratives,’ ‘causal narratives,’ and ‘process verification.’ Which, if any, of these approaches do you believe represent an advance over the comparative method, and which do you consider to be a step in the wrong direction? Why? Illustrate your answer using examples of works that exhibit the strengths and weakness of the (at least two) methodological approaches you choose to discuss.

B. Skeptics of rational choice approaches to comparative politics over the years have often argued that human behavior is not always “rational.” They frequently maintain that values, beliefs, identities, and cultural norms powerfully influence the propensity of men and women to vote for a particular candidate, to organize collectively, or to rebel. Yet, theoretical approaches to the study of culture embrace a broad gamut, including post-modernism, anthropological approaches, survey research, and even rational choice theories. Is one or more of these theoretical approaches better suited to the study of culture than others? If so, why?

II. Cross-regional topics
   Please respond to one of the following questions:

A. Lisa Wedeen observes, "Political culture accounts, with their tendencies toward cultural essentialism have rightly come in for criticism by many political scientists. Rejecting such views as either fundamentally tautological or empirically invalid, some critics have opted for one or another strictly 'materialist' approach, objecting to cultural
variables in any form." (APSR Dec. 2002, p.713) Is comparative political analysis better off sticking to materialist approaches? If so, critically review recent approaches to political culture and explain their shortcomings. If not, discuss the recent literature on cultural analysis and assess its contributions as well as its limitations.

B. In one of the most famous quotes in the history of the analysis of political parties, E. E. Schattschneider wrote in 1942 that "Modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties."

Sixty-three years have transpired since Schattschneider wrote those words. Is his claim still accurate? If so, why is modern democracy unthinkable without parties? If not, what has changed so that modern democracy is thinkable without parties?

C. The study of regimes and regime change is split between scholars who favor macro-level structural explanations and those who favor actor focused agency explanations. Name the major works in each camp, with at least one representative author on each side of the methodological divide. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? Is this a conceptually coherent distinction? If you think this is a coherent distinction, propose a research project that would allow you to assess the relative strengths of each approach. If you think it is not a coherent distinction, why not? If there is little difference between the two camps, is it possible to unify these two approaches?

III. Area Studies:

(For Ozlem Kayhan) Discuss the role of religion and other identities (such as ethnicity, tribe, clan) in state-building in developing countries such as Africa, the Middle East, or Eurasia. Do they play a positive or negative role -- and in what way -- in the process of state-building and institutional consolidation? Be sure to address various theoretical approaches, and to make an argument of your own. Please choose three countries to answer this question.
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   Please respond to one of the following questions:

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III. Area Studies:

(For Bong-Jun Ko) Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have sometimes been cited as good examples of "growth with equity"--high growth rates combined with a relatively even distribution of income. For the past decade or so growth rates have been somewhat slower, and incomes apparently have been becoming less nearly equal (although the data, of course, are sometimes ambiguous). During about the same period the political systems of these societies have become more competitive.

Explore a possible relationship between democratization and income inequality. Trace out a rough theory or model relevant to these societies postulating some kind of relationship. From your theory derive some empirical hypotheses; then specify some ways in which these hypotheses might be tested and the theory corroborated or falsified. As part of this, try to show how a political explanation for inequality might be abstracted from various obvious alternative explanations. In the answer you may take into account continuities or changes in state-economy relations, party systems, electoral systems, the relative influence of elected politicians and institutions and the permanent bureaucracy, executive-legislative relations, campaign financing, anything else that may be relevant.
I. Core question: Methods
   Please respond to one of the following questions:

A. In his “Letter from the President” of the most recent newsletter of the Organized Section in Comparative Politics of the American Political Science Association, Peter Hall asked, “How can a field so closely associated with such a weak methodology have accomplished so much?” His answer is that the success of the field rests on the ways it has moved beyond the comparative method, as defined by Lijphart, and the search for a few key causal variables. (1) to develop new theoretical perspectives on politics using ‘disciplined configurative’ inquiry; (2) identify the complex causal processes that lie behind political outcomes using ‘sequences of strategic interactions’ or the ‘feedback effects of path dependence’; (3) analyzing more cases by taking advantage of cross-national data sets and making increasing use of statistical methods; and (4) using more information from each case by moving beyond the ‘statistical worldview’ and examining cases intensively using ‘analytical narratives,’ ‘causal narratives,’ and ‘process verification.’ Which, if any, of these approaches do you believe represent an advance over the comparative method, and which do you consider to be a step in the wrong direction? Why? Illustrate your answer using examples of works that exhibit the strengths and weakness of the (at least two) methodological approaches you choose to discuss.

B. Skeptics of rational choice approaches to comparative politics over the years have often argued that human behavior is not always “rational.” They frequently maintain that values, beliefs, identities, and cultural norms powerfully influence the propensity of men and women to vote for a particular candidate, to organize collectively, or to rebel. Yet, theoretical approaches to the study of culture embrace a broad gamut, including post-modernism, anthropological approaches, survey research, and even rational choice theories. Is one or more of these theoretical approaches better suited to the study of culture than others? If so, why?

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C. The study of regimes and regime change is split between scholars who favor macro-level structural explanations and those who favor actor focused agency explanations. Name the major works in each camp, with at least one representative author on each side of the methodological divide. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? Is this a conceptually coherent distinction? If you think this is a coherent distinction, propose a research project that would allow you to assess the relative strengths of each approach. If you think it is not a coherent distinction, why not? If there is little difference between the two camps, is it possible to unify these two approaches?

III. Area Studies:

(For Carlos Lisoni and Robert Portada) Over the course of the 20th century, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile had widely different experiences with democracy. Argentina had multiple experience with competitive political regimes with reasonably open suffrage, but all except the post-1983 regime were wracked by instability. Chile experienced two lengthy periods of democracy before 1973 and ended the century with a democracy that by many standards is the most successful in contemporary Latin America. Before 1985, Brazil had only one experience with a reasonably democratic regime.

Briefly discuss these three countries' experiences with democracy, in particular, when they inaugurated democratic or semi-democratic regimes, and when such regimes broke down. Then analyze the reasons for the different democratic outcomes in the three cases before the post-1978 wave of democratization. Why did democracy come substantially later in Brazil than in Chile and Argentina? Why was democracy in Argentina so unstable before 1983 given some circumstances that might have been propitious? Why was Chile able to develop relatively stable democracy earlier than almost all other Latin American countries? Try to place your answer to these questions within the broader context of theories of why democracies emerge, become stable, or break down.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Exam in Comparative Politics-Schaal  
May 2005

I. (please respond to one of the following questions)

A. What is meant by “selecting on the dependent variable”? What are the effects of selecting on the dependent variable, and how do you craft a research design to avoid it? Is this just a problem for quantitative researchers or does it affect qualitative research as well? Are there situations where selecting on the dependent variable is unavoidable given the research question, and how should such situations be dealt with? A complete answer will involve both general explanation and relevant examples, with examples drawn from published scholarship encouraged.

B. Identify one testable hypothesis of interest to you that you think the existing literature in comparative politics has not adequately addressed. Then:

1. Clearly state the hypothesis
2. Design a “comparative” research project to test your hypothesis using one or a combination of the following approaches:
   
   Most similar systems design
   Most different systems design
   Statistical approach
   Case study approach
   Cross-National approach
   An approach not listed here

3. Explain why you chose the approach or combination of approaches you have chosen. Fully discuss the tradeoffs or relative advantages and disadvantages involved in using one approach or combination of approaches rather than another approach or combination of approaches.

II. What are historical institutionalism’s defining features? What are some of the ideas commonly associated with historical institutionalism? Present a critique of some aspects of historical institutionalism.

III. Although the scholarly literature on the state is large, diffuse and often conflicted it appears to be increasingly converging around the conclusion that profound and even irreversible changes are currently underfoot regarding the nature of the fundamental relationship between the state and its citizens. Drawing upon three country cases from among the advanced industrial societies, generally discuss the ways in which the nature of the contemporary state is changing and elaborate upon one area of state policy or responsibility that illustrates the depth and breadth of change.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics - Stringer  
January 2007

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question I

During the last few years, the United States' government has performed poorly at both state-building and democratization in Iraq and Afghanistan. What do the canonical readings in comparative politics say about the ability of outside actors (states or non-state actors) to engage in state-building and democratization?

a. Using the core readings, lay out the arguments concerning the ability of outside actors to assist in state-building. What aspects of this process can be performed by outside actors? What aspects can only be accomplished by domestic actors? Make reference to at least three authors (you can also use authors who talk about nation building in this section) in your response.

b. Next, using the core readings, explore the ability and limitations of outside actors to assist in democratization. Make reference to at least three authors in your response to this section as well.

c. Select just one concrete component claim from your response to either of the two parts above. Imagine you had an infinite amount of money and all the high level political cooperation necessary. How might you test this claim about the ability of outside actors to achieve either state-building or democratization? What data would you collect? What evidence would convince you that your claim had support? What evidence would undermine your claim?

Question II

There have been several recent attempts to improve comparative politics, in some instances by changing the methods of comparative politics and in other instances by changing the ways methods are understood. Which innovations are the most important and useful ones? Which innovations are misdirected and potentially harmful?

Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Association, Participation, and Representation

What determines systems of political representation? What are the strengths and weaknesses of competing approaches purporting to explain the origins and evolution of at least two different ways of organizing political interests? Which, in your view, is the most promising approach and why? Please illustrate your response with cross-regional examples.

Parties and Elections
Party competition is more programmatic in some countries than others. Give some examples of countries where competition seems to be more programmatic, and examples of countries where it seems to be less programmatic. What leads you to place countries in these different categories (i.e., more or less programmatic competition)? If party competition is not based on programmatic differences, what is it based upon? Finally, discuss different theoretical possibilities that might explain these cross-national differences in the programmatic structuring of party competition.

**Part III: (Please respond to the following question)**

*Political Economy of Development/Latin America*

Students of political economy have long debated the desirability of a broad role for the state in promoting development. Students of comparative politics have also debated why states in different settings have assumed more or less active roles in managing the economy. Focusing on this latter question, write an essay that compares the reasons for the expansion, retrenchment, or redesign of the state’s role in promoting economic development in three Latin American countries in at least two different time periods. Please refer to arguments in the literature as well as to specific empirical examples.
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics
January 23, 2009
(Robert Brathwaite and Shaojin Chai)

Important Instructions: Be sure to indicate whether you are taking this exam under the old rules (closed book, 6/7 hours, no word limit) or the new rules (open book, 8/9 hours, limit of 1750 words per question, in-text citations required, direct quotations discouraged). Consult the “Grading Standards for Comprehensive Exams in Comparative Politics” for what demonstrates good understanding of relevant theory, critical judgment, and case knowledge.

Part I: Core

A. A large volume of work has been published on comparative methods during the past two decades. Against this backdrop, apply to any 3 exemplary pieces of scholarship from the list of canonical works (which you read for this exam) at least 2 methodological “lessons” drawn from the seminal literature on comparative methods written after 1990. What ultimately in your view are the major methodological strengths and weaknesses of the aforementioned 3 exemplary pieces of scholarship?

