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The sociology of Emile Durkheim

Patricia Chewning Young

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THE SOCIOLOGY OF
EMILE DURKHEIM

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Sociology
University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts
with Honors in Sociology

by
Patricia Chewning Young
May, 1962
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Tables taken from Pitirim Sorokin's *Contemporary Sociological Theories*. 
CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF EMILE DURKHEIM

Aristotle remarked many years ago that man is a social animal and that only a beast or a god is fit to live alone. Today, more than ever, one can not deny the ineluctable fact that the fate of mankind is determined by the group. Individuals working together, not alone, must resolve the problems of this troubled world. For as long as the human species has inhabited the earth, society has influenced man's actions, beliefs, and attitudes. It is not surprising, therefore, that society has become an object of investigation.

Sociology, the science of society, is an academic discipline. As a social science it is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, rather than with the reform of individuals or of society. Sociologists, however, are not indifferent to the attempts made by men to improve the conditions of human life. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim firmly believed that the knowledge acquired through the scientific investigation of society could be used to help men build a better tomorrow, but that this sound knowledge was needed before any type of social reform could be effective. Durkheim's conception of society gave him an indelible place not only in the history of sociology, but also in the history of all human thought.
Durkheim renovated social thinking because he felt "with his heart as well as with his brains." He conceived sociology to be not only a positive science and a method of investigation, but also to be the foundation of an integrated social philosophy which men could use to raise social standards. Although Durkheim as a sociologist was concerned with objectivity, he was never able to separate his work from his own time and place. As a sociologist and a teacher, he hoped that he could improve the social conditions of his native land.

To understand Durkheim's thought, therefore, one must know something about his life, experiences, and influences.

DURKHEIM'S BACKGROUND AND EARLY SCHOOLING

Rabbinical background. Emile Durkheim was born on April 15, 1858, just one year after the death of Auguste Comte, his acknowledged master. In his hometown of Voges in the province of Lorraine, Durkheim prepared himself for the rabbinate as many of his ancestors had done. The influence of a Catholic instructress, however, caused him to renounce his religious ambitions, and later he became an agnostic. His early religious training was not useless, for his Jewish background made him realize the importance of social solidarity. He used his Biblical knowledge in his sociological works on religion and in his analysis of primitive law and social organization.

Formal schooling. Durkheim's formal education began
in his native city at the College d'Epinal where he had a brilliant record. At the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris, he prepared himself for the teaching profession. After studying three years, he passed the national competitive examination which allowed him to enter the École Normale Superieure. Durkheim was disappointed with this school, but the German chemist Wilhelm Ostwald said that, "The surest mark of greatness in a young man is rebellion against the teaching he received." At the École Normale Durkheim condemned the ultra-literary style and too unscientific nature of instruction. He opposed the dilettantism and mysticism it encouraged, and later he spent his entire sociological career fighting against these forces. The Division of Labor in Society was Durkheim's main work in which he proved the moral worthlessness of dilettantism. This belligerent attitude toward the humanities and literature caused him to be next to the bottom on the rank list of degree candidates in 1882.

Two of Durkheim's professors at the École Normale had a profound influence on his thought. Émile Boutroux taught him the necessity of constantly subjecting scientific problems to a critical analysis. From Boutroux Durkheim also obtained the idea of creative synthesis, the nature "sui generis" of the life of the mind, and the importance of each science explaining its phenomena in terms of its own specific principles. Durkheim later used these principles in his own conception of sociology and its subject matter. From Charles Renouvier,
Durkheim acquired his contempt for dilettantism as well as his belief that philosophy should serve as a guide for social action.

While Durkheim was at the Ecole Normale, he studied the German philosopher Immanuel Kant whose works inspired him to form his own ethical system. Professor Bougle said that, "Durkheimism is Kantism revised and complemented by Comtism." The validity of this statement can be proved because Durkheim used Kant's inadequacies as the starting point for his own ethical system, and he emphasized the social aspect of reality which Kant often ignored. At one time Durkheim wrote:

Of all the philosophies which Germany has produced, Kantism is the one which, if wisely interpreted, can best be reconciled with the exigencies of science.

Auguste Comte, a nineteenth century French philosopher and mathematician, was Durkheim's acknowledged master. While studying Comte, Durkheim obtained his positivistic stress on empiricism and his emphasis on the significance of the group in determining human conduct. These two ideas are really the bases of Durkheim's sociology. One should not overlook the fact, however, that Durkheim rejected Comte's metaphysics.

**DURKHEIM AS A SOCIOLOGIST**

**Decision to be a sociologist.** In 1882, Durkheim decided to be a sociologist. He reached this decision because of his dissatisfaction with the state of the philosophical disciplines, because of his desire to contribute to the moral
consolidation of the Third French Republic, and because he believed that a positive science of society was necessary. Durkheim was attracted to sociology because it dealt with the living rather than with the dead, and Durkheim was anxious to use his knowledge in solving the problems of his own time and country. Durkheim, however, emphasized the importance of objectivity in sociology and felt that all scientists should distinguish between the scientific study of society and plans for social reform.

From 1882-1887, Durkheim taught philosophy at the Lycées of Sens, Saint-Quentin, and Troyes. During this period he was influenced by the organismic views of Spencer and Espinas. In his dissertation *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim approached the study of society biologically and referred to such concepts as the "social organ" and the "visceral life of society." By the founding of the *Année Sociologique* in 1896, Durkheim had broken with the organismic tradition. Espinas also influenced Durkheim's conception of a collective conscience. Durkheim was greatly influenced by great thinkers, but he did not keep their antiquated theories if he saw value in the new.

Émile Durkheim made his debut as a sociologist in 1885, when he collaborated with Ribot, the father of French psychology, on the *Revue Philosophique*. While working with Ribot, Durkheim began to realize the significance of the non-conscious aspects of human activity and the principle that the study of the pathological can throw light on the nature of the normal.
In 1887, Durkheim was appointed professor at the University of Bordeaux, and in 1920, he joined the faculty of the University of Paris where in 1906, he was appointed to the first chair of sociology in France.

**Durkheim as an author.** As an author Durkheim contributed not only to the field of sociology, but also to the fields of philosophy, religion, political science, law, and education. His four main works were efforts to treat the facts of social life according to the method of a positive science. One of these, *The Division of Labor in Society*, was his doctoral thesis which he defended before the Faculty of Letters in Paris in 1893. Muhlfeld, who wrote an account of Durkheim's defense said:

I am too often obliged to describe the candidate as brow beaten by the superiority of his jury, not to be happy for once... to speak of a thesis defense in which the candidate constantly held the upper hand. M. Durkheim is not only a scientist of great value, he is the surest and most delightful of orators. He will be a master.

