

Emile Durkheim Contributions to Sociology

Huma Akhtar Malik¹ and Fizana Ashraf Malik²

¹Research Scholar ,Sociology, Bhagwant University Ajmer Rajasthan

²Research Scholar, Finance (School of Management) ,G. D. Goenka University

Abstract: *Emile Durkheim, the French genius, was a well-known French Sociologist who, along with Karl Marx and Max Weber, founded sociology as a discipline. He dedicated his life to the scientific study of sociology and is considered as the father of French sociology. Durkheim's main contribution was his thinking on how humanity is bound together, and he concluded that there are two types of unity: biological solidarity and mechanical solidarity. His seminal writings include The Division of Labor (1893), Rules of Sociological Method (1895), and Suicide (1900). (1897). Emile Durkheim established himself as a sociologist who contributed significantly to the advancement of sociology. In 1885, he helped develop sociology as a formal academic discipline by founding the first European sociology department at the University of Bordeaux. The aim of this paper is to examine Durkheim's approach to social science, which is notable in the empirical study of culture.*

Keywords: Emile Durkheim, contribution, sociology

INTRODUCTION

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) was a key theorist in the history of modern sociology. Durkheim's research was concerned with how cultures could preserve their dignity and coherence in the face of modernity. Durkheim takes some concepts from August Comte and Herbert Spencer and develops a formal sociology in philosophy and technique (Monivas , 2007.) Da la division du travail social (1893; The Division of Labor in Society) would be his first major sociological work, followed in 1895 by les Regles De La Methode Sociologique (The Rules of Sociological Method). Durkheim's groundbreaking monograph, Le Suicide (1897), a survey of suicide rates in Catholic and Protestant societies, in particular, pioneered contemporary social studies by distinguishing social science from psychology and moral theory. In 1898, he established the journal L'Année Sociologique. Les Formes elementaires de la vie religieuse (1912; The elementary forms of Religious life) presented a theory of religion, comparing the social and cultural lives of aboriginal and modern societies. He presented various works on a variety of topics, including the sociology of knowledge, morality, social stratification, religion, law, education and deviance. There is criticism in his theories and methods. Any of his works, however, have been disputed and criticized. Durkheim stresses the importance of studying social facts as well as the techniques for doing so in his book "The Rules of Sociological Procedure." Durkheim's philosophy and methods were put to the test in two of his main works: "The Division of Labor" and "Suicide."

Durkheim was mainly concerned with three objectives. First, sociology must be developed as a modern academic discipline. Second, consider how cultures will preserve their dignity and coherence in the current world, where shared religious and ethnic backgrounds are no longer believed. He wrote extensively on the impact of legislation, faith, culture, and other related influences on community and social integration. Finally, Durkheim was interested in the realistic consequences of scientific knowledge. He is often credited with developing the functionalist perspective of sociology. He was a well-known sociologist who was known for his views on the nature of society and was interested in how conventional and contemporary cultures developed and functioned. Durkheim's ideas were based on the principles of social facts, which were characterized as societal norms, beliefs, and systems.

Social solidarity

Durkheim put forward the idea that society operated because of social solidarity. He saw this operating at four levels:

- 1.) The system of bond between individuals and society.
- 2.) The bonds between individuals within a society
- 3.) Members of a society are united by ties to that society
- 4.) Solidarity refers to the intensity of the cohesion of attachments which link the individuals to their society.

Mechanical Solidarity

According to Durkheim, there are two kinds of solidarity. The first of these is mechanical Solidarity. He believed that this form of social unity expressed itself through shared identity. Individualism is mostly discouraged by these social bonds between the rational and their shared identity, contributing instead to a group consciousness rather than an individual consciousness. Links of dependence and ties of duty emerge in members of society in this form of unity, most importantly in their mutual economic and domestic duties. Individuality is least developed here. Instead, the personality is assumed by the units of family and faith.

Organic solidarity

Organic Solidarity happens as people are grouped together based on the positions they play in society, which are different from those of the family. Organic solidarity occurs in larger populations, as opposed to mechanical solidarity, which occurs in small populations. The economy in this region is agricultural, with a diverse division of labor. A broader social framework emerges that extends beyond the home, and as a result, communal values and traditions are replaced by new ties and bonds based on an individual's position in the division of labor. It can be found in industrialised areas with high populations, which eventually contributes to specialized economic functions.

Sociology as a Discipline and Social Facts

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) is known as one of the "fathers" of sociology for his attempts to differentiate sociology from philosophy and psychology. This initiative is seen in the two key themes that run through Durkheim's work: the importance of the social over the person, and the notion that culture can be observed scientifically. Especially Durkheim's definition of social facts distinguishes sociology from philosophy and psychology. Social facts are social constructs, societal traditions, and beliefs that are alien to people and exert arbitrary power over them. Social facts are not bound to any specific person, nor are they reducible to human consciousness. Thus, social facts can be studied empirically. According to Durkheim, two different types of social facts exist: material and immaterial.

