

Final Exam Questions
Department of Political Science, CEU
2011/2012 Academic Year

Field 1: Political Theory

1. What sources of authority does law rely on?
2. What questions about democratic public will formation does the Condorcet paradox raise?
3. What are the “positive” versus the “negative” accounts of liberty?
4. What is the idea of a social contract, and what is it supposed to do for political theory?
5. Discuss the relationship between constitutionalism and democracy.
6. Compare and contrast the difference principle and Pareto optimality as means to define the achievement of distributive justice.
7. What are Rawls’s two principles of justice?
8. Should expensive tastes be compensated?
9. Is prioritarianism a better alternative to egalitarianism?
10. What are the main objections to utilitarianism?

Field 2: Political Economy and Public Policy

1. Explain the concept of democratic corporatism and give examples of corporatist societies.
2. Which are the main points of Polanyi's criticism of liberal thought on change in history, motives of social action, and the origins and emergence of the market economy?
3. Discuss alternative explanations of transformational recession. Was it inevitable?
4. How do institutions, ideas, and interests interact in political economy analysis? Can we ascribe a leading role to any of these three factors?
5. What are the main collective action problems and some remedies to these problems that are widespread in political arena? Please provide concrete examples.
6. What is methodological individualism? Characterize it through an approach from political science.
7. Explain the concepts of moral hazard and adverse selection. In what ways are the two concepts different?
8. Discuss if democracies are more likely to emerge as countries develop economically and whether they are more likely to survive in developed countries. Please evaluate all the channels through which the two might be interrelated.
9. Present the J-curve hypothesis of economic reforms and its major criticisms. What are the political and policy implications of the various approaches?
10. Is rules-based economic policy-making by independent agencies compatible with democratic political systems?

Field 3: International and Comparative Politics

1. What are the major critical arguments against democratic rule? Discuss the pros and cons of these arguments.
2. What is a consociational democracy? Describe its core features as opposed to non-consociational democracy and name the classic West European examples.
3. How would you operationalize an abstract concept for comparative empirical research? Describe the logic of concept formation and measurement. As examples use either the concept of 'rich society' or of 'powerful president'.
4. In the scholarly literature it is often argued that presidential democracies are inherently less enduring than parliamentary democracies. First, present the principal features of presidentialism and parliamentarism in contrast to each other. Then evaluate the impact of these institutional variables on democratic consolidation.
5. What are the different strategies for selecting cases in comparative political research? List as many as you can, then focus on two of them by spelling their pros and cons.
6. Social movements' mobilisation often varies over time. How can we explain "waves" of mobilisation?
7. Discuss the similarities and differences between the following non-democratic regimes: totalitarianism, post-totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and sultanistic rule.
8. Evaluate the impact of EU accession on democratic consolidation in East-Central Europe
9. Which are the role and status of political parties in liberal democratic polities?
10. What characterises the modern Nation-State (as compared to previous models of political organisation)?

Field 4: Research Methods

1. What are the typical problems of (qualitative) field research?
2. What are the premises of the paradigm of "critical research"?
3. Describe the major aspects of a comparative study design in an experimental and in an observational setting.
4. What is the role of the normal distribution in data analysis? Compare the main ideas underlying the statistical analysis of discrete and continuous data.
5. Explain the application and interpretation of a t-test.
6. Explain Type I and Type II errors in a test of a statistical hypothesis? How are they related and how can their values be reduced? Use, as an example, the question whether economic development and the level of democracy are related.
7. What is the correlation coefficient? When to use it and how to interpret its value?
8. What are validity and reliability? How do you assess them and how can they be improved?
9. Suppose you are running a regression analysis to understand the effect of economic development on the level of democracy with data from several countries. Can you think of other variables that may affect this relationship? How would you control for their effects of these other variables?
10. Discuss the assumptions of regression modeling. Discuss the impact of assumption violations on the results.

Field 5: Political Communication

1. What is the role of news media in a liberal democracy?
2. What is meant by the concept 'primary definers' and how does it relate to a 'hierarchy of credibility'?
3. What are the benefits/disadvantages of a public service vs. commercial funding structure for news?
4. In what way is media policy part of a strategy to attain specific political goals (Freedman 2008)?
5. In the current media environment, is transparency replacing objectivity as the primary ethic of news?
6. What are the main arguments against the notion that the internet is making news media better?
7. What does Fuchs (2010) mean by 'alternative media as critical media'?
8. Explain the argument that media globalization has led to the rise of global infotainment (Thussu 2007).
9. In what way can we say that news media 'promotes war' (Hale 2010)?
10. Discuss the potential and limits of monitorial citizen behavior, infotainment and public intervention in news markets in promoting informed political behavior among citizens.