

GRADUATE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL PRELIM EXAM

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2007

Directions:

Answer ONE question from each section. No one essay should exceed 8 pages and the total length should not exceed 20 pages. Be sure to include a list of references for each essay.

General Approaches (Answer ONLY One):

- Discuss the differing perspectives on the role of causal theory in comparative historical sociology? Review and critique these positions making sure to clearly articulate your own position. Employ several empirical examples in crafting your argument.
- Pick the 5 most significant books written since 1965. Explain why they are critical and how they changed the field of comparative historical sociology. What are the similarities and differences between these books? As a set what do they say about the field—its past, present and future?
- Discuss the different views on the use of narratives in comparative-historical sociology and the different roles of narratives in generating social science theories. Cite empirical studies to make your point.

Research Design (Answer THIS One):

- Identify an unresolved problem in any one area of comparative historical research. Outline the competing theoretical arguments noting all relevant studies and then design research that would adjudicate them. Be sure to provide/defend your detailed research strategy noting general approach, independent and dependent variables, sources of data, mode of analysis, etc.

Substantive Debates (Answer ONLY One):

- Discuss how the specific historical conditions that distinguish the most recent wave of globalization from previous periods of economic development have shaped the relationship between states and markets.
- Since Bendix's *Work and Authority in Industry* (1956), managerial ideologies and their cross-societal differences have drawn much attention from organizational sociologists. Use two or more specific empirical studies to illustrate how the seminal research has been modified and extended by later work.

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Substantive Debates (Answer ONLY One):

- Do explanations of revolution traditionally employed to explain pre-20th century social change account well for the spate of post World War II revolutions? What are the competing explanations and how well do they address the historically very different types of revolution experienced worldwide? Do we need new arguments?
- Congratulations! You have been chosen to design the artificial intelligence for the new state-building simulation game, Civilization V! You get to create the rules whereby states come into being. How do states form in this virtual world (assume the game starts with settlers, warlords/chieftains)? Designers are a fractious lot. Make sure you include at least two alternative paths to state development to satisfy the AI requirements. (i.e. if war happens early, if trade happens late, etc).

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Substantive Debates (Answer ONLY One):

- Is a poststructuralist feminist comparative historical sociology possible? What are the tensions inherent in such a project? How might a poststructuralist feminist approach contribute to the progress of comparative historical sociology as a field? Use two or more specific empirical examples to illustrate the epistemological, theoretical, and methodological points of departure from traditional comparative historical work that characterize and justify a poststructuralist feminist approach.
- Compare and contrast the Marxist/neo-Marxist, Weberian and Foucauldian theories of power as they relate to systems of law. Give empirical examples to demonstrate how these different theories have informed the work of comparative historical researchers. Which of the three do you find most useful? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

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Substantive Debates (Answer ONLY One):

- There are two prevailing perspectives in recent literature on the consequences of globalization: convergence and divergence. Discuss the main arguments of each perspective with particular attention to how they understand the effect of economic globalization on development. Note also how well they are supported by empirical evidence.
- Most knowledge of “racial matters” is based on data and theories based on the USA case. Even when scholars venture overseas, the logic of inquiry and observation is deeply shaded by the American lenses. Discuss how the scholarship about a country you select for discussion (e.g., Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Rwanda, China, Japan, Canada, the Netherlands, or any other country other than the USA) reflects this reality. In answering this question, discuss the work of at least three authors who have written on the country in question (e.g., if you were to choose Brazil as your country, you could examine the work of Gilberto Freyre, Edward Telles, France Twine Winddance, Antony Marx, Pierre van den Berghe, Carl Degler, Jonathan Warren, and others) and propose a way (research strategy) and a vision (epistemology) that will allow scholars to develop interpretations and analyses of racial matters that fit the reality of how race and racism are lived there.

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Substantive Debates (Answer ONLY One):

- You are Ruud Koopmans. Write a review of *Dynamics of Contention*. In this review situate the work within the field noting where it builds upon existing work and where it departs from it. Pay particular attention to the extent to which it helps scholars understand post-citizenship movements.
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