

Does the Social Scientists' Scientific Methodology Produce Knowledge?

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KEYWORDS Social-scientists, methodology, ahistorical, mechanistic

ABSTRACT Just as a correct road-map leads the tourist to his destination, so knowledge and skills help human societies to solve problems. It is for this relationship between knowledge and skills and the ability of a society to solve problems that the efforts of social scientists aimed at providing the intellectual framework for solving the problems confronting mankind are of great interests to everybody. The development of the social sciences is quite recent, coming thousands of years after the flourishing of the pure sciences. Because scientists had many great feats to their credit, social scientists decided in the nineteenth century, to adopt the method of inquiry which the pure scientists had developed. It is quite obvious today that the social scientists have not been able to provide the necessary intellectual basis for achieving sustainable and rapid economic growth, industrialization, democracy and development; for solving the problems of unemployment and inflation; and for promoting global peace. This paper examined the social scientists' scientific methodology with a view to explaining why social scientists have failed to achieve their desired goals. The analysis was done in relation to the origin of the methodology, its content, and output. The theory of knowledge states that for a piece of information to qualify as knowledge, it must be true, it must be seen as a matter of certainty and indubitability and must agree with reality. Results of social science research rarely have these desirable features because they are principally derived from empirical inquiry. Besides, the methodology is mechanistic, abstract, ahistorical and has ideological, egocentric, ethnocentric, materialistic and indoctrinating colorations. Hence, social scientists' research scarcely produces knowledge.