Functionalism

Durkheim's philosophy of functionalism was perhaps one of his most important contributions to explaining and quantifying populations. He used a very clear example to demonstrate this: society is a human entity with different organs (religion, education, politics, the judiciary, and so on) that are mutually dependent. If one main organ fails, the whole organism fails. As a result, each segment of society plays an important role in ensuring the society's long-term wellbeing. Durkheim used functionalism to describe the idea of agreement - why societies cooperate. He contended that consensus arose from constraint; if one "organ" of civilization unexpectedly fails, it would bring about the impending collapse of all others. As a result, for the sake of their own survival, societal institutions must collaborate. Functionalism refers to societal desires. A valuable point of reference in this context is how educational curricula react to societal needs, generating and influencing individuals that are educated to work optimally in their respective societies.

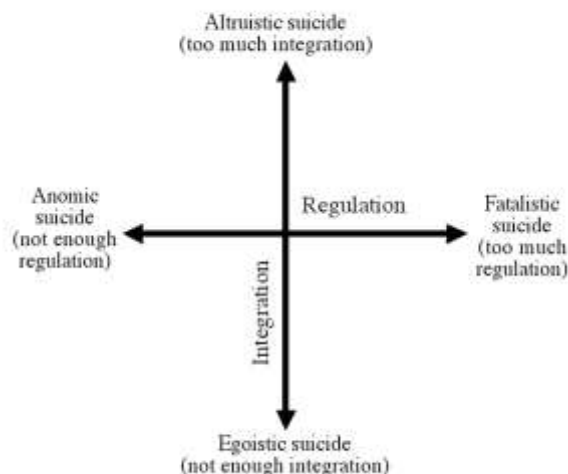
Division of Labour

Durkheim's idea of the division of labor centered on the transition of economies from basic to complicated. He contended that existing cultures were made up of homogeneous people who had similar values, religious views, and backgrounds. In comparison, modern economies are made up of a diverse division of labor, values, and histories. In traditional cultures, the collective consciousness dominated, social norms were high, and social behaviour was well controlled. In western cultures, collective consciousness was less evident, and the management of social behaviour was less coercive and more restitutive, seeking to return regular behavior to society.

The Suicide:

Durkheim's most significant explanation for researching suicide was to show the influence of the modern science of sociology. According to Durkheim Suicide is neither an entity nor a personal act. It is a social gesture. It can be studied through collecting data from outside of our own minds through study and experimentation. He was involved in understanding variations in suicide rates but not in the research that any single person committed suicide. Durkheim has explained four big forms of suicide. They are Egoistic, Altruistic, Anomic, Fatalistic.

Durkheim's four types of suicide (after Pope 1976)



Elementary forms of Religious Life

This is probably Durkheim's most nuanced work, as he seeks to include both a sociology of religion and a philosophy of wisdom. In this thesis, Durkheim studies primitive culture to show that an enduring characteristic of all faiths, even the most secular, is the distinction between the holy and the profane. The sacred is formed by ceremonies, and what is considered sacred is what morally ties individuals to society. This moral bond then becomes, according to Durkheim, a semantic bond that forms the categories we use to interpret the social world. The evolution of religions is not solely dependent on the distinction between the divine and the profane, but rather on moral practices, rites, and the church. The latter two conditions are especially important to Durkheim because they bind the person to the social; individuals learn about the sacred and religious traditions by engaging in ceremonies and the church. The most basic type of religion is totemism, which is related to the least complex form of social organisation, the tribe. The totem is the physical symbol of the clan—it is the material representation of the nonmaterial, collective morality of the clan.

Totemism is significant to Durkheim's philosophy of information in that it is one of his divisions of understanding: description. Other types of perception include time, space, force, causality, and totality. These six categories can be abstract concepts, but they are all drawn from social interactions, especially rituals. Durkheim accepts that it is important for spiritual and cognitive categories to alter or be formed anew during what he called social effervescence, or times of great collective exaltation.

Cult of the Individual

While Durkheim based much of his attention on the social, he did not ignore the notion of individualism. Indeed, he argued that in contemporary society the personality has become holy, and he termed the modern system of collective consciousness the cult of the individual. According to Durkheim, humans are constituted by two beings or selves: one is founded on the solitary uniqueness of the body, while the other is based on the social. These two beings can be in a continual state of conflict, and they are linked in that personality evolves as society develops. For example, it is only in modern society, characterized by the division of labour, that people even come to understand themselves as distinct individuals. Durkheim argued that individuality has both positive and negative consequences. Egoism, or the selfish pursuit of individual interests, is at odds with moral individualism, the ability to sacrifice self-interest for the rights of all other individual human beings.

