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UPSC Mains 2024 Sociology Paper 1

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<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains/sociology/gs-1/2024/>

Q1(a) · 10 marks

Discuss the nature of Sociology. Highlight its relationship with Social Anthropology.

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Sociology is the systematic study of social relationships, institutions and structures.

Its nature is empirical, comparative and theoretical, after Comte, **Durkheim**, **Marx** and **Weber**.

Social anthropology studies culture and community life, often through intensive fieldwork.

The two subjects share the study of institutions and meaning.

They differ in typical scale, method and historical setting.

Indian village studies show how the border has been crossed in practice.

Introduction

Sociology is the systematic study of how people live together in groups, institutions and structures. Auguste Comte gave the discipline a name and asked for a science of society. **Emile Durkheim** treated social facts as constraints that exist outside the individual. **Max Weber** studied meaningful social action. The nature of sociology follows from this project. It is empirical, comparative and theoretical. Social anthropology studies culture, kinship and everyday life in communities, often through long fieldwork. The two subjects share a border and also keep a division of labour.

Body

Nature of sociology

Sociology studies recurrent patterns such as class, caste, family, state, religion and work. It uses concepts, comparison and evidence. **Durkheim** insisted that social facts must be explained by other social facts. **Karl Marx** located institutions in modes of production and class struggle. **Weber** added interpretation of motives and the study of domination. Robert Merton later asked sociologists to look at both manifest and latent functions. The discipline is therefore neither a list of opinions nor a branch of psychology. It is generalising, but it does not claim the same laboratory control that physics enjoys. Anthony Giddens called this the study of a world that already interprets itself.

Sociology is also historical and critical. It asks how a present arrangement was made and whose interest it serves. C. Wright Mills linked private troubles to public issues. In India, G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas and A. R. Desai used this toolkit on caste, village and class. The nature of the subject is therefore scientific in method and social in object.

Relationship with social anthropology

Social anthropology, in the lineage of Bronislaw Malinowski, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and later Clifford Geertz, has classically studied small-scale communities through participant observation. It has given sociology the ideas of culture, ritual, kinship and the native point of view. Sociology has classically studied large, industrial and state-centred societies through survey, statistics and historical comparison. Durkheim and Marcel Mauss already sat on both sides of this fence. In India, village studies by Srinivas, McKim Marriott and Andre Beteille show how anthropological fieldwork became a method of Indian sociology.

The relationship is close because both study institutions, meaning and inequality. The difference is one of typical scale, typical method and typical research setting, not a wall. Urban ethnography, Dalit studies and the anthropology of the state have narrowed the gap. A fair answer keeps the shared object and names the remaining contrast: sociology's taste for structure and comparison across mass societies, and anthropology's taste for intensive cultural description.

Flow diagram

Sociology -> Structure comparison theory
Social anthropology -> Culture kinship fieldwork
Sociology -> Institutions meaning inequality
Social anthropology -> Institutions meaning inequality

Conclusion

Sociology is a systematic, comparative study of social life, with a nature that is empirical and theoretical at once. Social anthropology is its closest kin in the study of culture and group life. The two subjects exchange methods and concepts, while still differing in typical scale and research style.

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Q1(b) · 10 marks

Analyse the changing nature of caste as a status group.

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Weber's status group is a community of honour, lifestyle and closure.

Caste fits this through hierarchy, endogamy and ritual ranking described by Ghurye, Dumont and **Ambedkar**.

Sanskritisation and the dominant caste show older strategies of status mobility and local power.

Law, reservations and democratic politics have recast caste as a public identity.

Urban class and occupation have loosened hereditary work more than they have loosened marriage.

Change is real, but caste has not ceased to be a status group.

Introduction

Max Weber defined a status group as a community of honour, lifestyle and social closure. Caste in India has long been such a group. It ranked people by birth, regulated marriage and occupation, and claimed ritual purity or pollution. That picture has not vanished. It has changed in important ways. The task is to analyse how caste still works as status, and how politics, law, markets and cities have altered its form.

Body

Caste as a status group

Louis Dumont described caste as a system of hierarchy based on the opposition of pure and impure. G. S. Ghurye listed features such as segmental division, hierarchy, restrictions on feeding and marriage, and hereditary occupation. B. R. **Ambedkar** treated caste as a system of graded inequality that also divided the oppressed. As a status group, a caste claims honour, polices endogamy, and closes ranks against outsiders. **Weber's** idea of social closure fits this well. Economic class can cut across caste, as Andre Beteille showed in Tanjore, but honour and marriage still follow status more stubbornly than income does.

Changing nature

- **M. N. Srinivas described Sanskritisation as a status strategy:** a lower group copies the ritual style of a higher group. He also described the dominant caste, which holds land, numbers and local power even without the highest ritual rank. After Independence, the Constitution banned untouchability, and reservations created a new political career for caste as a vote bank and as a claim on the state. Rajni Kothari and later scholars of caste politics showed that caste became an instrument of democratic mobilisation. Urban jobs, education and migration weakened hereditary occupation. Yet matrimonial advertisements, honour violence and residential clustering show that status honour continues.

Dipankar Gupta argued that we now see competing hierarchies rather than one Dumontian ladder. Yogendra Singh spoke of modernisation of tradition. The change is therefore double. Caste is less a complete ritual cosmos in the city and the factory. It remains a status group in marriage, social honour and political identity. Class and party have entered the field, but they have not simply replaced status.

Flow diagram

Caste as status group -> Honour endogamy closure

Caste as status group -> Change

Change -> Politics and reservations

Change -> Class and urban occupation

Change -> Legal equality

Conclusion

Caste remains a Weberian status group of honour and closure, even as occupation and law have shifted. Politics, education and the market have changed its public face. Analysis must hold both the persistence of status and the new uses of caste in democracy and class.

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Q1(c) · 10 marks

Marriage as an institution has undergone a radical transformation from 'ritual' to 'commercial' in its outlook. Explain the factors behind this change.

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Older marriage was a ritual alliance of families, caste and honour.

A commercial outlook prices grooms, dowry and wedding display.

Hypergamy and scarce high-status jobs inflate the market.

Media, urban consumption and the wedding industry make the ceremony a public show.

Law against dowry exists, but practice still follows family bargaining.

Ritual form can survive while the outlook becomes commercial.

Introduction

Marriage in much of India was long treated as a ritual alliance between families, not as a contract between two individuals. Hindu law books called it a sacrament. Caste endogamy, gifts and honour surrounded the rite. The same institution now often looks like a market. Families bargain over grooms, dowry, lifestyle and wedding display. The change is radical in outlook even where the ritual form survives. Sociology must name the factors, not only regret the cost.

Body

From ritual to commercial outlook

A ritual outlook treats marriage as a duty that completes householder life, transfers women between patrilineages, and reproduces caste. Louis Dumont and later kinship studies stressed alliance. The commercial outlook treats the wedding as a package of goods and the spouse as a bundle of credentials: job, salary, skin colour, overseas visa and family property. Matrimonial sites and newspaper columns make this market visible. Veena Das and others have shown how honour still sits inside this market, so the change is not a simple move from sacred to secular. It is a move toward pricing of status.

Factors behind the change

Hypergamy pushes families to buy a higher-status groom. Uma Chakravarti's account of Brahmanical patriarchy links control of women's sexuality to caste property. Dowry inflation follows when education and government jobs become scarce status goods. M. N. Srinivas already noted the modernisation of dowry among groups that once practised bride-price. Urban middle-class consumer culture, television and social media turn the wedding into a public performance. The wedding industry, hotels and gold markets have a material interest in this display. Legal bans such as the **Dowry Prohibition Act** exist, but weak enforcement and family complicity keep the market alive. Migration and the NRI groom have added a global price list.

The commercial outlook does not mean that love or ritual has disappeared. Companionable marriage and court choice have grown in cities. The point of the question is the dominant public language of bargaining, costing and show. Capitalism did not invent arranged

marriage. It has commercialised the search and the ceremony.

Flow diagram

Ritual alliance -> Marriage
Commercial outlook -> Marriage
Commercial outlook -> Dowry and credentials
Commercial outlook -> Wedding industry
Property hypergamy media -> Commercial outlook

Conclusion

Marriage has shifted from a mainly ritual alliance to an outlook that prices status, grooms and display. Property, hypergamy, media and a weak legal net explain the change. The rite continues, but the market now speaks loudly inside it.

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Q1(d) · 10 marks

Democracy needs a vibrant culture of civil society in order to strengthen its foundation of citizenship. Comment.

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Politics and Society

Revision summary

Civil society is organised life between family and the state.

Citizenship is a practice of rights and claim-making, not only a legal status.

Tocqueville, Habermas and Gramsci show associations as schools of democracy and as fields of hegemony.

Indian movements and campaigns illustrate how publics train citizens.

Civil society can exclude or become communal, so vibrancy must be judged by openness.

Democracy still needs this culture to keep voting tied to everyday citizenship.

Introduction

Democracy is more than periodic voting. It needs citizens who can associate, argue, watch the state and claim rights. Civil society is the sphere of unions, associations, newspapers, social movements and voluntary groups that sit between the household and official power. A vibrant culture in this sphere trains people in citizenship. Without it, the vote can remain a lonely act and the constitution a paper promise.

Body

Civil society and the foundation of citizenship

Alexis de Tocqueville saw American democracy as a school of associations. People learned public spirit by joining groups. T. H. Marshall described citizenship as civil, political and social rights that grow over time. Those rights stay alive only when people use them. Jurgen Habermas described a public sphere where private persons debate common affairs. Antonio Gramsci treated civil society as a field of hegemony, where consent is organised, not as a purely innocent space. Neera Chandhoke and Indian debates after the 1990s placed NGOs, people's movements and the media in this field.

Citizenship is therefore a practice. The Right to Information campaign, the Narmada Bachao Andolan, SEWA, and local resident associations show how organised publics teach claim-making. A quiet population that only consumes news does not deepen democracy in the same way.

Why vibrancy matters, and its limits

A vibrant civil society watches elections, documents police abuse, defends minority rights and supplies welfare where the state is thin. It also produces counter-publics for Dalits, women and Adivasis when the official public is captured by dominant groups. Partha Chatterjee's argument about political society reminds us that many poor Indians meet the state through informal negotiation rather than civic association. Civil society can itself be exclusive, donor-driven or communal. Hindu and other identity associations are also civil society. Vibrancy is not automatically liberal.

The comment asked by the question is still sound. Democracy's foundation of citizenship weakens when associations shrink, when fear replaces debate, and when the only organised

voices are those of money and majorities. A culture of civil society does not replace parties and parliaments. It keeps them honest and keeps citizens in training.

Flow diagram

Civil society -> Associations movements media
Civil society -> Citizenship as practice
Citizenship as practice -> Democratic foundation
Capture exclusion -> Civil society

Conclusion

Democracy needs a living culture of association and public argument if citizenship is to be more than a legal label. Civil society is that training ground. It can be captured or exclusive, yet without it the democratic foundation stays weak.

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Q1(e) · 10 marks

What are the 'basic and irreducible' functions of the family as proposed by Talcott Parsons? Explain.

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx

Revision summary

Parsons said the modern family had two basic and irreducible functions.

Primary socialisation trains the child in society's values and roles.

