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Chapter 8 of Temidayo D. Oladipo and Noah Balogun’s History and Philosophy of Science, titled Philosophy of Social Sciences (and Applied Sciences), does nothig less than justice to the topic. It goes back to the origin and phases of evolution of science to explain better the philosophy involved in social and applied sciences.

As discussed in the text, natural science recorded enormous success on the social and intellectual life pf the Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The people had a positive response to science and this explains why the belief or application of science in the various aspects of life is called positivism.

The chapter goes through various epochs in time with the reader to better explain the growth and evolution of science startingv with the renaissance and the enlightenment period. This marked the point in time where people returned to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern rather than religion as was used in the prior age which was called the dark age as relgion fully reigned and the words of the Pope was the final authority on any matter, be it political, social, or intellectual.

The change started with the infiltration of literature with the benefits of using reason to arrive at justified conclusions which then proceeded to hiding Greek worldviews in arts and music. The philosopers involved in these are Socrats, Plato, and aristotle. This period was known as the classical period of romanticism, which then gave rise to humanism and naturalism. The two most important happenings that characterised this age was the diminishing authority of the church and increasing authority.

The scientific approach to things then grew out of philosophical approach to issues but was restricted to the study of natural phenomena because it was the only material that was believed to behave in a regular and predicable way. However, August Comte, a French social philosopher was of the different opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and he believed that this behaviour can be studied and make accurate predictions from it. Therefore, August Comte is being regarded as the father of Sociology and Social sciences in general.

A lot of problems appear with the conception of ideal knowledge-seeking enterprise. The first of these problems is observation, upon which the basic justification of positivism came. Observation is heavily laden with errors including the facts that observations are concept-laden; hypothesis-laden; theory-laden; value-laden; interest-laden; and finally laden with culture-specific ontologies.

Social science, birthed from positivism, is an 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 mores such as interactions created. One of the objectives of Social Sciences includes understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context and factors responsible for such. Another one of the objectives includes its ability to predict human behaviour based on the pattern of interaction, belief system, social norms, and other factors influencing human behaviour. Social Sciences aim to influence human behaviour; discovering the laws governing most of human behaviour and manipulating it, if possible, and finally advancing the knowledge about the characteristic temperament and the associated behaviour of a person or group beyond armchair Philosophy.

Furthermore, there is the problem of reasons and causes. According to Ernest Nagel’s presentation of David Hume’s exposition of the notion of causation, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must have an invariable or constant relation; be spatially contiguous; be temporally related and; have an assymetrical relation. However, when this is applied to human activities, the problem becomes deeper. One way to solve ths problem is to accept that reasons are not causes but motive or intent. Therefore, scholars have argued on whether it is better to leave reason as motive, drive, or intent and not cause. However, others still insist that reasons can be treated as causes.

In conclusion, the most important 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 behaviour with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws. Therefore, this chapter has done a lot to expatiate on the topic: Philosophy of Social Sciences (and Applied Sciences).