

THE METHODS AND APPROACHES OF POLITICAL SCIENCE INQUIRY AND ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper is a comprehensive study that focuses on understanding the various methods and approaches used in political science research and analysis. It examines the strengths and weaknesses of different methods and approaches, and explores how they contribute to the understanding and explanation of political phenomena. The study evaluates the relevance and applicability of different methods and approaches in addressing specific research questions or problems. It highlights the importance of selecting the most suitable method or approach based on the nature of the research question and the desired outcomes. Additionally, the study analyzes the ethical considerations and challenges associated with the use of different methods and approaches in political science. It delves into the potential ethical dilemmas that researchers may face and provides insights on how to address these challenges responsibly. Overall, this study serves as a valuable resource for political science researchers and analysts, offering a comprehensive overview of the field's methods and approaches. It informs decision-making processes by providing a framework for selecting the most appropriate method or approach based on specific research needs while considering ethical considerations.

Keywords: Political science inquiry, Political science analysis, methods, research design and researcher

Background to the Study

Political science is a social science discipline that studies the theory and practice of politics and government at the local, national, and international levels. It encompasses a wide range of subfields, including comparative politics, international relations, political theory, public administration, and public policy. Political scientists seek to understand and analyze political behaviour, institutions, and processes, as well as to develop theories and concepts that explain political phenomena. Political science is distinct from political philosophy, which is more concerned with normative and rational questions about politics and values (Lijphart, 2019).

Meanwhile, Political science inquiry and analysis is the process of using systematic and rigorous methods to study political phenomena and answer empirical questions. Political scientists use a variety of approaches, such as experiments, case studies, surveys, interviews, narrative analysis, and secondary data analysis, to collect and interpret data and test hypotheses. Some of the key concepts and principles that guide political science inquiry and analysis are embedded in the logic of social science, which seeks to explain causation, or what causes what, in political, social, or economic phenomena. Political scientists use positive research, which describes and explains what is, rather than normative research, which prescribes what ought to be; the role of comparison, which is essential for establishing correlation, temporal sequencing, and ruling out alternative explanations. Comparison can be done across cases (such as countries, regions, or groups), within cases (such as over time or across subunits), or between cases and within cases (such as using a most-similar or most-different design) and finally, the distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods (Kuru, 2019). Quantitative methods use numerical data, statistics, mathematics, and formal theory to draw inferences and insights into key political questions. Qualitative methods on the other hand, use description and observation of non-numerical data, such as texts, images, speeches, or behaviours, to draw inferences and insights into key political questions.

One of the main debates in political science is about the methods and approaches of inquiry and analysis. Some scholars favor a positivist approach, which seeks to test hypotheses and discover causal relationships using quantitative data and statistical techniques (Gerring, 2012). Others prefer an interpretivist approach, which aims to understand the meanings and contexts of political phenomena using qualitative data and

textual analysis (Shapiro *et al.*, 2014). Both approaches have strengths and limitations, and there is no consensus on which one is superior or more scientific.

Positivists argue that their approach is more objective, rigorous and generalizable. They claim that by using numerical data and mathematical models, they can measure and compare political variables across different cases and contexts, and identify patterns and regularities that can explain political outcomes (Marsh & Furlong, 2018). Positivists also contend that their approach is more falsifiable, as they can test their hypotheses against empirical evidence and reject or revise them if they are contradicted by the data. Interpretivists counter that their approach is more nuanced, contextual and reflexive. They assert that by using textual data and discourse analysis, they can capture the meanings and interpretations of political actors and institutions, and understand how they shape and are shaped by their historical and cultural environments (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Interpretivists also maintain that their approach is more critical, as they can question the assumptions and values that underlie political practices and discourses, and expose the power relations and ideologies that influence them.

Political science as a discipline, examines power, governance, and the distribution of resources within societies and it aims to explain how political systems function, how policies are made, and how individuals and groups participate in the political process. The methods and approaches of political science inquiry and analysis are crucial in understanding and studying political phenomena and processes and there several significant aspects related to these methods and approaches according to Marsh & Furlong (2018). These aspects are:

1. Empirical Research: Political scientists use various research methods to such as surveys, interviews, case studies, and statistical analysis to collect data and evidence. Empirical research helps in generating knowledge based on observation and evidence, enabling the development of theories and hypotheses about political phenomena.

2. Comparative Analysis: Political science often employs comparative methods to study political systems and institutions across different countries or regions. By comparing and contrasting various cases, researchers can draw insights about what factors influence political outcomes and understand different political models and their strengths and weaknesses.

3. Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses: Political science inquiry involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis employs statistical methods to measure and analyze large datasets, aiming to identify patterns and relationships between variables. Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, focuses on interpreting meaning, exploring context, and understanding subjective experiences through methods such as interviews, content analysis, or ethnography.

4. Theory Development: Political science inquiry relies on the development and testing of theoretical frameworks. Theories in political science help explain and predict political behaviour, decision-making, and other phenomena. Researchers use deductive or inductive reasoning to develop theories, which are then empirically tested to assess their validity and generalizability.

5. Policy Analysis: Political science inquiry and analysis can contribute to policy development and evaluation. By studying the impact of policy choices, political scientists can provide evidence-based recommendations to improve governance and policy outcomes. They analyze the feasibility, effectiveness, and consequences of policy decisions, assisting policymakers in making informed choices.

6. Disciplinary Collaboration: Political science overlaps with various other disciplines, such as economics, sociology, history, or philosophy. Interdisciplinary collaborations enrich political science inquiry, bringing different perspectives and methodologies to address complex political issues. For example, economists may contribute their expertise on political economy, while sociologists may analyze social movements and political participation. To investigate and explain various political phenomena, political scientists use various methods and approaches such as quantitative, qualitative, comparative, historical, normative, and interpretive. Although, there is no consensus on the best or most appropriate way to conduct political science inquiry and analysis, not applying robust methods, approaches, and theoretical foundations in political science research can result in biased, erroneous, inconsistent, irrelevant, or invalid findings (Marsh & Stoker, 2010). Therefore, to ensure the credibility, reliability, and relevance of political science research, researchers

must diligently adhere to established methodologies, utilize appropriate theoretical frameworks, and remain mindful of potential biases and errors.

Furthermore, political science research entails many challenges and limitations that require careful and rigorous application of methods, approaches, and theoretical foundations to ensure the quality and relevance of the findings. However, by applying appropriate methods, approaches, and theoretical foundations in political science research, political scientists can avoid or minimize the dangers of bias, error, inconsistency, irrelevance, or invalidity and produce valid, reliable, generalizable, comparable, and useful knowledge that can inform and improve political decision-making and practice. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the methods and approaches of political science inquiry and analysis.

Specifically, the paper seeks to:

- i. understand the various methods and approaches used in political science research and analysis;
- ii. examine the strengths and weaknesses of different methods and approaches in political science inquiry;
- iii. explore how these methods and approaches contribute to the understanding and explanation of political phenomena;
- iv. evaluate the relevance and applicability of different methods and approaches in addressing specific research questions or problems;
- v. analyse the ethical considerations and challenges associated with the use of different methods and approaches in political science.

Literature Review-Concept of Political Science Inquiry and Analysis

Political science inquiry and analysis is a field of study that focuses on understanding and explaining political phenomena, institutions, processes, and behaviours. It involves rigorous research methods and theoretical frameworks to explore and examine political issues and topics. Political science inquiry and analysis is grounded in several foundational principles. Firstly, it recognizes the importance of studying power and authority in political systems, whether at the local, national, or international level. Scholars in this field seek to understand how power is acquired, exercised, and contested, and how it shapes political outcomes (Sartori, 2018).

Secondly, political science inquiry and analysis emphasizes the study of institutions, such as governments, parliaments, courts, and international organizations. Institutions play a crucial role in shaping political behaviour and decision-making processes. Understanding their functioning, structure, and dynamics is essential for comprehending political processes and outcomes.

Thirdly, political science inquiry and analysis incorporates the study of political behaviour and attitudes. It explores how individuals and groups form their political preferences, engage in political activities, and participate in political processes.

Political science inquiry and analysis typically involves several key elements. These elements help researchers conduct systematic investigations and generate knowledge about political phenomena like research questions, theory, research design, data collection and data analysis. Moreso, political science inquiry and analysis encompasses a wide range of research approaches and methodologies as hypothesized by Toshkov & Blavoukos (2018). Some commonly used approaches include:

1. Comparative Politics: Comparative politics involves studying political systems, institutions, and behaviours across different countries or regions. It aims to identify similarities, differences, and patterns in political phenomena.

2. International Relations: International relations focuses on the study of interactions between states, non-state actors, and global institutions. It explores issues such as diplomacy, international conflict, cooperation, and global governance.