Stabilization of adult personalities gives emotional support in an industrial economy.

He tied these functions to instrumental and expressive sex roles.

Feminist and Indian family studies criticise the male-breadwinner assumption.

The two functions remain the syllabus core of the question.

Introduction

Talcott Parsons, writing with Robert Bales on the American family, argued that the modern nuclear family had lost many older economic and political tasks. Two functions, he said, remained basic and irreducible. The first is the primary socialisation of children. The second is the stabilization of adult personalities. The claim belongs to structural functionalism. It must be explained in his terms before it is criticised.

Body

Primary socialisation

Primary socialisation is the child's first training in the values, roles and motives of the wider society. Parsons held that the isolated conjugal family, with a small number of children, could give intense emotional training that a large kin group scattered across work and farm could not. The child internalises a superego and learns to take roles. George Herbert Mead's play and game stages sit nearby, but Parsons stressed the family's fit with industrial society. The family, in this view, is a factory of personalities that the occupational system needs.

Stabilization of adult personalities

Adults, especially in a competitive industrial economy, face strain. The family is a place where the adult can receive emotional support and restore balance. Parsons linked this to a gendered division: the husband as instrumental leader toward the occupational world, the wife as expressive leader inside the home. The marriage is a personality system that manages tension. Without this function, he feared, adults would carry unresolved strain into work and politics.

A necessary critical note

Feminist sociologists such as Ann Oakley and later Sylvia Walby argued that the expressive role was unpaid labour and a structure of patriarchy, not a natural function. Cross-cultural families, joint households in India, and dual-earner couples show that socialisation and emotional support can be shared more widely. I. P. Desai and A. M. Shah studied Indian household forms that do not match the isolated American nuclear type. Parsons named two functions that families often do perform. He over-stated their uniqueness and tied them too tightly to a male-breadwinner model.

Flow diagram

Parsons nuclear family -> Primary socialisation
Parsons nuclear family -> Stabilization of adult personalities
Primary socialisation -> Child roles and values
Stabilization of adult personalities -> Adult tension management

Conclusion

Parsons's basic and irreducible functions are the child's first socialisation and the emotional stabilisation of adults. They explain his picture of the modern conjugal family. A full answer states those two functions clearly and then notes that later work has questioned their gender and their claim to be the only forms that can do this work.

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Q2(a) · 20 marks

Sociology is the product of European enlightenment and renaissance. Critically examine this statement

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

The Renaissance and Enlightenment made society an object of this-worldly reason.

The French and industrial revolutions supplied the classic problems of order and change.

Comte, Marx, Durkheim and Weber institutionalised European sociology.

The statement is only a half-truth if it ignores Ibn Khaldun and other older social thought.

Colonial encounter and later Southern Theory show that Europe was not the only workshop.

Indian sociology had to name caste and colonial capitalism beyond the Enlightenment citizen.

Introduction

The statement says that sociology is a child of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment. There is a strong historical case for this. The Renaissance recovered a this-worldly interest in human affairs. The Enlightenment asked that society be explained by reason and evidence rather than by sacred tradition alone. The French and industrial revolutions then made order and change into urgent problems. A critical examination must grant this origin story and then show what it leaves out.

Body

What the statement gets right

Niccolo Machiavelli and later Renaissance humanists treated politics as a human craft. Enlightenment writers such as Montesquieu compared governments and climates. The Scottish moralists, including Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, wrote about commercial society, sympathy and the division of labour. Auguste Comte, after Saint-Simon, named sociology and offered a law of three stages from theology to positive science. Karl Marx wrote in the wake of industrial capitalism and Hegelian philosophy. Emile Durkheim's science of social facts, and Max Weber's study of rationalisation, are unthinkable without a European crisis of church, market and state. R. W. Connell and others still accept that the canonical textbooks were written in this setting. The dual revolution that Eric Hobsbawm described, political in France and industrial in Britain, produced the classic questions of class, bureaucracy, anomie and the city.

What a critical examination must add

The Renaissance and Enlightenment were not the only sources of social thought. Ibn Khaldun had already written a science of social organisation and group feeling. Indian, Chinese and Islamic traditions reasoned about kingship, caste, law and ethics. The European canon itself was formed in a colonial world. Marx wrote on India and Ireland. Weber compared world religions. Anthropology grew from the imperial encounter. To say that sociology is only a European product is to confuse the institutional birth of a university discipline with the whole history of thinking about society.

Feminist and postcolonial critics, including Raewyn Connell's Southern Theory, argue that the metropolitan canon treated the colony as data and Europe as theory. Indian sociology after G.

S. Ghurye, D. P. Mukerji and A. R. Desai had to study caste, village and colonial capitalism, which the Enlightenment pair of individual and citizen did not fully name. Religion did not simply die as Comte expected. The Enlightenment also had exclusions of women, the poor and the colonised.

A fair critical examination therefore holds two sentences together. The professional discipline called sociology was organised in Europe under the signs of reason, science and the modern state. Its problems, methods and later global practice cannot be reduced to that one origin. The statement is a useful half-truth.

What the examination answer should still grant

The syllabus still needs the European story in some detail. Saint-Simon's industrialism, Comte's hierarchy of the sciences, and the moral statistics of Quetelet prepared Durkheim's suicide tables. The Scottish Enlightenment's account of commercial society prepared Marx's and Weber's questions about markets. Renaissance humanism made the human city a legitimate object of writing. None of that is cancelled by pointing to Ibn Khaldun. What is cancelled is the boast that only Europe could think society. Indian university sociology, from Bombay and Lucknow, used the European toolkit on caste, village, joint family and colonial class. D. P. Mukerji asked for a sociology that knew Indian tradition as a living process. That is how a critical examination ends: origin in Europe as an institution, continuation as a global craft that must name non-European structures.

Flow diagram

Renaissance humanism -> Enlightenment reason
Enlightenment reason -> Comte Marx Durkheim Weber
Colonial encounter -> Comte Marx Durkheim Weber
Non-European social thought -> Sociology as global practice

Conclusion

Sociology as a named academic discipline did grow from European Renaissance and Enlightenment currents, and from the shock of industrial and political revolution. A critical view adds non-European social thought, the colonial context of the canon, and later work that decentres Europe. The statement should be examined, not swallowed whole.

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Q2(b) · 20 marks

Do you think 'objectivity' is an over-hyped idea in sociological research? Discuss the merits and demerits of non-positivist methods

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology as Science

Revision summary

Objectivity as a view from nowhere is over-hyped in sociology.

Objectivity as disciplined honesty toward evidence remains necessary.

Durkheim's thing-like social facts and **Weber's** value-neutrality mark the classical debate.

Non-positivist methods recover meaning, context and everyday methods.

Their demerits are reliability, small cases and the interpreter's power.

Standpoint theory and the double hermeneutic explain why purity fails and why method still matters.

Introduction

Objectivity in sociological research is the effort to let evidence constrain the researcher's wishes. **Emile Durkheim** wanted social facts treated as things. **Max Weber** asked for value-neutrality in the handling of data, while admitting that values shape the choice of problem. Some later writers treat objectivity as a myth and praise only interpretation. The question asks whether objectivity is over-praised, and what non-positivist methods can and cannot do.

Body

Is objectivity over-hyped?

A strong positivist version says that the sociologist can stand outside society like a chemist outside a compound. That version is over-hyped. Alvin Gouldner attacked the myth of a value-free sociology. Feminist standpoint theorists such as Dorothy Smith and Sandra Harding showed that a view from nowhere often hides a view from a powerful somewhere. Anthony Giddens's double hermeneutic states that people already interpret the world that sociologists study. If objectivity means the erasure of the knower, the idea is inflated.

A weaker and more useful version remains necessary. **Weber's** demand was honesty about evidence, ideal types that can be checked, and a refusal to smuggle a political programme into a table. Karl Popper's stress on criticism and falsification, even if born in a different debate, supports this modest sense. Without some such discipline, ethnography becomes autobiography and theory becomes sermon. Objectivity is over-hyped as purity. It is not over-hyped as a working ethic of accountability to data and to alternative explanations.

Merits of non-positivist methods

Non-positivist methods include Weberian understanding, phenomenology after Alfred Schutz, symbolic interactionism after G. H. Mead and Herbert Blumer, ethnomethodology after Harold Garfinkel, and much of ethnography and qualitative interviewing. Their merit is access to meaning, motive and the taken-for-granted. They can show how a census category is used in daily life. They suit the study of stigma, ritual, caste honour and social movements. Clifford Geertz's thick description is a famous statement of this strength. In India, Srinivas's field view

of the village could not have been replaced by rates alone.

Demerits of non-positivist methods

The same methods struggle with reliability, comparison and public check. Two observers may tell different stories of one neighbourhood. Samples are often small. The researcher's class, caste and gender can silently write the account. Howard Becker noted that we tend to take sides. Power-laden interviews can produce pleasing narratives. Policy still needs counts of poverty, crime and enrolment that non-positivist work does not replace. The demerit is not that meaning is fake. The demerit is that meaning is hard to discipline.

A balanced view therefore uses non-positivist methods for what they do well, and keeps a modest objectivity as the habit of showing the path from evidence to claim.

How to use both without hype

In a concrete research programme the two sides can sit in sequence. A census or NFHS table shows that women's work is under-counted. Interviews then show how a household names a woman as "not working" while she runs a farm and a shop. The table is a check on the anecdote. The interview is a check on the official category. Objectivity here means showing both steps, not claiming that the sociologist has no caste or gender. Non-positivist work that refuses any check becomes a sermon. Positivist work that refuses meaning becomes an administration of other people's lives. The over-hype is the claim of purity. The remaining task is a public trail from field to claim that another scholar can contest.

Flow diagram

Objectivity -> God-eye myth over-hyped

Objectivity -> Accountability to evidence

Non-positivist methods -> Meaning context

Non-positivist methods -> Reliability and generalisation problems

Conclusion

Objectivity is over-hyped when it pretends that the sociologist has no standpoint. It is still needed as honesty toward evidence. Non-positivist methods are strong on meaning and weak on easy generalisation. Good research holds both the critique of purity and the ethic of checkable claims.

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Q2(c) · 10 marks

What is social mobility? Critically examine the classification of 'closed' and 'open' models of social stratification

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Stratification and Mobility: Concepts

Revision summary

Social mobility is movement across strata in one life or across generations.

Sorokin and later class analysis distinguished types of mobility, including structural change.

A closed model centres ascription, endogamy and birth rank.

An open model centres achievement, education and market class.

Real societies mix the two, as Indian caste-class studies and Western elite closure both show.

The classification is a useful type, not a complete map.

Introduction

Social mobility is the movement of persons, families or groups from one position in a stratification system to another. The movement may be upward or downward, and it may occur in one life or across generations. Pitirim Sorokin made mobility a central topic. Closed and open models are classroom types of how such movement is supposed to work. A critical examination treats them as models, not as full photographs of any living society.

Body

What social mobility covers

Vertical mobility is a change of rank. Horizontal mobility is a change of position without a clear rise or fall, such as a move from one job to another of similar standing. Inter-generational mobility compares parent and child. Intra-generational mobility tracks one career. Structural mobility occurs when the whole occupational system expands, as when industry creates new white-collar posts. Exchange mobility is a zero-sum swap of winners and losers. **Karl Marx** expected class polarisation more than a large middle rise. Later class analysis, including John Goldthorpe's work, measured actual rates. In India, the story of mobility is tied to education, reservation, migration and the informal sector.

