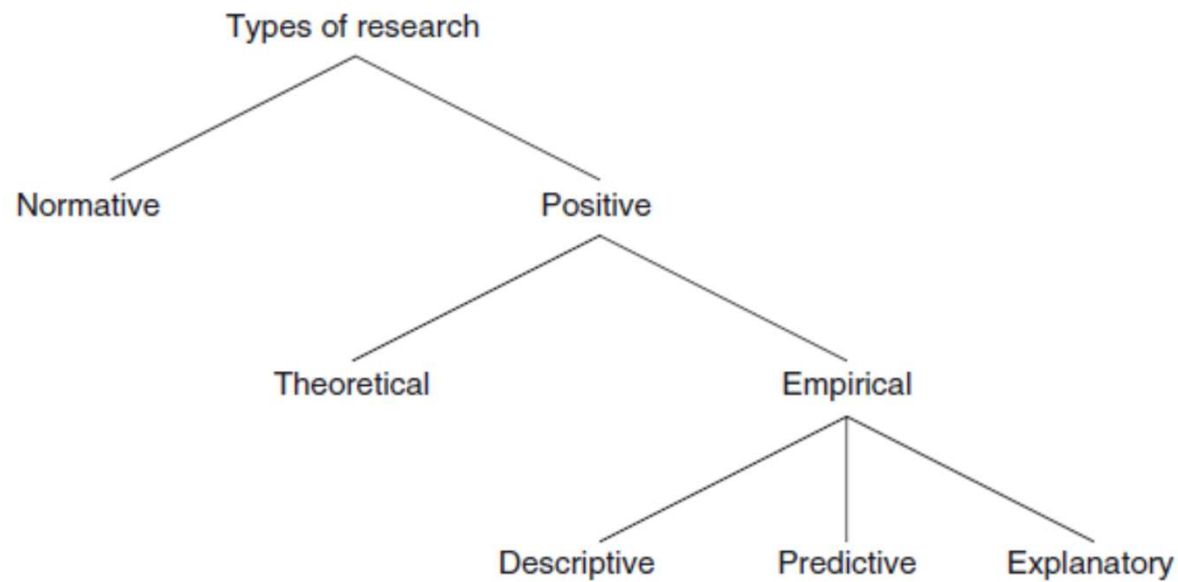




Research Questions

Doing Political Research

Figure 2.3 *A taxonomy of major types of research in political science research*



Types of
Political
Research
(Toshkov)

Normative vs Positive Research



- Normative: what the world should be
 - Often called 'political theory' or 'political philosophy'
 - Which electoral system is the fairest?
- Positive: what the world is
 - What this module focuses on
 - How do different electoral systems affect who gets elected?
- Can these be separated?
 - Critical theorists: objectivity is not possible
 - Social action research: social change should be the goal of all research

Theoretical vs Empirical Research



- Theoretical research
 - Establishing relationships between concepts: a set of internally consistent propositions
 - May or may not be testable in the real world
 - For example, game theoretic research on nuclear escalation
- Empirical research
 - Use of qualitative and/or quantitative data to analyse political phenomena
- Most research projects combine both, but purely theoretical research is possible without being normative

Types of Empirical Research



- Description
 - collection of facts relevant to building or testing a theory
 - finding associations between variables
 - classification and generating typologies
- Explanation
 - attempt to answer 'how' and 'why' questions
 - establishing causal relationships
 - can be complete/partial, general/specific
- Key goal for both is *inference*: making valid statements about a larger process/phenomenon/group while observing only a part



Developing Research Questions

- Starting point for research (but see Bryman)
 - Two parts: Topic > Question
 - Topic: personal interest, current news, gaps in the literature, importance for policy-making, puzzle
 - Question: normative vs positive, descriptive vs explanatory, big vs small, general vs particular
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My Research Questions

- What effects do legacy unions have on labour politics in new democracies?
- How do migrants' remittances affect the likelihood of democratisation in authoritarian regimes?
- To what extent does corruption drive emigration?