B. Imre Lakatos once wrote,

The hallmark of empirical progress is not trivial verifications: Popper is right that there are millions of them. (…) But so-called “refutations” are not the hallmark of empirical failure, as Popper has preached, since all programmes grow in a permanent ocean of anomalies. What really count are dramatic, unexpected, stunning predictions: a few of them are enough to tilt the balance; where theory lags behind the facts, we are dealing with miserable degenerating research programmes. [“Introduction: Science and Pseudoscience,” in John Worrall and Gregory Currie, eds., The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers, vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 6.]

Is comparative politics a progressive or degenerative research program? That is, has theory in comparative politics tended to lag behind events, or has it sometimes made stunning predictions? Support your answer with examples from our core reading list.

Part II: Cross-regional

A. Institutions and Institutionalisms
In the 1980s, scholars of comparative politics began to pay renewed attention to institutions. Some sought to “bring the state back in” and understand institutions in their historical context; others explored how rational actors would respond to institutional incentives. What perceived analytical absence(s) were these scholars responding to? Twenty years later, how would you assess the strengths and weaknesses of this increased attentiveness to the role of institutions to explain political outcomes? Which approaches do you find most useful? Why? Please highlight your response with relevant examples from the literature.
B. Social Movements and Revolution
Some theories of protest make no distinction between the peaceful or violent nature of the activities. They try to explain mobilization, whether that mobilization is violent or nonviolent. Other theories of protest are instead concerned exclusively with explaining violent mobilization or exclusively with peaceful political mobilization. Still other theories distinguish between peaceful and violent protest and focus on the factors that make one type evolve into another. In your view, should we seek to explain violent and nonviolent protest with the same variables and hypotheses? Are some variables useful for explaining mobilization, whether violent or nonviolent, while other variables are useful for explaining only one or the other? Which variables or hypotheses do you think are most convincing? Support your answer with empirical examples from at least three different social movements, protests, or revolutions (or situations that were ripe for protest where protest nevertheless did not materialize). Be sure to provide clear definitions of all terms and concepts.

C. Regimes and Regime Change [Note: If you answer this question, you may not also answer question III.B.]
It has often been noted that some approaches to understanding democratization focus on the micropolitics of elites, while other approaches focus on macropolitical factors such as economic development, class structure, social divisions, or even geography. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach (micro vs. macro)? Support your argument with at least three sources. What advice would you give to someone who would like to combine the advantages of both approaches?

Part III: Area Studies

A. The State in Asia (China/Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam)
"The prospect of democratic transition in East and Southeast Asia is grim. This is not because Asian political culture is undemocratic; rather, the main obstacle to democratic breakthrough is the strong state." Comment on this statement.

B. Regimes and Regime Change in Asia (South Korea, Taiwan, China) [Note: If you answer this question, you may not also answer question II.C.]
Some Chinese publicists, inspired in part by the ideas of the late Samuel P. Huntington, assert that democracy in China is best served through the development of a strong "middle class." This in turn depends on a thriving market economy, and a market economy is nurtured by a strong state able to impose strong "macroscopic" controls over the market keeping the market in its proper channels, thwarting corruption, and preventing the disruption of the market by social forces that could stand in the way of market efficiency. This in its turn requires limiting rather than expanding political participation. (1) Evaluate the logic of this argument. (2) Discuss the degree to which this kind of model explains the democratization of South Korea and Taiwan. (3) Whatever the answer to Part (2), discuss whether the Taiwan and Korean experiences are relevant to democratization in China proper.
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics
January 2011
(Charles Fagan, Claudia Anewalt, Michael Hartney, Lenore VanderZee)

Instructions
The Comparative comp is an open book written exam. Native English speakers are allowed 8 hours; non native speakers and nursing mothers are allowed 9 hours. The questions are emailed to students at the beginning of the exam period and must be returned electronically at the specified time. Any exam returned late automatically fails. There is no guaranteed grace period; “8 hours” means 8 hours and “9 hours” means 9 hours. Only the DOS may make exceptions to this, and only in extraordinary circumstances, such as a power outage or server failure. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that his or her email and computer are in good working order before the exam begins. Students are advised to save their work frequently.

The exam consists of three questions. No answer can be longer than 1,750 words. References and citations in the (Author, date) format will be expected, although without page numbers. All answers must be the student’s own work. The university’s Honor Code and conventional ethical standards for academic work apply. Students are advised not to use direct quotations or to copy tables or figures from anyone else’s work; if they do, the source absolutely must be documented to avoid charges of plagiarism.

Part I: Core
Answer one of the questions below.

A. Political scientists sometimes speak as though the discipline's major methodological division is between those scholars who favor quantitative approaches and those who favor qualitative approaches. Is this still an important and meaningful claim about the discipline? Or is it less and less relevant to the major arguments that are now taking place among political scientists? Write an essay in which you describe each of these two positions and identify the implications of subscribing to one over the other. Then, take a stand. Which of the two claims do you find most persuasive?

B. Much has been written about the importance of reintroducing time into our theories via process-tracing, historical institutionalism, analytic narratives, and other approaches. Was this temporal dimension ever really absent from theories in comparative politics? What exactly, if anything, has really changed? Is everyone “doing time” now? What are the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a dynamic approach?
Part II: Cross Regional
Answer one of the questions below.

A. The State
It is often argued that Tilly's oft-cited aphorism "war made the state, and the state made war" applies only to the European experience. Do you agree with this criticism? Compile your own "Tilly Tally" and anchor your analysis with at least two world regions.

B. Regimes and Regime Change
Can the breakdown of democratic regimes be understood as transitions to democracy in reverse, i.e., are the same causal factors important for both directions of change, only with different values (substituting high values for low, or absence for presence)? Or do these processes require fundamentally different kinds of explanation? Has thinking about this issue evolved over the decades?

C. Political Parties and Elections
E.E. Schattschneider once stated that "What happens in politics depends on the way in which people are divided into factions, parties, groups, classes, etc. The outcome of the game of politics depends on which of a multitude of possible conflicts gains the dominant position." How do political parties shape the nature of political conflict that exists within their particular country? To what extent can we consider political parties as independent variables rather than mere reflections of social divisions or natural outcomes of institutional arrangements? Please include examples from your cases to support your argument.

Part III. Area Studies
Answer one of the questions below.

A. Advanced Industrial Societies
Are there "varieties of capitalism," as Hall and Soskice (2002) claimed? If yes, how are the varieties defined? What are their causes? Their consequences? How does the work of other scholars reinforce or undermine the varieties approach? If you would rather reject Hall and Soskice’s proposal, explain an alternative framework for thinking about similarities and differences across the political-economies of advanced industrial societies.

B. Middle and North Africa
In the Multiple Identities of the Middle East, Bernard Lewis contends that, “People may define their identity by country, by nation, by culture, by religion, but the allegiance they owe is payable to the state...” In light of failing and fragile Middle Eastern states, examine the accuracy of this statement and analyze the evolution of the identities of the Middle Eastern peoples from the collapse of the millet-based Ottoman Empire in 1918, passing through attempts to construct strong nation-states, to today’s clash of old and new identities. Draw on the assigned readings and cases whenever appropriate.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics  
May 2004  

Answer one question from each of the three sections.  

I. Core Readings  
A. Against the backdrop of your reading and comprehension of the “great works” of the comparative politics subfield, which themes or questions do you perceive as having endured over time as worthy of scholarly investigation? Which important subjects or intellectual concerns connect the comparative scholarship of a half century past with contemporary scholarship? Why the longevity of these particular questions or themes?  

B. Below is a list of the “core” readings for this exam. As you know, our comparative field selected them as core readings because they are the works that many political science Ph.D. programs require their graduate students in comparative politics to read. Why are they considered so important? Is it their factual content? Their exemplary methods? Their innovative concepts? Their powerful theories? Some other criterion? We do not expect you to discuss all of the works below. Rather, develop an argument for the importance of at least three criteria and defend each criterion by using (for each criterion) at least two of the works below as examples. You should not simply mention these works. If you choose a work as an example, you should write enough about it to make it clear why it is a good example of the importance of the criterion in question.  

Schumpeter, Joseph, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, 1942  
Downs, Anthony, An Economic Theory of Democracy, 1957  
Gerschenkron, Alexander, Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective, 1962  
Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture, 1963  
Olson, Mancur, The Logic of Collective Action, 1965  
Moore, Barrington, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, 1966  
Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan, Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments, 1967  
Huntington, Samuel, Political Order in Changing Societies, 1968  
Dahl, Robert, Polyarchy, 1971  
Skocpol, Theda, States and Social Revolutions, 1979  
O'Donnell, Guillermo and Phillippe Schmitter, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Transitions, 1986  
Almond, Gabriel, A Discipline Divided, 1990  
Putnam, Robert w/ Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Nanetti, Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy, 1993  
Tarrow, Sidney, Power in Movement, 1994  

II. Cross-regional  
A. Institutions and Institutionalisms (Fairbrother and Kachangaki)  
Historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism represent two distinct approaches to studying the origins and functioning of political institutions. In practice, they have often been treated as competing approaches. But are they? If you believe that they are competing approaches to studying the same problem, choose an issue area and an institution or set of related institutions to govern that area, and write an essay that lays out...
the differing accounts that historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism would provide of the origins and functioning of the institution(s). In your answer, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, which, in your view, is the stronger choice, and why. If, on the other hand, you believe that they are complementary approaches, choose at least two issue areas and institutions governing that area, and write an essay that argues why one approach is best suited to studying one problem and the other is better suited to studying a different set of institutions or point in institutional development.

B. Regimes and Regime Change (Moraes)
Our understanding of the impact of economic development on democracy has evolved over the last 45 years. Divide this intellectual history into periods. For each period, describe the dominant understanding of the relationship and at least one alternative view. Identify at least one scholar work that is associated with each view.

III. Area Studies
A. Parties and Elections: Europe (Fairbrother)
Trace the evolution of the role of political parties in democratic governance and representation since WWII in at least two European countries. To what degree and in what specific ways have political parties and the party system in these countries changed over time? To what cause(s) might these changes be attributed?

B. Parties and Elections: Latin America (Moraes)
Latin American party systems experienced widely different levels of change and continuity after periods of military rule. One important dimension of such change and continuity is in party organizations. Brazil’s party system after the 21 years of military rule, 1964-85, was in this respect almost completely different from the pre-1964 party system. None of the major parties of the pre-1964 period remained a major party after 1985. In contrast, in Uruguay, the three important parties of the pre-1973 period (counting the Frente, although it surfaced very late in the 1942-73 period) have continued to dominate political competition after 1984. In Chile, the Socialists and Christian Democrats continue to be major parties, while on the right there has been a marked reconstitution, and in the center left a new important party, the PPD has emerged. In this respect, the Chilean case stands between the Brazilian (where no major parties survived) and the Uruguayan (where all of the major parties from 1971 survived) cases.

Is there any theoretical literature on parties and party systems that would help to explain these differences in how much the party systems were disrupted by military rule? Which theoretical literature seems most relevant? Building on or rejecting different literatures on parties and party systems, construct an argument about why the Brazilian party system experienced the greatest dislocation of these three, the Chilean was an intermediate case, and the Uruguayan system exhibited the greatest continuity.

C. Regimes and Regime Change: Africa (Kashangaki)
Evaluate two major explanations for regime change in Africa. What evidence exists for or against these arguments? Is it necessary to consider distinctly African factors in order to understand regime change in Africa well? Please use examples or evidence from at least three African countries in your response.
Comprehensive Examination  
Comparative Politics  
May 2008

Please respond to three questions, one from each section. Each essay should make an argument and should address each part of the question. Strive to draw upon a wide range of relevant readings across your three essays.

