



**Question 1. Examine the evolution of sociology as an independent discipline. How does it compare and contrast with other social science fields? (10 Marks)**

Sociology as an independent discipline was setup by founders like Comte and Durkheim premised upon adherence to scientific and positivist methods to systematically study social systems like society. It emerged as a result of enlightenment (belief in human reason) and even due to counter-enlightenment (quest to restore social order)

Immediate context

Political upheaval caused due to French Revolution causing chaos

Factors behind evolution of sociology (Socio.)

Generalised context

- Enlightenment
- Positivism
- Renaissance
- Conservative Reaction
- Urbanisation and Industrialization
- Rise of capitalism

Comparison with other social sciences

1) Socio and History

History is sequenced study of events - what, where, when and how. Socio. is nomothetic and analytical, while

History is ideographic and descriptive.

It is also true that "Socio. without history is rootless, History without Socio. is fruitless."



Ex - Marx's Historical materialism

## 2) Socio and Economy

Economy studies the demand and supply forces and measurable quantities like prices, growth, inflation, etc while socio. studying production-distribution relations explain stratification and economic choices of people.  
Ex - Advertisements contain values, norms, beliefs.

## ② socio and Political science

Polity is about Power and its utilization, while socio studies the impact of political processes over other bureaucratic social systems.

Ex - Bureaucratization studied by Weber.

## ④ socio and Anthropology (Anthro)

Similarities - methods used and subjects of study i.e. societies.

However, socio studies modern civilized societies, while Anthro studies primitive uncivilized societies.

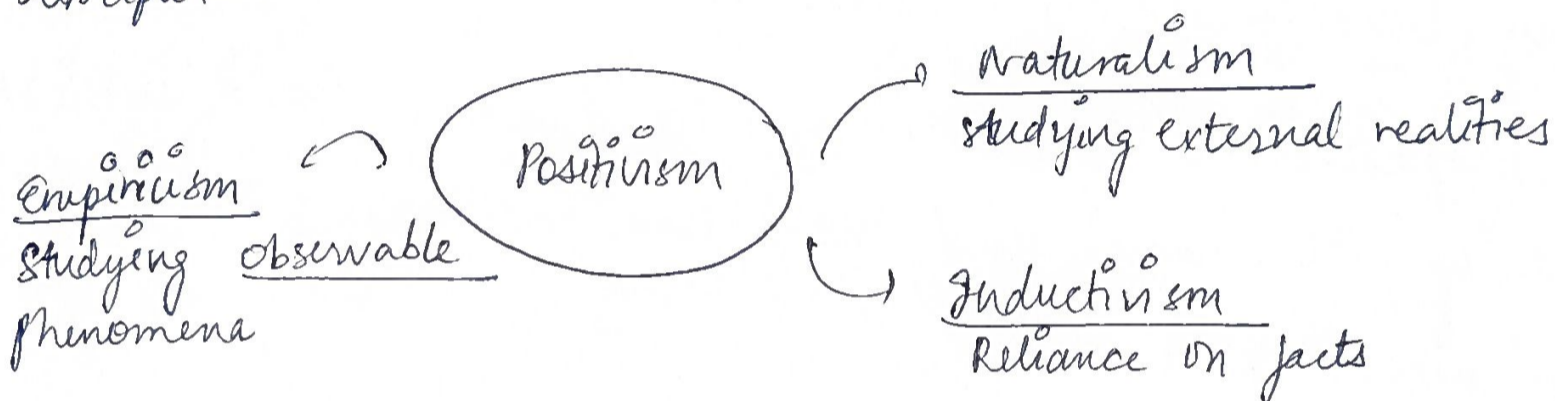
Hence, socio. was established as a distinct body of knowledge.



Question 2. "Despite facing widespread criticism, positivism played a pivotal role in establishing sociology as a recognized academic discipline across the world. Discuss." (10 Marks)

Positivism as the founding cornerstone of scientific study of society faced criticism due to focus upon ultra-empiricism, but still played a pivotal role in establishing sociology as a distinct discipline as :-

1) Positivism is based upon the use of scientific methods for conducting research and brings objectivity to the discipline.