Closed and open models

A closed model of stratification treats position as ascribed by birth. The ideal type is a caste or estate order with endogamy, ritual barriers and little legitimate individual climb. A slave order is even more closed. An open model treats position as achieved through talent, education and market success. The ideal type is a class or meritocratic order in which the child need not repeat the parent. **Weber's** class, status and party already warn that honour can stay closed while markets look open.

The classification is useful as a first cut. It is weak if it is used as a simple contrast of "traditional India" and "modern West". M. N. Srinivas's Sanskritisation is group mobility inside a supposedly closed caste order. Dominant castes hold land and votes. Andre Beteille showed that class, caste and power do not always coincide. Industrial Britain had class closure through property and elite schools even while it preached openness. Reservation policy in India is an attempt to force openness in public employment against ascriptive closure. Marriage markets still close many paths that classrooms open.

A critical view therefore says that closed and open are poles on a scale. Every complex society mixes ascription and achievement. The ideology of an open society can hide inherited cultural capital, as Pierre Bourdieu argued. The ideology of a closed society can hide money and local power. Mobility studies must measure rates, barriers and group strategies rather than rest on the two labels alone.

Flow diagram

Social mobility -> Vertical and horizontal

Social mobility -> Inter and intra generational

Closed model -> Ascription caste estate

Open model -> Achievement class market

Real mix -> Closed model

Real mix -> Open model

Conclusion

Social mobility is movement across ranked positions in one life or across generations. Closed and open models name ascription and achievement as poles. They help teaching, but living systems mix caste honour, class property and state policy. Criticism begins when the labels are mistaken for whole societies.

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Q3(a) · 20 marks

How do you view and assess the increasing trend of digital ethnography and the use of visual culture in sociological research?

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Digital ethnography follows social life on platforms with ethnographic patience.

Visual culture treats images and video as data and as a mode of presentation.

The trend matches a world where kinship, politics and markets are already mediated.

Promises include access to networks, movements and everyday visual politics.

Problems include consent, platform sampling, stereotype and loss of co-presence.

The methods are necessary if they stay disciplined, and weak if they become screenshot dumps.

Introduction

Digital ethnography studies social life as it is lived on platforms, messaging groups and online worlds, using the same patience that older ethnography used in a village or a factory. Visual culture in research means treating photographs, video, memes and screens as data, and sometimes as a way of showing results. Both trends have grown quickly. A sociological assessment must weigh what they add to knowledge and what they risk.

Body

What the trend is

Classic ethnography, after Malinowski, asked the researcher to live among people and to learn their point of view. Digital ethnography, in the work of scholars such as Daniel Miller and later internet ethnographers, follows people into WhatsApp families, gaming worlds, caste groups and political feeds. It may be purely online, or it may mix online and offline, which many Indian researchers now do because kinship and politics already mix the two. Visual sociology, from earlier uses of the camera in fieldwork to today's study of selfies and political video, treats the image as a social fact, not as a decoration. John Berger's writing on seeing, and later work on media events, sit in the background. The trend is increasing because so much interaction is now mediated.

Promises

- **The methods open fields that a village stay cannot reach:** diaspora networks, hidden fandoms, troll farms, and the everyday visual politics of rumour. They can record interaction that would vanish in a notebook. They suit the study of social movements that organise on Telegram or Instagram. They can democratise who is seen, if local people hold the camera. For Indian sociology, digital caste publics, online marriage markets and campaign videos are now ordinary objects. Mixed with older fieldwork, they give a fuller map of how honour, class and the state are performed.

Problems and a view

Ethics are sharp. A public tweet is not always meant for a thesis. Consent, lurking, and the use of images of minors or of the dead raise duties that survey ethics codes only partly cover.

Platforms already watch the watcher. Algorithms sample the world for the researcher. Visual material can aestheticise poverty or freeze a stereotype. Clifford Geertz's warning about interpretation still applies: a meme is not self-explanatory. Co-presence, smell, fear and the long wait of fieldwork can be lost if the researcher never leaves the screen. Digital methods can also over-represent the connected urban user and miss those who live at the edge of the network.

My assessment is that digital ethnography and visual culture are now necessary tools, not toys. They should remain ethnographic in discipline: long engagement, contrary cases, and an account of how the data were produced. They should not replace face-to-face work where bodies, land and offices still organise power. Used with those limits, they strengthen sociological research. Used as a dump of screenshots, they weaken it.

How I would use them in a study

Suppose the object is a caste association's marriage campaign, or a farmers' protest. The visual record of posters, live streams and forwarded clips is part of how honour and grievance are made. A researcher should log how those images circulate, who edits them, and which audiences they never reach. Then the same researcher should sit in the office, the langar or the court queue. Digital ethnography without that second step will overstate the loudest users. Visual culture without theory will treat a photograph as proof rather than as a social performance. The increasing trend is welcome as an expansion of the field. It is unwelcome as a fashion that forgets ethics, time and the offline organisation of power.

Flow diagram

Digital ethnography -> Platforms groups feeds
Visual culture -> Photos video memes
Digital ethnography -> Access new fields
Visual culture -> Access new fields
Digital ethnography -> Ethics algorithms representation
Visual culture -> Ethics algorithms representation

Conclusion

Digital ethnography and visual culture extend fieldwork into mediated life and treat images as social data. They add access and new objects. They bring ethical, algorithmic and representational risks. The sound view is to use them with the old ethnographic duties of consent, context and time.

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Q3(b) · 20 marks

Describe the main idea of Max Weber's book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* as a critique of Marxism

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx

Revision summary

Weber distinguished modern rational capitalism from ordinary greed.

Some Protestant ethics, especially Calvinist worldly asceticism, formed a methodical conduct of life.

The idea of calling made work a duty and success a possible sign of election.

Elective affinity, not a single cause, links this ethic to the capitalist spirit.

The argument criticises a Marxism that treats religion as mere reflection of the base.

Weber still accepted material interests; he denied that they exhaust explanation.

Introduction

Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* asks why modern rational capitalism, with its methodical pursuit of profit and reinvestment, grew with particular force in parts of the Protestant West. His main idea is that a religious ethic, especially Calvinist this-worldly asceticism, formed a habit of disciplined work, saving and calling that fitted the capitalist spirit. The book is a critique of a one-sided Marxist claim that ideas are only a reflection of the economic base.

Body

The main idea of the book

- **Weber distinguished the adventurous greed of all ages from the spirit of modern capitalism:** a sober, continuous, rational organisation of labour and capital. He found in some Protestant teachings a worldly calling. Martin Luther's idea of vocation treated ordinary work as a duty before God. John Calvin's doctrine of predestination, as believers lived it, produced anxiety about salvation. Methodical labour, frugality and success in a calling became signs that one might be among the elect. Inner-worldly asceticism turned away from monastery flight and toward disciplined conduct in business. Benjamin Franklin's maxims about time and credit illustrated the later, more secular spirit. Once capitalism stood on its own feet, **Weber** said, the religious root could wither, leaving a steel-hard housing of work without belief.

This is an argument of elective affinity, not a simple claim that Calvin invented factories.

Weber used historical comparison with other world religions in later essays to ask why a similar spirit did not become dominant elsewhere in the same way.

As a critique of Marxism

Karl Marx treated religion as part of the superstructure and, in a famous phrase, as the opium of the people. Historical materialism, in its strong form, explains the rise of capitalism from forces and relations of production, primitive accumulation and class. **Weber** did not deny class, markets or technology. He denied that they were a complete explanation of the capitalist ethos. Ideas, for him, can switch the tracks on which interests run. The Protestant ethic thesis is therefore a critique of reduction: religious meanings helped form a type of economic actor. Friedrich Engels had already allowed some reaction of the superstructure on the base. **Weber** made that reaction historically specific and empirically argued.

The critique is limited in ways a fair answer must note. Historians have debated whether the chronology of Puritanism and capitalist growth is as neat as the essay suggests. R. H. Tawney and later writers gave more weight to politics and class. Marxist replies say that Protestantism itself needs a material explanation. Weber also never claimed that only ideas matter. In *Economy and Society* he kept class, status and party together. The book's force as critique is the demonstration that a cultural ethic can be a causal ingredient in economic history, which a base-only Marxism cannot fully absorb.

Flow diagram

Calvinist asceticism -> Calling work frugality
Calling work frugality -> Spirit of capitalism
Spirit of capitalism -> Rational enterprise
Marxist base-first -> Spirit of capitalism
Weber elective affinity -> Spirit of capitalism

Conclusion

The Protestant ethic thesis says that a disciplined religious conduct of life had an elective affinity with the spirit of rational capitalism. As a critique of Marxism it restores ideas and meaning to the explanation of economic action. Weber still leaves room for material interests. The book attacks one-sided materialism, not the study of class itself.

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Q3(c) · 10 marks

Critically explain the salient features of 'alienation' as propounded by Karl Marx

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx

Revision summary

Marx's 1844 manuscripts describe alienation as a social relation of wage labour.

The worker is estranged from the product that capital owns.

The process of work is external, forced and controlled.

Species-being as creative production is reduced to survival.

People are divided from one another by class and competition.

Critique should not dilute the concept into mood, but may add gender, caste and informal labour.

Introduction

Karl Marx's idea of alienation, set out most clearly in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, describes what happens to the worker under private property and wage labour. The worker becomes a stranger to the product, to the act of work, to human species powers, and to other people. Alienation is a social relation, not a passing sadness. A critical explanation must state these features and then note what later debate has added or questioned.

Body

Salient features

First, the worker is alienated from the product. The object that labour creates belongs to the capitalist. The more the worker produces, the richer the alien world of commodities becomes. Second, the worker is alienated from the process of work. Labour is external, forced and controlled. It is not a free expression of skill. The working day is sold, and the method of work is dictated. Third, the worker is alienated from species-being. **Marx**, drawing on Ludwig Feuerbach and then turning him around, held that human beings are distinguished by conscious, creative production. Under capitalism this becomes a means of mere survival. Fourth, people are alienated from one another. Class antagonism and competition replace cooperative production. The capitalist is also caught in the logic of capital, though the worker bears the heavier loss.

- **These features rest on a definite structure:** labour power is a commodity, surplus value is extracted, and the means of production are privately owned. Alienation is therefore not a complaint about machines as such. A craft worker under a master could be unfree, but **Marx's** type is the wage worker in a system of commodity production. In later writings the language of exploitation, surplus value and commodity fetishism carries much of the same insight in a more economic form. Commodity fetishism says that relations between people appear as relations between things.

Critical explanation

Critics say the 1844 texts are philosophical and that the later **Marx** dropped the word. Louis Althusser drew a sharp line between early and late **Marx**. Others, including Istvan Meszaros and many labour sociologists, see continuity. Harry Braverman's deskilling thesis extended

alienation into twentieth-century scientific management. Feminist writers argued that unpaid domestic labour is also alienated and that Marx's worker is silently male. In India, bonded labour, caste-based occupation and informal work complicate a factory-only picture. A. R. Desai and later Marxist studies of Indian capitalism still find the core: people do not control the conditions of their labour.