SECTION I

1. Recent American foreign policy has emphasized two principles as its premises: One, that democratization leads to superior economic growth and development. Two, that high economic growth and development lead to democratization. How does the political science literature speak to these claims? Are they two different claims? Discuss them in light of cases or other evidence that can be used to support and to undermine both sides and your position.

2. Some scholars have argued that political parties are in decline everywhere. People increasingly look to social movements and interest groups to gain voice, benefit, and accountability. Evaluate this claim. Have the functions parties serve changed over time? Have voter expectations regarding parties changed? Have organizational imperatives changed? Consider both theoretical and empirical knowledge on this topic in political science to address this statement across time and across countries.

3. What do you see as the principal methodological strengths and weaknesses of a) case studies, b) large-N statistical analysis, and c) rational-choice theory? Illustrate your answer by evaluating one well-executed publication from each approach.

SECTION II

4. States. As you know, the patterns of state-making in Western Europe have been quite extensively studied. This is not the case in relation to other parts of the world, including the United States. Pick up a large country (could be the USA) or region, and tell us what aspects of the European-centered literature would be useful for studying state-making in it, and what would be the main aspects/variables that should be corrected and/or supplemented for that purpose.

5. Association, Participation, Representation. If the twentieth century was the “century of corporatism,” the twenty-first century arguably is shaping up to be the “century of clientelism,” at least among comparative political scientists who are rediscovering various forms of political representation that fall under the rubric of “clientelism” from Western Europe to Africa. Is there anything new about clientelism today and is there any reason to believe it is more pervasive today than, say, a quarter century ago, or are political scientists merely rediscovering the wheel? To address this question, write an essay that answers the following questions:
A. What is clientelism, or, what are the various forms of clientelism? When, where, and why do clientelistic arrangements prevail as forms of political representation?

B. Are there significant differences across or within regions in the type of clientelism that is evident today, and if so, to what do you attribute these differences (levels of economic development, political institutions, culture, something else)? Please illustrate this part of your answer by making reference to at least one country in at least two different regions of the world.

C. Do you see these arrangements as stable or unstable? Why?

6. Regimes and Regime Change. Linz (1978) argued that pivotal elites can tilt a regime toward either breakdown or reequilibration, and O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) argued that elite decisions could make the difference between a democratic transition or resurgent authoritarianism. However, Huntington (1991) believes that there have been waves of democracy or authoritarianism that are best explained by structural, international, and historical factors. These different views could be construed as a contradiction, but they could also be construed as complementary. How do you think the aforementioned authors would reconcile these “micro” and “macro” views? How would a couple of other authors (for example, Linz and Stepan 1996, Held 1996, or Bunce 2000) attempt to reconcile them? How would you do it? Make sure that your essay considers evidence from more than one region of the world.

SECTION III

7. Africa. It has been argued that the degree to which parties and party systems are "institutionalized" matters for the quality of democracy. Evaluate the merits of this claim, especially as it relates to the dynamics of party politics in West Africa. Make reference to three countries in your response.

Next, propose two hypotheses to explain the variation observed in levels of party institutionalization. Explain how you would test these hypotheses given sufficient resources: What definitions would you use? What data would you gather? And how would these data enable you to test the validity of the hypotheses?

8. Latin America. It has been argued that the degree to which parties and party systems are "institutionalized" matters for the quality of democracy. Evaluate the merits of this claim, especially as it relates to the dynamics of contemporary party politics in the countries of the southern cone of Latin America.

Next, propose two hypotheses to explain the variation observed in levels of party institutionalization. Explain how you would test these hypotheses given sufficient resources: What definitions would you use? What data would you gather? And how would these data enable you to test the validity of the hypotheses?

9. East Asia. Robert Bates has written: “I do not regard area studies as an intellectual rival . . . rather, I regard it as a necessary complement to the social sciences.” Area specialists “would record the data from which political inferences would be drawn by
social scientists residing in political science departments.” Chalmers Johnson comments: “One problem with this proposed division of labor is that these social scientists do not produce beautiful objects [fashioned by the theoretical goldsmiths from the raw ore dug by the area specialist miners], but junk and real area specialists have a much better record of producing theory than their self-proclaimed theoretical rivals.”

Comment on this exchange by reference to political studies of east Asian societies. Discuss the place of studies of east Asian politics in empirical comparative politics generally, and (in order to conform to the parameters required for this examination) with special reference to studies involving the concept of political culture. To what extent, if at all, do empirical comparative theories need to take culture into account in order to explain east Asian politics? To what extent, if at all, is there spill-back from east Asian political studies into general comparative theories of political culture?

10. Advanced Industrial Societies. Consider three advanced industrial countries (such as the US, France, and the UK). In what ways are these countries secularized and in what ways are they not secularized? What are the similarities and differences across these countries in the roles played by religion in politics? Are there important similarities and differences across these countries in the types of relations between religious institutions and states? Do the differences matter for religion and/or for politics?
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics
May 28, 2009

Instructions: The Comparative comp is an open-book written exam. Native English speakers are allowed 8 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 9 hours. The questions are e-mailed to students at the beginning of the exam period and must be returned electronically at the specified time. Any exam returned late automatically fails. There is no guaranteed grace period; “8 hours” means 8 hours and “9 hours” means 9 hours. Only the DGS may make exceptions to this, and only in extraordinary circumstances, such as a power outage or server failure. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that his or her email and computer are in good working order before the exam begins. Students are advised to save their work frequently. The exam consists of three questions. No answer can be longer than 1,750 words. References and citations in the (Author, date) format will be expected, although without page numbers. All answers must be the student’s own work. The university’s Honor Code and conventional ethical standards for academic work apply. Students are advised not to use direct quotations or to copy tables or figures from anyone else’s work; if they do, the source absolutely must be documented to avoid charges of plagiarism.

1. Core
Answer one of the two questions in this section. Any student may choose either question.

A. Lisa Wedeen observes, “Political culture accounts, with their tendencies toward cultural essentialism have rightly come in for criticism by many political scientists. Rejecting such views as either fundamentally tautological or empirically invalid, some critics have opted for one or another strictly ‘materialist’ approach, objecting to cultural variables in any form” (APSR Dec. 2002, p.713).
1. Select a topic area which you think is well suited to a culturalist approach. Explain why a cultural framework is the most appropriate way to understand this topic. Next, pick a specific claim from the scholarly literature on this topic, provide its origin, and explain how you would assess this claim. What evidence would you gather? How would you know if you were right or wrong?
2. Select a topic area which you think is well suited to a materialist approach. Explain why this is the appropriate way to understand this topic. Next, pick a specific claim from the scholarly literature on this topic, provide its origin, and explain how you would assess this claim. What evidence would you gather? How would you know if you were right or wrong?
3. For one of the two claims above, come up with a counter-argument that stresses the opposite approach, i.e. consider a materialist objection to the culturalist claim or vice versa. How would you assess this challenge? What evidence would you gather? How would you know if you were right or wrong?

B. Specialists in comparative politics share very little agreement on which books or articles are essential reading. Why is there so little consensus on this? Nevertheless, there is a fairly level of agreement on a few works, most of which are on our “Current Canon” reading list. Do they share some set of strengths that explains their success, or have they enjoyed success for different reasons? Explain, and support your arguments with at least six examples.
II. Cross-Regional
In this section, answer only the question you are designated to answer.

A. For Garcia, Kiewiet de Jonge, Meléndez, and Osorio
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Spatial models such as Downs (1957) and Hinich and Munger (1994, 1997) present a useful parsimonious theory of what motivates voters and of how parties compete.” Explain.

B. For Cody and Ledet
The theory of "path dependency" assumes that the road to the consolidation of the modern state will have a direct impact on the relationship between state and society both 1) long after these initial processes have taken place and 2) regardless of the ideological proclivities or desires of a country's leaders down the road. Take any two examples of state formation in two different regions over the past couple centuries and examine the theory of path dependency by comparing these states' historical experiences with contemporary state/society relations. Whatever stand you take, make sure you consider both arguments for your position and counterarguments.

III. Area Studies
In this section, answer only the question you are designated to answer.

A. For Cody, Garcia, Kiewiet de Jonge, Meléndez, and Osorio
The level of organization, basis for mobilization, and degree of success of social movements in pressing specific demands and toppling governments has varied widely across time and national borders in Latin America in the past quarter century. This variation raises some obvious questions: Why do social movements emerge at some points in time and not others? Why are they organized along identity lines in some places and on a socioeconomic basis elsewhere? Do social movements wax and wane at more or less the same time across Latin America, or are there significant national differences, and if so, why?

Write an essay that first describes the most important social movements in three Latin American countries, paying particular attention to their (1) basis for mobilization; (2) scope and timing; (3) goals; and (4) success in achieving objectives. Then, evaluate the major comparative theories of social movement mobilization for their ability to explain why social movements emerge in the form they do in these three countries or why they do materialize at all. What approach would you endorse, and why?

B. For Ledet
Choose three advanced industrialized states (such as the US, France, and the UK) and describe how they differ in their treatment of ethnic or religious minorities. Can these differences explain differences in the frequency or severity of political violence by these minorities? If not, what other explanatory factors should we consider?
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics

May 20, 2010
(Sandra Botero)

Instructions:
The Comparative comp is an open-book written exam. Native English speakers are allowed 8 hours; non-native speakers are allowed 9 hours. The questions are e-mailed to students at the beginning of the exam period and must be returned electronically at the specified time. Any exam returned late automatically fails. There is no guaranteed grace period; “8 hours” means 8 hours and “9 hours” means 9 hours. Only the DGS may make exceptions to this, and only in extraordinary circumstances, such as a power outage or server failure. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that his or her e-mail and computer are in good working order before the exam begins. Students are advised to save their work frequently.

The exam consists of three questions. No answer can be longer than 1,750 words. References and citations in the (Author, date) format will be expected, although without page numbers. All answers must be the student’s own work. The university’s Honor Code and conventional ethical standards for academic work apply. Students are advised not to use direct quotations or to copy tables or figures from anyone else’s work; if they do, the source absolutely must be documented to avoid charges of plagiarism.

Part I: Core
Answer one of the two questions in this section.

A. According to Michael Coppedge, most scholars of comparative politics take one of two approaches in their research. They either use thin concepts, that are "simple, unidimensional, and more theoretically adaptable" (as in formal theory) or thick concepts, that "tend to be multifaceted, multidimensional, and imbued with theory" (as in historical institutionalism or political culture).

Choose two works in comparative politics (not mentioned in the chapter cited above) to illustrate these two approaches and use them to discuss the advantages of thin concepts over thick and vice versa. Do you believe that the method of analytic narratives can avoid the trade-offs scholars face when having to choose between the thick and thin approaches? Explain why.


B. Choose a major work from comparative politics (could be from the core list but doesn't have to be) that uses qualitative methods and concisely describe the dependent variable, independent variables, the relationship between them, and the evidence used to come to that conclusion. Then describe how you would try to test this theory using quantitative methods. Consider what evidence you would gather and code (and how) if you had a fairly large budget to do this and what estimators you might use to test the
theory. Is there a major competing explanation that you could test using this same data and method?

