

Fundamentals of Public Administration: Concepts, Scope, and Relevance in Modern Society

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to outline the main ideas about social sciences, the scope of their studies, and their relevance in modern life marked by technological developments and globalization. The results of the study show that social science has an important role in helping humans understand various social phenomena, such as social interaction, cultural change, social conflicts, and the development of modern society. In addition, social sciences also function as a means of education that is able to form social awareness, critical thinking skills, and responsibility as citizens. The novelty of this article lies in the discussion that not only outlines the basic concepts and scope of social sciences, but also relates them to societal challenges in the digital era and globalization. Through this approach, this paper provides a more complete view of the important role of social sciences in responding to the increasingly diverse and complex changes in today's life.

Keywords: social sciences, society, social education, globalization, social change.

INTRODUCTION

Social science can be interpreted as a whole branch of knowledge that examines the position of human beings in their environment as part of a group living together. Therefore, every study that studies and examines various aspects of human life in the collective environment belongs to this group. The scope includes interaction patterns, cultural heritage, fulfillment of living needs, learning systems, agreed rules, perspectives and inner responses, conditions of the residential area, and various other aspects. From these elements, various fields of study were born, such as the study of the structure of society, the study of culture, the study of resources and the economy,

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the education system, the rule of law, psychology in the group environment, regional studies, historical travel, and other related fields. Along with the development of perspectives and analytical frameworks, these disciplines then develop into more detailed and in-depth branches of knowledge.

According to Ralf Dahrendorf, a German sociologist and author of a work entitled *Class Division and Strife in Industrial Society*, who is known as the formulator of the idea of social strife with its own approach, social science is a broad concept that encompasses a set of fields of study that focus on all aspects of human life in its environment. Its mention in the singular form illustrates the unity of principles and frameworks of thought, although today such a view is more widely used by a limited circle. Meanwhile, if viewed in its plural form, namely the social sciences cluster, it is seen as more appropriate to reflect the diversity of fields of study covered in it. These sciences include various branches of study, such as the study of relations between citizens, cultural studies, psychology in the collective environment, the study of resource management, the study of territory and the environment, the study of power and state order, and even the study of past events which on the one hand are also classified as the group of cultural and humanities sciences (Dahrendorf, 2000:99). Through these various approaches, social science seeks to understand the patterns of human actions, the relationships between individuals, the structure of the order of life together, changes that occur in the social environment, and all events that arise in the daily life of society. Therefore, this field has a great contribution to providing a complete view of the dynamics of human life over time.

Studies on the nature of social science have been carried out by many previous researchers, focusing on the basic meaning, scope of the study, its properties, and its application in the real environment. Most of the research reviews the conceptual side alone, or specializes in the application of this material in the learning process in schools. Nevertheless, the development of today's life, which is characterized by the rapid advancement of information systems, the faster flow of the spread of knowledge, and the closer connectivity between nations, has given birth to various new social events that require more in-depth study. This paper has advantages over previous studies, because it not only describes the basic meaning and scope, but also examines its relationship with the reality of today's life. More than that, this paper explains how this science can be used to understand various up-to-date social phenomena, such as increasing selfishness, excessive consumption patterns, disparities in living standards, and a decrease in local noble values due to the entry of

foreign influences. By utilizing a number of complete and relevant references, this work is expected to provide broader insight into the role of social science in understanding the changes in common life, as well as helping people face various dynamics that occur quickly and complexly.

THEORETICAL STUDIES

Social science is a combination of various branches of knowledge that examine the existence of humans in a common environment, as well as all events that arise due to mutual relationships between individuals and groups. According to Herry-Priyono (2022), this field is a systematic study of humans and their environment, which is constantly evolving along with the actions and habits that are formed. Meanwhile, Mackenzie (1996) explained that this science examines the position of humans as part of their group. Through this study, social science seeks to understand the basic nature of humans, the patterns of relationships that are established, the structure of the order of life together, and various shifts that occur in daily society. Broadly speaking, social science has a very wide scope, because it includes various branches of knowledge, such as the study of the structure of society, cultural studies, resource management, psychology in the group environment, regional studies, the history of civilization, and the system of government. Each of these branches has a different focus of observation, but they complement each other in explaining various events that occur in the midst of life together.

