**Uniting theory and action for climate**

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Karl Marx popularized the quote “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”. Given the quote, let us not forget that Earth has its needs too, and it is our collective ability that must rise to meet the challenge of climate change.

In the quest to address the escalating challenges of climate change, it is imperative to draw upon diverse theoretical frameworks to understand and formulate effective policies. Among these, Karl Marx's conflict theory and the paradigm of structural functionalism offer unique insights that can be applied to the realm of climate change policy, particularly in the context of Pakistan.

Karl Marx's conflict theory posits that societal structures are inherently characterized by conflicts arising from unequal distributions of power and resources. When applied to climate change policy, this theory highlights the stark disparities between those who contribute most to environmental degradation and those who bear the brunt of its consequences. In Pakistan, the impacts of climate change are felt acutely by marginalized and impoverished communities that have limited access to resources and decision-making power. The conflict theory perspective underscores the need for climate policies that address these inequalities, ensuring that the burdens and benefits of climate action are equitably distributed.

On the other hand, structural functionalism, a theory that emphasizes the interdependence of societal components and their contribution to overall stability, offers a different approach to climate change policy. According to this, each sector of society, including government, industry, and civil society, has a specific role to play in mitigating climate change and adapting to its impacts. For Pakistan, this implies the necessity of a coordinated and integrated approach to climate policy, where all stakeholders work collaboratively towards the common goal of environmental sustainability. By fostering synergy between various sectors, structural functionalism advocates for a holistic strategy that leverages the strengths of each component to achieve effective climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Comparatively, while Marx's conflict theory focuses on addressing the power imbalances and social injustices exacerbated by climate change, structural functionalism emphasizes the importance of a cohesive and cooperative societal structure for successful climate action. For Pakistan, both perspectives offer valuable insights: the former calls for policies that rectify inequalities and empower vulnerable communities, while the latter stresses the need for a unified and systematic approach to climate governance.

To develop a comprehensive, effective and equitable climate change strategy for Pakistan, the following detailed recommendations can be employed, integrating insights from both Karl Marx's conflict theory and structural functionalism.

First, equity-based financing mechanisms can ensure the equitable distribution of resources for climate action. Pakistan should implement progressive taxation mechanisms such as a carbon tax on high-emission industries and compliance with the carbon market. The revenues generated should be earmarked for climate adaptation and mitigation projects, with a focus on marginalized communities.

A national climate fund should also be established to pool resources from various sources, including international climate finance, to support grassroots initiatives and community-based adaptation projects. This will require building climate-smart infrastructure, instilling climate-smart civic sense into the population, climate-aware government, climate-conscious politicians/leaders and logistics. Indeed, this is a politically, diplomatically, economically and financially intensive task.

Second, participatory governance models can empower local communities and include vulnerable groups in decision-making processes. The establishment of community-based organizations (CBOs) and local climate action committees can facilitate direct participation in the planning and implementation of climate policies at the local level. Participatory budgeting processes should be implemented to allow communities to have a say in the allocation and spending of climate finance within their regions.

Third, decentralizing policy frameworks can enhance regional autonomy in climate action. Provincial and district governments should be empowered to develop and implement their own climate action plans, tailored to local environmental conditions and socio-economic contexts. Technical and financial support should be provided to local governments for capacity building in climate policy planning, implementation, and monitoring. Inter-provincial coordination and knowledge sharing should be encouraged to ensure consistency and synergies in climate action across different regions.

Fourth, utilizing integrated assessment models (IAMs) and adopting a systems-thinking approach can help analyze the interconnections between social, economic, and environmental systems. A national climate change strategy that aligns with sustainable development goals and incorporates multi-sectoral action plans should be developed. This strategy should consider the impacts of different climate policies on economic development, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

Fifth, it is crucial to put our noses to the grindstone and invest in programmes that build the capacity of government bodies, civil society, and grassroots communities. We should also extend an olive branch to international organizations and experts for technical assistance, bolstering our ability to craft, execute, and keep a watchful eye on climate policies. Additionally, setting up a climate change knowledge hub would be the cherry on top, acting as a treasure trove of best practices, case studies, and technical know-how for those at the helm of policymaking and implementation.

Sixth, nurturing public-private partnerships is like a catalyst for climate action, tapping into the private sector's treasure trove of resources, expertise, and innovation. Sweetening the pot with incentives like tax breaks or subsidies can entice private investment into clean energy and green infrastructure projects. It is time to break down silos and encourage a meeting of minds between government bodies, businesses, and research institutions to cook up innovative solutions for climate resilience and reduction efforts.

Moreover, the strategy may propose regional climate cooperation. Pakistan aims to foster collaboration with other South Asian countries to share knowledge, resources, and strategies. This cooperation is intended to enhance regional climate resilience, recognizing that climate change is a challenge that transcends national borders. In this context, Saarc may be renamed South Asia’s Resilience for Climate Change (SARCC) to make it more purposeful.

Seventh, it is time we put our best foot forward and enact comprehensive climate legislation, laying down the law with binding targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions and establishing a robust legal framework for climate action. Implementing regulations that mandate environmental impact assessments (EIA) for all major projects is a must to ensure we're not caught off guard by climate risks.

We need to tighten the screws on enforcement mechanisms to ensure everyone plays by the rules and adheres to environmental standards. Furthermore, IMF’s Climate-Public Investment Management Assessment (C-PIMA) can provide insights for public planning, which involves an assessment of the five institutions of public investment management that are key for climate-aware infrastructure. It starts with climate-aware planning, followed by coordination between entities, project appraisal and selection, budgeting and portfolio management and risk management.

Eighth, it is time to set up a national climate change monitoring system that acts as a central hub, weaving together data from a variety of sources like satellite imagery, weather stations, and grassroots observations. Employing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can help us chart the course, pinpoint climate vulnerabilities and mark the X on the map for critical intervention areas. We need to establish a rhythm of regular reporting and evaluation for our climate policies, using indicators that track our strides toward emissions reduction, adaptation achievements, and social equity.

Finally, it is crucial to dip our toes in the water with pilot projects, testing the waters of climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. We should cultivate a garden of iterative learning and policy fine-tuning, taking cues from stakeholder feedback and the latest scientific discoveries to nurture our ongoing climate efforts. Let's throw our hats into the ring of innovation and experimentation in climate governance, fostering an environment where novel ideas and technologies can take root and flourish.

By incorporating these detailed recommendations into its climate change policy framework, Pakistan can enhance the effectiveness, equity, and adaptability of its climate action, ensuring that it addresses both the root causes and the impacts of climate change comprehensively and inclusively.

In conclusion, integrating insights from Karl Marx's conflict theory and structural functionalism into Pakistan's climate change policy framework can provide a more comprehensive and equitable pathway to addressing the multifaceted challenges of climate change. By acknowledging the interplay between social structures, power dynamics, and environmental sustainability, Pakistan can devise climate policies that are not only effective but also just and inclusive.

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