JASON TOCKMAN

You must answer a total of four (4) questions for this examination. You have five (5) hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question each from your subfield sections, and the fourth methodology question.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument and to refer to relevant empirical examples.

Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS

1. To what extent can we explain institutional structures by reference to the functions that they serve? What are the limits of such an explanatory approach?

2. Political scientists often emphasize features in political systems that induce institutional and policy equilibrium and stability. At the same time, from time to time these equilibria are disrupted by substantial, and non-incremental, change. What analytical tools can political scientists draw on to account for these major disruptions to political life? Explain with detailed reference to the comparative politics literature on either institutional change or policy change.

3. Advocates of rational choice theory stress its potential to contribute to the cumulative growth of knowledge because rational choice scholars share the same standards, tools, and methods. Critics argue, however, that rational choice is only appropriate under certain conditions. Where do you stand on this debate? Does rational choice unify the social sciences, or do we still lack an overarching, unifying theory? Justify your answer.
Section 2  SUBFIELD: THE STATE

1. In her appraisal of "the state of the study of the state," Margaret Levi argues that "the state is too complex and too varied to grasp the whole. ... We must go beyond thick descriptions of specific states at specific times to develop models and falsifiable hypotheses derived from realistic and logical presuppositions about the state and the interactions of its agents with each other and with the larger society. ... At best, we can develop only partial theories." Do you concur with Levi? Justify your position with reference to empirical works, drawing on both macrohistorical and rationalist accounts of state development.

2. Compare and contrast key explanations in the literature on state formation and unitarism, federation, and confederation. In what ways can this literature inform the debate on whether the European Union is a step towards the formation of a European state?

3. In seeking to understand the relationship of states to their populations, what models of state-society relations can we draw on? Critically compare and contrast models developed in the state literature. Which of these models do you find most compelling, and why?

Section 3  SUBFIELD: LATIN AMERICA

1. Why did the Latin American region as a whole embrace import-substitution industrialization and then abandon it the 1980s? Were the problems of ISI intrinsic to the model, or the way it was applied? Are external conditions or internal choices more important in explaining the adoption and "exhaustion" of ISI?

2. What explains the pattern of regime changes in Latin America in the 20th century? Has democracy finally become the "only game in town"?

3. Many theories of Latin American politics have emphasized class, class alliances, and class conflict, but in recent decades many social movements have mobilized their supporters along other axes of association, especially ethnicity. Does the rise of indigenous movements present a challenge to theories of Latin American politics? Which theories? How?
Section 4: METHODOLOGY

Propose and justify a plausible research design for empirically investigating ONE of the 3 substantive questions that you have answered elsewhere in your Comparative Politics exam. In your answer, you should include a discussion of the research question, a testable causal hypothesis (and at least one alternative hypothesis), the research design (big-N or qualitative), and anticipated empirical challenges with respect to data collection and making causal inference. How will the data or evidence that you plan to collect allow you to discriminate between alternatives?

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MINOR FIELD
4 HOURS

November 22, 2010

STEWART PREST

You must answer a total of three (3) questions for this examination. You have four (4) hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question from your subfield section, and a third question from either section.

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4. What do our core readings inform us about the multi-disciplinary nature of political science? What the specific analytical contributions of different disciplines? Illustrate by reference to specific texts.
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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS  
MINOR FIELD  
4 HOURS  

November 22, 2010  

ANASTASIA SHEETERININA  

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Section 2 SUBFIELD: DEMOCRATIZATION

1. Is democracy endogenous to modernization? Outline the opposing views and make a case for the view you find most convincing.

2. It has been argued that democracy is most possible at moderately high levels of state capacity, but that both low-capacity states and very high-capacity states are unlikely to sustain democratic regimes. Is this the case? If so, what are the risks at both ends of the spectrum and is one end more hostile than the other to democratic rule?

3. Kathleen Collins has argued that, at least in the post-Soviet Central Asian new democracies, “the formal level... matters very little, whereas the informal level matters enormously.” What kinds of informal institutions affect the extent or forms of democratization in various countries? Are there differences in how they affect democratic regimes as opposed to non-democratic ones? Why or why not? Refer in detail to at least three kinds of informal institutions in empirical contexts.

4. Can we justify democratization as a subfield of comparative politics? Is there a different category under which this literature would be better categorized? Explain.
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS  
MAJOR FIELD  
5 HOURS  

September 24, 2010  

PASCALE MASSOT  

You must answer a total of four (4) questions for this examination. You have 5 hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question each from your subfield sections, and the fourth methodology question.  

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Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS  

1. Research in comparative politics has exhibited increasing methodological awareness concerning problems of causal explanation. Assess how causal arguments have been made in exemplars of comparative research. Should the standards of quantitative methods be promoted as a model for good qualitative research? (In your answer you may wish to address such issues as: causal inference, homogeneity of the effects of causes across cases, causal mechanisms, and process tracing).  

2. What explains the origins of dictatorship and democracy? Compare and contrast the answers and approaches of Moore and Acemoglu and Robinson. What are the strengths and weaknesses of those two works in addressing this question?  

3. Why are some political problems addressed through individual action, some through (formally non-hierarchical) collective action, whereas others are only handled through formally hierarchical political organizations? Identify a prominent example of political action of each of these types and discuss characteristics of political problems that lead them to be more likely to be addressed in one of these fashions rather than another.
Section 2 SUBFIELD: CPE

1. Students of comparative political economy have, implicitly or explicitly, taken differing positions on how much scope OECD governments today have to make political choices about the shape of social and economic policies and institutions. After reviewing key arguments relevant to this question, state and justify your own view. To what extent, that is, is a government elected today free to reshape existing state programs and economic institutions in line with its own ideological preferences? Does it matter which party governs?

