Final Exam Questions
Department of Political Science, CEU
2018/2019 Academic Year

Field 1: Political Theory

1. Describe the idea of moral equality and explain its significance in the context of different problems in political philosophy.

2. Explain the basic idea of political obligation and its main components.

3. What is the consent theory of political obligation? Describe the main problems with it.

4. What are some of the main objections to utilitarianism?

5. What role does the idea of the Original Position play in Rawls' theory of justice?

6. Describe Rawls' second principle of justice and mention some criticisms of it.

7. Explain the idea of the "circumstances of justice".

8. Assess Nozick's principle of acquisition.

9. What is the difference between instrumental and intrinsic justifications of democracy?

Field 2: Political Economy and Public Policy

1. How do institutions, ideas, and interests interact in political economy analysis? In what ways might we argue for the analytical centrality of any of these three factors, if at all?

2. What are the major attributes of "homo economicus"? How can this concept be challenged?

3. Discuss the problem of the so-called equity-efficiency trade-off.

4. What are the main collective action problems in the political arena, and which are the remedies to these problems? Please provide two concrete examples.

5. What is information asymmetry, what are its main types and how can they be mitigated?

6. Explain the concept of market failure, its origins, and various types.

7. What kind of states is considered in the literature as "developmental state"? What are their main attributes?

8. Explain the concept of "embeddedness" of economic sociology!

9. Is rules-based economic policy-making by independent agencies compatible with democratic political systems? If so, in what ways?

10. How have political economists explained the emergence of democracy? Provide a summary of one such theoretical model.

Field 3: Comparative Politics

1. What are the major critical arguments against democratic rule? Discuss the pros and cons of these arguments (with particular attention to elitism, populism, fascism, and classic liberalism).

2. Discuss the majoritarian and the consensual configuration of institutions and evaluate their impact on the quality of democracy.

3. Explain the difference between federalism and decentralization and argue whether one or both are either the cause or a solution to sub-national conflicts such as Scotland, Catalonia, or Flanders

4. Discuss the structuralist and agency-based explanations of revolution.

5. Explain why concept formation and measurement are a crucial part of comparative political research. In your answer, address the tools that make concepts and and their measurement travel across cases.

6. Discuss the differences between the authoritarian regimes, hybrid regimes and liberal democracies.

7. Discuss the role of political parties in modern democracies. Contrast the recent developments in postindustrial societies with the patterns characterizing the mass-party era.

8. What characterizes the modern nation-state compared to previous models of political organization?

9. Discuss the main types of electoral systems and their alleged effects on party systems

10. Discuss pro- and con- arguments about whether federal or unitary systems of government are particularly well suited for the social and political conditions of some contemporary European countries (you can choose which counties you want to make the argument about).

Field 4: Research Methods

1. a) What types of research questions are best tackled using an interpretivist qualitative research project? To illustrate your points, compare and contrast with research questions that are best answered using different designs.
   OR
   b) Discuss the key challenges that emerge regarding concept formation and measurement?
   OR
   c) Suppose you are running a regression analysis to understand the effect of economic development on the level of democracy with data from several countries. How can your analysis control for the effect of other variables that may affect this relationship? What methodological problems can you expect to occur in controlling for those other effects and how can you deal with them?

2. a) What are the usual steps needed for preparing and carrying out primary qualitative data collection?
   OR
   b) What are the different strategies for selecting cases in comparative political research and what are their pros and cons?
   OR
   c) Discuss the assumptions behind the different forms of regression modeling. Discuss the impact violations of these assumptions have.

3. a) Discuss the different forms and roles of process tracing in theory-based case studies.
   OR
   b) Please discuss the pros and cons of opt-in recruitment strategies in qualitative research projects with human participants.
   OR
   c) Discuss the problem that emerges when running regression models on time series data. What are some basic ways of testing and overcoming the issue.

4. Discuss the similarities and differences of the types of chi-square tests covered in class. What are they used for and how? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using these nonparametric tests versus parametric counterparts?

5. What is the role of the normal distribution in data analysis? Compare the main ideas underlying the statistical analysis of discrete and of continuous data. Illustrate their respective applicability in political science.

6. Explain the application and interpretation of a t-test. Consider all forms of t-tests and describe research scenarios under which you would use one or another. Also consider when the t test is appropriate and inappropriate and why. Describe alternative methods available for these situations.

7. Explain Type I and Type II errors in a test of a statistical hypothesis. How are they related and how can they be reduced? Use as an example the hypothesis of independence of the following variables: whether or not the mayor and the majority of the councilors in a municipality come from the same party and whether or not the municipality has some expenditure covered by bank loans or the selling of property.

8. Give a brief summary of multivariate statistical methods (regression analysis, analysis of variance, log-linear analysis). Illustrate their applicability to problems in political science.

Field 5: Political Communication

1. Discuss the role attributed to mass media in normative theories of liberal democracy and what economic, social and political challenges arise to mass media actually living up to those expectations.

2. Review the arguments in favor and against the idea that media content has only minimal effects on the political views of the audience.

3. Discuss the merits and demerits of public vs. commercial funding for public affairs coverage in broadcast media.

4. Discuss the ways in which media system characteristics may arguably be related to how politically informed and engaged different types of citizens are.

5. Discuss the possible impact of election campaigns on citizens' political information level and engagement.

6. Present the main arguments for and against the notion that the internet is making news media better.

7. Discuss the positive and negative implications of interpersonal communication complementing media exposure as a source of political stimuli for citizens in a democracy.

8. Critically discuss the implications of the internet for professional journalism and its coverage of public affairs.

9. Present possible ways of studying framing and agenda setting effects, and discuss their limitations.

10. Explain whether and how political parallelism and journalistic professionalism can coexist.