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Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)**The Importance of the Study of Social Sciences****Irfan Ahmed Gorshani**

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[irfanbalochjc@gmail.com](mailto:irfanbalochjc@gmail.com)**ABSTRACT**

*In this paper, the author seeks to discuss how social sciences are very important in the study of and finding solutions to modern issues in the society. The paper, viewed through the prism of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human behavior, institutional frameworks, and cultural interactions, demonstrates the critical role of social sciences in understanding human behavior and the cultural and institutional frameworks, as well as cultural interactions. The theoretical framework uses the insights of the leading thinkers of the past, such as Weber, Marx, Durkheim, and such modern intellectuals as Sen and Said to show how the social sciences connect the experience of an individual with the history and the structure. Among the most important contributions, we can distinguish the development of critical thinking, the formation of inclusive policies, the encouragement of civic participation, consideration of social inequalities, and the improvement of intercultural awareness. Contextually, the article reveals some systemic issues in the teaching of social science in Pakistan, such as perpetual underfunding, obsolete curriculums and the lack of social value, which all impede the potential of social science to play a role in national development. In the study, the author advocates the immediate reformation of the curricular, faculty, and funding of research to realize the potential strength of social sciences in creating a fairer and more sustainable society.*

**Keywords:** Social Sciences, Critical Thinking, Public Policy, Civic Engagement, Social Inequality, Intercultural Understanding, Pakistan, Education Reform, Theoretical Framework, Sustainable Development.

**Introduction**

Social sciences have emerged as the study of human societies in a rapidly globalized and interdependent world that can no longer be understood without them, as a means of promoting sustainable development throughout the world (Giddens, 2018). The social sciences have a wide range of disciplines including anthropology, political science, economics, and sociology which offer different perspectives in which the human behavior, institutional arrangements, and the changes in societies may be viewed. The fields hold essential information on the issues affecting modern societies such as inequality, governance, and cultural conflicts. According to Flyvbjerg (2001), social scientific inquiry can help us to get out of the narrow-minded explanations and get

up to accessing the rich context of human life and thus, is necessary to tackle the global and local concerns.

The interdisciplinary character of social sciences does help to comprehend the complex interactions between people, institutions and cultures in a holistic way (Wallerstein, 2004). Anthropology, as an example, shows the world the greatness of human cultural diversity, whereas political science studies power balances and governing processes that determine the realities of life. The field of economics offers schemes to interpret how things get allocated and market dynamics, whereas sociology reveals how society is structured and acts in unison. It is in this multidimensional nature that Mills (1959) in his notion of the sociological imagination urges researchers and policymakers to relate individual experience to more encompassing historical and social processes. These views are especially useful in the developing world where the social changes occur at a rapid rate but also face the structural inequities which have existed for a long time.

Moreover, the theoretical premises that were established by the great thinkers of the past are still used in the social science research and practice nowadays (Bourdieu, 1986). The analysis of power and knowledge by Foucault (1977) has changed the way we conceive the institution and the social control, as well as the capabilities approach by Nussbaum (2011) changed the development paradigm which puts the human dignity and agency first. These theoretical contributions reveal that social sciences do not just explain the world but they also offer instruments of changing the world. In the age of globalization, the knowledge of social sciences, as Appadurai (1996) asserts, is central to the manoeuvring of cultural currents, economic interdependences and political strains. Social sciences are, therefore, not only a field of study, but they are also a powerful tool of establishing fairer, equitable, and sustainable communities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Social sciences are essentially rooted in the scientific study of human societies and complex relations that make up these societies (Giddens & Sutton, 2021). It is an intellectual tradition that dates back to some of the pioneering theorists, including Max Weber, who examined the rationalization of modern societies and the bureaucracy; Karl Marx, who criticized the capitalist system and the struggle between classes; or Emile Durkheim, who built the science of sociology by explaining social facts and collective consciousness (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2020). These traditional views laid down fundamental paradigms through which historical processes, economic structures, political systems, and cultural practices can be used to influence human actions and social structure. Modern theorists such as Amartya Sen have further extended these premises by coming up with other concepts like development as freedom, which changes our perception of progress to the human capability instead of economic growth (Nussbaum, 2011). Equally, the postcolonial theory of Edward Said and, specifically, his concept of the concept of Orientalism illustrates how cultural images and power relations reproduce inequalities among societies (Bhambra, 2021). Collectively, these theoretical traditions offer multilateral prisms through which to explain the interaction between the individual agency and structural forces, how these phenomena are produced out of particular historical and cultural situations.

These theoretical frameworks have stood the test of time because they have been able to explain continuity, as well as change in human societies (Calhoun et al., 2022). The analysis of Protestant work ethic by Weber, for example, continues to be useful in explaining the cultural roots of modern capitalism and theories of alienation and exploitation by Marx serve to be critical in the analysis of modern labor relations in the digital age (Sayer, 2020). Anomie is one of the concepts introduced by Durkheim to explain why societies disintegrate during rapid transitions, and the capability approach integrated by Sen has transformed the development policies of many countries around the world by focusing on the well-being of humans and not on GDP measures (Robeyns, 2017). Furthermore, the work by Said still impacts the research on the topics of globalization, migration, and identity politics due to the revelation of the way knowledge production is intertwined with the power (Hall, 2019). The theories, as a whole, emphasize that social scientific research should be able to explain the interrelationship of the material conditions, cultural meanings, and institutional arrangements. By his theory of practice, Bourdieu (1990) postulates that human action can only be explained by the interaction of the subjective dispositions (habitus) and objective social structures (fields), where both a micro-level interaction or a macro-level system needs to be analyzed, to complete the understanding of social phenomena.

