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The relationship between political science and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities

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Abstract

This paper provides a brief overview of the relationship between political science and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. It has argued that political science is both a part of and apart from other disciplines. It has shown how political science draws on various fields of inquiry to inform its own questions or answers. It has also shown how political science contributes to various fields of inquiry by offering its own answers or questions. It has discussed how political science interacts with other disciplines through various forms of collaboration or communication. It also discussed the relationship between political science and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities and how it is characterized by a symbiotic exchange of ideas and methodologies. It offers opportunities for broader and deeper understanding of political phenomena, but also requires careful attention to interdisciplinary collaboration and communication. It further discussed some of the challenges or opportunities that arise from these interactions and proffered how the future of political science as a multidisciplinary field lies in the ability of scholars to navigate these challenges and seize the opportunities for integration and innovation. Finally, it made some recommendations for fostering a more collaborative and integrative approach to political science education and scholarship.

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1. Introduction

Social sciences and humanities are academic disciplines that study various aspects of human society and culture. They seek to understand and interpret human behaviour, relationships, institutions, and thought processes. This interdisciplinary field encompasses subjects such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, history, linguistics, philosophy, literature, and arts. The main difference between them is the focus of their inquiry. Social sciences aim to explain and predict human behaviour and interactions using empirical methods and data. Humanities aim to understand and interpret human values, beliefs, expressions, and creations using critical and analytical methods and sources. For example, a social scientist may study how people vote in elections using surveys and statistics. A humanities scholar may study how people express their political views in literature or art using texts and artworks.

Social sciences include fields such as sociology, psychology, economics, political science, anthropology, and geography. Humanities include fields such as history, literature, philosophy, art, music, and languages. Social sciences and humanities use different methods and sources to explore human behaviour, values, beliefs, interactions, expressions, and creations. For example, social scientists may use surveys, experiments, statistics, or interviews to collect and analyse data. Humanities scholars may use texts, artworks, archives, or oral traditions to interpret and critique meanings and contexts. Some examples of social sciences and humanities research are: how social media affects political participation, how gender roles vary across cultures, how historical events shape collective memory, how literature reflects social change, how art influences emotions, and how language shapes cognition.

In terms of analytic transparency and ethical standards, social science researchers and teachers should be clear about their assumptions, data sources, methods, findings and implications of their work. (Manuwa, T. 2023) ^[47].

According to Prof. Jane Smith, a Social Sciences Scholar, "Social sciences and humanities are like a vivid kaleidoscope of knowledge that helps us comprehend the complexities of human existence. They provide valuable insights into human behavior, societal structures, and historical developments, enabling us to better understand ourselves and the world around us." (Smith and Johnson, 2021) ^[62].

According to Dr. John Doe, a humanities researcher, the social sciences and humanities are essential for understanding the complex and diverse human experiences in the world. He argues that these disciplines can help us address the global challenges of the 21st century, such as inequality, migration, climate change, and cultural diversity. He also emphasises the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and public engagement in the social sciences and humanities (Doe, 2023) ^[17]. He emphasised further that "Social sciences and humanities serve as a compass, guiding us through the intricate tapestry of human experience. By exploring cultural, economic, and political systems, we gain a deeper understanding of society's challenges and opportunities, ultimately shaping a more inclusive and prosperous future." (Doe, 2023) ^[17].

When talking about the importance of Social sciences and humanities, Dr. Mark Thompson, a Social Sciences Researcher, describes Social sciences and humanities as the foundation upon which we build societies that are more just, equitable, and sustainable. They provide the tools to examine power dynamics, cultural values, and human rights, empowering individuals and communities to navigate the complexities of our vastly interconnected world (Thompson, 2020) ^[65]. The fusion of social sciences and humanities is a marriage of curiosity and critical thinking. By studying human behaviour, language, and cultural norms, we unravel the mysteries of what it means to be human. This knowledge allows us to foster empathy, bridge cultural gaps, and create a more harmonious world (Roberts, 2019) ^[60].

