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COLLEGE: SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE

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COURSE TITLE: HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

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ASSIGNMENT: Do a review of chapter 8 of History and philosophy of science. In not more than 2 pages.

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)

Belief in science or application of science to any issues is called POSITIVISM because of the response to science that happened as a result of change in the socio-cultural milieu in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and the enlightenment period. It is called renaissance because it marked the time when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage. This period was called the dark ages because it was the time religious beliefs reigned supreme. Diseases were said to be the direct consequences of sin and idolatry. It was also the time men and women were burned at stake because the church has found guilty of witchcraft or sorcery.

Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism, and works of art and literature produced at this time were regarded as classic. 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 of the medieval period in many ways”. Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. There are some problems in positivism and the first is observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error. These include the facts that: observations are concept-laden, hypothesis-laden, theory-laden, value-laden, and interest-laden, they 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, including the institutions, norms, and, mores such as interactions created. Disciplines in social science includes; sociology, psychology, economics, political science, archaeology and anthropology. Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study.

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 unachieved due to methodological mismatch.

Francis Offor 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. 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 the activities of event ‘A’. This is the principle that underlies the method of explanation in science.

One way to solve this problem is to accept reasons are causes but motives or intent. There are some scholars who insist that reasons can be treated as causes.

Another problem with the project of social science is that, according to Max Weber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the facts that the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with freewill, desire and other sentient features that come into play in his actions or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behavior with which natural science is known to deduce their principle and laws.