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The Evolution of Political Science through the Lens of the History and Philosophy of Science

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ABSTRACT

The article examines political science development through historical and philosophical analysis to understand how the discipline has evolved its paradigms and methodological debates. The research starts by showing how political science evolved from its origins in Plato and Aristotle through the creation of contemporary Western and Eastern political systems. The research problem examines how different philosophical traditions and discourses have formed political science as a distinct field of study which leads to essential disagreements between researchers who focus on empirical transformations versus those who focus on ethical preservation. The research aims to establish a complete understanding of political science development through an analysis of its conceptual roots and historical impacts and philosophical interactions. The research uses critical qualitative analysis to study political science development through a combination of essential literature review and historical and comparative case study evaluation. The research shows that political science continues to exhibit methodological pluralism through its combination of empirical research with philosophical analysis. The article shows that constructivist and historical-causal frameworks serve as crucial tools for understanding political phenomena because they reveal their dynamic nature and their contested and context-dependent characteristics. The research demonstrates that contemporary governance challenges and ethical questions require interdisciplinary and reflexive approaches which support a political science that combines historical understanding with forward-looking analysis to remain relevant in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: History of Political Science, Methodological Pluralism, Philosophy of Science, Political Science, Reflexive Political Science

INTRODUCTION

The study of political science through historical and philosophical perspectives of science has become essential for modern academic research. This paper examines the combined approach by placing political science within its historical and philosophical framework. The research stems from understanding that political science as both an academic field and social science discipline has developed through diverse scientific and humanistic methodological and epistemological changes (Pozzoni, 2021).

Political science investigates fundamental issues about governance and power structures and societal arrangements. The field's conceptual and methodological foundations show no signs of stability because they have evolved substantially because of philosophical discussions and historical events. According to Shi (2022) the fundamental principles of methodology establish whether research methods match the essential features of specific academic traditions. This research is motivated by a central question: how has the historical trajectory and philosophical discourse surrounding science contributed to the evolution of political science as a distinctive academic discipline? In addressing this, the paper draws on both Western and non-Western intellectual traditions. For instance, Western political science has long been influenced by the Enlightenment's scientific rationalism and by figures such as John Stuart Mill, who emphasized empirical rigor (Pozzoni, 2021), while in Eastern contexts, as highlighted by Yang (2021), Chinese political thought has been deeply shaped by a continuous focus on stability and governance rooted in Confucian traditions.

The combination of historical and philosophical studies of science with political science creates an extensive conceptual framework to analyze present scientific paradigms and potential future developments. The debate about political science status as a natural science or humanistic field finds its connection through historical and philosophical analysis which links different methodological approaches (Shi, 2022). The discipline of political science has followed a non-linear path because philosophical paradigms have evolved from positivism to constructivism and additional frameworks (Shi, 2022; Yang, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper evaluates political science development through integrated historical and philosophical analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding that moves past academic boundaries. The paper will follow the development of political science as an academic field by examining its historical evolution and philosophical debates about knowledge and truth and methodological approaches.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptual Foundations: Political Science, History, and Philosophy of Science

The evolution of political science requires first defining its core concepts which include political science and history of political science and philosophy of science and their distinctive relationships between these domains. Political science exists as a systematic field which examines political institutions and processes and behavior and ideas although its exact boundaries and content have changed with political thought developments and social practice changes (Pozzoni, 2021; Verbeek & McIntyre, 2017). According to John Stuart Mill the definition of science emerges from practical historical development rather than leading it (Pozzoni, 2021).

The historical development of political science demonstrates its growth and adaptation to new social economic and political environments. According to James Farr (1988) political science tends to rediscover its historical development through new historical narratives when the discipline faces internal crises or external disturbances. The emergence of behavioralism and systems theory and later positivism critiques during the early twentieth century caused substantial changes in political science definitions of its subject matter and its disciplinary relationships (Farr, 1988; Yang, 2021). Historical analysis serves as a vital foundation for modern political research because it enables us to evaluate present-day political inquiry and challenge its basic principles.

The philosophy of science together with the philosophy of political science serves as an essential framework to evaluate basic assumptions. According to Verbeek & McIntyre (2017) the philosophy of political science exists as a vital academic field because it examines the conceptual and methodological questions which determine political research approaches. The philosophy of political science serves as a connecting link between empirical and normative analysis to help researchers understand the distinctions between political facts and political values in political life (Pozzoni, 2021).

