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Q2(a)

Discuss the changing equation of discipline of sociology with other social sciences

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 marks · Sociology

Sociology - The Discipline: Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of sociology; Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences; Sociology and common sense.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the changing equation of the discipline of sociology with other social sciences
- Keep the discussion within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

Sociology began as a claim to the whole of society.

Durkheim, **Weber**, and **Marx** drew borders with mind, meaning, and production.

Mid-century specialisation split the social sciences; **Parsons** over-unified them.

Historical sociology, political sociology, and ethnography reopened traffic.

Indian caste, gender, and informal labour force a joint equation, not a sealed discipline.

Introduction

Sociology's equation with economics, political science, psychology, history, and anthropology has never been a fixed border. It began as a claim to the whole of society. It now works as a complementary science of relations, methods, and inequalities that specialists still need.

Body

The founding claim

- Auguste Comte placed sociology as queen of the sciences. **Emile Durkheim** later marked social facts off from psychology.
- **Max Weber** shared the interpretative field with history and economics, yet kept social action as the unit.
- **Karl Marx** made the economy social, so a sealed economics of price was already a political fiction.

Mid-century specialisation

- Economics modelled choice. Political science modelled the state. Psychology modelled the mind. Sociology kept survey, class, and role.
- Talcott **Parsons** tried a grand system that absorbed neighbouring sciences as subsystems. The attempt overreached.

Later mixing

- Rational-choice and network work borrowed from economics without surrendering structure.

- Political sociology, after Stein Rokkan and Indian election studies, treated votes as caste, class, and gender, not only as office.
- Historical sociology, after Barrington Moore and Theda Skocpol, closed the old split of unique history versus types.
- Social anthropology and sociology now share ethnography; the Census and NFHS are already joint files.

Indian equation

- M. N. Srinivas, Andre Beteille, and later Dalit and feminist work made caste and gender objects that economics of growth cannot finish.
- Informal labour and SHGs sit across economics and sociology. Civil society sits across political science and sociology.

Present equation

- The useful equation is division of labour plus shared methods.
- Sociology does not own society. It asks how neighbouring objects hang together as structure and meaning.

Flow diagram

Sociology relations -> Economics
Sociology relations -> Political science
Sociology relations -> Psychology
Sociology relations -> History
Sociology relations -> Anthropology
Shared methods files -> Sociology relations

Conclusion

The equation shifted from imperial queen-science to complementary study of relations. Durkheim, Weber, and Marx still mark the classic cuts. Contemporary work mixes methods with economics, politics, history, and anthropology, especially on caste, gender, and informal work in India.

Facts & figures

Durkheim

Separated social facts from individual psychology as a founding border.

Parsons

Tried to nest economics and politics as subsystems of the social system.

Skocpol

States and Social Revolutions: historical sociology as a bridge with history.

NFHS

A demographic-health file used equally by demographers and sociologists.

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