
Analysing the Scope, Nature, and Understanding of Major Theories of Political Science:

An Overview

* Prof. Dr. Zahir Shah, Dean (Corresponding Author)

* Muhammad Haneef, MPhil Scholar

Abstract



Political science theories form the intellectual foundation of governance, power relations, and social structure. In most modern analyses, the nature, impact, and explanatory basis of these theories often receive insufficient inquiry. A key gap is the lack of synthesis among major theories in response to emerging global challenges such as democratic decline and geopolitical shifts. This discussion offers an understanding of what each theory can and cannot do, highlighting their limitations and applications. The research will explore where and how these theories apply, whether they are normative or empirical, and provide insights into their history and critiques, focusing on foundational theories like realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism, and their relevance today. It hypothesizes that their ongoing relevance for interdisciplinary policy analysis will be evident through a comprehensive overview. The analysis draws on classical literature (e.g., Plato, Machiavelli, Marx) and contemporary studies, employing a qualitative and theoretical approach via literature review. Comparative frameworks will evaluate the assumptions, methodologies, and contextual adaptations of these theories, interpreting doctrines and mapping concepts to trace their development from antiquity to postmodernism. Recent discoveries reveal the breadth of theories, from local governance reforms based on communitarianism to international applications rooted in realist international relations. These also expose conflicting trends between empirical behavioralism and normative idealism. Examples include Marxist influences on social movements, liberal ideas in institutional design, and the resilience of these theories in facing 21st-century challenges such as populism. This overview aims to create a harmonizing pattern among scholars and practitioners by emphasizing the synthesis of theories for better predictions in political research. It underscores how the discipline can promote resilient democracies by illuminating its role in policy-making, civic engagement, education, government, and future studies.

Keywords: Political Science Theories, Theoretical Scope, Normative-empirical Approaches, Political Thought Evolution, Interdisciplinary Applications

Introduction

Political science as the field of study focused on the systematic study of power, government and political behaviour has always been dependent on the use of theoretical frameworks to explain the intricate overall phenomena of politics. These theories have conceptual instruments that assist the scholars to explain the behavior of political institutions, the behavior of states, social movements, and world patterns of interaction. The political science theories have changed since classical philosophical contemplations through the contemporary analyzes of various studies to direct scholarly investigation (Easton, 1953; Hunt, 2022). The history of these frameworks is based on a long-standing effort to comprehend the operation of political structures and the role of authority, legitimacy and conflict in haring social organization.

Traditionally political thought was strongly shaped by the works of classical philosophers Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, and Locke whose works formed the normative ground of the discussion of issues of justice, power, and state structure. These schools of thought, later on, grew into theoretical frameworks of the contemporary political science. Scholars have been given multiple lenses of analyzing the political structure and behavior at both domestic and international level and this is because of the development of realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism (Bhattacharya, 2025; Novikova, 2022). Realism focuses on power, security and state interests in political interactions

* Faculty of Social Sciences, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: zahirshah@awkum.edu.pk

** Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: haneefmashwani@yahoo.com

especially in the international system. In its turn, liberalism emphasizes the aspects of cooperation, institutional governance, and the importance of democratic norms. Marxist approaches concentrate on the issues of relations in the classes, economic models and ideological collectors whereas constructivist approaches concentrate on the functioning of ideas, identities and social conventions to ensure a certain political result (Finnemore and Wendt, 2024; Guo, 2025).

Irrespective of the fact that these theories have been developed extensively, the nature and scope of political science theory is an issue of debate. Researchers are still analyzing the question of whether political theories mainly serve as normative models that spells out the ideal political order, or as an empirical instrument that can be used to account for the existence of observed political behavior (Jorgensen and Jorgensen, 2021; Sapkota, 2025). This discussion is a manifestation of bigger arguments within the field of methodology about interpretive systems and traditions that have traditionally been associated with philosophy, versus more scientific approaches that focus on the analysis of data and behavioral studies. Moreover, the modern political issues such as democratic backsliding, competition in geopolitics and the emergence of populism have re-energized the case of reevaluating the explanatory power of classical and modern political theories (Roe, 2025; Aryal, 2025).

