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QUESTION

In not more than 2 pages, do a review of Chapter 8 of Temidayo D. Oladipo and Noah O.Balogun, History and Philosophy of Science: A Brief Survey , Ibadan: Hope Publications, Page 86-95.

The success recorded in natural science in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was so enormous on the social and intellectual life of the people of Europe that they have started trusting the words of scientists and even sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. The belief in the positive response to science or application of science to any issue is called **positivism** from then on.

The socio-cultural milieu in which this positivism grew is called **the renaissance and the enlightenment period.** The renaissance period is also known as the **dark age** because it was the time religious beliefs reigned supreme. The words of the Pope was the final authority on any matter, churches started finding the men and the women guilty of witchcraft or sorcery, diseases were said to be the consequence of sins but however the intellectual community saw this as a big threat to human survival so they started infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reason to arrive at justified conclusion such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do. This became known as the classical period of romanticism which gave rise to humanism and naturalism and works of art and literature produced at this time were also classic. Of that Bertrand Russell said, two are the most important; the diminishing authority of Church which later led to the growth of individualism and the increasing authority of science.

The French social philosopher called August Comte is being regarded till date as father of sociology and social sciences in general. Positivism rejects theoretical speculations, declares false and propositions that could not be solved. There are a lot of problems with this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise. First of these problems is observations which include facts that are concept-laden, hypothesis-laden, theory-laden, value-laden, interest-laden and laden with culture-specific ontologies.

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. Disciplines in the social sciences include sociology, economics, political science, anthropology, psychology and archaeology. Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study.

The Problem of Reasons and Causes; one of the essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a casual or correlational connection between and event and its cause. According to this account, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must have an invariable or constant relation, be spatially contiguous, must be temporary related and lastly must have an asymmetrical relation. Francis Offor explains this point that the principle of cause and effect states that for event in the universe, there is a set of conditions such that if the conditions are all fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. He goes further to assert that by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents. One way to solve this problem is to accept reasons that are not causes but motive or intent as some scholars like J.S. Mill, T.M. Newcomb and Auguste Comte have argued on whether it is not better to leave reason as a motive, drive or intent and not cause while other scholars who insist that reasons can be treated as causes; one of such scholars is Robin Collingwood who argues that reasons are not only causes but they are the 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 u.

The problem of Human Person as Object of Study in Social Sciences; 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. For example, the Law of Demand and Supply in Economics which predicts that human as a rational being will buy less when the price is high and buy more when the price is low. It is on this basic assumption of rational behavior that the law of demand and supply was formulated. The higher the demand, the higher the price but the higher the supply the lower the price. This is also referred to as market forces. However, it has been observed that even the economists themselves do not hold the law all the time since man does not behave rationally all the time. In this recent years, capitalists have been able to manipulate consumer behavior to the point that it is doubtful if these laws hold any longer. Now, if a supposed scientific law is neither absolute nor hold quite often, should we continue to call it scientific laws of economics.