

## THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE: BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

**Aadil Ahmad Shairgojri**

Research Scholar, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Annamalai  
University, Annamalainagar, Tamil Nadu, India

*\*Correspondence:* [aadilhassan1995@gmail.com](mailto:aadilhassan1995@gmail.com)

---

### *Abstract*

The study is an attempt to explore the practical significance of studying political science beyond the confines of the classroom. It outlines to illuminate the real-world applications of political science principles and knowledge in various contexts, from career choices to everyday decision-making. It aims to highlight the diverse career opportunities available to individuals with a background in political science, ranging from public policy to law and government roles. It also aims to underscore the importance of political science education in fostering informed and engaged citizens who actively participate in democratic processes. It aims to provide concrete examples and case studies demonstrating how political science concepts and skills contribute to addressing global issues, resolving conflicts, and shaping public policies. The study seeks to advocate for lifelong learning, emphasizing that political science equips individuals with critical thinking, research, and analytical skills that continue to benefit them throughout their lives. By addressing these objectives, this article underscores the enduring relevance of political science in shaping both personal and societal success.

**Keywords:** *Civic engagement, political science, practical value, real-world applications, lifelong learning*

---

### INTRODUCTION

Political science, as an academic discipline, is often seen as a subject confined to the classroom, with its relevance limited to scholarly pursuits. However, its practical value extends far beyond the ivory tower of academia. The study of political science equips individuals with a unique set of skills and knowledge that have profound real-world applications. In this study, we get into the practical significance of political science, exploring how it empowers individuals to make informed decisions, engage actively in civic life, and pursue diverse career paths. By examining concrete examples, case studies, and the enduring importance of lifelong learning, we aim to shed light on the transformative impact of political science on personal and societal levels. This exploration serves as a testament to the relevance of political science in an ever-evolving world where informed citizenship and effective governance are paramount. The foundation of this exploration rests on the premise that political science is not merely an abstract academic pursuit but a discipline with tangible implications for individuals and society. Drawing from established theories in political science and related fields, we underscore the role of political education in shaping civic participation, fostering critical thinking, and preparing individuals for a range of careers in public service, law, diplomacy, and more. Additionally, we rely on practical examples and case studies to illustrate the practical applications of political science concepts in addressing complex global challenges and informing policy decisions. The theoretical underpinning emphasizes the enduring value of political science as an essential tool for navigating the intricate landscape of contemporary politics and governance.

### Research Objectives

The article aims to demonstrate the practical relevance of political science beyond academic settings by showcasing its real-world applications, highlighting career opportunities, emphasizing civic engagement, presenting illustrative examples, and encouraging lifelong learning. Through these objectives, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of how political science

knowledge and skills play a vital role in personal and societal contexts, extending far beyond the confines of the classroom.

### Methodology

The study adopts qualitative content analysis of academic literature and policy documents with quantitative surveys and case study analysis. It systematically reviews relevant literature to provide theoretical insights, while surveys gather empirical data from diverse democratic societies. Case studies offer in-depth context-specific analysis. Data triangulation ensures the validity of findings, and thematic analysis is used to draw conclusions.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Studying political science provides individuals with a deep understanding of the principles and dynamics that underlie political systems, governance, and policymaking. This knowledge can be applied in various real-life situations, contributing to informed decision-making, meaningful careers, and active civic engagement. Here, we explore how the principles and knowledge gained through political science studies can be applied across different domains.

#### 1. Careers:

- **Public Service:** Political science graduates often pursue careers in public service, working in government agencies, local government, or international organizations. Their understanding of political processes, policy analysis, and governance equips them to contribute to effective public administration and policymaking.
- **Law:** Many political science majors go on to pursue law degrees. Their background in legal systems, constitutional law, and political theory provides a strong foundation for a career in law, whether as lawyers, judges, or legal scholars.
- **Journalism and Media:** Political science graduates can apply their knowledge to work in journalism and media. They are well-equipped to analyze political events, conduct investigative reporting, and provide informed commentary on political issues.
- **Political Consulting:** Careers in political consulting involve advising political candidates, parties, or interest groups. Political science graduates can leverage their expertise in campaign strategy, public opinion analysis, and voter behavior to help clients make informed decisions.
- **International Relations and Diplomacy:** Understanding the dynamics of international politics and diplomacy is essential in careers related to foreign service, diplomacy, and international organizations. Political science graduates can work as diplomats, foreign affairs analysts, or international development professionals.

#### 2. Civic Engagement:

- **Voting and Advocacy:** Knowledge of political systems and ideologies gained through political science studies enables individuals to make informed decisions when voting and engaging in advocacy efforts. They can assess the positions of candidates and the potential impact of policies.
- **Community Involvement:** Understanding government structures and local politics can motivate individuals to become actively involved in their communities. They may participate in local government meetings, join community organizations, or run for local office.
- **Policy Analysis:** Political science graduates can contribute to the development and evaluation of public policies by conducting research, analyzing data, and providing evidence-based recommendations to policymakers and advocacy groups.

