

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY**  
**January 31 – February 4, 2022**

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You are required to answer THREE (3) QUESTIONS (ONE QUESTION FROM EACH OF PARTS A, B & C). Each answer should be 10-12 pages (12-point font and double-spaced) in length. The complete exam should not total more than 36 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font), not including references. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT READ PAST THE 36TH PAGE.

**Part A**

1. Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1967) is a classic book that has defined the study of democratization and authoritarianism. First, discuss the main arguments proposed by Moore and then, take the case of contemporary China (since the introduction of market reform in the late 1970s) to revise Moore's theoretical findings. How should political sociologists rethink the formation of different political regimes through a careful understanding of China's capitalist development in the last four decades? Are these conceptual revisions applicable to other contemporary states other than China?

2. Whether "Varieties of Capitalism" or "The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism," this scholarship has focused on creating analytical typologies. Discuss how these typologizing analyses have enlightened the study of capitalism and welfare states. Also, examine the methodological limitations of this scholarship and propose what can be done differently, both methodologically and theoretically, to engage in a systematic analysis of economic systems and welfare states under neoliberal capitalism.

**Part B**

3. Political sociologists sometimes theorize the state as a mechanism for engendering a more just and equitable distribution of wealth and decision-making power. However, states are also conceptualized as central to the production of exclusions and marginalization. What has political sociology had to say about the ways that states create and/or amplify inequality and injustice within and across human populations? Contextualize your argument within a substantive domain, such as citizenship and immigration, welfare regimes, indigenous sovereignty, etc.

4. Political sociologists have long studied why some groups, particularly members of the working classes, mobilize in support of political parties and programs that seemingly contradict their underlying material interests. Scholarship in recent decades, in particular, has problematized simple assertions of a class basis for party preference. The recent resurgence of right-wing populism in the wealthiest democracies of North America and Europe has rekindled interest in this problem. Develop an argument that synthesizes how political sociologists have

dealt with the relationship between group interests and political party preference and its relevance to contemporary political alignments. Your response should identify important lacunae, stumbling blocks, and paths not taken in the research literature. It should also propose what you see as the most promising lines of theoretical and empirical advancement.

### **Part C**

5. This question asks you to generalize in a theoretical mode from a single empirical case. Social movement theory is dominated by the American experience, yet the United States differs from many other countries. Drawing on the example of a single social movement in a country outside the United States, what lessons do we learn about: (1) the strengths and limits of the contentious politics approach; and (2) how social movement theory might advance?

6. In "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," Lipset and Rokkan discuss institutionalized segmentation (the development and maintenance of vertical networks and social groups that ensure partisan loyalty and insulate supporters from cross-cutting influences). Since the 1960s, which is when Lipset and Rokkan wrote their chapter: (1) what has become of institutionalized segmentation in one country of your choice; and (2) what are the implications for the cleavage theory of electoral politics (here address not only Lipset and Rokkan, but also Inglehart's postmaterialist theory)?