The idea can be stretched into a vague cultural mood. That stretch is a weakness. The strength of the concept is its link to property and wage labour. Automation and gig contracts change the form. They do not automatically restore the worker's control over product and process.

Flow diagram

Wage labour and private property -> Alienation
Alienation -> From product
Alienation -> From process
Alienation -> From species-being
Alienation -> From other people

Conclusion

- **Marx's alienation has four salient features:** estrangement from product, from work, from species powers and from other people. They follow from wage labour and private property. A critical view keeps that structure, notes later debates on gender and informal work, and refuses to reduce the idea to a private feeling.

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Q4(a) · 20 marks

What do you understand by 'mixed method'? Discuss its strengths and limitations in social research

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology as Science

Revision summary

Mixed method is a designed combination of numerical and interpretive strategies.

Sequence, weight and integration are part of the design, not an afterthought.

Strengths include triangulation, complementarity and better measurement.

Limitations include cost, dual skill, sampling clash and failed integration.

Pragmatism defends mixing; purists on both sides resist it.

Indian survey-plus-fieldwork studies show the promise and the ritual risk.

Introduction

A mixed method design uses both numerical measurement and interpretive inquiry in a planned way in one study. It is not a casual extra interview after a survey, and it is not a few percentages dropped into an ethnography. Alan Bryman, John Creswell and others have treated mixing as a research strategy with its own choices of sequence, weight and integration. The question asks for that meaning, then for strengths and limits in social research.

Body

What mixed method means

Quantitative work counts, scales and tests associations. Qualitative work interprets meanings, cases and processes. Mixing may be sequential: a survey to map a field, then interviews to explain a surprising cell in a table. It may be concurrent: ethnography and a small census in the same neighbourhood. It may give equal weight or let one method lead. The point is integration at the level of question, sampling and inference. Durkheim's Suicide was not mixed in the modern sense, but later community studies often were. The Indian NFHS can be followed by village fieldwork. A study of gig work may combine platform data, time-use numbers and worker narratives.

Philosophically, mixing sits between positivist and interpretive camps. Pragmatist writers argue that the research problem, not a school loyalty, should choose tools. Purists on both sides dislike this.

Strengths

- **The first strength is triangulation:** one method can check another. A claim about women's labour force participation is stronger if PLFS tables and factory ethnography point the same way. The second is complementarity. Numbers show extent. Stories show mechanism. Why a scheme fails in one block can be heard in interviews after a large sample has shown that it fails. The third is development of instruments. Qualitative work can improve questionnaire wording on caste, stigma or unpaid care, which official categories often mishandle. Mixed designs also help in evaluation research for the state, where both coverage and lived experience are required.

Limitations

Mixing is costly in time, money and skill. One person may not be good at both regression and long fieldwork. Teams can split into two unjoined reports. That is the most common failure: data are collected twice and never truly integrated. Paradigmatic tension remains. A p-value and a life history do not automatically answer the same question. Sampling logics clash: probability samples versus theoretical cases. Ethics multiply, because images, interviews and large data sets sit under different risks. In Indian official research, mixed method can become a ritual chapter of "case studies" that do not disturb the tables.

Mixed method is therefore powerful when the design states what each strand is for. It is weak as a slogan that more methods mean more truth.

A worked sociological use

Take a study of school dropout among adolescent girls. A quantitative strand can estimate the association with household wealth, distance to school and caste category, using a probability sample. A qualitative strand can then follow a smaller set of households through the year, watching harvest labour, early marriage talk and the school's hidden curriculum. Integration happens when a cell in the table, such as high dropout among a particular OBC group in one district, is explained by a mechanism heard in the field, and when that mechanism is then checked against other districts. If the interviews only decorate the report, the design was mixed in name. If the survey categories cannot be revised after fieldwork, the mixing was one-way. Strength and limitation both appear in that test of integration.

Flow diagram

Mixed method -> Quantitative mapping
Mixed method -> Qualitative meaning
Quantitative mapping -> Integrated inference
Qualitative meaning -> Integrated inference
Unjoined reports -> Mixed method

Conclusion

Mixed method is a planned joining of quantitative and qualitative strategies. Its strengths are check, complementarity and better instruments. Its limits are cost, skill and the frequent failure to integrate. In social research it should be chosen for a clear inferential job, not as decoration.

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Q4(b) · 20 marks

Define the concept of 'gig' economy and discuss its impact on the labour market and workers' social security net

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx

Revision summary

The gig economy pays for short tasks, often through digital platforms.

Firms often classify workers as independent partners rather than employees.

Labour-market effects include easy entry, risk transfer, wage pressure and algorithmic control.

Social security designed for regular employment does not automatically cover gig workers.

India's Social Security Code named gig and platform workers, but benefits remain limited.

Worker protests show that collective action is still possible outside the old factory union.

Introduction

The gig economy is a labour market in which people are paid for short tasks or gigs rather than for a stable job with one employer. Digital platforms now organise much of this work in transport, delivery, domestic service and click-work. Firms present the arrangement as flexibility and entrepreneurship. Sociology treats it as a form of labour control. The impact falls on the structure of the labour market and on the social security net that once assumed a long-term employer.

Body

Defining the gig economy

- **A gig is a discrete task:** a ride, a delivery, a design job, a micro-task online. Platforms such as ride-hailing and food-delivery apps match supply and demand, set rules, and often set prices through algorithms. Guy Standing's idea of the precariat, and earlier work on informalisation by Jan Breman and the ILO, help place gig work in a longer history. In India most workers were already informal. The new element is platform mediation, rating systems, and the legal claim that the worker is an independent partner, not an employee. The Code on Social Security, 2020, named gig and platform workers as a category, which shows that the state now sees the form, even if protection is still thin.

Impact on the labour market

Gig platforms expand a flexible workforce that can be switched on and off. They compete with regular service jobs and can push wages and hours in those sectors. They create easy entry for migrants and students, which looks like opportunity. They also transfer risk to the worker: idle time, fuel, vehicle repair, accident and demand slumps. Classification struggles are central. If the worker is not an employee, labour law on minimum wage, union recognition and unfair dismissal is hard to apply. Algorithmic management replaces the visible supervisor. Ratings become a private court. Women in gig domestic work and beauty work face both platform control and household stigma. The labour market becomes more like a spot market and less like an internal labour market with careers.

Impact on the social security net

The standard net of Employees' Provident Fund, ESI, gratuity, paid leave and employer-backed accident cover was built for recognised employment. Gig workers typically

stand outside it. Health shocks, old age and downtime are privatised. Some platforms offer commercial insurance as a product, which is not the same as a right. Trade unions and new worker associations have tried to organise anyway, as in strikes by app-based transport workers in Indian cities. The NCEUS had already mapped a huge unorganised sector. Gig work adds a digitally visible layer to that old insecurity. Without portable benefits tied to the person rather than to a single employer, the security net will not catch this labour.

The sociological impact is therefore a sharpening of precarity, a blurring of the employee category, and a challenge to welfare systems designed for the factory and the office.

Labour market and security together

A delivery worker may have more daily choice of hours than a factory hand, and still have less monthly security. Idle time is unpaid. Accident risk sits on the worker. The platform can change incentive slabs overnight. Trade unions built for a factory gate find it hard to meet a workforce that never shares one canteen. New associations still try, which shows that the gig form does not abolish collective action. For Indian policy the implication is portable social security, clearer employment tests, and data rights over ratings. Without those, the gig economy will keep expanding the informal sector in a digitally visible way rather than shrinking it.

Flow diagram

Gig and platform work -> Spot labour market
Gig and platform work -> Contractor classification
Gig and platform work -> Thin social security
Algorithmic control -> Gig and platform work

Conclusion

The gig economy is task-based, often platform-mediated work sold as flexibility. It informalises and fragments the labour market and leaves workers outside the old employer-based security net. Law has begun to name the category. Protection and bargaining have not yet caught up.

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Q4(c) · 10 marks

Critically assess the impact of technological advancement and automation on the nature of work and employment

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Marx treated machinery as part of the struggle over skill and the working day.

Braverman described deskilling and the split between conception and execution.

Automation can raise safety and productivity while polarising employment.

Surveillance and algorithmic allocation change the nature of remaining jobs.

Job creation in new sectors coexists with displacement in routine work.

Outcomes depend on ownership, policy and bargaining, not on technology alone.

Introduction

Technological advancement and automation change how work is done and who is employed to do it. Machines, software and now algorithms take over tasks that human labour once performed. **Karl Marx** already saw machinery as a weapon in the struggle over the working day and skill. A critical assessment must look at the nature of work, not only at a headline count of jobs lost or created.

Body

Changes in the nature of work

Automation can raise productivity and cut dangerous toil. It can also strip skill from the craft worker and place control with engineers and managers. Harry Braverman argued that scientific management and machinery deepen the separation of conception from execution. The worker becomes a watcher of a process designed elsewhere. Digital automation extends this to offices, warehouses and platforms. Call-centre scripts, barcode picking and ride-allocation are automated labour processes. Shoshana Zuboff and later writers on surveillance describe monitoring of keystrokes and location. The nature of employment shifts toward polarisation in many economies: some high-skill design jobs, many low-skill service jobs, and a squeezed middle of routine clerical and factory posts. Joseph Schumpeter's creative destruction captures the churn of firms and occupations. It does not by itself tell us who bears the destruction.

Employment and a critical view

Optimistic accounts say that new technology creates new sectors, as the green revolution, IT services and logistics did in India. NASSCOM-era software work and platform delivery both exist because of technical change. Pessimistic accounts stress displacement of textile workers, clerical staff and, in the future, drivers. Both can be true in different segments. The critical sociological point is distribution. Those who own the machines and the data capture surplus. Those whose skills are coded into software lose bargaining power. Women in routine office work and in some manufacturing lines are often more exposed to replacement. Informal workers may not be replaced by robots so much as tied to them, as in warehouses that combine cheap labour with scanning systems.

Indian public debate on Industry 4.0, electric vehicles and artificial intelligence often repeats a skill-gap story. Skill matters. Without social security, unions and industrial policy, reskilling talk can become a way of blaming the displaced. Marx's machinery chapter still helps: technology is not a neutral spirit. It is introduced under definite property relations. Automation can shorten necessary labour. Under present relations it often lengthens control and fragments employment into contracts and gigs.

A critical assessment therefore grants gains in productivity and safety, and then asks about deskilling, surveillance, inequality and the missing link to decent employment.

Employment quality, not only employment counts

A warehouse that adds scanning and robots may keep a large staff on short contracts. The job count looks stable while the nature of work becomes paced by software. An IT firm may hire fewer routine testers and more prompt engineers. The net national employment effect can hide a sharp local loss. Public policy that only counts vacancies will miss this. Vocational training helps only if there are employers who hire on decent terms. Automation under public ownership and strong unions has a different sociology from automation in a weakly regulated platform firm. The critical task is to name those relations each time the machine is praised.