2. Most theories in CPE/IPE of the last decade have emphasized the structural power of global norms, global market pressures, and global technological change in restricting the role of the state in the economy. Dirigism and developmental states were seen as things of the past. Yet, the global crisis of 2008-2009 has seen not just France or China reasserting the guiding role of the state; in fact, even the US government seemed to act as a Gaullist state. What did theories of the last decade(s) miss about the role of the state in the economy? Will the 2008 crisis be seen as a critical juncture in the CPE literature? What are the larger lessons emerging from the last two years?

3. When governments pursue structural reforms that target some components of domestic economic institutions but not others, does this weaken the coherence of their model of political economy? If your answer is yes, why should political leaders do this? Which explanations do you find most useful in understanding reform pathways? Please be sure to contrast the examples of at least two countries in your answer.

Section 3 SUBFIELD: CHINA

1. Most observers would argue that the Chinese regime is currently quite stable, secure, and even popular. What can explain such authoritarian stability at the center, in the wake of apparent regime fragility in 1989, and despite the recent explosion of social unrest at the local level, and the social transformation caused by high-speed growth and rising inequality? What are the larger implications of this case for our understanding of the resilience of authoritarian regimes?

2. It is well-known in the CPE literature that powerful bureaucrats generally distort market incentives and have a negative impact on economic growth. More generally, government intervention in the economy tends to preclude the establishment of efficient free markets. Do you agree with this proposition in the case of Chinese reforms since 1979? Has the continuing involvement of the Chinese bureaucracy distorted or prevented the establishment of market mechanisms? And if not, what can explain this puzzle?
3. It is often argued that globalization restricts the autonomy of the state (particularly in developing countries), generates domestic social conflicts between winners and losers, and makes it more difficult for countries today to pursue Japanese-style development strategies. Does the Chinese case disprove such arguments? And if yes, what explains the distinct Chinese pathway? Can any lesson be drawn for our understanding of the interactions between globalization and domestic politics?

Section 4: METHODOLOGY

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PLEASE NOTE: You may NARROW the scope of the substantive question in order to formulate a testable causal hypothesis.
Beth Schwartz

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In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument and to refer to empirical examples from at least two countries.

Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS

1. Most rich countries are democracies and most non-democracies are poor. Assess existing theories of the relationship between economic development and democratization. Is democracy endogenous to development?

2. What is an analytical narrative? Does it succeed, by occupying the middle ground between idiographic and nomothetic reasoning, in providing insights beyond formal modeling or historical description? Illustrate your answer with reference to the work of a scholar in this tradition (Bates, Greif, North, Weingast).

3. The commercialization of agriculture is one of the most important social transformations used by comparatists to explain the making of the modern world. Describe and assess how two or more major theorists of comparative politics (Moore, Skocpol, Huntington, Scott) understand this transformation and its political consequences. What makes social change in the countryside such an important topic?

4. Research in comparative politics often treats groups of people or organizations as if they are unitary actors. Systematically explain (with reference to concrete examples of research in comparative politics) when such aggregation is appropriate and when it is not.

[Section 2 on second page]
Section 2  SUBFIELD: Comparative Public Policy

1. What explains the variety of welfare systems among advanced capitalist economies? Please be sure to evaluate different explanations while taking a stance on the best causal hypothesis.

2. It is never easy for ordinary citizens to exert democratic control over the policy choices of governments. How can the particular structure of a country’s political institutions facilitate or impede democratic control? In your answer, consider a range of specific arguments and findings in the literature on comparative public policy.

3. In the field of comparative public policy, there are especially large literatures analyzing the politics of health care, economic policy, and social welfare policy, with less written about many other policy fields. How well should we expect theoretical lessons drawn from these two policy fields to apply to other fields of state activity?

4. Under what conditions can ideas shape public policy outcomes? How should and how can one go about studying the influence of ideas on public policy?
Beth Schwartz

You must answer a total of three questions for this examination. You have 4 hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question from your subfield section, and a third question from either section.

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MINOR FIELD
4 HOURS

March 29, 2010

Beth Schwartz

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Section 2 SUBFIELD: THE STATE

1. “The state, as we commonly conceive of it, is a historically contingent political organization that arose in Western Europe 500 years ago. ‘States’ that arise today must be theorized differently. In fact, the great difference between the two types of states suggests that there is no compelling universal concept of the state.” Do you agree or disagree? How do states that arose in the 20th century differ from the archetypical Western European nation-state? What is the source of these differences?

2. Is it realistically possible to have states without nations? Note: this question is not about multi-nation states primarily, although consideration of multi-nation states may be relevant, but about the possibility of states in the absence of nations.

3. Is state capacity contingent on state autonomy? Critically discuss the range of positions taken by state scholars on this question. Can we arrive at a satisfactory universal answer to this question or must our answers remain context-specific?

Section 3 SUBFIELD: JAPAN

1. Political scientists when building theory generally rely on simplified or stylized interpretations of political history. In international relations, for example, one traditionally points to the world wars as two crucial events when it comes to IR theory-building. Can one point to one or more key events in Japanese political history that inform theories of Japanese politics? Are there multiple interpretations of such events that (could) suggest alternative theoretic approaches?

2. At times, Japanese policy-making can generate key reforms and change. At other times, it is paralyzed. Contrasting at least two time periods in at least two policy arenas, explain the factors behind such variation in outcome.

3. Under what conditions and through what mechanisms does civil society have a significant impact on policy-making outcomes in post-1998 Japan?

