

Research Question Examples: Political Science

About this document

This PDF contains 68 **political science research question examples**, each quoted word for word from one of 30 completed dissertations and theses (2010–2026), grouped into 5 sections. Each question links to the thesis that asked it, so you can read how it was answered. Use them to see what a well-formed political science research question looks like, then adapt the shape to your own study.

By [Derek Jansen](#) (MBA) · Reviewed by [Eunice Rautenbach](#) (DTech) · Grad Coach · October 2026

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Exploratory questions

These questions ask how or why something happens, usually where little research exists yet. They are common in qualitative studies built on interviews or observation.

1. How does the globe-girdling U.S. diplomatic assemblage reflect and influence geopolitical ideas and practices?

Asked in: [A Critical Geography of the United States' Diplomatic Footprint](#) · Anna W. Moore · University of Oregon · 2017

2. How does the grouping of diplomatic missions along regional lines reflect and influence U.S. foreign policy?

Asked in: [A Critical Geography of the United States' Diplomatic Footprint](#) · Anna W. Moore · University of Oregon · 2017

3. How do theory, practice, context, and history reveal the non-neutrality of technology?

Asked in: [Analysis, description, and categorization of the political usage And consumption of commercial tools of information and Communications technology \(ICT\) by social movements](#) · Gustavo Adolfo De la O Godínez · University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia · 2024

4. How has neoliberal rationality become embedded in the ICT commercial tools most commonly used by social movements?

Asked in: [Analysis, description, and categorization of the political usage And consumption of commercial tools of information and Communications technology \(ICT\) by social movements](#) · Gustavo Adolfo De la O Godínez · University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia · 2024

5. Drawing on the case study of Matamoros, Mexico, how did the implementation of MPP and Title 42 impact asylum seekers at the US-Mexico border?

Asked in: [Asylum Policies of Expulsion and Grassroots Refugee Governance at the US-Mexico Border](#) · Kathryn McDaniel · Texas State University · 2022

6. How did humanitarian aid workers, immigration lawyers, medical service providers, and asylum seekers organize in response to the lack of state protection and social services for asylum seekers?

Asked in: [Asylum Policies of Expulsion and Grassroots Refugee Governance at the US-Mexico Border](#) · McDaniel, Kathryn · Texas State University · 2022

7. How does state capture manifest itself in the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture?

Asked in: [Corruption and state capture : an interpretive reading of the reports of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture.](#) · Zulu, Mbalendo Reid · University of KwaZulu-Natal · 2025

8. How do women in local educational political leadership describe and interpret the conditions produced by the nationalization of school board elections and culture war politics during the period spanning 2019 through 2026?

Asked in: [Navigating Political Violence: Women's Experiences and Responsive Strategies in Local Educational Political Leadership](#) · Christian Watkins · University of Kansas · 2026

9. How do women in local educational governance experience and interpret political violence in the context of their public service?

Asked in: [Navigating Political Violence: Women's Experiences and Responsive Strategies in Local Educational Political Leadership](#) · Christian Watkins · University of Kansas · 2026

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10. Who are the actors involved in the governance of cultural heritage within an historic urban district?

Asked in: [Participatory governance for the sustainable management of cultural heritage : pathways to social, cultural, and civic value creation.](#) · Maria Antonietta Cipriano · Roma Tre University · 2026

11. How does the environmental information disclosure policy's content impact its implementation?

Asked in: [PROCESS TRACING THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE, CASE OF TANZANIA](#) · Olan'g, Lulu Silas · Nazarbayev University · 2024

12. How does the context of the environmental information disclosure policy Impact its implementation?

Asked in: [PROCESS TRACING THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE, CASE OF TANZANIA](#) · Olan'g, Lulu Silas · Nazarbayev University · 2024

13. Why did the Labour Party cancel the promised referendum on the new treaty of the European Union?

Asked in: [The British Labour Party – traitors or saviors? : About a broken election promise, or the rescue of Britain's influence in the EU.](#) · Hansen Gustafsson, Niklas · Linnaeus University · 2010

14. How did Zimbabwean political actors, namely ZANU-PF, MDC formations, Build Zimbabwe, National People's Party, Independent candidates and ordinary citizens use Twitter for political engagement from 2015 to 2020?