Though there is a large literature on individual conceptualizations of politics, the current scholarly literature tends to maintain the perspectives in isolation or in very limited subdisciplines like international relations or comparative politics. A synthesized critical viewpoint, then, is still required that views the more extensive scope, conceptual content, and interpretative roots of the key theories of political science in an integrated perspective. To illustrate the point, such an approach can be used to shed light on how these theories overlap, break off, and reform depending on the changing political realities. In the absence of an overview, the field will run the risk of being divided, and researchers and practitioners will not easily be able to measure the level of relevance and applicability of theoretical paradigms to the contemporary political analysis.

To fill this gap, the current paper examines the breadth, nature and intellectual comprehension of big theories in political science. In particular, it looks into the definition of limits to their analysis, conceptualisms, and methods by foundational paradigms such as realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism. The synthesis of the classical political thought and modern scholarly interpretations of the political thought aims to shed some light on the historical development and present-day applicability of the theoretical traditions. The initial research question that is used to conduct the present enquiry is as follows: How do major theories in political science make themselves, their nature, and their interpretive frames, and what do they all tell us about the politics of today? This analysis will help the study to make a more coherent conceptual framework that will help with the increased integration of the theory and aid in more thorough political exploration.

Research Objectives

This paper seeks to discuss significant theories of political science to gain a better insight into their functions in cognizing political systems and political behavior. The study is concerned with the domain, nature, and conceptual basis of major philosophical drives on the field.

1. To look at the breadth of major political science theories, especially the realism, liberalism, Marxism and constructivism theories as well as to comprehend how the political behaviors and systems in various contexts can be explained using these theories.
2. To examine the characteristics and theoretical basis of these theories of political science, particularly, their normative and empirical attributes, as well as determine whether or not they are applicable to explaining modern political trends.

Research Questions

The research questions below are the guiding ones in my study and they directly refer to the research objectives.

1. How far are the big theories of political science, realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism, in the explanation of political systems and political behavior?
2. What is the impact of the normative and empirical nature of these theories to their relevance in the contemporary political issues and developments?

Literature Review

1. Historical Evolution of Political Science Theories

The theories in politics have evolved over an extensive intellectual tradition in an attempt to comprehend the power, governance, and political behavior. Classical thought centered on early political thought and discussions on the concept of justice, being a citizen and the utopian political society was carried out by Plato and Aristotle among other scholars. The Normative issues of justice and the governance were discussed in the Republic of Plato and the practical structure of a political system and the place of citizenship in ensuring order through the work of Aristotle in the Republic was in the Politics (Plato, 2004; Aristotle, 1998). These classical works provided the philosophical basis of political thinking by integrating the normative reflection and the initial observations of political institutions.

Machiavelli, Locke and Rousseau were some of the early modern thinkers who had a significant contribution to the development of modern political theory. The Prince by Machiavelli stressed political realism and effective application of power in leadership which brought to an end the purely normative politicians philosophy and more pragmatic analysis (Machiavelli, 1998). The theory of natural rights and social contract by Locke formed the philosophical foundation of liberal democracy since it puts emphasis on the connection between political power and the freedom of the individual (Locke, 1988). In the same way, the idea of the general will as put forward by Rousseau also led to democratic theory of polity as he stressed on collective sovereignty and civic representation (Rousseau, 1968).

Political science emerged as an academic field of study in the twentieth century with formal theoretical schools. According to scholars like Easton (1953), there was a necessity to conceptualize the politics systems based on analytical models that describe the political processes, and interaction processes between institutions. Empirical procedures were subsequently applied in the field through the approach of behavioralism which targeted observable and not necessarily philosophical study of political behavior. Recent observers observe that modern political science combines normative and empirical perspectives when examining the complex political phenomena (Hunt, 2022). Through this historical development, political theory has been able to adapt itself to new intellectual and political conditions and still plays its central role in the understanding of governance and power.

2. Dominant Political Frameworks Realism and Liberalism.

There are two most influential traditions in the body of political science and theories of international relation, which have always existed; these are realism and liberalism. Realism is concerned with power, interests of a country, and anarchic character of international system. As classical realists, Morgenthau claimed that states pursue power and security as the most important goals of the deeds of states in a competitive world, where states are rational and struggle to remain alive (Morgenthau, 1948). Realism thus offers an approach to the geopolitical rivalry, war, and military unions between states.