Flow diagram

Automation and digital control -> Labour process
Labour process -> Deskilling and polarisation
Labour process -> Surveillance
Automation and digital control -> Job shift and displacement
Property and policy -> Job shift and displacement

Conclusion

Technological advancement and automation reshape skill, control and the mix of jobs. They can reduce drudgery and they can deepen precarity. The outcome depends on who owns the technology and how the state and labour can bargain. A critical view studies those relations, not the machine in isolation.

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Q5(a) · 10 marks

Describe various characteristics of a 'social fact'. How is the rate of suicide a social fact according to Durkheim?

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx

Revision summary

Social facts are ways of acting that are external, constraining and general.

Durkheim asked that they be treated as things, not as inner opinions.

A single suicide is a personal event; the suicide rate is a group property.

Rates vary with religion, family and crisis through integration and regulation.

Egoistic, altruistic, anomic and fatalistic types classify those social conditions.

The method explains rates by other social facts, not by biography alone.

Introduction

Emile Durkheim defined a social fact as a way of acting, thinking or feeling that exists outside the individual and that can exert constraint. In *The Rules of Sociological Method* he asked students to treat social facts as things. In *Suicide* he used the suicide rate as a clear example. The rate is a property of a group, not a private mood.

Body

Characteristics of a social fact

A social fact is **external**. Language, law, currency and religious rites are already there when a person is born. The individual finds them, and does not invent them alone. A social fact is **constraining**. It can be felt as duty, shame, punishment or simple inability to do otherwise. One cannot drive on the wrong side of the road by private wish. A social fact is **general** in a group, yet it is not the same as a mere average of individual psychologies. It has a collective reality. **Durkheim** distinguished social facts from organic facts and from individual representations. Later readers such as Steven Lukes have noted that constraint can be moral as well as legal.

The suicide rate as a social fact

A particular suicide looks like the most private of acts. **Durkheim** did not deny grief or illness in the person. He showed that the **rate** of suicide varies in a stable way with religion, family status, war and economic crisis. Protestant communities, in his data, showed higher rates than Catholic ones. Married people with children showed lower rates than the unmarried. Rates rose in some crises and fell in others according to the degree of integration and regulation. These regularities cannot be read off one biography. The rate is therefore a social fact: it is exterior to any one victim, it constrains the group's chances, and it is general as a collective tendency.

- **He named types:** egoistic suicide when integration is weak, altruistic when the self is absorbed in the group, anomic when regulation fails, and fatalistic when regulation is excessive. The classification is debated. The methodological point of the question stands. Psychology may explain a case. Sociology explains a rate by other social facts, such as integration and regulation, not by weather or insanity as sufficient causes.

The Indian official suicide data of NCRB, used carefully, still invite the same Durkheimian question: which groups, regions and crises show stable differences that point beyond private despair.

Flow diagram

Social fact -> Exterior
Social fact -> Constraint
Social fact -> Generality
Suicide rate -> Social fact
Integration and regulation -> Suicide rate

Conclusion

A social fact is external, constraining and general. The suicide rate is such a fact because it belongs to the group and varies with social organisation. **Durkheim's** study of suicide is the classic demonstration of this rule.

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Q5(b) · 10 marks

Explain G.H. Mead's idea of development of 'self' through the 'generalised other'.

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Mead's self arises in interaction through language and role-taking.

The Me is internalised attitudes of others; the I is the spontaneous reply.

Play takes one role at a time; the game takes an organised set of roles.

The generalised other is the community's organised attitude in the person.

Moral self-control depends on seeing one's act from that group standpoint.

Multiple communities can give a person more than one generalised other.

Introduction

George Herbert Mead argued that the self is not a thing one is born with. It arises in social interaction through language and role-taking. The child first meets significant others, then learns to take the attitude of a whole community. That organised attitude is the generalised other. Through it the person can become an object to herself and can act with a social self.

Body

Self as process: I, Me, play and game

Mead distinguished the **I** and the **Me**. The Me is the organised set of attitudes of others that one has taken in. The I is the spontaneous response to that Me. The self is the conversation of the two. Charles Horton Cooley's looking-glass self sits nearby: we imagine how we appear to others. Mead made the mechanism more precise through gestures and significant symbols, especially language.

In the **play stage the child takes the role of particular others, one at a time: parent, teacher, hero**. In the **game** stage the child must take several roles at once, as in a team sport where each position answers the others. Only then does a fully social self become possible. Herbert Blumer later named this family of ideas symbolic interactionism.

The generalised other

The generalised other is the community's organised attitudes as they live in the person. It is not one neighbour. It is the rules of the game, the law, the school, the caste public, or the nation as the child comes to feel them. When a person asks "what would people say?", the generalised other is at work. Moral responsibility, for Mead, depends on this ability to take the group's standpoint toward one's own act. The self is therefore developed from the outside in, through communication, and then becomes a source of inner control.

Indian socialisation studies can use this idea without copying Chicago. A child learns the Me of family honour, school discipline and, later, a professional code. Conflict among several generalised others, such as village caste and city workplace, is a Meadian problem of modern selfhood. Erving Goffman's later dramaturgy shows performance; Mead remains the account of how the self is formed so that performance is possible.

Flow diagram

Significant others -> Play stage

Play stage -> Game stage

Game stage -> Generalised other

Generalised other -> Me

Me -> I responds responds

I responds -> Self as process

Conclusion

Mead's self develops through role-taking, from particular others in play to the organised community in the game. The generalised other is that community attitude internalised. The person becomes a self by learning to look at herself as the group looks at her.

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Q5(c) · 10 marks

Describe the differing principles of work organization in feudal and capitalist societies.

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Works and Economic Life

Revision summary

Feudal work is tied to land, lord and custom rather than to a free labour market.

Surplus is taken through extra-economic power and personal dependence.

Capitalist work sells labour power as a commodity under wage and clock.

The factory and office separate production from the household.

Marx's modes of production name this contrast of principles.

Unfree labour can survive inside capitalism without erasing the type.

Introduction

Work is organised under different principles in different historical types of society. In feudal society, labour is tied to land, lord and estate. In capitalist society, labour is sold as a commodity on a market and is coordinated by wage and clock. Karl Marx's contrast of feudal and capitalist modes of production is the clearest sociological statement of this difference.

Body

Feudal principles of work organisation

Feudal work, in the European type that Marx and later historians such as Marc Bloch described, rests on extra-economic power. The serf or dependent peasant is not a free seller of labour power. Obligation to the lord, customary dues, and rights in the manor organise production. The household and the village community do much of the coordination. Time follows season and custom more than the factory bell. Occupation is largely ascribed. Guilds in towns regulate craft by status and apprenticeship, not by an open labour market. Surplus is taken as rent in labour, kind or money, backed by political and military lordship. Max Weber also stressed traditional domination and the absence of a fully separated economic sphere.

Indian agrarian history is not a copy of European feudalism. Dharma Kumar, Irfan Habib and others have debated how far land control, caste occupation and jajmani resemble a feudal principle. The syllabus contrast still helps: work organised by personal dependence and customary status, rather than by a universal wage contract.

Capitalist principles of work organisation

Capitalist work organisation rests on formally free labour. The worker owns no means of production and must sell labour power. The capitalist owns the plant and the product. Coordination is through the wage, the contract and workplace discipline. The factory, and later the office, separate workplace from household. Time is measured. Harry Braverman described how scientific management deepens this control. Commodity production for the market, not use for the manor, becomes the aim. Competition forces reinvestment. Karl Polanyi showed that labour, land and money are treated as if they were ordinary commodities, which is a radical social change.

The two principles can mix. Plantations, colonial forced labour and today's informal tying of migrants to contractors show unfree elements inside capitalism. The typological difference

remains. Feudal organisation binds work to personal and landed hierarchy. Capitalist organisation binds work to propertyless wage labour and market discipline.

Flow diagram

Feudal work -> Personal dependence and manor

Capitalist work -> Free labour wage and factory

Feudal work -> Rent through extra-economic power

Capitalist work -> Surplus value through market

Conclusion

Feudal work is organised by customary dependence on land and lord. Capitalist work is organised by the wage contract, commodity production and workplace discipline. The contrast is of principle. Real histories often mix unfree ties with market labour.

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Q5(d) · 10 marks

How is 'power' different from 'authority'? Discuss various types of authorities as theorized by Max Weber.

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx

Revision summary

Power is the probability of carrying out one's will even against resistance.

Authority is power accepted as legitimate domination.

Traditional authority rests on custom and inherited position.

Charismatic authority rests on devotion to an exceptional leader.

Legal-rational authority rests on enacted rules and bureaucratic office.

The types mix in practice, as in parties that join charisma to legal office.

Introduction

Max Weber defined power as the chance that one actor in a social relationship will carry out his will even against resistance. Authority, or domination in his stricter vocabulary, is power that is accepted as legitimate. People obey not only from fear or interest but because they believe the command is justified. **Weber** then classified authority by the kind of belief that supports it.

Body

Power and authority

Power can rest on force, money, numbers or knowledge. A robber has power for a moment. A factory owner has power over wages. Steven Lukes later added hidden faces of power, such as the power to keep issues off the agenda. Authority is narrower. It is legitimate domination. The officer, the priest and the elected minister claim a right to be obeyed. **Weber's** sociology of domination is about that claim and the staff that makes it routine.

Three types of authority

Traditional authority rests on the sanctity of custom and of the person who inherits a throne, a caste rank or a household headship. Obedience is owed to the traditional ruler, not to a set of abstract rules. Patrimonial administration is a common form.

Charismatic authority rests on devotion to the exceptional quality of a leader, prophet or hero. The bond is personal. It is unstable. It must be routinised into office or tradition if it is to last, as **Weber** said of the problem of succession. **Gandhi's** moral leadership and later populist leaders show charisma in Indian politics, mixed with party organisation.

Legal-rational authority rests on belief in the legality of enacted rules and in the right of those appointed under the rules to issue commands. Bureaucracy is its typical staff: written files, hierarchy, specialist training and impersonality. The modern state and the large corporation aim at this type.

Weber knew that types mix. A civil servant may still use traditional patronage. A charismatic leader may capture a legal office. The distinction of power and authority still matters. Naked power without a legitimacy story is costly to maintain. Authority without any capacity to enforce can become empty ceremony.

Flow diagram

Power as chance to impose will -> Authority as legitimate domination

Authority as legitimate domination -> Traditional

Authority as legitimate domination -> Charismatic

Authority as legitimate domination -> Legal-rational

Conclusion

Power is the chance to realise one's will against resistance. Authority is legitimate domination. **Weber's** three types name the beliefs that make obedience seem rightful: custom, gift of grace, and enacted law. Real organisations combine them, but the classification remains the syllabus core.

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Q5(e) · 10 marks

Critically examine the roles of science and technology in social change. What is your opinion on their increasing trend in 'online' education and teaching?

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Social Change in Modern Society

Revision summary

Science and technology are major forces of social change and are also steered institutions.

Marx, Weber, Ogburn and Merton offer different angles on this role.

Online education can archive and extend lessons for connected students.

It exposes a digital divide of devices, space and home support.

Schooling is socialisation as well as content, which a screen only partly supplies.

The sound opinion is public digital infrastructure plus the school, not replacement by platforms.

Introduction

Science and technology change how societies produce, heal, fight, communicate and teach. They are among the strongest forces of modern social change. They are also social institutions, funded and steered by states, firms and professions. A critical examination must hold both sides. Online education is a current test of that double view.