#### **Enhancing Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills**

Developing critical thinking and analytical skills is one of the most revolutionary inputs of the social sciences. In contrast to other fields that tend to focus on rote learning and knowledge of procedures, social sciences focus on asking questions, making interpretations, and being able to assess complicated and even conflicting concepts (Giddens & Sutton, 2021). Students are taught not to accept what is considered a norm, examine the societal frameworks, and evaluate implications of policies and ideologies. In the same way that Mills (1959) described the sociological imagination, social sciences help people to relate individual experiences to the wider historical and structural processes. Such a skill is necessary in the current globalized environment, where socio-political matters demand interdisciplinary and subtle knowledge. Furthermore, critical thinking teaches people to identify propagandas, avoid manipulations, and become informed citizens who make decisions (Flyvbjerg, 2001). In a community such as that of Pakistan, which tends to use polarized narratives to inform the public discourse, the capacity to understand the different perspectives is essential to maintaining democracy and social harmony. This is further reinforced by the theory of practice developed by Bourdieu (1990) that stresses that knowing about social life demands going beyond the surface to get a handle on the power relations and habitus (which determines behavior). Social sciences therefore do not just make intellectual rigor more demanding, but also equip the students to engage ethically and reflectively in the public life.

#### **Shaping Public Policy and Governance**

The social sciences are relevant in the design of competent governance framework and public policies. Data and theoretical concepts developed within such fields of study as political science, sociology, and economics become more frequently used by governments to overcome such

societal issues as, for example, the state of the economy (Giddens, 2018). Through social science research, policymakers can determine the core causes of such problems as poverty, unemployment, and gender inequality and be provided with the evidence-based solutions. As an example, the development as freedom framework by Amartya Sen (1999) has transformed the global policy-making by focusing more on the well-being and agency of people rather than only on economic indicators. Social sciences in Pakistan can be used to fill the divide between top-down planning and ground realities that is often the cause behind policy failure in the country owing to a lack of contextual sensitivity (Government of Pakistan, 2022). Policies that do not take into consideration regional, linguistic or cultural diversity are likely to fail; such as education reforms which do not consider local spoken languages have limited effect in rural Sindh. According to Flyvbjerg (2001), phronesis or practical wisdom in a social context is required in efficient governance in addition to technical expertise. Social sciences can help create a more democratic and inclusive governance by providing insights on power relations, the behavior of institutions and opinion of the masses. Therefore, the inclusion of social science views in the policymaking procedures is necessary in order to establish institutions that are sensitive to the needs of the citizens.

#### **Promoting Civic Engagement and Democratic Values**

The development of effective and well informed citizens is one of the underlying objectives of social sciences. Students are taught in the fields of political science, sociology and civics the tenets of democracy, rights and duties, which are necessary in maintaining participatory governance (Durkheim, 1895; Weber, 1922). The knowledge of such concepts as justice, representation, and accountability allows the citizens to be better equipped to consider or criticize political decisions and to participate in the democratic act of voting, protest, and advocacy (Giddens & Sutton, 2021). In communities where there is political disenfranchisement as in the case of Shikarpur, a civic education guided by social science can enable the people to confront corruption, seek services and participate in local development plans. The theory of power and representation by Edward Said (1978) also highlights the fact that education is one of the most important instruments in fighting the hegemony of narratives and ensuring one has a voice in the public sphere. Social science curricula with the local case studies and participatory pedagogies can develop confidence and capacity of students to become change agents. Also, empirical evidence indicates that a higher level of civic knowledge is associated with the increased participation and tolerance in politics (Bhambra, 2021). Thus, it is not only academic but a democratic necessity to promote social sciences in schools and universities to create active, ethical and socially conscious citizens.

#### **Addressing Social Inequality and Injustice**

Social sciences are very useful in determining and working on the root causes of social inequalities. Disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, or gender studies are especially good at revealing the influence of class, caste, ethnicity and gender on access to education, health, jobs, and political resources (Nussbaum, 2011). Social science studies can provide important data on the experiences of the marginalized groups in the areas where structural discrimination is still

deeply rooted, like rural Sindh. It shows the impacts of the past injustices on modern life and offers approaches to inclusive development (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2020). Bourdieu (1990) explains how social capital and habitus reproduces inequality as a result of its institutions and daily practices, whereas Foucault (1977) shows how equality is created by power through apparently neutral systems of education or medicine. Caste-based marginalization and gender inequality in Pakistan are largely absent in the mainstream discourse; in this context, social sciences are used to advocate on behalf of those who are not heard. Curriculum, labor, and healthcare access reforms can be achieved based on the research-based policy recommendations, thus establishing more equitable societies. Therefore, the social sciences do not only identify the root cause of inequality but also the specific actions towards justice, thus they are indispensable in ethical governance and human development.

