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Chapter 8

This era was referred to as Renaissance period because individuals began to use reasoning and logic to arrive at conclusions in matters of public concern rather than just going with the conclusion of religious authorities as was done in the Dark Ages. According to Bertrand Russel, the period of history known as modern brought about lower authority of the church and higher authority of science. The effect of this was overwhelming.

However, science only studied natural phenomena since those were the only things with predictable behavior until the intervention of August Conte who thought otherwise. Conte believed that society behaves in a regulated pattern and this is the foundation of social sciences.

Problems with the conception of knowledge seeking enterprise include observation being concept-laden, theory-laden, value-laden and interest-laden.

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, thought-process and manifestations either as an individual or collectively as a group. Disciplines in social sciences includes sociology, psychology, political science, economics and anthropology. Progenitors of these disciplines include Karl Marx, Thomas Hobbs, John Locke and Emile Durkheim even though August Conte is considered the father of social sciences. The objectives of social sciences include understanding human behavior, predicting human behavior, influencing human behavior and discovering laws governing human behavior.

There came a time, as far back as the eighteenth century, where the successes of natural sciences became so popular that people started applying scientific theories in non science ridicule areas.

Philosophy of social science arose out of the notion that the objectives of social science may not be achievable as a result of the nature of the subject of social science studies meaning that it may be hard to, for example, predict or influence human behaviors since humans are conscious beings and do not behave in a certain particular way as opposed to s chair which is not a conscious being and does not have a mind of it’s own.

To understand the problem of social science better, we need to understand the notion of cause and effect. For anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must have an invariable relations meaning that whenever the alleged cause occurs, the effect must also occur. It must be spatially contagious, temporally related and have an asymmetrical relation. According to Offor, by applying scientific method in social investigation, social sciences seeks to explain the cause of human action.

It is important to establish that reasons are not causes but motive and intent.

There are some scholars who insist that reasons can be treated as causes. One of such is Robin Collingwood.

All in all, social sciences have been applied in all areas of human life in a bid to try to predict, understand and observe human actions which I themselves show the importance of the impacts of science in human and societal development.