

Comparative Politics Field Exam September 2015

Instructions

Choose one essay from Part 1 and two essays from Part II. Be sure that your essays take the form of an argument, that you cite relevant literature, and that you avoid overlap, so you can demonstrate familiarity with a wide range of political science literatures. Also, be sure to draw examples from countries with which you are familiar in at least some of your answers--preferably countries from more than one area of the world.

Part I

1. Comparativists have traditionally been required to learn the language, histories, societies and cultures of the countries or regions that they are studying. Yet some recent approaches to the study of comparative politics do not require such knowledge. How important is knowledge of specific world areas to understanding contemporary political developments? Identify specific studies to support your argument.

2. Recently, a number of leading journals, including the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, and *Comparative Political Studies*, adopted a new policy on Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT; the policy statement is attached). Do you think such a policy is needed in comparative politics? And how, in your view, will this new policy affect comparative-politics research? Include in particular discussion of the implications of the policy for your specialization within comparative politics.

3. In recent years, regression analysis has become prevalent in comparative politics. Is regression analysis usually necessary for a solid comparative-politics argument, in your view? Is regression analysis usually necessary, but insufficient? Why? Identify specific studies to support your argument.

Part II

1. You are given unlimited funds and tasked with creating a new research center that will focus on either one of three areas: Comparative Political Economy; Political Regimes; and Identity and Conflict. The center would have up to six researchers/faculty members, both senior and junior scholars. None of them can be a GWU faculty member. Whom would you invite and why?

2. How important are international influences in bringing about regime change? Discuss by evaluating the roles of domestic and international actors in ousting authoritarian regimes in two world areas.

3. Political parties are widely considered to be institutions that are necessary for democratic governments. How important to democracy is a stable system of political

parties in the twenty-first century? Discuss with reference to the role of political parties in two world regions.

4. “Authoritarian regimes can learn, change and adapt just as well as democratic regimes.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? How would a greater focus on authoritarian learning and adaptation (or the lack thereof) affect comparativists’ theories of regime stability and change?

6.”The rise of ISIS/ISIL/IS cannot be explained by the existing theories and literature on political violence, civil conflict, or state-building.” Do you agree with that statement? If yes, in what ways does the rise of ISIS challenge existing theories and their findings? If you disagree, discuss how the rise of ISIS/ISIL/IS can be explained by the existing literature.

7. For many scholars of democratization, the “third wave” peaked in the mid-2000s and has receded in recent years. Do you agree? What factors best explain the ebbs and flows of democratization in the twenty-first century, in your view?

Data Access and Research Transparency: A Joint Statement by Political Science Journal Editors

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In this joint statement, leading journals commit to greater data access and research transparency, and to implement policies requiring authors to make as accessible as possible the empirical foundation and logic of inquiry of evidence-based research. Please visit dartstatement.org for more information.

Transparency requires making visible both the empirical foundation and the logic of inquiry of research. We agree that by January 15, 2016, we will

- Require authors to ensure that cited data are available at the time of publication through a trusted digital repository. Journals may specify which trusted digital repository shall be used (e.g., if they have their own Dataverse). If cited data are restricted (e.g., classified, require confidentiality protections, were obtained under a non-disclosure agreement, or have inherent logistical constraints), authors must notify the editor at the time of submission. The editor shall have full discretion to follow their journal's policy on restricted data, including declining to review the manuscript or granting an exemption with or without conditions. The editor shall inform the author of that decision prior to review.
- Require authors to delineate clearly the analytic procedures upon which their published claims rely, and where possible to provide access to all relevant analytic materials. If such materials are not published with the article, they must be shared to the greatest extent possible through institutions with demonstrated capacity to provide long-term access.
- Maintain a consistent data citation policy to increase the credit that data creators and suppliers receive for their work. These policies include using data citation practices that identify a dataset's author(s), title, date, version, and a persistent identifier. In sum, we will require

authors who base their claims on data created by others to reference and cite those data as an intellectual product of value.

- Ensure that journal style guides, codes of ethics, publication manuals, and other forms of guidance are updated and expanded to include improved data access and research transparency requirements.

- *American Journal of Political Science*
- *American Political Science Review*
- *British Journal of Political Science*
- *Comparative Political Studies*
- *Conflict Management and Peace Science*
- *Cooperation and Conflict*
- *European Journal of Political Research*
- *European Political Science*
- *European Union Politics*
- *International Interactions*
- *International Security*
- *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- *Journal of European Public Policy*
- *Journal of Peace Research*
- *Journal of Theoretical Politics*
- *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*
- *Party Politics*
- *Political Analysis*
- *Political Behavior*
- *Political Science Research and Methods*
- *Research and Politics*
- *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*
- *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*
- *Security Studies*
- *The Journal of Politics*
- *The Political Methodologist*