

MY410 Week 5 Seminar

Chao-Yo Cheng

Systematic review and meta-analysis



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The Impact of Microfinance in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Systematic Review of the Evidence

C. van Rooyen, R. Stewart, T. de Wet

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2012.03.012>

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Summary

Microfinance is seen as a key development tool, and despite the current deepening crisis within the industry, it continues to grow in sub-Saharan Africa. We systematically reviewed the evidence of the impacts of micro-credit and micro-savings on poor people in sub-Saharan Africa. We considered impacts on income, savings, expenditure, and the accumulation of assets, as well as non-financial outcomes including health, nutrition, food security, education, child labor, women's empowerment, housing, job creation, and social cohesion. The available evidence shows that microfinance does harm, as well as good, to the livelihoods of the poor.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2012.03.012>

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Article | [Published: 30 March 2020](#)

Systematic review and meta-analysis investigating moderators of long-term effects of exercise on cognition in healthy individuals

[Sebastian Ludyga](#) , [Markus Gerber](#), [Uwe Pühse](#), [Vera N. Looser](#) & [Keita Kamijo](#)

Nature Human Behaviour **4**, 603–612 (2020) | [Cite this article](#)

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Abstract

As cognitive function is linked with academic achievement, career success and mental health, there is a need to understand how the cognitive benefits of long-term exercise can be optimized. Our meta-regression included 80 randomized controlled trials and examined moderators of the effects of exercise on cognition in healthy individuals. The summary effect was small and did not differ between cognitive domains. Higher benefits of exercise on cognitive function were found after coordinative exercise compared with other exercise types. With longer intervention length, the effect size increased with longer session duration. Exercise was less effective in female compared with male individuals, and the dose–response relationship differed between sexes. Our findings suggest a general rather than domain-specific effect of exercise on cognition, which is influenced by sex, exercise type and reciprocal relationships between dose parameters. We derive sex-specific recommendations on how cognitive benefits can be optimized by exercise intensity, its progression and exercise type.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-020-0851-8>

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Article contents

- Abstract
- A Narrative Review of Three Key Debates
- Quantitative Analysis
- Conclusion
- Supplementary Materials
- Footnotes
- References

Economic Inequality and Political Responsiveness: A Systematic Review

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 11 October 2021

Mads Andreas Elkjær  and Michael Baggesen Klitgaard 

Article

Figures Supplementary materials Metrics



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Abstract

Do political outcomes respond more strongly to the preferences of the rich? In an age of rising inequality, this question has become increasingly salient. Yet, although an influential literature has emerged, no systematic account exists either of the severity of differentials in political responsiveness, the potential drivers of those differentials, or the variation across democracies. This article fills that gap. We analyze 1,163 estimates of responsiveness from 25 studies and find that, although this research collectively suggests that political outcomes better reflect the preferences of the rich, results vary considerably across models and studies. The divergence in results is partly driven by partisanship and the model specification, while we find no significant variation across either policy domains or general/specific measures of political outcomes. Finally, and against theoretical expectations, published research suggests that differentials in responsiveness are weaker in the United States compared to other developed democracies. The article contributes to our understanding of differential responsiveness by clarifying the main debates and findings in the literature, identifying issues and gaps, and pointing to fruitful avenues for future research.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592721002188>

Systematic review and meta-analysis

- ▶ Evans, David, and Sanna Popova. 2015. "How Systematic Is That Systematic Review? The Case of Improving Learning Outcomes." *Development Impact*.
<https://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/how-systematic-systematic-review-case-improving-learning-outcomes> (10 December, 2021)
- ▶ Waddington, Hugh, Edoardo Masset, and Emmanuel Jimenez. 2018. "What Have We Learned After Ten Years of Systematic Reviews in International Development?" *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 10(1): 1-16.

