

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND OTHER DISCIPLINES IN  
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Politics is a discipline that connects other academic disciplines especially those in the social sciences. It is imperative to note that all these disciplines in the social sciences deal with man as a social creature. Therefore, their nexuses are mutually contributory and complementary. Political science would certainly be impossible without its sisterly disciplines and those disciplines may also lose their holds without politics. On the subject matter: Politics borrows and always ready to learn from the canopy of its sisterly and contemporary disciplines like Economics, Geography, Sociology, Psychology, Ethics, Classics, Law and Philosophy among others, although our focus is on the social sciences. A realization of this fact by contemporary writers has, therefore, led to the popularization of studying social phenomena in interdisciplinary perspective. (Dogan, cited in Lipset and Stein) is right in holding that there 'is almost no form of human behaviour which is not treated to some extent by each of the social sciences. Each varies only in its primary area of interest. The interdisciplinary academic relationship becomes imperative as a result of understanding and explaining political actions that it was obligated to employ and apply whatever knowledge and insight available to it from other sisterly academic fields of human endeavor (Varma, 1999). Also, researchers in the political science have proximate academic contact with researchers in Economics, Geography, Sociology, Psychology, Ethics, Classics, Law and Philosophy. The interrelationship existing between Political Science and other fields open new areas of study and better opportunity for concentration of knowledge and focusing of research interests. These areas include but not limited to Political Economics which is a combination and interaction of those principles of economics and Politics; the interaction of Geography and Politics evolves Geopolitics while the

combination of Politics and Psychology evolves Political Psychology and the merger of the principles of Politics and Sociology gave birth to Political Sociology. The interaction between Politics and its sisterly disciplines is just a hybrid of the principles of Politics and those fields. The old barriers created by the trend of compartmentalization of knowledge are crumbling and the talk of inter-disciplinary studies is very much in the air. Hence, it shall be worthwhile to make a study of the relationship of political science with some other social sciences.

To this end, details of the interaction and interrelatedness of Political Science and other disciplines within the social sciences are discussed below:

## **POLITICS AND ECONOMICS**

David Easton defined politics as authoritative allocation of value for the society while John Baptist Says defined economics as the study of laws which governs wealth while the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE) defined Economics as the “study of the factors that influence income, wealth and well-being” and Adam Smith defined Economics as the nature and causes of the wealth of nation. The nexus between politics and economics is value or wealth. While politics deals with decision making upon who gets what (i.e. value) or where, how and when value must be authoritatively distributed, economics is involved in effective combination of resources to efficiently create wealth or value. However, the close relationship between economics and politics may be traced to the period when the two disciplines were one in the form of ‘political economy.’ On the subject of close relationship between the two disciplines, Garner (1962) asserted that “Political Science and social life is obviously intermixed with, and the activities and even the forms of government are profoundly influenced by economic conditions. Conversely, there is a distinct interaction of politics upon economics. The production

and distribution of wealth are to some extent determined by the existing forms of government. The solution to economic problems must come through political actions, while, on the other hand, some of the fundamental problems of government have their origin in economic conditions. Thus, tariff laws and trade restrictive acts, generally are favoured or opposed largely on economic grounds and, to a great extent, the whole question of the relationship between government and liberty is at base, an economic problem. Some of the important questions of the present-day politics: government control of public utilities, the reaction of state to corporate enterprise and its attitude towards the whole question of capital and labour-are, at the same time, fundamentally questions of economics; indeed, the whole theory of government administration is largely economic. In addition to this, both disciplines focus on wealth attainment. While economic means of wealth attainment is based on production and exchange, political means of wealth attainment is based on distribution. Therefore, the link that exists between Economics and Political Science revolves around the understanding of the policy(ies) which surrounds resources. On the basis of gathered information and feedback from the market, politics create environment where economic matter could be deliberated and decided while Economics undertakes the study and understanding of the policy in term of optimal utilization. As Economics tries to study those policies which includes rules or/and regulations, politics develops and applies those policies which are put to use most times by the politicians and government functionaries. Economics covers a vast area among which include those issues that have to do with minimum wage, banking regulations, pricings (inflation), taxation, unemployment and exchange rates while a large portion of politics sees into making policies that will influence those economic activities. This phenomenon has both political and economic consequences. The study of these economic effects relate to Political Science. Other areas of interest connecting Political Science and