The research philosophy in political science consists of metaphysics ontology epistemology axiology and methodology which provide separate yet connected perspectives on political reality according to Sapkota (2025). Political science metaphysics investigates basic existence questions about political phenomena and their existence patterns across various historical and social settings. Metaphysical research requires scholars to investigate whether states exist as permanent political systems by nature or if they emerge from social and cultural influences (Sapkota, 2025).

The study of political reality through ontology in political science focuses on understanding its fundamental nature and organizational patterns. Political science examines which political entities exist as real entities and which do not exist and whether political realities exist as single entities or multiple entities and if they

possess absolute or relative qualities (Sapkota, 2025). The study of epistemology in political science investigates political knowledge production methods as well as valid knowledge definitions and reliable knowledge acquisition methods (Friedman, 2014; Sapkota, 2025). The relationship between ontology and epistemology exists as a dialectical system where political reality views determine the methods used to acquire knowledge about it (Sapkota, 2025).

The philosophical dimensions of these research approaches have generated substantial methodological discussions throughout political science. Political inquiry under positivist approaches has traditionally adopted natural science methods to study politics through objective measurement and causal analysis (Sapkota, 2025). Post-positivist and constructivist scholars who oppose positivism maintain that political phenomena exceed the capabilities of quantitative models and objective measurements because political realities emerge from social construction and face ongoing disputes (Sapkota, 2025; Shi, 2022). Post-positivist paradigms recognize that political knowledge exists within provisional contexts so they support interpretive research methods that focus on historical context (Sapkota, 2025).

The historical development of scientific paradigms together with philosophical studies of science provide political science with enhanced understanding. According to Kuhn's paradigm shift theory the scientific field experiences periodic revolutions that transform both the research boundaries and methods of investigation (Sapkota, 2025). Political science experienced methodological shifts from early institutionalism to behavioralism and post-behavioral critiques before developing governance-oriented frameworks which focus on state management of complex social systems (Yang, 2021).

The historical and philosophical discussions demonstrate why political science needs a sophisticated and analytical approach to its basic principles. The following sections of this paper demonstrate how empirical research interacts with philosophical thinking to direct political science development especially when facing modern political issues in our evolving world.

Early Origins and Classical Political Thought

The development of political science began in ancient Greece and Rome through the foundational work of philosophers Plato and Aristotle who studied governance and civic life and ethics. The classical thinkers created practical political guidance through their work because they understood both the complex nature of human affairs and their variable characteristics.

Aristotle established himself as a crucial figure who first defined political science during its early development. The *Nicomachean Ethics* presents political science (*politikē epistēmē*) as the “most authoritative” and “most architectonic” of the sciences (Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1094a27; 1094b5-6). According to Aristotle political science serves as a practical discipline which delivers useful knowledge to achieve

the common welfare of the city-state. Aristotle explains that scientific knowledge in natural philosophy focuses on eternal necessary truths but political knowledge deals with variable and contingent aspects that match civic realities (Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1139b–1140b).

The *Politics* book by Aristotle presents his concept of political science as a practical field which includes his analysis of democratic and oligarchic and monarchical systems and his proposal for a balanced mixed regime (Gong, 2024). His golden mean principle demonstrates his method of finding equilibrium between moral values and political practicality (Gong, 2024).

Plato stands equally important in the classical era because his *Republic* offers a different perspective about the perfect political structure. According to Plato the philosopher-king represents the most suitable ruler for guiding the polis because he alone possesses knowledge of truth which enables him to govern justly (Gong, 2024). Through his cave allegory Plato demonstrates that the philosopher who has experienced true knowledge must descend from enlightenment to guide others in darkness. Plato expresses his doubts about democracy because he believes that politics will become unstable and demagogic when philosophy does not guide political decisions (Gong, 2024).

The Roman political tradition expanded the classical tradition through its establishment of governance systems and civic duty principles. The Roman Republic expressed its governmental structure through the phrase *Senatus Populusque Romanus* (SPQR) which created a system of mixed government that distributed power between the senate and magistrates and the people (Gong, 2024). The Roman political thinkers and jurists developed republican principles and legal frameworks which became foundational for future constitutional systems and civic moral values (Gong, 2024).