#### 3. Everyday Decision-Making:

- **Critical Thinking:** Political science education emphasizes critical thinking skills, enabling individuals to evaluate information critically, discern biases, and make rational decisions in various aspects of life.
- **Understanding Political Context:** Knowledge of political systems and ideologies helps individuals better understand the political context in which they live. This understanding can inform decisions related to personal values, social issues, and civic engagement.

- **Negotiation and Conflict Resolution:** Political science coursework often includes the study of negotiation and conflict resolution, skills that are valuable in both personal and professional relationships.

The principles and knowledge gained from studying political science are not limited to specific careers or political involvement; they are broadly applicable to a wide range of situations. Additionally, political science research often delves into normative questions about justice, ethics, and governance (Gerring & Yesnowitz, 2006), providing a foundation for ethical decision-making in various contexts.

### **Career Paths for Political Science Graduates**

Individuals with a background in political science have access to a diverse range of career paths and job opportunities across multiple sectors (Lowi, 1992). These opportunities are a result of the valuable skills acquired during their academic journey, including critical thinking, research, analysis, and effective communication. Here are some of the career paths and job opportunities available to individuals with a background in political science: One common career path for political science graduates is that of a public policy analyst. These professionals are responsible for researching and analyzing government policies, assessing their impact, and making recommendations for policy improvements (Gerring & Yesnowitz, 2006). Public policy analysts work in various settings, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, think tanks, and research institutions. Their knowledge of political systems and their ability to conduct rigorous policy analysis are essential for success in this field.

Government positions at the local, state, or federal levels are also a viable option for political science graduates (Easton, 1985). These roles encompass a wide range of responsibilities, including public administration, city management, and public affairs. Graduates can work as legislative aides, policy advisors, or public relations specialists in government agencies and elected officials' offices, contributing to the functioning of government and public service. Many political science majors choose to further their education by attending law school and pursuing careers in the legal field (Lowi, 1992). These individuals can become lawyers, judges, paralegals, legal researchers, or legal consultants. A strong understanding of constitutional law and legal systems acquired during their political science studies serves as a solid foundation for success in legal professions. For those with a keen interest in global affairs and diplomacy, careers in international relations may be appealing (Dryzek & Leonard, 1988). Such professionals may work for foreign services, international organizations like the United Nations, or as diplomats. Proficiency in international relations theories and geopolitics is invaluable in this field, as it enables individuals to navigate complex international dynamics.

Political consulting is another avenue where political science graduates can make a significant impact (Easton, 1985). Political consultants offer guidance to political candidates, parties, or interest groups. They play a crucial role in campaign strategy, public opinion analysis, and communication planning, helping their clients make informed decisions during election cycles. Non-profit organizations dedicated to advocacy and policy change often seek political science graduates to fill roles such as advocates, policy analysts, or program coordinators (Gerring & Yesnowitz, 2006). Their understanding of government structures and policy processes positions them well for effecting change through these organizations. In academia and research, some political science majors choose to pursue careers as professors or researchers (Easton, 1985). They engage in teaching and conduct research on political theory, government, and related fields. Advanced degrees, such as a Ph.D., are often required for university positions, where they contribute to the education and intellectual growth of future leaders and scholars.

Political science graduates can also enter the field of journalism and media (Easton, 1985). They can work as journalists, political reporters, or media analysts, utilizing their background to analyze political events, conduct investigative reporting, and provide informed commentary on political issues. Corporate and business roles are another option, particularly in areas like public relations, corporate social responsibility, and government affairs (Easton, 1985). Their understanding of government regulations and policies is highly relevant in these positions, where they can help organizations navigate the intersection of politics and business. Finally, think tanks

and research institutions employ political scientists to conduct research, publish reports, and provide policy recommendations (Lowi, 1992). These professionals work on a wide range of issues, from foreign policy to social justice, contributing to informed policy discussions and decision-making processes. Political science education plays a pivotal role in fostering informed and engaged citizens who are well-prepared to actively participate in democratic processes and advocate for meaningful change. This importance is underscored by the discipline's historical development, its evolving focus on normative questions, and its impact on shaping individuals into knowledgeable and responsible participants in the political sphere.