*The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895) introduced Durkheim's principle that the analysis of group behavior should begin with the study of collective phenomena, not individuals. *Suicide* presented his theory of social constraint and his idea that suicide is a social fact, although it is usually thought of as being a highly individualistic fact. The last of Durkheim's major works was *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. In this book he tried to show that religious life reflects the society and that association is the generating source
of religious experience.

In 1898, Durkheim founded and became the first editor of *Année Sociologique*. This annual periodical systematically and methodically reviewed the state of the social sciences. Durkheim felt that one of the main purposes of the *Année* was to bring all social sciences closer together. He also hoped that by classifying and analyzing sociological literature, he would boost social investigation. Articles on general sociology, religion, crime, economics, law, and social morphology appeared in the *Année*.

**Durkheim as a citizen.** Durkheim contributed to the practical as well as the theoretical ends of sociology. Durkheim hoped that his theoretical studies might help to raise social standards by giving men the courage to condition and control their world. As a citizen of France, he developed a series of recommendations for the regulation of production, consumption, distribution, and employer-employee relations. He urged the abolition of hereditary class positions and worked for the tightening of divorce regulations in France. During World War I, he participated in activities of moral encouragement, and he interpreted the meaning of contemporary events for the French people. During the war his son André, one of his two children by his wife Louise Dreyfus, was killed. Durkheim looked upon his only son as one of his brightest pupils and hoped that he would carry on his work. André's death hastened Durkheim's own death on November 15, 1917.
CHAPTER II

DURKHEIM'S CONCEPTION OF SOCIOLOGY

PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM

Durkheim contributed to the field of sociology in so many ways that it is difficult to choose his main contribution. Certainly one of the most important things he did for sociology was to formulate a complex definition of the purposes and content of this social science. Durkheim first conceived sociology to be a philosophical system. He believed that it should be linked to the art of social living. In the Division of Labor in Society Durkheim said:

We would not consider our scientific labors worth an hour's trouble if they were to have only a speculative interest.8

Durkheim hoped that sociology would show the best ways to achieve social objectives and would select the ends society ought to pursue on the basis of scientific observation and empirical data.

POSITIVE SCIENCE

Objectivity. Durkheim also thought of sociology as a positive science. He stressed the importance of adopting a certain framework of reference in studying social facts. In The Rules of Sociological Method he emphasized the fact that scientists must eradicate all preconceptions and
prejudices and must accept the proposition that the phenomena being studied have properties not yet known by man. To be a positive science, Durkheim felt that sociology must meet squarely the paradox of studying subjective phenomena objectively. Sociology should, therefore, include rules for universal verification. Durkheim believed that definitions are indispensable for verification and that a sociologist's first task is to define the things with which he is dealing.

_Gathering social facts._ Durkheim warned against the dangers of gathering facts unsystematically. In order to be a positive science, sociology should be specific and examine a particular moral problem rather than philosophize on the nature of morality. Durkheim insisted, however, that all facts pertaining to this moral problem must be related within a systematic framework. Sociology is a specific and a synthetic science.

In this light, Durkheim stressed the independence of sociology. He felt that it should have a field of its own and should contain within itself its own principles of explanation. Durkheim stressed the fact that there is a social reality "sui generis" and that the facts of social life must be explained in terms of other social facts. Durkheim also believed that sociology was the system or corpus of the positive social sciences. He felt that the whole body of social disciplines must be studied from the sociological point of view.
using the positive approach and method.

STUDY OF SOCIAL FACTS

Exteriority. The most fruitful of Durkheim's conceptions of sociology is his emphasis on its being the study of social facts. In *The Rules of Sociological Method* Durkheim asserted that there are some facts in social life that cannot be explained by physical or psychological analysis. These facts are called "social facts" because they are irreducible to individual facts. Durkheim identified social facts by two main criteria. First, social facts are exterior to the individual. By "exterior," Durkheim meant that a social fact is an independent reality which forms a part of the objective environment. Social facts are not responsive to individual desires because they are completely exterior to the individual and not created by him. This conception of social facts has put Durkheim in the category of a social realist. He has been accused of maintaining that society, its facts and products, exist outside and above individuals as a super entity. Durkheim, however, persistently denied believing in society as a transcendental and substantial entity. He asked his critics to spare him the humiliation of ever suspecting that his theories implied that a whole can be an existential reality apart from its parts. Durkheim merely meant that social facts have properties which are different from what they would have been if social phenomena had been developed separately by non-asso-
ciated members of a group.

**Constraint.** Social Facts are also endowed with a power of constraint over the individual. The individual feels constrained by the social facts that are exterior to him. Social facts do not conform to individual volition, but they actually mold individual volition to some extent. This characteristic of a social fact is Durkheim's basis for his conception of collective forces in social life. Social facts are defined by Durkheim as, "every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an exterior constraint."
CHAPTER III

DURKHEIM'S METHODOLOGY

RULES FOR OBSERVING SOCIAL FACTS

Since social facts are the subject matter of sociology, Durkheim felt that there should be rules for observing them. Many of the earlier social theorists had neglected the problem of what method should be used in analyzing social phenomena. The Rules of Sociological Method is concerned specifically with methodological problems, but Durkheim's valuable contributions in this area are scattered throughout his major works.

Social facts as "things". Durkheim's first rule for the observation of social facts is that they must be considered as "things". Durkheim believed that men's ideas are illusions that distort the real aspect of things and that these ideas must not be taken for the "things" themselves. Sociologists must eradicate all preconceptions and study social facts objectively as external things. Only by following this procedure can sociology be a positive science.12

Definitions. Durkheim's second rule for observing social facts is that the group of phenomena under study must be defined in advance of the investigation by common external characteristics. Such a definition does not explain the phenomena, but furnishes a basis for further explanation.13 Durkheim's
views on the function of definitions in scientific analysis constitute one of the weakest parts of his methodology. He did not appreciate the important part the hypotheses and "a priori" assumptions play in a scientific investigation. Durkheim ignored the role of the scientist in defining characteristics. Although Durkheim held that this method does not depend on the particular twist of the scientist's mind, he failed to see that facts cannot define themselves and that the scientist must have some notion of what he is looking for before he can study the facts.

