

Department of Political Science, Yale University

Field Examination in Comparative Politics

August 26th 2011

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 7 hours.

1. The recent riots in the UK have generated a great deal of intense public debate about its causes and meaning. What would a meaningful social-scientific intervention into this debate entail? Can there be a social-scientific answer as to the meaning of these riots? If not, why? If yes, which one? Does the literature on ethnic riots help us at all?
2. How does the study of civil wars inform the discussion of the endgame in Afghanistan?
3. How important were differences in colonial institution-building in determining levels of democracy and growth after independence?
4. To what extent, if at all, did the scholarly literature on authoritarian regimes and their breakdown anticipate the historic events that have taken place in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Syria, and elsewhere this year? Do those events suggest the importance of causal factors that scholars concerned with regime change have previously ignored or slighted?
5. How much do we know about the impact of economic development on the extent of inequality in wealth and income and, in turn, the impact of development and inequality on the institutional forms of political authority in a state? In particular, discuss the impact of economic development and distributional inequality on *changes* in the institutional forms of political authority?
6. What accounts for the wide variation in the type of party cleavages that have emerged in different democracies?