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Q5(c)

Does scientific method make Sociology a Science? Illustrate your answer with Durkheim's method.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · 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

- Does scientific method make sociology a science? Illustrate your answer with **Durkheim's** method
- Keep the illustration within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Scientific method is necessary for sociology as public, comparative knowledge.

- **Durkheim**: social facts as things, **suicide** rates, concomitant variation.

That illustration founds a science of society.

It is not sufficient as a physics costume.

Weber's meaning and official coding remain scientific issues.

Introduction

A scientific method of public evidence and comparison is necessary for sociology to be a science. It is not sufficient if the object is wrongly reduced. **Durkheim's** **suicide** study is the illustration of both the gain and the remaining debate.

Body****Durkheim's** method as science**

- **Treat social facts as things**: external, constraining, and measurable as rates.
- Comparative concomitant variation across religion, family, and country.
- Reject introspection as the main path. Auguste **Comte's** positive programme is here made operational.

What this achieves

- A pattern of **suicide** that private motives cannot explain.
- Repeatable tables, later extendable to **NCRB**-type files.

Why method is not a full baptism

- **Max Weber** still required meaning. Official coding is itself a social practice.
- Karl Popper would ask whether types are at risk of failure.
- If "scientific method" means only physics-like laws, **Durkheim** already stretched the copy.

Answer

- Method makes sociology scientific in the sense of disciplined, comparative knowledge.
- The object remains society, not particles.

Flow diagram

Scientific method -> Durkheim rates comparison
Durkheim rates comparison -> Sociology as science of facts
Weber meaning -> Still science of society
Sociology as science of facts -> Still science of society

Conclusion

Durkheim shows that a scientific method of rates and comparison can found sociology as a science of social facts. It does not freeze the discipline as a lesser physics. Meaning and coding remain later scientific problems, not a return to guesswork.

Facts & figures

Rules of Sociological Method

Durkheim's charter: social facts as things.

Suicide

Application of comparative statistical method to a private-looking act.

Comte

Positive science programme that **Durkheim** specified for sociology.

NCRB

A later official series that can inherit **Durkheim**'s method with coding cautions.

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