These classical thinkers left a deep mark on the development of political science as an ethical and practical field of study. The practical nature of political science emerges from Aristotle's observation that political life contains diverse noble and just elements (Smith, 2019). Political science differs from natural sciences because it must study human behavior alongside collective life complexities while natural sciences seek demonstrable truths about unchanging phenomena (Smith, 2019).

The dual focus between ethics and practicality maintained its importance throughout the classical period and shaped future Western political theory. Shi (2022) explains that political philosophy exists beyond abstract speculation because it functions as both cognitive and causative knowledge which aims to understand political life and improve it. The combination of theoretical knowledge and practical application remains the core characteristic which defines political science in the present day.

The early investigations into political science demonstrate that the field developed through an ongoing interaction between philosophical principles and

real-world requirements. According to Aristotle politics represents a natural human expression because he believed that humans possess a political nature (Gong, 2024). Plato established the philosopher-king position to serve as truth guardian because he wanted to unite the pursuit of justice with governance requirements.

The classical contributions established political science as a discipline which studies both moral aspects and practical applications of human social interaction. The early political thought remains significant because it teaches that politics requires ethical contemplation and effective governance requires both philosophical understanding and practical knowledge. The fundamental principles from the past continue to influence modern political theory discussions and practical applications by uniting historical knowledge with contemporary issues.

Medieval and Early Modern Developments

The development of political science across medieval and early modern Europe demonstrated intricate connections between religious doctrine and monarchies alongside developing secular power structures. The political power in medieval Europe existed within an inseparable bond with theological beliefs which governed that time period. According to Shi (2022) the governance during this period adopted a theocratic system where spiritual authority stood above temporal power. Augustine of Hippo established his dual political framework which divided society between the "city of God" and the "city of man" (Shi, 2022). Through his reinterpretation of classical political principles Augustine established divine law as the supreme authority which dominated secular matters (Shi, 2022).

Royal authority gained strength during the later part of the Middle Ages as it challenged Church claims to power. The political struggle between church and state evolved into what scholars describe as an "absolutist state" because monarchs began to dominate spiritual and secular power relations (Shi, 2022). Thomas Aquinas employed Aristotelian natural philosophy to establish a hierarchical system which incorporated divine authority and royal authority (Shi, 2022).

During the Renaissance scholars started evaluating ancient political and moral teachings through new humanistic and empirical perspectives which marked a significant intellectual change. The Prince written by Niccolò Machiavelli demonstrates this intellectual transition. Machiavelli introduced a new political approach in The Prince by showing rulers how to use the strategic nature of foxes along with the force of lions (Shi, 2022). His work established the foundation of political science which concentrated on practical governance instead of theological dogma (Shi, 2022).

During the English Civil War Thomas Hobbes developed these ideas further. In Leviathan Hobbes argued that political authority emerges from a social agreement between people to leave the disorder of the state of nature behind. Hobbes established a new understanding of state authority through his depiction of the state as a human-made "mortal god" which departed from medieval beliefs

about divine right (Smith, 2019). Hobbes established the foundation for future political theory and political science by demonstrating that politics should function as a scientific discipline which relies on empirical evidence and deductive logic (Smith, 2019).

During the late seventeenth century John Locke presented an opposing political theory which focused on protecting individual freedoms and restricting state control. Through his *Two Treatises of Government* Locke established the principle of government by consent which became the foundation for liberal constitutionalism (Shi, 2022). The concept of "possessive individualism" which Macpherson described in Shi (2022) demonstrated how political science debates about collective authority versus individual liberty would persist across future centuries.

These thinkers demonstrated the fundamental changes that occurred in early modern thought regarding state power and political authority. Early modern political thinkers started to establish politics as an independent field of study known as *scientia politica* which received equal status with natural sciences, according to Smith (2019). The new political science terminology focused on structured examination and universal principles while still dealing with moral evaluation and political authority issues (Smith, 2019).

During the Renaissance and Enlightenment period Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* experienced a renewed interest which served as essential references for medieval scholastics and early modern thinkers (Smith, 2019). The reinterpretation of these texts led political thought to transition from moral discussions to institutional improvement studies. The development of political science as a systematic discipline became possible because of this transformation which focused on real-world governance problems in an evolving world.