Asked in: [The internet, political mobilisation and civic engagement in Zimbabwe from 2015 to 2020: investigating the role of Twitter](#) · Brian Pindayi · University of Cape Town · 2022

15. What evidence could be found for how the issues of dominant advocacy coalitions were realised in electricity policy?

Asked in: [The politics of electricity planning in South Africa: A review of dominant advocacy coalitions seeking to influence the Integrated Resource Plan of 2010 \(IRP2010\), and its update in 2013](#) · Brenda Martin · University of Cape Town · 2017

16. How do private actors react to the politicisation of water in the city and why does it matter?

Asked in: [The socio-cognitive dimension of water: the case of politicisation of water in Barcelona](#) · Popartan, Lucia Alexandra · University of Girona · 2020

17. How have [New Economic Governance] interventions impacted the Italian and Romanian healthcare systems?

Asked in: [The struggle for healthcare under the European Union's new economic governance regime. Trade union and grassroots mobilisations in response to healthcare commodification in Italy and Romania \(2008 – 2022\)](#) · Galanti, Costanza · University College Dublin · 2024

18. How have Italian and Romanian unions and grassroots mobilisations responded to [New Economic Governance] interventions and their implementation in their respective healthcare sectors?

Asked in: [The struggle for healthcare under the European Union's new economic governance regime. Trade union and grassroots mobilisations in response to healthcare commodification in Italy and Romania \(2008 – 2022\)](#) · Galanti, Costanza · University College Dublin · 2024

19. How do non-governmental organisations work with women empowerment in Ethiopia?

Asked in: [To Empower Ethiopian Women : A Minor Field Study of how the Gender Reforms of the Ethiopian Government impact on Non-Governmental Organisations work with Women Empowerment](#) · Tegnell, Frida · Linnaeus University · 2020

20. To what extent and how have non-governmental organisations been affected by the gender reforms of the Ethiopian government that took office in 2018?

Asked in: [To Empower Ethiopian Women : A Minor Field Study of how the Gender Reforms of the Ethiopian Government impact on Non-Governmental Organisations work with Women Empowerment](#) · Tegnell, Frida · Linnaeus University · 2020

21. How have Ethiopian women been affected by the gender reforms of the Ethiopian government that took office in 2018 according to non-governmental organisations?

Asked in: [To Empower Ethiopian Women : A Minor Field Study of how the Gender Reforms of the Ethiopian Government impact on Non-Governmental Organisations work with Women Empowerment](#) · Tegnell, Frida · Linnaeus University · 2020

22. How do water users participate in new WUA institutions in Tajikistan?

Asked in: [When the Canals Run Dry: New Institutions and the Collective Governance of Irrigation Systems in Tajikistan](#) · Corrie Hannah · Duke University · 2018

23. How do new WUA institutions in Tajikistan affect irrigation infrastructure conditions?

Asked in: [When the Canals Run Dry: New Institutions and the Collective Governance of Irrigation Systems in Tajikistan](#) · Corrie Hannah · Duke University · 2018

24. How do the contextual features of a locale affect the adoption of new WUA institutions in Tajikistan?

Asked in: [When the Canals Run Dry: New Institutions and the Collective Governance of Irrigation Systems in Tajikistan](#) · Corrie Hannah · Duke University · 2018

25. How are the monitoring and evaluation of Portugal's Strategic Cooperation Programs carried out?

Asked in: [A monitorização e avaliação na cooperação internacional para o desenvolvimento : o sistema de monitorização e avaliação da cooperação portuguesa – caso de estudo: a M&A do programa estratégico de cooperação Portugal – Angola \(2018-2022\)](#) · Jorge Agostinho Henrique · University of Lisbon · 2025

26. What is the relevance of [Monitoring and Evaluation] practice in strategic decision-making processes?

Asked in: [A monitorização e avaliação na cooperação internacional para o desenvolvimento : o sistema de monitorização e avaliação da cooperação portuguesa – caso de estudo: a M&A do programa estratégico de cooperação Portugal – Angola \(2018-2022\)](#) · Jorge Agostinho Henrique · University of Lisbon · 2025

27. How has Portuguese Cooperation promoted the development of national capacities in [Monitoring and Evaluation], namely in Angola?