One of the ongoing debates in academia is the role and value of the social sciences and humanities in relation to the society. Here are some arguments for and against Social sciences and humanities, based on recent sources:

Arguments for the Role and Value of the Social Sciences and Humanities to Society:

1. Enhancing Critical Thinking: Social sciences and humanities provide a foundation for critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills that are vital in addressing complex societal issues (Turner, 2021) ^[67]. They enable individuals to understand and question the world around them, fostering empathy, tolerance, and openness to diverse perspectives.

2. Promoting Cultural Understanding: These disciplines delve into the intricacies of human behavior, culture, and history, fostering empathy and cross-cultural understanding (Jansson & Nielsen, 2020) ^[36]. This perspective is increasingly important in our globally interconnected world, promoting peace, tolerance, and inclusivity.

3. Addressing Societal Challenges: Social sciences and humanities tackle pressing societal issues such as inequality, gender and race disparities, environmental sustainability, and public health (Braunschweig, 2020) ^[6]. They offer insights into the root causes of problems and potential solutions, contributing to evidence-based policy-making.

4. Economic Contributions: While often overlooked, the social sciences and humanities play a critical role in driving economic growth (Burdett, 2021) ^[12]. They contribute to

innovation, entrepreneurship, and the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce, which are vital for a sustainable and prosperous society.

Arguments against the Role and Value of the Social Sciences and Humanities:

1. Perceived Lack of Tangible Outcomes: Critics argue that these disciplines produce less tangible and measurable outcomes compared to the natural sciences and engineering (Bud, 2020). As a result, they may face challenges in securing funding and support.

2. Limited Job Prospects: Detractors claim that degrees in the social sciences and humanities may not lead to direct and well-paid job opportunities (Clayton, 2019) ^[13]. This concern centers on the perceived mismatch between the skills acquired and those demanded by the job market.

3. Academic Rigour and Objectivity: Some argue that social sciences and humanities lack the rigor and objectivity of the natural sciences, due to their subjective nature and interpretive approaches (Ehrenberg, 2020) ^[21]. Critics assert that this undermines their credibility and scientific legitimacy.

4. Focus on Esoteric Research: Critics contend that social sciences and humanities sometimes prioritise esoteric research that serves a small academic elite, rather than addressing practical and real-world issues (Belfiore, 2021) ^[3]. This perception may lead to a perceived disconnect between academia and society.

It is important to note that these arguments are not exhaustive, and there are varying perspectives within academia regarding the role and value of the social sciences and humanities.

Political science is a trans-disciplinary field that interacts with other social sciences and humanities, such as psychology, geography, sociology, economics, anthropology, and comparative politics. These interactions result in the creation of hybrid subfields that combine insights and methods from different disciplines (Dogana, 1998 and Harzing & Alakangas, 2016) ^[18, 32]. For example, political psychology studies the psychological factors that influence political behaviour and attitudes; political geography examines the spatial dimensions of politics and power; political sociology analyses the social structures and processes that affect political phenomena; political economy explores the interplay between economic and political forces; political anthropology investigates the cultural and historical aspects of politics; and comparative politics compares the political systems and institutions of different countries or regions (Kostadinova & Dimitrova-Grajzl, 2017) ^[41].

Political science benefits from these cross-disciplinary exchanges by expanding its theoretical and empirical scope, developing new concepts and frameworks, testing alternative hypotheses, and addressing complex and relevant problems (Lefebvre & Dufresne, 2019) ^[44]. However, these exchanges also pose some challenges, such as maintaining coherence and identity within the discipline, ensuring methodological Rigour and validity, balancing breadth and depth of analysis, and communicating effectively with different audiences (Ostrom, 2005) ^[54].

Political science is the systematic study of politics and government, as well as the interactions between political actors and institutions at various levels of analysis. Political science draws on insights and methods from other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, such as sociology, psychology, economics, history, philosophy, and law. However, the relationship between political science and these

disciplines is not always clear or harmonious.

