

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

Q4(a)

Do you think that common sense is the starting point of social research? What are its advantages and limitations? Explain

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · 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

- Do you think that common sense is the starting point of social research? What are its advantages and limitations? Explain
- Keep the explanation within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

Common sense is the everyday recipe knowledge of the **life-world**.

It is the usual starting point for problems, not the method of proof.

Advantages are relevance, hypotheses, and the language of respondents.

Limitations are naturalised power, contradiction, and shallow cause.

Durkheim, Mills, Schutz, and Garfinkel require a break after the start.

Introduction

Common sense is the stock of everyday recipes by which people act and explain the world. Social research usually begins in that stock, because questions arise from puzzles in ordinary life. It cannot end there, because common sense is local, moral, and often wrong as explanation.

Body

Is it the starting point?

- Yes, as a starting point. Alfred Schutz described the **life-world** as the taken-for-granted base from which scientific questions are selected.
- C. Wright Mills asked for a **sociological imagination** that moves from personal trouble to public issue, which is a move that begins in common sense and does not stay there.
- **Emile Durkheim** insisted that common sense must be left behind as a method, even if the topic, such as suicide, is a public worry.
- So the fair answer is yes for the origin of problems, no for the method of proof.

Advantages

- It supplies relevance. People already know that dowry, queue-jumping, or factory shifts matter.
- It supplies first hypotheses and the language of respondents, without which interviews fail.
- It keeps the researcher from a closed jargon that cannot be checked against lived reports.

- Ethnomethodology, in Harold Garfinkel's **breaching experiments**, used the smash of common sense as data about how order is done.

Limitations

- It naturalises power. Caste rank and gender duty appear as how things are.
- **It is contradictory:** thrift and display, fatalism and effort, live in the same proverb stock.
- It confuses correlation with cause and the typical with the universal.
- It is historically shallow. Mills's distinction of biography and history is exactly what common sense skips.
- **Value judgements arrive as facts:** a crowd is a mob when the speaker dislikes it.
- Official common sense in files can be as misleading as folk common sense.

How research should use it

- Start with the puzzle. Convert it into variables, cases, and comparisons.
- Return findings to public language without putting the old error back in command.
- **Feminist method is a warning:** household common sense hid **unpaid work as love**.

Explanation in judgement

- Common sense is the usual door. Science is the reconstruction of what is found behind the door.

Flow diagram

Common sense life-world -> Research question
 Research question -> Method comparison evidence
 Method comparison evidence -> Sociological finding
 Sociological finding -> Public language
 Common sense life-world -> Naturalised power
 Naturalised power -> Method comparison evidence

Conclusion

Common sense is the starting point of social research as a source of problems and first meanings. Its advantages are relevance and access to the **life-world**. Its limitations are naturalised power, contradiction, and weak cause. **Durkheim**, Mills, Schutz, and Garfinkel together require that research begin there and then break with it as method.

Facts & figures

Life-world

Schutz's term for the taken-for-granted stock of knowledge of everyday life.

Sociological imagination

Mills's move from personal trouble to public issue and from biography to history.

Durkheim's break

The rule that social facts must be explained by other social facts, not by common-sense motives alone.

Breaching experiments

Garfinkel's disruptions that made the work of common-sense order visible.

Unpaid work as love

A common-sense frame that feminist research recoded as labour.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/sociology-gs-1/2023/do-you-think-that-common-sense-is-the-starting-point-of-social-research-what-are-its-advantages-and-limitations-explain/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com