

Preface

The attempt of social science to emulate the natural as well as the pure and applied sciences has had unimpressive results. Indeed, notable physicist Richard Feynman is on record calling social science “a science which is not a science... they follow the forms... but they don’t get any laws” (Feynman 1981). One way of dealing with this situation is to adhere to the same approach in the hope that things will improve. A different approach is to take a step back and see if there may be a different way by analyzing how natural and social sciences are different. This is the attempt of the work at hand.

This book proposes that social science differs from the natural sciences in a fundamental way, namely, by involving the phenomenon of choice. Moreover, it suggests that a useful means for dealing with this phenomenon is the general theory of human action of Praxeology. This meta-theoretical framework helps us to *understand* how a complex social system may work and what the limitations of empirical research are in contributing to this understanding.

To demonstrate its usage we have chosen the field of leadership. We hope to provide a meta-theoretical guide and illustrate how various theories related to leadership fit the conceptual framework of Praxeology. We propose that Praxeology brings a framework forward that captures a very broad range of phenomena and theories, and brings a novel viewpoint of understanding.

Up to this point Praxeology has been largely restricted in application to Austrian Economics. This has limited the appeal of Praxeology to other fields of inquiry. The main premise of the book is that Praxeology is not a theoretical framework solely for the domain of economics. It is a framework of social science based on a pure theory of choice, that being Menger’s Subjective Theory of Value. Our goal for the book builds on the original perspective of Mises that Praxeology provides a generalized structure which researchers may use in developing applied models and frameworks for the social sciences. We look forward to other researchers bringing the structure into new fields of inquiry in an attempt to develop more robust applied models.

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A Praxeological Perspective

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