



SYM 101

Sociological concepts

Unit 01

Topic : Scope of Sociology

Scope of Sociology

- ▶ Every science has its own areas of study or field of inquiry. In the broadest sense, Sociology is the study of human interactions and inter-relations, their conditions and consequences. There are two main schools of thought among sociologists on scope of sociology.

Schools of Sociology

- ▶ Formalistic School
- ▶ Synthetic School

Formalistic School

One group of sociologists headed by **German sociologist, Simmel**, demarcates Sociology clearly from other branches of social study and confines it to the enquiry into certain **defined aspects of human relationship**. They regard sociology as pure and independent.

Synthetic School

The field of social investigation is too wide for any one science and that if any progress is to be made there must be specialisation; that in addition to special social sciences such as Economics, History etc. there is need of a general social science, i.e. Sociology whose function would be to inter-relate the results of the special social sciences and to deal with the general conditions of social life.

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❖ **Simmel's view:**

- ▶ Pure and Independent Science
- ▶ Special Aspect of relationship

Small's view on scope of Sociology

According to Small, sociology does not undertake to study all the activities of society. Every science has a limited scope. The scope of sociology is the study of the generic forms of social relationships, behaviours and activities, etc.

► **Vierkandt's view:**

Similarly, Vierkandt, another leading sociologist maintains that Sociology is a special branch of knowledge concerned with the ultimate forms of mental or psychic relationships which link men to one another in society.

- ▶ According to him, the actual historical societies, for example, the French society of the eighteenth century, or the Chinese family are of interest to a sociologist only as illustration of particular types of relationships.

He further maintains that similarly in dealing with culture sociology; it should not concern itself with the actual contents of cultural evolution but it should confine itself to only the discovery of the fundamental forces of change and persistence. It should abstain from a historical study of concrete societies.

❖ **Max Weber's view:**

- ▶ Max Weber also makes out a definite field for Sociology. According to him, the aim of Sociology is to interpret or understand social behaviour. But social behaviour does not cover the whole field of human relations. Indeed not all human interactions are social.

- For example, a collision between two cyclists is in itself merely a natural phenomenon, but their efforts to avoid each other or the language they use after the event constitute true social behaviour. Sociology is thus, according to him, concerned with the analysis and classification of types of social relationships.

❖ Von Wiese's view:

- ▶ According to Von Wiese, the scope of Sociology is the study of forms of social relationships. He has divided these social relationships into many kinds.
- ▶ *"Sociology is the science of the forms and processes of human interrelations."*

❖ Von Wiese's view:

- ▶ According to Von Wiese, the scope of Sociology is the study of forms of social relationships. He has divided these social relationships into many kinds (Associative and Dissociative).
- ▶ *"Sociology is the science of the forms and processes of human interrelations."*

- ▶ **Associative:** These are positive, cooperative interactions that create social bonds
- ▶ **Dissociative:** These involve conflict, competition, or separation in social interactions.

Type(Associative)	Description	Example
Approach	Movement toward connection	Friendships, business partnerships
Adaptation	Adjusting behavior to fit social norms	Immigrants adopting local customs
Accommodation	Temporary compromises to avoid conflict	Labor unions negotiating with employers
Assimilation	Merging cultural identities into a unified group	Intermarriage between ethnic groups
Integration	Long-term unification of social groups	Formation of a new political coalition

Type(Dissociative)	Description	Example
Competition	Non-violent struggle for resources	Businesses competing for market share
Opposition	Direct conflict with clear adversaries	Political rivals in an election
Conflict	Hostile, sometimes violent confrontations	War, strikes, riots
Avoidance	Deliberate social distancing	Feuding families ignoring each other
Disintegration	Breakdown of social unity	Divorce, secession movements

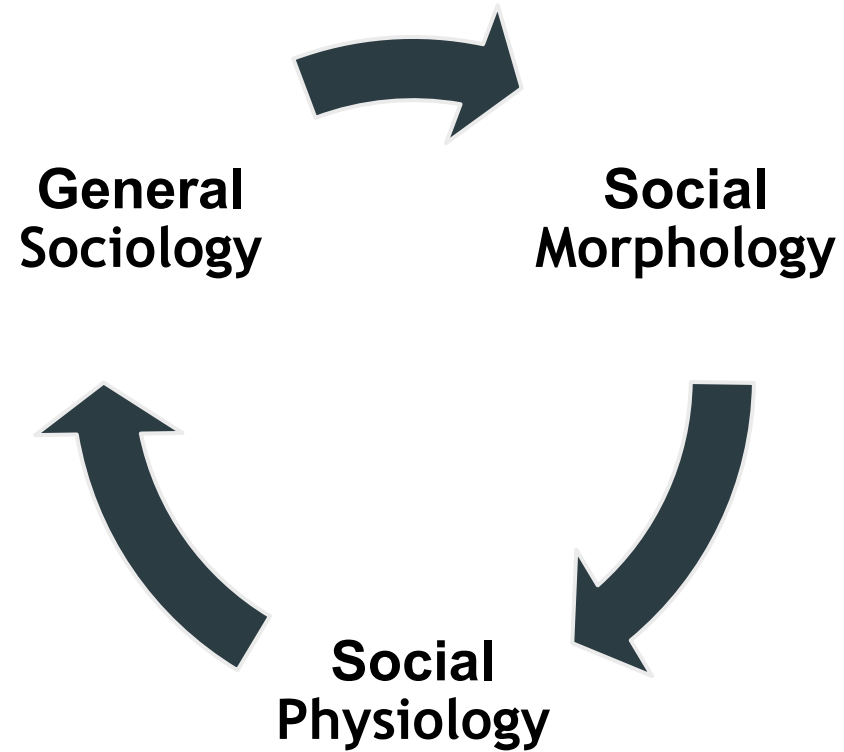
Criticism of formalistic school

- ▶ Narrow view of Sociology
- ▶ Social Distinction is not clear
- ▶ Other Sciences also studies the social aspect of relationship

Criticism of formalistic school

- ▶ Practically not possible to developed sociology as Pure science

Views of Emile Durkheim on Synthetic School



- ▶ **Hob-house's view:**
- ▶ Hob-house also holds a view similar to that of Durkheim regarding the functions of Sociology. Ideally, for him Sociology is a synthesis of numerous social studies but the immediate task of the sociologist is threefold.

Firstly, as a sociologist, one must pursue studies in particular part of the social field. Secondly, bearing in mind the interconnections of social relations, one should try to interconnect the results arrived at by the different social sciences and, thirdly, one should interpret social life as a whole.

**Morris
Ginsberg's
View on
synthetic
school of
sociology**

Social
Morphology

Social Control

Social Process

Social Pathology

Aspect	Formalistic School	Synthetic School
Focus	Abstract social forms (e.g., conflict, cooperation).	Entire society (structures, institutions, change).
Method	Analytical, classificatory.	Holistic, integrative.
Key Thinkers	Simmel, Von Wiese, Weber.	Durkheim, Hobhouse, Ginsberg.
Strengths	Clear boundaries, avoids overlap.	Comprehensive, practical relevance.
Weaknesses	Too abstract, ignores real issues.	Too broad, hard to systematize.

Field of Sociology in the 21st Century

Interpersonal
Relations

Rural and Urban
Life

Marriage and
Family

Field of Sociology in the 21st Century

Social Change
and Social
Transformation

Gender Studies

Subaltern
Studies

Field of Sociology in the 21st Century

Gerontology

Globalisation
and World
System

Tourism

Health and
Medical
Sociology

Thankyou