Body

Roles in social change

- **William Ogburn spoke of cultural lag:** material technology moves first, and norms catch up later. Karl Marx treated the forces of production, including tools and knowledge, as a motor of change, always inside relations of property. Max Weber saw rationalisation and technical means as part of the disenchantment of the world. Science, as Robert Merton described it, has an ethos of organised scepticism, yet it also needs patronage. Green revolution seeds, vaccines, railways and mobile phones have remade Indian rural and urban life. They have also created new inequalities of skill, capital and risk, as in industrial disasters and in data extraction.

Technology does not determine a single path. The same digital network can support a public health campaign and a rumour mill. Langdon Winner and later STS scholars argue that artefacts can embody social choices. Social change through science is therefore real, powerful and politically directed.

Online education and teaching

Online education expanded sharply during COVID-19. It can reach a student who has a device and a signal, and it can archive lectures. SWAYAM and other Indian platforms show a public effort to widen access. That is a genuine gain for some working students and for remote coaching.

The same trend deepens the digital divide. ASER and other studies showed that many children lacked devices, quiet space or literate help at home. Teaching is not only content delivery. It is socialisation, peer group, discipline and the hidden curriculum that Bourdieu linked to cultural capital. A screen lesson can weaken those functions. Surveillance of students, commercial platforms and a market in recorded coaching can turn education into a commodity

more than a public good. Teachers' labour is also reorganised, sometimes without security.

My opinion is that online tools should remain a supplement and a public infrastructure, not a cheap replacement for the school as a social institution. Science and technology should widen equal access to knowledge. When they are left to private platforms and uneven households, they speed change for some and leave others further behind.

Flow diagram

Science and technology -> Social change
Science and technology -> Inequality and power
Online education -> Access for some
Online education -> Digital divide
Online education -> Weaker school socialisation

Conclusion

Science and technology drive social change as productive forces and as institutions of power. Online education can extend teaching, but it cannot replace the school's social functions for most children. A critical view supports public digital access and keeps face-to-face education at the centre.

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Q6(a) · 20 marks

Underline the role of social media in contemporary social movements and describe its challenges

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Politics and Society

Revision summary

Social movements use social media to gather people, tell a story and gain visibility.

Networked campaigns can be fast, visual and transnational.

Indian protests of the last decade show both organising power and rumour risk.

Challenges include misinformation, state and platform surveillance, and click-only support.

The digital divide and outrage algorithms shape who is heard.

Platforms are a resource, not a substitute for organisation and political opportunity.

Introduction

Social movements are organised efforts to promote or resist social change. They need communication, numbers, symbols and a sense of we. Social media now supply much of that infrastructure. Hashtags, videos and messaging groups can summon a crowd faster than a printed pamphlet. They also create new weaknesses. The role and the challenges must be stated together.

Body

Role in contemporary movements

Resource mobilisation theory, associated with Mayer Zald and others, already treated media as a resource. Digital platforms cheapen that resource. They help **mobilise** by spreading the time and place of protest. They help **frame** a grievance in a short visual story, which Snow and Benford's framing approach would recognise. They create **visibility** for groups that official television ignores. They link local struggles to a transnational audience, as environmental and feminist campaigns have done. Manuel Castells wrote of networked social movements in a digital age. In India, anti-corruption protests, student movements, farmers' protests and several identity campaigns have used WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and later Instagram and YouTube as organising tools. Diaspora money and attention can arrive through the same channels.

Social media also allow leaderless or loosely led forms. This can protect a movement from the arrest of a single head. It can also scatter strategy.

Challenges

Misinformation and rumour travel on the same rails as solidarity. Communal riots and panics have been linked to forwarded messages. States and opponents **surveil** and troll activists. Platform companies can mute a page or an account without a public trial. **Slacktivism**, a term for low-cost clicking, can substitute a like for organisation on the ground. Charles Tilly's older stress on WUNC, worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment, is harder to sustain if the crowd exists only as a metric. The digital divide excludes those without phones or literacy in the campaign language. Algorithms reward outrage, which can radicalise a frame and split a coalition. Donatella della Porta and others note that digital tools do not abolish the need for organisations, allies and a political opportunity structure.

The sociological lesson is that social media are a new ecology for movements, not a replacement for the street, the union, the court or the party. They amplify both voice and noise.

Role and challenge on the same platform

A farmers' sit-in can use live video to keep a national audience when television cameras leave. The same video stream can be clipped by opponents to invent a different story. A women's safety campaign can find allies in another state overnight. It can also attract organised abuse that silences speakers. Leadership becomes harder to locate, which protects some activists and leaves others without a mandate to negotiate. Older movements had newspapers and cadres. New movements have metrics. The role of social media is therefore infrastructural: it is how many contemporary movements think, recruit and remember. The challenge is that this infrastructure is privately owned, easily flooded, and unevenly available. A complete answer underlines both, with the street and the organisation still in the sentence.

Flow diagram

Social media -> Mobilisation and framing
Social media -> Visibility and transnational ties
Social media -> Challenges
Challenges -> Misinformation surveillance
Challenges -> Slacktivism and exclusion

Conclusion

Social media help contemporary movements to mobilise, frame and become visible across borders. They also bring rumour, surveillance, shallow participation and corporate control of the microphone. Movements that treat platforms as tools inside a wider organisation use them well. Movements that live only online fade quickly.

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Q6(b) · 20 marks

How does a multicultural society accommodate diversities of all kinds-ethnic, linguistic, and religious? Discuss its major challenges

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Religion and Society

Revision summary

Multiculturalism is public recognition of ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity.

Accommodation uses constitutions, federalism, language policy and civil mixing.

India is a principal case of pluralism inside a democratic republic.

Challenges include majoritarianism, communal violence and segregated everyday life.

Inequality that maps onto community turns culture into conflict.

Group rights can clash with gender justice and with a common civic status.

Introduction

A multicultural society is one in which several ethnic, linguistic and religious communities live under one political order and claim public recognition, not only private worship. Accommodation means more than tolerance in the home. It means rules, resources and everyday habits that let diversity persist without civil war. The major challenges are those that turn diversity into hierarchy or into separate warring publics.

Body

How accommodation works

Bhikhu Parekh and Will Kymlicka have argued that liberal states can grant group-differentiated rights, such as language in schools or personal law in limited fields, while keeping a common citizenship. India is a major laboratory. The Constitution recognises linguistic states, minority educational rights, and freedom of religion. Federalism and the Official Languages framework try to accommodate language. Personal laws and, in a different way, the debate over a uniform civil code show the tension between community and equal citizenship. Everyday multiculturalism, as studied in cities, includes markets, schools and neighbourhoods where people deal across difference without becoming one culture.

Accommodation also needs a civil society that is not only communal. Inter-caste and inter-faith associations, a relatively independent press, and public universities have been sites of mixing. T. K. Oommen and others have written on pluralism in India as a historical pattern, not a recent import of a Canadian slogan. The nation-state still supplies a civic umbrella: vote, law and public employment.

Major challenges

Majoritarianism treats the largest religious or linguistic group as the owner of the nation and others as guests. That logic weakens accommodation. Segregation in housing, schools and marriage can produce what some writers call living separately under one flag. Economic inequality, when it maps onto ethnicity or religion, turns cultural difference into class conflict. Communal violence and riots destroy trust that law alone cannot quickly rebuild. A weak common civic culture leaves only community bosses as spokesmen. Feminists have criticised multicultural accommodation when it shelters patriarchal personal laws. **Ambedkar's** warning

about caste shows that diversity is not only a bouquet of equal cultures. Some differences are structures of oppression.

Global migration has made Western states face similar tests of language, religion and race. The Indian case adds caste and a civilisation of many traditions inside one republic. Successful accommodation is therefore a daily political and educational labour, not a once-and-for-all settlement.

Flow diagram

Multicultural society -> Rights federalism language

Multicultural society -> Everyday mixing

Multicultural society -> Challenges

Challenges -> Majoritarianism

Challenges -> Segregation and inequality

Conclusion

Multicultural societies accommodate ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity through law, federal arrangements, rights and everyday mixing. The major challenges are majoritarianism, segregation, mapped inequality and a thin civic bond. Diversity survives when equal citizenship is strong enough to hold difference without ranking it.

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Q6(c) · 10 marks

Discuss the concept of animism and differentiate it from naturism

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Tylor's animism is belief in spiritual beings, rooted in ideas of the soul.

Dreams, trance and death were his clues for how the soul was inferred.

Muller's naturism treats gods as personified natural forces and names.

- **The two theories differ in starting point:** inner soul versus outer nature.

Both are intellectualist origin stories from nineteenth-century evolutionism.

Later sociology of religion adds ritual, the sacred and group life.

Introduction

Nineteenth-century anthropology asked how religion began. E. B. Tylor offered animism. Max Muller offered naturism, sometimes called nature-myth theory. Both are intellectualist origin stories. They remain on the syllabus as concepts to define and to separate, even though later anthropology has criticised them as complete explanations of religion.

Body

Animism

Tylor, in *Primitive Culture*, defined religion minimally as belief in spiritual beings. Animism is the doctrine that souls and spirits inhabit humans, animals, plants and objects. He thought early humans inferred a soul from dreams, trance and death. The soul of the dead could become a ghost. Spirits could fill the world. Polytheism and later monotheism were, in his evolutionary ladder, developments from this base. Animism is therefore a theory of **souls and agencies** inside and behind things. **Durkheim** later attacked the idea that religion is only a mistaken science of spirits, and placed totemism and the sacred at the centre instead. The word animism is still used in a looser way for many indigenous cosmologies, which is not exactly Tylor's evolutionary scheme.

Naturism and the difference

Max Muller, a scholar of the Vedas, argued that religion grew from the personification of natural phenomena: sun, dawn, storm and fire. Names of powers became gods through a disease of language, as metaphors hardened. Naturism locates the origin in **awe before nature's forces**, not in the dream-soul. Vedic hymns to Agni and Ushas were his illustrations.

The difference is clear. Animism starts from the idea of a soul that can exist apart from the body and then populates the world with spirits. Naturism starts from natural objects and events that are named and then worshipped as deities. One is a psychology of the double, the other is a mythology of sky and storm. Both are origin theories that treat early humans as puzzled philosophers. Bronislaw Malinowski, **Durkheim** and later anthropologists argued that religion is also ritual, group solidarity and practical magic, not only a theory of souls or of weather. A good answer defines, differentiates, and then refuses to let either term exhaust the sociology of religion.

Flow diagram

Tylor -> Animism souls and spirits

Max Muller -> Naturism forces of nature

Animism souls and spirits -> Origin theories of religion

Naturism forces of nature -> Origin theories of religion

Durkheim Malinowski -> Origin theories of religion

Conclusion

Animism, for Tylor, is belief in souls and spirits inferred from dreams and death. Naturism, for Muller, is the deification of natural forces through language and myth. They differ in starting point. Neither is a complete sociology of religion, but both remain standard conceptual tools.

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Q7(a) · 20 marks

Do modernization and secularization necessarily go together? Give your views

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Modernisation means industrial, bureaucratic, scientific and urban transformation.

Secularisation means religion losing authority over public institutions and sometimes over belief.