3. Political Theory: Political theory examines the normative foundations of political systems and ideologies. It explores concepts like justice, democracy, freedom, and equality, seeking to provide theoretical frameworks for understanding political phenomena.

4. Public Policy: Public policy analysis examines the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies. It investigates the factors influencing policy decisions, their impact on society, and the effectiveness of policy interventions.

The Various Methods Used in Political Science Research and Analysis

Political science is the study of the theory and practice of governing, lawmaking, and politicking. Political scientists use various methods and approaches to conduct research and analysis on political phenomena. Some of the most common methods are:

Quantitative data analysis: This method involves measuring and analyzing numerical data using statistical models and mathematics. Quantitative data can be collected through surveys, polls, experiments, or other sources that provide numerical information. Quantitative data analysis can help describe the basic features of a data set, such as the frequency, distribution, correlation, or causation of variables. For example, a political scientist might use quantitative data analysis to examine the relationship between income and voting behaviour, or the effect of campaign spending on election outcomes.

Qualitative data analysis: This method involves identifying and exploring the qualities and meanings of non-numerical data using observation, interpretation, and comparison. Qualitative data can be collected through interviews, focus groups, case studies, document analysis, or other sources that provide textual or visual information. Qualitative data analysis can help understand the how and why of a political phenomenon, such as the motivations, perceptions, or experiences of political actors or groups. For example, a political scientist might use qualitative data analysis to investigate the political culture of a country, or the discourse of a social movement.

Game theory models: This method involves using mathematical models to represent strategic interactions among rational actors in situations of conflict or cooperation. Game theory models can help predict the outcomes and equilibria of political games, such as bargaining, voting, war, or cooperation. Game theory models can also help explain the behaviour and preferences of political actors under different scenarios and assumptions. For example, a political scientist might use game theory models to analyze the incentives and strategies of nuclear deterrence, or the collective action problems of climate change.

Historical analysis: This method involves using historical sources and evidence to reconstruct and explain the past events and processes that shaped the present political reality. Historical analysis can help identify the causes and consequences of political change over time, as well as the continuities and discontinuities of political patterns and trends. Historical analysis can also help contextualize and compare different political cases and periods. For example, a political scientist might use historical analysis to study the origins and development of democracy, or the similarities and differences between revolutions.

Scenarios: This method involves creating plausible stories or narratives about alternative futures based on current trends, uncertainties, and choices. Scenarios can help explore the possible implications and impacts of different political decisions or events on various aspects of society and environment. Scenarios can also help stimulate creativity and imagination among political actors and stakeholders. For example, a political scientist might use scenarios to envision the potential outcomes of a global pandemic, or the challenges and opportunities of a post-carbon world.

These are some of the main methods used in political science research and analysis. However, there are many other methods that can be used depending on the research question, purpose, design, and context. Moreover, these methods are not mutually exclusive or incompatible; rather, they can be combined or integrated to produce more comprehensive and robust political knowledge.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Different Methods and Approaches in Political Science Inquiry

Political science is a broad and diverse discipline that studies the theory and practice of politics, both at the domestic and international levels. Political scientists use different methods and approaches to analyze political phenomena and answer research questions. One of the main distinctions in political science research is between qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods involve collecting and analyzing non-numerical data, such as texts, images, interviews, observations, etc. Quantitative methods involve collecting and analyzing numerical data, such as statistics, surveys, experiments, etc. Both types of methods have

advantages and disadvantages, depending on the research question, the availability of data, the validity and reliability of the measurements, and the generalizability and causality of the findings.

According to Looi Theam Choy (2014), some of the strengths of qualitative methods are:

- i. They can provide rich and detailed information about the context, meaning, and interpretation of political phenomena.
- ii. They can capture the complexity and diversity of political reality and human behaviour.
- iii. They can explore new or emerging topics that have not been studied before or that lack existing theories or hypotheses.
- iv. They can generate new concepts, theories, or frameworks that can guide further research.

Some of the weaknesses of qualitative methods are:

- i. They can be time-consuming and labor-intensive to collect and analyze data.
- ii. They can be influenced by the researcher's subjectivity, bias, or preconceptions.
- iii. They can be difficult to replicate or verify by other researchers.
- iv. They can have limited generalizability or external validity due to small or non-representative samples.

Some of the strengths of quantitative methods are:

- i. They can provide precise and objective measurements of political phenomena using standardized instruments and procedures.
- ii. They can test existing theories or hypotheses using statistical techniques and inferential logic.
- iii. They can handle large amounts of data and produce generalizable or representative results.
- iv. They can establish causal relationships or effects using experimental designs or control variables.