Sociology studies social structures and interactions, anthropology studies human culture, economics studies the fulfillment of needs through the use of limited resources, while political science discusses power and government. Thus, social sciences use a multidisciplinary approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of various societal problems. In modern life, social sciences have an increasingly important role along with the rapid development of technology and globalization. Various social challenges, such as increasing individualism, social disparities, changes in cultural values, and the emergence of various conflicts due to differences in interests require a deep understanding through a social science perspective. In addition to functioning as a means to understand social phenomena, social science also plays a role in shaping critical thinking skills, increasing social awareness, and fostering responsibility as citizens. Therefore, the study of social sciences is an important foundation in an effort to create a society that is fair, harmonious, and able to adapt to social changes that take place rapidly.

METHODS

The approach applied in this paper is a literature review. According to the view of Zed (2014), this kind of study includes a series of steps related to efforts to collect information from written sources, observe and record its contents, and process it into regular study materials. This approach utilizes a variety of references that have been compiled, such as books, writings in scientific magazines, academic essays, and other documents that are related to the subject being studied. In addition, according to Sugiyono (2021), literature review is a systematic effort to collect, analyze, and compile information sourced from the work of others in order to obtain a strong foundation of thought. Meanwhile, Milles and Huberman (2020) explained that this method functions as a means to trace ideas, findings, and views that have been put forward previously, so that researchers can see the position of their studies in the existing series of thoughts.

Through this approach, the compiler seeks to gain in-depth insight into the main ideas, frameworks of thought, findings that have been produced previously, and the direction of the development of studies related to social sciences. The review process is carried out regularly, starting from selecting appropriate sources, assessing the quality and validity of the content, grouping information based on the topic of discussion, to compiling the results of the assessment into a complete and structured description. The main goal is to strengthen the foundation of thought, find sides that have not been fully discussed in previous studies, and produce a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the problems studied.

The tools used in this study are in the form of various reference sources and research support tools, such as scientific books, national and international journals, academic articles, previous research documents, and relevant electronic media. In addition, devices such as laptops or computers, internet networks, and reference management applications are used to help the process of searching, collecting, and processing library data. The population in this study includes all literature sources relevant to the topic discussed, such as books, scientific journals, academic articles, theses, and various other references used as study materials. These sources were selected based on their suitability with the research theme so that they could support the process of comprehensive analysis and discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Definition of Social Sciences

According to Hidayati (2008:7), social science is a set of insights that are compiled through a combined approach from various branches of study, such as the study of relations between citizens, cultural studies, psychology in the collective environment, the study of past events, regional and environmental studies, the study of resource management, the study of power and state order, and other fields. Taneo (2008:18) explained that knowledge about community life is formed from the merger of various disciplines, including regional studies, management of living needs, past events, cultural diversity, and government systems. In essence, this science examines the patterns of actions and efforts made by humans in living life together, as well as observing their relationship with the surrounding environment. Its scope includes all ways of relating to others and to the circumstances around them.

According to Herry-Priyono (2022), social science refers to the regularly arranged study of human existence and the order of coexistence: humans who live in the midst of a collective environment, as well as the order itself formed from human existence. The two are closely related through the mutual relationship that is manifested in every action and pattern of life that is formed. According to Mackenzie (1996), this science is a study that examines humans in their position as part of a group. Therefore, every field that studies and researches aspects of human life in the common environment belongs to this group. The aspects studied include how to interact, values and habits, the need for resources, efforts to develop insights, agreed rules, inner reactions in attitudes, the condition of the area where they live, and others. In an effort to survive and meet their needs, humans are always bound to relationships with others and with the surrounding nature.

