

Review Questions for the Final Exam

(Note: You should also refer back to the hour exam review questions.)

1. How could the following concepts or theorists help to explain the variety of attitudes and the controversy about issues such as affirmative action and immigration?

- Domhoff
- MacKinnon
- Schema
- Authoritarianism
- Nationalism
- Regression in political socialization

*2. Assume that the surprising findings in the Kinder, Adams, and Gronke article about “pocketbook voting” are based largely on samples of people who entered adolescence and young adulthood in the immediate post-war years of 1946-1950.

(a) How might the concepts of “generation,” “formative experiences,” and “post-materialism” explain these results?

(b) In other words, do you think their results would have been different if they had studied people who came of age during the Great Depression of the 1930s? Why or why not?

(c) And do you think their results would have been different if they had studied members of your own generation (i.e., people who entered late adolescence and young adulthood in the mid- to late 1990s)? Why or why not?

3. How can the concept of “schema” or “engaged schema” be used to explain the following:

- Vera Brittain’s development of feminism and/or pacifism
- The way in which a generation’s “formative experiences” during adolescence affect its later political cognition and behavior
- The misperceptions that often occur in conflict escalation and war
- Terrorism
- Different attitudes to the 1996 welfare reform
- The variety of different popular reactions to “free trade” and “globalization”

4. Consider the following statement: “Existing arrangements of power and domination within a society [i.e., ruling-class interests, in Domhoff’s terms] are served when people accept a change in their subjective experience as a substitute for changes in their objective reality.” How could this perspective be applied to a “political” analysis of the following:

- The role of psychotherapy in treating people’s “problems”
- The function of prime-time television entertainment show
- The rise of professional sports
- Heavy marketing of alcohol, coffee, and tobacco to college students
- “Blockbuster” films such as “Titanic” or “Star Wars”
- TV talk shows such as “Jerry Springer,” “Ricki Lake,” etc.

*5. Inglehart suggested that the rise of post-materialism was primarily due to a cohort (or generational) effect. Now, almost 20 years after his article, this “post-materialism cohort” has attained political power. Discuss the role that post-materialist ideas played in recent American political and social life.

6. Drawing on the concepts and theories of this course, discuss why it is that some (but not all) people become politically active?

7. Describe the terrorist mind-set. Considering the course material about the effects of power on those who exercise it, what changes would you expect in this mind-set, in the cases when “terrorists” actually attain power?

*8. The 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City has focused public attention on the beliefs and activities of various “militia” or “patriot” fringe movements. Discuss the beliefs and actions of these movements in terms of the following concepts:

- American national character (from the children’s readers stories)
- Authoritarianism
- The terrorist mentality
- Nationalism
- Relative deprivation

*9. This course has suggested that power-leadership and affiliation-solidarity are two main dimensions of human social and political behavior. What do each of the following theorists or concepts have to say about these two dimensions?

- MacKinnon
- Weber
- Domhoff
- Ruddick
- Schmookler
- Authoritarian ideology
- “Alternative” ideologies
- Terrorist mind-set
- Relative deprivation theory (Crosby)
- People studied by Cole & Stewart and/or Settles et al., who participated in various 1960s political movements

*10. Have Americans (all Americans, American women, American men) changed in relation to the dimensions of power-leadership and affiliation-solidarity (see # 9 above) over the last 50 years? Discuss, in terms of the concept of “generation” and the data on American national character (children’s readers stories, the article by Veroff, et al., reporting the results of surveys in 1957 and 1976).

11. Weber suggested that at the top of every rational-legal bureaucracy was a leader whose legitimacy was not purely bureaucratic, but was rather in part traditional and/or charismatic:

“The basis of every authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige. . . . In the case of ‘[rational-]legal authority,’ it is never purely legal.” (p. 263)

In the case of the American political system (especially the presidency), what are these “never purely legal” beliefs? Give some ways in which these “non-rational-legal” beliefs are created, maintained, or enhanced.

*12. Does Weber’s suggestion (see # 11 above) help to explain why attempts to create a “McWorld” (Barber) seem also to create “Jihad”?