2) Use of quantitative methods like questionnaire, polls, using statistics and computational techniques bring reliability and verifiability to social theories.

3) Positivism helped in making generalisations which led to formulation of grand abstract theories and provided predictability regarding social phenomena.

For ex - Durkheim's analysis of mechanical and organic solidarity using methods like moral density, moral volume, etc. explained social cohesion in its changing nature.



4) Finally, positivism imparted characteristics like methodology, spirit of inquiry, purpose of research and consequences formulation, imparting scientific character to socio.

However, certain critics like Max Horkheimer call this objective anarchism of science, which has an irreverent attitude for other subjects except itself.

Positivism is labelled as downplaying human creativity and subjectivity and acts as "status-quoist" by giving teleological explanations of existing stratification.

Hence, positivism has both pros and cons for a subject studying "humans" and not non-material phenomena like science.



Question 3. "How does Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach help in interpreting the dynamics of daily social interactions? Substantiate your answer with suitable examples." (10 Marks)

Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach helps to understand social behaviours of humans in different social setups through analyzing how interactions take place among them at the micro level.

- concept of Role play

For Goffman, individuals are merely fitting into the expected roles in a particular context and it seems like they are acting according to the desired behaviours expected in those roles.

- Control of social setups over individuals

Individuals are seen as mere puppets whose strings are controlled by different people in different systems and keeps changing as the setup is changed. Hence, it provides a dynamic yet deterministic view of social actions.

- Front stage and Back stage analogy

Goffman talks about what roles people "play" when they are interacting with others, vis-a-vis how it shapes their identities when their



social performance is over. for Goffman, frontstage role seriously impacts backstage identities, even identities can be formed / reinforced by role-play and dramaturgical performance

Though an interesting insight, it fails to incorporate human subjectivity in creating meaning about social actions as mentioned by Weber.

However, it still gives insights about formation of self-concept through social interactions.



**Question 4. Critically examine the shortcomings of using quantitative methods in social research while assessing their overall effectiveness. (10 Marks)**

Quantitative measures in social research refer to mathematical and statistical measures that can be objectively deployed and assessed. These measures produce results that are not varied from context to context.

Although quantitative methods like statistics, numerical data collection, use of authentic reports (like police reports for suicide by Durkheim), polls, questionnaire, etc. helped in organizing sociology as a distinct discipline and creating predictable, generalized, verifiable theories, it has the following shortcomings:-

- It is not closer to reality as it downplays human subjectivity that creates massive differences in outcomes.

- It relies heavily on empirical data, but several social phenomena is not observable and can only be explained through logical analysis.

- Issue of objectivity still remains in socio, as it is a subjective understanding of objective reality.

- Efficacy of quantitative methods is challenged on



the grounds that ignores actors' interpretations of social phenomena.

(For Ethnomethodology meaning making is a social construct and studying interactions at micro level is a key to understand it)

○ It can also be influenced by researcher's bias, as their sense about what is important can be questioned.

For ex - researcher's imposition in asking questions in questionnaire based upon what he thinks is important.

Hence, there is a need to use Mixed method utilizing both benefits of quantitative and qualitative research and making sound, research more valid and reliable.



**Question 5. How does triangulation function in research methods, and what is its significance? (10 Marks)**

Triangulation refers to the isolation of independent variable and its impact upon chosen dependent variables to establish correlations and causal linkages.

For ensuring greater objectivity in research, Pathi Sather suggested the use of methods like triangulation, construct validity, face validity, etc.

### Triangulation's significance

- ↳ It helps in bringing more realistic perspectives into research by considering variety of factors related to the phenomena depicting interconnectedness of reality.
- ↳ It establishes scientific theories with use of pluralistic methods to ward off biases of researchers.  
For ex- Durkheim's multivariate analysis of suicide to induce objectivity.
- ↳ It explains several realistic phenomena that are often confused when it comes to interpretations.  
For ex - Generalised notions confuse poverty and



high population as linked together, with reciprocity.  
However, triangulation can lead us to another factor  
that is governance which affects both of them and  
is instrumental in deciding the outcome.

Hence, triangulation can be used as a cross-check  
mechanism to increase testability and explainability  
of theories producing plural inter-relationships.