George Mason University  
School of Public Policy  
Doctoral Qualifying Examination, Part I (in-class exam)  

May 30, 2009  
9 am – 12 noon  

Instructions  
The following questions draw exclusively from:  


Answer each question in order, but first read through all questions to avoid redundancies in your answers. Answer each question completely, being both definitive and concise as appropriate to fully communicate your answer; do not repeat information given in a prior answer. You should not quote passages from the article; use your own words. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to answer all six questions (consider their point values).  

You have been assigned a tracking number by the Doctoral Office. Put the tracking number on the printed exam/bluebook, notes, and on the outside of the exam envelope. Do not put your name on the envelope or any materials in the envelope.  

Examination Questions  

1. What are the goals of this research article? What specific research question(s) are the authors trying to answer? (10 points)  

2. Identify the primary dependent and independent variables used in the study. What is the causal mechanism of key interest in the paper? (10 points)  

3. Describe (a) the data, (b) the unit of analysis and (c) the general methodology used to test the major research questions (you do NOT need to comment on the specific technique of zero-inflated Poisson regression; you may discuss the methodology as if it were simply a form of multiple regression). Comment on strengths and weaknesses as appropriate (your own opinions). What problems do you see in the data used in the study? (25 points)  

TURN OVER→→→
4. The following questions refer to Table 3 (page 363) and the results of the insurance regulation regression analysis (20 points):

   a. Most of the coefficients are shown to be significant at the 0.05 level. For which relationships do they find the relationship fails to be significant at this level?
   b. Which factor do Ruhil and Teske find had a greater impact on the number of financial exams conducted: the presence of elected commissioners or divided government?
   c. In the footnotes to Table 3, the authors report that coefficients for temporal dummy variables (1988-1997) are not reported. What function are these variables performing in the regression?

5. The following questions refer to Table 4 (page 365). (20 points):

   a. What is the key difference between the hypotheses tested in tables 3 and 4? How are they related?
   b. Describe how the two columns in Table 4 differ.
   c. What is the interaction term “elected commissioner*divided government” meant to test by its inclusion as an independent variable?
   d. The coefficient for the influence of state insurance carriers is negative. Explain what the negative coefficient implies. What are possible interpretations of the negative coefficient?

6. What are the authors’ major conclusions? Evaluate the extent to which the authors’ conclusions are warranted by their data and analyses. (15 points)