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In not more than two pages review chapter 8 of History and Philosophy of Science.

This chapter talks about social sciences but before we fully what is it and why we have it we have to question where did social sciences start from. Social sciences was formed due to the success recorded in natural science in the 18th and 19th century, it was so successful that people started trusting the words of scientists and even sought the opinions on matters or related to science such as law and forensic evidence. This positive response to science happened as a result of a change in the social cultural milieu of the time and this explains why belief in science or application of science to any issue was called positivism from then on. Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge.

What is social science?

Social science that 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 such as interactions created. Disciplines in the social sciences include sociology, psychology, economics, political science, archaeology and anthropology. The man regarded as the father of social sciences was a French social philosopher called August Comte.

The objectives of studying a human being using the methods of science 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 pattern of interaction belief system social norms and other factors influencing human behaviour
3. Influencing human behaviour
4. Discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing most of human behaviour
5. Advancing beyond armchair philosophy

However the philosophy of social science arose out of the Curiosity that central Focus and propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch. This means that it may be impossible to fully study human beings using science because human beings are unpredictable based on the fact that they are pushed by their emotions and thoughts.

The problem of reasons and causes.

To understand this problem with social science better we need to understand that one of the essential features of social science and scientific explanation is to provide a causal 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. Ernest Nagel presents Hume's exposition of the notion of causation in a bullet form:

1. Have an invariable or constant relation in the sense that whenever the alleged cause a cause the effect must also occur.
2. The 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 spatially linked.
3. Be temporally related such that the cause precedes effect in time just as the effect must follow continuously from the cause.
4. Have an asymmetrical relation in that the occurrence of the alleged cause must be actual events which brings about the effect such that the effects must not be part of the original conditions that are necessary and sufficient for his own occurrence.

An example given is when friend A punches friend B and upon seeing this the other friends ask why and he replies "I punched him because I was angry" it seems like a good enough reason but you have to question what made him angry and why it was friend B he punched and not anyone of the others.

The problem of Human Person as object of study in social sciences.

Another problem with the project of social science is the according to Max Weber methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social sciences, man a rational being with freewill, desires, emotion's 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 science is known to deduce their principles and laws. Take for instance the law of demand and supply in economics which predicts that human as a rational being will buy less when the prices is high and more when the price is low is, it is on this basic assumption of rational behaviour that the law of demand and supply was formulated. But in recent years we see that these laws no longer apply because people buy things more when they are more expensive, examples are iPhones and designer brands. Now if a supposed scientific law is neither absolute nor those it hold quite often, should we continue to call it scientific laws of economics?.

