

Philosophy of Political Science.

Limits and possibilities of political science research: axiological, epistemic, methodological and ontological foundations

The *general philosophy of science* analyzes the rational limits and possibilities of the sciences. It discusses the importance of empiricism, methodology, practical relevance, rationality and values. The central question is: what are the foundations of scientific research? In my opinion, four *types of questions* can be ideally identified and discussed:

1. *Ontology*: What objects can and should be scientifically investigated? What kinds of problems, what entities, characteristics, phenomena, relations or structures should be addressed within science?
2. *Axiology*: What tasks and goals do scientists pursue? To what extent can and should values be studied? Which values constitute science?
3. *Methodology*: What is and what can science do? How can science be guaranteed? What are the limits and possibilities of scientific research?
4. *Epistemology*: What results, knowledge or theories can science generate?

The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Social Science (McIntyre/Rosenberg 2017) has a chapter on every social science (economics, history, political science, psychology and sociology/anthropology). The chapter on political science is titled “*Why is there no philosophy of political science?*” (Verbeek/McIntyre 2017). Firstly, the authors state that there is no special discipline “Philosophy of Political Science” with a corresponding institutional anchoring in the science system, e.g. curricula, chairs or journals. Secondly, there are a variety of contributions that deal with the limits and possibilities of political science research and thus with fundamental issues of this discipline.

In this lecture / seminar an *insight into the special field of philosophy of political science* is given. Firstly, the limits and possibilities of political science research are discussed in an ideal-typical way using the axiological, epistemological, methodological and ontological foundations. Secondly, the significance of this special discipline for the entire discipline of political science is worked out. Dealing with the fundamentals of the discipline not only enables a therapeutic dimension to eliminate misunderstandings, but also promotes innovative insights that can advance the discipline of political science in many ways. Four types of questions are discussed:

1. *Ontological dimension*: What is the subject area of political science as part of the science system? What kinds of problems, what entities, properties, phenomena, relations or structures are addressed within political science?
2. *Axiological dimension*: What tasks and goals can and should political scientists pursue? To what extent can and should political values be studied? Which values constitute political science?
3. *Methodological dimension*: Which procedures can be guaranteed to be scientific? Which political science methodologies are used? What are the limits and possibilities of political science methodologies?
4. *Epistemic dimension*: What results, knowledge goals, political knowledge or political theories can be generated by political science?



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