Some of the weaknesses of quantitative methods are:

- i. They can oversimplify or ignore the context, meaning, and interpretation of political phenomena.
- ii. They can miss the complexity and diversity of political reality and human behaviour.
- iii. They can rely on existing or predefined concepts, theories, or frameworks that may not capture the novelty or specificity of the topic.
- iv. They can generate spurious or misleading results due to measurement errors, sampling errors, confounding factors, or statistical artifacts.

Another important distinction in political science research is between normative and empirical approaches. Normative approaches involve evaluating political phenomena based on moral principles, values, or ideals. Empirical approaches involve describing or explaining political phenomena based on observable facts, evidence, or data. Both types of approaches have different purposes and implications for political science inquiry.

According to Brady & Collier (2010), some of the strengths of normative approaches are:

- i. They can provide ethical guidance or justification for political actions or decisions.
- ii. They can challenge or criticize existing political practices or institutions that are unjust or undesirable.
- iii. They can propose or envision alternative political scenarios or possibilities that are more just or desirable.
- iv. They can reflect on the normative assumptions or implications of empirical research.

Some of the weaknesses of normative approaches are:

- i. They can be subjective or arbitrary in choosing or applying moral principles, values, or ideals.
- ii. They can be contested or disagreed by different moral perspectives or viewpoints.
- iii. They can be unrealistic or utopian in ignoring or neglecting the empirical constraints or consequences of political reality.
- iv. They can be irrelevant or detached from the actual problems or issues faced by political actors or agents.

Some of the strengths of empirical approaches are:

- i. They can provide factual information or knowledge about political phenomena based on observation, measurement, or experimentation.

- ii. They can analyze or explain the causes, effects, patterns, trends, variations, etc. of political phenomena using scientific methods and logic.
- iii. They can predict or anticipate future political outcomes or events based on past data or evidence.
- iv. They can evaluate or test the empirical validity or accuracy of normative claims or arguments.

Some of the weaknesses of empirical approaches are:

- i. They can be descriptive or explanatory without providing normative guidance or evaluation for political actions or decisions.
- ii. They can be limited or constrained by the availability, quality, or validity of data or evidence for political phenomena.
- iii. They can be uncertain or tentative in their findings due to methodological challenges, limitations, or trade-offs.
- iv. They can be influenced by the empirical assumptions or biases of researchers or methods.

How Methods and Approaches of Political Science Inquiry and Analysis Contribute to the Understanding and Explanation of Political Phenomena

As earlier pointed out, Political science is the systematic study of politics, power, and human interactions. It aims to understand and explain political phenomena using various methods and approaches. Methods of political science inquiry are the technical rules that lay down the procedures for how data can be obtained and analyzed. They help political scientists to test hypotheses, measure concepts, compare cases, and draw valid inferences. There are different types of methods that can be used depending on the research question, the availability of data, and the level of analysis. Some of the common methods of political science inquiry are:

Quantitative data analysis: This method involves the collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of numerical data using statistics, mathematics, and formal theory. It can help to identify patterns, correlations, and causal relationships among variables. For example, a quantitative study can examine how economic development affects democracy across countries using regression models (Lauer, 2017).

Qualitative data analysis: This method entails the description and observation of non-numerical data such as texts, images, speeches, interviews, etc. It can help to understand the meanings, contexts, and processes behind political phenomena. For example, a qualitative study can explore how political elites frame climate change issues using discourse analysis (Herbst, 2010).

Game theory models: This method uses mathematical models to represent strategic interactions among rational actors in situations of conflict or cooperation. It can help to predict the outcomes and equilibria of political games. For example, a game theory model can analyze how countries bargain over trade agreements using Nash equilibrium (Morrow, 2014).

Historical analysis: This method uses historical sources and evidence to reconstruct and explain the past events and processes that shape the present political phenomena. It can help to identify the origins, causes, and consequences of political change over time. For example, a historical analysis can trace how colonialism influenced the formation of states in Africa using process tracing (Moses & Knutsen, 2012).

Scenarios: This method uses plausible stories or narratives to imagine and explore alternative futures or outcomes of political phenomena. It can help to anticipate the uncertainties, risks, and opportunities of political decisions or actions. For example, a scenario can envision how a global pandemic might affect the world order using scenario planning (Lijphart, 2019).

