

What is Political Science and its Uses in Daily Life 甚麼是政治科學以及它在日常生活中的用處

Talk given by Dr. WONG Yiu-chung at the Lingnan University Information Day, 25 October 2008.

在政治學的教科書裡，我們可以找到各種各樣政治學的定義，有些會說這是研究公共政策的學問，有些會說這是研究權力及影響的學問，有些說是研究政府及政黨的學問，不一而足。孫中山曾說政治是眾人之事，的確，孫中山先生說出了政治學的一個重要方面，就是：政治是涉及全體國民的，生活在一個社會中的市民，很難脫離政治的影響。既然不能脫離政治的影響，我們就要去瞭解它，甚至深刻地認識什麼是政治學。

一個社會有管治者以及被管治者，管治者的權力是多於被管治者的，為何如此，這已是政治學的範圍了。一個社會的資源是有限的，有些人取得多些資源，有些人則取得少些資源，為何如此，這也已經涉及政治學的範圍了。如果有一些被管治者，向管治者奪取權力，從而變成管治者；又或者有些資源不多的人，用和平或暴力的手段，向資源多的人奪取更多的資源等。研究這些現象的都屬於政治學的範圍。

政治科學則是將這些研究變成普遍的規律。利用這些理論工具，觀察日常生活的種種有關政治的現象，從而瞭解我們身處社會的性質、動態以及未來的走向，是政治學所能提供的最大用處。

In the textbooks of political science, you can find different definitions of the subject. Some define it as the study of public policy, some as the study of power relationships, some as the study of the political parties and government, etc. Dr Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the Chinese republic, once pointed out that politics involves everybody. This is true. Dr Sun did not try to give a definition of political science but rather he pointed out the extent to which politics influences people. Indeed, one can hardly avoid politics since it is all-pervasive in our daily life. Because of that, we have to understand the nature, contents and scope of politics.

In every society, there are rulers and ruled. If you ask the question why this is so, then the question falls into the scope of politics. In every society, resources are limited. Some have more resources than others. If you ask why this is so, then this also belongs within the scope of politics. If the rulers are overthrown by the ruled, the ruled become the ruler. How is this possible? This is the subject of politics. If the 'have-nots' try to seize more resources from the 'haves' with either peaceful or violent means, how is this possible? This is also the subject of politics.

Science develops regularities, patterns, or laws on social and natural phenomena. Political science is a branch of social science, which aims to develop regularities, patterns and laws for explaining human behaviour. The central concept of political science is power. The usefulness of political science lies in the fact that with the theoretical knowledge derived from the study of power relationships, government, political parties, etc in human society, we can understand where we are, the nature of our society and the future trajectory of our path.