Section 4: METHODOLOGY

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MATTY GRAVELLE

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MINOR FIELD
4 HOURS

November 22, 2010

AGUSTIN GOENAGA

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2. Compare and contrast key explanations in the literature on state formation and unitarism, federation, and confederation. In what ways can this literature inform the debate on whether the European Union is a step towards the formation of a European state?

3. In seeking to understand the relationship of states to their populations, what models of state-society relations can we draw on? Critically compare and contrast models developed in the state literature. Which of these models do you find most compelling, and why?

4. How should we conceive of the role of war (or threat of war) in the process of state development? In your answer, make sure to address (1) the relationship of war to other potential explanatory variables, and (2) the degree of generalizability of coercion-based explanations.
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS  
MINOR FIELD  
4 HOURS  

November 22, 2010

KATRINA CHAPELAS

You must answer a total of three (3) questions for this examination. You have four (4) hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question from your subfield section, and a third question from either section.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument and to refer to relevant empirical examples.

Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS

1. To what extent can we explain institutional structures by reference to the functions that they serve? What are the limits of such an explanatory approach?

2. Political scientists often emphasize features in political systems that induce institutional and policy equilibrium and stability. At the same time, from time to time these equilibria are disrupted by substantial, and non-incremental, change. What analytical tools can political scientists draw on to account for these major disruptions to political life? Explain with detailed reference to the comparative politics literature on either institutional change or policy change.

3. Advocates of rational choice theory stress its potential to contribute to the cumulative growth of knowledge because rational choice scholars share the same standards, tools, and methods. Critics argue, however, that rational choice is only appropriate under certain conditions. Where do you stand on this debate? Does rational choice unify the social sciences, or do we still lack an overarching, unifying theory? Justify your answer.

4. What do our core readings inform us about the multi-disciplinary nature of political science? What the specific analytical contributions of different disciplines? Illustrate by reference to specific texts.
Section 2  SUBFIELD: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY

1. Has globalization over the last two decades reduced the diversity of capitalist systems around the world? Why or why not? (Be sure to specify the mechanisms that underlie either divergence or convergence).

2. Much has been written about the enduring obstacles to development in our global system, including the new constraints exerted by the forces of globalization over the last two to three decades. In this context, what explains the astonishing development success of China? How has China managed to harness the forces of globalization? (You are welcome to bring in other examples, as either contrast cases or similar cases).

3. Have global pressures since the early 1980s reduced the degree of democratic control over domestic (macro and micro) economic policy? Why or why not? Do elections still have an impact on domestic systems of financial regulation or corporate governance?

4. What explains the apparent diffusion of neo-liberal norms in fields such as corporate governance, privatization, or financial regulation even in stakeholder capitalist systems that embed a different set of core principles? Discuss in relation to two issue areas of your choice.
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS  
MAJOR FIELD  
5 HOURS  

November 22, 2010  

JAN BOESTEN  

You must answer a total of four (4) questions for this examination. You have five (5) hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question each from your subfield sections, and the fourth methodology question. 

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument and to refer to relevant empirical examples. 

Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS  

1. To what extent can we explain institutional structures by reference to the functions that they serve? What are the limits of such an explanatory approach?  

2. Political scientists often emphasize features in political systems that induce institutional and policy equilibrium and stability. At the same time, from time to time these equilibria are disrupted by substantial, and non-incremental, change. What analytical tools can political scientists draw on to account for these major disruptions to political life? Explain with detailed reference to the comparative politics literature on either institutional change or policy change. 

3. Advocates of rational choice theory stress its potential to contribute to the cumulative growth of knowledge because rational choice scholars share the same standards, tools, and methods. Critics argue, however, that rational choice is only appropriate under certain conditions. Where do you stand on this debate? Does rational choice unify the social sciences, or do we still lack an overarching, unifying theory? Justify your answer.
Section 2  SUBFIELD: THE STATE

1. In her appraisal of “the state of the study of the state,” Margaret Levi argues that “the state is too complex and too varied to grasp the whole. ... We must go beyond thick descriptions of specific states at specific times to develop models and falsifiable hypotheses derived from realistic and logical presuppositions about the state and the interactions of its agents with each other and with the larger society. ... At best, we can develop only partial theories.” Do you concur with Levi? Justify your position with reference to empirical works, drawing on both macrohistorical and rationalist accounts of state development.

2. Compare and contrast key explanations in the literature on state formation and unitarism, federation, and confederation. In what ways can this literature inform the debate on whether the European Union is a step towards the formation of a European state?

3. In seeking to understand the relationship of states to their populations, what models of state-society relations can we draw on? Critically compare and contrast models developed in the state literature. Which of these models do you find most compelling, and why?

Section 3  SUBFIELD: LATIN AMERICA

1. Why did the Latin American region as a whole embrace import-substitution industrialization and then abandon it the 1980s? Were the problems of ISI intrinsic to the model, or the way it was applied? Are external conditions or internal choices more important in explaining the adoption and “exhaustion” of ISI?

2. What explains the pattern of regime changes in Latin America in the 20th century? Has democracy finally become the “only game in town”?

3. Many theories of Latin American politics have emphasized class, class alliances, and class conflict, but in recent decades many social movements have mobilized their supporters along other axes of association, especially ethnicity. Does the rise of indigenous movements present a challenge to theories of Latin American politics? Which theories? How?
Section 4: METHODOLOGY

Propose and justify a plausible research design for empirically investigating ONE of the 3 substantive questions that you have answered elsewhere in your Comparative Politics exam. In your answer, you should include a discussion of the research question, a testable causal hypothesis (and at least one alternative hypothesis), the research design (big-N or qualitative), and anticipated empirical challenges with respect to data collection and making causal inference. How will the data or evidence that you plan to collect allow you to discriminate between alternatives?