Economics are the government budget at all tiers of government. In addition, the draft is based upon the activities of the economy overtime while Political Science provides the framework that legislates on the draft budget via the oversight function of the legislators. Aside this, both Political Science and Economics are concerned with issues that bother on the government foreign reserves, balance of payment, national debts, and even its impacts on its citizenry as well as electorates. Basically, Political Science focuses attention on emerging problems such as power relationship, authority, regulation, force and influence while Economics addresses those basic questions of the society such as who get what, how, when, where and to what extent via the available resources? For instance, Economics is interested in optimal utilization of available resources and constraints to create wealth for the society while politics is concerned with how, when where and to what extent is the created value or wealth is distributed. Also, the type of government of the day determines the pattern and system of wealth distribution (i.e. Politics decides the distribution of means and ownership system of wealth: capitalism, socialism among others). Economics also deals with other fundamental issues like scarcity and choice which are highly influenced by politics.

Political science stands in close relations to Economics in the sense that Economics is concerned with investigation of man's activities in pursuit of wealth. It also deals with the production of and distribution of wealth under the influence of forces both material and non-materials. In as much as the production and distribution of material wealth is very largely conditioned by the exchange form of government and institutional basis of economic life, the study of economics is brought into an intimate relation with that of Political Science. In addition to the aforementioned interrelatedness, the emergence of globalization which came along with trade liberalization, has widened and strengthened the interconnection of the world states. States

and societies freely interact through trades cutting across international boundaries. This further explains the complicated interconnectivity of Politics and Economics.

In the recent time, the principle of socialism has brought economics and politics closely. Many social thinkers have studied the questions of production, distribution and exchange of things and their relationship with the system of private property. While the liberals have sought to justify the existing state of economic relationship, the socialists have discovered the cause of poverty and exploitation of many at the hands of the few in the inequitable distribution of national wealth. For this reason, it has been suggested that the state should impose more and more restrictions on private property system and, if necessary, may go to the last extent of nationalising key private industries in the public interest. It means that public economy has become a subject of politics. We may take note of the fact that fantastic inequality in income and wealth, rampant exploitation and occasionally violent fluctuations in national economy constitute a perennial source of friction in the industrial societies. The dismal situation evokes the necessity of political intervention in the field of economic activities and consequently, the concept of 'welfare state' with its planning content emerged and forged a rapprochement between economic and political studies to the mutual benefit of both.

On the whole, Economics and Political Science are symbiotic as well as synergetic. Hence, states need to have strong economies to operate properly. Economics is a large part of politics, therefore causing politics and vice versa.

## **POLITICS AND PSYCHOLOGY**

Psychology is an academic and applied discipline that involves the scientific study of mental functions and behaviours. In a similar view, Psychology simply means the science that

studies behavior of both human beings and animals. Psychology seeks to understand individuals and groups by establishing the general principles and researching specific cases while the authoritative allocation of wealth for the society as defined by David Easton is anchored on the behavior of the society. The activities of the political scientists in the society are based on the behavior of the people within that society. For instance, formulation of policies on some national issues like elections, international diplomacy and relations are informed by the behaviours of the beneficiaries. Political policy formulation results from the actions and behavior of man within the political settings. Scholarly works on politics from the days of Plato and Aristotle have attempted to study and understand human nature and its effects on politics. Therefore, politics would rarely be possible without psychology and Psychology may also lose its relevance without politics. The two fields are intertwined. It is against this background that Lippmann (2008) asserted that, *“It is just the deepest error in our political thinking when one talks about Politics without making reference to human beings”*.

