NAME: Anorue Victoria Uchechi

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REVIEW OF CHAPTER 8

The success of natural science and its scientists in the 1700s and 1800 made Europeans to trust the words of natural scientists completely. The opinions of natural scientists were sought in other matters like law. Positivism is the positive response to explanations given by science or application of science in any issues. Positivism grew during a period of socio cultural change. These periods were the renaissance and enlightenment periods. It was called the renaissance period because it marked the return of the Greek heritage of using reason inn matters of the public unlike the dictation of religions as in the dark ages. The effect of this was remarkable. Scientific approaches were actually derived from philosophical approaches though they were restricted to studying natural phenomena because only materials were seen to behave in a patterned and predictable manner. Until Auguste Comte thought otherwise. He thought that the behaviour of the society was patterned, therefore accurate predictions can be made. This gave rise to sociology and other social sciences. Till date Auguste Comte is seen as the father of social sciences.

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behaviour, interaction and manifestation either as an individual or collectively; including institutions, norms etc. Disciplines in the social sciences include sociology, law, psychology, anthropology, economics, political science, archaeology, etc. social sciences use scientific method to investigate social phenomena using humans as the object. The behaviour of humans change as a result to changes in circumstance and environment.

In other to understand the problem of reasons and causes, one has to first know what the principle of cause and effect means; that is why event A is the cause of event B. This goes back to the exposition of the notion of causation in a bullet form. The cause and effect must;

* Have a constant relation in the sense that whenever the alleged cause occurs, the effect must also occur
* Be spatially contagious; that is, the two 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 of precedes the effect in time just as the effect must follow continuously from the cause
* Have an asymmetrical relation in that the occurrence of the alleged cause must be actual event, which brings about the 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 that “The principle of cause and effect states that for every event in the universe, there is a set of conditions such that if all the conditions are all fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. Put differently, 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 all activities of event ‘A’. This is the principle that underlines the method of explanation in science”. One way to address this problem is to accept reasons not as causes but intent and motive. For example, a man goes to popcorn at a store. His reason for going to the store was to buy popcorn. But he comes out with a bottle of Coke. You can’t then say that him wanting to buy popcorn caused his buying a bottle of Coke but something obviously caused his buying the bottle of Coke. Therefore, cause is not the same as reason. Nonetheless, there are other approaches to this problem.

Another problem with social sciences that, according to Karl Max science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social sciences is man, a rational being with freewill, emotion, desires, and other sentiment. All these factors undermine the notions of actions and causes of certain actions being predictable.