In your answer, you should explicitly compare the relative strengths and the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative approaches to studying this research question. Whichever strategy you are proposing (qualitative or quantitative), please discuss BOTH the advantages of this approach over the alternative AND its relative limitations.

PLEASE NOTE: You may NARROW the scope of the substantive question in order to formulate a testable causal hypothesis.
MATTHEW GRAVELLE

You must answer a total of three (3) questions for this examination. You have four (4) hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question from your subfield section, and a third question from either section.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument and to refer to relevant empirical examples.

Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS

1. To what extent can we explain institutional structures by reference to the functions that they serve? What are the limits of such an explanatory approach?

2. Political scientists often emphasize features in political systems that induce institutional and policy equilibrium and stability. At the same time, from time to time these equilibria are disrupted by substantial, and non-incremental, change. What analytical tools can political scientists draw on to account for these major disruptions to political life? Explain with detailed reference to the comparative politics literature on either institutional change or policy change.

3. Advocates of rational choice theory stress its potential to contribute to the cumulative growth of knowledge because rational choice scholars share the same standards, tools, and methods. Critics argue, however, that rational choice is only appropriate under certain conditions. Where do you stand on this debate? Does rational choice unify the social sciences, or do we still lack an overarching, unifying theory? Justify your answer.

4. What do our core readings inform us about the multi-disciplinary nature of political science? What the specific analytical contributions of different disciplines? Illustrate by reference to specific texts.
Section 2  SUBFIELD: THE STATE

1. In her appraisal of “the state of the study of the state,” Margaret Levi argues that “the state is too complex and too varied to grasp the whole. ... We must go beyond thick descriptions of specific states at specific times to develop models and falsifiable hypotheses derived from realistic and logical presuppositions about the state and the interactions of its agents with each other and with the larger society. ... At best, we can develop only partial theories.” Do you concur with Levi? Justify your position with reference to empirical works, drawing on both macrohistorical and rationalist accounts of state development.

2. Compare and contrast key explanations in the literature on state formation and unitarism, federation, and confederation. In what ways can this literature inform the debate on whether the European Union is a step towards the formation of a European state?

3. In seeking to understand the relationship of states to their populations, what models of state-society relations can we draw on? Critically compare and contrast models developed in the state literature. Which of these models do you find most compelling, and why?

4. How should we conceive of the role of war (or threat of war) in the process of state development? In your answer, make sure to address (1) the relationship of war to other potential explanatory variables, and (2) the degree of generalizability of coercion-based explanations.
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MAJOR FIELD
5 HOURS

September 24, 2010

KONRAD KALICKI

You must answer a total of four (4) questions for this examination. You have 5 hours
to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question each
from your subfield sections, and the fourth methodology question.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument
and to refer to relevant empirical examples.

Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS

1. Research in comparative politics has exhibited increasing methodological
   awareness concerning problems of causal explanation. Assess how causal
   arguments have been made in exemplars of comparative research. Should the
   standards of quantitative methods be promoted as a model for good qualitative
   research? (In your answer you may wish to address such issues as: causal
   inference, homogeneity of the effects of causes across cases, causal
   mechanisms, and process tracing).

2. What explains the origins of dictatorship and democracy? Compare and contrast
   the answers and approaches of Moore and Acemoglu and Robinson. What are
   the strengths and weaknesses of those two works in addressing this question?

3. Why are some political problems addressed through individual action, some
   through (formally non-hierarchical) collective action, whereas others are only
   handled through formally hierarchical political organizations? Identify a
   prominent example of political action of each of these types and discuss
   characteristics of political problems that lead them to be more likely to be
   addressed in one of these fashions rather than another.
Section 2  SUBFIELD: THE STATE

1. “The state, as we commonly conceive of it, is a historically contingent political organization that arose in Western Europe 500 years ago. ‘States’ that arise today must be theorized differently. In fact, the great difference between the two types of states suggests that there is no compelling universal concept of the state.” Do you agree or disagree? How do states that arose in the 20th century differ from the archetypical Western European nation-state? What is the source of these differences?

2. Is it realistically possible to have states without nations? Note: this question is not about multi-nation states primarily, although consideration of multi-nation states may be relevant, but about the possibility of states in the absence of nations.

3. Is state capacity contingent on state autonomy? Critically discuss the range of positions taken by state scholars on this question. Can we arrive at a satisfactory universal answer to this question or must our answers remain context-specific?

Section 3  SUBFIELD: JAPAN

1. Political scientists when building theory generally rely on simplified or stylized interpretations of political history. In international relations, for example, one traditionally points to the world wars as two crucial events when it comes to IR theory-building. Can one point to one or more key events in Japanese political history that inform theories of Japanese politics? Are there multiple interpretations of such events that (could) suggest alternative theoretic approaches?

2. At times, Japanese policy-making can generate key reforms and change. At other times, it is paralyzed. Contrasting at least two time periods in at least two policy arenas, explain the factors behind such variation in outcome.

3. Under what conditions and through what mechanisms does civil society have a significant impact on policy-making outcomes in post-1998 Japan?

Section 4: METHODOLOGY

Propose and justify a plausible research design for empirically investigating ONE of the 3 substantive questions that you have answered elsewhere in your Comparative Politics exam. In your answer, you should include a discussion of the research question, a testable causal hypothesis (and at least one alternative hypothesis), the research design
(big-N or qualitative), and anticipated empirical challenges with respect to data collection and making causal inference. How will the data or evidence that you plan to collect allow you to discriminate between alternatives?

In your answer, you should explicitly compare the relative strengths and the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative approaches to studying this research question. Whichever strategy you are proposing (qualitative or quantitative), please discuss BOTH the advantages of this approach over the alternative AND its relative limitations.

