

POLS W3503
Fall 2012
Final exam information and questions
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The registrar has scheduled your final exam for Thursday, 12/20/2012, 1:10pm - 4:00pm, in HAM 516. If you cannot take the exam for expected or unexpected reasons, I will follow the usual Columbia University requirements and protocols.

Below are 14 sample essay questions, some with multiple parts.

Your final exam will ask you to answer three or four of these questions, longhand, in exam booklets. You will not be told which questions in advance. Hence you should study by preparing an answer to all.

You should prepare your answers individually. You may casually discuss questions and answers with your classmates, but by no means should you share your preparatory notes and answers with a classmate, nor should you ask a classmate for their notes or detailed answers. Original insights and independent work will be rewarded.

Your written answers can be as long as you like. Longer is not always better, however, for a couple of reasons. One, of course, is that you have limited time in the exam. The second is that coherent and effective answers are usually concise. So avoid running on interminably.

You should write in complete sentences. We encourage you to use headings and subheadings to organize your answers. You may also use bullet points—clear, coherent ones—in your answer, though these should be used judiciously.

Your answers will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Answering the actual question asked
- Clear, organized and thoughtful writing
- Demonstrated knowledge of the readings, lectures and key debates
- Evidence and examples from the readings, including explicit references to authors
- Critical analysis reflecting deep, well-reasoned and logical thinking
- Concision
- Original answers, distinct from your peers

Question 1

Explain how foreign aid can affect economic growth. Use the Solow model and the Big Push models to frame your arguments. Make sure to tackle these three points briefly and clearly:

- i. Under what circumstances would aid affect capital per worker, and does this always increase growth rates?
- ii. Under what circumstances would aid affect “technology”, and does this always increase growth rates, or could growth decrease in some circumstances?
- iii. What does the existing evidence say about (i) and (ii)? Is that evidence convincing?

Question 2

You work as an assistant to the Finance Minister in Malawi, where annual aid is roughly 26% of GDP. Your minister recognizes the importance these outside funds play in paying for education, health and infrastructure, but wonders whether there are deleterious effects of so much aid to African countries. She asks you to write him a memo, with reference to specific people and points of view (including your own) that does the following:

- i. Outlines the possible deleterious effects of so much aid
- ii. Highlights the major benefits of that aid, and
- iii. Discusses concrete ways his government could maximize the benefits of aid while mitigating the ill effects.

[Note: Your answer can be general. We have not discussed Malawi and so there is no need for specific knowledge of Malawi in this case, though you are encouraged to briefly investigate and report on the relevant features of Malawi.]

Question 3

Your Finance Minister passes on your excellent aid memo to her colleague, the Minister of Planning. He’s impressed with your cogent, concise, and critical writing and wants you to write a memo about his most important topic: industrialization. “We’re a landlocked country,” he reminds you, “with a small domestic market.” Is there any hope that we can attract or grow industry? What kind, and what can the government do to promote industry?

Question 4

Acemoglu and Robinson focus on the historical determinants of inclusive and extractive institutions. Unfortunately, nations cannot change their history. What policy conclusions, if any, do you think can be drawn from their work? Frame your

answer as though you were writing a memo to a governance commission of senior political figures in an African country.

Question 5

At present, rebels control northern Mali and eastern DRC. These have been war-torn regions almost since independence, and the central state has failed to govern these peripheries effectively. Jeffrey Herbst suggests we should consider letting African states disintegrate (i.e. let northern Mali and eastern DRC secede). In your mind, what are the strongest arguments for and against this view? What specific policies would you propose in its place? Back your critique and policies up with theory and evidence from the readings.

Question 6

You land your first job after graduation with a strategy consulting firm, and your first assignment brings you to consumer goods giant Procter and Gamble. They are already in South Africa, but plan an African expansion. They are only going to move into a handful of countries to begin with, and they want to start with the countries most likely to experience sustained growth in the next three to four decades, regardless of market size. Knowing you just completed this course, your senior manager asks you to put together a list of the five things they should look for in a country today to predict sustained growth in the future. What things are on your list and why? He also asks you to list two things that would be on most people's lists, but not yours (because you don't think they are as important for growth as most people think).