The medieval and early modern periods created an environment which enabled political science to develop into a field that connects ethical contemplation with theological analysis and scientific research. The transition from divine to secular governance systems and from moral philosophy to political science demonstrates how ideas have continuously transformed the field. The developments created conditions for political science to become an established academic field which maintained strong connections to its historical and philosophical foundations.

The Rise of Modern Political Science: 19th and Early 20th Centuries

During the 19th and early 20th centuries political science evolved from its philosophical roots into an organized academic field. The discipline underwent institutional changes in Western academia while facing major methodological debates which determined its future direction.

The United States established dedicated academic chairs and departments for political science through European-inspired *Staatswissenschaften* models which

studied the state. The appointment of Francis Lieber at Columbia College in 1856 triggered the professionalization of political studies in the U.S. which resulted in the establishment of the Columbia School of Political Science in 1880 (Farr, 1988; Pozzoni, 2021). The American Political Science Association (APSA) established itself in 1903 while the American Political Science Review began publication in 1906 (Pozzoni, 2021). The establishment of these developments created political science as an independent field which separated from history and law while establishing a platform for academic discussions.

During this time American political science adopted scientism as its dominant approach because scholars believed they could create universal political theories like those found in natural sciences (Adcock & Bevir, 2005). The Chicago School actively promoted this method through Charles Merriam who advocated for a “new science of politics” that relied on empirical research and statistical techniques (Farr, 1988). According to Crick (1959) the scientific approach in political science adopted a limited positivist view of politics which attempted to duplicate natural science methods but sacrificed the deep historical and philosophical foundations of the field (Adcock & Bevir, 2005).

During this time British political science maintained stronger ties with historical and philosophical studies. British academics preferred to study politics through interpretive historical methods instead of accepting American scientism's reductionist approach (Adcock & Bevir, 2005). The British historicist approach stressed that political ideas and institutions need to be studied in their specific historical contexts (Adcock & Bevir, 2005). The American Science of Politics by Crick (1959) represented this viewpoint by opposing American formal modeling approaches with a historical approach that recognized political life's complex nature (Adcock & Bevir, 2005).

The development of historical–causal narratives in political science research made this divide more apparent. Shi (2022) observed that this period witnessed the creation of methods which studied the historical development of social and political institutions instead of variable relationships. These narratives known as “formation stories” demonstrated an awareness that political phenomena require their historical context for meaningful study. The dominant positivist paradigms faced opposition from historical approaches because they based their understanding of causality on counterfactual reasoning and empirical regularities (Shi, 2022).

The paradigms received critical evaluation from Crick and historical institutionalists. Crick believed that American scientism threatened to transform political science into a “pseudo-science” that lost sight of political ethics and history (Crick, 1959, as cited in Adcock & Bevir, 2005). British historicists Julia Stapleton and Stefan Collini together with other scholars criticized the static and monolithic view of political science by showing its contingent and contested nature (Adcock & Bevir, 2005).

The historical–causal narrative approach that emerged during this period presented a strong alternative to both scientism and basic historical description. Shi (2022) explains that this method examines how social existence develops through historical processes to deliver a more comprehensive and dynamic understanding of political phenomena. This method followed David Hume’s regularity theory of causality which defines cause as a historical process of conjunction and transformation (Shi, 2022).

The various paradigms of American scientism and British historicism and historical–causal narratives demonstrate fundamental disagreements about political inquiry. The American political science field adopted measurement and prediction terminology while British scholars focused on political interpretation and historical understanding and ethical political analysis (Adcock & Bevir, 2005; Crick, 1962).

The discussions expose fundamental philosophical issues regarding political science goals and objectives. Political science should it pursue natural science-like objectivity and generality or maintain its connection to political life's historical and normative aspects? Political science exists as a tool for governance or does it function as a critical discourse that examines the basic structures of political systems?

During the early part of the twentieth century political science underwent a transformation through professionalization alongside specialization. The discipline started to define its professional standards while establishing its unique identity which distinguished it from neighboring fields such as history and law (Pozzoni, 2021). The creation of specialized journals together with professional associations and university departments formed the institutional base which allowed political science to gain recognition as an academic discipline.

Professionalization led to the development of political science as an academic field but it did not resolve the fundamental philosophical disagreements within the discipline. As stated by Crick (1962) scientism presented a risk because it treated politics as an unproblematic subject for study instead of recognizing its essential nature as a contested ethical and historical domain (Adcock & Bevir, 2005). British historicists maintained that political science needed to stay receptive to historical and philosophical and literary knowledge while avoiding the formation of strict disciplinary barriers (Stapleton & Collini as cited in Adcock & Bevir, 2005).