PLEASE NOTE: You may NARROW the scope of the substantive question in order to formulate a testable causal hypothesis.
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MAJOR FIELD
5 HOURS

November 3, 2008

Kristi Kenyon and Nastia Salnykova

You must answer a total of four (4) questions for this examination. You have 5 hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question each from your subfield sections, and the fourth methodology question.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument and to refer to empirical examples from at least two countries.

Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS

1. Many studies of early European democratization have focused their explanations of democratization on complex clusters of context-specific conditions. Given that these explanations tend to be rooted in a particular region and time period, to what extent have the insights of these scholars succeeded in shaping the study of democratization in other regional and temporal contexts?

2. “It is impossible for any Man to act upon any other Motive than his own Interest ... in the larger Sense of the Word.” Trenchard and Gordon, *Cato’s Letters*. Critically analyze this argument. How do theories of political actors' motives influence the study of comparative politics?

3. In the mid-1980s, the rise of an intellectual movement to "bring the state back in" led to a renewed scholarly interest in the study of the state as an entity that is autonomous from society. In your view, how fruitful is it to conceive of the state as an autonomous actor? What alternative conceptions of the relationship between state and society have emerged since, and to what extent have they furthered our understanding of the state?

Section 2 SUBFIELD: DEMOCRATIZATION

1. In recent years, we seem to be witnessing more cases of regime reversion from democracy than transition to democracy. Is the field of comparative democratization no longer useful for understanding changes in political regimes? If so, what should replace it? If you disagree, explain how democratization theory is still relevant. Contextualize your answer with reference to recent cases of shifting regimes.
2. If you were forced to choose three key factors that could best account for the stability of democratic regimes, what would they be? Would these three factors apply universally to point to a general explanation of democratic stability, or would the degree of variation across cases preclude any general explanation? Refer to cases in different regions of the world in making your argument.

3. Can external actors successfully institute democracy in previously non-democratic states? If so, by which means? If not, why not? Refer to concrete cases of such efforts in making your argument.

Section 3  SUBFIELD: ETHNIC POLITICS

1. Lijphart and some others contend that ethnic conflict cannot be “resolved,” only managed. Lustick contends it can be resolved with his “control model”. Still others believe that while Lijphart’s consociational model works in the short-term, it may actually retard long-term solutions. There are numerous approaches to the management of ethnic conflict. Using examples, discuss and evaluate the possibilities.

2. Why should “ethnicity” or “ethnic politics” be counted as a major subfield in the field of comparative politics? What holds this subfield together and gives it the importance to be counted as being of equal status to other subfields, such as democratization, parties and elections, the state, and political behavior?

3. Are there “good” and “bad” nationalisms? What are the key differences between ethnocultural nationalism and civic nationalism? Is there an implicit Western bias in seeing a “progression” from ethnic to civic nationalism? Where does patriotism fit in? Discuss, providing examples.

Section 4: METHODOLOGY

Propose and justify a plausible research design for empirically investigating ONE of the 3 substantive questions that you have answered elsewhere in your Comparative Politics exam. In your answer, you should include a discussion of the research question, your hypothesis (and at least one alternative hypothesis), the research design (big-N or qualitative), and anticipated empirical challenges with respect to data collection and making causal inference. How will the data or evidence that you plan to collect allow you to discriminate between alternatives?

In your answer, you should explicitly compare the relative strengths and the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative approaches to studying this research question. Whichever strategy you are proposing (qualitative or quantitative), please discuss BOTH the advantages of this approach over the alternative AND its relative limitations.
You must answer a total of three questions for this examination. You have 4 hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question from your subfield section, and a third question from either section.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument and to refer to empirical examples from at least two countries.

Section 1 CORE QUESTIONS

1. Many studies of early European democratization have focused their explanations of democratization on complex clusters of context-specific conditions. Given that these explanations tend to be rooted in a particular region and time period, to what extent have the insights of these scholars succeeded in shaping the study of democratization in other regional and temporal contexts?

2. “It is impossible for any Man to act upon any other Motive than his own Interest ... in the larger Sense of the Word.” Trenchard and Gordon, Cato’s Letters. Critically analyze this argument. How do theories of political actors' motives influence the study of comparative politics?

3. In the mid-1980s, the rise of an intellectual movement to "bring the state back in" led to a renewed scholarly interest in the study of the state as an entity that is autonomous from society. In your view, how fruitful is it to conceive of the state as an autonomous actor? What alternative conceptions of the relationship between state and society have emerged since, and to what extent have they furthered our understanding of the state?

4. Rational choice theorists frequently exhort comparativists to make sure their work has micro-foundations. Take a major book in comparative politics that is not in the rational choice tradition (such as Scott's Weapons of the Weak, Skocpol's States and Social Revolutions, Moore's Social Origins, Collier and Collier, Shaping the Political Arena or any other from the core reading list) and discuss whether it has micro-foundations. Could it be improved by more self-consciously attempting to work out the logic of choice at the level of individual decision-makers?
Section 2  SUBFIELD:Former Soviet Union

1. Are the former Soviet states best seen as converging or diverging in their political trajectories since the breakup of the Soviet Union? Discuss with specific reference to multiple case countries.

2. Which regime “label” best suits contemporary Russia, or do none of the standard labels fit? These labels could include “delegative democracy”, “hybrid regime”, “competitive authoritarianism”, or “managed democracy”, among others. Ground your response in recent scholarly writing on Russia as well as current events.

3. How important is nationalism as a factor for explaining both the collapse of the Soviet state and political developments in the post-Soviet states, relative to other potential explanatory factors? Discuss with detailed reference to at least three former Soviet states.