Liberalism on the other hand values the significance of cooperation, democratic rule and institutional structures in enhancing stability and peace. Liberal theorists believe that the conflict can be mitigated and cooperation can be brought in between the states through the international institutions, interdependence in terms of economics and democracy (Keohane, 1984). The liberal view accentuates the contribution of such bodies like the United Nations and regional alliances in controlling the global issues. Other scholars like Dahl (1991) extended the liberal theory by examining the rights of democratic institutions and civic engagement in ensuring a check-on-power form of governance.

The current scholarship has investigated the dialogue between the realist and liberal approaches to politics. Although realism still plays the essential role of explaining politics of power and issues of security, liberalism offers significant information on the institution of cooperation and global government (Jorgensen and Jorgensen, 2021). Other researchers believe that it is impossible to explain the contemporary international politics only by a particular theory, and that the integration of realist and liberal perspectives can be used as a more exhaustive explanation of the political dynamics (Guo, 2025). Consequently, the two theories are still discussed in the academic circles on the issues of depth and explanatory capacity of the political science theories.

3. Marxist View and Politics Economy.

Marxist theory is one of the critical approaches of the political science that is concerned with the connection between the economic formations and political authority. Karl Marx claimed that political institutions relate to the economic systems and the relations between different classes are strictly related to the dominating position of the economic classes in political decisions (Marx and Engels, 2012). The state is seen to be a tool of class domination and Marxist analysis also affirms inequalities in the capitalistic societies. This school of thought has been dominant in the analysis of political economy, social movements, and inequality in the world.

The Marxist theory gained grounds in the twentieth century when neo-Marxist and critical approaches emerged. Researchers within the realms of Marxism thought put into consideration the influence of capitalism in world politics and social life. These strategies emphasized how economic globalization and imperialism alongside the impact of colonization influenced the political institutions (Fanon, 1961). Marxist scholars were also keen on the explanation of ideology and cultural power as to how it helps in sustaining political dominance.

Marxism concepts are still used today to interpret the issues of economic inequality, globalized capitalism and political resistance movements. As an example, Marxist concepts are frequently applied to the conceptual framework of the relationship that exists between economic development and political governance within the framework of political economy studies (O'Brien, 2025). Although Marxist theory has been criticized to overemphasize economic factors, it still remains significant as an analytical tool of understanding structural inequalities and power relations in political systems. This school of thought is thus an important one in arguments about the extent of political science and its opinions.

4. The role of Ideas and Norms and Constructivism.

Constructivism has also become a significant theoretical approach that gives significant attention to the fact that ideas, identities, and social norms are very important in influencing political behavior. Compared to realism and liberalism where both the first and the second theories mainly consider material parameters like power and institutions, constructivism posits that political reality is socially created by the shared ideology and cultural cultures. Other researchers, including Finnemore and Wendt (2024), point to the effect of international norms and collective identities on the actions of political actors.

The constructivist theory was made eminent during the late twentieth century when scholars attempted to explain shifts in politics that could no longer be effectively described using the traditional theories. As an example, the diffusion of international human rights standards and environmental rules and frameworks proved that ideas and values are significant in influencing the state behavior (Novikova, 2022). Constructivism thus enlarges the analytical outlook of the political science with specificities to social and cultural aspects of the political relationships.

Contemporary scholarship has gone further to employ constructivist modes of study by using stories, identities, and discourses to analyze how they affect the political decision-making process. The constructivist approaches have been used by the researchers in areas like global governance, security policies, and international cooperation (Finnemore and Wendt, 2024). The theoretical approach has also promoted the interdisciplinary studies since views of sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies have been included. Despite the methodological dilemma that constructivism had been criticized because of the inability to measure ideas and norms, it is an important tool in comprehending the interpretive aspect of the political processes.

5. Modern Discussion and Topicalities, Tendencies, and Incompletenesses of Research.

According to the new literature, some debates exist about the scope and nature of the political science theories. Among the principal debates, there is the connection between normative and empirical strategies of the field. Normative theories dwell on the ideas of ethics and the perfect political set up whereas empirical methods seek to account observable political conduct through analysis of systematic data (Sapkota, 2025). The given debate is representative of wider differences in the methodologies between scholars on purpose of political theory.

The rising importance of interdisciplinary approaches is another important trend of the modern research. In common sense, political science theories have become common in other disciplines including economics, sociology, and international relations. According to scholars, an integration of theoretical views can give a more comprehensive assessment of more complex world

problems such as the decline of democracy, populism, and as well as geopolitical rivalry (Rösch & Wojczewski, 2025). This tendency can be attributed to the increased interest in the fact that political phenomena can be affected by various social, economic and cultural factors.