The development of modern political science between the 19th and early 20th centuries established fundamental debates about political knowledge and scientist roles that continue to influence the field. The discipline maintains its ongoing debates about political knowledge and scientist roles which demonstrate the necessity of empirical rigor alongside historical and ethical awareness in political science.

The Role of the History and Philosophy of Science in Political Science Research

The connection between political science and scientific history and philosophy has been a matter of ongoing academic discussion. Political science as an academic field has drawn its methodological tools and conceptual frameworks from both natural and social sciences which have shaped its identity and practice. This section examines how political science handled these influences and critiques positivist approaches and the development of constructivist and historical-causal narratives and the paradigm shifts from “change-oriented” to “governance-oriented” political science.

The development of political science has been shaped by its ongoing dialogue with natural sciences. Multiple sources show that initial political scientists attempted to emulate physics and biology by using empirical methods to establish causal laws in their political observations (Mahoney, 2021; Pozzoni, 2021). The pursuit of positivism became prominent because it aimed to detect quantifiable political realities through experimental empiricism and quantitative analysis (Sapkota, 2025).

Scholars have criticized the use of natural science methods in political inquiry as described by Shi (2022). The emphasis on causal inference and objective reality measurement in positivism has value but it fails to capture the intricate and time-sensitive nature of political phenomena according to Shi (2022). The social and political world exists beyond natural world extension because it develops through human meaning creation and cultural and historical processes (Mahoney, 2021). Shi (2022) warns that applying natural scientific frameworks to political science research diminishes the ability to understand political processes within their specific historical and cultural settings.

Political scientists have adopted conceptual frameworks from sociology and economics instead of maintaining a positivist approach. Political science has adopted interpretive and constructivist approaches from neighboring disciplines according to Pozzoni (2021) and others because social realities emerge from human actions and perceptions and historical circumstances. Social phenomena cannot be studied through natural object methods because they require approaches that acknowledge their constructed and contingent nature according to Verbeek and McIntyre (2017).

The recognition of these limitations has led to demands for methodological pluralism in political science. According to Sapkota (2025) political science needs to break free from positivism's universal methodological framework to accept multiple methods and paradigms which mirror the discipline's multifaceted nature. The approach of methodological pluralism combines quantitative and qualitative research methods with an understanding of how empirical data fails to capture political norms and historical aspects.

The core of this pluralism emerges from constructivist and historical-causal frameworks. Shi (2022) explains that political categories and structures exist only through social construction because they emerge from ongoing interaction and

interpretation processes. According to this perspective political science empirical data exists as a product of researcher and political actor collaboration rather than as an independent discovery. This perspective opposes the strict determinism of positivism by demanding more reflective and context-aware research methods (Sapkota, 2025).

The historical-causal narrative approach extends this perspective. This method explores how political phenomena develop and transform through historical processes instead of attempting to identify permanent causal laws. The approach emphasizes storytelling alongside sequence and event interrelation instead of focusing on static variable correlations (Shi, 2022). According to Shi the narrative methodology follows David Hume's regularity theory of causality which defines cause as historical patterns of conjunctions and contingencies (Shi, 2022).

The development of these frameworks gained momentum because political science scholars identified fundamental changes in their field. According to Yang (2021) Western political science has alternated between two paradigms which focus either on revolutionary change or governance maintenance. The governance-oriented paradigm has gained fresh interest in Eastern political science because this tradition emphasizes both historical continuity and collective stability (Yang, 2021).

The paradigm shifts demonstrate why political science research needs to incorporate historical and philosophical knowledge. The discipline exists beyond the boundaries of scientific or humanistic approaches. Political science exists in a state of constant tension between its need to explain phenomena and its need to interpret them while balancing empirical data collection with ethical considerations.

The ongoing interaction between natural science influences and social science insights and constructivist and historical-causal critiques demonstrates the multifaceted nature of political science as a field. The history and philosophy of science offer fundamental methods to analyze political science development and its potential future evolution as a field which maintains scientific rigor while respecting political life's distinctive characteristics.

Case Studies: Western and Non-Western Perspectives

The development of political science has been deeply shaped by different philosophical and historical trajectories in Western and non-Western traditions. The two different approaches to political study provide distinct methods for understanding political systems and social organization.