Approaches of political science inquiry are the general perspectives or frameworks that guide the selection and application of methods. They reflect the underlying assumptions, values, and goals of political scientists. There are different types of approaches that can be used depending on the research problem, the theoretical orientation, and the normative stance. Some of the common approaches of political science inquiry are:

Empirical approach: This approach focuses on observing and explaining what is happening in the real world using empirical data and evidence. It aims to describe and analyze political phenomena as they are, without imposing any normative judgments or prescriptions (Von-Wright, 2011). For example, an empirical study can measure how democratic a country is using indicators such as civil liberties, electoral systems, etc.

Normative approach: This approach focuses on evaluating and prescribing what should be happening in the ideal world using moral principles and values. It aims to critique and improve political phenomena as they ought to be, based on some ethical standards or criteria (Wolf, 2015). For example, a normative study can assess how democratic a country should be using concepts such as justice, equality, etc.

Behavioural approach: This approach focuses on understanding and predicting how individuals or groups behave in political situations using psychological theories and methods. It aims to uncover the motivations, attitudes, preferences, and actions of political actors such as voters, leaders, parties, etc. For example, a behavioural study can investigate how emotions affect voting behaviour using surveys or experiments (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2014).

Institutional approach: This approach focuses on examining and comparing how formal or informal rules shape political outcomes using historical or comparative methods. It aims to identify the structures, functions, and effects of political institutions such as constitutions, laws, courts, parliaments, parties, etc. For example, an institutional study can analyze how electoral systems influence party systems using typologies or indices (Franco, 2023).

The Relevance and Applicability of Different Methods and Approaches of Political Science Inquiry and Analysis in Addressing Specific Research Questions or Problems

Political science as the systematic study of politics, power, and human behaviour uses various methods and approaches to address specific research questions or problems related to political phenomena.

Quantitative data analysis: This method involves the collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of numerical data to provide inferences and insights into key political questions. It can help measure the magnitude, frequency, distribution, and correlation of political variables, such as voting behaviour, public opinion, policy outcomes, etc. Quantitative data analysis can also test hypotheses and theories using statistical techniques, such as regression, factor analysis, or cluster analysis. For example, a recent study by Böhmelt *et al.* (2021) used quantitative data analysis to examine the effects of climate change on civil conflict onset across the world.

Qualitative data analysis: This method entails a set of tools for explaining political phenomena that are not numerical or statistical and does not seek to count or measure data. Instead, a qualitative approach uses description and observation of non-numerical data to draw inferences. Such data can include texts, documents, speeches, interviews, images, videos, etc. Qualitative data analysis can help explore the meanings, motivations, perceptions, and experiences of political actors and groups, as well as the contexts and processes that shape political phenomena. For example, a recent study by Kaya *et al.* (2020) used qualitative data analysis to investigate the narratives and practices of Turkish diaspora organizations in Europe.

Game theory models: This approach uses mathematical models to represent strategic interactions among rational actors in situations of conflict or cooperation. It can help analyze the choices, preferences, payoffs, and outcomes of political actors under different scenarios and assumptions. Game theory models can also help identify the optimal strategies, equilibria, and solutions for various political games, such as bargaining, voting, signaling, etc. For example, a recent study by Chen *et al.* (2020) used game theory models to analyze the strategic interactions between China and the US in the South China Sea dispute.

Historical analysis: This approach uses historical sources and evidence to examine the origins, development, and consequences of political phenomena over time. It can help understand the continuity and change of political institutions, ideas, movements, policies, etc., as well as the causal mechanisms and factors that influence them. Historical analysis can also help compare and contrast different historical cases and periods to identify similarities and differences in political phenomena. For example, a recent study by Kuru (2019) used historical analysis to explain the rise and fall of political Islam in Turkey.

Scenarios: This approach uses imaginative narratives to describe possible future situations or events related to political phenomena. It can help anticipate the opportunities, challenges, risks, and uncertainties that may arise from different political developments or decisions. Scenarios can also help evaluate the implications and impacts of various political alternatives or options for different actors and groups. For example, a recent study by Börzel *et al.* (2019) used scenarios to explore the future of EU-Turkey relations after 2023.

These aforementioned methods and approaches that political scientists use to address specific research questions or problems in their field are not mutually exclusive or exhaustive; rather they complement each other and can be combined or adapted depending on the research objectives and design.

The Ethical Considerations and Challenges Associated With the use of Different Methods and Approaches in Political Science

Political science is a broad discipline that encompasses various methods and approaches to study political phenomena. However, different methods and approaches may pose different ethical challenges and considerations for researchers, especially when they involve human subjects, sensitive data, or controversial topics.

