

# A Framework for Analyzing Competitive Hypotheses in Method Tracing for Political Analysis

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## Editorial Note

Political science is the scientific study of politics. It is a social science dealing with systems of governance and power, and the analysis of political activities, political thoughts, political behavior, and associated constitutions and laws.

Modern political science can generally be divided into the three sub disciplines of comparative politics, international relations, and political theory. Other notable sub disciplines are public policy and administration, domestic politics and government (often studied within comparative politics), as well as political economy and political methodology. Furthermore, political science is related to, and draws upon, the fields of economics, law, sociology, history, philosophy, human geography, journalism, political anthropology, and social policy.

Political science is methodologically diverse and appropriates many methods originating in psychology, social research and cognitive neuroscience. Approaches include positivism, interpretivism, rational choice theory, behaviourism, structuralism, post-structuralism, realism, institutionalism, and pluralism. Political science, as one of the social sciences, uses methods and techniques that relate to the kinds of inquiries sought: primary sources, such as historical documents and official records, secondary sources such as scholarly journal articles, survey research, statistical analysis, case studies, experimental research, and model building.

As a social political science, contemporary political science started to take shape in the latter half of the 19th century. At that time it began to separate itself from political philosophy, which traces its roots back to the works of Aristotle and Plato, which were written nearly 2,500 years ago. The term "Political Science" was not always distinguished from political philosophy, and the modern discipline has a clear set of antecedents including also moral philosophy, political economy, political theology, history, and other

fields concerned with normative determinations of what ought to be and with deducing the characteristics and functions of the ideal state.

The advent of political science as a university discipline was marked by the creation of university departments and chairs with the title of political science arising in the late 19th century. In fact, the designation "political scientist" is typically for those with a doctorate in the field, but can also apply to those with a master's in the subject. Integrating political studies of the past into a unified discipline is on-going, and the history of political science has provided a rich field for the growth of both normative and positive political science, with each part of the discipline sharing some historical predecessors. The American Political Science Association and the American Political Science Review were founded in 1903 and 1906, respectively, in an effort to distinguish the study of politics from economics and other social phenomena.

The theory of political transitions, and the methods of their analysis and anticipating of crises, forms an important part of political science. Several general indicators of crises and methods were proposed for anticipating critical transitions. Among them, a statistical indicator of crisis, simultaneous increase of variance and correlations in large groups, was proposed for crisis anticipation and may be successfully used in various areas. Its applicability for early diagnosis of political crises was demonstrated by the analysis of the prolonged stress period preceding the 2014 Ukrainian economic and political crisis. There was a simultaneous increase in the total correlation between the 19 major public fears in the Ukrainian society (by about 64%) and also in their statistical dispersion (by 29%) during the pre-crisis years. A feature shared by certain major revolutions is that they were not predicted. The theory of apparent inevitability of crises and revolutions was also developed.

The study of major crises, both political crises and external crises that can affect politics, is not limited to attempts to predict regime transitions or major changes in political institutions. Political scientists also study how governments handle unexpected disasters, and how voters in democracies react to their governments' preparations for and responses to crises.

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