Question 7

You are a Congressional staffer. Your Congresswoman is committed to improving governance in countries that receive US aid. She asks you the following question: "How do we create strong institutions?" For your answer, draft a memo that does the following:

- i. Using the readings from class, present a coherent definition of "institutions".
- ii. Using Herbst, Sawyer, Ake, Bates, Hyden, and Acemoglu & Robinson: (a) highlight two strategies for making institutions stronger, and (b) highlight two strategies for making institutions more inclusive.
- iii. How these strategies contrast with the current approach to democratization?

Question 8

Compare the positive and negative effects of colonialism. Consider the following:

- i. In what ways did colonialism enrich Europe at the expense of African colonies?
- ii. What is the counterargument—in what ways could colonialism have advanced Africa development?
- iii. Are there any good arguments for why colonialism doesn't actually matter one way or the other?
- iv. How do your answers in (i) to (iii) fit into the Solow growth model (the exogenous or endogenous variables), if at all?
- v. Overall, which argument do you find most convincing and why?

Question 9

Jeffrey Sachs, Stanley Engerman & Ken Sokoloff, and Jared Diamond all argue that initial factor endowments have direct effects on underdevelopment today. Acemoglu and Robinson argue that these direct geography arguments are wrong. What specifically do Sachs, Engerman & Sokoloff, and Diamond each claim? How do Acemoglu and Robinson argue they are false? Are there any arguments for or against geography that these authors overlook? Based on these arguments and counterarguments, to what extent do you think the direct effects of geography, climate, ecological conditions, natural resource endowment, and population density can help explain underdevelopment in many African countries?

Question 10

Consider the following statement: "Structural adjustment was foisted on poor country governments against their wishes and good sense. These governments could have charted an alternative, better reform path to without all the conditionality and without the Washington Consensus."

- i. What are the arguments for this view?
- ii. What are arguments against?
- iii. Where do you stand? What is the counterfactual scenario you would have like to see?

Question 11

In class and section we have talked about Kenya, the DRC, Zambia, Uganda, and Liberia. Choose two of these states and discuss the following:

- i. What criteria should we use to assess level and character of regime type, regime quality and state strength?
- ii. Using these criteria, create a table that contrasts your two cases. Be specific about the time period where you choose to compare them.
- iii. How did personalized rule play out in the two cases you choose?
- iv. What effective methods do you propose to reverse or limit personalized rule?
- v. What benefits and risks are posed by shifting to multiparty democracy?

Question 12

Using your readings (Bates, Weinstein, Sawyer, Herbst, etc.) to discuss the positive and negative effects of conflict and war.

- i. Do you think conflict or war is a viable solution for statebuilding in the 21st century?
- ii. The major authors we see in this course (Sen, Banerjee and Duflo, Acemoglu and Robinson, van de Walle, Hyden) don't address this question directly. But based on your reading of these authors, what do you think they might say and why?

Question 13

Rwanda and Uganda are classified as "partial democracies", because they allow many parties to compete and hold regular and relatively clean elections.

- i. Why might Uganda and Rwanda not be classified as "full democracies" by some observers? What characteristics do you associate with string and stable democracies, and what could be missing in the cases of Uganda and Rwanda? [Note: You do not necessarily need specific knowledge of Uganda or Rwanda to answer this question, but some brief investigations will help.]
- ii. In recent years, both Presidents Museveni and Kagame have been increasing their economic and political control of the country, sometimes through authoritarian means. Both countries have been experiencing high rates of growth. List three reasons why the non-democratic aspects of their rule could be helping growth, and three reasons why in future it could hinder growth.
- iii. A group of opposition and civil society figures in each country have decided to lobby the US and UK governments to help them advocate for political reform in Uganda and Rwanda. They ask for your advice: What two political reforms should they encourage the US and UK to advocate? Keep in mind that effective reforms need to balance impact with feasibility. You want to suggest the highest impact reforms that the US and UK have the ability to influence.

Question 14

Banerjee and Duflo conclude their book with an argument to steer away from "big" political reform.

- i. Has a focus on marginal economic change been successful? List two reasons why and two reasons why not. You will probably need to define "successful".
- ii. Contrast Banerjee and Duflo's view with some of the political scientists we read, such as Amos Sawyer, Goran Hyden, James Ferguson and Nicolas van de Walle. Trace the choice between the marginalist and macro research and policy reform approaches to root assumptions. That is, can we trace different conclusions to differences in basic assumptions about the world, policy, or social science?