First and foremost, the historical development of political science, as discussed by scholars like Lowi (1992) and Easton (1985), reflects a deep-rooted commitment to understanding political systems and governance. Over the years, political science has evolved to encompass various subfields, including comparative politics, international relations, and political theory. This comprehensive approach equips students with a multifaceted understanding of political structures, ideologies, and processes, enabling them to navigate the complexities of the political world. Moreover, political science education provides individuals with the analytical tools and critical thinking skills necessary to assess political information critically. In an era of information overload and misinformation, the ability to evaluate sources, discern biases, and analyze political events becomes increasingly crucial. This analytical skill set empowers citizens to make informed decisions, whether in the voting booth, in advocacy efforts, or in everyday life. Political science also encourages a normative turn, as noted by Gerring and Yesnowitz (2006), by delving into ethical and normative questions related to justice, equity, and governance. This aspect of political science education not only imparts knowledge of political systems but also fosters a sense of civic responsibility and a commitment to values such as fairness, equality, and human rights. Students learn to engage in discussions about the ethical implications of policies and advocate for changes that align with their normative beliefs.

Furthermore, the emphasis on research and data analysis within political science equips students with the tools to conduct empirical investigations into political phenomena. This research-oriented approach enables citizens to engage in evidence-based advocacy and policymaking. By gathering data, analyzing trends, and evaluating the impact of policies, individuals can make compelling arguments for change and contribute to evidence-driven policy discussions. In essence, political science education serves as a catalyst for active civic engagement and meaningful participation in democratic processes. It empowers individuals to be not just passive observers of politics but informed, critical thinkers who can actively advocate for policies that align with their values and the greater good. It equips citizens with the knowledge, skills, and ethical grounding needed to effect positive change in their communities, nations, and the world at large. Political science education is of paramount importance in fostering informed and engaged citizens who are well-equipped to participate in democratic processes and advocate for meaningful change. Its historical evolution, normative focus, analytical rigor, and research-oriented approach collectively contribute to shaping individuals into responsible, knowledgeable, and active participants in the political arena. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the value of political science education in promoting democratic values and effective civic engagement cannot be overstated.

#### **Global Problem-Solving, Conflict Resolution, and Policy Shaping**

Political science concepts and skills have played a pivotal role in addressing global issues, resolving conflicts, and shaping public policies in various contexts. Here are specific examples and case studies that illustrate the application of political science in these areas:

Political science concepts such as power-sharing, consociationalism, and conflict resolution played a crucial role in the Northern Ireland Peace Process. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998, facilitated by political scientists and diplomats, established a framework for inclusive governance and ended decades of sectarian violence. The study of political transitions and democratization was instrumental in understanding and supporting South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. Political scientists and international observers contributed to the negotiation process and the design of democratic institutions.



Political science concepts of international cooperation, negotiation, and global governance have been vital in addressing climate change. The Paris Agreement of 2015, which aims to limit global warming, resulted from extensive diplomatic efforts and negotiations informed by political science research on international environmental cooperation. Political scientists have examined the structure and functioning of the United Nations Security Council, contributing to discussions on its reform and effectiveness in addressing global security challenges.

Political science has played a significant role in shaping public policies, including healthcare reform. Research on policy analysis, interest groups, and public opinion informed the development of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in the United States. Comparative political science has been essential in studying and understanding the welfare state policies of Scandinavian countries. These policies, characterized by social welfare, education, and healthcare provisions, have been influenced by political science research on social democracy and policy design. Political science scholars have contributed to the study of international criminal justice and the establishment of the ICC. Their research on international law, human rights, and transitional justice has informed the work of the ICC in prosecuting individuals for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

Political science concepts of human rights and international norms played a role in the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This foundational document has since influenced global human rights discourse and policy. Political science methods, including polling and survey research, are routinely used to analyze public opinion and election outcomes. These analyses help political scientists, candidates, and policymakers understand voter behavior and design effective election strategies. Political science concepts of nationalism, populism, and EU integration were applied to analyze and understand the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom. Researchers examined voter motivations and the implications of the referendum's outcome for the UK and the European Union.

Political science concepts and skills have had a profound impact on addressing global issues, resolving conflicts, and shaping public policies. Whether through conflict resolution, global governance, public policy development, human rights, or election analysis, political science has provided valuable insights and guidance for policymakers, diplomats, and scholars working to address complex challenges and advance the common good. These examples highlight the practical and analytical contributions of political science to real-world issues and decision-making.

### **The Enduring Value of Political Science-Critical Thinking and Lifelong Skills**

Political science is a subject that offers enduring value by equipping individuals with critical thinking, research, and analytical skills that prove invaluable throughout their lives, regardless of their chosen career paths. This enduring value is rooted in the foundational principles and knowledge that political science imparts, which extend far beyond the confines of political careers or academic pursuits. Drawing insights from relevant scholarly references, this advocacy underscores the long-lasting benefits of studying political science. Critical thinking is a cornerstone of political science education, and it extends well beyond the realm of politics. The discipline encourages students to question assumptions, examine evidence, and consider multiple perspectives. These critical thinking skills are transferable to virtually any field or endeavor. Whether making informed decisions in personal life, assessing complex issues in the workplace, or engaging in civic participation, individuals who have honed their critical thinking abilities through the study of political science are better equipped to navigate the challenges they encounter.

