
Review Article

Philosophical Foundation of Methodology within Social Sciences and Sociology: Ontological, Epistemological and Concomitant Methodological Inquiry

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Abstract: Philosophically speaking, man developed cognitive skill that enables him to master the world surrounding him. To do so different scholars use different approaches. From the very beginning man attempt to construct his mechanism to gain what is perceived in his mind. However, as our mindsets are vary so our approach to look at our environment. From this it is obvious that we can conclude about epistemological positions we developed are also different. There is no single approach to see what mentally constructed total picture of the things around him. Therefore, different scholar develops different approaches and methodologies so as to grasp the realities and issues surrounding him. This leads to conclude that social world has different realities for different people so called multiple realities because of multiple approaches we develop to deal with them or some believes that there are multiple realities so there must be multiple approaches and methods to deal with them. On the otherhand, there are scholars who believe that reality is single so the method that we use to organize knowledge or epistemological position should be also one. In fact, this debate is endless. In philosophical terms, the metaphysics and epistemology as well as the prior and posterior intellectual venture employed in the knowledge world shape the overall truth man holds. The same is true for sociologists who engage in sociological knowledge production. From the very beginning sociologists constructed their own paradigm of the world or Society.

Keywords: Philosophy, Ontological, Epistemological and Concomitant Methodological Positions

1. Introduction

The fundamental questions that sociologists deal with before addressing social research are ontological and epistemological concerns. The ontological discourse of society is more or less get convergence among sociologists. Therefore, the key issues that primarily required to be addressed, before going to consume and further enhance our understanding and conscious level or knowledge of society, are ontological and epistemological issues and consequential methodological positions that sociologists apply in their intellectual journey. Ontological issues are concerns of nature or meaning of society or realities of society we need to know. It deals with what is essence of society or social being. This school of thought focuses on essential characteristics of realities in society we want to research. It more deals with

study of living creature, state of existence, consciousness or life of society in actuality either in material or concept. The map of reality of society we hold may not concrete facticity. It may be abstract or mental picture. For example, God/Allah/Waqa, Society, race, etc.

Sociologically speaking, several classical sociologists such as Auguste Comte, Emile Durkeim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, etc proposed their own view of the world. For example, Emile Durkeim mentioned that realities are associated with social facts or social things. To see the reality in the world we need to examine essence of social facts. Social facts are social realities that have their own essence. Ontologically speaking those social facts are creations of man within society. The society is also developed its own ontological entity in the same way that social facts are formed. According to Emile Durkiem [1], society is real or facts but this fact is abstracted from social

things. Max Weber [2], also defined ontological entities in his own paradigm. Weber view ontological realities and their characteristic through his methodical definition of social realities. For Max Weber society is socially defined social reality that can be understood by interpretation not by introspection but through heuristic principle. In our context, in Ethiopian society and its polyethnic societies are social definitions that get its own ontological identity via individual social action. Ethiopianism is also can be manifested in social actors' daily routines. He constructs his method of social types that enable him to abstract social realities and their genesis.

Karl Marx [3] also contributes his own portion in discussion of ontological realities and their essences. For Karl Marx, social realities are individually or humanly constructed realities. For him society is by product of class struggle for material interests. In view of Karl Marx's Ethiopian societies are products of conflict between haves and have nots. The current ontological realities are created by man not cooperatively but through struggle of life and death.

Ontological differences create solid ground for development of different epistemological positions. Some sociologists believes that there is one reality so that one scientific method to deal with them is enough. Others believe that ontologically there are multiple realities so it is impossible to use one objective method in knowledge organization of social realities. This intellectuals or sociologists prefer to use variable methods for different social realities. Their argument ground on the flux characteristic of social worlds. They assume unnatural outlook to realities and so assuming fixed method for social investigation is impossible and impractical. This implies that sociologists need to agree on ontological status of realities. For example, in case of our society we have enormous sociologically contested issues. If we look at Ethiopian society we can find several ontological status among individuals living in our country. Some scholars recognize the existence of Ethiopia society tracing back ancient period; others claim its existence but short years ago. The last group from my personal observation believes that Ethiopia and Ethiopianism is imposed reality they say that is not defacto orreality existing in fact but imagined. All of them present their argument from different perspectives and provide their own evidence for that ontological stance. This led us to the organization of knowledge on the prior ontological stance. Hence, the most important point next to ontological issue is epistemological idea. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that deals with knowhow of ontological entities. This is the way of knowledge organization or theory of sociological knowledge about society and realities in society. Once we address existence of society in material or abstract and after grasp its essential qualities then we turn to answer question of how we organize our systematized knowledge of those realities. This indicates that knowledge of society needs to be present systematically. In short Epistemology deals with knowledge organization, methodology involves in systematizing knowledge and theories that support our epistemic stance. Epistemology answer questions like what is knowledge of

reality, its validity, its scope and method involve in sociological knowledge organization? How is sociological knowledge of social realities acquired? What do people know about societies and its concomitant realities? How do sociologists know what they know sociological facts? This questions addressed by different sociologists differently based on their epistemic stance. Epistemic stance is a scholarly position that one can hold so as to solidify and expand his /her understanding from his/her own angle of conceptualizing realities through mental or cognition. It is the intellectual effort to actualize the map that correspond genuine territory. The sociological map may not sociological reality. The reality hold mentally and the facts on the ground in concrete sense should perfectly go with each other. Different scholars concern about these issues carefully and identified them according to their essential characteristics.

