

Department of Political Science, Yale University

Field Examination in Comparative Politics

January 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 8 hours.

1. In Boix and Stokes, Adam Przeworski asks, "Is the Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" What is your answer?
2. Why has it proven so difficult to assess the impact of ethnicity on outcomes such as violent conflict and economic development? How could we do better?
3. Scholars have debated whether countries that enjoy ample natural resources are subjected to a "resource curse" that has an adverse effect on both the economy and polity. What analytic arguments and substantive evidence can be marshalled in support of, or against, a claim that such a "curse" exists?
4. Does the literature on state formation account for state failure? Should it?
5. Over the past two decades, many countries have embarked on what was presumed at the time to be a transition to democratic politics. Some established and consolidated democratic polities, others fell by the wayside and reverted to authoritarian politics, and still others developed "hybrid" regimes that contain elements of democratic and non-democratic politics. What do we now know about why democratic polities were established and consolidated in some countries but not others?
6. In what ways does violence in civil wars differ from other types of violence that we study in comparative politics?