What we have done so far

- ▶ How to formulate research question(s).
- ▶ How theory and data (both quantitative and qualitative) speak to each other. For instance,
 - You can use your observations to *evaluate* a theory (i.e., generate empirical implications based on the theory and test them with your observations).
 - You can use your observations to *challenge* a theory.
 - You can use your observations to *develop* a theory.
- ▶ How to ensure rigor in research: Question-theory-empirics alignment and bias management (etc).

Aims for this week

- ▶ Develop your ideas for your topic, literature and research question for your formative assignment (and eventually your summative assignments perhaps) through discussion and feedback from your peers.
- ▶ Develop your skills in articulating a good literature review and research question by providing feedback on your peers' plans.
- ▶ Develop your skills in identifying and articulating methodological critiques (identifying limitations) of different research designs.

The formative assignment: An overview

- ▶ Main task: Building a research question from a literature review.
- ▶ Format: 1 page (max 500 words), incorporating:
 - References for 3 related, **empirical** articles
 - 1 paragraph introducing the topic
 - 1 paragraph outlining and critiquing the research designs, setting the background for:
 - A research question
- ▶ Due: 4pm Thursday 4 November 2021 (MT week 6)
- ▶ Full instructions on Moodle (<https://moodle.lse.ac.uk/>)

Feedback will be provided based on

- ▶ The scope of the topic – is it too broad, or just about right?
- ▶ The selection of articles – are they appropriate for the annotated bibliography?
- ▶ Your preliminary assessment/critique of the pieces and their research designs
- ▶ Your research question
- ▶ General style, prose

From articles to question(s): Identifying the gaps

As you scope the literature, you may notice that a particular research design may have one or more of the following elements:

- ▶ Theoretical/empirical tensions or contradictions between the papers;
- ▶ Different or alternative theoretical perspectives;
- ▶ Different methodological approach (e.g., build on more inductive work to propose some hypothesis-testing deductive approach);
- ▶ Extension to new context (e.g., different region, time period);
- ▶ Something left unexplored (e.g., critical element not engaged with, need to consider other conditions);
- ▶ Something left untested;
- ▶ ... and more.

Peer feedback activity

- ▶ Phase 1: Discuss your drafts in pairs
 - Exchange your written plans with your neighbor(s).
 - Read over your peers' plans, note questions/ constructive feedback.
 - Verbally explain your plan to your peer; peer asks questions and gives feedback.
 - Switch!
- ▶ Phase 2: Join groups
 - Briefly introduce your draft.
 - Discuss how the feedback changes your original plan.
 - Come up with a list of common issues and how to address them.
- ▶ Phase 3: Plenary discussion – discuss the topic, the research question, the most useful feedback, and any lingering uncertainties, etc.

Things you should consider

► The topic

- Is it clear what common topic is being addressed?
- Is there a specific focus – or is the topic very broad or vaguely defined?

► Research design(s)

- Are the research designs identified?
- Are limitations of the approach appropriately identified?
- Is there methodological diversity or not? (and what are the implications?)

► Research question(s)

- Does the question identify a specific setting/case/location/group?
- Does the question speak to a social science concern?
- Is the question sufficiently clear to be feasible and tractable?

Post-seminar notes: Requirements

- ▶ Your formative assignment will be a short essay of three paragraphs.
- ▶ Your formative assignment should not exceed 500 words. There is no required min.
- ▶ Your formative assignment should include a reference list; the list is not included in the 500-word limit.

Post-seminar notes: Topic

- ▶ Justify your topic (using additional references if necessary).
- ▶ If your topic is too broad, you can narrow it down by specifying the contexts of interest (e.g., a particular region or time period) – your choice of the scope condition may depend on the gap in the literature, your interests, and whether the resources are available – or by defining the concept of your interest (e.g., gender justice or women empowerment).
- ▶ There is no golden rule, so do your best to explain yourself. Keep in mind that it is not a test.

