Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods

1. Experimental
   • Ansolabehere & Iyengar
   • Susan Hyde: electoral observation
   • Gerber & Green: turnout in U.S. elections

2. “Natural Experiments”
   • Krosnick: Ohio ballot order
   • Rainfall and conflict in Africa
   • Strömberg: U.S. radio
   • Broadcasting range (various)

3. Thought experiments
   • Krehbiel, Tsebelis: veto players
   • Downs: party positions
   • Chandra: electoral institutions in multiethnic societies

4. Case study
   • Abernethy: imperialism
   • Allison: missile crisis
   • de Soto: informality

5. Systematic comparison
   • Lipset: US vs. Canada
   • Art: Germany vs. Austria (MSS)
   • Tocqueville: USA (internal comparisons)

6. Cross-sectional analysis

7. Time series
   • ANES, etc. (minimal consistency)

Ability to infer causality

N<30

1>N>30

N=1

N=0

Ability to generalize (inverse scale)

Hybrids: Putnam combines natural experiment, etc.
O’Donnell combines cross-sectional in L.A., paired comparison (Ar. / Ur.), case study (Brazil)
Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods

1. Experimental
   • Ansolabehere & Iyengar: lab experiments on American voters exposed to negative advertising
   • Susan Hyde: electoral observation in semi-democratic or democratizing political systems; random assignment of some of the electoral observers
   • Gerber & Green: turnout in U.S. elections

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Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Shanto Iyengar. Going Negative: How Political Advertisements Shrink & Polarize the Electorate. Free Press, 1997. © Free Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." American Political Science Review 94, no. 3 (2000): 653–63. © Cambridge University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

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1. Experimental

2. “Natural Experiments”
   - Kroscnick: Ohio ballot order
   - Rainfall and conflict (Africa)
   - Broadcasting ranges (various)
   - Strömberg: U.S. radio

Miguel, Edward, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti. "Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach." © Edward Miguel, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see [https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/](https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/).

Enikolopov, Ruben, Maria Petrova, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. "Media and Political Persuasion: Evidence from Russia." American Economic Review 101 (2011): 3253–85. © American Economic Association. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see [https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/](https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/).
Natural experiments using broadcasting ranges (e.g., Moehler)
Strömberg: Radio and relief

The problem with claim that radio predicts turnout?

Strömberg’s solution: Ground conductivity
Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods: thought experiments (Downs)

3. Thought experiments

- Hoteling, Downs, Shepsle: party positions
- Krehbiel, Tsebelis: veto players
- Chandra: electoral institutions in multiethnic societies
Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods: thought experiments (Downs)

3. Thought experiments
   - Hoteling, Downs, Shepsle: party positions
   - Krehbiel, Tsebelis: veto players
   - Chandra: electoral institutions in multiethnic societies

"Arise, ye workers from your slumber..."
"The people's flag is deepest red..."
"Dear Land of Hope, thy hope is crowned, God make thee mightier yet!..."
Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods:

3. Thought experiments
   - Hoteling, Downs, Shepsle: party positions
   - Krehbiel, Tsebelis: veto players
   - Chandra: electoral institutions in multiethnic societies
Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods.
Thought experiments: Veto players

Scenario A: President is a centrist

Scenario B: President is a leftist

Scenario C: President is a rightist
## Though Experiment: Chandra’s combinatorics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minority % of population</th>
<th>Electoral system</th>
<th>Percent disenfranchised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Winner-take-all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Winner-take-all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country 3</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Winner-take-all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country 4</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>Winner-take-all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country 5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country 6</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country 7</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bad combination: minority is big percentage of the population + institutions are non-proportional
Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods

Abernathy, David B. The Dynamic of Global Dominance: European Overseas Empires, 1415–1980. Yale University Press, 2002. © Yale University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

Allison, Graham T. Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. Little Brown, 1971. © Little Brown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

de Soto, Hernando. El Otro Sendero. Instituto Libertad y Democracia, 1990. © Instituto Libertad y Democracia. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

4. Case study

- Abernethy: imperialism
- Allison: missile crisis
- de Soto: informality
Example of a case study: informal economies in Lima
Administrative requirements for adjudication of state-owned land

Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods

Lipset, Seymour Martin. *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada*. Routledge, 1990. © Routledge. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

5. Systematic comparison

- Lipset: US vs. Canada
- Art: Germany vs. Austria
- Tocqueville: USA (1831-2)

Art, David. *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. © Cambridge University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.
Tocqueville uses international comparisons to assess effect of culture on democracy in the U.S.
He also uses internal comparisons to assess effect of culture on democracy in the U.S.

The U.S. in 1830
Excellent research in political science has been done with all these methods

7. Time series

6. Cross-sectional analysis
Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, et al. The American Voter: An Abridgment. Wiley, 1967. © Wiley. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

Example: minimalism
• Minimal knowledge
• Minimal concept recognition
• Minimal consistency
• Minimal constraint

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, et al. The American Voter Revisited. University of Michigan Press, 2008. © University of Michigan Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

Shenkman, Rick. Just How Stupid Are We?: Facing the Truth About the American Voter. Basic Books, 2009. © Basic Books. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

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Multi-method design: Putnam

1. Italian decentralization in 1970s as natural experiment in government (with lots of measures of governmental effectiveness and legitimacy)

2. Case comparisons (e.g., Milano)
How scientific can we be? Should we be?

1. Description versus causation

2. The collapse of the Soviet Union

3. Capturing context
   - As in other departments of science, so in politics, the compound should always be disaggregated into the simplest elements, or essential parts, of the whole. We must therefore look at the elements of which the state is composed, in order to see how the different kinds of rule differ from one another and whether any scientific result can be attained about each one of them. (Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book 1, Chapter 1, c.350 BCE)
   - Political scientists should “turn proper names into variables” Przeworski & Teune (1970)

4. General failure of prediction

5. Scope conditions and “theory decay”

6. Conducting *actual* research

7. Knowledge accumulation
17.801 Political Science Scope and Methods
Fall 2017

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