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Q1(a)

Explain how sociology has emerged as a distinct discipline based on rationality and scientific temper

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 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

- Explain how sociology has emerged as a distinct discipline based on rationality and scientific temper
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Sociology arose as a science of society after industry and revolution.

Comte named it; Durkheim, Marx, and Weber gave it method and objects.

Rationality is both a method and, in Weber, a historical process.

Scientific temper uses comparison, rates, and social facts.

The Census later became a public file for that temper.

Introduction

Sociology became a distinct discipline when European order after industry and revolution was treated as a worldly object of reason. Rationality and scientific temper meant explaining groups by evidence and comparison, not by theology or court chronicle.

Body

Rationality as a new object and a new method

- Auguste Comte named sociology as a positive science of social order and progress, placed after biology in a hierarchy of sciences.
- **Max Weber later made rationality itself a historical process:** legal-rational authority, calculation, and disenchantment.
- **Karl Marx** treated capitalist production as a lawful, if conflictual, structure that could be studied, not only morally denounced.

Scientific temper

- **Emile Durkheim demanded social facts be treated as things:** external, constraining, and comparable, as in the study of suicide rates.
- The French Revolution and the factory made society a problem that natural law and sermons could not settle.
- **Census** counting, later NFHS-type surveys, and comparative history supplied files that a scientific temper could use.

Distinct from neighbours

- Economics kept price, political science kept the office, and psychology kept the mind. Sociology claimed patterned relations among institutions as its own field.

Flow diagram

Industry and revolution -> Sociology
Rationality -> Sociology
Scientific temper -> Sociology
Sociology -> Durkheim facts
Sociology -> Weber action
Sociology -> Marx class

Conclusion

Sociology emerged when **Comte**, **Durkheim**, **Marx**, and **Weber** treated society as knowable by reason and method. Scientific temper meant evidence, types, and rates. Distinctness is that joint map of relations, not a claim to own every neighbouring fact.

Facts & figures

Comte

Named sociology and claimed a positive science of order and progress.

Durkheim

Fixed the object as social facts to be studied as things, illustrated in Suicide.

Weber

Tied modern sociology to interpretative study of rationalisation and social action.

Indian Census

A later administrative file that a scientific temper uses for large-scale structure.