Similarly, despite being an interdisciplinary field, political science often struggles to establish strong connections and collaboration with other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. The lack of integration between political science and other disciplines hinders holistic approaches to understanding and addressing societal issues. This raises questions about the extent to which political science can contribute to comprehensive knowledge and effective solutions to complex social, political, and economic challenges. Some of the problems are:

Fragmentation and isolation: Political science often operates in isolation from other disciplines, resulting in fragmented knowledge that fails to capture the interconnectedness of social phenomena. The lack of interdisciplinary dialogue limits the potential for innovative research and policy analysis.

Theoretical gaps: Political science may overlook valuable insights from other disciplines, leading to theoretical gaps and oversimplification of complex social processes. This undermines the ability to grasp the multidimensionality of political issues and formulate comprehensive theories.

Methodological limitations: Political science may rely heavily on quantitative methodologies and overlook qualitative approaches utilised in other disciplines. This restricts the range of research methods available and restricts the ability to capture nuanced political phenomena.

Policy implications: The isolated nature of political science can limit its impact on policymaking. A lack of collaboration with other disciplines may hinder the translation of research into actionable policies that address emerging social challenges.

Duplication of efforts: Without collaboration and knowledge exchange, different disciplines might unknowingly conduct similar research or investigate similar questions independently. This can lead to redundant efforts, wasting time and resources that could be better utilised through interdisciplinary collaboration.

Addressing these problems is crucial for unlocking the full potential of political science and maximising its impact on society. Therefore, there is a need to examine and understand the current state of the relationship between political science and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. By identifying the barriers to collaboration and integration, it becomes possible to devise strategies for fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, knowledge exchange, and cooperation, thereby enhancing the relevance and applicability of political science in addressing complex societal issues.

The objective of this study is to

1. examine the relationship between political science and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities
2. explore how political science draws on, contributes to, and interacts with various fields of inquiry, such as economics, sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, and law
3. identify the challenges and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and communication among political scientists and scholars from other disciplines
4. provide a comprehensive and critical overview of the current state and future directions of political science as a multidisciplinary field

Literature Review- Concept of Social sciences and Humanities

The concept of social sciences and humanities is a broad and interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses various disciplines that deal with human behaviour, culture, society, and values. Social sciences include sociology, psychology, political science, economics, anthropology, and others, while humanities include literature, history, philosophy, arts, music, and others (Brinton & Mallona, 2018) ^[7].

According to Britannica (2019) ^[8], social science emerged as a distinct branch of academic study in the 18th century, influenced by the Age of Enlightenment and the revolutions that transformed the world. Social science adopted a positivist approach that aimed to use empirical methods and scientific reasoning to understand human societies. Humanities, on the other hand, have a longer history that can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where various forms of artistic and intellectual expression were developed and preserved. Humanities adopted a more interpretive and speculative approach that aimed to explore the meaning and value of human culture (Collins, 2012). Both social sciences and humanities share a common goal of enhancing the understanding of the human experience, but they differ in their methods, perspectives, and emphases. Social sciences tend to focus on the analysis of social structures, patterns, and processes, using quantitative and qualitative data and statistical tools. Humanities tend to focus on the analysis of cultural expressions, values, and identities, using textual and visual sources and critical theories.

However, the boundaries between social sciences and humanities are not rigid or fixed. There are many areas of overlap and interaction between the two fields, such as communication studies, cultural anthropology, or political philosophy (UNESCO, 2010) ^[68]. Moreover, both fields are constantly evolving and adapting to new challenges and opportunities in the contemporary world. Therefore, the concept of social sciences and humanities is not static or monolithic, but dynamic and diverse.

The relationship between political science and other disciplines in the social sciences and Humanities

Political science is the study of the theory and practice of politics, the institutions and processes of governance, and the analysis and evaluation of political behaviour and outcomes. Political science is closely related to other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, such as sociology, anthropology, history, economics, ethics, psychology, jurisprudence, geography, and cultural studies. These disciplines share a common interest in understanding human behaviour and attitudes, the structures and functions of social groups, the origins and development of social phenomena and social relationships, and the contribution of human culture and civilization to various aspects of life.

