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History has created a platform for studying the origin, methods, challenges, and relationships between disciplines. In this instance, we explore the relationship between philosophy of natural and social sciences, which have societal good as common interest

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the success of natural sciences affected the lives of Europeans in such a way that made dependence on scientists for unrelated matters. Positivism is the result of the positive response to science as a result of changes in the socio-cultural activities of the time.

The socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called “The Renaissance and The Enlightenment period”. It is called a renaissance period because it marked a period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern and not the dictate of religion as it was in the age prior to this time. The time religious beliefs reigned supreme was called dark ages where the words of the Pope was the final authority on any matter e.g. men and women were burned at stake because the church has found them guilty of witchcraft or sorcery and the church waged wars to exterminate the heathens because diseases were said to be direct consequence of sin and idolatry e.t.c. It was seen as a serious threat to human life and because of that literature was infiltrating with the benefits of using reason to arrive at a justified conclusion just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to. The classical period of romanticism began in arts and music which were hidden Greek worldviews. Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism and works of art and literature produced at that time were regarded as classic. According to Bertrand Russell, the period of history which is called “modern” has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways. There are two that are most important which are diminishing authority of the church and increasing authority of science. Also Russell holds that the emancipation from the authority of the church lead to the growth of individualism and anarchy. Discipline, intellectual, moral and politics was associated in the minds of the men of the renaissance with the scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government.

The scientific approach to things that grew out of philosophical approach to issues. Science was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was only the material that was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way but the idea was pointed wrong by August Comte a French social philosopher who believed otherwise. He believed that society behaves in a regular pattern much more like material things and this behavior can be studied and somehow accurate predictions can be made. This is the beginning of social sciences. August Comte is still regarded as the father of sociology and social sciences in general till date. Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge.

There are a lot of problems with this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise. Firstly, observation is one of the problems upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error which are observations are concept-laden, hypothesis-laden, theory-laden etc.

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. Disciplines in the social sciences are sociology, archaeology, anthropology, economics, psychology and political science. Philosophers like St Augustine, Ibn Khaldun, Karl Marx, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Emile Durkheim etc. wanted to study how society works. Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. The objectives are:

1. Understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context and factors responsible for such development or change.
2. Discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing most of human behavior, etc.

The philosophy of social science arouse out of curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science maybe impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch. The incongruity stem from the fact that human beings do not behave in exact way objects of natural sciences behave eg stone.

There is 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. The explication of causality form which is endearing to our analysis here. “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 temporally related such that the cause precedes the effect in time just as the effect must follow

Continuously.

Francis Offor explains this point as “the principle of cause and effects states that for every event in the universe, there is a set of conditions such that if the conditions are fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. He goes further to assert that “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social science seeks to explain the cause of action involving human agents”.

One way to solve this problem is to accept reasons are not causes but motive or intent, for example, a man went to supermarket to buy canned beef. The reason why he went to supermarket is to get canned beef. Going with the substitution thesis, the cause of his going to supermarket is to get canned beef. The intent or motive which is to buy canned beef is the cause and going to the supermarket is the effect. Another problem is that, if reasons are causes, then getting the canned beef must of necessity before going to the supermarket since causes always precede the effect they caused. Scholars like J.S Mill, T.M. Newcomb and August Comte have argued on whether it is better to leave reason as motive, drive or intent and not cause. Although they are some scholars who insist that reasons can be treated as causes e.g. Robin Collingwood who argues to the extreme that reasons are not the only causes but they are the ultimate causal power that lies in human and ascribing causal power to inanimate things and objects in the physical world may be too naïve of us.

According to Max Weber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable to social sciences 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. It is on this basic assumption of rational behavior that the law of demand and supply was formulated. However, changing technology and methodologies have proven that man is not always rational thus bringing to question these laws based on such assumptions, further highlighting the inappropriateness of using same methodology.