### **Fostering Intercultural and Global Understanding**

Social sciences play an important role in promoting intercultural and global understanding in an age of globalization, migration and cultural pluralism. Such fields of study as anthropology, international relations, and cultural studies provide a learner with the means to value diversity, orient through cross-cultural experiences, and comprehend the dynamics of global interdependence (Appadurai, 1996). It is particularly important in such countries, as Pakistan, where the ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity is accompanied with the regular intergroup conflicts. Social sciences advance empathy and pluralism through the idea of culture as a dynamic process of contestation occurring through the influence of power and the historical legacies as the students are taught to see culture not as an object but a process (Said, 1978; Hall, 2019). To take an example, the theory of Orientalism produced by Edward Said is a critical approach to the way the West tends to represent the East inaccurately, stressing the need to represent oneself and the significance of cultural independence. Social science curricula have the ability to change the stereotypes, minimize prejudice, and bring about mutual respect in the classroom through the inclusion of the various worldviews. In addition, it is important to comprehend global systems, including trade, migration, and climate change, through interdisciplinary strategies of connecting the local and the global (Calhoun et al., 2022). Therefore, social sciences play a non-negotiable role in equipping learners to become responsible global citizens capable of constructively approaching the difference and becoming agents of international peace and cooperation.

### **Challenges to Social Science Education in Pakistan**

Education in social sciences in Pakistan has a long way to go in undoing the institutional and societal challenges to the growth of social science education and to its potential to make a meaningful contribution to national development (Hoodbhoy, 2021). One of the main obstacles is chronic underfunding where social science departments in universities are underfunded in comparison with STEM subjects, which leads to inadequate research facilities, inability to access modern scholarly literature, and incomplete support of fieldwork (Ali, 2020). What makes this problem more significant is the fact that many curricula are outdated and do not reflect the most important developments in theory or respond to the changing socio-political reality in Pakistan,

so students are unprepared to study modern issues (Zaidi, 2019). These issues are also worsened by the lack of qualified faculty, where most institutions have to resort to employing underpaid adjunct lecturers, or professors who were educated in outdated teaching practices (Qureshi, 2022). Also, the cultural value that places more importance on technical and vocational education than on critical fields in the humanities has made social sciences degrees not only undesirable but also an option that talented students should avoid going into (Ahmed, 2021). Such system neglect has led to a vicious circle since the marginalization of social sciences deprives them of their power to conduct the subtle studies that would inform Pakistan of its policy decisions and social development approaches.

Even the increasing pressure to teach STEM has pushed social sciences to the side in Pakistan, as they can be instrumental in teaching civic engagement (Saqib, 2023). The policy of education implemented by the government since the early 2000s has overfunded technical subjects and failed to modernize social science curricula, and this trend can be explained by a limited understanding of development that is focused on short-term economic benefits rather than the societal good in the long term (Hussain, 2020). This lack of balance has led to the creation of generations of specialists who, albeit being technically proficient, lack the ability to think critically and have no socio-historical awareness in order to deal with complicated problems such as ethnic conflicts, gender inequality, or democratic governance (Zafar, 2022). Its effects can be observed in the failing public institutions in Pakistan in which the lack of social science views has resulted in policies that often do not consider either cultural contexts or realities at the grassroots level (Rehman, 2021). Moreover, the decline of social sciences has reduced the ability of Pakistan to add to the global academic debate since the local academics face a lack of research possibilities and international partnerships (Shah, 2023). Unless dramatic changes to cope with such issues are done such as modernization of the curriculum, faculty development, and propaganda of the mass, Pakistan will continue to produce technicians, not thinkers; workers and not active citizens who can solve the most important social dilemmas of the country.

### **Conclusion**

The paper highlights the importance of social sciences in solving global and local issues, including developing critical thinking to coming up with inclusive policies and enhancing democratic values. Through an exploration of the behavior of people, the systems of society and cultural forces, the social sciences offer invaluable resources in understanding the sophisticated realities of our current world. The situation in Pakistan, where such problems as inequality, gaps in governance, and intercultural tensions also exist, is particularly acute in terms of the necessity of the development of a strong social science education system. Nevertheless, this has not been able to achieve its potential as systemic issues have been an obstacle including: underfunding, obsolete curricula and undervaluation of it in society. To deploy the transformative potential of social sciences in terms of sustainable development and social justice, it is necessary to address these obstacles. In the future, Pakistan should focus on the reform that will renew the teaching of social sciences, such as the modernization of curricula, the training of faculty, and the rise of research investments. By filling the gap between the theoretical and practical knowledge, social

sciences can enable citizens to be able to critically engage their world so that they can play a role in the development of the world in which they live. The incorporation of the cross-disciplinary thinking and participatory learning will be significant in raising a generation of minds that can help resolve the most burning issue of Pakistan. Finally, spending in the social sciences is not only an academic necessity but a beginning point of a more equal, knowledgeable and robust society.

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