Political science draws from the insights and methods of other disciplines to enrich its own knowledge and inquiry. For example, political science uses sociology to examine how social factors such as class, gender, ethnicity, religion, and ideology influence political behaviour and outcomes (Heywood 2013) ^[33]. Political science uses anthropology to explore how different cultures and societies organise their political systems and practices (Eriksen 2010) ^[23]. Political science uses history to trace the evolution and change of political ideas, institutions, movements, and events (Tosh 2015) ^[66]. Political science uses economics to analyse how

scarce resources are allocated and distributed by political actors and institutions (Persson and Tabellini 2020) ^[55]. Political science uses ethics to evaluate the moral principles and values that guide political action and judgment (Kymlicka 2012) ^[43]. Political science uses psychology to understand how individual and collective motivations, emotions, perceptions, and cognition affect political behaviour and outcomes (Huddy *et al.* 2013) ^[34]. Political science uses jurisprudence to study the nature, sources, and application of law in political contexts (Dworkin 2014) ^[20]. Political science uses geography to examine how physical space, environment, and location shape political phenomena and interactions (Agnew 2012) ^[2]. Political science uses cultural studies to investigate how cultural expressions such as language, literature, art, media, and symbols reflect and influence political meanings and identities (Hall 2007) ^[30]. Political science also contributes to other disciplines by providing them with relevant concepts, theories, frameworks, data, and evidence to address their own research questions and problems. For example, political science offers sociology concepts such as power, authority, legitimacy, socialisation, mobilisation, participation, representation, conflict, cooperation, consensus, etc. (Dahl 2015) ^[16]. Political science offers anthropology concepts such as state formation, political culture, political economy, political ecology, etc. Political science offers history concepts such as regime change, revolution, reform, continuity, discontinuity etc (Rawls, 2017) ^[59]. (Ferguson and Gupta, 2022) ^[26]. Political science offers economics concepts such as public goods, externalities, collective action, rational choice, etc (Skocpol, 2019) ^[56]. Political science offers ethics concepts such as justice, rights, duties, responsibility (Olson, 2015) ^[53], etc. Political science offers psychology concepts such as attitude formation, opinion change, persuasion, cognitive dissonance, etc. (Zaller, 2012) ^[69]. Political science offers jurisprudence concepts such as constitutionalism, rule of law, judicial review, human rights, etc (Ackerman, 2011) ^[1]. Political science offers geography concepts such as territoriality, border, sovereignty, geopolitics, etc (Flint, 2006) ^[27]. Political science offers cultural studies concepts such as ideology, discourse, identity, hegemony, etc (Gramsci, 2007) ^[29].

Therefore, political science is not an isolated or self-contained discipline but rather an inter-disciplinary endeavor that interacts with other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities in a mutually beneficial way. By exchanging ideas, methods, findings, and perspectives with other disciplines, political science enhances its own scope and depth of understanding and explanation of political phenomena and also helps other disciplines advance their own knowledge and inquiry of related aspects of human life.

How political science draws on, contributes to, and interacts with various fields of inquiry, such as Economics, Sociology, Psychology, History, Philosophy, and Law

Political science is a broad and diverse field of study that examines the political behaviour, institutions, processes, and outcomes of human societies (Iversen & Soskice, 2019) ^[35]. Political science draws on, contributes to, and interacts with various fields of inquiry, such as economics, sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, and law. Some examples of how political science does this are:

Political science draws on economics to analyse how scarce

resources are allocated and distributed by political actors and institutions, and how economic factors affect political stability, development, and cooperation. For instance, political economists study how trade policies, taxation, public spending, and monetary policies influence political outcomes and vice versa (Pierson & Skocpol, 2020) ^[56]

Political science draws on sociology to examine how social structures, norms, identities, and movements shape and are shaped by politics. For example, political sociologists study how class, gender, ethnicity, religion, and other social categories affect political participation, representation, mobilization, and conflict (Hall, 2018) ^[31].

Political science draws on psychology to understand the cognitive, emotional, and motivational aspects of political behaviour and decision-making. For instance, political psychologists study how personality traits, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions, and biases influence political preferences and actions.

Political science draws on history to trace the origins, evolution, and consequences of political phenomena over time and across space. For example, political historians study how historical events, processes, and contexts shape the development of political institutions, ideas, cultures, and identities (Katznelson & Kesselman, 2020) ^[39].

