

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q1(a)

Is sociology a science? Give reasons for your answer.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Sociology as Science

Sociology as Science: Science, scientific method and critique; Major theoretical strands of research methodology; Positivism and its critique; Fact value and objectivity; Non-positivist methodologies.

Core demand of the question

- Is sociology a science? Give reasons for your answer
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Sociology is a science of patterned social relations, not a physics of persons.

Comte, **Durkheim**, and **Marx** claimed laws, facts, and historical regularities.

Weber, Mead, and **Merton** add meaning, interaction, and middle-range theory.

The claim holds as systematic social science, not as laboratory naturalism.

Introduction

Sociology is a science if science means systematic, comparative, and testable knowledge of a defined object. It is not a laboratory physics of persons. The classical founders already split on how far law, meaning, and critique can sit inside one method.

Body**Reasons for a scientific claim**

- Auguste **Comte** named sociology as a positive science of social statics and dynamics, last in a hierarchy of sciences.
- **Emile Durkheim** treated social facts as external and constraining, and used rates, as in suicide, to show regularities beyond private motive.
- **Karl Marx** sought laws of the mode of production and class conflict, a science of history rather than of isolated wills.

Limits of a narrow science

- **Max Weber** required interpretative understanding of social action. Meaning is part of the object, not noise around a law.
- Robert K. **Merton** asked for theories of the middle range, because grand laws often fail the case.
- George Herbert Mead's self is formed in interaction, which a billiard-ball causal model misses.

A workable answer

- **Sociology is a social science:** concepts, comparison, evidence, and public criticism.
- It is not a copy of experimental natural science, and it is not common-sense opinion dressed as theory.

Flow diagram

Sociology -> Durkheim social facts
Sociology -> Marx mode of production
Sociology -> Weber social action
Durkheim social facts -> Social science
Marx mode of production -> Social science
Weber social action -> Social science

Conclusion

Yes, sociology is a science of social relations if science means disciplined evidence and comparison. **Durkheim** and **Marx** supply the law-seeking pole; **Weber**, Mead, and **Merton** keep meaning and limited theory inside that claim.

Facts & figures

Comte

Named sociology and placed it as the last positive science of order and progress.

Durkheim

Treated social facts as things and used suicide rates as evidence of social regularities.

Weber

Defined sociology as interpretative study of social action oriented to others.

Merton

Preferred middle-range theory over a single closed system of social laws.