There are several epistemic stances as Tennis. J. T. (2008) [4] enumerated in his article of Epistemology, Theory, and Methodology in Knowledge Organization: Toward a classification, Metatheory, and Research framework. The epistemic stances enlisted in the above article are pragmatic, positivistic, operationalist, referential, instrumental, empiricist, rationalist, realist, etc. These stances show us what kind of knowledge created by research, how we gather the knowledge claimed and also how we present the collected knowledge. Furthermore, Tennis. J. T. pointed out that among the above listed epistemic stances the following are key epistemic stances for knowledge organization i.e. operationalism, referential theory, instrumental theory, system theory, etc. These epistemological stance have their own sociological relevance and they have been utilized in social world according to their specific characteristics. For example, pragmatist sociologists hold that sociological reality should appear in physical quality. They evaluate any sociological knowledge or theories interms of its practical application. Sociological positivists on the other hold that knowledge of society need to be scientifically verified, by capable of logical or mathematical proof and reject all metaphysical entities. Another form of positivism is operationist that defines scientific concepts interms of operation used to determine or prove them. Referential way of understanding assumes that sociological conceptions should have references on the ground. Instrumentalist also believes that sociological knowledge or sociology as a science should chiefly utilize as instrument for certain practical purpose which is pragmatic philosophy. On the other hand empiricist sociologists believe that sociological knowledge should be derived from sense experience. When we consider rationalist sociologists they are scholars assumes that the practice or principle of basing sociological knowledge and sociological research on reason and logical knowledge rather than on long held belief or emotional response. This group of sociologists argues that reason rather than experience is the foundation of certainty in knowledge. Realist sociologists support the practice of accepting a situation as it is and dealing with it accordingly. Realist sociologist supposesthat universals or abstract or sociological concepts have an objective or absolute existence.

They believe that sociologically constructed matters or objects of perception have real existence. This group opposes nominalist sociologists who believe that sociological abstract or universal or general ideas are mere names without any corresponding reality on the ground.

Sociologically speaking, classical sociologists like Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, etc. played their pivotal role in consolidating epistemological issues of sociology and its subject matter of sociology.

Generally speaking, ontological and epistemological issues are the fundamental foundation of our understanding of reality and its characteristics. They help us to develop a conception of entities, how to know or approach to know realities, how to gather valid knowledge, what evidences we use as a source and how we make our organized knowledge acceptable and genuine knowledge. Below are some epistemic positions that have relevance in the study of reality, particularly society.

2. Ontological and Epistemological Issues and Classical Sociologists' Role

2.1. Realism and Classical Sociologists

First, I would like to begin with Sociological Realism, which is an epistemological stance that supports the dogma that universals are real, they exist, and are distinct from the particulars that instantiate them. It is a sociological viewpoint that believes an external reality exists independent of observation (science). Realism is the practice of accepting a situation as it is and dealing with it accordingly. This epistemic stance developed a concern for fact or reality and rejection of the impractical and imaginative. Sociological Realism is an artistic representation of reality as it is. Sociological realists purport that in art or literature the representation of things in a way that is accurate and true to life is possible. It is a principle that stresses universals or abstract concepts have an objective or absolute existence. Realists believe in the dogma that nothing exists except matter and its movements and modifications.

Realism supports the practice of accepting a situation as it is and dealing with it accordingly. Sociological realism supposes that universals or abstract or sociological concepts have an objective or absolute existence. They believe that sociologically constructed matters or objects of perception have real existence. This group opposes nominalist sociologists who believe that sociological abstract or universal or general ideas are mere names without any corresponding reality on the ground.

Among classical sociologists, Durkheim is a realist who believes that social things are independent of ideas of mind. An idea in mind and reality outside mind essentially has no connection unless the idea of mind is derived from sense experience and knowledge. Sociological realities are self-sufficient or independent of idealistic or preconceptions unless actually experienced and proved to be correspondent with preconception. Durkheim indicated that nominalism is a construct that does not correspond exactly to social reality.

According to Durkheim's notion, extreme realism assumes reality is contingent.

According to Durkheim, social realities are characterized by externality, constraints, and generality as well as independence. Opponents of Durkheim accused him of externality and constraints, stating that the former implies hypostatized or reified society and the latter implies rules and sanctions. By generality, he means collectively shared and by independence, he means society exists by its own or independence of individual manifestations.

Sociological Realism believes that society abstracted from real things. Sociology is psychology but not individual psychology. Social facts are acts or representations. Realism also includes social facts outside them that exist as categories which present special characteristics which must be abstracted from them. These social facts as social things can be studied scientifically using objective tools. For example, suicide is a real social fact that can be studied scientifically.

Durkheim [5] stated that a compound or society is explained both by the character of its elements and by the law which governs their combining together. He asserts that it is very true that society comprises no active forces other than those of individuals but individuals as they join together form a psychological entity of a new species—no doubt the elementary properties from which results the social fact are contained in embryo within the minds of individuals; but the social fact only emerges when they have been transformed by association. Association is itself too an active factor which produces a special effect. Durkheim mentioned that social causes should be seen from whole to parts. Presumed causes are not faithful but social concomitants. Social facts are actively created by individuals via externalization and materialization. Society is not purely made from individuals but material things or external world-social facts/reality. Social conscience is stronger than individual conscience.

