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*‘CONTENT SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 8’*

***PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)***

The success recorded in natural science in the eighteen and nineteenth century was so enormous on the social and intellectual life of the European people then that they started trusting the words of scientists and even sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues, but science was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was only the material that was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way. Not until a French social philosopher called August Comte thought otherwise. He was of the opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behaviour can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions made. This is the beginning of social sciences, especially sociology and Comte is being regarded till date as father of sociology and social sciences in general.

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behaviour, interaction and manifestations, either as an individual in a society or collectively as a group; including the institutions, norms and more of such interactions created. Disciplines in the social sciences include: sociology, psychology, economics, political science, archaeology and anthropology. Social science seeks to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study, such endeavour include; understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context and factors responsible for such development or change; discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing most of human behaviour; being able to predict human behaviour based on the pattern of interaction, belief system, social norms and other factors influencing human behaviour, especially in relation to economic and political activities; influencing human behaviour, grooming it towards a socially desirable conduct and channelling collective effort toward development; advancing beyond armchair philosophy, the knowledge about the characteristic temperament and associated behaviour of a person or group, or the exhibited by those engaged in an activity.

To understand this problem with social sciences better, we need to understand that one of the essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a casual or correlational connection between an event and its cause. So in that case, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must: have an invariable or constant relation in the sense that whenever the alleged cause occurs, the effect must also occur; be spatially contiguous, that is, the two events must occur in approximately the same location or at least be related by a chain of events that are spatially linked; be temporally related such that the cause precedes the effect in time just as the effect must follow continuously from the cause; and have an asymmetrical relation in that the occurrence of the alleged cause must be actual event, which brings about the effect, such that the effect must not be part of the original conditions that are necessary and sufficient for its own occurrence.

Another problem with the project of social science is that, according to Max Weber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with freewill, desires, emotions and other scientific features that come to play in his action or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behaviour with which natural sciences is known to deduce their principles and laws. Take for instance the law of demand and supply in economics which predicts the human as a rational being will by less when the price is high and buy more when the price is low. It is on this basic assumption of rational behaviour that the law of demand and supply was formulated; The higher the demand, higher the price, but the higher the supply the lower the price. This is also referred to as market forces. However, it has been observed even by economists themselves that these laws do not hold all the time since man does not behave rationally all the time. In fact, in recent years, capitalists have been able to manipulate consumer behaviour to the point it is doubtful if these laws hold any longer. For example, some android phones or iPhones applications are of necessity to buy if you want to use the phone. Some applications will even force the user to update it, causing the user to spend data on the update as data is the currency of the internet of nowadays. The law of demand and supply does not seem to work here as consumers have no choice. Now, if a supposed scientific law is neither absolute nor hold quite often, should we continue to call it scientific laws of economics.