4. Scholars of the former Soviet Union seem to focus increasingly on the role of informal institutions in shaping the politics of the former Soviet states. Are there any common characteristics or effects of politically relevant informal institutions across the post-Soviet cases? Be sure to define what you mean by informal institution and refer to at least three examples of informal institutions in different post-Soviet states.
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MAJOR FIELD
5 HOURS

March 10, 2008

Guo Li

You must answer a total of three questions for this examination. You have 5 hours
to do so. You must answer one question from the core section and one question each
from your subfield sections.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please refer to empirical examples
from at least two countries.

SECTION 1: CORE QUESTIONS

1. Political scientists often emphasize features in political systems that induce
institutional and policy equilibrium and stability. At the same time, from time to time
these equilibria are disrupted by substantial, and non-incremental, change. What
analytical tools can political scientists draw on to account for these major disruptions to
political life? Apply these tools to the comparative study of either institutional change or
policy change.

2. In politics, actors often face the challenge of coordinating their behaviours or
generating collective action. How much of politics can be explained as a consequence of
the ability or failure of actors to solve problems of coordination and cooperation? How
far do rationalist approaches take us in understanding when actors will succeed and when
they will fail to cooperate? What are the limits of rationalist approaches to collective
action? Justify your answer with reference to specific empirical political phenomena.

3. There is a trend toward “mixed methods” (i.e. combining qualitative and quantitative
methods) in comparative politics. Can qualitative and quantitative methods be combined
in ways that correct the limitations of each? If so, explain specifically what the limitation
of each method is and how it can be corrected by use of the other. If not, explain why not.

SECTION 2 SUBFIELD: DEMOCRATIZATION

1. What role do international factors have in accounting for the extent of democratization
in various countries? Could a theory of democratization be based purely on domestic
factors and still yield largely accurate predictions about the location and degree of
democratization in regimes around the world? Be sure to use empirical examples in
composing your answer.
2. Today many political regimes that have formal democratic rules in place (such as Russia or Indonesia) share close resemblance with soft authoritarian regimes that do not hold competitive elections. To what extent do formal democratic rules really matter in shaping political behaviour and the ability of citizens to influence those who govern them?

3. Consolidation is a ubiquitous concept in the democratization field, and serious criticisms of the concept have been raised for more than a decade. Is the framework of consolidation a useful one for explaining or understanding democratic development? If not, is there an alternative framework that could replace the consolidation paradigm?

SECTION 3 SUBFIELD: CHINA

1. In recent years, scholars have argued over whether the Chinese party-state has become weaker and less coherent or has been successfully reshaped into an administrative apparatus able to govern China well for years and decades to come. Which side do you find more persuasive, and why?

2. Why is the link between economic development and democratization that has long been assumed by social scientists NOT holding in the case of China? Please address this question both at the central and at the local level.

3. Under what conditions is Chinese policy-making, a system usually described as fragmented and multipolar, able to generate significant policy innovation and institutional change? Please refer to several issue areas and cases over time.
You must answer a total of three questions for this examination. You have 4 hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section and one question from your subfield section. Your third answer may come from either section.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please refer to empirical examples from at least two countries.

SECTION 1: CORE QUESTIONS

1. Political scientists often emphasize features in political systems that induce institutional and policy equilibrium and stability. At the same time, from time to time these equilibria are disrupted by substantial, and non-incremental, change. What analytical tools can political scientists draw on to account for these major disruptions to political life? Apply these tools to the comparative study of either institutional change or policy change.

2. In politics, actors often face the challenge of coordinating their behaviours or generating collective action. How much of politics can be explained as a consequence of the ability or failure of actors to solve problems of coordination and cooperation? How far do rationalist approaches take us in understanding when actors will succeed and when they will fail to cooperate? What are the limits of rationalist approaches to collective action? Justify your answer with reference to specific empirical political phenomena.

3. There is a trend toward “mixed methods” (i.e. combining qualitative and quantitative methods) in comparative politics. Can qualitative and quantitative methods be combined in ways that correct the limitations of each? If so, explain specifically what the limitation of each method is and how it can be corrected by use of the other. If not, explain why not.

4. Some have argued that studying the politics of just a single country is methodologically unwise and inhibits theoretical development. Assess the validity of this view. In doing so (whether you agree or disagree), be sure to consider both the reasoning on which this view might rest and potential challenges to this view. Illustrate your answer by reference to texts in comparative politics that take a single-country and a cross-national approach.
SECTION 2 SUBFIELD: ETHNIC POLITICS AND NATIONALISM

1. Compare and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the constructionist, instrumentalist, and rational choice approaches to ethnic conflict and nationalism, on the one hand, and the neo-primordialist and cultural theorist approaches on the other. Is there some useful middle ground between these approaches? Discuss, citing theoretical and empirical examples.

2. Many analysts of ethnicity contend that the deep divisions between groups leading to ethnic conflict cannot easily be resolved in the short term, but must somehow be managed to minimize violence. There are some quite varied theoretical approaches to the management of ethnic conflict. Some of these have been conducive to long-term solutions but others appear to have contributed to deeper resentments. Using empirical examples, discuss and evaluate these approaches.

3. What are the factors that can make ethnonationalism such a powerful and salient political force? What distinguishes ethnic nationalism from civic nationalism? What distinguishes nationalism from class divisions? Incorporate theory and empirical examples in your answer.

4. To what extent is ethnopolitics a product of modernity, and to what extent is it an artifact of pre-modern identities? Use empirical examples to illustrate your arguments.
Daisaku Higashi

You must answer a total of three questions for this examination. You have 4 hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section and one question from your subfield section. Your third answer may come from either section.

