

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

This is an essay exam. Please choose 3 questions from among the 4 listed below. A good essay exhibits a combination of analytical coherence (drawing on analytical frameworks developed in the readings and/or lectures) and concreteness (making reference to actual country experience). In other words: what are the important ideas, and how does actual experience illustrate/refine/support/critique them?

1. Nigeria came to independence as an uneasy federation of three regions. More than 40 years after independence, ethno-regional tensions continue to dominate political discourse and, Suberu tells us, to divert the economy's resources from production to distributive struggle. How have Nigerian governments attempted to handle these tensions? What accounts for their continued salience in spite of such efforts? If either Suberu or you (your choice) could institute one important constitutional or policy reform with a view to improving Nigeria's economic performance over the next decade, what would it be and why?
2. Robert Bates argued in 1981 that African governments had greater autonomy from domestic political institutions and foreign pressures than many previous analysts had assumed, and that he could account for some of the dominant patterns in policy affecting the agricultural sector by appealing to the self-interested behavior of political elites. What patterns was Bates seeking to explain, and what are his main insights? Identify and discuss one limitation of this approach as a theory of economic policy (e.g., a puzzle it seems incapable of explaining; a critical influence it leaves out; etc.).
3. Adrian Wood and Paul Collier take different views of what has fundamentally held back the emergence of manufactured exports in Africa in the period since independence. What are the main arguments of each writer, and what is the crux of their disagreement? Does your study of the political economy of economic policy in Africa lead you into greater sympathy with one or the other of these views? In your answer, ignore "resource-rich" economies whose dominant exports are oil or minerals.
4. Nicolas van de Walle argues that African economies are characterized by "permanent crisis," a condition that has proven resistant both to economic reforms and to democratization. What does he mean? In what important respects do his arguments differ from those of Bates? What is your own view: will van de Walle be able to write the same book in 10 years?