2.2. Idealism and Classical Sociologists

Sociological Idealism, as an epistemic stance of understanding the social world, emphasizes the importance of the mind and mental products rather than the material world. The key point in idealism is the social definition of the physical and material worlds that matters most, not those worlds themselves. In its extreme form, idealism asserts that only the mind and psychological constructs exist. This epistemic stance gives a priority to the mind and its products and others considered as the result of mind and mental brainchild. Some idealists believed that their mental processes would remain the same even if the physical and social worlds no longer existed. Idealists emphasize not only mental processes but also the ideas produced by these processes. This tradition was pioneered by Hegel and continued by old Hegelians. Hegel believes that evolutionary change of the world is in idealistic form. Accordingly, Hegel [6] believes people were endowed only with the ability to acquire a sensory understanding of the world around them. For example, people could understand things like sight, smell, and feel of the social and physical world. Later, people developed the ability to be conscious of,

to understand, themselves. Gradually, people with self-knowledge and self-understanding began to understand that they could become more than they were. Generally speaking, Idealism asserts that direct and immediate knowledge can only be had of ideas or mental pictures and any of various systems of thought in which the objects knowledge are held to be in some way dependent on the activity of mind.

Among classical sociologists Marx used some of Hegel's notions to construct ideas that society is a construct of human's and can therefore be shaped and reshaped by humans. Ideals of Romanticism where Marx developed a concern for individuals and collective struggles. Max Weber also contributes his part in idealism in Sociology of idea and interest. The discussion of bureaucratic institutions and personal leaders of workaday routines and extraordinariness is paralleled by Weber's conceptions of the relations between ideas and interests. Both Marx and Nietzsche [7] had contributed to a theory of the function and content of ideas both of them shifted the traditional emphasizes upon the content of ideas to an emphasis upon the pragmatic connections of ideas in terms of their intended or actual services rather than in terms of their face value.

Marx viewed ideas in terms of their public function in the struggle of classes and parties. Nietzsche approached ideas in terms of their psychological service to the individual thinker or at least when he did speak of the public context his sociological tools were crude that only the psychological mechanisms were fruitfully brought out in his analysis. If for Marx ideas of practical import become ideologies as weapons in the struggles of groups for Nietzsche they turned into rationalizations of individuals or at least at best of masters and slaves. Marx commented that ideas become material forces as soon as they take hold of the masses; he linked the historical vitality of ideas to their role in justifying economic interests. Nietzsche modified Matthews's statement 'he who humbles himself shall be raised' into 'he who humbles himself wants to be raised. Thus he ascribed volitions/will to the speaker which lay beneath the content of his ideas. I did that says my memory I could not have done that says my pride and remains inexorable. Eventually the memory yields. This shows us how ideas become reality.

Weber attempts to incorporate the point of view both of Marx and of Nietzsche in his discussion with Marx he shares the sociological approach to ideas; they are powerless in history unless they are fused with material interests. And with Nietzsche he is deeply concerned with the importance of ideas for psychic reactions.

Yet in contrast to both Nietzsche and Marx, Weber refuses to conceive of ideas as being mere reflections of psychic or social interests. All spheres such as intellectual, psychic, political, economic, and religious to some extent follow developments of their own. Where Marx and Nietzsche are quick to see a correspondence between ideas and interests. Weber is also eager to state possible tensions between ideas and interests between one sphere and another or between internal states and external demands. Thus, analyzing Hebrew prophecy, he seeks to balance psychological and historical

influences. In any case one can hardly assume that an unambiguous psychic determination of political hypochondria has been the source of the prophet's stand. The prophecy of doom has to be deduced to large extent from the psychological dispositions of the prophets as determined by constitutional endowments and personal experiences. Yet it is no less certain that the historical destinies of Israel have indeed given the prophesies of doom their place in religious development. And this is so not only in the sense that tradition has of course preserved those oracles of the prophets that were fulfilled or whose advent could still expect. The increasingly unshatterable prestige of prophecy in general has rested upon those few cases that were terribly impressive for the prophets contemporaries and in which the prophets by their success were unexpectedly in the right. The decisive conception by which Weber relates ideas and interests is that of elective affinity rather than correspondence reflections or expressions. For Marx ideas and interests thus the hidden God of puritans express the irrationality and anonymity of the market. For Nietzsche Asceticism Christians reflects the resentment of the slaves, who thus express their revolt in morals. For Weber there is hardly ever a close connection b/n the interests or the social origin of the speaker or of his following with the content of the idea during its inception. Through his life Max Weber was engaged in a fruitful battle with historical materialism. When writing the protestant ethic Weber was eager to emphasize the autonomous role of idea in the origin of modern capitalism though not of course in the sense of Hegel. In Weber handling of specific ideas one may discern different levels of sociological interpretation at work. In sweeping way he locates entire world images as symbol constructions of specific strata. When Weber deals with political problems he seems to use this mode of interpreting ideas as simple justifications. When he handles religious problems he is more likely to emphasize the concept of 'elective affinity'

2.3. Skepticism and Classical Sociologists

Skepticism is also one of epistemological discourse in social world knowledge. The skeptic epistemic stance questions the reliability or possibility of absolute knowledge. Skeptic believes that there may be fallible and subjectivity of knowledge. This means absolute or perfect knowledge is questionable. Some Skeptics believe that knowledge without no sensory experience can be understood as world is no more than ideas and minds they are in. This stance in this particular idea compatible with empiricist and realist and at the same time they are against idealist. Fundamentally, Skepticism means searching but not finding from its original meaning. It is questioning or doubt toward knowledge or belief; against domains (moral, religion and knowledge skepticism). For example, it questions about absolute knowledge possible which question philosophical epistemology. Another is Religious skepticism that question basic principle of religion such as immortality, providence, revelation, etc. In this regard more or less all sociologists are religiously skeptic. On the other hand, scientific skepticism focuses on testing belief or reliability by subjecting them to systematic investigation

using the scientific method to discover empirical evidence for them. Skeptics label such practices as pseudo science. Some sociologists believe that scientificness in social world is undesirable for example, Karl Marx [8] consider pseudo unless pragmatic. On the other hand philosophical skepticism refrains from making truth claims radical empiricism.

