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**Course Title**: History and Philosophy of Science

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**Assignment Title**: Review Chapter 8

Question: Write a review on chapter 8 of the History and Philosophy of Science.

The topic considered in chapter 8 is Philosophy of Social Sciences (and Applied Sciences). In this survey I will be discussing on 3 subtopics: What social science is, the problem of reasons and causes and lastly the problem of Human Person as Object of Study in Social Sciences.

**What is Social Science?**

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 institution, norm and more such interactions created. Disciplines in the social science include: Sociology, Psychology, Economics, Political Science, Archaeology and Anthropology. Although, the history of the discipline dates back to early philosophers who wanted to study how society works such as St. Augustine and the 14th-century historian Ibn Khaldun; down to Karl Marx, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Emile Durkheim and a host of other social thinkers. However, **August Comte** was regarded as the father of social science.

Social Science seeks to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study.

The objectives of such endeavour include;

1. Understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context and factors responsible for such development or change.
2. Being able to predict human behaviour based on the patterns of interaction, belief system, social norms, and other factors influencing human behaviour, especially in relation to economic and political activities.
3. Influencing human behaviour; grooming it towards a socially desirable conduct and channeling collective effort towards development.
4. Discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing most of human behaviour.
5. Advancing beyond armchairs philosophy, the knowledge about the characteristics temperament and associated behaviour of a person or group, or that exhibited by those engaged in an activity.

**Note:** However, the philosophy of social science arouse out of curiosity that the central focus and the There exist an incongruity in using method of scientific enquiry to study human and his society. i.e. the fact human beings do not behave in exact way object of natural sciences behave.

**The Problem of Reasons and Causes**

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 reciprocal connection between an event and its cause. According to this account, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must:

1. Have an invariable or constant relation in the sense that whenever the alleged cause occurs, the effect must also occur.
2. 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
3. Be temporally related such that the cause precedes the effect must follow continuously from the cause
4. 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. Francis Offor explains this point in the following words: The principle of cause and effect states that for every event in the universe, there is a set of conditions such that if the conditions are all fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. The principle states that for every event ‘B’ in the universe, there is always a cause ‘A’, such that ‘B’ can always be explained by reference to that reasons can be treated as causes and of such is Robin Collingwood who argues that reasons are not only causes but they are the ultimate casual power which lies in human and that ascribing casual power to inanimate things and objects in the physical world may be too naïve of us.

**The Problem of Human Person as Object of Study in Social Sciences**

Another problem with the study 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 sentient features that come into 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.