

PhD Policy Comprehensive Exam  
Spring 2007

Answer I, II, and any ONE other question:

I. Develop a research design that provides evidence on a theoretically non-trivial problem in the context of either: evaluating the impact of an ongoing public program, policy, or institutional design; comparing the impact of program, policy, or institutional design alternatives; examining cause (or causes) of policy or institutional choice by legislators, legislatures, bureaucrats or bureaus; or examining reasons for the differential implementation of policy by bureaucrats or bureaus.

Choose any policy area that you are familiar with. Discuss the theory or theories that motivate the empirical question and the statistical model. Briefly describe the program or policy alternatives, or policy decisions, that you are examining, and discuss and justify the outcome measure(s) you will use. Based on theory, what do you expect to



Table 1: Factors Affecting the Degree of Flexibility in State Charter School Laws

<u>State politics</u>	
Government Ideology (100=liberal)	-01 (.004)
Governor is Republican	-.24 (.16)
Republican % in state legislature	.0003 (.01)
Percent of public sector unionized	-.01 (.003)
<u>State context</u>	
Years since first charter law	.002 (.02)
Charter law has been revised (yes=1)	.26 (.11)
Percent school-aged children white	.005 (.004)
Percent state population in poverty	.01 (.02)
State population (actual #)	.03 (.01)
Constant	

III. a) Why do markets fail when there are externalities? What is the market and social optimum in the presence of these market failures? (Diagrams will probably help, if they are properly labeled.) In your answer, consider:

- Positive externalities of consumption
- Positive externalities of production
- Negative externalities of consumption
- Negative externalities of production

- b) Do these distinctions matter theoretically?
- c) Considering only taxes and subsidies, does it matter theoretically whether you tax unwanted behavior, or subsidize desired behavior? Does it matter theoretically whether you tax/subsidize consumers or producers? (Use diagrams to support your answer.)
- d) Considering only taxes and subsidies, does it matter politically whether you tax unwanted behavior, or subsidize desired behavior? Does it matter politically whether you tax/subsidize consumers or producers? (Use diagrams to support your answer.)
- e) How would you test one of your conjectures regarding either political or economic consequences empirically? Briefly describe a feasible research design.

IV. Citing and using relevant literature, write a mini-essay on each of the following topics:

- (a) Why democracies are efficient;
- (b) Why democracies are inefficient..

Then, describe an empirical test of these contending theories using either the American states as units of analysis, or nation-states (or a subset of nation-states) as units of analysis.

Your empirical test can be general, or it can apply to the provision of a particular type of government service (e.g., education, environmental regulation, criminal justice, social services, etc.)

V. Citing and using relevant literature, write a mini-essay on each of the following topics:

- (a) Why bureaucracies (in democracies) are efficient;
- (b) Why bureaucracies (in democracies) are inefficient..

Then, describe an empirical test of these contending theories using either the American states as units of analysis, or nation-states (or a subset of nation-states) as units of analysis.

Your empirical test can be general, or they can apply to the provision of a particular type of government service (e.g., education, environmental regulation, criminal justice, social services, etc.)