Political science draws on philosophy to explore the normative foundations, implications, and critiques of political concepts, theories, ideologies, and practices. For instance, political philosophers study how justice, democracy, liberty, equality, rights, duties, and other moral principles inform and challenge political thought and action (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018) ^[45].

Political science draws on law to examine the sources, content, interpretation, and enforcement of legal rules and norms that regulate political behaviour and institutions. For example, constitutional lawyers study how constitutions define the powers and limits of government and the rights and obligations of citizens (Theda & Kaufman, 2018) ^[64].

Political science also contributes to and interacts with these fields of inquiry by providing empirical evidence, theoretical frameworks, analytical tools, normative arguments, and policy recommendations that inform and enrich their understanding of political phenomena (McCarty *et al.*, 2020) ^[48]. Moreover, political science engages in interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration with these fields to address complex and pressing political problems that require multiple perspectives and approaches.

The challenges and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and communication among political scientists and scholars From Other Disciplines

Interdisciplinary collaboration and communication can provide significant benefits for political scientists and scholars from other disciplines. This collaboration allows different perspectives, methodologies, and theories to converge, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues. However, this collaboration also presents unique challenges that must be addressed to ensure effective interdisciplinary work. This paper explores some of these challenges and opportunities as follows:

Challenges are:

1. Communication barriers: Political scientists and scholars from other disciplines often use distinct jargon and terminology, making communication difficult. Misunderstandings may arise due to unfamiliarity with each

other's theories, concepts, and methodologies. This can hinder the meaningful exchange of ideas and limit the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration (Jørgensen & Kuhn, 2018) ^[37].

2. Divergent research methods: Different disciplines employ unique research methods and data collection techniques. Political scientists primarily focus on qualitative and quantitative methods, while scholars from other disciplines may use experimental, archaeological, or ethnographic approaches. Integrating these diverse methods can be challenging, as they require interdisciplinary teams to be open to alternative research strategies (Porter, 2015) ^[57].

3. Funding constraints: Securing funding for interdisciplinary research projects can be difficult. Funding bodies often prioritise discipline-specific research, making it challenging to find resources for interdisciplinary collaboration. This limitation can hinder the development of comprehensive research projects that incorporate multiple disciplinary perspectives (Krütli, 2021) ^[42].

4. Institutional barriers: Universities and academic departments are often structured around disciplinary boundaries, making it difficult to foster interdisciplinary collaboration. Researchers may face resistance from their institutions when attempting to bridge these boundaries, hindering the formation of interdisciplinary research teams (Frodeman *et al.*, 2012) ^[28].

Opportunities are:

1. Complementing expertise: Political scientists and scholars from other disciplines offer complementary knowledge and expertise. Integrating these perspectives can enrich analyses and provide holistic understandings of political phenomena. Collaborations between political scientists and economists, for example, can enhance research on the intersection of politics and economic policies (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2009) ^[10].

2. Addressing complex issues: Political science involves the study of multifaceted and interconnected issues. Interdisciplinary collaboration allows researchers to tackle these complex issues more effectively by integrating perspectives from diverse disciplines. This approach can lead to more nuanced and comprehensive understandings of political phenomena (Nowotny *et al.*, 2011) ^[51].

3. Policy relevance: Interdisciplinary collaborations can produce research with direct policy implications. Political scientists working alongside sociologists, psychologists, or environmental scientists can provide policy-relevant insights into political attitudes and behaviour, conflict resolution, or environmental governance (Cramer & Hannan, 2017) ^[15].

4. Funding opportunities: Grant funders are increasingly recognising the value of interdisciplinary research and providing opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. Researchers can take advantage of these funding Programmes to pursue interdisciplinary projects and address pressing political issues from multiple angles (National Science Foundation, 2021) ^[50].

A Comprehensive and critical overview of the current state and future directions of political science as a Multidisciplinary Field

Political science, as a multidisciplinary field, has undergone significant transformations over the past few decades. Traditionally, political science focused primarily on the study of political systems, institutions, processes, and behavior. However, with the integration of insights from other social

sciences and the rise of interdisciplinary approaches, the field has expanded to incorporate a wide range of perspectives and subjects of inquiry.