The Western tradition recognizes Max Weber and Karl Marx as its foundational scholars. Weber established a lasting framework for understanding political authority and sovereignty through his definition of the state as “a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (Weber, as cited in Yang, 2021). Through his materialist approach to history Marx demonstrated the internal conflicts within

liberal democracy while showing how class-based analysis reveals political power dynamics (Yang, 2021).

The foundational thinkers established the base for later developments which included behavioralism and rational choice theory that emerged during the mid-twentieth century. The behavioralist movement led by David Easton and Gabriel Almond worked to make political science more similar to natural science through empirical research methods. During this period, the dominant paradigm of structural functionalism emerged, aiming to identify shared political functions across different systems (Macridis & Cox, 1953, as cited in Yang, 2021). Rational choice theory expanded the scientific approach by focusing on political behavior through individual preference analysis and strategic decision-making processes.

The Western paradigms imposed implicit beliefs about modernization and democratization according to Yang (2021) in their criticism of how structural functionalism applied to "non-Western" societies. Modernization theory faced rising challenges because its economic development model of liberal democracy did not match the political realities of Asia Africa and Latin America.

Eastern philosophical traditions have formed Chinese perspectives on political science through their emphasis on holistic governance and ethical principles and social harmony. Rulers according to Confucianism must demonstrate *ren* and *yi* because these virtues enable them to maintain social stability through moral development (Sapkota, 2025). Legalist traditions base statecraft on strict rules and authoritarian rulers who enforce these regulations.

The Chinese political thought of today uses traditional principles to analyze why Western models lack universal application. According to Yang (2021) the Western political science field has focused on "change-oriented" approaches that emphasize democratic transitions but Chinese political science has developed "governance-oriented" research to study stability and order maintenance and practical collective life administration.

The Chinese governance model integrates bureaucratic meritocracy with consensus-based policy-making under centralized control and decentralized local administration (Yang, 2021). The model presents a challenge to liberal democracy as the only possible end of political development because it demonstrates that governance ability and social peace can be better indicators of political success than democratic systems (Yang, 2021).

Non-Western philosophies including Buddhism and Taoism present unique perspectives about political relationships. The Buddhist principles of impermanence and interdependence together with the Middle Way serve as ethical foundations for governance and conflict resolution according to Sapkota (2025). According to Taoist teachings *wu wei* (non-action) leads political systems to follow natural and social cycles by minimizing authority interference (Sapkota, 2025).

The various paths of development create substantial effects on modern comparative political science research. The Eastern perspectives question the

universal application of Western democratization theories because they exist within different historical and cultural settings. The debate about modernization shows this tension because Huntington (1991) demonstrated that modernization throughout various regions resulted in political decay instead of liberal democracy or new authoritarian systems (Yang, 2021).

The analysis of Western and non-Western political science demonstrates why researchers need to adopt multiple research methods while questioning the fundamental beliefs of different theoretical approaches. According to Sapkota (2025) political science should combine multiple intellectual traditions because it needs diverse explanations to enhance its research and comprehension.

Political scientists gain better understanding of diverse political systems through studying their different developmental paths and the ethical and historical and philosophical aspects of governance. The comparative analysis promotes a reflective political science which acknowledges the boundaries of individual paradigms while extracting knowledge from worldwide political experiences.

Contemporary Reflections and Methodological Challenges

Modern political science faces significant obstacles when it attempts to unite historical research with philosophical theories and empirical data in its academic and practical work. The integration of these elements has become vital because the field faces modern governance complexities and changing political paradigms and worldwide political system connections.

The main obstacle exists in how modern research combines historical elements with philosophical aspects and political science approaches. According to Farr (1988) political science throughout history has demonstrated a pattern of dismissing or minimizing its own past which results in marginalizing historical reflection within disciplinary discussions. Robert H. Murray argued in 1925 that every modern controversy has roots which extend back through time to distant ages (Farr, 1988). The understanding demonstrates that political science needs to be placed within its historical and philosophical context which remains essential for modern times as it was in previous centuries.

The development of “historical political science” as a distinct subfield demonstrates an increasing awareness of this requirement. Shi (2022) explains that historical political science studies political phenomena through time-based analysis which demonstrates how political phenomena transform while highlighting temporal and narrative aspects in political research. This method surpasses basic behavioralist static models by studying historical processes which form political institutions and concepts.

