

**Department of Political Science
Yale University**

**Final Examination in Comparative Politics
August 2018**

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 any three of the questions. Each answer contributes one-third of the overall exam grade. There is a strict 21-page limit (double-space, 12 font). You have seven hours.

1. At the traditional heart of the field of Comparative Politics is the “comparative method,” sometimes referred to as “small-n” analysis or the structured comparison of a limited number of cases. Does this method have a place in contemporary political science, where causal identification and “big data” are valued? Whether you agree or disagree it has a role in contemporary political science, discuss, with examples, the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional “small-n” method.
2. In discussing the process of state formation in Europe, Charles Tilly famously said, “war made the state and the state made war.” To what extent, if at all, does the experience of state-building outside Europe require us to reassess that claim? And for that matter, to what extent, if at all, does the experience of state-building in Europe confirm Tilly’s claim?
3. Robust coercive apparatuses have long been credited with maintaining the Middle East’s authoritarian regimes, and the 2011 ‘Arab Spring’ uprisings confirmed their centrality. In Tunisia and Egypt, the military abstained from using force against protesters, while in Syria and Bahrain, militaries defended leaders against mass mobilization with brutal force. In Yemen and Libya, militaries fractured, with some portions remaining loyal to the leader while others defected. How does the comparative politics literature on the role of the military in domestic politics, and more specifically on the relationship between the role of the military and the success of revolutions, help to explain these divergent outcomes?
4. Non-democratic regimes often adopt the ‘window dressings’ of democracies, sometimes going so far as to permit the establishment of opposition parties and semi-competitive elections. Why do authoritarian regimes adopt electoral institutions? Under what circumstances are these institutions more likely to lead to meaningful liberalization or democratization? How might these seemingly democratic institutions actually strengthen an authoritarian regime?
5. In their classic introduction to *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, Lipset and Rokkan argued that the party systems in most European and North American countries had become “frozen” – that “the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s.” Yet we have seen many instances over the 50 years since Lipset and Rokkan wrote those words of new parties appearing, including, in recent years in a number of

countries, “populist” parties that have attracted support, and in some cases entered governments, by espousing anti-establishment, nationalist and xenophobic views. Were Lipset and Rokkan wrong about the “freezing” of cleavage structures in the 1920s? If so, why? If not, why not?

6. In recent years, there has been growing alarm over a perceived decline in the quality of democracy in a number of democratic polities – not only in some of those established after the demise of Communist regimes in the early 1990s but in some longer-established ones as well. What do we know about the extent and causes of “democratic backsliding”? Are there any theories about the prerequisites and preconditions for democracy that might help us understand the phenomenon of “backsliding”? Are there any remedies that come to mind?