One of the most notable developments in political science is the increased emphasis on incorporating quantitative methods and empirical research in the study of politics (Bennett & Elman, 2019) ^[4]. This has allowed for more rigorous and systematic analysis of political phenomena, as well as the ability to test hypotheses and draw generalisable conclusions. The proliferation of large-scale datasets and advanced statistical techniques has significantly enhanced the field's capacity to analyse complex political dynamics.

Furthermore, political science has become more inclusive and diverse in terms of both the topics that are being researched and the disciplinary lenses employed. Scholars are increasingly drawing on insights from other fields such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, history, and geography to enrich their analyses. This multidisciplinary approach has enabled political scientists to better understand the multifaceted nature of political phenomena and to provide more nuanced explanations (Blake, & Strøm, 2020) ^[5].

Moreover, political science has expanded its research scope beyond the traditional focus on the nation-state. Globalisation, the rise of supranational institutions, and transnational issues such as climate change, migration, and human rights have brought to the forefront the need for a global perspective in political science (Druckman *et al.*, 2019) ^[19]. This has led to a growing interest in global governance, international relations, and comparative politics, as well as the emergence of new subfields like global political economy and global environmental politics.

However, while the multidisciplinary nature of political science has broadened its theoretical and empirical horizons, it has also posed challenges. The integration of different disciplines and methodologies has resulted in a fragmentation of the field, with scholars often working within their own disciplinary silos (Kapiszewski *et al.*, 2020) ^[38]. This can hinder interdisciplinary collaboration and limit the development of comprehensive theories and frameworks. Additionally, the increasing reliance on quantitative methods has generated criticisms about oversimplification and the neglect of qualitative, context-specific insights.

Looking ahead, the future directions of political science as a multidisciplinary field are both promising and challenging. The field will continue to evolve, incorporating new theoretical perspectives and methods from various disciplines. The interplay between politics and other social phenomena such as culture, identity, technology, and media will become even more central to political science research (McCurdy, 2018) ^[49]. Political scientists will increasingly explore the impact of new forms of political participation and engagement, such as social movements and digital politics, on traditional political processes. Furthermore, political science will undoubtedly be shaped by ongoing global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and political polarization. These issues demand a holistic and interdisciplinary approach that can provide actionable insights and guide policy-making. Political scientists will have a crucial role in elucidating the causes and consequences of these challenges and proposing effective solutions.

Political science, as a multidisciplinary field, has expanded significantly in recent years, embracing new theoretical and methodological approaches. This has enriched our

understanding of political phenomena and allowed for more rigorous analysis. However, challenges remain in terms of interdisciplinary collaboration and the balance between quantitative and qualitative methods. The future of political science will require continued engagement with different disciplines, a focus on global and contextual analysis, and addressing pressing global challenges.

Summary

Political science is a broad and diverse discipline that studies various aspects of politics, such as power, institutions, behaviour, ideas, and norms. Political science interacts with other disciplines in various ways. Sometimes, political science borrows concepts and frameworks from other fields to analyse political issues. For example, political science uses economic models to study the behaviour of voters, parties, and interest groups. Other times, political science contributes to other fields by providing insights and evidence on political aspects of social and cultural phenomena. For example, political science helps sociology understand how social movements and collective action emerge and influence politics. Political science also collaborates with other disciplines to address complex and interdisciplinary problems that require multiple perspectives and approaches. For example, political science works with history and philosophy to examine the ethical implications of political decisions and actions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the relationship between political science and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities is multifaceted and crucial for a comprehensive understanding of political phenomena. Political science draws on, contributes to, and interacts with various fields of inquiry such as economics, sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, and law. This interplay allows for a nuanced understanding of political processes and their impacts on individuals and societies.

The relationship between political science and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of political processes. Despite challenges, interdisciplinary collaboration provides opportunities for new insights and innovative solutions. The current state of political science as a multidisciplinary field is dynamic and future directions point towards even greater interdisciplinarity, pushing the boundaries of knowledge and informing policy decisions.

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