

**Department of Political Science, Yale University**  
**Field Examination in Comparative Politics**  
**August 2010**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This is a closed book, closed notes exam, with access to a clean copy of the reading list only. You are required to answer 3 questions (each answer comprises one-third of the exam grade). The exam has a strict 21 page limit (double-space, 12 font). You have 8 hours.

1. How well does cross-national work in comparative politics deal with the question of deeper historical causes and preconditions, when trying to demonstrate the importance of particular 'institutions' on levels of conflict or democracy?
2. Constructivist approaches to ethnic identity would seem to predict larger number of politicized ethnic groups and a lot more ethnic switching among individuals and from group to group than we actually observe. How can this apparent mismatch between prediction and reality be explained?
3. Does corruption facilitate or prevent violent conflict? Discuss.
4. The negative consequences of poverty have been demonstrated for multiple dependent variables in comparative politics. Often these findings are treated in separate literatures that tie poverty to one specific outcome of interest, but can these findings be aggregated together to produce a larger theory about the effects of poverty? What phenomena does poverty help us understand? In your view, is poverty an important and useful explanation for the outcomes we see in poor countries?
5. Przeworski has argued that competitive elections provide a substitute for war -- a way to resolve conflict -- yet the study of war and the study of elections are often segregated. What, if any, is the relationship between warfare and elections? How do the modalities of civil war and electoral politics differ? Can an understanding of elections inform studies of violence and vice versa?
6. What do political science theories have to say about the future of democracy and autocracy in the world?