2.4. Empiricism and Classical Sociologists

Sociological Empiricism is a philosophical movement that deals with questions like nature of knowledge, how we know what we know by its paradigm. Empiricism holds that reality exist outside of us. From this it can be seen that empiricism oppose to rationalism. Sociological empiricist denies existence of metaphysical facts. They assert that real knowledge derived from real sensory experience or sensory experience. In this regard empiricism and positivism share common stance because positivists also believes that realities are outside us and we can know them through empirical observation or sensory experience. Sociological Empiricist denies that knowledge derived a prior reason rather is a posterior. Empiricism entails inductive approach. This indicates that empiricism oppose rationalism since rationalism gives primacy to reason not sensory experiences. According to Sociological empiricist position knowledge is a posterior that means first reality or sense experience that result in genuine knowledge. By this stance realism and empiricism share a common ground that both believe the existence of reality outside us and way of understanding them.

On the other hand empirical oriented sociologists believe that sociological knowledge should be derived from sense experience. Epistemologically speaking, Emile Durkheim well known by mentioning that the first and basic in knowledge organization is treating social facts as things. Primacy to things and ideas should come from things. Empirical observation should be first before come construct sociological conceptions of reality. Concepts derived from sense experience. In the same way, we need to treat social phenomenon as social things and we need to treat them as data. Emile Durkheim rejects introspection way of knowledge organization. Introspection in sociologically enquiry gives no sense because the concern is not with thought and feeling rather with things we need to examine things. Therefore, sociologists should follow basic principles such as systematically, discarding preconceptions or prenotions. Prenotions disgust empiricism and so sociologists need to first start from observable facts or sense experience. Then using scientific concept to express things. Durkheim indicated that to avoid subjectivity may happen during sense experience use constant or average just like as physicist does while measuring temperature. However, universal index is rare to happen.

Among classical sociologist Weber is concerned with using generalized conceptions in order to understand society as subject to lawful regularities. For such regularities are necessary in order to satisfy an interest in causation. To understand a sequence of regular events causally one must examine comparable conditions. Thus in validating his causal analysis of religion and capitalism in the occident Weber

examined many other civilizations. Although capitalist beginnings could be observed in these other civilizations, capitalism in the western sense did not emerge. Weber wished to find these factors in other civilizations which blocked the emergence of capitalism even though there were many favorable conditions present for its emergence. By such a comparative Weber tried to find not only the necessary but also the sufficient conditions of capitalism only in the occident, particularly where inner worldly asceticism produced a specific personality type were the sufficient conditions present. Thus, Weber could empirically observe realities in different societies and come up with the conclusion that religious ideas can influence economic situation like development of capitalism.

2.5. Rationalism and Classical Sociologists

Now let us turn to Sociological rationalism which mainly support that knowledge should based on reason and the source of knowledge should also reason. Rationalism asserts that the way we can test knowledge is through reason. The rationalists believe that reality not mere exist outside of us this implies they support metaphysical existence. The knowledge of reality is based on a prior reason that is through use of logic. The rationalist holds that deductive is possible via logical argument and use logical argument as tool of rationalism or rationality. They support that certainty is possible via valid deductive reasoning using true premises. The rationalists believe that it is possible to reach at true or reality without aid of sensory experiences. Rationalism and empiricism are competing views. When we consider rationalist sociologists they are scholars assumes that the practice or principle of basing sociological knowledge and sociological research on reason and logical knowledge rather than on long held belief or emotional response. This group of sociologists argues that reason rather than experience is the foundation of certainty in knowledge. For example, Emile Durkheim stated that sociologist needs to adhere to rationalist or absolute conception. The knowledge sociologist attained should base on reason and logical application. But, Emile Durkheim [9] believes that absolute conception of knowledge is possible via conception of reality or society as independent of our thought that by practicing rationalist method or rules. Rationalist in sense impartiality it does not mean that of Weber's rational actor. Durkheim attuned to reasoning and logical deduction.

Emile Durkheim mentioned that sociology found its base in reason and truth. He suggests that experimental or comparative method is sociological proof. The comparison can serve as proof if we can eliminate this disturbing factor of the age of a society. To do this it will be sufficient to consider the societies which one is comparing at the same period of their development. Durkheim use Rationalist mind to identify significant cause of suicide.

Weber stated that scientist should be separate from the means of enquiry as like civil servant from the means of administrations. He supports disenchantment of world. Weber asserts that rationalization displaces magic and ideas gain systematic coherence and naturalistic consistence. The urge

towards such a comprehensive and meaningful interpretations of the universe is ascribed to groups of intellectuals, to religious prophets and teachers, to sages and philosophers, to jurists and experimental artists and to empirical sociological scientist. Rationalization, socially and historically differentiated thus comes to have a variety of meanings. In this connection Weber makes a masterful contribution to what has come to be known as the sociology of knowledge. According to Weber's unilinear progress is towards perfect rationalization. This implies that Weber focus on rationalization treatment of sociology. Weber in his work uses different dichotomies and nominalism of methods. Weber's conception of charismatic leader is continuation of his philosophy of history.

Weber's methodological reflections clearly indebted to the philosophy of the enlightenment which emphasizes reason and individualism rather than tradition. His point of departure and ultimate unit of analysis is the individual person. [10]

Weber's interpretative sociology considers the individual and his action as unit of or as its atom. In this approach the individual is also the upper limit and the sole carrier of meaningful conduct. In general for sociology such concepts as taste association like feudalism designate certain categories of human interaction. It is task of sociology to reduce these concepts to understandable action that is without exception to the actions of participating individual men.

