INTRODUCTION

Philosophical problems have always been the same since the first attempts at philosophizing by the early Greeks. It is not surprising, therefore, that philosophy is regarded as dogmatic and stagnant. But a cursory glance at the contemporary philosophical issues and the attempts made to solve them will show that philosophy is not so stagnant as prima facie it seems. The arguments employed, the techniques used in analysis are certainly different and much more precise and definite than the traditional ones - the conclusions may very often remain the same. The development of logic, especially symbolic logic is definitely a boon to even economics, physics, computer sciences and the like.

Again, the philosophy of science and its development for the last fifty years or so is undoubtedly a clear proof of progress and development "in analysis of evidential support, in the analysis of causality and determinism and in the examination of nature of scientific enterprise."  

A brief survey of the recent manuals and articles in the philosophical journals will give enough evidential support to the claim that philosophy has made tremendous progress in every branch of its disciplines.

The proper formal object of philosophy of science is the problem of 'what is science'. An attempt to answer this would imply answering the question 'how does science function', for the fundamental question what in science implies how of science or analysis of the functioning of science. Although what demands a structural definition and the question how demands a functional definition, the fundamental issue is to study the function of science. This is the conditio sine qua non of any kind of philosophy of science, epistemology and even logic.  

One could even say that the 'analysis of the presuppositions, the foundations, the aims, goals and purposes of science


are nothing else than analyses of their general and specific formal as well as practical and empirical methods."¹ The methodology of a scientific discipline, claims Richard S. Rudner, "is not a matter of its transient techniques but of its logic of justification. The method of science is indeed the rationale on which it bases its acceptance or rejection of hypotheses or theories."²

Hence, any study of the problems in philosophy of science or social sciences depends on the analyses of the methods and function of the particular discipline. In philosophy of science or social science, the predominant factor is the study of methodology which would determine the conclusions of the many philosophical and scientific problems.

Throughout history, philosophers have emphasized the primacy of methodology for any kind of philosophy. Aristotle is undoubtedly the best representative of the classical period. His scientific epistemology is a clear determinant of the methodological supremacy. He claims that "when the objects of an inquiry, in any department, have principles, conditions or elements it is through acquaintance with these that knowledge, that is to say, scientific knowledge, is attained. For we do not think that we know a thing until we are acquainted with its primary conditions or first principles, and have carried our analysis as far as its simplest elements. Plainly, therefore, in the science of nature as in other branches of study, our first task will be to try to determine what relates to its principles."³ The above passage clearly demonstrates Aristotle’s preoccupation with the methodology which entails the study of the primary principles and conditions that determine science.

Kant’s transcendental analysis is another case of absolute necessity of methodology in any philosophical or scientific investigation. Kant applies the term transcendental to the knowledge (or discovery or proof) of the *a priori* factor in its relation to objects of experience. The *empirical method*, i.e. empirical psychological

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investigation by observation is different from the noetical in-
vestigation of principles and consequently the two methods would
determine the study, procedure, techniques and even the subject-
matter of the study.

Russell's method of philosophy could be summed up in the
words of A. J. Ayer. It is "the method of starting with propositions
which are the least susceptible to doubt, and trying to reconstruct
the edifice of knowledge on this basis, with as few assumptions as
possible." Russell being a positivist-empiricist believed only in
the physical world which was the world real. Consequently, the em-
pirical method became the only method for the reconstruction of the
edifice of knowledge.

The study of methodology further brings together two
essentially diverging disciplines, namely, philosophy and natural
science. A philosopher of science has to become a scientist and a
scientist has to become a philosopher in this common endeavour of
analyzing the methods employed in natural sciences. Thus, "in so far
as the scientist is interested in common methods, he is a philosopher,
and in so far as the philosopher composes a general program together
into a specific scientific method, he becomes nonens volens a scien-
tist."

The binding point, however, has been a source of much
controversy in the philosophy of social sciences, where intellectual
blows are exchanged even today - none being fatal! The debate very
often has overtones of the 'survival of the fittest'. It is probably
the fear of annihilation that forced many a social scientist to re-
affirm the difference of methodology between natural and social
sciences. Again, it is probably the fear of being reduced to a sec-
ondary position that led a few to defend the scientific methodology
and regard methodology of social sciences to be a result of inadequacy
of techniques. It is in this climate of controversy that methodo-
logical debate between individualism and collectivism arises.