Asked in: [A monitorização e avaliação na cooperação internacional para o desenvolvimento : o sistema de monitorização e avaliação da cooperação portuguesa – caso de estudo: a M&A do programa estratégico de cooperação Portugal – Angola \(2018-2022\)](#) · Jorge Agostinho Henrique · University of Lisbon · 2025

28. How has the privatization of public rental housing been legitimized in the city of Stockholm between 1990 and 2015?

Asked in: [Det legitima ägandet : Politiska konstruktioner av allmännyttans privatisering i Stockholms stad 1990–2015](#) · Helena Löfgren · Södertörn University · 2021

29. How have the applied legitimation strategies influenced the discursive framework of the new housing policy?

Asked in: [Det legitima ägandet : Politiska konstruktioner av allmännyttans privatisering i Stockholms stad 1990–2015](#) · Helena Löfgren · Södertörn University · 2021

30. Does the study provide Game Theory, from Rational Choice theory, and Path Dependency, from Historic Institutionalism, a new perspective and strength especially when bringing them together?

Asked in: [Stigberoende och spelmatriser : Varför har landstinget i Värmland valt att ansöka om att få gå ihop med Region Västra Götaland?](#) · Sangrid von Zedtwitz-Liebenstein · Karlstad University · 2010

Descriptive questions

These questions ask *what* is happening: *how much*, *how often*, or *what kinds*. They describe a situation rather than explain it.

31. What ideas and policies shaped the geographical footprint of U.S. diplomatic infrastructure over the course of the twentieth century?

Asked in: [A Critical Geography of the United States' Diplomatic Footprint](#) · Anna W. Moore · University of Oregon · 2017

32. What are the basic dynamics and claims of the centre-periphery theory?

Asked in: [Ak Partili Yıllar Ve Merkez-Çevre İlişkilerinin Dönüşümü = The Ak Party Years And The Transformation Of Center-Periphery Relations](#) · Ertürk, Erkan · Sakarya University · 2025

33. What are the prominent dynamics in the course of centre-periphery relations in Türkiye in the historical process?

Asked in: [Ak Partili Yıllar Ve Merkez-Çevre İlişkilerinin Dönüşümü = The Ak Party Years And The Transformation Of Center-Periphery Relations](#) · Ertürk, Erkan · Sakarya University · 2025

34. How do political activists in the United States, specifically residents of Georgia, perceive the neutrality of technology?

Asked in: [Analysis, description, and categorization of the political usage And consumption of commercial tools of information and Communications technology \(ICT\) by social movements](#) · Gustavo Adolfo De la O Godínez · University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia · 2024

35. Is there an assumption that technology is “values-free” in the context of political usage of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) commercial tools?

Asked in: [Analysis, description, and categorization of the political usage And consumption of commercial tools of information and Communications technology \(ICT\) by social movements](#) · Gustavo Adolfo De la O Godínez · University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia · 2024

36. What is a state according to the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture reports?

Asked in: [Corruption and state capture : an interpretive reading of the reports of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture.](#) · Zulu, Mbalendo Reid · University of KwaZulu-Natal · 2025

37. What are the concepts and theories of state capture that guided the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture?

Asked in: [Corruption and state capture : an interpretive reading of the reports of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture.](#) · Zulu, Mbalendo Reid · University of KwaZulu-Natal · 2025

38. How has Israel's warfare in Gaza been portrayed by Haaretz, Al Jazeera and The New York Times from October 2023 to October 2025?

Asked in: [Framing of Israel's Warfare 2023-2025 : A Framing analysis of Haaretz, Al Jazeera, and The New York Times](#) · Simon Persson · Linnaeus University · 2026

39. What are the challenges faced by International Organizations in Rwanda and available solutions to them?

Asked in: [International Organizations and poverty alleviation in Rwanda A case study of United Nations Development programs-Kicukiro District](#) · Kabera, Betty · Mount Kenya University · 2013

40. What strategies, informed by bridging, bonding, and linking social capital, do women in local educational governance develop and employ to navigate conditions of political violence?

Asked in: [Navigating Political Violence: Women's Experiences and Responsive Strategies in Local Educational Political Leadership](#) · Christian Watkins · University of Kansas · 2026

41. How is cultural, social, and economic value produced and sustained through participatory governance arrangements?

Asked in: [Participatory governance for the sustainable management of cultural heritage : pathways to social, cultural, and civic value creation.](#) · Maria Antonietta Cipriano · Roma Tre University · 2026

42. How do U.S.-trained Africans perceive the relevance of their U.S. leadership training in their home-country practice?