Although this has been developed, there were a number of gaps in the literature. Most of the studies are directed at the individual theories instead of analyzing the overall conceptual relations among the various political science frameworks. Consequently, comprehensive research in which realism, liberalism, Marxism and constructivism are summarized under a single lens of investigation and analysis is minimized. Moreover, the published literature tends to focus on the international relations and devote less attention to the theoretical generalizations of political science as a field. It is significant to fill these gaps in order to enhance integration of theories in political science as well as the explanatory strength of theories in explaining the contemporary politics (Aryal & Pulami, 2025).

Research Methodology

Intelligence In this paper, I have undertaken qualitative research design with a literature review design. The aim of the study is not to gather numerical data but to know and describe the scope, the nature and the development of the significant theories of political science. Thus, qualitative approach is appropriate since it enables the researcher to study ideas, concepts and arguments that are presented by various scholars. The principal theoretical schools explored in the research include the realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism theoretical perspectives and explores how each theory relates to the knowledge of political systems, governance, and actor politics.

Purposive sampling is adopted in the study of adequate scholarly materials. The researcher in this method selects the materials that bear the most relevance to the research topic and goals. Included in the study are classic construction of political writings by Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau including Marx, and modern books and peer-reviewed journal articles pertaining to political science theories. The secondary data were gathered based on the analysis of documents like academic books, journal articles, and academic publications. The nature of these sources was chosen in accordance with their relevance, credibility and contribution to the study of political theory.

The thematic and comparative analysis was used to analyze the information collected. The researcher has first gone through the chosen literature that reveals the main themes pertaining to the scope of the political theories, their normative and empirical features, and their contribution to the descriptions of the political systems and political behavior. Subsequent to this, the key theories, namely, realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism were contrasted with each other in order to learn of the similarities and differences that were brought about by the theories to the field of political science. The method assists in offering clear and systematic insight into how the key theories of political science evolved and the reason they remain pertinent in the modern political discourse.

Data Analysis

This part is the analysis and interpretation of the obtained data on the basis of the qualitative review of literature. The fact that the study is based on secondary scholarly sources meant that the thematic analysis and comparison analysis were adopted in identifying the patterns and the relationships among the key political science theories. Through the analysis of four major theoretical traditions namely realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism, the study aims at assessing their extent, character, and explanatory propositions on political systems and political behaviour.

1. Thematic Analysis of Theory In Political Science.

Thematic analysis was exploited to recognize the conceptual themes that were common in the chosen literature. Having reviewed the chosen sources, three prevailing themes were identified, which included the power and security, institutions and cooperation, and economic structures and social relations, and a fourth theme, which focused on ideas and norms. These themes are correlated to the highlights of the four major political theories addressed by this paper.

Power and Security: Realism: Realism as a Basic subject.

According to the evaluation made in the analysis of realist literature, the main objective of realism is centered on the politics of power, national interest, and threat of the anarchic international system. According to Morgenthau (1948) and other scholars, states are rational actors, and maximize their power and survival in the competitive international system. This school of thought stresses that military power, strategic relationships and geopolitical conflicts have been instrumental in determining how the political will is behaved in a certain way.

The results of the literature provide that the idea of realism is widely used in explaining the international conflict and the behavior of states in the context of war, diplomacy and the policy of security. Nevertheless, the analysis also unveils some shortcomings because realism does underestimate the role of the institutions, norms, and economic interdependence. However, the established accuracy of the realist analysis as the means of explaining the power struggle in the world supports the objective of the research developing the explanatory capacities of major theories of politics (Jørgensen and Jorgsen, 2021; Guo, 2025).

Liberalism: Institution, Cooperation and Democratic Governance.

The liberal scholarly literature focus review suggests that institutional cooperation, democratic governance, and economic interdependence are important. According to the liberal theorists, political systems may facilitate stability by establishing international institutions and democratic political systems (Keohane, 1984; Dahl, 1991).

The analysis has shown that liberalism introduces the political theory beyond the power politics and focuses on cooperation, diplomacy, and international governance mechanisms. The examples of institutional structures that are used to control the operation of states are most often the United Nations and welfare coalitions.