Post-seminar notes: Article selection

- ▶ For the formative assignment (as well as the annotated bibliography), choose three empirical articles – they can employ a variety of research methods to collect and analyze data and use the data to speak to the theory in different ways. You can review studies that use similar or different methods.
- ▶ Do not use *literature review* (for the formative assignment and annotated bibliography), but you can include *systematic review* and/or meta-analysis as one of the three empirical articles.
- ▶ Use your topic/question to guide the search for articles – one thing you can do, for instance, is to consider how the particular political events and socio-economic phenomena of your interest speak to one or more general social science questions (and use the general questions to search for additional references).

Post-seminar notes: Reviewing the articles

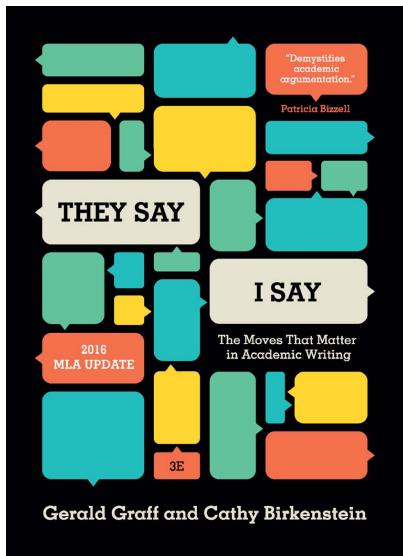
- ▶ Discuss the limitations of each article so as to identify the gaps; ask yourself – "Given that this is what others have done, what question(s) can I pursue in my dissertation?"
- ▶ The discussion by no means tries to completely invalidate other scholars' contribution (unless you spot some serious flaws); you are just using their work to motivate your research questions by identifying some gaps that you'd like to fill in.

Post-seminar notes: Proposing your research questions

- ▶ Be clear and concise and reasonable in terms of the scope (it is one of the possible ways to show the RQs are tractable at this moment).
- ▶ When it comes to the research proposal, then you need to use your research design to further justify the feasibility of your RQs.

Additional references

- ▶ *"They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* by Cathy Birkenstein and Gerald Graff – consult it to learn more about literature view.
- ▶ *Annual Reviews* (<https://www.annualreviews.org/>) – a place where you can learn more about
 - the current literature with respect to your topic/subject;
 - questions that remain unsolved with respect to your topic/subject;
 - examples of good literature reviews.



BRIEF CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION xiii

PREFACE: Demystifying Academic Conversation xvi

INTRODUCTION: Entering the Conversation 1

PART 1. "THEY SAY"

1 "THEY SAY": Starting with What Others Are Saying 19

2 "HER POINT IS": The Art of Summarizing 30

3 "AS HE HIMSELF PUTS IT": The Art of Quoting 42

PART 2. "I SAY"

4 "YES / NO / OKAY, BUT": Three Ways to Respond 55

5 "AND YET": Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say 68

6 "SKEPTICS MAY OBJECT": Planting a Naysayer in Your Text 78

7 "SO WHAT? WHO CARES?": Saying Why It Matters 92

PART 3. TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

8 "AS A RESULT": Connecting the Parts 105

9 "AIN'T SO / IS NOT": Academic Writing Doesn't Always Mean Setting Aside Your Own Voice 121

10 "BUT DON'T GET ME WRONG": The Art of Metacommentary 129

11 "HE SAYS CONTENTS": Using the Templates to Revise 139

PART 4. IN SPECIFIC ACADEMIC CONTEXTS

12 "I TAKE YOUR POINT": Entering Class Discussions 163

13 "IMHO": Is Digital Communication Good or Bad—or Both? 167

14 "WHAT'S MOTIVATING THIS WRITER?": Reading for the Conversation 173

15 "ON CLOSER EXAMINATION": Entering Conversations about Literature 184

16 "THE DATA SUGGEST": Writing in the Sciences 202

17 "ANALYZE THIS": Writing in the Social Sciences 221

READINGS 239

INDEX OF TEMPLATES 293