Asked in: [SQUARING THEIR ROOTS: LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF SOME U.S.-TRAINED AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR](#) · William Patrick Dant · University of Maryland · 2010

43. What are the reasons that the Labour Party went from being a Eurosceptical party, to become more pro-European?

Asked in: [The British Labour Party – traitors or saviors? : About a broken election promise, or the rescue of Britain's influence in the EU.](#) · Hansen Gustafsson, Niklas · Linnaeus University · 2010

44. What is the role of the state, according to classical liberal state theory?

Asked in: [The Classical Liberal Theory of State : An Idea Analysis of Classical Liberalism](#) · Samuel Drougge · Karlstad University · 2019

45. What are the challenges faced by HCBs during the introduction of the new UAE halal policy?

Asked in: [The Impact of a New Halal Policy on Certification Bodies: The Case of the UAE](#) · Farah Alzarooni · University College Dublin · 2022

46. What regulatory design amendments are needed to alleviate the challenges faced by HCBs during the implementation of the new UAE halal policy?

Asked in: [The Impact of a New Halal Policy on Certification Bodies: The Case of the UAE](#) · Farah Alzarooni · University College Dublin · 2022

47. Which challenges of organisational culture are experienced in the South African municipalities with specific reference to the City of Tshwane Municipality?

Asked in: [The influence of organisational culture on service delivery in South Africa : a case of the Tshwane Municipality in Gauteng Province](#) · Khapane Madute Sebidi · University of Limpopo · 2022

48. How can organisational culture and service delivery in the City of Tshwane be measured?

Asked in: [The influence of organisational culture on service delivery in South Africa : a case of the Tshwane Municipality in Gauteng Province](#) · Khapane Madute Sebidi · University of Limpopo · 2022

49. Which recommendations can be proposed to use organisational culture to improve service delivery in the City of Tshwane?

Asked in: [The influence of organisational culture on service delivery in South Africa : a case of the Tshwane Municipality in Gauteng Province](#) · Khapane Madute Sebidi · University of Limpopo · 2022

50. What examples are there of successful civic engagement through Twitter in Zimbabwe from 2015 to 2020?

Asked in: [The internet, political mobilisation and civic engagement in Zimbabwe from 2015 to 2020: investigating the role of Twitter](#) · Brian Pindayi · University of Cape Town · 2022

51. What can be concluded and what are the implications for future electricity planning?

Asked in: [The politics of electricity planning in South Africa: A review of dominant advocacy coalitions seeking to influence the Integrated Resource Plan of 2010 \(IRP2010\), and its update in 2013](#) · Brenda Martin · University of Cape Town · 2017

52. To what extent is the politicisation of water in Barcelona a populist one and to what extent does it challenge the water paradigm in the city?

Asked in: [The socio-cognitive dimension of water: the case of politicisation of water in Barcelona](#) · Popartan, Lucia Alexandra · University of Girona · 2020

53. Is Circular Economy a de-politicised area in the interaction between the actors in conflict?

Asked in: [The socio-cognitive dimension of water: the case of politicisation of water in Barcelona](#) · Popartan, Lucia Alexandra · University of Girona · 2020

54. What constrained the discretion of the political actors in the choice of region to merge with?

Asked in: [Stigberoende och spelmatriser : Varför har landstinget i Värmland valt att ansöka om att få gå ihop med Region Västra Götaland?](#) · Sangrid von Zedtwitz-Liebenstein · Karlstad University · 2010

55. Which principles and guidelines guide the use of AI in Finnish public sector organizations?

Asked in: [Tekoälyn käyttö Suomen julkisen sektorin organisaatioissa](#) · Aho, Anttoni · University of Oulu · 2026

56. Which AI technologies are utilized in the AI systems used in the Finnish public sector?

Asked in: [Tekoälyn käyttö Suomen julkisen sektorin organisaatioissa](#) · Aho, Anttoni · University of Oulu · 2026

57. What purposes are the AI systems used for in the Finnish public sector?

Asked in: [Tekoälyn käyttö Suomen julkisen sektorin organisaatioissa](#) · Aho, Anttoni · University of Oulu · 2026

58. What are the future plans for AI systems in the Finnish public sector?

Asked in: [Tekoälyn käyttö Suomen julkisen sektorin organisaatioissa](#) · Aho, Anttoni · University of Oulu · 2026

Causal questions

These questions ask whether one thing causes a change in another. Answering them usually takes an experiment or a careful design that rules out other explanations.