Based on the literature review, liberalism is a powerful source of explanation of international cooperation, democratic stability, and the coordination of policies among the states. Nevertheless, the critics claim that liberal assumptions regarding cooperation can underestimate the geopolitical conflicts that are lasting (Jorgensen and Jorgensen, 2021). In general, the results indicate that liberal theory is instrumental in explaining institutional governance and democratic political systems.

Marxism: Maintenance and Exchange of Class Structures.

An analytical perspective of the Marxist literary works shows to have a divergent analytical approach in its focus that is based on the structures of the economy, relations of classes and ideology exercising power. Marx and Engels (2012) suggest that political institutions tend to represent interests of more significant economic classes, and that state can be discussed as the instrument of preserving economic inequality.

The thematic results demonstrate that the Marxist theory might be effective specifically in the characterization of structural inequalities, labor movements and the political aftermath of the financial capitalistic economic frameworks. Marxist scholars focus on the interaction between political power and the system of economic production, which includes an economic interest affecting the choice of policy and the form of governance (Fanon, 1961; O'Brien, and Williams, 2025).

Although Marxist analysis contributes important information on the topic of relationship between economics and politics, the literature also reports that; its focus on economic determinism can ignore cultural and institutional influence. This limitation notwithstanding, the theory is still used in works on the political economy, social movements and the global inequality.

Constructivism: Concepts, Standards, and Personality.

Constructivism is also found as one of the important theoretical frameworks in the literature review with the focus on the importance of ideas, norms, and collective identities in a determination of political behavior. According to constructivist scholars political facts are socially constructed as a result of collective beliefs and cultural engagements (Finnemore and Wendt, 2024).

The results indicate that constructivism widens the analysis dimensions of political science with the aim of factoring in non-material aspects, including international norms, social identities, as well as ideological stories. To exemplify, the world dissemination of human rights standards and environmental regulations provides an example of how common ideas affect the decision-making procedure in politics (Novikova, 2022).

Constructivism is also more focused on interpretive and sociological explanations of political behavior than realism and liberalism. Nevertheless, methodological difficulties of empirical measurement of norms and ideas are also recognized in the literature. Nonetheless, constructivism holds a value as far as it is possible to explain how political actors perceive and react to the global developments.

2. Theoretical Perspectives Comparative Analysis.

A comparative study was done further to meet the research objectives through similarities and differences among the four theoretical frameworks. The parallels put across the relationship between

the two theories in terms of their explanations of political systems and political behavior using different analytical views.

Theory	Main Focus	Key Explanation of Political Behavior	Nature of Theory
Realism	Power and security	States compete for power and survival in an anarchic international system	Primarily empirical
Liberalism	Institutions and cooperation	International institutions and democratic governance promote cooperation	Empirical and normative
Marxism	Economic structures and class relations	Political systems reflect economic interests and class power	Critical and structural
Constructivism	Ideas, norms, and identity	Political behavior is shaped by social norms and shared beliefs	Interpretive and sociological

Comparative results prove that no single theory can be used to explain the political phenomena. Rather, both frameworks bring knowledge on various areas of the political reality. Realism defines power competition, liberalism emphasizes cooperation and institutions, Marxism as a factor of economic inequality and the influence of ideas and identities are addressed in constructivism.

The research hypothesis that could be adopted based on this comparison is that in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the political science, it is necessary to combine various theoretical points of view. The current political issues, globalization, populism and the weakening of democracy are the phenomena where relations between power, economic interests, institutions and social norms are frequently involved.

The data analysis responds directly to the research aspects of investigating the sphere and idea of the prevalent political science theories.

To start with, the results affirm that the subject of political science theories is wide-ranged and varied. All of the theories present a different perspective of the political systems, with some of them being power-based and some being economical and normative.

Second, the analysis indicates normative and empirical nature of these theories. Realism and liberalism have a tendency to focus on a more empirical study of political behaviour, whereas the Marxist and constructivist approaches take into account the critical and interpretative approaches. This difference indicates the wider methodology debate that can be seen in political science between scientific explanation and normative political philosophy (Sapkota, 2025).

Lastly, the discussion has shown that these theoretical frameworks can still be used to explain the current political events. Realism is applied to explain the idea of geopolitical rivalry, liberalism is used to understand institutional cooperation, Marxism to shed light on the issue of economic inequalities and constructivism to describe the role of ideas and identities in world politics.