Furthermore, if definitions are the starting point of an investigation, how can one know the inherent characteristics of a phenomenon in advance? Durkheim granted this point, but dismissed it by saying that although one cannot know the essential features of a phenomenon at the beginning, one can discover some characteristics that are external enough to be immediately visible. Durkheim failed to regard the first definition as a working tool to be changed or discarded, but he accepted it as permanent. Definitions are necessary in scientific investigation, but they should not be permanent conceptions as Durkheim conceived them to be.14

Independence of social facts. Third, the investigator must consider social facts as independent of their individual manifestations. Durkheim maintained that social facts can be dealt with more objectively if they are separated from the individual facts expressing them. Social life is perpetually in
the process of transformation, so that the scientist has no constant point of reference which is a prerequisite for objectivity. Collective habits, however, are expressed in individual acts and in definite forms such as legal codes, social statistics, and religious dogma. These definite forms constitute a standard for the scientist and serve as objective indices.¹⁵

Durkheim's most famous example of the objective index method or of the indirect observation of social facts is found in his The Division of Labor in Society. In this study of social solidarity Durkheim found himself confronted with the moral phenomenon of social solidarity which is not conducive to exact observation. He, therefore, used an external fact that he believed symbolized the internal fact and studied the latter through the former. He picked law as the external index of social solidarity and justified this objective index on the following grounds:

1. The greater the sentiment of social solidarity, the greater will be the number, frequency, and intensity of the diverse relations in the society.
2. The number of these social relations is necessarily proportional to the number of juridical rules which regulate them.
3. The general life of society can not expand without its juridical life expanding at the same time and in the same proportion.¹⁶

These assumptions of Durkheim, however, are not necessarily valid. First, many social relations are not regulated by law, but by customs, folkways, and mores. Often the mores are not in agreement with the law. Durkheim said that it is
an exceptional situation when mores and laws are in conflict and that mores are usually the basis for laws. This may be true, but any scientific method should be definite, and there should be no room for exceptions. Although there are several flaws in Durkheim's rules for observing social facts, his principle of studying social facts objectively helped to boost sociology as a positive science.

COMPARISON TO SHOW CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS

Comparison and history. Durkheim's idea concerning the observation of social facts led to his emphasis on the comparative method to show causal relationships. Durkheim stressed the fact that history is central to the sociological method of comparison. History guides sociologists in classifying social facts in terms of a systematic and relevant typology. Although Durkheim insisted that only currently operative variables are causes of social phenomena, he maintained that these variables can only be understood by a comparative analysis involving a recourse to history.

History shows that as the size of a society and as the dynamic density increase, competition also increases. As an adaptive response to this increased competition, structural differentiation occurs. Durkheim, therefore, said:

...History is not the only natural framework of human life, man is a product of history. If one takes him out of
history, if one tries to conceive him outside of time, fixed, immobile, one distorts him. This immobile man is not man.18

Concomitant variations. In using the comparative method, Durkheim argued the merits of studying concomitant variations. This method holds that if a change in one variable is accompanied by a change in another, then the two changes may be casually related directly or linked through some basic social fact.19 Durkheim maintained that sociological data often requires the establishment of an intricate causal situation rather than a simple cause and effect relation. In addition, a sociological investigation must include an account of the axiological significances in a causational situation. Ideals and values may be concomitant variables. They also give direction to behavior and may properly be considered as causes and effects.

Division of Labor. In a causal analysis the scientist must first define the causal problem. Then he should subject existing causal explanations to a critical review to see if there is a positive correlation. One of Durkheim's best examples of this method is found in The Division of Labor in Society. The causal problem which Durkheim was studying was what caused the division of labor in society. Durkheim examined the existing causal explanation that said that the division of labor is caused by man's desire to increase his happiness. Durkheim pointed out that happiness is a relative thing and that there is not any absolute happiness that men approach
as they progress. There might be as much happiness in primitive societies as in modern ones which are characterized by the division of labor.

Durkheim's argument against the desire for happiness being the cause of the division of labor showed the characteristics of his style known as "argumentum per eliminacionem". Arguing by elimination is psychologically appealing and convincing. The reader is prone to think that the theories discussed and eliminated are the only possible ones. The arguments also imply that the causes are mutually exclusive. This is not true, and all causes should be studied for their interrelations. It may be true that the desire for happiness did not by itself cause the division of labor, but perhaps this desire intensified the basic cause which Durkheim maintained was the increase in volume and density of societies.

FUNCTIONALISM

Durkheim maintained that causal relationships are not the only things to be considered in studying social facts. To show how a fact originated does not necessarily show how a fact is useful. Durkheim said that a social fact can exist without being useful, and often the cause of its existence is independent of the end it serves. Any major phase of a society, however, is interwoven with the maintenance and integration of that society. Durkheim, therefore, believed that, "When the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek
separately the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills." In *The Division of Labor in Society* Durkheim showed that the function of the division of labor is to integrate society, although it was not originally brought into being to perform this role.

Durkheim's conception of the methodology to be used in social investigation was important in spite of the fallacies that have been indicated. His stress on objectivity made sociology more precise. His emphasis on combining the comparative method to show causal relationships and the functional approach to show the usefulness of social facts kept sociology from being one-sided. Durkheim also emphasized the importance of knowing the past if one is to understand the present. Durkheim's methodology showed that sociology should indeed be the system of the social sciences.
CHAPTER IV

DURKHEIM'S CONCEPTION OF SOCIETY

AGELIC REALISM

One of Durkheim's most interesting conceptions is that of the nature of society. He believed that one must first know society in order to understand man. Durkheim's conception of society greatly influenced his methodology and his views concerning the nature of sociology.

The basis of Durkheim's conception of society is "agelic realism". Agelic realists believe that society is a reality "sui generis" and that society exists apart from individuals. Durkheim, therefore, ascribed ultimate social reality to the group rather than to the individual. He maintained that social facts exist as social currents which have an objective reality and a constraining effect on the individual.

Defense of "agelic realism". There are four points in the defense of Durkheim's "agelic realism". First, there is an alleged heterogeneity of the individual and collective states of mind. For example, in the time of a national danger the intensity of the collective feeling of patriotism is greater than any individual feeling of patriotism. The individual and collective states of mind differ in spite of the fact that the feeling expressed is the same. Second, individual attitudes and behavior are often different in a group situation. An in-
individual in a rioting mob behaves in a way which he could not if he had to act alone.

"Agelic realism" can also be confirmed by the uniformity of social statistics. Crime and suicide rates tend to be consistent within a given society. This consistency shows that the rates can be explained by real social currents rather than by individual factors. The fourth point in the defense of "agelic realism" is the fact that society is not reducible to properties of the individual mind because society is more than a sum of individuals. Society can constrain the individual and mold his attitudes and beliefs. These four principles show that society is a reality "sui generis" and that it exists apart from individuals.22

**Sociology and psychology.** In order to understand Durkheim's conception of social realism, one must know something about his views on the relationship between sociology and psychology. One reason that Durkheim's theories pertaining to the individual and society are so hard to comprehend is because he used the word "individual" in several ways. He usually spoke of the individual as an isolated, organico-psychical being. When he specifically used the qualification "as he really is," Durkheim meant the organico-psychical individual as a member of society and as a complete personality. When he said that social phenomena can not be explained in terms of the individual, he meant the individual as an isolated being rather than the individual as a social being.23
Durkheim believed that no man can live outside of society and be a complete individual, but he objected to the doctrines which viewed society as an artificial mechanism deliberately invented by human beings. Durkheim used sociology as a weapon against the various individualistic views of the origin of society. Many of his works such as *The Division of Labor in Society* and *Suicide* were directed mainly against those doctrines which implied that there were individuals who existed prior to and were responsible for the creation of society.