Moreover, political science fosters research and analytical skills that are essential in a rapidly evolving world. The ability to gather, analyze, and synthesize data is indispensable in an age of information overload. Political science coursework emphasizes empirical research, data interpretation, and the development of evidence-based arguments. These skills not only serve students well in academia but also in diverse career paths where informed decision-making, problem-solving, and effective communication are valued. The enduring value of political science is also evident in its capacity to cultivate an informed and engaged citizenry. By understanding the complexities of political systems, government structures, and policymaking processes, individuals become active participants in their communities and nations. They are better equipped to critically

evaluate political discourse, engage in civic activities, and contribute to the democratic process. This engagement extends beyond voting—it encompasses involvement in local governance, advocacy for social and political change, and a commitment to upholding democratic values.

The references cited in this advocacy underscore the historical and disciplinary foundations of political science. They highlight the evolution of the field and the ongoing relevance of its principles. Lowi (1992) and Dryzek and Leonard (1988) discuss the historical and disciplinary dimensions of political science, emphasizing how the subject has evolved over time. Gerring and Yesnowitz (2006) suggest a normative turn in political science, emphasizing its engagement with ethical and moral questions, further enhancing its relevance beyond traditional political arenas. Easton (1985) provides insights into the past and present of political science in the United States, illustrating its evolution and adaptation to changing political landscapes.

## CONCLUSION

The practical value of political science extends far beyond the confines of the classroom, influencing and enriching various aspects of our lives. Through the exploration of real-world applications, diverse career opportunities, civic engagement, illustrative examples, and the encouragement of lifelong learning, it becomes evident that political science plays a pivotal role in shaping informed, responsible, and engaged citizens. As demonstrated, the knowledge and skills acquired through the study of political science empower individuals to make informed decisions in their personal lives, advocate for change in their communities, and contribute to broader societal advancements. Whether pursuing careers in public policy, law, international relations, or other fields, individuals with a background in political science are well-equipped to address complex challenges and promote positive change. In an ever-changing global landscape, political science remains a relevant and indispensable subject that not only enhances individual opportunities but also contributes to the betterment of societies worldwide. Thus, it is essential to recognize and appreciate the enduring practical value of political science as we navigate the complexities of our modern world.

## REFERENCES

- Hunold, C. (2001). Corporatism, pluralism, and democracy: Toward a deliberative theory of bureaucratic accountability. *Governance*, 14(2), 151-167.
- S? derbaum, P., & Brown, J. (2011). Pluralism and democracy in political economics. *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, 2(3), 240-243.
- Adelman, S. (1998). Constitutionalism, pluralism and democracy in Africa. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 30(42), 73-88.
- Lijphart, A. (1996). The puzzle of Indian democracy: A consociational interpretation. *American political science review*, 90(2), 258-268.
- Kohli, A. (Ed.). (2001). *The success of India's democracy* (Vol. 6). Cambridge University Press.
- Rudolph, S. H., & Rudolph, L. I. (2002). New Dimensions of Indian Democracy. *J. Democracy*, 13, 52.
- Jayal, N. G. (2007). Democracy in India. *OUP Catalogue*.
- Sarkar, S. (2001). Indian democracy: the historical inheritance. *The success of India's Democracy*, 23-46.
- Dhar, P. N. (2018). Indira Gandhi the 'Emergency' and Indian Democracy. Oxford.
- Rudolph, L. I., & Rudolph, S. H. (2008). *Explaining Indian democracy: a fifty-year perspective, 1956-2006* (Vol. 1). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Varshney, A. (2007). India's democratic challenge. *Foreign Aff.*, 86, 93.
- Kohli, A. (Ed.). (2014). *India's democracy: an analysis of changing state-society relations* (Vol. 913). Princeton University Press.

- Goodin, R. E., & Klingemann, H. D. (1996). Political science: The discipline. *A new handbook of political science*, 3-49.
- Wahlke, J. C. (1979). Pre-Behavioralism in political science. *American Political Science Review*, 73(1), 9-31.
- Lowi, T. J. (1992). The state in political science: How we became what we study. *American Political Science Review*, 86(1), 1-7.
- Dryzek, J. S., & Leonard, S. T. (1988). History and discipline in political science. *American Political Science Review*, 82(4), 1245-1260.
- Gerring, J., & Yesnowitz, J. (2006). A normative turn in political science?. *Polity*, 38, 101-133.
- Easton, D. (1985). Political science in the United States: Past and present. *International Political Science Review*, 6(1), 133-152.