1. A. J. Ayer, "B. Russell" in Western Philosophy and Philosophers
Plan of the Dissertation

In Chapter One entitled "General Frame of Reference" we study three issues that traditionally appear in the journals and manuals of philosophy of science. The three issues are: the character of the subject-matter of social and natural sciences, the methods employed in their analysis and notion of theory and types of theories formulated. Chapter One is a general discussion on some of the issues that very often emerge in the debate between individualism and collectivism. It is therefore in reference to this chapter that we would have to understand the proceeding discussion in the study. Chapter Two to Five are critical studies of different positions regarding methodological individualism. I have taken for a more detailed study three representative 'individualists', namely, Karl Popper, F.A.Hayek and J.W.N.Watkins. The reasons for choosing these three are: Karl Popper, we consider to be a representative scientist-philosopher whose individualism seems to have influenced all attempts at an individualistic interpretation of social phenomena. Attempts to explain social phenomena in individualistic terms have met with certain amount of success - but the economic theories seem to be presenting peculiar problems of their own. Consequently, we chose economist-turned-philosopher, Hayek as our next major 'individualist' for the present study. Finally, J.W.N.Watkins represents all theoretical social scientists who have attempted to explain the social phenomena in individualistic terms. Watkins attempts to answer a large number of questions that arise in the practical study of social phenomena.

Popper's individualistic doctrines are studied from three different angles (Chapter Two): the unity of method, answer to historicism (presumably the strongest anti-individualistic position for Popper) and psychologism (which he vehemently rejects as impossible). In Hayek's thesis of individualism (Chapter Three), three problems are considered: Are social sciences systematically subjective? Is the use of macroscopic, collective, non-psychological concepts always illegitimate? Should explanations in social sciences be only in terms of individual motivation and behaviour? In the study of J.W.N.Watkins (Chapter Four), the following issues remain prominent: the notion of historical explanation in social sciences, the notion of ideal types and the principle of methodological individualism. In Chapter Five
a number of minor exponents and critics of individualism are studied, prominent among them are A.C. Danto, Steven Lukes, Man Brodbeck and Maurice Mandelbaum. Finally, in Chapter Six we give a résumé of the arguments for and against the methodological individualism and then attempt to restate individualism both as a methodological and as an ontological model of explanation.

The Subject-Matter

The contrast between collectivism or holism and individualism in social sciences has been a methodological issue commonly understood as: should we consider the large-scale social phenomena as mere aggregates or configurations of the actions, attitudes, relations and circumstances of the individual men and women who participated in, enjoyed or suffered them? – the methodological individualist would say "yes", the collectivist however, would claim that social phenomena may be studied at their own autonomous, macroscopic level of analysis, the true historical individuals are "wholes" not individual human beings. 1

Some classification of the terms "individualism", "collectivism" or "holism" and "methodological" is necessary before we proceed with the basic analysis of the arguments.

"Individualism" comes from the word "individual" which according to Oxford Dictionary is 1. "single, particular, special, opposed to general; having distinct character, characteristic of particular person. 2. Single member of class; single human being, opposed to society, family etc. By "individualism" Oxford Dictionary understands "self-centered feeling, or conduct, egoism; social theory favouring free action of individualism". The compiler of Oxford Dictionary in his explanation although retains the etymological understanding indivisua (the Latin word meaning undivisible) or existing as a separate entity, pertaining to single person or thing) however, restricts himself to the ethical individual when he defines individualism as "self-centered feeling or conduct".

Gould and Kolb claim that the word individual in social sciences has lost its original meaning and has been used as a synonym for person or single human being. For example, L. von Wiese and R. Becker claim that they "do not wish to assert that the single human being is indivisible, but rather that he is unique and singular; we should therefore, really say "singular" instead of "individual". It is equivalent to singularity that individual is used by most social psychologists and sociologists." ¹

A more clear case is that of K. Young² who identifies "individual" with "single human being" and with "persons". Some sociologists regard individual as a status-less person. For example, R.E. Park and E.W. Burgess regard "person" as "and individual who has status. We come into this world as individuals. We acquire status, and become persons."³ H.B. Lesswell, however, is more consistent with the synonymity between "individual" and "persons". He says: "A person is an individual who identifies himself with others."⁴

Philosophical terms are highly controversial and especially so when they are used in more than one discipline. "Individualism" is one such terms that has been used with unusual lack of precision and a clear definition. As Steven Lukes points out: "It slides from individual autonomy to equality of respect to the idea that society is the product of individual wills; from Roman law to Christian morality; from Rousseau and Kant to Bentham and from a methodological to a practical doctrine. The term "indivi-

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dualism" gives all this an illusory air of unity and coherence.