The field experiences internal conflicts between change-oriented and governance-oriented paradigms particularly during the 21st century. According to Yang (2021), western political science focuses on "change-oriented" approaches to explain revolutionary changes and democratization and social upheaval whereas

Chinese political science has shifted toward "governance-oriented" paradigms that emphasize stability and order and practical governance. The philosophical and historical traditions between Western and Eastern thought demonstrate their differences because Western societies value change as progress but Eastern traditions like Confucianism focus on rulers' ethical duty to preserve social order (Sapkota, 2025).

The current political environment has made this conflict more pronounced. According to Yang (2021) the current governance crises including climate change and digital transformation and geopolitical shifts require political science to balance transformation needs with stability requirements. The conflicting demands between change and stability in political science require scholars to examine their fundamental research subjects.

This reflection demonstrates the significance of combining different disciplines and critical perspectives. According to Sapkota (2025) and other researchers political science research needs to combine multiple methodological and philosophical approaches because political phenomena present complex challenges. The digital era requires research methods that unite historical perspectives with philosophical insights and sociological understanding and technological analysis to study algorithmic governance and social media politics and global crises (Sapkota, 2025; Shi, 2022). The traditional positivist frameworks which focus on static measurement and causality fail to effectively capture these complex and dynamic political realities.

The ethical and cultural aspects of political life require more than positivist reductionism because of its recognized limitations. Shi (2022) warns that concentrating only on causal inference and measurement techniques hides important humanistic and interpretive elements of political practice. Historical–causal narratives together with constructivist approaches demonstrate that political phenomena emerge from contextual factors and cultural meanings and contingent events.

Constructivism opposes positivism's strict determinism by showing how political actors use language symbols and practices to build and dispute social realities (Sapkota, 2025). Historical–causal frameworks avoid basic causation models by studying how political processes transform through time-dependent interactions and unpredictable decisions (Shi, 2022).

The current political science discipline requires both empirical and theoretical approaches because it cannot survive with limited methodological approaches. Political science needs to study all aspects of human experience including political aspects and ethical dimensions and historical elements and social dynamics to stay relevant for solving twenty-first century problems.

The development of interdisciplinary fields including digital governance and environmental politics and global studies demonstrates why political science needs to be flexible and adaptive. According to Sapkota (2025) political science needs to

transcend disciplinary limits to integrate knowledge from data science and critical theory and cultural studies because political realities exist within social and technological frameworks.

The changing political science environment requires ongoing critical evaluation of its practices. Political science has historically shifted between scientific ambitions and humanistic perspectives which indicates that no single paradigm can completely understand political life's complexity. According to Robert Murray, as cited in Farr (1988), political science requires historical context for its roots and philosophical and ethical examination for its fruits.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates the vital understanding which emerges from studying basic perspectives about political science development. Political science has advanced through its extensive philosophical examination of human nature and social dynamics and power structures and historical change. Political science has evolved through various paradigms including empirical and interpretive and governance-oriented and change-oriented approaches which provide different perspectives on political system complexity.

The multiple paradigms in political science demonstrate both the field's extensive empirical and normative content and the intricate nature of its research subjects. The acceptance of diverse research methods represents both an advantage and a necessity for grasping the various dimensions of political existence. The discipline demonstrates its ability to address new political challenges through its implementation of positivist, interpretivist, constructivist and post-positivist frameworks rather than indicating theoretical confusion.

The preservation of historical awareness serves as a fundamental element for directing the future advancement of political science. A historical perspective allows for better empirical understanding of political institutions and practices while maintaining the ability to recognize the ethical cultural and temporal aspects which define political existence.

The discipline of political science will encounter multiple critical challenges during the upcoming period. The field needs to direct more attention toward micro-politics and gender relations and digital capitalism and digital era governance complexities. Research agendas need both technical expertise and critical evaluation of the values and assumptions which guide scholarly work. The field needs to develop flexibility and self-reflection to adapt to current global crises which include environmental issues and technological changes and social transformations.

The future success of political science depends on its ability to reflect on itself while embracing diverse paradigms and philosophical approaches. Political science maintains its relevance and inclusivity through empirical research

that combines ethical analysis with historical context to explain political realities while creating a more just and responsive political future.

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