59. How is employees' public service motivation affected by remote work in public organizations?

Asked in: [Motivation in remote work within public organizations : The influence of external motivation on public service motivation](#) · Sofia Wallin · Linköping University · 2025

60. How does external motivation affect employees' public service motivation during remote work in public organizations?

Asked in: [Motivation in remote work within public organizations : The influence of external motivation on public service motivation](#) · Sofia Wallin · Linköping University · 2025

61. To what extent do security risks, privacy risks, and institutional logics affect e-government acceptance?

Asked in: [Security, privacy and institutional logics: conduit to South African citizens' e-government service adoption](#) · Bayaga, Anass · University of Cape Town · 2026

62. How does organisational culture influence service delivery in the City of Tshwane?

Asked in: [The influence of organisational culture on service delivery in South Africa : a case of the Tshwane Municipality in Gauteng Province](#) · Khapane Madute Sebidi · University of Limpopo · 2022

63. To what extent has Twitter influenced political mobilisation in Zimbabwe from 2015 to 2020?

Asked in: [The internet, political mobilisation and civic engagement in Zimbabwe from 2015 to 2020: investigating the role of Twitter](#) · Brian Pindayi · University of Cape Town · 2022

Relational questions

These questions ask whether two things tend to go together, such as study time and exam results, without claiming that one causes the other.

64. Is possession of the J.D. related to access to reference materials and to perceptions of control for either judges or quasi-judicial officers?

Asked in: [Compromised Justice: A Study on the Role of Quasi-Judicial Officers in Georgia's State-Level Courts](#) · Elizabeth Henderson Taylor · Valdosta State University · 2016

65. How does passive political engagement on TikTok relate to Swedish first-time voters' perception on the level of polarization in Sweden?

Asked in: [From Double-Taps to Deep Divides? : Understanding the Relationship between Political Engagement on TikTok and Perceived Polarization](#) · Puhony, Julia · Uppsala University · 2023

66. How does active political engagement on TikTok relate to Swedish first-time voters' perception on the level of polarization in Sweden?

Asked in: [From Double-Taps to Deep Divides? : Understanding the Relationship between Political Engagement on TikTok and Perceived Polarization](#) · Puhony, Julia · Uppsala University · 2023

Comparative questions

These questions compare two or more groups or settings, such as two schools or two teaching methods, to see whether they differ.

67. Do quasi-judicial officers perceive themselves as possessing the same amount of control as judges in determining how their daily activities are completed?

Asked in: [Compromised Justice: A Study on the Role of Quasi-Judicial Officers in Georgia's State-Level Courts](#) · Elizabeth Henderson Taylor · Valdosta State University · 2016

68. How do Social Democrats and Moderates portray gang crime following up to the elections of 2018 and 2022?

Asked in: [Säkerhetiseringsprocessen av gängkriminalitet : En innehållsanalys av hur Moderaterna och Socialdemokraterna kommunicerar med väljarna 2018 och 2022](#) · Carlsen, Linn · Swedish Defence University · 2022

How to adapt a question to your own study

Every question here was asked by someone else, about their own setting. These four steps turn one into a question that is yours.

- 1. Pick the shape, not the wording.** Notice whether the question compares, explores, explains or measures. That shape is what transfers to your study.
Recommended reading: [How to write a research question](#)
- 2. Swap in your own population and setting.** Change who, where and when, and check the question still makes sense.
Recommended reading: [How to find a research gap](#)
- 3. Check it fits your method.** A "how" or "why" question usually points to qualitative work; "how much" or "is there a relationship" to quantitative.
Recommended reading: [Qualitative vs quantitative research](#)
- 4. Line up your aims, objectives and questions.** Your committee will check that they agree.
Recommended reading: [Research aims, objectives and questions](#)

Do this with two or three questions and compare them: the one you can actually answer with the time and access you have is usually the right one.