Definition According to Experts

- Utami Pratiwi, S.Pd. stated that social science is a field of study that recognizes the existence of differences in nature and circumstances, but still views everything as a whole unit.
- Peter Herman argues that this science covers various branches of study that are generally studied in depth at the advanced education level.
- Achmad Sanusi defines it as a field of study that is carried out systematically on the nature of human beings as beings who live in groups, with the main attention to their role as part of the common environment and their group.

- Gross explained that social science learning aims to provide an understanding of the basic concepts of social science based on material objects, formal objects, and the scope of study. Human beings, especially behavior in groups, become their material objects, while formal objects are related to the point of view and purpose in studying these behaviors.

Based on these various opinions, it can be concluded that social science is a combination of various studies on human behavior. These behaviors can be understood through various aspects, such as space, time, culture, power, psychology, scarcity, and social life. From these aspects various social disciplines were born, such as economics, geography, history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and political science.

Table 1. Scope of Social Sciences Studies

Yes	Key Aspects of the Study	Scope of Special Discussion	Object of observation studied
1.	Real social symptoms	Any event, circumstance, or pattern of life that forms and takes place collectively in society, both those that run according to the order and those that deviate.	The pattern of relationships between residents, inherited traditions, and changes in circumstances in life together.
2.	Social ideas and foundations	Various definitions, concepts, and values that are the basis of life views and unwritten rules that are mutually agreed.	The meaning of justice, equality, social norms, value systems, and beliefs that bind community groups.
3.	Variation of action patterns	Similarities and differences in ways of thinking, behaving, and acting.	Differences in habits between regions, ways of self-adjustment, and intergenerational interaction styles.
4.	Interest-based relationships	Mutual interaction due to similarities or contradictions.	Cooperation in achieving goals, disputes due to differences in desires, and

			efforts to reach consensus between citizens.
5.	Inequality and social challenges	Any condition or event that is considered to hinder common welfare.	Disparities in living standards, cultural shifts, access to basic needs, and population problems.
6.	Ties between citizens and institutions	Reciprocal relationships between individuals and groups with systems in the form of social and state institutions.	The rights and obligations of citizens, the role of institutions in maintaining order, and participation in decision-making.
7.	Social structure and hierarchy	The arrangement of positions, roles, and positions in society.	The division of roles in the group, access to resources, and efforts to achieve a balance of positions.
8.	Life based on the character of the region	Characteristics, potentials, and obstacles faced by people who live in environments with certain natural and social conditions.	The uniqueness of life in rural areas, environmental management, and the impact of the times on local life.

Source : Adapted from Soerjono Soekanto (2021) *Sociology of an Introduction*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, Hidayati, A. (2022). *Social Sciences: The Concept of the Scope of Study*. Bandung: Alfabeta, and Gross, R (2019). *The Scope and Nature of Social Sciences*. New York: Pearson Education.

Based on table 1. The scope of social science studies, the scope of social science studies covers all aspects of human life in the social environment. The first scope is real social symptoms, namely events, conditions, and life patterns. Furthermore, the scope of this study also includes social ideas and foundations, which contain all the understandings, values, and norms that are the basis of life views and rules that have been mutually agreed. In addition, it also includes variations in action patterns, namely observing similarities and differences in ways of thinking, behaving, and acting shown by individuals and groups as a result of the influence of their respective cultural backgrounds, environments, and life experiences. Social science also examines interest-based relationships, namely mutual interactions that arise due to similarities or conflicts of needs and goals, which can give birth to cooperation and disputes between citizens. The scope of this study is inseparable from the observation

of inequality and social challenges, namely various conditions that are considered to hinder common prosperity so that they need to be resolved collectively. In addition, the bond between citizens and community and state institutions, which regulate rights, obligations, and participation in maintaining public order, was also discussed. The study also covers social structures and hierarchies, which describe the structure of positions and roles formed in society, and studies how these structures affect access to resources and the balance of position. Finally, this scope includes life based on the character of the region, which recognizes the existence of differences in potential, challenges, and lifestyles according to the natural conditions and environment in which each group lives. Overall, the table illustrates that social science covers all aspects of human life, aiming to understand social reality in depth so that it can be used as a basis for realizing a more harmonious and prosperous social order.

