

three fields of this auxiliary science: criteria of scientific quality, criteria of relevance, and practical procedural rules of research.

An important metasociological issue is the problem of postulates, particularly, of supra-empirical postulates. The question has been discussed with a great deal of disparity. The question does not refer to postulates drawn from the empirical sciences. Whether or not it is expedient or useful to include supra-empirical postulates depends on the sociologist's grasp of reality. While sociology may enjoy the autonomy of the purely empirical sciences, it is possible that this social science may turn to supra-empirical postulates for the understanding of an empirical reality in all its aspects.

This summary is not meant to oversimplify the much involved science of Metasociology. On the other hand, it is hoped that with this introductory remark, sociologists may be reminded to pause awhile and reconsider their metasociological assumptions. Such a step may lead to clarity and possible agreement, or at least, to an understanding of differences.

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THE SCOPE AND FIELD OF SOCIOLOGY

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According to a general and a very broad definition sociology is the science of society, the science which treats of man's relations with his fellow men. It studies human society, its customs and institutions and their development at all times and at all places.

There are certain key terms in this definition which in themselves delineate more precisely the scope of this comparatively new science of sociology. There is, first of all, the statement made that sociology is a science. As such it should bear the various characteristics of a science; above all, a theoretical framework and a well defined methodology to gain empirical evidence through the systematic gathering, compiling and comparing of actual data.

Another key term in the above given definition is "man" and in particular man's relations with his fellowmen, but always with the special emphasis on that concept of man himself. Speaking in a general way, we may say that today it is usually and generally accepted that so-called "pure sociology" aims at being a positive science, that men as, it only may admit the inductive method of all scientific research. It seeks the understanding of social phenomena by observing, describing and classifying actual social facts and conditions.

In its purely inductive limitations it refrains carefully from all value judgments and claims almost tenaciously that it is not a normative science and hence is not at all concerned about values and norms. This explains the fact that many sociologists today are not at all anxious to provide remedial means for the present maladjusted and chaotic social life. They confine themselves to the classification of available material and to the drawing of conclusions as to the processes involved, checking and re-checking them. This they believe will enable them to establish on the basis of their actual findings definite laws in order to make accurate predictions concerning the future social behavior patterns of man. Many sociologists today frown at all theory in the strict sense of the word; they call it a-prioristic and hence too vague and too little scientific to be applied.

As we have said, one of the key concepts in each definition of sociology is "man"—but man as he is in reality, the religious, moral, social individual. In their endeavor to guarantee the science character of sociology, pure sociologists of today aim at the establishment of almost invariable laws, as they exist in the so-called exact, natural sciences. Yet, the statistical findings of the positive method, as it is applied to sociological research, cannot in any way lead to the establishment of laws as we have them in the natural sciences. Many of the forces at work in social life can neither be measured nor predicted, for the simple reason that man is the main agent in all social relationships. Man possesses free will, he is influenced by many factors, and may act quite contrary to the normal patterns of human behavior. The formulation of so-called social laws may easily treat man as an automaton and, therefore, will not give a true picture of human reality.

Another point needs to be mentioned in this connection. Since man is actually the key concept in all social studies and research one cannot neglect the true nature of man, which is rational and moral, without arriving only at half truths. Hence, by necessity, value judgments and normative, a-prioristic evaluations have to be taken into consideration. If this is neglected, reality as such is misrepresented and truth cannot be achieved.

As in every science, so also in their own field sociologists must make use of the twofold and supplementary method: the inductive and the deductive method, or the a-priori and the a-posteriori. Only then will they be able to study and investigate the field of social reality in its total aspect. Only then will they be able to gather data by a sound experimental method as it is typical for the field of sociology, by observation, statistical research, research, by the various tools of interviewing, and so forth. On this empirical basis laws can be established, but not laws as a purely positive sociology wants them: patterned minutely after those of the natural sciences; this would be unrealistic, a misrepresentation of the nature of the main agent in all social relationships—man. This, in turn, would also mean a misrepresentation of man's social life in its various aspects. Hence, the science of sociology would miss its purpose.

As has been said, certain laws must be laid down in all sciences; so also in sociology. But in those sciences where man is the focal point, these cannot be more than generalizations. These then make a certain amount of predictions possible and point the way to further research and, above all, establish and support the theoretical basis. The inductive, a-posteriori method has its fully acknowledged place in sociology. This, however, does not exclude the deductive, a-priori method. As in every true science, so also in sociology, the deductive method, we may also call it the "prescriptive" method, must supplement and complement the actual, fact-finding research. In sociology, however, as in every other science that deals predominantly with man or with certain aspects and phases of his life, as for instance psychology, norms and values cannot be neglected, without again misrepresenting reality as such. Therefore, the a-prioristic, value-orientated approach is a sheer necessity to guarantee the scientific character of sociology. That even so-called purely positive sociologists cannot do without it has been amply evidenced. One needs only to glance at the literature in the field. Is not the warning against the a-prioristic approach, with the various reasons given already, a-prioristic in itself? It is certainly the expression of value judgments and evaluations. Even the "father of Positivism," come himself, does certainly not use the descriptive method only in his writings; he makes ample use of the prescriptive approach.

Another point needs to be mentioned. As has been said already, a realistic concept of man views him as a religious, moral, social individual because he is all this *secundum naturam*. However, this concept points already to the first: that the science of sociology alone is sufficient to grasp the total view of the human personality. Certain characteristics of man definitely ask for other disciplines to pass judgment and evaluation on them. There exists the necessity of all sciences to take postulates from other disciplines—this is given by the interrelationship of the sciences and by the fact of the oneness of truth. Sociology, having as its main and focal concept "man", must therefore draw postulates from those sciences that deal primarily with man's nature: philosophy, psychology, anthro-

pology, and so forth, are to be consulted. Only then will a certain guarantee be given that the total social reality will be studied and presented—empirically and theoretically. Much more could be said on this particular subject: the scope of sociology. Space and time do not permit.

Sociology, then, as a science needs the twofold approach of the a-priori and the a-posteriori, of the prescriptive and the descriptive method. It needs this approach within the limits of its own characteristics; as a science that deals with distinctive *human social relationships*.

The assertion of methodology, whether it be "prescriptive," or "descriptive," or both, in itself implies the expression of certain value judgments.

In one of the recent meetings of the Philippine Sociological Society, the author stated with clarity and precision the supplementary and complementary character of the twofold approach: *a-priori* and *a-posteriori*. Sociology *qua* sociology is empirical, and as such depends on the descriptive method for the study of social phenomena. However, since *man* is the focal concept in this social study, and since *man* is to be represented as a totality, that is, his true nature, it is necessary that "value judgments and normative, a-prioristic evaluations have to be taken into consideration." In a broad sense, therefore, sociology "humbly" seeks postulates drawn from the other disciplines like, anthropology, psychology, philosophy and theology. These are necessary for the interpretation of empirical data in the fullest possible way.