Durkheim's grave error was trying to combat these doctrines on their own grounds. He realized that individuals cannot exist prior to and apart from society. The individualistic views, however, confused the individual as a product of his social milieu with the isolated, organic-psychical individual. Instead of rejecting this as an illusory construct, Durkheim accepted it for polemic purposes and set up his own sociological conceptions in opposition to it. Durkheim believed that social life is "constituted by a system of facts which derive from positive and durable relations established among a plurality of individuals." Durkheim felt that sociology should deal with only the purely associative aspects of behavior. One of his most famous statements was "every time that a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychical phenomenon, one can be assured that it is false."  

**Social realist.** Durkheim repeatedly insisted that man
is a product of society and that a theory of human nature must not be the starting point of sociology, but must be one of its end results. In fighting the utilitarian solution to the problem of individual relations to society, he took over the individualistic ideas and turned them around by emphasizing society in opposition to the individual. This polemic ratiocination was often psychologically convincing, but it also made Durkheim express this problem in terms set by his opponents, although many of their terms were false, misleading, and illogical. Because Durkheim's own principles were couched in the phrases of the realists, he himself was labelled as a social realist. 26 Durkheim, however, denied ever believing in society as a transcendental and substantial entity. Society is a reality "sui generis," but it can not exist without the individuals who comprise it.

ASSOCIATIONAL REALISM

Although Durkheim was not a true social realist, he did support "associational realism". "Associational realism" is the belief that the process of association and its particular kind of organization has a direct effect on the interacting individuals. 27 In associating, individuals are transformed and behave in a manner contrary to their behavior when they are alone.

Basic concepts. The principle of "associational realism" is the source of several of Durkheim's concepts about
society. Durkheim believed that social facts exist independently of individual facts. By this he meant that society is a personality qualitatively different from the individual personalities that comprise it. By "la société dépasse l'individu," Durkheim meant that society makes demands on the individual which he could not make on himself as a simple biological being. Collective representations and the collective conscious are the direct results of human association, but they exist in individual minds and consciences, according to Durkheim.28

Social realism misunderstood. There are two reasons why Durkheim's conception of social realism has been misunderstood. First, he emphasized using "exteriority" as a visible symbol of social facts. By "exteriority" Durkheim did not mean that social facts exist apart from individuals, but that social facts have visible symbols such as codes of law, buildings, and religious ceremonies through which the social facts can be studied. Durkheim did not ignore the fact that these external symbols were the overt indices of representations and sentiments. The reason why Durkheim's social realism was misunderstood is due to his polemic style. In his fight against individualism, he accepted the isolated, organico-psychical being instead of pointing out that Society and Individual are "the collective and distributive aspects of the same thing."29
CHAPTER V

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN THE DIVISION OF LABOR IN SOCIETY

Durkheim felt that one of the main problems of sociology is to investigate the nature of social cohesion. Durkheim's focal concept in his study of group unity was "solidarity". He believed that one of a sociologist's main duties is to classify and compare the different types of social solidarity. The Division of Labor in Society is a classic example of Durkheim's study of social solidarity or of the collective conscience.

In this work Durkheim was concerned with proving that the division of labor is a necessary factor in social solidarity. He classified social solidarity as a moral phenomenon which can not be directly observed or measured; therefore, an external symbol must be substituted for it. Durkheim chose law as the objective index because he believed that all varieties of social solidarity are reflected in law. Durkheim then classified the different types of law to see if there is a type which symbolizes the social solidarity of which the division of labor is the cause.

MECHANICAL SOLIDARITY

Repressive law. Durkheim said that repressive or penal law is the most dominant in primitive societies. In such so-
cieties a crime is an act which offends the collective conscience and which evokes punishment. Durkheim defined collective conscience as "the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of the same society." These beliefs form a system of control, for the members of a group will not tolerate anyone who acts against them. Punishment in primitive societies is really an emotional reaction of graded intensity which the society expresses on members who commit crimes.

**Individual and common consciences.** Durkheim believed that each individual possesses two consciences. The first conscience "contains states which are personal to each of us and which characterize us, while the states which comprehend the other are common to all society." When the collective conscience determines conduct, men pursue collective interests rather than personal ones. Collective sentiments seem to dominate the individual in societies where social solidarity is strong, and these sentiments bind the individual to objects that are outside the temporal life. In avenging these collective sentiments, men avenge society, not themselves. The crime rate shows that some particular sentiment is not in all individual consciences; since crime attacks the collective conscience, it must be combated as collectively as possible.

**Mechanical solidarity.** Penal law reveals a type of social cohesion which is derived from the fact that individuals are attracted to each other because they have common be-
liefs and practices. Durkheim referred to this social cohesion based on likeness as "mechanical solidarity". He argued that the degree to which penal law promotes mechanical solidarity depends on the extent to which the life of the society is embraced and regulated by the common conscience. Mechanical solidarity is strongest if the ideas common to all group members are greater than those which belong to each individual member.

In societies where mechanical solidarity is strongest, the individual's personality disappears. Man no longer acts for himself, but for the group. Mechanical solidarity may be compared to the cohesion which unites the elements of an organic body. Social molecules, as well as the molecules of inorganic bodies, must act together in order to maintain cohesion. Individuality must become a secondary factor in societies with mechanical solidarity. Each individual must forget himself and work with other group members for the advancement of the group.

The strength of mechanical solidarity in a society varies with respect to three conditions:

1. The links of mechanical solidarity are as strong as the common conscience more completely envelops the individual conscience.
2. The average intensity of the states of the collective conscience determines the degree of solidarity.
3. The more definite beliefs and practices are, the less place there is for individual divergencies.

As societies progress, however, the personal conscience becomes more important than the common conscience.
By studying the decline in the types of crimes which have progressively disappeared, one can see that the common conscience consists less and less of strong determined sentiments. The only collective sentiments that have become more intense are those which have for their object individual affairs rather than collective ones. Religious history shows that there has been a decline in the number of collective sentiments and beliefs. Criminal law and religious beliefs both show that the common conscience has steadily become feebler and weaker. Durkheim believed, however, that the common conscience will not completely disappear. In fact, it might even be strengthened because as beliefs become less collective, the individual becomes the object of a kind of religion. Men then become attached to one another for their own benefit, rather than for the benefit of society.35

ORGANIC SOLIDARITY

Restitutive law. Since mechanical solidarity is progressively becoming feeble, Durkheim reasoned that social life must decrease or another type of solidarity must replace mechanical solidarity. It is evident that social life does not decrease in advanced societies and that they continue to show a sentiment of unity. Durkheim maintained that after the collective sentiment breaks down, the division of labor promotes solidarity. In societies characterized by a division of labor, civil or restitutive law is most prominent. Laws are no longer
concerned with punishment, but with the restoration of things as they were before the society was disturbed. Since civil laws are established between individuals in society rather than between individuals and society, the public does not react very violently when civil laws are broken.

