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ASSIGNMENT: SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 8 [PHILOSPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AND

APPLIED SCIENCES)]

Natural science recorded so much success in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe that people began to trust the words of scientists and even seek their opinions on matters unrelated to science like law and religion. The belief in science or application of science to any issue called positivism originated during this period.

Positivism grew in the socio-cultural setting known as the renaissance or enlightenment period, marked by revolution against the dark ages, a time where religious belief reigned supreme, men and women were burnt alive if found guilty of sorcery or witchcraft by the church, and several wars against heathens by the church.

The intellectuals at that time saw this as a threat to society, and secretly stated using literary means to arrive at justified conclusions, giving rise to romanticism, which saw the influence of the church wane, and the influence of science increase. This development spawned individualism, which if left unchecked can escalate to anarchy.

The effect of these was overwhelming, as scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues., but science was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was believed to behave in a particular way. It was until French philosopher Auguste Comte came up with the theory the society behaves in a regular pattern and that this behavior can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions can be made.

This began social sciences, especially sociology, and Comte is regarded as the father of social sciences. Positivism rejects theoretical explanations that are not based on facts in acquiring knowledge. This is laden with a lot of problems and error.

Social science is dedicated to studying and explaining human behaviors, institutions, norms and interactions.it employs scientific method in study of social phenomena with the human being as focus through various endeavors.

However, social science arouses out of curiosity that its main focus may be unachievable due to methodological mishaps. To understand the problems of social science better, one first needs to understand the principles of cause and effect.

The principle of cause and effect dates back to David Hume, and was further expanded by Ernest Nagel, that for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must be invariably and constantly related, spatially contiguous, temporarily related and have asymmetrical relations in that the occurrence of the alleged cause must be an actual event.

Francis Offor backs this up by claiming that for every event in the universe, there is a set of conditions such that if all the conditions are fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. He further asserts that by using scientific methods in social investigation, social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents.

An example is cited on Mr. A being asked by his friends why he punched one of them at the gym; Mr. A replying that he did that because he was angry. In other words, anger was the reason or cause for punching his friend. However, when delving deeper, one can insinuate that Mr. A was either angry or his brain activated a muscle to throw a punch. That he could have punched his friend the same way in jubilation or as a tease. So if the reason of something can be many but the cause cannot, the extent to which we take reasons as causes is limited.

One reason to solve this is to accept reasons are not causes bot motive or intent. Another example is cited of a man going to the supermarket to by canned beef. We can either say that his reason was to get canned beef or his intent or motive to buy canned beef was the cause and going to the supermarket was the effect. But what if he gets there and buys a drink? Can the cause change after the effect has taken place?

Another problem is the argument my social science expert and scholars on whether it is not better to leave reasons as drive, intent or motive and not cause. Even so, some scholars like Robin Collingwood still argue that reasons can be treated as causes.

Then there is the problem of social science according to Max Weber, that science methods become inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study which is man is a rational being with emotions, freewill and desires that come into play in his actions and reactions. The theory of demand and supply is cited. The higher the demand, the higher the price, but he higher the supply, the lower the price. But it has been discovered that laws do not always hold because man doesn’t always behave rationally. For example, on some phones, applications force the user to constantly update, causing them to spend so much on data. The law of demand and supply doesn’t seem to work here. The question then arises that if a supposed scientific law cannot hold all the time, why should we continue to call it scientific laws of economics?