The Social Sciences—How Scientific Are They? Manas Sarma

he social sciences are a very important and amazing field of study. A division of science, social sciences embrace a wide variety of topics from anthropology to sociology. The social sciences cover a wide range of topics that are crucial for understanding human experience/behavior in groups or as individuals.

By definition, social science is the branch of science that deals with the human facets of the natural world (the other two branches of science are natural science and formal science). Some social sciences are law, economics, and psychology, to name a few. The social sciences have existed since the time of the ancient Greeks, and have evolved ever since. Over time, social sciences have grown and gained a big following. Some colleges, like Yale University, have chosen to focus more on the social sciences than other subjects. The social sciences are more based on qualitative data and not as black-and-white as the other sciences, so even though they are more open to interpretation, the social sciences are still as scientific as the rest. Unfortunately, they have also not been as widely embraced as a science as natural science and formal science have, but are still as much a science as natural and formal science.

Law is a good example of social science. There is a lot more to law than most people may think. Lawyers have to know all of the federal laws, all of the laws of the state they may be living in, strong communication skills, and a multitude of critical thinking. The amount of critical thinking alone required for studying law is enough to qualify as a science. Lawyers are required to have a great deal of understanding of a great deal of things. Even though lawyers are not required to know physics or chemistry or anything of the like, they are still as scientifically knowledgeable as, say, Isaac Newton

or Madame Curie. That is, in their own way.

A better example of a social science than law may be economics. economics is, in a word, finances. Economics is the study



of how money changes, the rate at which it changes, and how it potentially could change and the rate at which it would. Even though economics does not deal with science directly, it is definitely equally scientific. About 50-60% of colleges require calculus to study business or economics. Calculus is also required in some science fields, like physics or chemistry. Since economics and science both require calculus, economics is still a science.

Perhaps the most scientific of the social sciences is psychology. Psychology is the study of human behaviors, how they change, mental disorders, and basically covers everything from how people behave to the emotional side of people. The field of psychology deserves as much credit as a science because of all that is required to study it. To study psychology requires biology, chemistry, and statistics, and also an advanced psychology class. Biology, chemistry, and (sometimes) statistics are also required in many science fields like engineering. With the common ground of requirements that psychology and science share, psychology is every bit as much a science field as actual science fields are.

The social sciences are a very important and amazing part of life and the world around us. While they are not as scientific and may be more abstract, the social sciences should still be more embraced than they are, because only by knowing people can you know the world around you.

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Section E Pg No: 136