In the second part of the question, do the same thing but in reverse. Take a major quantitative work from the literature and describe it (dependent variable, independent variables, relationship, data) and explain how you might test this theory using qualitative evidence. What evidence would you gather? How might you interpret this evidence? Can you use this evidence to consider and judge a major competing explanation?

Conclude with some thoughts about whether most theories lend themselves to easy testing using both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Is it simply a matter of logistics or are some questions just well suited to some approaches and poorly suited to others?

**Part II: Cross-regional**

Answer one of the two questions in this section.

A. Institutions and Institutionalisms

Debates in comparative politics suggest a dichotomy between structural determination (in which socio-economic structures largely determine certain outcomes) and agency or contingent action approaches (in which actors have considerable leeway in choosing their political behavior, which in turn affects outcomes). Institutionalist approaches fit neither of these categories. They reject the idea that socio-economic structures largely determine political outcomes, but at the same time they qualify the notion that actors have great leeway in choosing their behavior.

Discuss organizational/institutional approaches in this light, comparing them to both structural and agency approaches.

B. Social Movements and Revolutions

Most scholars of political protest and rebellion agree that the political system matters, but there is considerable ambiguity in the precise role of political variables. Some scholars discuss the importance of political opportunity structures that enable protest, some object to the word “structures” but still talk in terms of political opportunities, and some discuss constraints to protest as much as opportunities. In what ways do elements of the political system facilitate or constrain political protest or rebellion? Can discontent people protest or rebel regardless of the political system? What about protest is affected by the political system—the very occurrence of protest, the nature or number of participants, the character of the protest (violent or non-violent), or something else?

**Part III: Area Studies**

In this section, please answer the question below. (There is no choice.)

A. Regimes and Regime Change in Latin America (Colombia, Peru, Bolivia)

The Andean countries, like many others in Latin America, have undergone important transformations in both the nature and the quality of their regimes. Most of our attention has been drawn to the transitions from authoritarianism to democracy, but important
regime changes have been taking place even in countries that are, by most measures, democratic. Using your three selected countries, (a) describe the nature of the regime changes that have taken place over the last twenty years or so (that is, recent changes in the nature of their democracies); (b) explain what, in your view, accounts for over-time and cross-country differences; and (c) discuss whether our existing theories of regime change help us understand changes within regime type, and whether/how these theories must be modified to deal with within-type regime changes or whether we need an entirely new set of theories.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Exam in Comparative Politics (Fairbrother)  
September 2004

I. Core question: Methods  
Please respond to one of the following questions:

A. In the summer 2004 issue of APSA-CP, Juan Linz said that “the problem is that our knowledge . . . is cumulative only until you have a political earthquake. Then some of the relationships among the variables no longer hold” (p. 27). There seems to be some truth to this—comparative politics has had its share of frameworks and theories that come and go—but why? Linz believes that we have good theories that are valid until reality changes, but there are at least two other possibilities. One is that theoretical understanding progresses: it changes only in becoming an improved understanding. Another possibility is that our understanding is rarely valid: our theories are always trying, and failing, to explain the past, and therefore fail to anticipate the next “political earthquake,” and this forces us to try a new approach. Which of these three characterizations best accounts for the turnover of approaches in comparative politics? Or if there is truth in all of them, is there some way to reconcile these three interpretations? Use the core literature from our reading list to give an example of one, two, or all three of these tendencies. No matter how many tendencies you choose to discuss, give a total of three examples.

B. King, Keohane, and Verba's Designing Social Inquiry (1994) has been for a decade perhaps the single most influential text in methods in Comparative Politics. What are the main arguments of this book? What lessons should comparative political scientists still heed in the coming years? Where, if anywhere, does this book lead researchers astray? Give an example of an actual or hypothetical study that either a) meets key guidelines from the book or b) violates one or more guidelines but produces or would produce valid results according to other criteria.

II. Cross-regional topics  
Please respond to one of the following questions:

A. Lipset and Rokkan (1967), and others, argued that party systems in Western Europe have been characterized by relative stability since the inception of competitive electoral politics. Discuss the arguments and evidence for and against this claim. It has also been observed that the competitive party systems that have emerged since 1978 around the world have been characterized by strikingly high levels of volatility, rather than stability. How well does Lipset and Rokkan’s approach hold up when analyzing the newer party systems? Please demonstrate cross-regional expertise in your answer. Discuss the experience of at least three new party systems, no more than two from any single world region (Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America).
B. Compare and contrast causes of regime change in any two world regions (choosing from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America). In what ways are the causes of regime change similar or different? How much weight should be assigned to domestic versus international factors in each region? What does regime change in your two regions reveal about the characteristics of regimes in each region? Has the frequency and mode of regime change changed over time in these regions, and what does that portend for the future? Please answer the question making reference to at least three different authors and use specific examples from three countries (with no more than two from a single region).

III. Area Studies:

Referring to at least two country cases, describe in what major ways the nature of the European nation-state has evolved since the 19th century. Are the post-Maastricht European Union and the ongoing project of “ever closer union” in Europe mostly confirming or refuting traditional scholarly paradigms of the state and state sovereignty?
University of Notre Dame
Department of Political Science
Comprehensive Exam in Comparative Politics (Kashangaki)
September 2004

I. Core question: Methods
   Please respond to one of the following questions:

A. In the summer 2004 issue of *APSA-CP*, Juan Linz said that “the problem is that our knowledge... is cumulative only until you have a political earthquake. Then some of the relationships among the variables no longer hold” (p. 27). There seems to be some truth to this—comparative politics has had its share of frameworks and theories that come and go—but why? Linz believes that we have good theories that are valid until reality changes, but there are at least two other possibilities. One is that theoretical understanding progresses: it changes only in becoming an improved understanding. Another possibility is that our understanding is rarely valid: our theories are always trying, and failing, to explain the past, and therefore fail to anticipate the next “political earthquake,” and this forces us to try a new approach. Which of these three characterizations best accounts for the turnover of approaches in comparative politics? Or if there is truth in all of them, is there some way to reconcile these three interpretations? Use the core literature from our reading list to give an example of one, two, or all three of these tendencies. No matter how many tendencies you choose to discuss, give a total of three examples.

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B. Compare and contrast causes of regime change in any two world regions (choosing from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America). In what ways are the causes of regime change similar or different? How much weight should be assigned to domestic versus international factors in each region? What does regime change in your two regions reveal about the characteristics of regimes in each region? Has the frequency and mode of regime change changed over time in these regions, and what does that portend for the future? Please answer the question making reference to at least three different authors and use specific examples from three countries (with no more than two from a single region).
III. Area Studies:

One question that continues to puzzle social scientists concerns why certain social identities become more politically salient than others. Review and critique the major theories developed to explain why ethnic identity has been more politically salient in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa than socio-economic class. Is ethnic identity more politically salient in Kenya, Nigeria or Tanzania? What in your view explains the variation in the degree to which ethnic identity has been politicized in these three countries?
I. Core question: Methods

Please respond to one of the following questions:

A. In the summer 2004 issue of *APSA-CP*, Juan Linz said that “the problem is that our knowledge... is cumulative only until you have a political earthquake. Then some of the relationships among the variables no longer hold” (p. 27). There seems to be some truth to this—comparative politics has had its share of frameworks and theories that come and go—but why? Linz believes that we have good theories that are valid until reality changes, but there are at least two other possibilities. One is that theoretical understanding progresses: it changes only in becoming an improved understanding. Another possibility is that our understanding is rarely valid: our theories are always trying, and failing, to explain the past, and therefore fail to anticipate the next “political earthquake,” and this forces us to try a new approach. Which of these three characterizations best accounts for the turnover of approaches in comparative politics? Or if there is truth in all of them, is there some way to reconcile these three interpretations? Use the core literature from our reading list to give an example of one, two, or all three of these tendencies. No matter how many tendencies you choose to discuss, give a total of three examples.

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II. Cross-regional topics

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A. Lipset and Rokkan (1967), and others, argued that party systems in Western Europe have been characterized by relative stability since the inception of competitive electoral politics. Discuss the arguments and evidence for and against this claim. It has also been observed that the competitive party systems that have emerged since 1978 around the world have been characterized by strikingly high levels of volatility, rather than stability. How well does Lipset and Rokkan's approach hold up when analyzing the newer party systems? Please demonstrate cross-regional expertise in your answer. Discuss the experience of at least three new party systems, no more than two from any single world region (Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America).
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III. Area Studies:

During the 1980s and into the 1990s East Asia was one of the world's fastest growing regions, and some observers identified a general "Asian model" of economic development. But observers also adduced elements of this same Asian model to explain the financial crisis of 1997 and the region's subsequent economic woes.

1. Outline what might be taken as the Asian model, citing appropriate sources.

2. Does the 1997 crisis refute the theory behind the Asian model? or does it show that conditions had changed, so the model no longer worked in the way it had previously? or what? In your response, make specific detailed references to the experience of Taiwan and South Korea, with appropriate comparisons and contrasts. The 1997 crisis seems to have hit Taiwan less hard than South Korea. Can you explain this?
Comprehensive Exam in Comparative Politics

September 2008 (Ledet)

Answer one question in each part.

Part I: Core
1. Formal approaches to political science take preferences of agents as fixed (or given, or primitive). This paves the way to institutionalist approaches to political science, since with fixed preferences, institutions constrain individuals' behavior in desirable ways. However, scholars who focus on the role of culture in human affairs are skeptical of the ability of institutions to replace habits, attitudes and skills that citizens have acquired over long periods of time. Which of the two approaches - that of political culture or that of institutions - is a more fruitful way of studying comparative politics? Which subject matters of the discipline in particular lend themselves to political culture approaches and which are better tackled from an institutionalist perspective?

2. Some scholars have done cross-regional research, i.e., comparisons of countries in very different geographical regions rather than area-studies or case-study research. Give a couple of examples. How do scholars justify comparing countries that are so different? Do you find their justifications convincing? What pitfalls tend to occur in cross-regional research? Can they be avoided? Do you think cross-regional research is becoming more common? Why or why not?

Part II: Cross-Regional
1. Comparative political scientists study two types of representation: electoral representation by candidates and political parties and non-electoral representation by other means. Give examples of both types of representation in at least two world regions. What reasons are there to privilege electoral representation over representation through non-electoral channels? What reasons are there to prefer non-electoral representation?

2. In many societies, political competition is centered on ascriptive identities, such as ethnicity and race, rather than ideological or policy distinctions. Please provide at least three major explanations for why ascriptive identities, like ethnicity or race, have been more politically salient in some societies than in others. In your view, which explanation is the most compelling? Be sure to make reference to actual real-world cases to support your view.

Part III: Area Studies
1. How are state policies with respect to national integration and multi-culturalism similar and different across three advanced industrial democracies? What are the goals and trade-offs associated with different policies? How can the similarities and differences be explained?

2. Discuss the degree to which the nature and core functions of the state in the advanced industrial democracies have changed since WWII and specifically elaborate upon one area of state policy or responsibility that illuminates the reasons(s) for change; i.e., why change has occurred. Are traditional states becoming obsolete?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics – Ahern  
January 2006

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question 1:

Seminal works are labeled as such because they introduce new ideas that influence future research. Sometimes the future research builds on insights that largely prove correct; other times the future research debunk the earlier findings. Discuss three seminal works in comparative politics, their initial contributions to knowledge, and the research they have inspired. (Cite specific work.) Which insights have endured until today, and which insights have largely proven wrong? In your opinion, are these works worthy of the attention they receive? Why or why not? What are the key unanswered questions remaining for the research agenda inspired by each work?

