NAME: NWACHUKWU OGECHI ESOSA

DEPARTMENT: ACCOUNTING

MATRICULATION NUMBER: 19/SMS02/034

COURSE: GST118

Natural sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were so enormous on social media and intellectual life of those in Europe that they started trusting the words of scientists and sought after them in other fields like law and forensic evidence. This positive response was a result of a change in the socio-cultural milieu and explains why belief in science and its application to any issue is called positivism.

The socio-cultural milieu that positivism came from is called renaissance and the enlightenment period. Renaissance period meaning it was marked a period when people started a revolution of using reason in matters of public concern and not the dictate of the religion as it was at that time. The word of the pope was the final authority on every matter, diseases were also said to be a consequence of sin and idolatry. However, the community at that time saw it as a threat against humanity and survival. Hence, they started using literature to arrive at justification such as Aristotle, Plato and Socrates. The classical period of romanticism in arts and music gave rise to humanism and naturalism as works of art and music were regarded as classical. Bertrand Russel said that ‘’the period of history which is commonly called ‘modern”, has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in more ways than one. Russel holds that ‘’emancipation from the authority of the church led to the growth of individualism. Discipline, intellectual, moral and political are all associated in the minds of the men of the Renaissance with the scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government’’.

Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues but 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 not until a French social philosopher named August Comte thought otherwise, he had an opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behaviour can be studied. This was the beginning of social sciences, Comte is realized today as the father of sociology and social sciences.

Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. Positivism declares false, all propositions that could not be solved or verified by experience such as metaphysical statements due to a high degree of abstract nature. There are a lot of problems concerning this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise. The first of these problems is the basic justification of positivism came in laden with error. These include the facts that observations are concept-laden, they are hypothesis-laden, they are theory-laden, they are value-laden, they are interest-laden, and observations are laden with culture-specific ontologies.

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behaviour, interaction and manifestations, either as an individual in a society or group, including institutions, norms and mores such interactions created. Disciplines in the social science includes : sociology, psychology, economics, political science, archaeology and anthropology. Science also seeks to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. An objective is discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing most of human behaviour.

However, the philosophy of social science arouses out of social science arouse out of the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be impossible because of methodological mismatch. A stone is not a conscious being, so it may behave in a regular and thus predictable way when pushed. A man however is a conscious and rational being and may not behave in the same pattern.

***The problem of reasons and causes***

To understand this problem with social sciences 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. Therefore, to explain why event A is the cause of event B which is the effect. For anything to be the effect of another, the cause and effect must be temporally related such that the cause precedes the effect in time just as the effect must follow continuously from the cause.

Francis Offor explains this point in the following words;

*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. Put differently, the principle states that for every event B in the universe, there is always a cause A, such that B can always be explained by reference to cause A. This is the principle that underlies the method of explanation in science.*

Offor goes further to explain that, “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents”. For example, Mr A punches someone at the gym and is later asked why he did such, he says he punched him because he was angry. Nearly everyone will agree that the reason was because he was angry, in other words, anger is the cause for the punch. This example pretends the words ‘cause’ and ‘reason’ can be substituted for one another without loss of meaning. Can we say the reason this man gave the punch was out of anger or because his brain activated the muscle of his arm to throw a punch? He could have punched his friend in the same way if he was happy or if he was teasing him. But the notion of cause as explicated before does not allow for such multiplicity of casual factor for a single effect. If the reason of something can be many but the cause of something cannot be, to what extent can we take reasons or cause?

One way is to accept that reasons are not causes but motive or intent. An example where a man goes to the market to buy canned beef. We can say the reason he went to the market is to buy beef. If we go substitution thesis, we will say the cause of his going to the market is to buy canned beef. In other words, the intent or motive to buying canned beef is the cause and the going to the market is the effect. However, what if he gets to the market and could not find canned beef and thus buys soda drink? Would we say the cause changed after the effect has already taken place?

***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 because 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 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 price is high and buy more when it is low. 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, these laws do not apply all the time. In cases of goods of necessity for example, the price does not matter. The law of demand and supply does not work here as consumers have no choice. Now, if a supposed scientific law is neither absolute nor hold quite often, should we continue to call it scientific laws of Economics?