Causes of the division of labor. The relations which civil law governs and the solidarity expressed by civil law result from a division of labor. Durkheim rejected the idea that the division of labor is due to the desire for happiness. He said that the basic cause for it is the increase in population. An increase in population intensifies the struggle for existence and the social density. In order to survive, men find it necessary to divide the work to be done. In this way men can live side by side without fighting for existence. Social ties are hard to break because each member of the society performs a different function.

Organic solidarity. Durkheim compared the division of labor in society to the parts of a human body which must function together if the whole is to run smoothly. Solidarity resulting from the division of labor is known as "organic". In societies where organic solidarity is strong, there is much respect for the individual. Men are judged on the basis of innate worth rather than on hereditary status. The individual, not the group, is responsible for his own legal and moral actions. The individual expresses his desires in contracts which are enforced by the legal system. When labor is divided, how-
ever, the individual must still rely on his group because each member fulfills a particular function. This dependency creates a solidary society.

The division of labor is effective only in a society which is already established. If competition places isolated and estranged individuals together, it separates them even more. An abnormal form of the division of labor also exists when there is a conflict between capital and labor. In societies where the division of labor is forced or where employees are not sufficiently occupied, social solidarity is not promoted by the division of labor.

Although abnormal forms of the division of labor do exist, Durkheim believed that the ideal of human fraternity can only be accomplished in proportion to the division of labor. He felt that specialization is a moral force which can bring world peace. When labor is divided, men depend on each other for existence, and they are bound together by occupational groups. These occupational groups can provide the system of rules necessary for moral and judicial regulation in society. Durkheim maintained that by combining men into occupational groups and providing justice for all, men may someday be able to achieve their primary aim of peace on earth.

CRITICISM OF THE DIVISION OF LABOR IN SOCIETY

Durkheim's stress on the regulatory functions of social life helped men to see the need for a science of society. His
analysis of the evolution of law was interesting, but he failed to see that primitive societies as well as modern ones have both the division of labor and restitutive law. This fact refutes the plausibility of Durkheim's theory of unilinear development from mechanical to organic solidarity. He also failed to see that mechanical solidarity may be stronger than organic solidarity in modern societies. Durkheim's analysis of mechanical and organic solidarity can be used in the interpretation of the processes of differentiation, integration, and competition.

The biggest flaw in The Division of Labor in Society is the fact that Durkheim refuted his emphasis on social facts not being responsive to individual desires. By attributing the division of labor to the need to survive in a large society, he based his explanation on an individual, biological phenomenon rather than on a sociological one. In spite of this flaw, Durkheim presented a sociological study that emphasized the need for social solidarity and that showed the importance of group life on the individual. His suggestions for promoting peace showed that the scientific investigation of social problems may lead to solutions for the world's social ills.
# Table I

## Repressive and Restitutive Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society: Ranked in descending degree of primitiveness</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Number of laws</th>
<th>% Repressive</th>
<th>% Restitutive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Hebrews</td>
<td>4 books of Pentateuch</td>
<td>4000-5000 verses</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franks</td>
<td>Salic law</td>
<td>293 articles</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burgundians</td>
<td>Burgundian law</td>
<td>311 articles</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman–5th Century B.C.</td>
<td>12 Tables</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table II

**LIFE IN SOCIETIES WITH MECHANICAL AND ORGANIC SOLIDARITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Behavior and Psychology</th>
<th>Mechanical Solidarity</th>
<th>Organic Solidarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental, moral, and social homogeneity of individuals. Differences are due only to heredity, domination of tradition and lack of individualism.</td>
<td>Disappearance of mental and moral similarity of individuals. Increase of individuality and peculiarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, Morals, and Social Control</td>
<td>Social conscience is strong, unanimous, and non-atomized. Crime is an action which offends the strong and intensive social conscience and calls forth strong repression. Criminal law dominates. Purpose of law is “repression” and through that reinforcement of moral conscience of the group.</td>
<td>Common conscience decreases. Crimes offend less intensively. Punishment decreases and offender has only to restore harm done to his victim. Increase of individual freedom and of contractual law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity and Social Ties</td>
<td>“Mechanistic solidarity” based on homogeneity of individuals. Tie which binds them is strong. Unanimity of public opinion based on mental and moral homogeneity.</td>
<td>Homogeneity of individuals does not exist any more. The division of labor becomes the new social tie. Solid unity of group based on non-self-sufficiency of heterogeneous individuals. They “need” one another because everyone does a special part of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political regime</td>
<td>All important affairs and acts of justice enacted by the whole body of the group.</td>
<td>Specialization of political functions. Tendency to decrease inherited political status. Contractual relationship of government and citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic organization</td>
<td>Communal property</td>
<td>Private property; contractual cooperation; “open door” system which permits everybody to enter any occupation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and Ideology</td>
<td>Belief in impersonal totemic force free from an individuality of personality. Local and tribal patriotism.</td>
<td>Polytheism and monotheism; “individualization” and “personalization” of God accompanied by universalization of religion. Waning local and tribal patriotism and increase of cosmopolitanism or internationalism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL CONSTRAINT IN SUICIDE

PURPOSE OF SUICIDE

Suicide was Durkheim's empirical attempt to prove his theory of social solidarity and social constraint. In this book Durkheim was concerned with proving that different rates of suicide are the consequence of variations in degree and type of social solidarity. His study involved distinguishing normal and pathological phenomena. He used comparison and observation in determining the normality of social phenomena. Durkheim considered social conditions to be normal if they are generally distributed in a society at a given phase of its development. Each societal type has a different standard of normality because each has an average type of its own. Durkheim sought to prove that suicide is a normal social fact which only becomes pathological when it increases at an accelerated tempo and that the types of suicide depend on the degree of social solidarity.

Durkheim's theory of suicide rates was also important in showing the exteriority of social facts and their constraining power. He insisted that there are suicidal currents produced by varying states of social organization. These currents act mechanically upon individuals and force a certain number
of people in a particular society to commit suicide. Individual facts, however, determine who in particular will succumb to these currents, but they do not determine the number of suicides within a society.