Question 2:

According to King, Keohane, and Verba (1994), most comparative political scientists should keep in mind the assumptions and requirements of multiple regression as they design their research. Which aspects of KKV’s advice are worthwhile? Where does the advice go wrong? How is it incomplete?

Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Social Movements/Revolution

“Desmond Tutu remarks that ‘When people decide they want to be free, there is nothing that can stop them.’ Yet, this observation cannot be true. More often than not, people who want to be free are ruthlessly repressed, and revolutionary movements can succeed only when repressive regimes decide to change themselves.” Comment on this statement.

Parties and Elections

Some authors take political parties as their unit of analysis and assume that each party is a relatively homogenous actor. Others claim that it is essential to examine different groups within parties and claim that otherwise, the analysis fails to understand important dynamics. Finally, a third group of authors (e.g., David Mayhew, Congress, The Electoral Connection) believe that the most fruitful unit of analysis is individual politicians and that parties are best seen as an agglomeration of individuals.

Describe some reasons why different analysts take each of these positions, then provide your own perspective on which position you advocate and criticize the other two positions.

Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

Identity, Ethnicity and Religion – Europe
What does it mean when a person is said to “identify” with Europe; i.e., to what extent, and in which ways, does the concept of “Europe” matter (i.e. is relevant) to the citizens of the European Union? Whatever its specific meanings(s), to which persons, populations and/or groups does Europe matter most; to which does it matter least? Why these differences?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics - Gervasoni  
January 2006

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

**Question 1:**
Seminal works are labeled as such because they introduce new ideas that influence future research. Sometimes the future research builds on insights that largely prove correct; other times the future research debunks the earlier findings. Discuss three seminal works in comparative politics, their initial contributions to knowledge, and the research they have inspired. (Cite specific work.) Which insights have endured until today, and which insights have largely proven wrong? In your opinion, are these works worthy of the attention they receive? Why or why not? What are the key unanswered questions remaining for the research agenda inspired by each work?

**Question 2:**
According to King, Keohane, and Verba (1994), most comparative political scientists should keep in mind the assumptions and requirements of multiple regression as they design their research. Which aspects of KKV’s advice are worthwhile? Where does the advice go wrong? How is it incomplete?

Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

**Political Economy of Developing Countries**

Please review the debate about the proper role of the state in economic development. Pick three different theories concerning this subject, set them in historical context, then compare and contrast them. Using examples, describe the strengths and weaknesses of policies that involve high/low levels of government involvement in the economy. Are there certain circumstances/policy areas which necessitate government involvement? Are there other circumstances in which government involvement is always a bad idea?

**Parties and Elections**

Some authors take political parties as their unit of analysis and assume that each party is a relatively homogenous actor. Others claim that it is essential to examine different groups within parties and claim that otherwise, the analysis fails to understand important dynamics. Finally, a third group of authors (e.g., David Mayhew, Congress, The Electoral Connection) believe that the most fruitful unit of analysis is individual politicians and that parties are best seen as an agglomeration of individuals.

Describe some reasons why different analysts take each of these positions, then provide your own perspective on which position you advocate and criticize the other two positions.

Part III: (Please respond to the following question)
Regimes – Latin America

The most striking feature of Latin American regimes in the past 15 years has been the survival of democracy, often in spite of economic crisis, institutional deadlock, or mass mobilizations. Choose three Latin American countries that are either still democratic after all these years or more democratic than they were 15 years ago. For each one, say whether each of the authors below would probably consider the current regime 1) about as stable as expected, 2) more stable than expected, 3) less stable than expected, or 4) something else. Explain why. If there is some essential part of the explanation for these regimes that these authors overlook, speculate about what it is.

The authors (and works) are:
Robert Dahl, Polyarchy, 1971
Linz and Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, 1996
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics – Lawall  
January 2006

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question 1:

Seminal works are labeled as such because they introduce new ideas that influence future research. Sometimes the future research builds on insights that largely prove correct; other times the future research debunked the earlier findings. Discuss three seminal works in comparative politics, their initial contributions to knowledge, and the research they have inspired. (Cite specific work.) Which insights have endured until today, and which insights have largely proven wrong? In your opinion, are these works worthy of the attention they receive? Why or why not? What are the key unanswered questions remaining for the research agenda inspired by each work?

Question 2:

According to King, Keohane, and Verba (1994), most comparative political scientists should keep in mind the assumptions and requirements of multiple regression as they design their research. Which aspects of KKV’s advice are worthwhile? Where does the advice go wrong? How is it incomplete?

Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Social Movements/Revolution

“Desmond Tutu remarks that ‘When people decide they want to be free, there is nothing that can stop them.’ Yet, this observation cannot be true. More often than not, people who want to be free are ruthlessly repressed, and revolutionary movements can succeed only when repressive regimes decide to change themselves.” Comment on this statement.

Parties and Elections

Some authors take political parties as their unit of analysis and assume that each party is a relatively homogenous actor. Others claim that it is essential to examine different groups within parties and claim that otherwise, the analysis fails to understand important dynamics. Finally, a third group of authors (e.g., David Mayhew, Congress, The Electoral Connection) believe that the most fruitful unit of analysis is individual politicians and that parties are best seen as an agglomeration of individuals.

Describe some reasons why different analysts take each of these positions, then provide your own perspective on which position you advocate and criticize the other two positions.

Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

Identity, Ethnicity, and Religion – Middle East
Some theorists, including Samuel P. Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), argue that democratic regimes are uncommon in predominantly Muslim countries, such as Algeria, Egypt and Iran, in large part because of Islam. In other words, they argue that Islam is incompatible with democracy. In your view, can we say that countries like Algeria, Egypt and Iran are not democratic because Islam is incompatible with democracy? Why or why not? How might we discover whether and how Islam affects political culture? If we were to find that Islam is an obstacle to the development of a democratic political culture in Algeria, Egypt and Iran, is there evidence to indicate that Islam has always been an obstacle to democracy in these three countries? If we find evidence to indicate that Islam has not always been an obstacle to democracy, what might explain the variation in the effect that Islam has had on political culture in these three countries?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics - Owolabi  
January 2006

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question 1:

Seminal works are labeled as such because they introduce new ideas that influence future research. Sometimes the future research builds on insights that largely prove correct; other times the future research debunks the earlier findings. Discuss three seminal works in comparative politics, their initial contributions to knowledge, and the research they have inspired. (Cite specific work.) Which insights have endured until today, and which insights have largely proven wrong? In your opinion, are these works worthy of the attention they receive? Why or why not? What are the key unanswered questions remaining for the research agenda inspired by each work?

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According to King, Keohane, and Verba (1994), most comparative political scientists should keep in mind the assumptions and requirements of multiple regression as they design their research. Which aspects of KKV’s advice are worthwhile? Where does the advice go wrong? How is it incomplete?

Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

The State

Theories of state-making that center on the consequences of wars and taxation have been criticized on several grounds. Please summarize those criticisms and assess them.

Parties and Elections

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Describe some reasons why different analysts take each of these positions, then provide your own perspective on which position you advocate and criticize the other two positions.

Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

Regimes – Latin America
The most striking feature of Latin American regimes in the past 15 years has been the survival of democracy, often in spite of economic crisis, institutional deadlock, or mass mobilizations. Choose three Latin American countries that are either still democratic after all these years or more democratic than they were 15 years ago. For each one, say whether each of the authors below would probably consider the current regime 1) about as stable as expected, 2) more stable than expected, 3) less stable than expected, or 4) something else. Explain why. If there is some essential part of the explanation for these regimes that these authors overlook, speculate about what it is.

The authors (and works) are:
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics – Walsh  
January 2006

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question 1:

Seminal works are labeled as such because they introduce new ideas that influence future research. Sometimes the future research builds on insights that largely prove correct; other times the future research debunks the earlier findings. Discuss three seminal works in comparative politics, their initial contributions to knowledge, and the research they have inspired. (Cite specific work.) Which insights have endured until today, and which insights have largely proven wrong? In your opinion, are these works worthy of the attention they receive? Why or why not? What are the key unanswered questions remaining for the research agenda inspired by each work?

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Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Social Movements/Revolution

“Desmond Tutu remarks that ‘When people decide they want to be free, there is nothing that can stop them.’ Yet, this observation cannot be true. More often than not, people who want to be free are ruthlessly repressed, and revolutionary movements can succeed only when repressive regimes decide to change themselves.” Comment on this statement.

Parties and Elections

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Describe some reasons why different analysts take each of these positions, then provide your own perspective on which position you advocate and criticize the other two positions.

Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

Identity, Ethnicity, and Religion - Latin America
The mobilization of indigenous peoples along ethnic lines has intensified in much of Latin America in the past decade and a half. Please review general and regional (Latin America-specific) theories about identity formation and mobilization, and then explain which of these best explains why this identity has apparently become more salient in the countries of Central America in recent years than others (religion, class), and why now? If you feel that none do, please say why, and offer an alternative.
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics
January 23, 2009
(Robert Brathwaite and Shaojin Chai)

Important Instructions: Be sure to indicate whether you are taking this exam under the old rules (closed book, 6/7 hours, no word limit) or the new rules (open book, 8/9 hours, limit of 1750 words per question, in-text citations required, direct quotations discouraged). Consult the “Grading Standards for Comprehensive Exams in Comparative Politics” for what demonstrates good understanding of relevant theory, critical judgment, and case knowledge.

Part I: Core

A. A large volume of work has been published on comparative methods during the past two decades. Against this backdrop, apply to any 3 exemplary pieces of scholarship from the list of canonical works (which you read for this exam) at least 2 methodological “lessons” drawn from the seminal literature on comparative methods written after 1990. What ultimately in your view are the major methodological strengths and weaknesses of the aforementioned 3 exemplary pieces of scholarship?

B. Imre Lakatos once wrote,

The hallmark of empirical progress is not trivial verifications: Popper is right that there are millions of them. (...) But so-called “refutations” are not the hallmark of empirical failure, as Popper has preached, since all programmes grow in a permanent ocean of anomalies. What really count are dramatic, unexpected, stunning predictions: a few of them are enough to tilt the balance; where theory lags behind the facts, we are dealing with miserable degenerating research programmes. [“Introduction: Science and Pseudoscience,” in John Worrall and Gregory Currie, eds., The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers, vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 6.]

Is comparative politics a progressive or degenerative research program? That is, has theory in comparative politics tended to lag behind events, or has it sometimes made stunning predictions? Support your answer with examples from our core reading list.

Part II: Cross-regional

A. Institutions and Institutionalisms
In the 1980s, scholars of comparative politics began to pay renewed attention to institutions. Some sought to “bring the state back in” and understand institutions in their historical context; others explored how rational actors would respond to institutional incentives. What perceived analytical absence(s) were these scholars responding to? Twenty years later, how would you assess the strengths and weaknesses of this increased attentiveness to the role of institutions to explain political outcomes? Which approaches do you find most useful? Why? Please highlight your response with relevant examples from the literature.
B. Social Movements and Revolution
Some theories of protest make no distinction between the peaceful or violent nature of the activities. They try to explain mobilization, whether that mobilization is violent or nonviolent. Other theories of protest are instead concerned exclusively with explaining violent mobilization or exclusively with peaceful political mobilization. Still other theories distinguish between peaceful and violent protest and focus on the factors that make one type evolve into another. In your view, should we seek to explain violent and nonviolent protest with the same variables and hypotheses? Are some variables useful for explaining mobilization, whether violent or nonviolent, while other variables are useful for explaining only one or the other? Which variables or hypotheses do you think are most convincing? Support your answer with empirical examples from at least three different social movements, protests, or revolutions (or situations that were ripe for protest where protest nevertheless did not materialize). Be sure to provide clear definitions of all terms and concepts.

