



Sociology

Scope of the subject and comparison

with other social sciences Scope of Sociology: The scope of sociology is extremely wide. It can focus on interactions between individuals and at the same time, on larger issues like unemployment, caste conflicts, rural debt, etc. Hence, the discipline is defined by, not just what it studies, but also how it studies it. Sociology studies role (micro), structure (meso) and society (macro). Social organization - interdependence of parts Social structure - pattern of interrelations Social institutions - ensemble of a variety of customs and habits accumulated over time Culture - totality of learned and socially transmitted behavior from one generation to the next A. Specialist or Formal School: According to this school, sociology was conceived to be a social science with a specifically defined field. Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Ferdinand Tonnies, Alfred Vierkandt and Leopold Von Wiese are its main advocates - all are Germans. They regarded sociology as an independent discipline, with a limited scope. Sociology should confine relationships but not their contents. Social relationships such as competition, subordination, division of labour, etc. are expressed in different fields of social life like economics, politics and religion. Sociology should disentangle the forms of social relationships and study them in abstraction. Emphasis on micro phenomenon like social actions and social processes, and making abstract generalizations about concrete reality. Subjective understanding of objective reality. Simmel - forms from human relationships (example - formal or informal) which are common to diverse situations should be the subject matter of sociology. Sociology should confine its study to formal behavior instead of studying actual behavior. Sociology stands in such a relation with other sciences as is the relation holding between the physical sciences and geometry. Geometry studies the spatial forms and relations of objects, not their content. In the same way sociology, too, in its scope comprehends the forms of social relationships and activities, not the relationships themselves. Vierkandt - sociology is sum total of social and psychic behavior of man which can be explained by abstract conceptual design. Von Wiese - there are two kinds of fundamental social processes in human society. Associative processes concerning contact, approach, adaptation, etc. and dissociative processes like competition and conflict. Apart from these two forms, a mixed form also exists, and each of these processes has sub classes, which in totality give approximately 650 forms of human relationships. Tonnies - society is divided into two categories Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (association / society) on the basis of degree of intimacy and forms of relationships. Weber - sociology should interpret or understand social behavior - Verstehen. Human interactions

that are not social are excluded. Started the interpretative school. Book . Three types of actions that sociology can study - traditional, emotional and rational. Critique: Focuses on merely the abstract forms and neglects the concrete contents of social life. Distinguishing between the forms of social relationships and their content is not possible. Sorokin says its form, but I cannot conceive of a social Ginsberg says the conception of pure sociology is not practical as no social science can be studied in isolation. Other sciences also study forms of social relationships example: law studies conflict. B. Synthetic School: This school led by Durkheim (French), Leonard Hobhouse, Morris Ginsberg (both British) and Pitirim Sorokin (American) advocated a synthesis in form of coordination among all social sciences. Macro. Comte also belongs to this school and said "Sociology is the queen of all social sciences as it is the only discipline that can study both - reasons for continuity of society and conditions contributing to social change." Durkheim - sociology has three principle divisions: Social morphology concerned with geographical or territorial basis of life of people such as population, its size, density, distribution. Can be done at 2 levels analysis of size and quality of population which affects the quality of social relationships and social groups, and the study of social structure or description of the main forms of social groups and institutions with their classification Social physiology genesis and nature of various social institutions General sociology aims to formulate general social laws Hobhouse - whole social life of man is the sphere of sociology. Its relationship with other social sciences is of mutual exchange and stimulation. Mannheim (Hungarian who moved to Germany and then Britain) - two main sections of sociology - systematic and general sociology and historical sociology. book. Sorokin - general sociology (same institutions found all over the world) and specific sociology (caste in India, race in USA). Micro sociology is not required. Ginsberg - Social pathology and social processes. Pathology deals with diagnosis of social problems, their causes and consequences. Chief functions of sociology are: 1. To provide a classification of types and forms of social relationships 2. To determine the relationship between different parts of social life 3. To disentangle the fundamental condition of social change and persistence and to discover sociological principles governing social life Different phases of Sociology: Phase 1: 1838 1880s Comte (French) focused on macro units and spoke about social statics, social dynamics, positivism and empiricism, and the law of three stages Saint Simon (French) called it social physics Spencer (British) gave the organismic analogy. All societies change from simple to complex Followed an inductive approach with multiple observations, and tried to understand social reality in terms of empiricism. The overall aim was to

approach with a humanistic perspective, understand social problems and find solutions. Phase 2: 1880s 1940s Scope was widened as Weber spoke about micro realities. Start of interpretative sociology. Durkheim Formal and synthetic schools were separated Phase 3: 1940s 1990s Blending of formal and synthetic schools. Parsons (American) Merton (American) latent and manifest functions of everything a person does, thus combining micro and macro perspectives. He combined psychological and structural aspects of society, which is best exemplified in his theory of anomie CW Mills (American) sociological imagination Giddens (British) theory of structuration and double hermeneutics The formal school was further extended by phenomenology of Alfred Schutz (Austrian but worked in America) and ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel (American) Present Phase: 1980s onwards Emergence of post-modernist thought. Wider areas of interest like environment, healthcare, IT, biotechnology, media, defence. Rejection of metanarratives in this post truth world. No way to understand objective reality. Jacques Derrida (French) deconstruction of language, as it can never truly represent an internal, objective reality Michel Foucault (French) discourse analysis Alan Bryman (British) multidisciplinary approach, methodological pluralism Jean Baudrillard (French) - mass media has reversed the Marxist idea that society is dominated by economic structure, rather it will now be increasingly controlled by the signs and images which are a creation of mass media Marxism and Feminism (emerged in 1960s) does not fit in any school.