

Eco/Afs 371: Political Economy of Africa  
Princeton University, Spring 2005  
Professors Steve O'Connell  
**FINAL EXAMINATION**

The bulk of the exam (Section 1) consists of 3 essays designed to take a half-hour each. Section 2 contains a mandatory but short fourth question. The entire exam should take 2 hours or less, although you have 3 to complete it. *Please write your name only on the outside of your exam booklet(s), not inside.*

**SECTION 1: Answer 3 of the 4 questions in this section (30 points each = 90 points).**

1. Collier and O'Connell (2005) state that "Growth depends on the interaction of opportunities and choices." On the opportunities dimension, they distinguish (a) coastal, resource-poor economies, (b) landlocked, resource-poor economies, and (c) resource-rich economies. Choose any two of these three opportunity groups. What is the analytical and/or empirical basis for grouping economies in this way? How important is the distinction for understanding actual African growth experience since independence? (Your answer should refer substantially to at least 1 country in each of your 2 groups.)
2. Bates (1981) remains a central reference point for much of the literature on the political economy of economic policy in Africa. What are Bates's central claims about economic policy formation in Sub-Saharan Africa? How have Bates's arguments fared in light of subsequent country experience and research?
3. In "Ending Africa's Poverty Trap," (Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, 2005), Jeffrey Sachs proposes both an explanation and a solution to the problem of long-run stagnation of living standards in Sub-Saharan Africa. The solution is a doubling or tripling of aid (at minimum) to well-governed African countries. Assess Sachs's argument, drawing on your knowledge of the broader literature and country experience.
4. Political leaders and researchers viewed the achievement of national unity as a serious challenge for many African countries around the time of independence. How much weight do you give to this factor in your assessment of African economic performance since 1960? Be explicit about why, how, and where this problem matters for economic performance.

**SECTION 2: Mandatory question (10 points). Full credit for a thoughtful paragraph, regardless of how critical.**

5. Briefly apply the "eureka!" test—invented for this exam—to this seminar. Here is the test: In light of your intellectual background in the social sciences (e.g., your other courses in economics, political science, history, sociology, anthropology, demography, ...), was there a moment during this semester when you saw something in a completely new light, or made a connection that reshaped or undermined something you thought you already knew? If so, what was the substance of your insight? If not, why not?