SECTION 1: CORE QUESTIONS. In your answer to any of the questions below, please refer to empirical examples from at least two countries.

1. Methodological tensions exist within comparative politics. The tension is often described in terms of “qualitative versus quantitative.” Is this qualitative-quantitative division sufficient to capture the full range of the methodological debate in comparative politics? If it is, describe what the “qualitative versus quantitative” debate is about, and what’s at stake in adopting a purely qualitative or purely quantitative approach. If it is not, then describe what methodological issues and disagreements are overlooked by this debate, and how additional issues and disagreements have manifested themselves in the comparative politics literature.

2. Looking across the field of comparative politics, what do you see as the most successful efforts to develop causal generalizations about political life – claims that travel well across space and time? What makes these efforts successful? What do you view as the most misguided attempts to generalize, and why? How should scholars in comparative politics decide on the right scope for constructing and testing causal theories?

3. What does a comparison of Almond and Verba’s *The Civic Culture* and Putnam’s *Making Democracy Work* tell us about the changes in political science theory and methods between 1963 and 1993, and what do these changes suggest for our understanding of political culture?

4. “Although political scientists, like most humans, are more intrigued by change than inertia, they have been more successful at explaining inertia than change.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What methods of theorizing are most promising for explaining both political inertia and change in comparative politics?
SECTION 2. SUBFIELD: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY

1. If Hall and Soskice are right that coordinated market capitalism is both efficient and coherent as an interdependent system, why are key countries such as Japan, France, and Germany going ahead with major reforms of some components of the system? Are such reforms leading to the unraveling of coordinated systems or are they effective in just plugging some holes.

2. Has globalization transformed the role of the state in the management of advanced economies? Do we still need a state, when market mechanisms are more efficient? Why or why not? Use empirical examples.

3. Citizens and dominant interest groups support the post-war social contract in stakeholder systems like France, Germany, and Japan. Then, why are political leaders pushing for rapid programs of structural reforms? What is the political mechanism behind those reform processes?

4. While many scholars have argued that globalization is increasingly limiting the role of the state and forcing a degree of convergence toward liberal models, China is pointing the other way. How is China able to unilaterally manage its exposure to globalization and extract such a large share of the value created by interactions with the global economy? Is this sustainable or reproducible elsewhere?
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MAJOR FIELD
5 HOURS

November 23, 2007

Nathan Allen

You must answer a total of three questions for this examination. You have 5 hours
to do so. You must answer one question from the core section and one question each
from your subfield sections.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please refer to empirical examples
from at least two countries.

SECTION 1: CORE QUESTIONS

1. Methodological tensions exist within comparative politics. The tension is often
described in terms of “qualitative versus quantitative.” Is this qualitative-
quantitative division sufficient to capture the full range of the methodological
debate in comparative politics? If it is, describe what the “qualitative versus
quantitative” debate is about, and what’s at stake in adopting a purely qualitative
or purely quantitative approach. If it is not, then describe what methodological
issues and disagreements are overlooked by this debate, and how additional issues
and disagreements have manifested themselves in the comparative politics
literature.

2. Looking across the field of comparative politics, what do you see as the most
successful efforts to develop causal generalizations about political life – claims
that travel well across space and time? What makes these efforts successful? What
do you view as the most misguided attempts to generalize, and why? How should
scholars in comparative politics decide on the right scope for constructing and
testing causal theories?

3. What does a comparison of Almond and Verba’s *The Civic Culture* and Putnam’s
*Making Democracy Work* tell us about the changes in political science theory and
methods between 1963 and 1993, and what do these changes suggest for our
understanding of political culture?

SECTION 2 SUBFIELD: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

1. Much of the scholarship on political institutions is premised on the institutions
operating in a stable, democratic environment. How well does this scholarship
travel to understanding unstable or non-democratic regimes? Are there any particular insights that an institutional approach might provide in these cases?

2. Many comparative political scientists spend a lot of time focusing on institutions and the incentives (salutary and perverse) that institutions generate. One could argue that this is largely because a significant fraction of political scientists believe that if one can just get the institutions “right,” (political, social, economic, etc.) outcomes will necessarily be improved. Set out the limits to this “faith” in an institutions approach to comparative politics.

3. Public choice has achieved considerable cachet in analyses of bureaucratic behavior. What exactly does it maintain? Who are some of its most noted proponents? Generally, it depends on formal theory. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Can there be other theories of public service that rely on formal theory?

SECTION 3 SUBFIELD: DEMOCRATIZATION

1. Is consolidation a useful concept in measuring levels of democratization, or should it be abandoned altogether? Why or why not? If it should be abandoned, can some other concept replace it? Use examples.

2. Is the field of comparative democratization too infused with normative content? In other words, are scholars of democratization so invested in hoping for democratization that they cannot study the topic scientifically? Does this matter in the end? Defend your response using specific examples from the democratization literature and empirical cases that scholars have assessed correctly or incorrectly as a result of their outlook.

3. “Structural theories of democratization are too deterministic, while actor-centric theories are too confined to the short-term period of transition to provide accurate explanations of the timing and location of transitions to democracy and the stability of democratic regimes. As a result, we have no satisfactory theories of democratization.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Use examples to support your argument.
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MINOR FIELD
4 HOURS

November 23, 2007

Erin Penner

You must answer a total of three questions for this examination. You have 4 hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section and one question from your subfield section. Your third answer may come from either section.

SECTION1: CORE QUESTIONS. In your answer to any of the questions below, please refer to empirical examples from at least two countries.