C. Regimes and Regime Change [Note: If you answer this question, you may not also answer question III.B.]
It has often been noted that some approaches to understanding democratization focus on the micropolitics of elites, while other approaches focus on macropolitical factors such as economic development, class structure, social divisions, or even geography. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach (micro vs. macro)? Support your argument with at least three sources. What advice would you give to someone who would like to combine the advantages of both approaches?

Part III: Area Studies

A. The State in Asia (China/Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam)
"The prospect of democratic transition in East and Southeast Asia is grim. This is not because Asian political culture is undemocratic; rather, the main obstacle to democratic breakthrough is the strong state." Comment on this statement.

B. Regimes and Regime Change in Asia (South Korea, Taiwan, China) [Note: If you answer this question, you may not also answer question II.C.]
Some Chinese publicists, inspired in part by the ideas of the late Samuel P. Huntington, assert that democracy in China is best served through the development of a strong "middle class." This in turn depends on a thriving market economy, and a market economy is nurtured by a strong state able to impose strong "macroscopic" controls over the market keeping the market in its proper channels, thwarting corruption, and preventing the disruption of the market by social forces that could stand in the way of market efficiency. This in its turn requires limiting rather than expanding political participation. (1) Evaluate the logic of this argument. (2) Discuss the degree to which this kind of model explains the democratization of South Korea and Taiwan. (3) Whatever the answer to Part (2), discuss whether the Taiwan and Korean experiences are relevant to democratization in China proper.
Part I.

1. Choose a major theoretical puzzle in comparative politics: for example, why revolutions occur, how party systems differ, why nationalism emerges as a major factor in some processes of regime change but not in others, why democratic regimes break down, or any other puzzle of interest to you. Compare how scholars from different meta theoretical perspectives or theoretical paradigms (e.g. institutionalism, political culture, structuralism etc.) converge and diverge in explaining your chosen theoretical puzzle. Make sure your answer explicitly refers to some of the major scholars who are working within the theoretical paradigms on which you focus.

2. It is ironic that much of the research in “comparative” politics consists of case studies. Is the case study method valid or defensible? If so, on what grounds? If not, why not? Offer examples of published comparative research to illustrate your points. Should comparativists be organizing their research efforts in different ways than they currently do? If so, how and why?

Part II.

1. Has our understanding of democratization cumulatively increased over the past four decades? If not, argue that each wave of scholarship has ignored or overturned past scholarship while either striking out in different directions or reinventing the wheel. If so, argue that at least some wave of scholarship has built upon and improved our understanding of some aspect of the processes of democratization that had been achieved by earlier research. Be sure to offer specific examples.

2. What have the prevailing patterns of domestic politics of the countries within your major region of specialization during the past two decades or so taught the subfield of comparative politics about the nature of political parties and party systems? In what specific ways (if any) did the dominant theories/paradigms of parties and party systems prove to be faulty or inadequate as democratization unfolded in your major region of specialization? Be sure to offer examples drawn from specific country cases.

3. At the end of WWII, intellectuals and statesmen believed that the era of ethnicity and nationalism, which had brought such blood and violence to mankind, would soon be superceded by the emergence of a rational and scientific temper in the world. Now that the 20th century has ended, how would you judge this widespread belief and expectation of yesteryear? If your claim is that nationalism is here to stay, why in your judgement were so many scholars wrong? Contrariwise, outline reasons for why the era of nationalism might have ended, or might be at its end.

Part III.

1. In a way, many of the events that have occurred in Eastern Europe since the fall of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s could have been predicted. Anyone who witnessed or experienced the problems of communist rule first-hand would not be surprised that these states should have initially faced massive difficulties: economic collapse, official corruption, ethnic strife, etc. However, one development remains striking. Almost all of these states quickly embraced the institutions of liberal-democratic rule, including regular elections, robust political parties and active parliaments. Why was
this latter development possible when so much else about the East European transition out of communism seemed so difficult and unworkable? Moreover, what might the East European experience with democratic institutions teach us about contrasting paths to liberal democracy elsewhere? If you wish, please feel free to disagree with any of the assumptions implied in these questions.

2. If the 1980s was the decade of democratization in Latin America, the 1990s could arguably be viewed as the decade of market-oriented reforms. Some argue that economic liberalism reinforces democracy, while others maintain that market-oriented reform undermines democracies in progress. Citing the appropriate literature, write an essay that reviews the theoretical bases of these arguments and assesses them in light of at least four Latin American cases. In order to answer this question well, you will need to establish a research design to test these arguments and develop empirical standards for what, in your view, constitutes a successful democracy. Finally, the question leaves open the possibility that democracy may be stronger in some countries than in others for reasons that may not be attributable to the process or results of policy reform. If this is your view, justify it.

3. In what important ways are the advanced industrial societies economically converging and in what important ways are they not? On balance, what can be reasonably and soberly concluded about the nature, the scope and the significance or impact of globalization?
PART I

1. Discuss the utility and limits of rational choice approaches to the study of comparative politics.

2. Most comparativists most of the time study one or a few cases. It is therefore important to note that in Designing Social Inquiry (1994), King, Keohane, and Verba observe that "random selection is not generally appropriate in small-n research. But abandoning randomness opens the door to many sources of bias" (p. 128). What are these sources of bias? How should comparativists select their cases so as to make causal inferences that are as unbiased as possible?

PART II

1. The constructivist view of ethnicity and nationalism has been on the rise over the last ten to fifteen years. In embracing constructivism, have scholars gone too far? In answering this question, you should consider what the other approaches to ethnicity and nationalism are, and how they measure up when confronted with the empirical realities of the field. You should also compare those other approaches to the central claims of constructivism.

2. Make a useful analytic distinction between two or more stages in the process of democratization. Then, for each stage, identify at least one scholarly work that has made an important contribution to our understanding of that stage, and explain why you consider these contributions important in the context of the literature on democratization.

PART III

1. One of the great puzzles of South Asian politics concerns the remarkably different political trajectories of India and Pakistan after independence, even though both shared a similar political background under British rule. What are the key political and/or institutional differences between the two countries? How does one explain the emergence of dramatic political/institutional differences? Are these differences real, or only formal?

2. Identify the central challenges of democracy and democratization in South Asia. To what degree is the persistence of ethnic conflict in the region a brake on the progress of democratization? Be sure to cite specific country-based examples in support of your arguments.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics  
January 2003 (Jeremiah John)

Answer one question from each section.

I. General Theory

A. Briefly trace and critique the evolution of the concept of political culture within the context of the history of political science as a discipline since WWII. To what degree, in your view, is the concept useful/relevant for explaining change and stability in the contemporary political context? Generally speaking, at what point(s) in an analysis of political change/stability does political culture "matter"?

B. Discuss the strengths and shortcoming of adopting a large-n versus small-n strategy in comparative research. What methods can be used to bolster the validity of one or the other approach? Is one preferable? Are they incompatible? Refer in your answer to the responses offered by major works on methods, and give salient examples of large and small-n research.

II. Middle-Range Theory

A. Affluent countries tend to be democracies and impoverished countries tend not to be democracies. Why?

B. Most of the literature assumes that, in order to emerge and to endure for being able to at least pursue some of their stated goals, social movements must overcome severe collective action problems. Please tell us and discuss some of the contributions that analyze ways and reasons of overcoming this problem. Alternatively, you may want to argue—and give us a reasoned argument about, including some examples—that this is a false problem.

C. Scholars often treat religion as an identity that is similar to or part of ethnicity. Discuss the merits and shortcomings of this approach. More broadly, discuss how religious identity has been related to studies of civil and international conflict. What are the strengths, shortcomings, and biases of this work?

III. Area Studies (Latin America)

A. Over several decades, political scientists have debated what conditions are favorable to the survival of democratic regimes in Latin America, and conversely, what conditions make democracies most vulnerable to breakdown. What are the major competing theoretical perspectives in this debate? What are the main arguments for and against these theoretical approaches?

B. Is it useful, in comparative politics, to treat Latin America as a region? At one extreme, some claim that Latin American states have a host of characteristics in common and that this makes the region particularly useful to comparativists. At the other extreme, some argue that "Latin America doesn't exist" and that any generalization about the entire region is automatically false. What position do you take in this debate? Defend it by assessing how comparable one Latin American country of your choice is with respect to other countries of the region. In what ways is it analytically useful for them to be comparable, or to be different?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics  
January 2003 (Kate Nicholls)

Answer one question from each section.

I. General Theory

A. Briefly trace and critique the evolution of the concept of political culture within the context of the history of political science as a discipline since WWII. To what degree, in your view, is the concept useful/relevant for explaining change and stability in the contemporary political context? Generally speaking, at what point(s) in an analysis of political change/stability does political culture "matter"?

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II. Middle-Range Theory

A. Affluent countries tend to be democracies and impoverished countries tend not to be democracies. Why?

B. Theoretical approaches to comparative political economy have evolved considerably from the late 1970s, when structuralist theories were dominant, to the present, in which rationalist approaches have superseded them. What, in your view, are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and, more specifically, what has been lost and gained in the evolution of these theoretical approaches with respect to the study of specific issues in political economy? Illustrate your answer with reference to two areas of study in political economy, such as wage bargaining or the state's role in economic development. Would you argue in favor of adopting one of these approaches over the other, even in some modified form; for some synthesis of the two; or for a new theoretical approach?

C. Samuel Huntington opens his Political Order in Changing Societies (1968) with this statement: "The most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government." What did this statement mean in the context of the book? How does scholarship since that book address this issue?

III. Area Studies (Latin America)

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Government & International Studies
Comparative Comprehensive Exam
May 2001

PART I.

1. Discuss the major achievements and failures of the rational choice paradigm in Comparative Politics.

2. The field of Comparative Politics is sometimes criticized for encouraging overly sweeping generalizations and for lacking methodological rigor. What, if any, are the merits of these criticisms? Second, what are some of the conceptual and methodological advantages and disadvantages of a broad, system level approach to the study of politics? Support your answers with references to some of the major works in the comparative field.

PART II.

1. In what ways, and to what degree, does a successful transition to democracy depend upon the resolution or absence of ethnic, religious, linguistic and national conflicts? State and defend your answer to this question, applying it to one country of your choice; but also recognize the scholarship that has advanced similar arguments and contrast your argument with scholarship that takes a contrary position. What approaches to democratization, if any, have simply ignored these issues?

2. What is the relationship between democracy and development? In answering this question, you should consider its two different, though interrelated, aspects: 1) How does economic development affect the emergence or survival of democracy; and 2) How does democracy affect economic development? In answering the two parts of the question, you should not only consider what existing theories say, but also what the evidence might indicate.

3) What are the different approaches to explaining ethnic conflict? Lay out the basic arguments of each approach, and critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. You should also identify the major scholars who are associated with each approach.