In general, in the course of the qualitative analysis, the key theories of political science offer complementary insights into political systems and political behaviors. Realism is concerned with power and security, liberalism concerned with institutions and cooperation, Marxism concerned with economic structures and constructivism concerned with ideas and social norms. The combination of these theories provides a universal system of interpretation of the modern political issues and helps to learn more about the theoretical backgrounds in the field.

Conclusion

The results of this paper indicate that the grand theories on political science of realism, liberalism, Marxism and constructivism provide unique but complementary ideas to the explanation of political systems and political behavior. As discussed in the analysis, realism identifies power, security, and state interests as the major causes of political dynamics, focusing more on the competition existing in the international system. This is in line with the classical realist opinions that states deliberately operate to guarantee that they survive and retain an influence to existence in a global anarchic system. Liberal theory, on the contrary, broadens the analytical framework concerning the impact of institutions, the democracy system, and international co-operation. As it can be seen in the literature reviewed in this paper, liberal approaches are especially useful in explaining the operations of the

international organizations, diplomatic cooperation and the creation of institutional structures that govern the political deals.

Another important role of the Marxist and the constructivist approaches, identified in the study, is the lasting effect that these approaches have on the development of the concept of political processes past the conventional explanations based on power. The Marxist theory puts an emphasis on the connection between political power and economic organization and how the relations of the classes as well as the mutation of economic inequalities influence the government and policy formation. This view is particularly applicable when analyzing political economy, social movements, and inequality in the world. Constructivism on the other hand pays attention to the influence of ideas, norms, and identities in the process of shaping the behavior in politics. These conclusions indicate that the outcomes of politics do not only depend on material values including power or economic interests, but also the common ideology, cultural scriptures, and interactions between the political actors. These lessons confirm the essence of the interpretive and sociological inquiry in the field of political science.

When applied to the purpose of the research, the analysis proves that the scope of theories on politics is not only diverse politically, but also interrelated. The different theoretical traditions help to comprehend the various aspects of political reality in which the realism conceptualizes power rivalry, liberalism conceptualizes institutional collaboration, the Marxism conceptualizes structural inequalities, and the constructivism conceptualizes the impact of ideas and norms. The results thus confirm the thesis statement that an in-depth study of a political phenomenon must integrate various theoretical points of view. Modern political issues including globalization, de-democratization, and geopolitics tensions tend to create complicated relations of power, economic systems, institutions, and social identities.

In spite of these findings, the study is limited in some way. Since the study is founded on a qualitative literature review, the method of analysis will be mainly based on the conceptual interpretation, and not on empirical data. Alongside, the paper is concerned with four key theoretical traditions, thus, other approaches, like feminist, postcolonial, and critical theories, are not thoroughly analyzed. The research needs to be extended later in studies that include empirical cases and comparative political studies that may be used to validate the functionality of these theories in other political settings. Additional interdisciplinary studies can also contribute to alignment of more theoretical views, which will enhance the explanatory capacity of political scientific approach in solving the current global problems.

This paper has analyzed the extent, the content, and the theoretical principles of the major political science theories which concern realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism. Based on the basis of the qualitative literature review and the thematic-comparative analysis, the study reveals that all theoretical traditions provide a unique perspective of interpreting political systems and political behavior. Power competition and security issues are under music in realism, institution cooperation and democracy are in the limelight of liberalism, economic structures and classes in Marxism, and ideas, norms, and identities under the sun of constructivism. The results indicate that the field of theories of political science is wide-ranged and multidimensional, and that there is no unidimensional optimal theory applicable in explaining intricate political events. Rather, these theories serve to offer a complementary approach to analytical perspectives each of which offers a deeper view of politics at the domestic and international level.

The research paper is a contribution to the existing literature as it involves a synthesized analytical overview of significant political science theories as opposed to relying on them as individual contributions. Combining classical and modern school of thought, the studies illuminate the conceptual connections between realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism and accentuate their applicability in finding solutions to the problems of modern times, i.e. democratic backsliding, geopolitical contests, and inequality among the world. The results also support the concept of theoretical pluralism in the field of political science by indicating that alternative ways of analyzing issues can be used to enhance the explanatory and interpretive part of the field. Practically and policy wise, the study proves that knowledge of various theoretical perspectives can help the policymaker, academician and practitioners to make sense of political events, institutional structures and actions taken to address intricate global challenges.

