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Q1(a)

Differences between Social Anthropology and Sociology.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · The Nature of Society

2.2 The Nature of Society: Concept of Society; Society and Culture; Social Institution; Social groups; and Social stratification.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on Differences between Social Anthropology and Sociology
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Social anthropology grew from intensive fieldwork in small-scale societies.

Sociology grew from industrial class, state, and survey.

Malinowski versus Durkheim is the textbook origin split.

Srinivas and Bêteille show the Indian overlap.

The wall is departmental, not a law of nature.

Introduction

Social anthropology and sociology both study social relations. They grew from different field habits, scales, and colonial histories.

Body**The usual contrasts**

- **Social anthropology**, after Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, specialised in small-scale, kinship-heavy societies and long fieldwork.
- **Sociology**, after Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, specialised in industrial classes, the state, and surveys of large populations.
- **Method**: participant observation versus questionnaire and official statistics, as a crude teaching split.

Why the wall is thin

- **M. N. Srinivas** brought village India into both rooms. **Bêteille** wrote as sociologist with anthropological closeness.
- Urban ethnography and multi-sited work erased the 'primitive versus modern' division.
- In Britain the names marked departments. In India the same village can sit on either syllabus.

Flow diagram

Social anthropology -> Long fieldwork kinship

Sociology -> State class survey

Village India -> Social anthropology

Village India -> Sociology

Conclusion

The difference is historical method and scale, not two species of fact. Anthropology's mark remains intensive fieldwork; sociology's mark remains the large institutional set.

Facts & figures

Malinowski

Argonauts made year-long participant observation the anthropological badge.

Durkheim

Sociology as the study of social facts, with suicide and division of labour as large-scale cases.

Srinivas

Rampura fieldwork and Sanskritisation sat between the two disciplines in India.

Radcliffe-Brown

Called his science comparative sociology, already blurring the label.