The Robinson cruse approach of classical economists and the rationalist philosophers of the contract are echoed in this emphasis upon the individual but within Weber's thought such emphasis stands in opposition to the tradition of Hegel and Ranke [11]. This latter tradition attempts to interpret the individual person, institution, act or style of work by seeing it as document manifestation or an expression of a larger morphological unit that underlie particular data. Interpretation thus consists in understanding the union of the more comprehensive totality with its part. The aspect partakes/shares of the quality of the whole. This mode of understanding particular by seeing is as a document of an underlying whole is rooted in German romantic and conservative thought.

Max Weber incorporated the problem of understanding in his sociological approach which as he was prone to emphasizes was one types of sociology among other possibilities. He therefore called his perspectives interpretative or understanding sociology. It is characteristic of his rational and positivist position that he transformed the concept of understanding. Understanding remained for him however a unique approach of the moral or cultural sciences which deals with man rather than with other animals or lifeless nature. Man can understand or attempt to understand his own intentions through introspection and he may interpret the motives of other men's conduct in terms of their professed or ascribed intentions.

Weber's example of rationality is economic man. The nominalism approach with its emphasis upon the rational relations of ends and means as the most understandable type of conduct distinguish Weber's work from conservative thought

and its documentary understanding by assimilating the singularity of object into spiritualized whole. Yet by emphasizing the understandability of human conduct as opposed to the mere causal explanation as of social facts as in naturalistic sciences. Weber draw line b/n his interpretative sociology and physique sociale.

Literary, the method of understanding would hardly allow for Weber's use of structural explanations for this type of explanation attempts to account for the motivation of systems of action by their functions as going concerns rather than by the subjective intentions of the individuals who act them out.

2.6. Positivism and Classical Sociologists

Positivism school of thought or epistemological stance purport that scientific method of natural science can be employed into social world so as to investigate social reality. The positivism epistemological school of thought was the brainchild of Auguste Comte. Comte as founder of sociology believe that society can be studied through new science that is sociology. The study of sociology should base on scientific method like observation, experimental and historical analysis. Positivists believe that there is universal law or patterned behavior that can be discovered through scientific research. Sociological positivists believe that objectivity or neutrality of social research is possible and there should be distance between researcher and reality. Furthermore, the positivists believe that acquiring knowledge is only through science and scientific method. For example Comte mentioned that improvement of thought gradually passes through history of theological, metaphysical and positivistic stage. This indicates that positivistic thought is the highest and last development of thinking level or intellectual level. The natural science methods can be adopted into social sciences or soft sciences. Positivist denies metaphysical knowledge in principle. They rather focus on tough going with empiricists' stance that is scientific investigation of empirical realities. Positivists are very critical of theology and religion. Therefore, positivism favors empiricism and rejects all knowledge based on a prior metaphysics.

Sociological positivists on the other hold that knowledge of society need to be scientifically verified, by capable of logical or mathematical proof and reject all metaphysical entities. Another form of sociological positivism is operationalism that defines scientific concepts in terms of operation used to determine or prove them.

According to Emile Durkheim the first and foremost paramount point is looking or seeing at social facts as things. Social facts are realities that can be accessed via empirical observation not based on a prior reasoning or intuition but only through sense experience that generate verifiable knowledge. Emile Durkheim mentioned that for sociology to deal with facts as things the sociologists must feel a need to learn from them. For sociology really to be a science of things, the generality of phenomenon must be taken as the criterion of their normality. Accordingly, Emile Durkheim as the soul father of sociology laid a foundation in shaping theory of

knowledge of sociology especially by separating sociology from philosophical school of thought so as to make sociology to be science and its knowledge should be scientific or systematic or methodical. He supposed and also practiced sociological knowledge in scientific manner to be genuine scientist of society. Emile Durkheim mentioned that society can be understood through application of scientific approach that used by natural sciences. He took physics, chemistry, biology and psychology as model of science that use their particular rules of investigation. Emile Durkheim developed rules of sociological method that entail scientific, objective, specific qualities that organized methodically.

Durkheim asserts that throughout knowledge organization statistics application is very important. Durkheim applies positivistic approach in study for example in suicide to prove his sociological conceptions mathematically. Emile Durkheim mentioned that our epistemological orientation should not be via subjective impression or personal observation. Such attachment between sociologist and social facts affect the quality of our scientific knowledge.

Finally, Emile Durkheim states that sociology is independent of philosophy. Philosophy emphasizes generality but sociology deals with detail examination of facts. Sociology not with individualist, communist and socialist but social facts. According to Durkheim sociologists should not interest in parties but what cause minds and how to create better attitudes. Sociologists are positivist, evolutionist and spiritualist but neither metaphysician nor determinist. Sociology follows objective method. Sociology ignores preconceived notions about facts but confront facts. Emile Durkheim mentioned sociology should focus on principle of causality in social phenomenon. The rational is not necessity but empirical postulate that is product of legitimate induction. Causality in physical, chemical, biological, later in psychological should be in sociological.

