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Q1(a)

Delimit the scope of sociology in relation to other social sciences.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · 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

- Delimit the scope of sociology in relation to other social sciences
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Sociology studies patterned relations among groups and institutions as a whole.

Comte, **Durkheim**, **Weber**, and **Marx** named that object in different ways.

Economics, political science, psychology, history, and anthropology cut the same life along one axis.

Census and **NFHS** already show large-scale social structure.

The limit is complementary science, not a takeover of every neighbouring field.

Introduction

- **Sociology studies society as a whole:** groups, institutions, and the patterned relations among them. Other social sciences cut the same life along one axis, such as price, office, psyche, or the past. The scope of sociology is the joint map, not a claim to own every fact.

Body**What sociology takes as its field**

- Auguste Comte named sociology as a science of social order and change. **Emile Durkheim** later fixed the object as social facts that are external and constraining.
- **Max Weber** delimited the field as interpretative understanding of social action, which is action oriented to others.
- **Karl Marx** placed class and the mode of production at the centre, so the economy is social before it is a textbook market.

Borders with neighbouring sciences

- Economics specialises in allocation and price. Sociology asks how caste, gender, and status shape who can enter that market, as informal labour and unpaid care show.
- Political science specialises in the state and organised government. Sociology studies the social bases of votes, parties, and everyday domination.
- Psychology takes the individual mind. Sociology takes the group, the role, and the institution in which that mind is trained.

- History narrates unique sequences. Sociology seeks types and comparisons, while still using historical cases.
- Social anthropology long specialised in small-scale and kinship worlds. The two now share methods; the census and **NFHS** are already sociological files on large populations.

The useful limit

- Sociology does not replace the specialist sciences. It delimits itself by asking how their objects hang together as a social structure.

Flow diagram

Sociology as joint map -> Economics price
Sociology as joint map -> Political science state
Sociology as joint map -> Psychology mind
Sociology as joint map -> History sequence
Sociology as joint map -> Anthropology kinship

Conclusion

Sociology's scope is the structure of relations among institutions and groups. Economics, political science, psychology, history, and anthropology supply cuts of the same life. **Durkheim**, **Weber**, and **Marx** still mark the three classic ways of drawing that whole.

Facts & figures

Durkheim

Treated social facts as external, constraining, and not reducible to individual psychology.

Weber

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

Indian Census

Decennial count of population, work, and household that all social sciences use but none fully owns.

NFHS

National Family Health Survey files on fertility, nutrition, and gender that sit across demography and sociology.