

**Recent Trends in the Philosophy of Science:
Lessons for Sociology**

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ABSTRACT Auguste Comte's positivist claim of sociology was readily accepted by the succeeding generations of sociologists. Their efforts to vindicate this claim served to establish sociology on firm empirical foundations. Within a relatively short period, sociology succeeded in amassing a vast body of empirical data. Although meticulous attention was paid to methodology, most of it seemed to be misplaced, as it was mainly concerned with the tools and techniques of empirical research rather than with the logic of scientific procedure. It was however at the theoretical level that the limitations of sociology as a positivistic discipline were most apparent. Though some attempts had been made to develop general theories, these were far from satisfactory. In the natural sciences, whose model sociology has been trying to emulate, the terms science and scientific methodology have no longer the same meaning as in Newton's time. But unfortunately, the debate about the scientific status of sociology is still carried on in terms of an antiquated concept of science.