

**Some potential topics for research papers
(Not always posed as researchable questions)**

General topics in political science

The survival of democracy in former British territories

Explaining the extension of full “citizenship” to women (globally, across U.S. states, etc.)

Explaining the contraction, expansion, and collapse of the Roman Empire

Testing *What’s the matter with Kansas?*: Do people vote their pocketbooks or their values?

The development of the “rule of law” in pre-modern China and Korea

The development of constitutionalism in classical Greece

What causes “rally-around-the-flag” effects in the United States?

Changing styles of candidate discourse in Mexican political campaigns

How do Americans think about social justice? Are they “Rawlsians” or “Utilitarians”?
(Results of focus groups)

The impact of U.S. military occupation on prospects for democracy in ____

The management of ethnic tension in Belgium

When are international “capabilities” perceived as more or less threatening?

“Who governs”, in Cambridge

Political barriers to the diffusion of the moveable type (a.k.a., the printing press)

Predicting the size of militaries (from topography, external borders, country size, etc.)

Testing *Guns, Germs, and Steel*: What is the relationship between the availability of cultivable plants, domesticable animals, and the rise of complex societies?

The distributional consequences of bank bailout packages in Mexico, Japan, the U.S., Korea, Chile, Czech Republic, Russia, etc.

The impact of natural disasters on political legitimacy. Examples might include: Nicaragua (1970s), El Salvador (early 1980s), Mexico (1985), Pakistan (2005), Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. (2005) etc.

The effects of shorter “sound bites” in U.S. presidential campaigns on audience recall

The role of the Holy Inquisition in Spanish state-building

Does newspaper ownership affect political coverage in _____?

A comparison of the Tiananmen Square massacre in China (1989), the Kwangju Massacre in Korea (1980), the Tlatelolco Massacre in Mexico (1968), the Boston Massacre in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (1770), etc.

Why ethnic politics have become more prominent in some parts of Latin America

The consolidation of one-party, white rule in the American South, 1865-1890.

Topics related to regime change

The consolidation of dynastic imperial rule in the Eastern Roman Empire, beginning with Constantine

The fall of Slobodan Milosevic in Yugoslavia, October 2000

The survival of democracy in interwar Czechoslovakia

A comparison of the failure of the Kornilov coup in Russia (1917) to the success of the de la Huerta coup in Mexico (1911)

The Glorious Revolution in England, 1688-89 (deposition of James II and installment of William III and Mary II)

The failure of the Newburgh conspiracy in the United States in 1783

The consolidation of revolutionary theocratic rule in Iran, 1979-81

The 1974 fall of Haile Selassie (King of Kings, Elect of God, Lion of Judah, His Most Puissant Majesty and Distinguished Highness the Emperor of Ethiopia, etc.)

The fall of Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia, 1987

The repudiation of partial parliamentary rule and consolidation of monarchical absolutism in Morocco, 1963-1965

The Libyan “revolution” (read: coup), September 1969

The establishment of the Libyan Jamahiriya under Muammar al Qadhafi, 1973-79

Ethnic conflict and democratic breakdown in Fiji, 2000

Ethnic polarization and the partial breakdown of democracy in Sri Lanka

The breakdown of democracy and the eruption of civil war in Lebanon, 1975

The consolidation of personalistic dictatorship under Syngman Rhee in South Korea, 1948-60

The collapse of the Fourth Republic and the establishment of the Fifth Republic in France, 1958

Some past paper topics

Testing the “clash of civilizations”: Do cultural differences affect the likelihood or intensity of inter-state conflict?

Leadership succession mechanisms and political stability in the Roman Empire and Merovingian Gaul

The effects of economic conditions (as measured by changes in average annual rainfall) on political freedom in sub-Saharan Africa

The role of national identity in Estonian re-democratization (with extensions to other post-Communist countries)

The consequences for partisan fragmentation of direct election of the prime minister in Israel

The impact of political freedom on official responses to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa

Modernization, political mobilization, and State of Emergency in India

The role of leadership in regime transition: Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe

Ethnic fragmentation and political instability in Afghanistan

The effect of electoral rules on public satisfaction with democracy in the developed world

Legitimacy and the survival of leaders in the Roman Empire