1. Methodological tensions exist within comparative politics. The tension is often described in terms of “qualitative versus quantitative.” Is this qualitative-quantitative division sufficient to capture the full range of the methodological debate in comparative politics? If it is, describe what the “qualitative versus quantitative” debate is about, and what’s at stake in adopting a purely qualitative or purely quantitative approach. If it is not, then describe what methodological issues and disagreements are overlooked by this debate, and how additional issues and disagreements have manifested themselves in the comparative politics literature.

2. Looking across the field of comparative politics, what do you see as the most successful efforts to develop causal generalizations about political life – claims that travel well across space and time? What makes these efforts successful? What do you view as the most misguided attempts to generalize, and why? How should scholars in comparative politics decide on the right scope for constructing and testing causal theories?

3. What does a comparison of Almond and Verba’s The Civic Culture and Putnam’s Making Democracy Work tell us about the changes in political science theory and methods between 1963 and 1993, and what do these changes suggest for our understanding of political culture?

4. “Although political scientists, like most humans, are more intrigued by change than inertia, they have been more successful at explaining inertia than change.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What methods of theorizing are most promising for explaining both political inertia and change in comparative politics?
SECTION 2. SUBFIELD: COMPARATIVE PUBLIC POLICY

1. In the field of comparative public policy, there are especially large literatures analyzing the politics of health care and the politics of economic policy, with less written about many other policy fields. How well should we expect theoretical lessons drawn from these two policy fields to apply to other fields of state activity? Are there important ways in which the causal dynamics driving cross-national variation in health or economic policy may differ from those driving variation in other fields?

2. If we want to explain variation across space and time in public policies, how far can we get without taking into account the role of ideas? What are the limits of explanatory approaches that take beliefs and goals as given by objective material conditions? How do we figure out empirically when ideational factors are important? Justify your answer by reference to specific examples from the comparative politics of public policy.

3. It is never easy for ordinary citizens to exert democratic control over the policy choices of governments. How can the particular structure of a country’s political institutions facilitate or impede democratic control? In your answer, consider a range of specific arguments and findings in the literature on comparative public policy.

4. Many of the most important causal influences on policymaking – institutions, the organization of interests, national cultures and attitudes – vary jointly across countries. For instance, many of the countries with parliamentary, proportional-representation institutions are also characterized by strong forms of corporatism and by broadly social-democratic public attitudes. These are also the countries that have tended to generate the social and labor-market policies that are the most interventionist and egalitarian. As analysts interested in explaining policy variation, how are we to deal with the fact that our suspected causal factors so often vary together? In answering this question, please make reference to the strategies employed in specific works on comparative public policy.
Clare McGovern

You must answer a total of three questions for this examination. You have 5 hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section and one question each from your subfield sections.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please refer to empirical examples from at least two countries.

SECTION 1: CORE QUESTIONS

1. Methodological tensions exist within comparative politics. The tension is often described in terms of “qualitative versus quantitative.” Is this qualitative-quantitative division sufficient to capture the full range of the methodological debate in comparative politics? If it is, describe what the “qualitative versus quantitative” debate is about, and what’s at stake in adopting a purely qualitative or purely quantitative approach. If it is not, then describe what methodological issues and disagreements are overlooked by this debate, and how additional issues and disagreements have manifested themselves in the comparative politics literature.

2. Looking across the field of comparative politics, what do you see as the most successful efforts to develop causal generalizations about political life – claims that travel well across space and time? What makes these efforts successful? What do you view as the most misguided attempts to generalize, and why? How should scholars in comparative politics decide on the right scope for constructing and testing causal theories?

3. What does a comparison of Almond and Verba’s The Civic Culture and Putnam’s Making Democracy Work tell us about the changes in political science theory and methods between 1963 and 1993, and what do these changes suggest for our understanding of political culture?

SECTION 2 SUBFIELD: ETHNIC POLITICS AND NATIONALISM

1. Fearon and Laitin point out what they believe is a key deficiency of the social construction approach, namely that it does not explain if or when ethnic
violence will flare up. They believe that a rational choice approach is better at predicting ethnic violence. Do you agree or disagree with Fearon and Laitin? Explain these two approaches as they relate to ethnic conflict or its management in your answer. Use examples to support your argument.

2. Anthony D. Smith writes that the “systematic failure” of the modernists (the dominant paradigm) to accord any weight to the pre-existing cultures and ethnic ties of the nations that emerged in the modern epoch thus precludes “any understanding of the popular roots and widespread appeal of nationalism,” and the devotion that “myths, memories, and symbols of the nation command”. In light of this debate, discuss and evaluate the following statement by Smith: “History and culture provide the motives for conflict as well as solidarity. They are not simply pretexts which can be manipulated nor are they simply invented traditions... History and culture are embedded into the fabric through which elites must forge their strategies.” Use empirical examples to support your argument.

3. Why should “ethnicity” or “ethnic politics” be counted as a major subfield of comparative politics? What holds this subfield together and gives it the right to be counted as being of equivalent status to other subfields, such as democratization, political institutions, and the state?

SECTION 3 SUBFIELD: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

1. Much of the scholarship on political institutions is premised on the institutions operating in a stable, democratic environment. How well does this scholarship travel to understanding unstable or non-democratic regimes? Are there any particular insights that an institutional approach might provide in these cases?

2. Many comparative political scientists spend a lot of time focusing on institutions and the incentives (salutary and perverse) that institutions generate. One could argue that this is largely because a significant fraction of political scientists believe that if one can just get the institutions “right,” (political, social, economic, etc.) outcomes will necessarily be improved. Set out the limits to this “faith” in an institutions approach to comparative politics.

3. Public choice has achieved considerable cachet in analyses of bureaucratic behavior. What exactly does it maintain? Who are some of its most noted proponents? Generally, it depends on formal theory. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Can there be other theories of public service that rely on formal theory?