Moral Education and Social Reform

Durkheim believed that society is the root of morality; thus, he also believed that society must be transformed, particularly through moral education. According to Durkheim, morality is composed of three elements: order, attachment, and autonomy. Discipline constrains egoistic impulses; attachment is the mutual desire to be committed to groups; and autonomy is individual responsibility. Education equips children with the three moral resources they need to act in society. Adults can obtain these moral resources by entering professional organizations. These unions, according to Durkheim, will involve workers of a certain profession regardless of social status and may offer a degree of cohesion and control, all of which are undermined by the separation of labor.

Durkheim on Anomie:

Anomie is described as the collapse of social norms that govern behavior. Anomie was coined by Durkheim and other sociological thinkers as "a revolt toward, or withdrawal from, the social controls of society." All deviant behavior, including suicide, derives from a state of anomie.

Durkheim on Crime:

Crime serves a social function, meaning that it has a purpose in society. He saw crime as being able to release certain social tensions and so have a cleansing or purging effect in society. His views on crime were unconventional at the time.

METHODOLOGY:

Data has been collected through primary and secondary sources. Data has been collected through journals, books, magazines, newspapers, research papers, thesis. Also has been collected by visiting libraries, interviewing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 1.) To study the contributions of Emile Durkheim to sociology.
- 2.) To study the importance of how societies could maintain integrity and coherence in modernity.

RESULTS:

The magnitude and range of Durkheim's analytical works demonstrated the intellectual rigour he brought to sociology. His doctoral thesis, 'The Division of Labor in Society,' was published in 1893, as were later works such as 'The Principles of Sociological Method,' 'Suicide,' (1897), and 'The Elementary Modes of Religious Life' (1912). In 1896, he also founded the first sociological journal, *L'Année Sociologique*. Durkheim explained the validity of sociology as an autonomous research field in 'The Rules of Sociological Method.' He meticulously described what sociology learned and how it was studied (Adam and Sydie 2002: 96). Durkheim described sociology as the "science of institutions, their genesis, and their working." His dissertation on 'Suicide' was a demonstration of sociological methods. It demonstrated Durkheim's argument that sociology has a "subject all of its own" in the study of "a fact which is not in the realm of other research" (Adams and Sydie 2001: 98). By integrating what was formerly thought to be an isolated act into the realm of sociology, Durkheim demonstrated that suicide rates are a social phenomena that can be analysed sociologically. By 1895, Durkheim had developed an interest in studying the role of religion in social life. He became persuaded that "religion

incorporates in nature from the outset all the ingredients that have given rise to the different manifestations of collective life” (Quoted in Adams and Sydie 2001: 102). He believed that by learning how religion, as the essence of collective unity, functioned in more ancient cultures, he would be able to discover how egoism and anomie, which reflect the absence of collective solidarity, could be alleviated in modern society.

CONCLUSION:

Emile Durkheim was one of the founding figures of social sciences and creator of sociology as an academic discipline. Durkheim's influence extended beyond the social sciences. He took pains to articulate that the subject matter of the sociology was different from that of the other social sciences. During its early years, sociology was not seen as an independent academic discipline. Through his various theoretical works Durkheim proved that society is a sui generis reality, i.e. a unique reality that cannot be simply reduced to its constituent parts. It is created when individual consciences interact and fuse together to create a synthetic reality that is completely new and greater than the sum of its parts. As a result, psychology, philosophy, or some other cognitive science cannot adequately understand culture. Only by a scientific analysis in sociology will the nature of humanity be comprehended. As a result, Durkheim is credited with elevating sociology to its current university status. Sociology, by him, became a seminal discipline in France, broadening and transforming the study of law, economics, Chinese structures, linguistics, ethnology, art history, and history. Of the many topics about which Durkheim spoke, education has received the least attention. Durkheim's educational publications were scant during his lifetime. However, after his death, his lectures and lecture courses were published as books, including *Education and Sociology* (1922), *Moral Education* (1925), and *The Evolution of Educational Thought* (1926). (1938). All of these, whose names are in English, were not translated into that language until after WWII. Durkheim researched significant works in sociology as one of the pioneers of professional sociology. He discovered the process by which individuals socially integrate into society and developed various models to describe the interaction between people and society. Durkheim's work is highly valuable, useful, and applicable to sociologists. Emile Durkheim made important contributions to sociology and dedicated himself to the scientific study of sociology. Despite covering a wide variety of subjects, Durkheim's writings show a single, concentrated, organizing view of sociology's subject matter and objectives. His works contain many classics that have remained fundamental to the discipline of sociology, both through teaching and successive reinterpretations through which developments continue to arise through conflict with Durkheim's theories.

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