
Social Inequality: Comparison Between USA And Pakistan Using Schwalbe's Book

It is important to understand the inequalities that plague our societies because not only is the inequality gap huge it exists in various aspect of our lives. There is global inequality in the form of first world and third world countries and then there is inequality within different nations and sectors of our communities. Hence on the basis of Michael Schwalbe's book *Rigging the Game*, which is about the reproduction of inequality in America, a comparison will be made between the process mentioned by Schwalbe and how similar it is to the reproduction of inequality in Pakistan.

Schwalbe starts off by bring to attention Piketty's argument that inequality is greatest in a capitalist society because those who make money by investing tend to stay ahead of the people making a living by working. It is important to note that the people who have the strings of the means of production in their hands, such as the corporate capitalist in the US (United States) gain their wealth through the exploitation of the labour force that has no other means to gain income and can never reach the same level of wealth. He also notes that policies, laws and procedures function to profit some groups at the cost of others. (Schwalbe, 2014)

In Pakistani society the elite also carry the blame for reproducing inequality and not introducing reforms that will help the country strive towards an equal society. The country's lack in implementing policies that can enable equal opportunities and reduce inequality has also been questioned and has been called a 'coordination failure' that can be described by poor governance structures or institutions that control the incentives and restrictions that people face, specifically forms of competition, rules of ownership, norms and so on. These institutions therefore control a country's long-term growth and the (unequal) distribution of resources. Therefore, these institutions can be influenced or determined by wealth and power, hence they can be subjected to elite capture. The wealthy can manipulate these institutions and policies for their personal gain. Furthermore, it has also been established that these elites, referred to as extractive elite, vampire elite can prevent democracy, technologies, competition and educational reforms even though they are socially beneficial just because they will not succeed and will not be compensated. The main point growth led and equity enhancing policies are not in the best interest of specific elite people. In other words, policies that promote equality have to recognize the benefits across different sectors not just the general benefits. (Abid A. Burki, 2015)

As for people with at least primary education earn more than half what uneducated people learn. This solidifies the belief that education of every next level effects the level of productivity. Education is the most important determinant of earning, therefore the difference in education levels is the main cause for difference in earning. However, obtaining education is not easy and many inequalities exist in the education sector itself. In Islamabad the federal capital of Pakistan educational inequalities is quite low. The reason for this being that it is the most well-planned region of the country. Almost all the sectors in Islamabad have schools and colleges, making education available for everyone. As can be expected, with the comparison between rural-urban areas it can be seen that educational facilities are inadequate in the rural areas of Pakistan. In Baluchistan and Sindh educational disparity is more prominent in comparison to Panjab and KPK. This can be due to the establishment of informal political system such as Sardar/Vadara

who do not prioritize education in Baluchistan and Sindh. This can be seen during the FY2016 when these two provinces decreased their budget for education while the other two provinces increased. (SHAH, 2018) From this we can see how inequality exists between different states of the same country.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the status of women in a patriarchal society with strong gender norms such as the association of outdoor activities as masculine while indoor activities, with partial cross over towards outside activities and house work as feminine. In societies like these women are sometimes denied their right to property and their physical mobility is also reduced. This can be to the extent that the access to education for girls is disrupted, they are more likely to work from home and might have occupations that pay less as a compensating difference. This means that women become more dependent on men and it becomes necessary for them to marry. With the unequal treatment of girls and due to their lower status, they are not given equal opportunities and until this change, gender inequality will continue to be reproduced in Pakistani society. Therefore, social inequality, in reference to gender might reinforce economic inequalities. In addition, social norms are carried through generations: if the norm is that women are not supposed to get an education and are better suited for house chores and child rearing then these types of norms are passed on to daughters reproducing the inequality, with the daughters repeating what the mothers did. (Abid A. Burki, 2015)

Moreover, inequality can be witnessed in the work place as well with discrimination in pay, which can take many forms; direct and indirect. Sometimes pay rates are based specifically on whether the worker is a man or woman, age, ethnicity or marital status, which is clearly direct discrimination. Usually, discrimination is indirect, such as paying a lower wage in a sector traditionally or predominantly of female employees. Pg6 (Khan, 2017)

Although direct discrimination is generally criticised, other parts of the gender pay gap are frequently linked to women's "choices" such as "preferring" jobs in less financially rewarding sectors or having less experience due to childbirth and caring leave. The reality is that these "choices" are formed by an environment that is extremely gendered which places the majority of unpaid care and domestic work to women and stereotypes that group women into underrated jobs. This can be seen in the fact that women with children are probably going to be paid less than women without children and men. Ultimately, even the statistically explainable proportions of the gender pay gap can, ultimately, be shaped by gender. UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women estimated the gender pay gap in Pakistan to be at 29% in 2016. In majority of the sectors women earn less than men, the predominantly male sectors have a lower pay gap compared to sectors that are mostly occupied by women. Transport and communication are the only sectors where women earn more than men, but the statistics are unreliable since in these sectors majority of the employees are men. (Khan, 2017)

Due to the importance given to the women's primary role of caregiver and homemaker, in addition early age marriages women are less likely to enter the work force, especially since they have to carry the burden of unpaid housework along with their jobs as do their unemployed counterparts. pg 11 women tend to be over represented as "contributing family workers" while they make up a small portion of wage based or self-employed work. Women tend to be paid on a piece-based basis and this trend has contributed to the fact that women mostly in vulnerable employment. Women are mostly in low-paid, low-skilled employment and make up just a small percentage of those in professional groups and decision-making positions. (Khan, 2017)

Schwalbe also states that women get stuck supporting manhood acts. This can be due to various reasons; some women want their partners to be alpha male protectors against other men. While mothers might wish to make their boys strong so they are able to defend themselves from other boys and men. It could also be due to the fact that in patriarchal societies power is eroticised and some women might like “bad boy” manhood acts that they find thrilling. (Schwalbe, *Rigging The Game*, 2014) In Pakistani societies men are also preferred to be powerful and protective, to guard their women and protect them, however the. Men as leaders and alphas have been ingrained in the Pakistani culture and continues to be taught to next generations.

