

Political Science: A Science Hiding in Plain Sight

As a political science graduate, I've often encountered raised eyebrows and skeptical questions about the "*science*" in political science. In India, where it's traditionally categorized as a humanities subject, this confusion is even more prevalent. But let me tell you, political science is far more scientific than its classification might suggest.

At its core, political science is the study of power, systems, and human behavior within a political context. It involves rigorous research, data analysis, and the formulation of theories to explain political phenomena. Just like scientists in a lab, political scientists observe, hypothesize, and test their theories against real-world evidence.

We use quantitative methods like surveys and statistical analysis to measure public opinion, voting patterns, and the impact of policies. We employ qualitative methods like interviews and case studies to delve into the motivations and decision-making processes of political actors. We even use experimental methods to simulate political scenarios and test the effectiveness of different strategies.

The scientific method is deeply ingrained in our approach. We constantly question, challenge, and refine our understanding of the political world. We don't rely on gut feelings or personal biases; we seek evidence-based explanations.

Of course, political science isn't an exact science like physics or chemistry. Human behavior is complex and unpredictable, and political systems are constantly evolving. But that doesn't make it any less scientific. In fact, the challenges we face make our work all the more important and intellectually stimulating.

So, why is political science often categorized as a humanities subject in India? It's partly due to historical reasons and partly due to the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Political science draws on insights from history, philosophy, sociology, economics, and even psychology. This breadth of knowledge enriches our understanding of politics, but it can also lead to misconceptions about the scientific rigor of our discipline.

But make no mistake, political science is a science. It's a science that helps us understand the world around us, make informed decisions, and shape a better future. So next time someone questions the "*science*" in political science, you can confidently tell them that it's alive and well, even if it's sometimes hiding in plain sight.