

Memo Fall 2010 Graduate Theory

TO: Students in 8106 Fall 2010 Graduate Theory
FROM: RBT
DATE: 25 October 2010
RE: First in-class exam

This memo provides some background and details on the first in-class exam.

What you are getting back

When your exam is handed back in class, on your exam you will find either circled numbers, or written comments from me, or sometimes both. The circled numbers refer to the list of issues at the end of this memo.

You also will receive a detailed scoring based on the grading rubric used for the exam.

The distribution of grades organized by TUID, and the corresponding letter grade, also appear below.

Why is the numeric score and the letter score (for many of you) so different?

There are two reasons.

1. I am trying to ask questions for the exams in this course that are **harder** than you would get in a typical course exam. That is because a major purpose of this course is, for the doctoral students, to help you think and write along the lines of what will be asked in the advanced exam for theory. The questions here are not as challenging as those you will see in those advanced exams, but they are definitely more demanding than a typical in-class exam for a course like this.
2. When I blind-graded these exams, I tried to put myself in the mode I would be in if I was grading an advanced theory exam. With the letter grades, I tried to translate back to a typical graduate course context.

What can I do if I want to understand more about my exam answers and/or my scores?

Come see me. There are extra office hours this week, although I have to start Friday's hours a tad later than usual:

Wednesday: 1:30 – 4:00
Friday: 1:30 – 3:30

If none of these times work, call me, and we can set up a time.

What if I come talk to you and I think my exam was not graded fairly?

There is a re-grading policy. See the syllabus. I make absolutely no pretense to being a completely fair, unbiased and consistent grader. You should feel that you have a right to submit for re-grading.

NUMBERED POINTS THAT MAY APPEAR ON YOUR EXAM

1. Q1. A stronger answer would have more clearly separated the different levels of restraint/opportunism dynamics. At the least intra-institutional and between-institutional restraints/norms would have been separated from government-based regulatory structures.
2. Q1. This take on prevention seems to miss the macro-level **inherent** oscillation in the Polanyi cycles; “many of the most profound examples of regulatory action seem to coincide with major breaks in the market, precipitous drops and crashes” (181). Or p. 185 “As much as extremes of self interest may be inhibited, the logic of the market suggests that they will be back ... there is no optimal point, only contradictory forces that are in a constantly moving disequilibrium.” Implies that long term effective prevention is impossible. This is key to economic sociological perspective.
3. Q2. A stronger answer would have described more carefully the relationships in IAT between the four institutions (economy, family, education, political).
4. Q2. This answer captures some of the cultural facets of IAT but seems to overlook the role of structural factors. A stronger answer would have considered both. IAT assumes that structure and culture affect crime.
5. Q2. A stronger answer would have considered how structure (at what level is not clear) can modify culture, which is permitted by M&R’s IAT.
6. Q2. Ok. But rather than create a micro-macro link you could develop sociological dynamics but at a different level (meso-level inputs → meso-level outputs).
7. Q2. It is not clear that P&K have evidence about macro→ micro links; rather, the sociological reasoning sees macro (city) dynamics and meso (community) dynamics; this is the sociological perspective, distinguished from the methodological individualism implied by a discussion of macro→micro links
8. Q2. A stronger answer would have talked more about **differentials** in sufficiency of empirical support between P&K vs. M&R.
9. Q2. A stronger answer would have highlighted that whereas M&R’s model has both structure and culture, P&K’s model has no culture.
10. Q4. Question asks about gangs. A stronger answer would have kept the focus on gang presence, not the broader more diffuse concept of criminality.
11. Q4. A stronger answer would have highlighted the lucrative drug selling market and proximity to a high volume of drug using customers.
12. Q1. It is the markets in which Enron participated that are characterized by the restraint/opportunism Polanyi cycles. The answer seems to suggest that the P. cycles are at the institutional level.
13. Q1. The cycles oscillate over a long period.
14. Q2. A stronger answer would have highlighted the culture/structural interplay.
15. Q2. Perhaps this is too harsh about M&R’s prevention solutions. They do provide specifics, and they generally do address institutional rebalancing.
16. Q2. A stronger answer would have more explicitly stated which perspective was being chosen.
17. Q2. A stronger answer, after reviewing ALL the benefits/drawbacks of P&K vs. M&R would have said, given all that, why the writer was tilted toward one rather than another.
18. Q2. Theory addresses not individual race, but rather impacts/correlates of racial composition of neighborhoods.

19. Q2. What P&K are doing by invoking concepts like social disorganization is suggesting what collective dynamics might be set into motion by the structural variables they discuss. If this term (SD) is mentioned, a strong answer would point out that a) this is only one of several possible mechanisms that might transmit impacts of structure and b) there are no empirical indicators directly capturing SD dynamics.
20. Q1. There seems to be some confusion between mark-to-market, which although “gray” accounting, was not blatantly illegal. More illegal was moving profits/expenses off book into into/out of shell corporations to hide/shift profits/losses across quarters.
21. Q1. A stronger answer would have provided more specifics about increasing regulation, e.g., Sarbanes-Oxley.
22. Q2. A stronger answer would have made it explicitly clear that P&K are focused on crime rates **at the community level** and in **large cities**.
23. Q3. A stronger answer would have been more specific about the concept cited as relevant, and clearer about the specific ways in which it is relevant.
24. Q2. A stronger answer would have clarified the types of modifications needed for M&R’s IAT to conform it to community level urban violence rates.
25. Q2. A stronger answer would have made clearer the ways specific M&R evidence (decommodification, family leave) was or was not relevant to the outcome under consideration.
26. Q4. Answer at this point appears to be veering into the consequences of the gang presence rather than the factors that facilitated its emergence at that location.
27. Q2. A stronger answer would have provided considerable detail about how P&K’s analysis and results help us understand the causes “behind” the community violent crime differences by racial composition.
28. Q1. Even though individuals figured prominently in and are essential to opportunistic/overly aggressive trading behavior and financial behavior, a key idea in the econ socy perspective is that the key drivers are macro-structural dynamics emerging from market structure, history, and current broad societal/economic trends.
29. Q1. The Polanyi cycles are not about the overall economy, rather they are more specific about the behaviors of particular markets. This also seems to be missing the point about how markets are socially constructed.
30. Q1. It is hard to delineate the specific factors within the markets where Enron was involved that precipitated their demise. Market shift from bull to bear, investigative articles, short sellers becoming active, and so on. The factors that affected their demise were in part but not completely institution specific, because other corporations at roughly the same time also were imploding, but part of broader market dynamics, according to the sociological perspective.
31. Q2. It is not so much that P&K disregard impacts of structure on culture; they do incorporate it when they talk about various dynamics, like social disorganization, that economic deprivation can set in motion. So they are conceptually aware. It is just that they have no indicators.
32. Q2. A stronger answer would have recognized that although P&K *generally* were trying to explain urban community violent crime rate differences, their specific focus was on the factors relevant to violent crime differentials between mostly white vs. mostly African American communities.

TUid	FIRST EXAM		
	Number	Range	Letter
907389420	78	93-83	A
908552139	71.5	80-78	A-
909391024	88.5	72-66	B+
909832299	66	53	B-
910129247	79	44	C
910134376	66		
912068924	83		
912533584	79.5		
912563481	93		
912906574	84.5		
912966568	44		
912973901	80		
912980917	70		
912988405	86		
913014366	70		
913017402	66		
913018674	53		
913023991	71		