This study has a number of limitations in spite of its contributions. The research mainly applies secondary literature and conceptual analysis, implying that the research findings are interpretative and not empirical. Besides this, the emphasis on four major theoretical traditions can lead to making irrelevant other more influential perspectives, including feminist, postcolonial, and critical theories, which also have some valuable information on the political processes. The possible weaknesses of the studies could be resolved in future researches with the help of empirical research or comparative case study in which the working of various political theories under certain political conditions is examined. More theoretical lenses and interdisciplinary methods can also be included in future research to broaden the analysis perspective. By further investigating changing associations between political theories, scholars will be able to increase the aim of political science in elucidating and reacting to the complicated political problems of the twenty-first century.

References

- Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The civic culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five nations*. Princeton University Press.
- Aristotle. (1998). *Politics* (C. D. C. Reeve, Trans.). Hackett Publishing. (Original work ca. 350 BCE)
- Aryal, S. K., & Pulami, M. J. (2025). From margins to mastery: International relations and the future of political science. *SN Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-025-01190-x>
- Bardhan, P. K. (1984). *Land reforms in India*. Oxford University Press.
- Bhattacharya, R. (2025). *Foundations of political science*. Routledge.
- Dahl, R. A. (1991). *Democracy and Its Critics*. Yale University Press.
- Dahl, R. A. (1991). *Democracy and its critics*. Yale University Press.
- Easton, D. (1953). *The political system: An inquiry into the state of political science*. Knopf.
- Easton, D. (1953). *The political system: An inquiry into the state of political science*. Knopf.
- Fanon, F. (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press.
- Fanon, F. (1961). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove Press.
- Finnemore, M., & Wendt, A. (2024). When “Old” Constructivism Was New. *Perspectives on Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592724001464>
- Finnemore, M., & Wendt, A. (2024). When “old” constructivism was new: Reflections on classical constructivism. *Perspectives on Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592724001464>
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: Vol. 1. An introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books.
- Garner, J. W. (1928). *Political science and government*. American Book Company.
- Guo, X. (2025). Symbiotic Realism. *Frontiers in Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2025.1429868>
- Guo, X. (2025). Symbiotic realism: A transdisciplinary approach to understanding international relations. *Frontiers in Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2025.1429868>
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms*. MIT Press.
- Hunt, E. M. (2022). The past, present, and future states of political theory. *Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-022-00703-1>
- Jørgensen, K. E., & Jørgensen, F. A. (2021). Realist Theories in Search of Realists. *International Relations*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117820940355>
- Jørgensen, K. E., & Jørgensen, F. A. E. (2021). Realist theories in search of realists: The failure in Europe to advance realist theory. *International Relations*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117820940355>
- Keohane, R. O. (1984). *After Hegemony*. Princeton University Press.
- Keohane, R. O. (1984). *After hegemony*. Princeton University Press.
- Keynes, J. M. (1936). *The general theory of employment, interest, and money*. Macmillan. (Via Skidelsky, 1992)
- Lasswell, H. D. (1936). *Politics: Who gets what, when, how*. McGraw-Hill.
- Locke, J. (1988). *Two treatises of government* (P. Laslett, Ed.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1689)
- Machiavelli, N. (1998). *The prince* (H. C. Mansfield, Trans.). University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1532)
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2012). *The Communist Manifesto*. Yale University Press.

- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2012). *The communist manifesto*. Yale University Press. (Original work published 1848)
- McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(6), 1212–1241.
- Morgenthau, H. J. (1948). *Politics Among Nations*. Knopf.
- Morgenthau, H. J. (1948). *Politics among nations*. Knopf.
- Novikova, I. N. (2022). Small States in International Relations. *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1134/S1019331622150072>
- Novikova, I. N. (2022). Small states in international relations: Some theoretical aspects. *Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1134/S1019331622150072>
- Plato. (2004). *Republic* (C. D. C. Reeve, Trans.). Hackett Publishing. (Original work ca. 380 BCE)
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Rösch, F., & Wojczewski, T. (2025). Theorizing populism in international relations: A classical realist perspective. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2025.2514156>
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1968). *The social contract* (M. Cranston, Trans.). Penguin Books. (Original work published 1762)
- Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The civic culture*. Princeton University Press.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1968). *The social contract*. Penguin. (Original work published 1762)
- Sapkota, M. (2025). Debating Research Philosophy in Political Science. *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Scope*.
- Sapkota, M. (2025). Debating research philosophy in political science: A critical outlook. *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Scope*.