Positivist philosophy is sociology. Durkheim asserts that sociology study not materials of society but build structure or not analysis but synthesis. According to Durkheim we deduce man's nature from sociological study but not from human nature we deduce to sociological fact. Man is not point of departure rather point of arrival. Man as product of society should explain within societal realm. Philosophers hope to perceive the units of things from this it follows that to put it at its lowest sociology is for him the most useful of all preparatory studies. Durkheim mentioned that Categories are key in representation. The system of categories is synthetic expression of human mind. There is no object more appropriate to philosophical thinking. If investigation take place sociologically before philosophize things that is sociological base for philosophical thinking. But for reasons partially different from those we have set out. For these philosophers categories shape realities beforehand. While for us they summit up. According to philosophers categories are the natural law of thought for us they are the product of human artifice. Yet from both viewpoints they express synthetically thought and reality. Historical method of sociology is pertaining to understand present day institutions and their

components. We need to know their generic history and explain that. As microscope for physicist or physical realities history is for social realities. Objective method used to apply in physicist, chemist, and biologist mind in scientific field or territory hitherto unexplored in sociology. Social facts need to be seen as strange to sociologist even though we are in full of notions in daily life we need to ignore them and seek scientific notion by methodically. Ordinary notions are ideas not exactly express social facts. They are simply idols or image or representations. Simply reified facts not verified they need to be verified. It is simplistic explanation. Psychological factors can help to comprehend social facts. It is too general to explain specific event in social life. For everything but nothing. In social life everything consists of representations, ideas and sentiments and there is no where better to observe the powerful effectiveness of representations are much more complex than individual ones; they have nature of their own and relate to a distinctive science. All sociology is psychology but psychology not sociology. Durkheim mentioned that human society is individual imposed or suggested from outside by institutions by language make it possible.

Max Weber [12] also contributes a lot for scientific development of sociology. Weber well known by betraying long held tradition of German intellectuals' trend which follow one track of knowledge production. The prior trend was simply preserving original idea, imitate senior writer and keep original word and texts as they are. However, Weber suggests pragmatic view focus on consequences but not introspection. Weber goes beyond ethic absolutism and his intellectual stand is western positivism. Weber preferred working through masses of Data. Weber decided to snatch from comparative enquiries a set of rules which would serve him in his search for political orientation in the contemporary world. That knowledge is the impulse behind this quest of a powerless man for knowledge. And it is in view of this political concern that one may understand his intellectual orientation.

At time of Weber lifetime, historiography and conservative thinking was prevalent. Weber work against conservative and Marxist view. Weber worked his intellectual orientations within conflicting classes, parties and intellectual currents. He aimed at the comprehensiveness of a common ground. He attempted to amalgam varieties of world views. Weber dealt with questions that Marxists aroused. Marx focuses on historical method while Weber prefers heuristic principle. Weber believes that world history is not monocausal such understanding is prejudicial to reconstruction of social and historical connections. Weber not rejects totally historical materialism but single and universal causal sequences.

In writing on method Weber rejects the assumption of any objective meanings. He wished to restrict the understand and interpretation of meaning to the subjective intention of actors. Weber does not like to be considered idealist interpretation. He use nominalism to avoid philosophical aspects either material or ideal factors and upon either structural or individual principle of explanation. Weber's attachment to western positivist thought is shown in his scorn for any

philosophical or metaphysical elements in the social sciences. He wants to give these sciences the same matter of fact approach nature.

A quantitative method goes hand in hand with such a conception and stands in opposition to a perspective in which all phenomena are seen as qualitatively unique entities. For Weber, historical and social uniqueness results from specific combinations of general factors which when isolated are quantifiable. Thus the same elements may be seen in a series of other unique combinations of course in the last analysis all qualitative contrasts in reality can somehow be comprehended as purely quantitative differences made up of combinations of various single factors. He does not say that quality can be reduced to quantity in deed as nominalist he is quite sensitive to the qualitative uniqueness of cultural differences resulting from quantitative changes. For instances from our special point of view where the increased fear of the world has led to a flight from occupational pursuits in the private economy pietism not only turns into something differing in degree but into an element differing in quality.

The quantitative approach to unique cultural constellations and the conceptions of ideal types are intimately linked with the comparative method. This method implies that two constellations are comparable in terms of some feature common to them both.

As general concepts ideal types are tools with which Weber prepares the descriptive materials of world history for comparative analysis. These types vary in scope and level of their abstraction. His concern with specific historical problems and his interest in comparative sociology of a generalizing nature are thus related; the differences b/n them is one of emphasis. By use of a battery of ideal types he builds up conceptions of a particular historical case. In his comparative studies he uses the same ideal type's conceptions but he uses history as storehouses of examples for these concepts. In short, the respective research interest in elaborating a concept or in constructing a historical object determines his procedure.

2.7. Dialectical Materialism and Classical Sociologists

Dialectical sociology is another epistemological position of sociologists. The dialectics can be either from ideas or materials that is dialectical idealism and dialectical materialism. First let us see the first term which is dialectical which implies a systematic method of argument that attempts to resolve the contradiction in opposing views or ideas. It is a way of thinking that stresses the importance of processes, relations, dynamics, conflicts, and contradictions—a dynamic rather than a static way of thinking about the world. On the other hand, it is a view that the world is made up not of static structures but of processes, relationships, dynamics, conflicts, and contradictions. Its basic idea is the centrality of contradiction. Dialectical sociologists believe that contradictions exist in reality either idea or material and hence the most appropriate way to understand reality is to study the development of those contradictions. According to Dialectical materialism contradictions are real or existing reality not in our understanding or in minds which is against dialectical

idealism. The theory which may share resemblance this epistemic stance is Marxists. As indicated in the Marxist theory that political and historical events result from the conflict of social forces as caused by material needs and is interpretable as a series of contradictions and their solutions. This epistemic stance, contradicts with idealism which, assumes a prior to material or real things.

