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The positive response to sciences due to its enormous in natural sciences in the 18th and 19th century happened as a result of a change in the social-cultural milieu of the time which is why from then on belief in science is called POSITIVISM. The socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and the enlightenment period. It is called the renaissance period because it marked a period when people started a revolution to return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern. Prior to the renaissance age was the dark ages when religious belief reigned supreme, the pope had the final say, people who were assumed to practice witchcraft or sorcery were burnt at stake, diseases were said to be direct consequence of sin or idolatry so the church waged several words to eradicate the heathens. The intellectual community saw this as big threat to human happiness and survival so they started infiltrating literature with its benefits of using reason to arrive at a justified conclusion just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do. This became known as the classical period of romanticism which gave humanism and naturalism and work of art and literature produced at that time were regarded as classic. The emancipation of the authority of the church led to the growth of individualism, even to the point of anarchy.

Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues but science was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was only material that was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way. A French social philosopher called August Comte thought otherwise and was of the opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behavior can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions made. This is the beginning of social science especially sociology with Comte still regarded as its father. Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interaction and manifestations, either as an individual in a society or collectively as a group; including the institutions, norms, and mores such interactions created. Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. However, the philosophy of social science arouses out of curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch.

To understand this problem of social science 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. That is to explain why event A is the cause of event B which is the effect. 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 the conditions are all fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. He furthers that “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents. If the reason for something can be many but the cause of something cannot be, to what extent and we take reasons to cause?

One way to solve this problem is to accept reasons are not causes but motive or intent. A good example of this is the case of a man who went to supermarket to buy canned beef. We can say the reason he went to supermarket is to get canned beef. If we go with substitution thesis, we will say the cause of his going to the supermarket to buy canned beef. In other words, the motive which is to buy canned beef is the cause and going to the supermarket is the effect. However, what if he couldn’t get the canned beef thus, he gets a soda drink? Would we say the cause changed after the effect has already taken place? Another problem is that, if reasons are causes, then getting the canned beef must of necessity come before going to the supermarket since causes always precede the effect they caused. Some scholars still argue that reasons can be seen as causes for example Robin Collingwood who argues that reasons are not only causes but also 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.

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 sentient features that come into play in his action or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behavior with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws. Take for instance, the higher the demand, the higher the price but the higher the supply the lower the price which is based on the assumption that humans will buy less when the price is high and buy when its low, this is also known as market force. Economists have observed that the theory doesn’t hold all the time though because of the manipulation of consumer behavior by capitalist. Now, if a supposed scientific law is neither absolute nor hold quite often, should we continue to call it scientific laws of economics?