With the help of psychology it is now possible for the political investigator to undertake a study of public opinion and electoral behaviour. A plausible answer to the rise and fall of governments or frequency of revolutions and violent outbursts may be seen in the mood and temperament of the people. As Garner (1962) asserted, if we consider the state apart from its concrete organization and its manifestations through its legality constituted agencies, we shall see that it is essentially psychical rather than physical, subjective rather than objective in character. Consequently, the course of state life is determined in large measure by the psychic factors. Government to be stable and really popular must reflect and express the mental ideas and moral sentiments of those who are subject to its authority; in short, it must be in harmony with what LeBon calls ‘the mental constitution of the race. Psychology therefore contains the key to

the problem of the adaptation of particular forms of governments and laws to the character of the people.

In the modern academic plain and study basis, psychology has firmly linked with politics. It forms an integral part of degree programmes in the departments of Public Administration, Political Science and Political Economy in the University of learning in African continent and even beyond. Aside the intellectual linkage of Psychology and Politics above, Ezeani (2010) asserted that some psychological theories such as learning, personality and psycho-analysis theories have influenced Political Science in the sense that personality approach to politics assumes that political behaviour is a product deep seated trait that are usually developed at an early stage. The development and spread of democracy across the globe coupled with increasing significance of public opinion and propaganda have stimulated political scientist to deeply understand psychology and how it affects political behaviour. Therefore, social psychology and personality have persuaded the political scientists to empirically study political behaviour. Perhaps all the foci and concepts employed by psychologists such as perception, learning process, emotions and motivations have implications for political activities e.g. emotion and motivation are of great relevance in the political life as political activity is always purposive.

The interaction and application of the principles of Political Science and psychology to the real life evolved Political Psychology which enables us to explain many aspects of political behaviour, whether it be apparently pathological or neurotic actions such as those described as normal decision making practice that are sometimes optimal and sometimes failures. Political Science and Psychology seek to study and expand knowledge on issues and problems of common interests such as foreign affairs and domestic policy decision making by the elite, conflicts ranging from ethnic violence to wars, genocide, terrorism, nuclear deterrence, the minds



of the people who are racists and more peaceful, behaviours such as voting and electoral behaviour, among other many issues and problems that are traditionally concerned in political science. In addition to this, Martha et al (2010) asserted that, politics and psychology establish general laws of behaviour that can help explain and predict events that occur in a number of different situations. As time and psychology progress, understanding progressed while political psychologists began to look at personal characteristics such as motivation and traits in their analyses of political leaders.

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE AND SOCIOLOGY**

Sociology is a subject of recent origin Augustus Comte, universally recognized as the father of sociology, conceived of it as all inclusive social science. It deals with the origin, evolution, structure and activities of society and as state (the fundamental theme of politics) is a part of social structure, it covers within its fold what falls within the domain of political studies. Obviously, the two disciplines are closely related. A good number of recent social theorists like Weber of Germany and Merriam of America recognized this fact and so their students like Easton, Almond and Apter have taken much from the sociological writings of Talcott Parsons and R. K. Merton to enrich the stock of empirical political theory. This is known as behavioural persuasion in politics. This trend has become so popular in the period following the Second world war that a new subject with the name of “Political Sociology” has emerged in the form of, what Giovanni Sartori says, ‘a cross-disciplinary breakthrough’ (Cited in Johari, 2005). In the connection, Giddings, therefore, makes an illuminating observation that *“to teach the theory of state to men who have not learnt the first principles of sociology is like teaching astronomy or thermodynamics to men who have not learnt the Newtonian laws of motion”*.

It does not mean that the subjects of politics and sociology do not have their boundary lines. Sartori well observes that the formal theory of social system leaves off where the formal theory of political system begins. Political Science is concerned with only one forms of human association i.e. the state; Sociology deals with all forms of human associations. In sociology the unit of investigation is *socius*-individual viewed not merely as an animal and a conscious being but also as a neighbour, a citizen, a co-worker and the like. In political science the unit of study is the state as distinct from the nation, tribe, clan, family, while these have their detailed treatment in the field of Sociology. In order words, Sociology deals with all human associations and institutions; Political Science is concerned mainly with one of them-man as a political creature.

Close relationship between political science and sociology, Garner (1962) stressed that, while their respective fields are largely separate and distinct, political science and sociology are mutually contributory with one another. Sociology derives from political science knowledge of the facts regarding the organization and activities of the state, while political science derives in large measure from sociology its knowledge of the origin of political authority and the laws of social control. The political scientist therefore, ought to be at the same time a sociologist and the vice-visa.