DISCUSSION

The Relevance of Social Sciences in Daily Life

One of the fundamental advantages of social science is its close relationship with the reality of daily life. The various principles contained in it can be applied in various situations, ranging from collective work activities, dispute resolution efforts, to the preparation of service ideas for the common good. As an illustration, in the work environment, mastery of organizational structure and interaction patterns in groups is very crucial. Through this understanding, a person can more easily adjust to his environment and make optimal contributions. However, not all views view this discipline positively. There are responses that state that social science is more subjective, lacks precision like exact science, and the symptoms it studies are difficult to measure absolutely. However, it is precisely this nature that is its advantage, because this science views human beings as entities that have their own complexity and cannot be explained simply by numbers alone.

Responding to the increasingly complex dynamics of the world, social sciences will always play a vital role in the future. We need more experts who are able to be the link between knowledge findings, technological advancements, and basic human needs. The researchers in this field are also expected to be able to guide the community in facing various challenges, such as shifts due to technological developments, environmental balance, and divisions in the social order. With a thorough understanding, they can act as a driver of change that gives birth to a sustainable solution. It needs to be reiterated that this science is not just a set of theories, but a means to understand, study, and provide appropriate responses to the reality of life.

Through this foundation, we can build a more equitable social environment, unite differences, and take place sustainably.

Branches of Social Sciences

- **Sosiologi**

Sociology is one of the branches of social science that studies the order of coexistence, the pattern of relationships between individuals, and the various systems formed in it. In terms, this word comes from a combination of Latin and Greek elements, which means the study of collective life. Thus, sociology can be interpreted as knowledge that explores the essence of social life. Auguste Comte is known as the early formulator of this field, who developed it to understand order in the common environment while also finding solutions to various problems that arise. This study examines the behavior patterns of community members, the structure of life systems, and the process of shifting that occurs over time. One of the main ideas that is the main differentiator is the concept of the order structure, position, duties, norms, and values adhered to. The structure of the order describes the way society is divided into various groups, such as the family, the education system, the economy, and religious institutions, which function to maintain the stability of a common life. Sociology also examines the relationship between individuals and groups. This kind of relationship can create a harmonious atmosphere, but it also has the potential to cause discord in the social environment.

- **Antropologi**

Anthropology is one of the branches of social science that studies human existence in its entirety, both in terms of biological nature and cultural aspects, with the aim of understanding the nature of human beings and the diversity of their life patterns in various regions of the world. In terms, this word comes from a combination of Greek elements, namely anthropos which means human being and logos which means study or science. As it develops, this field is divided into several main parts, including the study of customs, the science that studies the biological aspects of humans, the study of language and sign systems, and the study of the remains of the past. Anthropology also has a scope that includes life habits, belief systems, cultural heritage, values adhered to, and rules that apply in society. Furthermore, this study examines various characteristics that humans have, ranging from physical to their mindset. This

field also describes language as one of the main means of connecting with others, as well as explaining how communication and a person's identity are formed.

- **Social Psychology**

Social psychology is a branch of knowledge that studies how a person's mindset, feelings, and actions are influenced by the existence of other individuals and the environment in which they are. The scope of the study includes a person's view of his environment, the process of interacting, and the dynamics that occur in the group. In addition, this field examines how a person assesses the circumstances of the environment, the influence received from the environment, the conformity of behavior with applicable norms, joint decision-making, and how the group influences the actions of its members.

- **Economy**

Economics is a branch of social science that examines human efforts in managing limited resources to meet the ever-evolving needs of life. The scope of the discussion includes the process of processing goods or services, their distribution, and how to use them. This field is divided into two main scopes: studies that focus on the actions of individuals or small institutions, and studies that review the state of the economy as a whole, such as the growth of business results, the level of availability of basic needs, and the direction of economic development. More broadly, this science also discusses trade relations between regions, environmental management in business activities, and the economic system as a whole.