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

State-sponsored trade unions after democratic transitions

Daniel Fedorowycz , Malu A. C. Gatto  and Barry Maydom 

^aJackson Institute for Global Affairs, Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA; ^bInstitute of the Americas, University College London, London, UK; ^cDepartment of Politics, Birkbeck College, University of London, London, UK

ABSTRACT

New democracies inherit a variety of institutions from prior authoritarian regimes, including political parties, militaries and entrenched oligarchies. While these authoritarian legacies have generally been well-researched, one set of institutions has received relatively little attention: state-backed trade unions that lose official sponsorship after democratizing transitions. In most new democracies and competitive authoritarian regimes, these "legacy unions" have remained the dominant workers' organizations despite few internal reforms. Previous research on the causes and consequences of legacy union dominance has rested on case studies of post-transition countries and small-N comparisons. In this article, we offer a global perspective on the fates of legacy unions by introducing new data about the relative importance of legacy unions in post-Third Wave democracies. We show that most legacy unions survive democratic transitions and remain dominant in new democracies, although with significant regional variation. Our data and analyses suggest that these trade unions are authoritarian legacies which continue to influence labour politics in new democracies. Dominant legacy unions are associated with lower labour movement fragmentation and better-protected labour rights in new democracies.

Research Article

Migrants' Remittances, the Fiscal Contract and Tax Attitudes in Africa and Latin America

Ana Isabel López García  and Barry Maydom 

Abstract

How does the receipt of remittances shape recipients' attitudes towards taxation? We argue that remittances are likely to reduce support for the fiscal contract of taxes in exchange for public services because recipients rely less on the national economy and the state for their well-being. Remittance recipients can use the money sent by friends or family overseas to obtain public services in the private market instead of, or in addition to, tax-funded welfare services. In doing so, remittance recipients become detached from the national political community and develop a transactional relationship with the state whereby they pay license fees, taxes and bribes to protect investment goods procured with remittances, making them less willing to support general taxation and more likely to approve of tax evasion and avoidance. We find strong support for our theory in analysis of survey data from Africa and Latin America. Our article contributes to knowledge of the micro-foundations of the fiscal contract and the political-economic effects of emigration and remittance on migrants' households.

Migrant Remittances and Violent Responses to Crime in Latin America and the Caribbean

Ana Isabel López García
Barry Maydom

ABSTRACT

High levels of crime are a key driver of emigration from Latin America and the Caribbean. But can emigration change public opinion about how best to respond to crime? Focusing on the political economy of remittances—the money migrants send to their families and communities—this study argues that emigration can increase support for violent responses to crime. Migrants' families often spend remittances on investment goods, which makes them more vulnerable to crime and more supportive of violence to protect themselves. An analysis of AmericasBarometer data finds that remittance recipients are more likely both to fear crime and to be victims of crime than nonrecipients. They are also more approving of vigilantism, more tolerant of police bending the law to apprehend criminals, and more supportive of deploying the military in crime fighting. These findings contribute to our knowledge of the consequences of international migration for political development in migrant-sending countries.

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OPEN ACCESS

Remittances, criminal violence and voter turnout

Ana Isabel López García  and Barry Maydom 

^aGIGA Institut für Lateinamerika-Studien, Hamburg, Germany; ^bDepartment of Politics, Birkbeck, University of London, London, UK

ABSTRACT

How do financial remittances influence electoral participation in violent democracies? Previous work has focused on the 'substitution effect': if recipients depend on remittances for welfare rather than the state, they become disengaged from formal political processes and less likely to vote in elections. However, while remittances can be used to substitute for state provision of welfare goods, they cannot fully substitute for public security. In this paper, we posit that the ability of governments to contain crime and violence conditions the effect of remittances on electoral participation. Specifically, we argue that high levels of crime can negate the substitution effect and make remittance recipients more likely to vote. Using municipality-level data from Mexico and individual-level data from Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, we find that both the receipt of remittances and crime exposure significantly reduce individuals' propensity to vote and that aggregate remittances and crime rates are correlated with lower turnout. Remittances can, however, negate the turnout-suppressing effects of crime, and crime can negate the turnout-suppressing effects of remittances. Our results suggest a need to account for government provision of both substitutable and non-substitutable goods when investigating the effects of remittances on political participation.

KEYWORDS
Political participation;
turnout; remittances; crime;
violence



Good Questions

- No hard rules!
 - Clear, understandable and answerable
 - Includes the key concepts
 - Not loaded (but can include a puzzle)
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