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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. Pages 86-95.

## PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century the success of natural sciences was so much such that the people of Europe relied on science and scientific methods even in maths unrelated to science e.g. law and forensic evidence. This happened as a result of change in the socio-cultural milieu of the time and as such the belief in science or application of science to any issue is called 'positivism'. The renaissance period marked the period where the people returned to their Greek heritage of using reasoning in matters of public concern and not relying on religion. Prior to this age was the Dark Age where religious beliefs reigned supreme despite of their illegalities. Thus the intellectual community rose up and began infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reason. The period in which Greek worldwide views were hidden in art and music was 'romanticism', this gave rise to humanism and naturalism followed next. Works of art and literature produced at this time were regarded as 'classic'.

Bertrand Russell states that the begin of the modern period in history led to the diminishing authority of the church and the increasing authority of science. Science was restricted to the study of natural phenomenon as it was believed that only material things behave in a regular and predictable way. August Comte, French social philosopher said the society, like material things behave in a regular pattern and can be predicted. As such Auguste Comte is regarded as the father of sociology and social science till date.

Positivism is based on facts of experience and as such rejects any theoretical speculations. This method is often criticised based on the fact that observations which is its bases is gladdened with errors. However this theory of positivism gave birth to social science.

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 collectively as a group. Including the institutions, norms and more such interactions created. Disciplines in the social sciences include: sociology, psychology, political science etc. Social science taking human person as the main study seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena. One of the objectives of social science is: discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing most of human behaviour. There is an incongruence in social science as man doesn't behave the same way in which objects of natural science behave.

An essential feature of science and scientific explanation is to provide a connection between an event and its cause. Causality can be traced to David Hume, however Ernest Nagel gave Hume's explanation of causation.

For one thing to cause another, the cause and effect must:

1. Have an invariable or constant relation
2. Be spatially contiguous
3. Be temporally related
4. Have an asymmetrical relation

Francis Offer explains that: 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".

Nagel claims that 'reason' and 'cause' can be substituted for one another without any loss of meaning. One of the problems to this might disregard the condition of temporally relatedness needed for cause and effect, which states that "the cause must precede the effect and the effect must follow continuously from the cause".

Scholars like Auguste Comte and Newcomb say reason is better left as referring to motive rather than cause. Despite all these problems to Nagel's assumptions, Robin Collingwood argues that reasons are not only causes but they are the ultimate causal power.

Another problem associated with social science according to Max Weber is the inapplicability of the scientific methodology due to the fact that man which is the main object of study is a rational being with sentiments, desires, freewill. This feature therefore might pose as an obstacle in the area of predictability which is the foundation of the laws and principles deduced in natural science because man due to this is sometime unpredictable. Take for example the law of demand and supply which states that: the higher the demand, the higher the price, but the higher the supply the lower the price. This law doesn't hold at all times because man doesn't behave rationally at all times. Capitalists to a great extent have been able to manipulate consumer behaviour to the detriment of the law.