**DEFINITION OF SUICIDE**

Durkheim distinguished suicide from other types of deaths by saying that it was any death caused by a possible or negative act on the part of the victim himself. Although the victim knows that his act will produce death, his action has a social nature. Each society has an aptitude for suicide, according to Durkheim. This aptitude is determined by the proportion between the total number of voluntary deaths and the population of every age and sex. The suicide rate within a given society is constant for long periods of time. Durkheim pointed out that the degree of variation with respect to the general mortality rate is greater than that of the suicide rate.

**CAUSES OF SUICIDE**

**Psychopathic states.** Durkheim said that suicide was not a distinct form of insanity. Suicides by the insane include such types as melancholy, obsessive, and impulsive suicides, but the majority of suicides are not connected at all with insanity. The suicide rates of many countries bear no definite relation to the insanity rates. Suicide, moreover, varies in inverse proportion to psychopathic states, so they
do not bear a regular and indisputable relation to suicide.

Normal psychological states. Durkheim also maintained that race and heredity did not determine the suicide rate of a society. Durkheim used the term "race" to mean any group of individuals whose resemblance is hereditarily transmissible. Durkheim found that there is a high suicide rate among Germans in Germany, but not among Germans outside of Germany. Durkheim also believed that suicide was not hereditary. The field that favors the development of suicide is transmitted, but not the tendency to commit suicide. If hereditary predestined people to suicide, there would be an equal effect on both sexes which is not the case. Suicide also can not be attributed to heredity because it tends to increase with the advance of age.

Cosmic factors. By studying statistical records, Durkheim found that, contrary to popular belief, suicide is more frequent in the summer than in the winter when life is most distressing. The suicide rate is higher during the day and in the summer when days are longer because social life is at its height, not because of cosmic factors. Durkheim, therefore, concluded that the direct action of cosmic factors can not explain variations in suicide rates.

Imitation. Contrary to Gabriel Tarde, Durkheim said that imitation is not the cause of suicide because if it were, the suicide rate would radiate from the center of a society and get weaker. Suicide is contagious, but imitation does not
propogate it. Imitation only exposes a condition which is the true generating cause of suicide.38

TYPES OF SUICIDE BASED ON CAUSES

Egoistic suicide. Having proved that extra-social factors were not the causes for the suicide rate, Durkheim sought to prove that the number of suicides within a society is a function of the degree of integration. He found in classifying suicides by causes that there are three types of suicide reflecting the degree of integration in a group. Egoistic suicide is caused by the insufficient participation on the part of individuals in the life of social groups or by the insufficient integration of social groups.

Catholics commit suicide less than Protestants. The reason for the low Catholic suicide rate is because they have greater integration and less individualism in their religious life. Durkheim maintained that religious individualism varies with the desire for knowledge which is stronger among Protestants than among Catholics. Durkheim maintained that religious individualism varies with the desire for knowledge. Catholics tend to accept church dogma without question, but Protestants want to know the reasons for various beliefs. As men seek knowledge, they lose cohesion in their religious group and begin to act more independently. Social cohesion, therefore, is stronger among Catholics than among Protestants because the de-
sire for knowledge is weaker among Catholics. Catholicism helps to keep men from committing suicide because it promotes social cohesion, not because it teaches suicide is wrong.39

Durkheim also considered the suicide rate of married people in studying egoistic suicide. Married persons over twenty commit suicide less than unmarried ones. Durkheim maintained that the lower rate of suicide among married people was due to the influence of family society. This immunity increases as the density of the family and its integration increase. Men need support outside of themselves, and the best obstacle to suicide is some type of collective force such as the church or the family. Egoistic suicide is committed by those who think mainly about themselves and who do not take enough part in social groups. A lack of social solidarity is, therefore, the generating cause of egoistic suicide.40

Altruistic suicide. When social solidarity is too strong, men do not have much resistance to suicide. Suicide committed in such societies is known as "altruistic". In societies where altruistic suicide is most dominant, the individual conscience is destroyed, and each person lives or dies for the group. Obligatory altruistic suicide is committed in some societies which consider it a social duty for an old, useless person to kill himself, so that he will not be a burden to the group. Some societies consider the taking of one's own life to give social prestige. This is known as "optional altru-
istic suicide". Those who commit acute altruistic suicide do so for the sheer joy of sacrifice.\(^{41}\)

Altruistic suicide can be studied among European armies. Durkheim found that suicide grows with the duration of service, that it is strongest among volunteers and re-enlisted men, and that it is stronger among officers than privates. Durkheim maintained that the suicide rate among soldiers is not due to disgust with the service, but that it is due to the military spirit, and the altruism it involves. This fact can be proved by noting that altruistic suicide is stronger when the people have less inclination to egoistic suicide and that the altruistic suicide is maximum among elite troops.\(^{42}\)

**Anomic suicide.** Anomic suicide is induced by the breakdown of social norms. During economic crises the suicide rate increases because the collective order is disturbed. Social control becomes weak, and there is no limit to individual desires. Individual passion has no bounds or goals, and the individual is lost in his desires. Moreover, married men commit suicide less than single ones because marriage provides a set of norms which regulate the life of passion. Women, however, do not need strict social regulation. As a result, the suicide rate of single women is lower than that of single men. All people need a set of social norms to guide them, and when the norms break down, anomic suicide increases.
INDIVIDUAL FORMS OF THE TYPES OF SUICIDE

It is interesting to distinguish the individual forms of the different types of suicide. Those who commit egoistic suicide tend to reflect sadly on their condition and are lost in their dreams. Many such people commit suicide cheerfully and feel that they are satisfying personal needs. Those who commit altruistic suicide do it with a calm feeling of duty, with mystic enthusiasm, and with peaceful courage. On the other hand, those who commit anomic suicide do it with violent recriminations against life in general or against one person.43

Combinations. The three types of suicide may also be combined. In ego-anomic suicide there is a mixture of apathy and agitation and of action and revery. Those who commit anomic-altruistic suicide seem to be exasperated, but effervescent. Ego-altruistic suicide is characterized by melancholy tempered with moral fortitude.

Forms of death. The form of death chosen by the person who commits suicide is independent of the nature of the suicide. The form is determined by the totality of customs and usages in a society and by the relative dignity attributed to the forms by each person. No matter how an individual commits suicide, the suicide rates show that there is a reality external to and above the individual. Collective forces and the degree of social solidarity are the only way to explain the fact that a defi-
nite number of people kill themselves in each society in a definite time period.

REDUCTION OF THE SUICIDE RATE

Repression and education. Since collective forces in society determine the suicide rate, society is confronted with the task of obviating suicide. Durkheim believed that sociology could show society how to reduce the suicide rate. In Durkheim's investigation he found that repressive measures have only a limited effect on lowering the rate because public opinion does not often tolerate repression. Education can not be used to lower the rate because the moral state of a society is reflected in the type of education it provides.