Weberian rationalisation made the pair look necessary.

The United States, global religious revivals and India show modern life with strong religion.

Berger revised the classical secularisation story.

The two processes often meet, but they do not have to travel as one.

Introduction

Modernisation is the cluster of changes that produce industrial economies, bureaucratic states, science-based knowledge and more individual choice. Secularisation is the process by which religion loses authority over law, education, politics and, in stronger versions, over personal belief. Many classical sociologists expected the two to move together. The question asks whether that necessity holds. My view is that they often accompany each other and that they do not necessarily do so.

Body

Why they have been linked

Max Weber's rationalisation thesis tied the modern world to disenchantment. Calculation, office and science crowd out magical and priestly control of public life. **Emile Durkheim** expected the cult of the individual and occupational ethics to grow as mechanical solidarity of a common church weakened, though he also looked for new forms of the sacred. Peter Berger, for a time, described a secularising modern consciousness. Functional differentiation, in Talcott Parsons and later Niklas Luhmann, gives religion a specialised slot rather than a canopy over all institutions. European histories of church and state seemed to confirm the pair: industrial society, liberal constitutions and declining Sunday practice.

Why they do not necessarily go together

The United States modernised while remaining highly religious in church membership. Jose Casanova showed public religions returning to politics. Berger later revised his own secularisation thesis after looking at global Pentecostalism and other revivals. India is a decisive case for this question. Colonial and postcolonial modernisation brought railways, universities, industry and a secular constitutional state. Religious identity, pilgrimage, televised ritual and communal politics did not fade. Ashis Nandy and T. N. Madan questioned a simple Western secularism as the only modern path. Rajeev Bhargava's idea of principled distance describes an Indian state that is not the same as French laicite. Instrumental modernisation can even intensify religious organisation, because parties and media use sacred symbols. Fundamentalist movements use modern technology.

So modernisation tends to differentiate institutions and to create secular law in some spheres. It does not necessarily empty the public square of religion, and it does not necessarily make individuals unbelievers. Secularisation, where it occurs, has more than one path: decline of belief, privatisation, or merely the state's refusal to be a theocracy. Those paths are historical and political, not automatic companions of the factory and the smartphone.

My view, stated plainly

I do not treat the classical pair as a law. Factories, universities and ballots can grow while pilgrimage, televangelism and religious parties also grow. What often does go together with modernisation is differentiation: the hospital is not run as a temple, and the civil code is not a sermon. That is a limited secularisation of institutions. Belief and identity can remain strong, and can even use modern media to become stronger. Turkey, the United States, Iran after a modernising state, and India after 1991 all show different pairings. A student who writes that they must go together has repeated a European expectation. A student who writes that they never meet has ignored law, science and the bureaucratic state. They often meet in part. They do not necessarily meet in full.

Flow diagram

Modernisation -> Differentiation science state market

Secularisation -> Religion loses public monopoly

Modernisation -> Secularisation

US India revivals -> Modernisation

US India revivals -> Secularisation

Conclusion

Modernisation and secularisation have often been partners in Western classical theory and in some European histories. They are not necessary twins. Modern societies can remain publicly religious, and secular law can coexist with intense belief. India shows that pairing with special clarity.

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Q7(b) · 20 marks

How do you understand the phenomena of the mushrooming of sects and cults in contemporary society? Discuss the factors responsible for the trend

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Religion and Society

Revision summary

Church-sect theory treats sects as demanding protest groups beside an accommodated church.

Cult, in careful use, names looser or new mystical memberships, not a tabloid insult.

New religious movements are the contemporary research label for much of this field.

Factors include urban migration, a market in belief, charismatic founders and media.

Crises of meaning and weak monopoly of old churches open space for new groups.

India's guru organisations and global NRMs illustrate the same structural trend.

Introduction

Sects and cults are organised religious or quasi-religious groups that stand apart from the dominant church or from mainstream culture. Ernst Troeltsch and later Bryan Wilson developed a church-sect typology. In contemporary usage, new religious movements often occupy the same field. Their mushrooming means a visible increase in small, intense, often leader-centred groups. Sociology explains this trend by social conditions, not by mockery of believers.

Body

How to understand sects and cults

A **church**, in this tradition, is an inclusive, accommodated religious body aligned with the wider society. A **sect** is a voluntary, demanding group that protests compromise and claims a purer path. It often recruits from the dissatisfied. H. Richard Niebuhr noted that sects may become denominations over time. A **cult**, in older American sociology such as Howard Becker's usage, was a looser, more individualistic, often mystical membership. Later media use of "cult" as a scare word is not a good scientific definition. Roy Wallis distinguished world-rejecting, world-accommodating and world-affirming movements. Eileen Barker's work on new religious movements asked for empirical study of conversion and leaving, against moral panic.

In India, bhakti panths, reform sampradayas, guru-centred organisations, and urban wellness and meditation brands sit on a related spectrum. Some are old sects. Some are new markets of spirituality.

Factors behind the contemporary trend

Modernisation weakens the monopoly of a single parish church and creates a **religious market**, as rational-choice writers such as Rodney Stark argued in one influential line. Urban migration cuts people from village ritual and leaves a demand for belonging. **Charismatic authority**, in Weber's sense, founds new groups around a gifted leader. Mass **media and social media** advertise gurus and apocalyptic messages cheaply. Rapid change produces a crisis of meaning and of trust in established clergy, parties and science. Relative deprivation,

after Glock and others, can push people toward groups that promise status, healing or election. Globalisation imports movements and also exports Indian gurus. The same openness that supports secular choice supports sectarian choice. State regulation is often weak until a scandal.

The trend is therefore not proof that society is becoming more irrational. It is a sign that belief has been privatised, marketed and networked. Some groups become violent or exploitative, which is a matter for law. Most remain small attempts to rebuild community and certainty.

Why the mushrooming looks sudden

Census religion tables change slowly. The mushrooming is of organisations, brands and intense memberships, not always of a new majority faith. A city neighbourhood may host a meditation centre, a prosperity church, a caste guru's weekly satsang and an online prophecy group in the same decade. That density is new even when the theological content is old. Factors pile up: spare income among the urban middle class, anxiety about jobs and marriage, distrust of established temples and churches, and a 24-hour screen. Sociology should count organisations and careers of members, and should not treat every new group as a civilisational collapse.

Flow diagram

Church denomination -> Sect protest purity
Sect protest purity -> Cult or NRM
Urbanisation media charisma market -> Cult or NRM
Urbanisation media charisma market -> Sect protest purity

Conclusion

Sects and cults are intense, often voluntary religious organisations outside the comfortable church. They multiply today because modern life breaks old monopolies and supplies markets, media, charisma and a hunger for meaning. Understanding the trend is a sociological task, not a panic.

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Q7(c) · 10 marks

Discuss the dimensions of power in the construction and maintenance of social hierarchies in a society

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Politics and Society

Revision summary

Power has economic, political, ideological and status dimensions.

Marx stressed property; **Weber** added status and party; Gramsci stressed hegemony.

Foucault and Bourdieu highlight discipline, capital forms and symbolic violence.

Hierarchies of class, caste and gender are built when these dimensions align.

Maintenance is both spectacular force and daily honour, schooling and family rule.

Splits among dimensions, such as legal equality versus ritual rank, create change.

Introduction

A social hierarchy is a ranked order of groups and persons that lasts beyond one encounter. Power is what builds that order and what keeps it standing. Power is not only the police. It has several dimensions: control of resources, control of office and force, control of meaning and honour, and control of everyday conduct. These dimensions work together in class, caste, gender and bureaucracy.

Body

Dimensions of power

- **Karl Marx emphasised economic power:** ownership of the means of production and extraction of surplus. Those who command capital construct a class hierarchy and maintain it through the state's legal protection of property. **Max Weber** added **status** honour and **party** or organisational power, so that hierarchy is three-dimensional. **Antonio Gramsci's** hegemony names ideological power: the capacity to make a hierarchy seem common sense. Michel **Foucault** described disciplinary power in schools, prisons and clinics, which trains bodies and does not only forbid. Pierre Bourdieu spoke of economic, cultural and social capital, and of symbolic violence that makes the dominated collude in their ranking. Steven Lukes distinguished overt conflict, agenda-setting and preference-shaping as faces of power.

Construction and maintenance of hierarchies

Hierarchies are constructed when these dimensions crystallise into durable positions. Caste hierarchy is maintained by endogamy, ritual honour, economic dependence and, historically, religious ideology. **Ambedkar** and Uma Chakravarti show that gender control is inside that maintenance. Class hierarchy is maintained by inheritance, elite schools, and the conversion of money into cultural capital. Gender hierarchy is maintained by unpaid care, violence, law and the naturalisation of roles. In organisations, Weberian bureaucracy constructs official ranks, while informal cliques maintain them through patronage.

Maintenance is daily. It happens in language, in who interrupts whom, in residential segregation, and in the fear of falling. It also happens in crisis, when force is used. A hierarchy that loses ideological consent becomes expensive to police. That is why schools, temples, media and the family are sites of power, not only parliaments.

A full answer therefore refuses a single-factor story. Economic power is fundamental in **Marx's** sense for class. Status and symbolic power are fundamental for caste and gender. Political and

organisational power lock the structure into the state. The dimensions construct hierarchy when they align, and they open a chance of change when they split, as when legal citizenship contradicts ritual rank.

Flow diagram

Economic power -> Hierarchy
Political organisational power -> Hierarchy
Ideological hegemonic power -> Hierarchy
Status and symbolic power -> Hierarchy
Hierarchy -> Endogamy inheritance everyday discipline

Conclusion

Power constructs and maintains hierarchy through property, office, honour and everyday discipline. **Marx**, **Weber**, Gramsci, **Foucault** and Bourdieu name different dimensions of that work. Hierarchies last when these dimensions support one another. They shake when law, economy and meaning fall out of line.

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Q8(a) · 20 marks

Modern families have not just become nuclear and neo-local, but also filiocentric. How do you explain this trend?

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Sociology

Revision summary

Nuclear families centre on the couple and dependent children.

Neo-local residence means a home apart from both parental households.

Filiocentric means the child becomes the emotional and economic centre.

Parsons linked the isolated nuclear family to industrial mobility.

Fertility decline, schooling and middle-class child projects deepen filiocentrism.

Indian households often mix nuclear dwellings with continuing wider kinship.

Introduction

The modern family is often described as nuclear, neo-local and, increasingly, filiocentric. Nuclear means a couple and their dependent children as the everyday household core. Neo-local means the couple set up a home apart from both sets of parents. Filiocentric means that the child, rather than the lineage elder or even the conjugal pair as a rank order, becomes the emotional and economic centre. The trend needs a sociological explanation, not a complaint about spoiling.

Body

Nuclear and neo-local change

Talcott Parsons linked the isolated nuclear family to industrial society. Occupational mobility, he argued, is easier when the household is small and not bound to a joint estate. William Goode expected a world movement toward the conjugal family. Indian evidence is more mixed. A. M. Shah distinguished family and household. Joint living continues in many property-holding groups, while urban rental housing and migration produce neo-local nuclear units. I. P. Desai and later NFHS-style data show a rise of smaller households without a simple death of kinship. Remittances, care of the elderly and festival membership keep the wider family alive even when the dwelling is nuclear.

