



Contact Email for September 2017

Here is a quotation from Yuval Noah Harari's book, 'Sapiens - A brief History of Human Kind'

"Capitalism began as a theory about how the economy functions. It was both descriptive and prescriptive - It offered an account of how money worked and promoted the idea that reinvesting profits in production leads to fast economic growth. But capitalism gradually became far more than just an economic doctrine. It now encompasses an ethic - a set of teachings about how people should behave, educate their children and even think. Its principal tenet is that economic growth is the supreme good, or at least a proxy for the supreme good, because justice, freedom and even happiness all depend on economic growth." This new religion has had a decisive influence on the development of modern science, too. Scientific research is usually funded by either governments or private businesses. When capitalist governments and businesses consider investing in a particular scientific project, the first questions are usually 'Will this project enable us to increase production and profits? Will it produce economic growth? A project that can't clear these hurdles has little chance of finding a sponsor. No history of modern science (or Social Science) can leave capitalism out of the picture."

This would be especially true for Applied Sociology. This means that neither physical science nor social science has much chance of presenting a view of the world that is independent of the dominant theory that supreme good only comes from financial profit.

I am amazed at the number of politicians who wholly support the above theory yet also claim to be practicing Christians, when the expected Christian position is:

"Those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away and pierced themselves with many pains". 1 Tim. 6v9-10

Can or should Applied Sociology offer an approach that could provide humanity a way to the 'supreme good' that does not depend on financial profit? Many people in the world can never expect to reach the supposed 'supreme good' by financial means. Sociology usually tries to work outside of society. It observes then says: this is how this community, business, department, family etc. works but the consequences of what sociology research uncovers is usually left to others to do something about it. Drawing from Webber, it has been suggested that many economic decisions may be based simply on tradition. This has translated in the catch cry of the neo-liberals. Sociology should not just say; this is how it works, it needs to be able to also say these should be considered as the possible consequences for this studied community.

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