Occupational group. Durkheim believed that only the occupational group could control the suicide rate. It is the best means because individuals are devoted to the occupational group that helps them to survive. The occupational group limits greed, so that the greatest number of people can survive, but it is also sympathetic to one's needs. Political groups are too far removed from the individual's life, and religious groups only socialize by withdrawing liberty of thought. Even the family can not provide as much social cohesion as the occupational group can in modern life. Only occupational groups can increase cohesion and reduce the suicide rate without weakening individuality and national unity.44
CRITICISM OF SUICIDE

Individual and society. In Suicide Durkheim showed that unintended and unwanted social phenomena require a social rather than a psychological interpretation. He failed, however, to see the social significance of individual volition or decision. He was wrong in giving priority to society because the individual is as real as society, and the two are always in interaction. His study did show how the group can influence the action of individuals, but it also showed the necessity of sociologists and psychologists working together to try to understand the nature of man.

Causal analysis. Durkheim also failed to see that a social fact is not the result of a single, unique cause. His statistical figures may have proved that suicide is not the result of extra-social factors, but he did not combine any of the extra-social causes to see if they could explain variations in the suicide rate. When Durkheim attributed suicide to a rupture in the individual's accommodation to his social environment, he failed to see that this rupture cannot take place without a simultaneous predisposition on the part of the individual.45 Durkheim's study, however, showed the exteriority and constraining power of social facts and how non-social phenomena are related to the social world. This study of suicide was a pioneering contribution to explaining social causation.
CHAPTER VII

DURKHEIM'S SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION
OF RELIGION

THE SOURCE OF RELIGION

The Aruntas. In the Elementary Forms of the Religious Life Durkheim analyzed the collective forces of religion in their most elementary manifestations. He chose the Arunta tribe in Australia for his study because he felt that its belief in "totemism" was the most primitive and simple form of religious thought. Totemism is "an implicit belief in a mysterious force...which provides sanctions for violations of taboos, inculcates moral responsibilities in the group, and animates the totem itself."46 Durkheim believed that the totem symbolizes the group.

Cause of religion. After studying totemism in the Arunta tribe, Durkheim postulated that the group is the generating cause of religious experience. Society develops moral forces for the individual and raises man outside of himself. Society becomes conscious of itself by the common actions of the individuals, and collective ideas or religious sentiments symbolize these actions. Action dominates religious life, and as a result, religion has given birth to all essential parts of society. The principle objective of all religions is to influence man's moral life and help him to build an ideal world.47
Symbols of religious life. The symbols of religious life originate from the interplay of minds in a society. These symbols have force because they are created and developed by the group. They are a vital part of cooperation since individuals are irresistibly inclined to respond to them because they are collectively derived. Religious beliefs picture the Kingdom of Heaven as a glorified society, and men need this ideal to discipline them for life in society.

THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

Durkheim believed that religion establishes a complete and absolute heterogeneity between the sacred and the profane. The sacred realm of life consists of things that are set apart by man as being religious. The sacred inspires a particular sort of reverence and awe unlike the secular which is common place and should not touch the sacred.48

When the Arunta tribesmen gather for periodic orgies known as "corroborees," crowd stimulation results and causes intense emotionalism. In this way the idea of the sacred emerges. The sacred is not illusory, but it symbolizes society. It produces in the individual a mixture of awe and respect. Such concepts as "God" and the "Holy Ghost" are symbols of the sacred and of religion, but society, not fear and awe, generates these symbols. Durkheim, therefore, considered religion to be the unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things.49
THE FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION

Disciplinary and preparatory function. Durkheim maintained that religion has four main functions. The disciplinary and preparatory function of religion imposes self-discipline on the individual and prepares him for life in society.

The ascetic practices of religion are an inherent element in any society, for they teach men to be concerned for others and to renounce their own goals for the goals of the society. Society can only function properly when the individual members are willing to accept controls. Religious beliefs teach men to accept these controls and to work for the group.

Cohesive function. Religion also promotes social solidarity. Religious ceremonies bring people together and help them to reinforce their common bonds. In daily life men are occupied with their own immediate and personal interests. As a result, social ties often become obscure, and men find it necessary to meet periodically to express their cohesion as fellow social beings. The essential thing about ceremonial institutions is that men are assembled, that sentiments are felt in common, and that they are expressed in common acts.

Revitalizing function. The third function of religion is that it perpetuates tradition and sustains the vitality of the group's social heritage. A large number of religious ceremonies include rites which recall the past and which keep the essential parts of group life from escaping from memory. Ceremony functions to awaken certain ideas and
sentiments, to attach the present to the past, and to attach the individual to the group. In order to keep society alive, individuals must be aware of their social heritage. Religion serves this educational function by perpetuating traditions.

**Euphoric function.** Ceremonies and rituals also have an euphoric function. They establish a pleasant feeling of social well-being. The mourning service is an excellent example of the euphoric function of religion. When someone dies, the group of the deceased feels weakened, and the smooth functioning of the group is disrupted. The group tries to counterbalance this disturbing event by assembling together. When the group members meet and share a common emotional experience, a sensation of comfort compensates the loss and the group is not weakened. Groups that do not react in such a way to the death of one of its members lack moral unity. Religion, therefore, serves men by preparing them for life in society, bringing them together, perpetuating their traditions, and keeping them together.

**CRITICISM OF THE SOCIAL INTERPRETATION OF RELIGION**

**God.** Many people object to Durkheim's connotation of the sacred because it is independent of the idea of God. The notion of a divinity to whom one owes respect for various reasons is fundamental in the religious life of many people. Durkheim looked upon the idea of God as only a secondary factor in
religion. He emphasized the fact that the traditional is the only source of sacredness and rejected Spencer's idea that a complex of fear and admiration is the essential source of religion. Durkheim did show that religion is important in the life of the group, but he deified society and neglected the idea of a God who created society.

The traditional. According to Durkheim, traditions are the source of religious life in society. He did not comprehend the fact that many traditions are not sacred. Traditions may merely be customary things that are insignificant in maintaining group solidarity. Durkheim only viewed these traditions from the outside and failed to give a psychological interpretation of the states of consciousness which these traditions express. As in all of Durkheim's sociological studies, he was so concerned with establishing the necessity for an objective study of social phenomena that he overlooked the importance of combining psychology and sociology to understand men's ways of thinking, acting, and feeling.
CHAPTER VIII

DURKHEIM'S INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

Although Durkheim has been praised and lauded by France for his many contributions to sociology, he has not been so readily accepted in the United States. At first American sociologists disregarded him, then criticized him, and only recently have come to accept some of his theories as landmarks in the history of sociology. In "Durkheim in American Sociology" Roscoe C. Hinkle, Jr. presented an excellent survey of Durkheim's influence on American sociologists from 1890-1939 and showed that Americans often rejected Durkheim's ideas because they feared that his theories might have disproved their own.