Neo-locality follows jobs, education and the housing market. It also follows the wish of young couples for privacy. Patriarchy does not automatically fall when the house is nuclear. The husband's parents may still govern from another flat.

Why families become filiocentric

Philippe Ariès argued that the modern idea of childhood as a protected, precious stage is historically produced. Falling fertility, which demographic transition theory describes, concentrates parental investment on fewer children. Schooling lengthens dependence. The child becomes a project of the middle class: marks, coaching, health and display. Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim wrote of the negotiated family and of children as last remaining sources of meaning in an individualised world. Emotional democracy, in Anthony Giddens's late-modern intimacy, raises the child's voice inside the home compared with a strictly patriarchal joint family.

In India, the only-child or two-child urban household, the coaching industry, and public anxiety about the girl child's education and safety all show filiocentrism. Advertising and social media amplify the child as consumer. This can improve child welfare. It can also produce pressure, sibling-less isolation, and neglect of the elderly, which is the other side of a child-centred budget.

The three adjectives therefore hang together. Industrial and urban work pull households toward nuclear neo-local form. Low fertility and long schooling turn that household around the child.

How the three changes support one another

A joint household with many children can centre the eldest male and the lineage property. A neo-local flat with one or two children, both in school for many years, has a smaller stage. Parents spend time on homework, health and competitive exams. The child's timetable organises the adults. This is filiocentrism as a practical order, not only as a feeling. It is strengthened by the state when childhood is legally protected, and by the market when toys, coaching and insurance are sold through the child. It is also class-specific. A landless household may still need children's labour. A wealthy joint family may remain elder-centred. The trend named in the question is strongest where wage work, small dwellings and school competition coincide. Explanation should keep that social location in view.

Flow diagram

Industry urban jobs -> Nuclear neo-local household
Low fertility long schooling -> Filiocentric investment
Nuclear neo-local household -> Filiocentric investment
Wider kinship -> Nuclear neo-local household

Conclusion

Modern families often live as nuclear neo-local units and place the child at the centre of emotion and spending. Industry, housing, fertility decline and schooling explain the trend. Kinship does not vanish, but authority inside the dwelling shifts toward the child's future.

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Q8(b) · 20 marks

Discuss various theories of social change. Explain the limitations of unilinear theory of social change

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Social Change in Modern Society

Revision summary

Social change is theorised as evolution, cycle, conflict, functional adaptation and global hierarchy.

Unilinear evolution claims one sequence of stages for all societies.

Comte, Morgan and some readings of **Marx** illustrate the ladder form.

Limits include Eurocentrism, teleology and weak handling of collapse and mixture.

Multilinear and dependency arguments were developed against that ladder.

Differentiation can be kept as a theme without a compulsory staircase.

Introduction

Theories of social change try to say how and why societies become different over time. Some see a ladder of stages. Some see cycles. Some see struggle. Some see the working out of functions and adaptation. Unilinear evolutionary theory is the most famous ladder. Its limits are now part of the standard sociological critique, and they should be explained after the wider map of theories.

Body

Various theories of social change

Evolutionary theories, from Auguste Comte's three stages and Herbert Spencer's movement from simple to complex, to L. H. Morgan's savagery-barbarism-civilisation, treat change as directional growth. **Cyclical** theories, in Vilfredo Pareto's circulation of elites, Oswald Spengler, and to some extent Pitrim Sorokin's cultural mentalities, treat rise and fall as recurrence. **Conflict** theories, especially **Karl Marx's** historical materialism, treat contradiction and class struggle as the motor. **Functionalist** theories, in **Durkheim's** differentiation and Parsons's pattern variables and later AGIL adaptation, treat change as a response to strain while seeking a new equilibrium. **Modernisation** theory in the mid-twentieth century, associated with writers such as W. W. Rostow in economics and several American sociologists, expected poor countries to follow a Western industrial path. **Dependency and world-systems** theories, from Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein, reversed that hope and located change in a global hierarchy. **Max Weber** offered no single law, but rationalisation and unintended consequences as historical processes.

Unilinear theory and its limitations

Unilinear evolution says that all societies pass through the same sequence of stages toward a single mature form, usually modelled on nineteenth-century Europe. Comte, Morgan and, in a cruder textbook form, some colonial anthropology used this shape. **Marx's** preface can be read as a sequence of modes of production, though he also wrote about the Asiatic form and later correspondence that complicates a single ladder.

Limitations are several. The theory is **Eurocentric**. It takes one region's history as the destiny of all. It is **teleological**. It reads the past as if it had to produce the present. It ignores

multilinear paths, which Julian Steward and later anthropologists stressed: irrigation states, pastoralists and industrial societies do not sit on one rung-list. It handles reversal, collapse and mixture poorly. Empires fall. Hybrid institutions are normal. It can justify colonial rule as a push up the ladder. Yogendra Singh's work on modernisation of Indian tradition, and critiques by dependency writers, show that contact with the West does not simply replay European stages. Gender and ecology are almost invisible on the old ladders.

- **A better use of evolutionary ideas is limited:** increasing differentiation is a useful theme, as in **Durkheim**, without a claim that every people must repeat the same rungs.

Flow diagram

Evolutionary
Cyclical
Conflict Marx
Functionalist
World-system
Unilinear ladder -> Eurocentrism teleology
Evolutionary -> Unilinear ladder

Conclusion

Theories of social change include evolution, cycle, conflict, function and global hierarchy. Unilinear evolution claims one ladder for all societies. Its limits are Eurocentrism, teleology, and blindness to diverse paths and reversals. Change is real. It is not one compulsory staircase.

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Q8(c) · 10 marks

Critically examine the World-Systems theory of Immanuel Wallerstein in terms of development and dependency of various nations

Sociology GS 1 · 2024 · Social Change in Modern Society

Revision summary

Wallerstein takes the capitalist world-economy, not the nation, as the unit of analysis.

Core, semi-periphery and periphery are linked positions in one division of labour.

Development of the core has been historically tied to peripheral constraint.

The theory criticises Rostow-style national stages and is cousin to Frank's underdevelopment thesis.

Criticisms include thin treatment of internal class, culture and new industrial cores.

It remains a strong map of dependency, provided ranks are not treated as eternal.

Introduction

Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory says that since the long sixteenth century a capitalist world-economy has been the relevant unit of analysis, not the isolated nation. Development and underdevelopment are positions in that system. Core, semi-periphery and periphery name those positions. A critical examination must state this map and then test it against how nations actually grow, stagnate and change rank.

Body

The main idea

Wallerstein, building on Fernand Braudel's long duration and on dependency writers such as Andre Gunder Frank, argued that a world-economy is bound by a single division of labour and multiple political states. There is no single world empire that commands the whole. The **core** specialises in high-skill, capital-intensive production and strong states. The **periphery** supplies cheap labour, raw materials and weaker states. The **semi-periphery** stands in between and stabilises the system, as a middle layer that can be both exploited and exploiting. Unequal exchange, in the language of Arghiri Emmanuel and related debates, moves surplus toward the core. Hegemonic powers rise and fall in long cycles: the United Provinces, Britain, the United States. Development of one zone is historically linked to the constrained development of another. This is a theory of **dependency inside a system**, not of cultural backwardness.

Against W. W. Rostow's stages, a peripheral nation is not simply late. Its agriculture, mines and labour markets have already been organised for the core. Frank's development of underdevelopment is close, though Wallerstein is more historical-systemic and less a simple two-term metropolis-satellite pair.

Critical examination

The theory is strong in explaining colonial drain, plantation economies, and the limits of import-substitution when the world market still sets terms of trade. It is strong in refusing methodological nationalism: Indian or Brazilian growth cannot be read as a closed story. It helps explain why political independence did not automatically mean economic autonomy.

Limits are serious. The categories can become labels that hide class struggle inside India or Brazil. A. G. Frank and Wallerstein were criticised by Marxists who wanted more on national bourgeoisies, the state and modes of production, as in the work of Ernesto Laclau or Indian debates involving A. R. Desai and later writers. Culture, caste and gender are thin in the original world-systems volumes. The rise of East Asian industrial cores and of China challenges a frozen map of periphery. Semi-periphery can become a catch-all. Empirical measures of unequal exchange are disputed. The theory can underplay agency of labour movements and of South-South ties.

Still, as a critical tool for development and dependency, world-systems theory remains more adequate than a naive modernisation ladder. Nations develop in a hierarchy of the world-economy. They can change position, but not by pretending that the hierarchy is not there.

Development and dependency of nations, applied

A core nation can set financial rules, patent regimes and military umbrellas that shape what a peripheral nation may industrialise. A semi-peripheral nation may export cars and still import high-end chips and pay tribute in profit outflow. East Asian catch-up shows that position can change when a strong state, land reform and access to the US market combine. It does not show that every nation can repeat that path at once, because the system needs cheap zones. India's software exports and its large informal labour force can sit in the same country, which is why a single label is crude and still why a world-economy frame is useful. Dependency is a relation, not a national character. Wallerstein's value is to keep that relation in the answer.

Flow diagram

Capitalist world-economy -> Core
Capitalist world-economy -> Semi-periphery
Capitalist world-economy -> Periphery
Core -> Unequal exchange
Periphery -> Unequal exchange
Unequal exchange -> Dependency and constrained development

Conclusion

Wallerstein explains development and dependency as related positions in a capitalist world-economy of core, semi-periphery and periphery. The theory beats a closed national stages model. It is weaker on internal class, culture and recent shifts of the core. Used critically, it still names the global structure in which nations grow or stay dependent.

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Compiled answer key

Last pages of this pack. Each question links to the WRAP model answer on wrapexams.com.

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Q1(a) 10 marks	Q1(b) 10 marks	Q1(c) 10 marks	Q1(d) 10 marks
Q1(e) 10 marks	Q2(a) 20 marks	Q2(b) 20 marks	Q2(c) 10 marks
Q3(a) 20 marks	Q3(b) 20 marks	Q3(c) 10 marks	Q4(a) 20 marks
Q4(b) 20 marks	Q4(c) 10 marks	Q5(a) 10 marks	Q5(b) 10 marks
Q5(c) 10 marks	Q5(d) 10 marks	Q5(e) 10 marks	Q6(a) 20 marks
Q6(b) 20 marks	Q6(c) 10 marks	Q7(a) 20 marks	Q7(b) 20 marks
Q7(c) 10 marks	Q8(a) 20 marks	Q8(b) 20 marks	Q8(c) 10 marks

Question-wise key

Q1(a) · 10 marks Solution

Q1(b) · 10 marks Solution

Q1(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q1(d) · 10 marks Solution

Q1(e) · 10 marks Solution

Q2(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q2(b) · 20 marks Solution

Q2(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q3(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q3(b) · 20 marks Solution

Q3(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q4(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q4(b) · 20 marks Solution

Q4(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(a) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(b) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(d) · 10 marks Solution

Q5(e) · 10 marks Solution

Q6(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q6(b) · 20 marks Solution

Q6(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q7(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q7(b) · 20 marks Solution

Q7(c) · 10 marks Solution

Q8(a) · 20 marks Solution

Q8(b) · 20 marks Solution

Q8(c) · 10 marks Solution

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