

Comparative Politics General Examination
Autumn 2009
Day 2

Directions. Answer two of the following questions. Be sure to provide empirical evidence in support of your claims.

Important: In questions where a choice of theoretical arguments or body of literature is given to you, you may not use the same body of research that is discussed in any other question (including from day one of the exam).

1. Distinguish between the concepts of party competition, party fragmentation, and party polarization. Explain how each should affect government policymaking and performance, and summarize the available empirical evidence. Given that these concepts are often empirically correlated, describe a research design that would allow us to separate their effects.

2. Proponents of political culture are often accused of circularity and stereotyping. Under what circumstances can cultural arguments avoid these pitfalls and help us better understand the world? What distinguishes a good cultural explanation from a bad one? How should culture be operationalized? What kind of political phenomena can it explain or not explain? Illustrate with reference to at least three works that you believe provide convincing cultural arguments.

3. James MacGregor Burns defines leadership in his classic study of that title, first published in 1978, as “the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers.”

Consider a body of literature of your choosing that emphasizes leadership as a key causal factor. How are leadership-based explanations best tested in comparison with other theoretical alternatives? Are there distinctive theoretical and methodological advantages and/or challenges that we gain or face when leadership is taken to be a key independent variable? What improvements (if any) do you recommend to further the study of leadership as a cause of political outcomes (in the area of scholarship you have selected)?

4. The Heckscher-Ohlin (HO) and Stolper-Samuelson (SS) theories have often been used to generate predictions of the domestic causes and consequences of economic globalization. Sketch these theories and their main predictions.

- a. Using examples from political science research, discuss how useful these theories have been for understanding the causes and/or consequences of economic globalization in developing countries.
- b. In your answer, be sure to evaluate both the merits and limitations of the HO and SS theories. Where you find these theories lacking, suggest an approach that is more appropriate for understanding the domestic politics of economic integration in developing nations.