Dogan, cited in Lipset and Stein, also looks at the relationship between the two disciplines when he captures thus:

*No sociologist can conceive of the study of society that does not include the political system as a major part of the analysis. Also, many political scientists, particularly in recent years, have argued sometimes with others in their own*

*field, that it is impossible to study political processes except as special cases of more general sociological and psychological relationship.*

Sociology as a subject matter investigates into the political behaviour of society such that the behaviour of the political parties, values about political issues, voting behaviour, processes of decision makings in both small and large societies, and even large governmental bureaucracy and political attitude of the people while Political Science focuses and makes thorough study on authority, legitimacy and regulations, power, influence and rules governing the society.

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GEOGRAPHY**

Geography is a human science that deals with the physical environment while political science deals with the study of states, institutions and the processes of government. The two subjects fall under the umbrella of the Social Sciences which concerns man and the society. Political Science is linked with Geography in the area of 'Political Geography'. This is an aspect that focuses on the study of the relationship between politics and the physical environment. Roberts Edwards (1991) puts it succinctly when he asserted that Political Geography is the 'study of the relationship between political areas, institutions or process and their physical environment'. The physical environment constitutes the communication system/networks, demography and the distribution of resources.

Olaniyin (1997) is of the opinion that the study of Geography can contribute a great deal to the understanding of some aspects of Political Science. This is because of the fact that since human on earth lives in specific areas and as geographical factors frequently determine the policies of state, therefore, factors such as land mass and population, resources accrued from

various states, soil and food, frequently determine the policies of state. For example, State creation, sharing of revenue and agricultural policy of the government are determined and influenced by geographical features and natural endowment of the land.

Also, geographical location is an important factor in moulding the destiny of every state. Apart from the fact that Geography influences its national and international policies and political institutions, it fathoms the actual impact of geographical factors on the political life of a nation, particularly in relation to its foreign policy; a new discipline of Geopolitics has developed. For example, the geographical location of Germany being in the centre of Europe and without natural boundaries is a compelling reason for her to remain a great military power. Professor Hintze corroborates this when he submitted that 'historical-political destiny lies in the geographical position' (cited by Dhawan, 2012).

Harris (1979) examined the relationship between Political Science and Geography, used Montesquieu's theory of the influence of climate upon political attitudes and cultures.' His results revealed that, people who live in warm climates will be inclined to the culture of authoritarian regimes, while those who live in cold climates imbibed the culture of democratic norms. Looking at this in a contemporary arrangement, using the North and the South African as examples, the authoritarian rule is prevalent in the Northern African countries (Libya and Morocco support authoritarian rule) while the Southern African countries embrace democratic rule (South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe practice democracy).

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

Otite and Ogionwo (1979) defined ‘Anthropology as the study of man in the broadest sense at all levels of development in every continent.’ It deals with the study of humans, past and present. In order to understand the fully swept and complexity of cultures across all of human history, anthropology draws and builds upon knowledge from the social and biological sciences as well as the humanities and physical sciences. A central concern of anthropologists is the application of knowledge to the solution of human problems.

Political Science is linked with Anthropology in the area of Cultural and Social Anthropology. The Cultural Anthropology assists political scientists to study cultures across continents in order to determine the similarities and different cultures of man. Also, Social Anthropology which deals with human behaviour in diverse circumstances with particular reference to how people live in particular places and how they organize, govern and create meaning. Olaniyin (1997) when considering the study of politics and social anthropology asserted that “one of the central institutions which is of greatest interest to social anthropology is politics.” He explained that the interest which political scientists developed in studying old societies emerging as new nations is anchored on anthropology. On their part, Anthropologists are always interested in studying patterns of political development of human race in a nation or across the continent.

The relationship between politics and anthropology has also led to the adoption of certain common terminologies in both disciplines like ‘cultural relativism’, ‘cultural diffusion’, ‘political/social evolution’ and ‘structural-functionalism’ etc.

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