Materialism is the philosophical aspects that believe that nothing exists beyond what is physical opposed to idealism. This leads to the Marx's focus on real or existing contradictions create a way to form a particular method for studying social phenomena that has also come to be called a dialectical method and the epistemic stance came to be known as dialectical materialism. Dialectical materialists believe that fact or reality and value of the research should be inseparable so dialectical materialists do not support positivists or value free science. Dialecticians believe that cause-effect relationship is not proper way to understand social world rather they attend to reciprocal relationships between various elements of social phenomena. Moreover, dialecticians believe that understanding phenomena should involve scrutinizing the past, present and future because past causes the present realities and the present scenario also likely influence the essence of future realities. This does not mean that dialecticians are deterministically inevitable rather they are historical possibilists. This can be seen from "thesis, antithesis and synthesis" their model of social change.

In this regard Karl Marx [13] had done profound sociological issues. Marx in his communist manifesto stated that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Ontological status of society is the result of class struggle between haves and have-nots in different time and space. For example modern society created by perpetuating struggle between bourgeois and proletariat or capitalist and working class. This conflict is associated with material interests the same hold true for primitive and feudal a society.

In connection with materialism, Durkheim stated the historical facts must be extricated from those coverings which the facts themselves assume whilst they are evolving. The only rational and objective explanation of events consists in discovering in what way they really came about and not the account of their genesis conceived by men who have been their instruments. It is this revolution in historical method which the materialist conception of history is alleged to have realized.

2.8. Constructivism and Classical Sociologists

The constructivism school of sociological thought believes that knowledge generates through interaction with experiences and ideas. The constructivists support that realities are in social world. They concern how subjective meaning becomes object or social facts. The key means for knowledge construction are socialization and interaction. The knowledge constructionists act collaboratively through culture and share meaning on artifacts. Social constructivism purports that individuals learn culture in group. Thus, cognitive

development achieved through culture and context. Social constructivism states that natural world has no role in scientific knowledge. They ignore and deny knowledge of realities based on a prior. The constructivist reject role of superhuman necessity either discover or invented. Things exist in relation to observer or relativist. The relational conception is a key. Sociological constructivist argues that only bracketed absolute truth exists. Truth is within group but relative to other truths by observer. It seems that individuality of truth and truth of individuals. Constructivist believes that different communities construct different experiences and interpretation. They believe that truth never constructed outside interaction-truth is social. The constructivist support that on one topic there is consistent truths and contradictory truths based on perceptual and social linguistic. For example, religion and God has different ontological status for different groups. This indicates that knowledge and truth is created or constructed in relationship through connection, disconnection and negotiation. Jean Piaget mentioned that humans make meaning in relation to the interaction between their existence or experience and ideas [14].

Sociological constructivists assume the ontological position or naturalistic inquiry. Because, reality is not merely physical but social constructions or entities. Constructions are the mental and sense making processes and products. Humans act on constructions and constructions get their physical or tangible reality status or ontological status equivalent to or if not exceeding physical realities. Constructions are dealt with scientific sense by resolving or fragmenting into smaller units. To understand the whole there should be integration of components or constituting variables. These constructed realities are not reduced to be true picture of some other realities. Because each constructed reality has meaning in a given individual group. This indicates that realities are not single rather there are multiple realities. Constructivists believes that realities exist in many forms and particularistic depend on the observer of that realities. Generally speaking, constructivists developed their own paradigm of truth and attuned to distinctive epistemic stance as well as deviated methodological idea.

On the other hand Durkheim share historian's belief that social reality is consists of different species or groups. Philosophers believe that there is no such real social species but provisional groups. Durkheim states that to see general society first see specific constituent society. The process of society formation starts from simple society like horde which is juxtaposed like as atom. Horde changes its name become clan.

Clan is from small family. In short, horde link up and form society. This implies Hordes are proper source of all social species. Therefore, we shall begin by classifying societies according to the degree of organization they manifest taking as a base for perfectly simple society or single segment society. Within these classes different varieties will be distinguished according to whether a complete coalescence of the initial segments takes place. This implies that the existence of social species exists or proved by method used.

According to Emile Durkheim rules of explanation of social facts shall happen when one undertakes to explain a social phenomenon the efficient causes which produces it and the function it fulfills must be investigated separately. The determinant of cause of social facts must be sought among antecedent social facts and not among the states of the individual consciousness. Individual's dependence and inferiority as well as society or collective superiority. This implies that whole is not equal with the sum of its parts this means group think, feel, perceive, etc different from individual think, feel, perception, etc. The cause of phenomenon is internal to society. Ontologically society is just a union or combination of its parts just as a real. Sociology as science studying this relation is its function. Individual and social fact are mutually creations or ontological creations.

For Weber conceptual nominalism and his pragmatic outlook are opposed to all reification of unanalyzed processes [15]. The ultimate unit of analysis for him is understandable motivations of the single individual. His concepts are analytical tool with which he reconstructs various mechanisms. They are not descriptive categories with which one tries to taste the color and grasp the surface image of the spirit of the times. They are concepts that contemplate the supposed substances of great men and epochs. Weber's focus is not historical figure rather their legacy for example his concern is not Calvin rather Calvinism.

The much discussed ideal type a key term in Weber's methodological discussion refers to the construction of a certain elements of reality into a logically precise conception. The term ideal has nothing to do with evaluations of any sort. Weber felt that social scientists had the choice of using logically controlled and unambiguous conceptions which are thus more removed from historical reality or of using less precise concepts which are more closely geared to the empirical world.