Schwalbe also looks into Patriarchy, which is reproduced via dramaturgical action that is most of the time mistaken as normal: human males behaving like men. By the “dramaturgical action” he means an action that delays a message regarding the person doing the acting, also known as identity work or impression management. Schwalbe argues that even though the concept of patriarchy is no longer relevant in modern societies it is still useful to understand how society works. (Schwalbe, *Rigging The Game*, 2014) This idea is still very important in societies like Pakistan where there is a prominent distinction between gender roles and norms and society is patriarchal.

Johnson in *The Gender Knot*, defines society as patriarchal to the point that it is male identified, male dominant and male centered. When institutional power resides in the hands of men the more things that are valued and seen as normal in culture, are associated with men and the more the actions of men become the focus point of society. This establishes the extent to which a society is patriarchal and according to this, it is quite obvious that the US is still a patriarchal society. (Schwalbe, *Rigging The Game*, 2014) This idea is very visible in Pakistan as mentioned before regarding the stereotyping of women as caregivers and the higher waged sectors that are predominantly occupied by men, it can also be seen in the importance associated with the education of boys while the lack of educational priorities given to girls.

Religious segregation is also a medium of inequality. Pakistan is home to around 10-13 million minorities, the most prominent being Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. However it is important to keep in mind that this figure does not include the various Muslim denominations, which are not in the favour of being recognised as minorities, which include Shias among them there are the Ismailis, Zikris and other Muslim communities that are not happy about the Sunni demand to consider them as a minority. Also, Ahmadis that have been declared as a minority officially refuse to be categorised as non-Muslim. Two ways can be used to look at the majority-minority dynamic in Pakistan. The majority wish to include the minorities on their own terms, while the minorities would like to maintain their religious, cultural and ethnic identities. Islam, the religion of over 90% of the Pakistani population, and the emphasis on Islam as the national religion underplays pluralism in Pakistan. Moreover, evangelic competition between Christianity and Islam is volatile, especially due to the anti-Muslim policies by the West that are based on double-standards. Furthermore, the attacks against these minorities in Bahawalpur, Islamabad, Murree and Taxila were linked to the Muslim reaction towards anti-Muslim ideas and policies in the West. Also, the Indo-Pakistan tension that remains strong even years later since the partition, fuels the dislike between the Hindus and Muslims in India and Pakistan, making both minorities feel insecure in these countries. (Malik, 2002)

However, it is unfair to say that Pakistani society does not tolerate pluralism, a small number of radicals miss use the political-economic frustrations of the people, which result in its popularity

in a non-democratic system. The politics of dispiriting and global or local geo-political factors further fuel this backlash. It is amplified by existing partialities that have come about due to ignorance about other religious traditions and by stereotypes of Hindus, Christians, Shias, Kalasha and others. The religious extremists in?ame detestation on the streets and through the mosques, against non-Muslim factions as well as against (Shia) Ismailis, Zikris and Twelvers. Currently fragmentation and exclusion are going on in Pakistan – which is an important a phenomenon which deserves to be understood in depth because these so-called religious fades might not actually be due to religion and might be due to other factors. (Malik, 2002) Therefore, it can be seen how religion is used as a tool to exploit the people and make them react in manners that are beneficial to these powerful leaders that reproduce this hatred between the minority and majority so they can use this volatile situation to their own benefit.

Inequality can be seen throughout Pakistan, but also in countries all around the world. Durable inequality is a phenomenon put forward by Rao which was formalised in the idea of inequality trap. He defines this as situations where the distribution is stable because of the multiple dimensions of inequality (power, social status, wealth, etc) work together to prevent the downward mobility of the rich and the upward mobility of the power. As stated above, the meaning of an inequality trap needs stability of income distribution and the protection of relative ranks: the rich remain rich and the poor remain poor. A method by which to get understand this phenomenon it is necessary to study inter-generational mobility. (Abid A. Burki, 2015)

In Pakistan there is an average elasticity in mobility of 0.29, which means a 1% increase in the income of the father is related to a 0.29% increase in the son's income. However, it is important to note that most countries though as egalitarian (such as Finland) have a lower elasticity rate to Pakistan, and states like the USA that are said to be unequal have a higher elasticity. It can be noted that the father's earning is directly related to the son. Also, in accordance with the idea of intergenerational gap it can be seen that the father's earning not only predicts that of the son's but also that their relationship dose not weaken over time. (Abid A. Burki, 2015)

In conclusion it is safe to say that the comparison made between USA and Pakistan using Schwalbe's book, that it is to a significant extent relevant in understanding Pakistani society. Schwalbe makes very interesting comments in his book *Rigging The Game* about various forms of inequality, how these came about and how they are continuously being reproduced which is a good reference in explain the existence and reproduction of inequality in Pakistan.