One of the ethical issues that political scientists may face is the protection of privacy and confidentiality of research participants. This is especially relevant for qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, or participant observation that collect personal or identifiable information from individuals or groups. Researchers should obtain informed consent from participants, explain the purpose and scope of the study, and ensure that their data are stored securely and anonymized when possible (Da Bormida, 2021; Ethical considerations associated with Qualitative Research methods, 2022). Researchers should also respect the right of participants to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2019).

Another ethical issue that political scientists may face is the potential for harm or distress to research participants or others. This is especially relevant for methods or approaches that deal with sensitive or controversial topics, such as violence, conflict, human rights, or democracy. Researchers should assess the risks and benefits of their study, avoid exposing participants to physical or psychological harm, and provide support or referral to appropriate services if needed (Bhandari, 2021). Researchers should also be aware of the possible consequences of their research for the wider society, such as influencing public opinion, policy making, or social movements (Sandel, 2020).

A third ethical issue that political scientists may face is the quality and integrity of their research. This is especially relevant for methods or approaches that involve data analysis, such as quantitative methods, computational methods, or artificial intelligence. Researchers should ensure that their data are valid, reliable, and representative of the population or phenomenon they are studying. Researchers should also avoid bias, manipulation, or fabrication of data, and report their findings honestly and transparently (Bhandari, 2021). Researchers should also acknowledge the limitations and uncertainties of their methods or approaches, and seek feedback or peer review from other experts (Sandel, 2020).

These are some of the ethical considerations and challenges associated with the use of different methods and approaches in political science. However, this is not an exhaustive list, and researchers may encounter other ethical dilemmas in their specific contexts or cases.

Summary

The article examines the different methods used in political science research, such as quantitative and qualitative approaches, surveys, experiments, case studies, and comparative analysis. It also delves into the various approaches used, including positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory. By understanding these methods and approaches, researchers can make informed decisions on the most suitable approach for their research. The strengths and weaknesses of these methods and approaches are carefully analyzed. Quantitative methods, for example, enable researchers to obtain precise and measurable data, but may neglect the complexity of individual experiences. On the other hand, qualitative methods provide rich and detailed insights, but may lack generalizability. By understanding these strengths and weaknesses, researchers can weigh the trade-offs and choose the most appropriate method for their research objectives. These methods and approaches play a crucial role in enhancing the understanding and explanation of political phenomena. By using quantitative data analysis, researchers can identify patterns, relationships, and trends in political behaviour. Qualitative methods enable researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the context, motivations, and perceptions of political actors. The combination of these approaches helps build a comprehensive understanding of complex political processes and outcomes. The relevance and applicability

of different methods and approaches are assessed in relation to specific research questions or problems. Some research questions may require a large-scale quantitative study to observe broad patterns, while others may necessitate an in-depth examination through qualitative case studies. The choice of method depends on the specific research objectives and the nature of the phenomenon under investigation.

Finally, the article examines the ethical considerations and challenges associated with the use of different methods and approaches in political science research. Ethical concerns may arise in terms of ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy and confidentiality, avoiding harm to participants, and being transparent about biases or conflicts of interest. Researchers must navigate these ethical challenges to uphold the integrity and credibility of their work. By understanding these aspects, political scientists can conduct rigorous and ethical research to advance our understanding of political processes and outcomes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study of political science encompasses a wide range of methods and approaches that aid in the understanding and analysis of political phenomena. Through the utilization of various research methods, such as quantitative, qualitative, and comparative, political scientists can gather and interpret data to generate knowledge about political systems, actors, and processes. Different approaches, including positivism, interpretivism, and post-positivism, offer distinct perspectives and methodologies for understanding political phenomena.

While each method and approach has its strengths, they also have weaknesses that need to be acknowledged and overcome. The adoption of diverse methods and approaches contributes to a deeper understanding and explanation of political phenomena. By employing multiple methods, researchers can triangulate findings and enhance the validity of their conclusions. When considering the relevance and applicability of different methods and approaches, researchers must ensure that the selected method aligns with the research question or problem at hand. Also, ethical considerations play a significant role in political science inquiry and pose unique challenges. In conclusion, political science inquiry and analysis benefits from the utilization of various methods and approaches. Understanding the strengths, weaknesses, relevance, and ethical considerations associated with these methods and approaches is critical for conducting rigorous and ethical research in the field of political science.

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