- **Political Science**

Political science is a branch of study that examines the ideas and implementation of power, government systems, and policies that are applied for the common good. The scope includes the origin of power, the exercise of authority, and the spread of responsibility in society. It also discusses the views of freedom, justice, and order of coexistence put forward by previous thinkers such as Aristotle, Machiavelli, and John Locke. This field also compares various constitutional systems that apply in various regions, as well as examines the

elements that determine the stability of a government. In addition, this science examines relations between nations, the workflow of world organizations, economic movements across regions, as well as the formulation, implementation, and assessment of policies issued by authorized institutions.

- **Social Geography**

Social geography is a branch of science that examines the relationship between humans and the environment in which they live, especially looking at how the physical existence of the area affects the pattern of activities, cultural order, and the course of the economy in the area. The scope includes the distribution of the population, the difference in the density of residents in each region, as well as the factors that encourage a person to choose a place to live. In addition, the differences in lifestyles between densely populated areas and sparsely populated areas, settlement patterns, development of residential areas, and population movement from one place to another were also discussed. This study also examines the process of changing the number of inhabitants and their distribution patterns, as well as various elements that shape social life and environmental conditions in an area.

Basic Characteristics of Social Sciences

Social sciences have distinctive characteristics that distinguish them from other knowledge groups. One of its main traits is that it is centered on the existence of humans and the environment in which they live. As a study that examines individual patterns of action in a collective order, this discipline places humans as both the studying and the being studied. This situation makes this science unique, because the study process is not only limited to observation, but also involves a direct relationship with the party that is the target of observation. This science also has flexibility in choosing the way of approach, so that it is able to examine various aspects of life comprehensively, ranging from the economic system, cultural system, to the power order in society (Brown & Taylor, 2021).

Another prominent feature is its ever-changing and adapting nature. This arises because social science continues to develop following the passage of the times and shifts in the order of life together. The advancement of

information systems and means of communication has also changed the way of understanding human relationships. Observations of interactions through virtual networks, the use of large amounts of data, and studies that utilize digital means are now an integral part of today's studies. This condition proves that this science is still able to maintain its relationship with the reality of life, while showing its ability to respond to evolving challenges.

In addition, social sciences are open to a combination of various fields of knowledge, so that they can collaborate with other disciplines in answering complex problems. For example, the study of climate change does not only rely on natural science, but also involves social science to understand its impact on people's lives and livelihoods. The combination of these approaches gives birth to a more complete and effective solution, especially in the face of large-scale problems that require review from various sides.

Another trait that is no less important is its ability to describe reality while providing a reference in a better direction. This science not only describes what happens in society, but also provides a view of a more ideal form of coexistence. As an illustration, the study of equal status between citizens does not only explain the difference in treatment, but also provides policy proposals to reduce existing inequality. Through this perspective, social science plays an important role in realizing changes in life together that take place in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature studies that have been carried out, it can be concluded that social science has a very important position in human life. The basic concept of social science provides an understanding of human behavior and interaction in society. Its wide scope allows various social phenomena to be studied in depth and systematically. Meanwhile, the relevance of social science in modern life is increasingly seen through its ability to explain the impact of technological developments, globalization, and various social challenges that arise in the digital era. Thus, social science not only plays a role as an academic field, but also as a means to increase social awareness, critical thinking skills, and community participation in facing various problems of modern life.

Based on the discussions that have been carried out, the community is expected to increase their understanding of social sciences because this science

has an important role in understanding various phenomena that occur in the surrounding environment. In addition, students need to utilize social science as a means to develop critical attitudes, tolerance, and concern for social problems. For educational institutions, social science learning should be carried out in a more contextual manner and linked to daily life so that the benefits can be felt directly. Thus, social sciences can contribute to forming a more harmonious, fair, and able society to face various challenges in the modern era.

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