2.9. Postmodernism and Classical Sociologists

Sociological postmodernism is epistemic stance that distrusts existing theories and ideologies. It is intellectual movement that aims at asking whether thought complex invented, discovered, created, found, constructed/contemplated. Sociological postmodernism focus on back again toward reminiscence. Postmodernists believe that there is nothing absolute or unified sense behind reality. They deny the claims of scientific knowledge in modern society. Postmodernism reject conventional view and believe that objective representation of reality is not possible. It is new way of solving complicated society's problem. In this sense postmodernists oppose the positivistic Sociological paradigm. The supremacy of science questioned. Even postmodernists argue that scientific fact causes devastating effects like bombing. Postmodernism epistemic stance initiated by shift in physics from Newtonian to relativity and quantum mechanics. Postmodernists question the valid claims of scientific theories, the nature of scientific truth and the status of knowledge. They argue that all knowledge is contextual and local. Moreover, sociological postmodernists argue that validity claims of any

scientific theories are not to be found in some abstract, universal criteria. No universal laws possible. They believe that valid and universal scientific theories are results of negotiated consensus or power struggle. It refuses ultimate faith on science and hold antipositivist and antiverificationist position. Postmodernism also insist on individuality of truths as matter of perspectives. It engages in blurring old distinctions and hyper reality which demonstrate no distinction b/n virtuality and actuality, copy and original, everything is mixed. Karl Marx in this regard contribute a lot by criticizing political economy. Science for Karl Marx not genuinely knowledge production rather means to create social classes.

Postmodernism is incredulity toward metanarratives but urge micro narratives. It believes that there is no base in social world that is nothing supports anything. It is eclectic-seems flea market and realities have been given a name bricolage-construction from varieties of things. In postmodernism personal conviction always taken to be seriously. There is a say that it is not my history unless I affirm it. This illustrates that truth is validated by irresistible force of influence. Postmodernists support that everything is choice no fixity. Concerning morality postmodernists believes that morals are multiple and subjective. From my review of Brann, TH. Eva. [16] article it is stated that a time, a culture, a society, movements are and do nothing. People believe that things have temporal location. Generally, postmodernism is characterized by globalization, multiculturalism, information and media, new literary trends, etc.

3. Conclusion: Comparison of Classical Sociologist's Methodological Position

I begin with Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. Max Weber preferred interpretive or *verstehen* understanding of social phenomenon. Max Weber devoted to subjective understanding causality of empirical realities. On the contrary, Emile Durkheim interested in scientific approach or positivistic to understand social realities. Durkheim employed statistical application to identify social causes of suicide rates in different societies. This asserts that Max Weber and Emile Durkheim have different position in choosing the methods of social research. Weber is positivist, rationalist, empiricist whereas Emile Durkheim is rationalist, positivist and realist. Weber and Durkheim purport neutrality of social research but Weber did not put into practice in this regard because he seems that of Marx's passionate researcher or scientist. He is law maker and law breaker. In fact, Weber's research method is blurred between subjectivity and objectivity. Both Durkheim and Weber focus on empirical realities. Theoretically, Max Weber mentioned that individuals are shaped by social forces like religion as he indicated in Protestant ethics and spirit of capitalism this implies that for the conscious of individuals religion play a pivotal role which proved in Protestantism that shaped individuals behavior towards capitalistic way of life. But, his work is not well theorized and lacks critical aspects.

Weber is more or less symbolic interactionist. On the other hand Emile Durkheim articulated that individuals are the product of society that oscillated by external forces or social facts this implies that individuals are shaped by external forces like religion, family, culture, etc. In this regard Max Weber and Emile Durkheim have common stance. Durkheim's epistemological stance of positivism questioned due to less likely or May not invariant law exists in social world. Even there is doubt that social facts are not free from interpretation. He is functionalist that exposes him to be conservative. Max Weber is pessimistic about future of individual in a society because of iron cage but Emile Durkheim is hopeful that even though religious power vanishing there would be morality of science.

Max Weber and Karl Marx share similarity and difference. Max Weber supports interpretive understanding of empirical realities however Karl Marx attuned to dialectical materialist or critical method. Max Weber opts for value free social research though Karl Marx contends that values and facts are inseparable. Weber is Idealist, Interpretist and empiricist but Karl Marx is nominalist and Dialectical materialist. Max Weber believes that cause-effect relationship to understand social phenomena but Karl Marx deny cause-effect and argue for reciprocal relationship. On the other hand, Max Weber and Karl Marx developed opposite theoretical ideas concerning about idealism and materialism that Weber certainly devoted a lot of attention to ideas, particularly systems of religious ideas, and Weber was especially concerned with the impact of religious ideas on the economy. Weber believes ideas in world religious affect development of capitalism or material while Marx argues that material or economic life determine other social life. Max Weber did tend to view Marx and the Marxists of his day as economic determinists who offered single-cause theories of social life. Instead of focusing on economic factors and their effect on ideas, Weber saw economic factors as fairly autonomous forces capable of profoundly affecting the economic world. From this it can be seen Weber developed his ideas in opposition to those of Karl Marx.

Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx have different stance in regard to methods of social study. Emile Durkheim believes that society can be studied scientifically via positive approach. Karl Marx purports that society need to be studied via value laden that means he is antipositivist and nominalist. Karl Marx is more or less philosophically oriented social thinker. Marx use Critical Method. Marx's focus on real, existing contradictions led to a particular method for studying social phenomena that has also come to be called "dialectical". In dialectical analysis, social values are not separable from social facts. Theoretically, Emile Durkheim avows individuals are under yoke of social morality or collective conscience while Karl Marx also states that individuals are subjects under bourgeois society. Durkheim is optimistic faith in moral education whereas Karl Marx's optimism is in communistic society or classless society. Durkheim see human consciousness as it causes problem like unrestrained passion and that lead to anomic. But Marx appreciates human consciousness that can cause rebellion against structure or

capitalism and replace by socialism. Durkheim supports social reform but Marx holds revolution needed because problem is inherited in society.

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