4) Over the last two decades, the question regarding “state strength” and “state capacity” has been at the center of analytical and historical debates about the state. While some authors find these interrelated concepts very useful, others have remain skeptical. Discuss the various ways in which “state strength” is conceptualized in the literature. What aspects of modern politics is the concept intended to illuminate? What are the main points of disagreement among scholars who debate the usefulness of the concept?
5) Drawing upon your knowledge of the literature on parties and party systems, what role do contemporary political parties play in 1) aggregating societal interests; 2) channeling nonelite political demands; 3) recruiting governing elites; and 4) politically socializing new citizens (e.g., immigrants and young people). You may choose to confine your analysis either to the advanced industrial or to the newly developing democracies.

PART III.

1. Instead of destroying the caste system, democracy has actually increased its political significance in India. Is this view correct? If so, explain how democracy, a system predicated upon political equality, has increased the significance of caste, a system based upon ascriptive hierarchy and inequality.

2. For a long time, communism was seen as a “solution” to the problem of endemic ethnic conflict in regions like the Balkans, central Asia, and the Caucuses. Is this view correct? Did Marxist-Leninist regimes have any significant positive impact in addressing this problem? Or, alternatively, compared to non-communist regimes, did they have no significant impact at all?

In responding to these questions, you should use evidence from at least two cases, one from a former Marxist-Leninist regime and the other from a non-communist regime.

3. Do what degree are governments in Western Europe masters of or hostages to macroeconomic outcomes? Do some states enjoy/exercise greater economic sovereignty than others? How can the rather recent commitments by the member states of the European Union to a single market and a single currency be explained?
GOVERNMENT & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
COMPARATIVE POLITICS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM
May 2002

PART I

1. What is "historical institutionalism?" In what respects is it similar to and different from rational choice institutionalism? What criticisms have scholars who work from alternative theoretical perspectives offered of historical institutionalism? Although your answer should not delve into the details of any particular works, you should refer to some leading examples of historical institutionalism.

2. Many prominent scholars (most notably, Karl Popper), have argued that because we cannot prove that any theoretical proposition is true, scientific progress consists of demonstrating that alternative propositions are false. Yet before a proposition can be falsified (shown to be false), it must be falsifiable; that is, we must be able to imagine some kind of evidence that would be inconsistent with the proposition. What kinds of theoretical propositions in comparative politics would not be falsifiable? Give an example of a theory that has been accused of being non-falsifiable and evaluate the accusation.

PART II

1. Why are rich countries more likely to be democracies than poor ones?

2. Scholars of comparative politics argue that institutions matter, yet much of the research has been criticized for focusing too narrowly on formal institutions, which may or may not adequately describe the rules that actors follow. In response to this criticism, scholars are beginning to incorporate informal institutions into their analyses. Outline an agenda for incorporating informal institutions into comparative politics. Your answer should address the following questions: What is (or is not) an informal institution? How do informal institutions differ from formal institutions? How do informal institutions emerge and change? What is the relationship between formal and informal institutions? What specific challenges does the study of informal institutions pose for empirical research?

3. In a direct challenge to the work of their intellectual forerunners during the 1960s and 1970s, many political economy scholars during the past 15 years or so have concluded that the policies of governments in liberal societies and economies can have but a modest impact on macroeconomic outcomes. If this is so, how to explain the inordinate attention political parties typically give to their economic programs *and* the propensity of voters to reward or punish governments for the general state of the economy?

4. An old debate in comparative politics centers around whether political parties and party systems are shaped primarily by social cleavages or by political institutions. Engage this debate in light of contemporary and specific examples of party system realignment, dealignment, or stability.
PART III

1. Why have virtually all Latin American countries turned toward more market-oriented economic policies since 1973—especially during the 1980s and 1990s? What explains the variance in speed within Latin America with which countries adopted market-oriented policies?

2. An increasing number of scholars claim that traditional definitions of citizenship in Western Europe are outmoded, that mass immigration to the region is stoking popular support for extreme right political groups and parties and, in general, the sovereignty of European states is irreversibly declining. First, what intellectual threads and observably economic, social or political trends if any, connect these alleged phenomena? Second, to what degree are these claims valid? Be sure to support your answers with evidence from specific country cases.

3. After nearly a quarter century of sanguine developments in the democratization of Latin America, there are manifestations today of widespread public disaffection with governmental performance and allegations of corruption on the part of public officials. Citing the lack of prestige of political institutions (and in some extreme cases even the disintegration of state institutions) and the rise of anti-party, populist politicians, some observers now believe that there exists a governability crisis that threatens democracy itself. Not only Latin America’s weakest democracies but even well established democracies and recently strengthened democratic regimes are allegedly not immune from these regional trends. Is there a general governability crisis in Latin America, or alternatively, are some democracies in crisis but not others? Explain why at least four of Latin America’s democracies are or are not becoming ungovernable.
PART I

1. In The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962), Thomas Kuhn referred to the social sciences, and political science in particular, as "pre-paradigmatic." This disparaging judgment meant that there was no single exemplary, foundational body of research that had become the model for most political scientists, and consequently research tended to follow competing schools of thought that rose and fell out of favor quickly. Without a generally accepted set of assumptions and concepts, a common research agenda, and consensus on standards for evaluating research, it was impossible, he argued, for truly scientific knowledge to accumulate. Is comparative politics today pre-paradigmatic? If so, is this a good or a bad thing? Give examples to justify your opinion.

2. Discuss the utility and limits of rational choice approaches to comparative politics.

PART II

1. The age of primordial conceptions of ethnicity, it is often said, is past. What are the new approaches to ethnicity, and how have they reformulated our understanding of this concept? Where might scholarly research on ethnicity go next in search of greater clarity and enlightenment?

2. It is often noted these days that without economic globalization poverty in the world will not disappear, but with globalization mass welfare may actually worsen before it improves. Do you agree with this view? Is it a paradox or a contradiction? How can this paradox/contradiction be resolved?

PART III

1. South Africa has often been considered as a case study in ethnic politics. Taking account of this assessment, first explain the rise of the apartheid state; then explain the growth of a liberation movement, dominated by the African National Congress, that was committed to a non-racial system of governance. How important was this non-racial commitment of the African National Congress in producing the relatively peaceful political transition from apartheid that culminated in South Africa's new constitution and election in 1994? Your analysis should conclude with an assessment of "ethnic politics" as an approach to understanding South Africa.

2. Discuss the progress of democratization in South Africa within the context of its progress across the African continent as a whole. Be sure to be as specific as possible in drawing your comparisons.
Department of Political Science  
University of Notre Dame  
Comparative Politics Comprehensive Examination  
September 2002 (Mary Mulvihill)

Answer one question from each part.

Part I: General Theory

A. What in your view are two or three of the most important findings that have been developed by scholars of comparative politics? By findings, we mean research results that many scholars currently view as substantially valid (although the results are in principle and perhaps in practice also subject to criticism). Explain the evidence and arguments in support of these findings. Demonstrate the importance of the findings to political science as a discipline and to society more broadly.

B. In practice, comparativists choose countries to study for all sorts of reasons, but there are some case-selection principles that scholars should use, or at least must use when asked to defend their selection of cases. How should a scholar choose one country for a case study? How should a scholar choose 2-3 cases for study? How should a scholar select a few dozen cases for study?

Part II: Middle-Range Theory

A. Political scientists have long drawn distinctions between institutions and culture. Now some scholars are exploring "informal institutions." Please explain how informal institutions can be understood and how such a concept aids investigations into the rule of law.

B. Given the dramatic increase in violent conflict in the world since 1991, should we assume that inter-ethnic conflict is more likely with an increase in the number of weak states? What role is played by a possible "contagion" effect of ethnic strife?

C. In the past few decades nationalist and ethnic conflict has been on the rise across the globe, as has the literature on nationalism and ethnic conflict. Discuss the prevailing schools of thought that address identity-based politics and conflict. How do rationalist and culturalist approaches explain such conflict? Is the scholarship in political science now at an impasse, such that these competing theoretical lenses cannot be reconciled, and has one approach won out, or are there ways to understand and explain identity-based conflict that bridge these theoretical divides? Discuss some empirical examples to support your argument.

D. What are the significant differences between the "third wave" democratic transitions and a purported "fourth wave"? More concretely, how well does the Latin American democratization literature travel to Eastern Europe?

Part III: Area Studies—Latin America

A. After many years in which Latin Americanists smugly debated whether or not democratic regimes were consolidated, the question of democratic stability is once again on the front burner. Many now argue that economic liberalization, heightened threats to physical security, corruption, and a host of other maladies are challenging democratic governability as well as, in some cases, state authority itself. Are these fears justified? Are they more justified for some countries (which) than for others (which)? Why or why not? In your answer, please refer specifically to academic debates on both sides of the question, and to the experiences of at least three Latin American countries.

B. Some theories of transitions have highlighted the importance of the timing of economic and political liberalization, claiming that it makes a big difference whether economic liberalization precedes political liberalization, political liberalization precedes economic liberalization, both happen simultaneously, or one happens but not the other. What does the Latin American record since the 1970s say about these claims?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics – Bejar  
May 2007

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question I

Describe the contributions of three works in the canon written before 1975 and three works written in 1990 or after. What theoretical insights have they contributed, and/or what body of literature did they launch? Have their insights been largely supported or unsupported by research that has followed? What accounts for the lasting impact of the older works? In twenty years from now, will the newer works still be on this list of the “best-known”? Why or why not?

Question II

John Stuart Mill’s method of similarity and method of difference could be said to be the classic methods of comparative politics. Contrast these Millian methods with a) a statistical approach such as regression and b) process-tracing. What do these newer methods have in common with Mill’s methods? What is different about them? Are they improvements? Are Mill’s methods now obsolete?

Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Parties and Elections

Are political parties less important in democratic politics today than 50 years ago, as Philippe Schmitter claims in his article, “Parties Are Not What They Once Were?”

Regimes and Regime Change

Some attempts to understand democratization (some of which may deserve to be called “theories”, others may be merely “hypotheses,” “propositions,” “frameworks,” or “approaches”) call attention to processes at the micro level, such as strategic bargaining among elites and pact-making. Other attempts to understand democratization call attention to factors and processes at the macro level, such as class structure, modernization, social cleavages, institutions, characteristics of the state, or diffusion. If you were going to write a dissertation on democratization, would you rather a) work exclusively at the micro level, b) work exclusively at the macro level, or c) try to bridge these levels of analysis? Why? Justify your decision by discussing one book or article on democratization that inspires you and contrasting it with two others that you consider inferior in some way.
Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

*Political Economy of Developing Countries/Latin America*

Not long ago, the comparative politics literature on political economy was sharply divided into two distinct bodies of work on advanced industrial societies and developing countries. Does such a distinction still make sense? Write an essay that first identifies at least two major topics (and cite representative work on these topics) covered by both political economy literatures, and show how at the time these representative works were written, they made sense for one but not the other set of countries. Then, address the question of whether or not this is still true taking the example of at least three Latin American countries. Are there any advantages for Latin Americanists in general or students of the three countries you have chosen to be more open to applying the literature developed for the political economy of advanced industrial societies, and if so, what are they? If you do not believe this literature travels well, then mount an argument for why some other approach(es) derived from the experience of developing countries is still more fruitful. If time permits, you may want to address whether or not your cases are atypical of Latin America as a region, or the wave of the future.
Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

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Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

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Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

**Identity, Ethnicity, Culture, and Religion/Africa**

Individuals have multiple social identities and there has been a great deal of debate about what makes certain social identities more or less politically salient than others. Compare and contrast the major arguments put forward to explain why ethnic identity has been more politically salient in sub-Saharan than in many other regions of the world and then offer some explanations for the variation in the political salience of ethnic identity that we find *within* sub-Saharan Africa. Further, explain why religious identity may be more politically salient in Nigeria than in Kenya. Would you say that politicized religious identity is necessarily more or less economically and politically destabilizing than politicized ethnic identity? Why or why not?
Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

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Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

State/Latin America

For many years, scholars of Latin America have spoken of “state failure.” Have states in the region, in fact, failed? Is state failure more glaring in some countries than in others? Is state failure more glaring in some policy areas than in others? Write an essay that sketches out where—in what countries and in what policy areas—you believe states have failed—or succeeded—in Latin America. Then mount an argument for why you judge these states to have succeeded or failed. Please refer to at least three countries in your answer. If you choose to go beyond three countries, you may deal with additional cases briefly and schematically.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics - Menghes  
May 2007

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question I

Describe the contributions of three works in the canon written before 1975 and three works written in 1990 or after. What theoretical insights have they contributed, and/or what body of literature did they launch? Have their insights been largely supported or unsupported by research that has followed? What accounts for the lasting impact of the older works? In twenty years from now, will the newer works still be on this list of the “best-known”? Why or why not?

