

# SOCIOLOGY FOR UPSC / IAS

## CHAPTER -1

### TOPIC 1.A

b. Scope Of The Subject And Comparison With Other Social Sciences

# TOPICS OF CHAPTER -1

## **1. Sociology - the discipline:**

- a. Modernity and social changes in europe and emergence of sociology.
- b. Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences.
- c. Sociology and common sense.

# SCOPE (SUBJECT MATTER) OF SOCIOLOGY

Emerged as distinct discipline in response to problems/social change

Guided initial scope

Gradually widened with time

Can be understood in different phases-

# **INITIAL PHASE**

## **1838 TO ~ 1880**

**Initial phase 1838-1880s**

### **Macro Units**

Understanding society in terms of Macro Units

**August comte - Social Statics, Social Dynamics**

**Saint Simon- Social Physics**

### **Inductive Approach**

Understanding social reality in terms of **Empiricism**

**August Comte - Social Positivism**

**Herbert Spencer - Organismic Analogy**

### **Humanistic Perspective**

Understanding and finding solutions to social problem



# 2ND PHASE (1880S-1940S)

Widening of scope

**Max weber** - Micro realities  
(start of Interpretative Sociology)

Whereas **Durkheim** continued - Macro Units  
(Social Facts)

Sociology started to be taught in large no of universities-

Therefore, Sociology now had Two Schools of thoughts -

Formal

Synthetic

# FORMAL SCHOOL

Emphasis on **micro** phenomenon like social action/social processes

Sociology makes abstract generalisations about concrete reality  
(**Kantian** influence)

(**SUOR** - Subjective Understanding of Objective Reality)

Studies objective reality as subjective interpretation

# **FORMAL SCHOOL**

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Mostly German

**Weber**

Start of **Interpretative School**

**George Simmel**

Forms of **interaction** (formal & informal)

Types of **interactants** (whether known or strangers. Behaviour varies)

**Alfred Vierkandt**

Sociology is **sum total of social and psychic** behaviour of man which can be explained by abstract conceptual design

**Leopold Vanwiese**

All human behaviour can be divided into **associative** and **dissociative**

**Ferdinand Tonnies**

Difference of social groups- **Gameinschaft**(community/small society) and **Gesellschaft**(society/industrial society)



# SYNTHETIC SCHOOL

Macro, bringing all social sciences together, sociology can study everything  
(Socio-Centrism)

**Durkheim**

Grand Theories

**Pitirim Sorokin**

**General sociology**- same institutions in the world (family, religion found everywhere)

**Specific sociology** - caste in India, race in America

**Karl Mannheim**

Discusses structure and broader ideas  
(book - ideology and utopia)



# 3<sup>rd</sup> phase

## (1940s to 1990s)

Blending of Formal and Synthetic

### **Parsons**

The SOSA (Structure of social action)

The SS (social system)

### **Merton**

Latent and Manifest - Combined Micro and Macro

### **CW Mills**

Sociological imagination - Sociology of coffee - Discuss the chain

### **Anthony Giddens**

Theory of Structuration - Double Hermeneutics

Observe and then understand

Why sindoor, why mangalsutra

Also emphasized blending

### **Extension of existing schools**

Formal School -

Ethnomethodology (Harold Garfinkel),

Phenomenology (Alfred Schutz).

# Present Phase

## 1980s onwards

Wider varieties of interest  
(health, IT, biotech, networking, defence, environment)

### **Emergence of Post Modernist thought**

Deal with metanarratives  
No way to differentiate between true and untrue stories

#### **Jacques Derrida**

Deconstruction

Language can never truly represent an internal, objective reality

#### **Micheal Foucault**

Discourse Analysis

That discourses have power

#### **Alan Bryman**

**Multidisciplinary Approach**

**Purposive** research has removed limitation on scope

Scope expanded throughout History

conflict view (marxian/feminism) scope can also be understood in comparing sociology with other social sciences

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Conflict view (Marxian/Feminism)

Scope can also be understood in  
comparing sociology with other social  
sciences