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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

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HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

The people of Europe started trusting the words of scientist, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and even sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. This positive response to science also happened as a result of a change in socio-cultural milieu of the time and this explains why belief in science or application of science to any issue is called positivism from then on.

The socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and 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 aeon prior to the renaissance period was called the dark ages because it was the time religious belief reigned supreme. The words of the pope was the financial authority on any matter, be it political, social or intellectual. It was a time men and woman were burned at stake because the church has found them guilty of witchcraft or sorcery.

However, the intellectual community at the time saw this as a big threat to human health and survival. So they started infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reason to arrive at justified conclusion just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do, in arts and music were hidden Greek worldview too. Bertrand Russell puts this more succinctly when he said that, “the period of history which is commonly called “modern” has a mental outlook which differs from that one from the medieval period in many ways. Of these, two are the most important: the diminishing authority of the church, and the increasing authority of science. Furthermore, Russell holds that “emancipation from the authority of the church led to the growth of individualism, even to the point of anarchy. Discipline, intellectual, moral and political, was associated in the minds of the men of the renaissance with the scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government.

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. First of these problems is observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error. These include the facts that:

1. Observation are concept-laden;
2. Observations are hypothesis-laden;
3. Observations are theory-laden;
4. Observations are value-laden;
5. Observations are interest-laden;
6. Observations are laden with culture-specific ontologies.

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interaction and manifestation, either as an individual in a society or collectively as a group. Social science seek to employ the method of science In the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. The objectives of such endeavor include:

1. Understanding humans in both historical development context and factors responsible for such development or change.
2. Being able to predict human behavior based on the pattern on interaction, belief system, social norms and other factors influencing human behavior, especially in relations to economic and political activities.
3. Influencing human behavior; grooming it towards a socially desirable conduct and channeling collective effort towards development.
4. Discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing most of human behavior.
5. Advancing beyond armchair philosophy, the knowledge about the characteristics temperament and associated behavior of a person or group, or that exhibited by those engaged in an activity.

However, the philosophy of social science arouse out of the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch. In other words, there exist an incongruity in using method of scientific enquiry of study human and society. However, a man as a conscious and rational being may not behave in the same pattern.