1890-1917. From 1890-1917 few European sociologists were more generally disregarded in the United States than Emile Durkheim. Although he was the foreign editor of the American Journal of Sociology during this period, he never contributed an article to it. Once he sent a letter to its editor and protested against Tosti's article "The Delusions of Durkheim's Sociological Objectivism" which appeared in the journal in 1898. Durkheim said that Tosti had misinterpreted his position. Perhaps American sociologists rejected Durkheim because they did not understand him.

Ward was the first American sociologist to recognize Durkheim's attempt to establish the distinctiveness of social
phenomenon *"sui generis,"* but Ward did not expound this theory. In the bibliography of *Folkways*, Sumner listed some of Durkheim's works, but he did not credit any statements to Durkheim. Cooley referred to *Suicide* once, and Giddings noted that Durkheim studied social causes.

*Suicide* seems to be the only one of Durkheim's studies to be noted for importance by American sociologists. Ward pointed out the fact that *Suicide* demonstrated the importance of using valid methods of research in sociological investigations, but the other judgments on this book were largely negative. Ward proposed changes in Durkheim's terminology, and Ross said after reading it:

Durkheim is a thinker who realized vividly the constraint exercised upon the individual by the plexus of social forms, yet stands helpless before the task of explaining just how these forms came to be.50

Small's reviews of Durkheim's *Anée Sociologique* classified it as incomprehensible. Lucius Moody Bristol studied Durkheim's conception of social solidarity. He disagreed with his claim of the normal being what is morally ideal and with his rejection of the abnormal as what is factually frequent. Bristol also opposed his view that the group reacts passively to the social environment.

Charles Elmer Gehlke studied Durkheim's theory of causation and said that he overlooked the fact that an internal necessity can not be objectively determined. Gehlke also pointed out that Durkheim's procedure appeared to be inconsistent
with his argument that a given social phenomenon is the result of only one social cause. Gehlke also opposed his realistic conception of the group and felt that his idea of the group emerging from the recombining of individual psychic states was metaphysical. Gehlke also felt that Durkheim used inappropriate analogies to justify his social realism. His comparison of individual minds to the cells of an organism was a materialistic conception of the origin of mental processes. Durkheim also disregarded the role of the emotional and volitional and destroyed the role of the individual in social causation.

American sociologists from 1890-1917 rejected Durkheim's theories because they adhered to fundamental individualism rather than social realism. American sociology was deductive and rationalistic and explained social change and structure by making logical inferences from an "a priori" characterization of the nature of the individual. On the other hand, Durkheim rejected "a priori" assumptions and emphasized induction and empiricism. Perhaps if Durkheim and the American sociologists from 1890-1917 had worked together and combined their ideas, sociology would have taken the biggest steps forward in its history.

1918-1929. 1918-1929 was the Chicago era in American sociology. During this period all European sociologists were ignored or criticized. The primary objection to Durkheim at this time was his emphasis on social realism. William I. Thomas' "Logical Note" in The Polish Peasant was an attack on Durk-
heim's notion of social causality. Thomas held that the cause of a social or individual phenomenon is never another social or individual phenomenon alone, but a combination of both types of phenomenon. During this period Park, in his Introduction to the Science of Sociology, was the first American sociologist to interpret Durkheim's social realism sympathetically.

1930-1960. Since 1930, the ideas of American sociologists have tended to converge with Durkheim's ideas. George Herbert Mead's "verbal symbol" was synonymous with Durkheim's "collective representation". Americans have begun to consider culture to be something "sui generis" and to emphasize inductive empirical studies. American sociologists, however, have not stopped criticizing him. Merton and Alpert said that the terms "thing," "fact," and the like used by Durkheim have ambiguous meanings. They also said that he ignored the fact that causation is an epistemological assumption and not a matter of investigation. For the last two years, American sociologists have concentrated on the specialized fields of sociology as Durkheim did. Durkheim's central methodological principle, however, which emphasized the etiological relationship of social facts has not been considered by Americans "because it would entail a serious modification of the prevailing voluntaristic nominalism".

General contributions. Emile Durkheim's contributions to sociological theory have been rejected and criticized for
many years, but one can not deny the influence that Durkheim has had on sociology. Alpert pointed out that, "Despite the warning of a Sorbonne professor of philosophy that sociological studies would lead him to insanity, Durkheim dedicated himself to the establishment of sociology as a legitimate and respected science, and as an instrument of rational social action." His efforts gave sociology an impetus and released it from the near-pariah status it had acquired. With more determination than any other man before him, he sought to apply the methods of rational intelligence to an understanding of human social behavior.

Durkheim's definition of sociology as "a natural, objective, specific yet synthetic, collective, independent, and unitary science of social facts" differentiated it from philosophy and other social sciences. He demonstrated the fact that the division of labor has social and cultural importance. He emphasized the importance of social solidarity in the individual's life, and his works were the first material on the role of social pressure which results in the limitation of personal freedom. Suicide is a landmark in sociology because it combined empirical evidence with a theoretical explanation of a particular kind of behavior. His works on the role of religion, morals, values, and ideals in social life also influenced sociology.

Durkheim's quantitative techniques showed ingenuity because statistical methods were vague and undefined before
Durkheim's time. He also showed the importance of the comparative and functional approaches in a sociological investigation. Finally, he diverted many sociologists' attentions from studying the role of the individual in making a social group to studying the role of a group in making an individual personality.

In spite of the many mistakes in Durkheim's works, he devoted his life to trying to make the world a better place in which to live. All men can obtain a better understanding of how complex society is by studying Emile Durkheim's works. Durkheim's life and works showed that man's intelligence does set him above other animals and that man's mind is one of God's greatest gifts.
FOOTNOTES


4. Harry Alpert, Emile Durkheim and His Sociology, p. 27.

5. Ibid., p. 28.

6. Ibid., p. 45.


10. Ibid., p. 157.


13. Ibid., p. 35.


27. Ibid., p. 156.
28. Ibid., pp. 156-158.
30. Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, p. 79.
31. Ibid., p. 96.
32. Ibid., p. 105.
33. Ibid., p. 130.
34. Ibid., p. 152.
35. Ibid., p. 172.
36. Durkheim, Suicide, p. 44.
37. Ibid., p. 48.
38. Ibid., p. 141.
39. Ibid., p. 170.
41. Ibid., pp. 222.
42. Ibid., p. 238.
43. Ibid., pp. 282-290.
44. Ibid., p. 390.
47. Ibid., p. 29.
49. Ibid., p. 47.


51. Ibid., p. 289.


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A. BOOKS


B. ESSAYS AND ARTICLES IN COLLECTIONS


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