

University of djilali bounaama

Faculté des Sciences Sociales et Humaines

Département of Social Sciences

English Scale

Third Year of bacheor's

1.4. The Relationship between Sociology and Disciplines Sociology occupies an important position among the disciplines, usually called the social sciences. These include sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, political science, history and human geography. These disciplines are sometimes also referred to as behavioral sciences, as they study the principles governing human social behavior. How is sociology related to other sciences? What are the similarities and differences? These are important questions. Sociology is similar with all other sciences in that it employs the scientific methods and its major aim is production of scientific knowledge. Sociology is related to other social and behavioral sciences in that all of them have more or less similar subject matter; they all in one way or another study society, human culture, social phenomena; and aim at discovering the laws that govern the social universe. Introduction to Sociology 56 However, sociology differs from other social sciences in terms of its focus of study, approach of study, and the method of study. The closest discipline to sociology is social anthropology. The two share concepts, theories and methods, and have similar historical background. However, they are different in that sociology is primarily interested in the problems of modern society, whereas anthropology is primarily interested in the problem of traditional, non-western society. (It should be noted here that this conventional distinction between the two is now disappearing.) Further, sociology focuses mainly on quantitative techniques where as anthropology on qualitative research techniques. Perhaps, the methods of research are more important in differentiating the two. Anthropology's heavy focus on qualitative method and sociology's on

quantification are still persistent natures of the two disciplines. Further, one point of difference worth mentioning is that sociology is narrower in scope than anthropology, which has four sub fields; and anthropologists tend to stay in the field for long period (several months to few years) while sociologists prefer brief stay (weeks to few months). Introduction to Sociology

1.5. Summary The term sociology is a combination of two words, socius and logos, which mean respectively society and study. Thus, a simple etymological definition of sociology is that it is the science of society. Sociology is a social or behavioral science that originated in the 19th century in Western Europe; its main concern is discovering the basic laws and principles that govern human social life, the social world, the working and development of society and its institutions. It grew out of the great revolutionary contexts, with great concern to address the social changes, disorders and problems of the modern world. Micro-sociology studies the micro aspects of human society, that is the social processes and phenomena taking place at small scale levels; macro-sociology studies the macro aspects, that is, the overall structure, functioning, change, development and processes of social phenomena at large-scale levels. The six major fields of study in sociology are social organization and Introduction to Sociology 58 social theory, social change, social problems, social processes, social groups, and social control. Learning sociology provides us with sociological imagination, an illuminating way of understanding the forces and factors that affect our lives as individuals, groups, communities and nations. Sociology provides us with much practical benefit and it contributes greatly to the solutions for contemporary societal problems. Research is very important in sociology. Although some challenge its scientific status, it uses the scientific method to produce, store and disseminate scientific knowledge on society and social phenomena. A typical sociological research may involve seven steps, and each step is very important and has to be carefully followed to do standard and quality research. Sociology is not an island; it is interdependent with other sciences; and as to its subject matter it is more or less similar with the other social or behavioral sciences such as anthropology, social psychology, political science,

economics, and human geography. However, as to its Introduction to Sociology 59 methods, focus, unit of analysis, and approaches, it is different. The closest discipline to sociology is social anthropology; they share similar historical development, concepts, theories, and approaches; although the former focuses on modern societies and quantitative research and the latter focuses on traditional societies and qualitative research techniques.