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Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

The State

Many scholars argue that it is important for a state to be legitimate. Begin by establishing a definition of legitimacy and then discuss the major conditions -- necessary and sufficient -- for a state to be legitimate. Continue by describing the conditions that might make a state illegitimate. What are the consequences if a state is illegitimate? Does it matter? Should the international community consider the legitimacy or illegitimacy of a state in its dealings with that state? Please make reference to at least three scholars of the state in your response, extending their theories if necessary to encompass this topic. Your response should also include examples drawn from at least two regions.

Regimes and Regime Change

Some attempts to understand democratization (some of which may deserve to be called “theories”; others may be merely “hypotheses,” “propositions,” “frameworks,” or “approaches”) call attention to processes at the micro level, such as strategic bargaining among elites and pact-making. Other attempts to understand democratization call attention to factors and processes at the macro level, such as class structure, modernization, social cleavages, institutions, characteristics of the state, or diffusion. If you were going to write a dissertation on democratization, would you rather a) work exclusively at the micro level, b) work exclusively at
the macro level, or c) try to bridge these levels of analysis? Why? Justify your decision by discussing one book or article on democratization that inspires you and contrasting it with two others that you consider inferior in some way.

**Part III: (Please respond to the following question)**

*Identity, Ethnicity, Culture, and Religion/Africa*

Many have tried to understand the nature of ethnic identity in order to comprehend the dynamics that lead to violent ethnic conflict. Compare and contrast the major schools of thought concerning the nature of ethnic identity. When you consider recent cases of violent ethnic conflict and genocide across the world, for which school of thought do you find the most support? What are the implications of your answer to the above question for policymakers interested in preventing violent ethnic conflict and genocide across the world? Please make references to Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan in your reply, although you may include other countries as well.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics – Schuenke  
May 2007  

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question I

Describe the contributions of three works in the canon written before 1975 and three works written in 1990 or after. What theoretical insights have they contributed, and/or what body of literature did they launch? Have their insights been largely supported or unsupported by research that has followed? What accounts for the lasting impact of the older works? In twenty years from now, will the newer works still be on this list of the “best-known”? Why or why not?

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Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Parties and Elections

Are political parties less important in democratic politics today than 50 years ago, as Philippe Schmitter claims in his article, “Parties Are Not What They Once Were?”

Social Movements and Revolution

Given the high, individualized, and certain costs of participation in response to grievances and the diffuse and uncertain benefits, many scholars suggest that rational people should never rebel. That they sometimes do rebel anyway leads scholars to posit “solutions” to the rebel’s dilemma, or ways that rebels overcome the problem of collective action. Some posit theories that are intended to be broadly generalizable, and they claim that certain variables are consistently important for explaining why people protest. Others assert that there is no single “solution” to the rebel’s dilemma and that instead the collective action problem could be solved in a variety of ways. In your opinion, are there some variables that must be present for protest to emerge? If so, what are these critical variables, and what is the evidence that they matter? Or is it more of a grab bag, with some variables relevant in certain circumstances and other variables relevant in other circumstances? If you believe the latter, what is your evidence, and what then is the best that we can hope to accomplish by studying political protest and rebellion? Support your answer
with empirical examples from at least three different social movements, protests, revolutions, or grievances that were expected to generate protest but did not. Be sure to provide clear definitions of all terms and concepts.

**Part III: (Please respond to the following question)**

*The State/Latin America*

For many years, scholars of Latin America have spoken of “state failure.” Have states in the region, in fact, failed? Is state failure more glaring in some countries than in others? Is state failure more glaring in some policy areas than in others? Write an essay that sketches out where—in what countries and in what policy areas—you believe states have failed—or succeeded—in Latin America. Then mount an argument for why you judge these states to have succeeded or failed. Please refer to at least three countries in your answer. If you choose to go beyond three countries, you may deal with additional cases briefly and schematically.
Department of Political Science

Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics – Garcia Iommi
May 2006

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question 1:

Political scientists are often asked if their discipline has any practical use. In that spirit, this question is "ripped from today's headlines."

*Will democracy survive in Iraq?*

Don't worry if you aren't familiar with the details of the case, the focus of this question is on the material you have learned, not on your familiarity with current events.

1. Using the core readings, develop two different arguments about the factors that lead to democracy in the world and apply them (to the best of your ability) to Iraq. Refer to specific authors and works wherever possible.
2. Next, treat Iraq as a laboratory to study political science. If you had an unlimited supply of money, how might you test the arguments that you have developed? Come up with both qualitative and quantitative tests for your two theories. What qualitative data might help you test your theories, and why? What numerical data would be useful to have and why? If both theories can be true at the same time, how might you assess the relative strength of each explanation?
3. Lastly, reflect on the real world usefulness of political science. How useful are our theories and methods for understanding the practical questions of public policy? Is reality too simple to need such complex tools or is it too complex for our simple theories and methods? Has this process illuminated any major deficiencies in our theories and methods?

Question 2:

In his 1971 APSR article, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” Arend Lijphart argued that "if at all possible one should use the statistical (or perhaps even the experimental) method instead of the weaker comparative method." To overcome the limitations of the comparative method, his advice was to "increase the number of cases as much as possible." In his formulation in 1971, the comparative method was a poor second best with no distinctive advantages except for feasibility.

Many social scientists agree with this view. Others, however, argue that the comparative method has distinctive advantages and that it is not just a poor second best.

In this light, discuss 1) what the comparative method is and 2) whether it offers any distinctive advantages or should it, as Lijphart claimed, be seen as a weaker tool for causal inference that should be used only when there are not enough cases for a quantitative analysis.
Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

The State

It seems that there is a disconnect between the comparative and the IR literatures on the state, both in the past and in the present. If you agree that there is such a disconnect, how would you characterize it? And, how would you overcome it? If you do not agree, tell us why there is not such a disconnect, and which are the main works that support your belief in this matter.

Political Parties

Outline the main features of a spatial model of voting and party competition. Please take into account in your discussion other relevant models as it relates to your discussion. Then discuss the virtues and shortcomings of such an approach to understanding voting and party competition. On balance, are spatial models a useful parsimonious way to understand voting and party competition?

Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

Political Economy of Advanced Industrial Societies

In the context of the claim of some scholars that state sovereignty, as traditionally defined, is irreversibly eroding, to what degree and in which specific areas, if any, do you believe that the contemporary advanced industrial democracies are relatively unconstrained to forge “national” economic policies? What light does the recent emergence of a central European bank, adoption of a common currency (i.e. the euro), and harmonization of many economic policies within the European Union shed on the scholarly debate about the degree of autonomy of national governments in economic policy making?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics - Fernandez  
January 2007

Part I: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Question I

During the last few years, the United States' government has performed poorly at both state-building and democratization in Iraq and Afghanistan. What do the canonical readings in comparative politics say about the ability of outside actors (states or non-state actors) to engage in state-building and democratization?

a. Using the core readings, lay out the arguments concerning the ability of outside actors to assist in state-building. What aspects of this process can be performed by outside actors? What aspects can only be accomplished by domestic actors? Make reference to at least three authors (you can also use authors who talk about nation building in this section) in your response.

b. Next, using the core readings, explore the ability and limitations of outside actors to assist in democratization. Make reference to at least three authors in your response to this section as well.

c. Select just one concrete component claim from your response to either of the two parts above. Imagine you had an infinite amount of money and all the high level political cooperation necessary. How might you test this claim about the ability of outside actors to achieve either state-building or democratization? What data would you collect? What evidence would convince you that your claim had support? What evidence would undermine your claim?

Question II

There have been several recent attempts to improve comparative politics, in some instances by changing the methods of comparative politics and in other instances by changing the ways methods are understood. Which innovations are the most important and useful ones? Which innovations are misdirected and potentially harmful?

Part II: (Please respond to one of the following questions.)

Social Movements

The study of social movements is relatively new, dating back only to some seminal publications in the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as Ted Robert Gurr's *Why Men Rebel*. In the years that followed, scholars have identified deficiencies in prior theories and promoted supposedly better alternatives, only to have these new theories also declared deficient. The various theories have focused on relative deprivation, resource mobilization, political process (political opportunities, organization, and cognitive liberation), collective action, framing, and more recently, emotions and morals.
Assess the field nearly forty years later. What have been the lasting contributions from these and other theories about the emergence of social movements? Which insights have been most supported by empirical evidence and which insights have been least supported? Why do men (and women!) rebel? Support your answer with empirical examples from at least three different social movements, protests, or grievances that could have led to social movements but did not. What is the most important unanswered question about social movements? Be sure to provide clear definitions of all terms and concepts.

Regimes

Name at least two scholars who would insist that authoritarian, totalitarian, or other nondemocratic regimes should be defined on their own terms rather than as degrees of failure to be democratic. Name at least two scholars who believe that authoritarian, totalitarian, and other nondemocratic regimes can be usefully treated as intervals on a democracy-nondemocracy continuum. What are the arguments in support of each position? If you believe that one position is correct, explain why. If you believe that both are correct, but in different situations, explain what those situations are.

Part III: (Please respond to the following question)

State/Latin America

As you surely know, the literature on state formation, as well as on the implications of its variations on democracy, until quite recently has been overwhelmingly focused on Western Europe. Please comment from a comparative perspective on more recent literature focused on Latin America, and reflect on the consequences of whatever differences you locate on the trajectory of democracy in this continent; alternatively, you may limit yourself to two countries, chosen from among Brazil, Mexico and Argentina.
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in Comparative Politics - Rabideau  
January 2007

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Question I

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**Part III: (Please respond to the following question)**

**Identity, Ethnicity, Culture, and Religion/Western Europe**

In recent years, the right of Muslim girls and women to wear headscarves in state-supported institutions has become a major controversy in France. Yet in other European countries, the issue has not arisen at all. What do these contrasting experiences tell us about the role of political culture in shaping public policy in Europe? Write an essay in which you explore this issue by contrasting the French case with that of at least one other European state. Make sure you take into account the influence of historical events and contemporary political and legal factors in your answer.