

Comparative Politics General Examination
Autumn 2011
Day 2

Directions: Answer TWO of the following questions from part C. Note that certain questions cannot be combined.

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). Also, be sure to provide empirical evidence in support of your claims.

PART C: Please answer TWO of the following questions. You may NOT respond to both questions #11 and #12.

- (1) All societies boast a wide array of social cleavages, including class, ethnicity, region, religion, identity etc. Why do some cleavages become politicized, while others do not? What does it mean for a cleavage to become politicized? What does the literature in comparative politics have to say on this topic?

- (2) “The public finances are one of the best starting points for an investigation of society, especially though not exclusively of its political life.”
- Joseph Schumpeter, *The Crisis of the Tax State*, 1954

Consider the literature on taxation. What do we know about the factors that bring about, or impede, the formation of an effective tax state? Is there a relationship between the political regime, political institutions, the class structure, ideology, ecology, or the inter-state system and the tax structure of the state? What important consequences result from these variations in the state’s fiscal capacity?

- (3) How do contemporary arguments about the political and economic effects of globalization differ from classic arguments about dependency? Are the two sets of theories mutually exclusive? To what extent do these theories absolve elites—in both the developed and developing world—from accountability for their mistakes?

OR

- (4) “The upper class keeps all of the money, pays none of the taxes. The middle class pays all of the taxes, does all of the work. The poor are there ... just to scare the shit out of the middle class.”
(George Carlin, stand-up comedian).

Are class-based analyses relevant [necessary and/or sufficient] in accounting for the political determinants of economic inequality? What other, if any, factors are important?