"Individualism" defines R.V. Sampson as 1. "a political theory which, by emphasizing property rights as a necessary condition of liberty, seeks to set definite circumscribed limits to the regulatory powers vested in the government over social and economic processes;" and 2. "the belief that the individual is an end in himself and as such ought to realize his 'self' and cultivate his own judgement, notwithstanding the weight of pervasive social pressures in the direction of conformity." 2

Another form of "individualism" as conducive/economic prosperity to Protestantism, i.e. a denominational sect of Christians who believed in collective prosperity but individual austerity resulting in the rise of capitalism, was claimed by Weber.

In contrast "individualism" in recent times has received a bad name as it has been associated with egotism and selfishness and consequently it has been condemned by economists and politicians alike. Again, the political theorists have used the word to mean "that the individual is a self-determined whole, a complete autonomous being in himself capable of being considered in isolation from society." 3

The term "individualism" has been further employed in the psychological sense by social scientists such as Eric Fromm to reaffirm the traditional individualism of Protestantism. Theirs is an attack on cultural conformity that emphasizes "self-reliant, inner-directed individual who brings evidence to the bar of his own personal judgement or conscience. True individualism in this presupposes a capacity on the part of the individual to discover and realise his own spontaneous self." 4

3. Ibid.
"Collectivism" denotes the beliefs, objectives or methods of those who advocate comprehensive central political control over social (and especially economic) arrangements or the extensions of such controls. The term which has till recently been used only in the political context, finds its origins to Basel Congress of the First Socialist International in 1869. Its purpose was to offer a non-authoritarian form of socialism or communism propagated by Bakunin, later on the term acquired economic dimensions in terms of property rights and collective ownership.

However, the term "collectivism" used in the present study is synonymous with the term "holism", i.e., collectivism understood not merely as a political theory of socialism but as a direct opposite of individualism. The synonym "holism" therefore, is understood to be a theory of society as a unity made up of "wholes" and not a mere aggregate of disparate parts. 2

Finally, the term "methodology" is understood as a systematic and logical study of the principles guiding scientific investigation. The term should, however, not be understood as 1. "substantive theory since it is only interested in the grounds for the validity of the theories, not in their content;" 2. "research procedures, (general modes of investigation) and techniques (specific fact finding or manipulating operations) themselves, since the methodologist evaluates procedures and techniques as to their ability to provide us with certain knowledge." Finally, 3. "as a normative discipline (it) differs sharply from the factual study of scientists at work as conducted." 3

As already defined, methodology refers to systematic and logical study of the principles guiding any investigation. Methodology was taken to be part of philosophy (i.e., logic) and the advances in sciences rendered such a methodology inadequate. Consequently, a need to formulate one’s own methodology to answer the specific problems confronted by social scientists arose. Phi-

losophers began to regard this new development as a 'bent of mind' that deals with procedures or techniques of investigations. Thus, in non-technical usage very often the term is referred to the general techniques used in the scientific research. ¹

Post-Kantian period prima facie seems to solve the conceptual confusion created regarding the term 'methodology', but the confusion assumed new dimensions in the hands of Weber, Parsons, Schelting and others. They regarded methodology as a discipline for the study of different methods of gaining scientific knowledge. The task of 'methodologist' is, therefore, to examine "systematically and logically, the aptness of all research tools, varying from the basic assumptions to specific research techniques, for the scientific purpose." ²

T. Parsons regards methodology not as the study of the "methods" of empirical research such as statistics, case study, interview, and the like. These latter are, as preferable to call research techniques. Hence, methodology is the consideration of the general grounds for the validity of scientific procedures and systems of them. It is as much neither a strictly scientific nor a strictly philosophical discipline. ³

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² Ibid.