

Classical Sociological Theory
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Lecture No. 27
The Rules of the Sociological Method (1897)

Welcome back to the class, we are continuing with our discussion on Emile Durkheim and I hope that you remember our previous class in which we had a brief discussion about the life of Emile Durkheim and the major intellectual influences during his time. Durkheim was born into a Jewish family in France and became one of the most important scholars who laid the foundations of this particular discipline.

In today's class, we are dealing with one of his very important works, titled 'The Rules of Sociological Methods', written in 1897. In fact, this is not his first major work, his first major work is 'Division of Labor', which we will be discussing in the next two sessions, immediately after this, but the reason why I decided to begin with this work is specifically because this lays down the basic philosophical as well as sociological arguments about a new discipline.

This particular book, the rules of sociological method, really explains the epistemological as well as methodological orientations of the discipline and you must be knowing that this book was something so influential because of the arguments that Emile Durkheim came up with and he was quite successful in establishing these arguments to a large extent. It played a very important role in establishing sociology as a discipline or in other words, this led to the institutionalization of a new discipline.

We know that in the previous class, we mentioned that he founded a journal and he was one of the first professors of sociology for treating it as an independent discipline, as a new discipline, which is distinct from other disciplines like psychology or philosophy or economics. So, that is the kind of significance of this particular work titled 'The Rules of Sociological Method' written in 1897.

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- *The Rules of the Sociological Method* is both a philosophical treatise and a set of guidelines for conducting sociological inquiry. For establishing the legitimacy of sociology.



- (1) "What Is a Social Fact?"
- (2) "Rules for the Observation of Social Facts,"
- (3) "Rules for Distinguishing Between the Normal and the Pathological,"
- (4) "Rules for the Classification of Social Types,"
- (5) "Rules for the Explanation of Social Facts,"
- (6) "Rules Relative to Establishing Sociological Proofs."



The rules of sociological method is both a philosophical treatise and a set of guidelines for conducting sociological inquiry because, if you read the book, you will see that Durkheim has certain philosophical arguments and orientations about the nature of this whole society or he has a philosophy on what constitutes this 'social' and why and how that society emerges when people come together. Thus, it has a philosophical angle to that, he has a philosophy about what constitutes society and what are its features.

On the other hand, he sets out a series of guidelines for conducting sociological inquiry, and as we will see that as we discuss this 6 or 7 hours, 5 or 6 chapters, in this book, he very specifically lays out what are the important methodological stipulations that one needs to keep in mind while conducting a sociological inquiry. So, in that sense, it talks about methodology, particular approach towards reality, how to conduct your research, what constitutes the kind of social reality, data and how a sociologist is supposed to approach his or her social reality and what are the methods of data collection.

In that sense, this is a very important work which talks about the connection between epistemology, methodology and research methods. The whole fundamental aim for Durkheim was to establish the independent status or independent stature of this new discipline. So, these are the 6 chapters, the names of the chapters in this work, what is a social fact? And second chapter is Rules for the Observation of Social Facts. Rules for

Distinguishing Between the Normal and the Pathological. Rules for the Classification of Social Types. Rules for the Explanation of Social Facts. Rules Relative to Establishing Sociological Proofs.

This work is something extremely important, it is a canonical one in the sociological literature because it lays down the very specific rules and regulations about conducting sociological inquiry. Quite a lot of criticisms, disagreements, alternative use about society and alternative views about methodology have emerged later, but Durkheim played a fundamental role in establishing a kind of a positivistic empirical, empiricist orientation to this discipline and it is something very important.

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- In *The Division of Labor*, he proclaimed "moral facts" to be sociology's subject, but in *The Rules* he changed his terminology to that employed earlier by Comte and argued that "social facts" were the distinctive subject of sociology.



- For Durkheim, a social fact "consists of ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with power of coercion, by which they control him."



In his previous work, the *Division of Labor*, which we are going to discuss in the next session, he proclaimed that moral facts to be the subject of sociology, but later in his work, the *rules of sociological method*, he changed his terminology to that employed earlier by Comte and argued that social facts were the distinctly subject of sociology. So, you will see the kind of transition in Durkheim's work with the kind of preoccupation from the kind of moral facts to social facts when he comes from this *Division of Labor* to that of *Rules of Sociological Method*, and we will come back to this question of his preoccupation with the issues of morality.

He had a very fascinating arguments about why moral positions are important, we will discuss it when we discuss his arguments about education. He did not believe in a host of other sociologists who did not take any particular position with respect to moral positions or morality, he argued that sociologists need to take a particular position because these particular positions, especially moral positions are something so important for the well being and health of a society. These terms are problematic, but we will come back to that later, but his argument is fundamental about sociology i.e. sociology is the study of social facts.

In today's class as well as throughout this lecture, we will come across this term 'social facts', quite often and this term constitutes the central engagement of Emile Durkheim. For him society is comprising, it comprises of social facts and the duty of sociologist is to understand the social facts and then study them in a in a scientific manner. So, how does he define social facts? Durkheim define social facts as it consists of ways of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual and endowed with the power of coercion by which they control him or her. It is very broad and vague definition, we will take up certain examples and look into the specific characteristics features of social facts.

Durkheim describes or defines social fact as it is consisting of ways of acting which is a broad definition. Ways of acting, we act in certain much specified manner in different contexts, look at the way we act in a temple or in a church is quite different from the way we act in a place of recreation. Is it not the way we act in a place where somebody has died is very different from the place where we act when somebody gets married? So, the way we act, think and feel external to the individual and endowed with the power of coercion by which they control.

Here he is talking about social fact as it is something external to the individual. And it is endowed with the power of coercion and through this coercive power, the social facts are able to control human beings, we will come to each of these terms, we will elaborate them later.

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- To say such phenomena are *social* means they compose a definite collective reality; they originate from and are characteristic of the group rather than the individual. This quality requires that social facts be studied *sociologically*.
- To say they are *factual* means they have an objective reality outside the mind of the individual. This quality requires that social facts be studied *scientifically*.
- Three defining characteristics of social facts: **externality, constraint, and generality.**



So, to say phenomena as social, that they compose a definitive collective reality. Durkheim here comes up with the most crucial aspects about defining what constitutes the social. We discussed from the beginning that the emergence of sociology really depicts the emergence of the social, it does not mean that there was no social before or prior to the emergence of sociology, ever since human beings began to exist in the world, the social existed, but a more systematic institutionalized way of looking at this social emerged with the emergence of sociology.

I am not going into the final debates, but this is a very important argument that has been widely accepted. So, what constitute the social? To say such phenomenon are social means they compose a definitive collective reality, they originate from and are characteristic of the group rather than the individual, this quality requires that social facts be studied sociologically.

Durkheim argues that you need to look at the social or you need to look at the social fact in the realm of the social and while it is you know that the society or socially is constituted by the individual, there is a tension between the individual and the social, we know that the social is composed of or it consists of the individuals, a society is impossible without individuals, but when individuals simply come together it does not really makes a society but they need to interact and when they interact, the particular

forms or particular patterns of social interaction takes place, and that is the focal point of Durkheim.

He says that the society is always much more than a mere collective of individuals and more than the mere sum total of all the individuals together. He argues that something else happens when people come together and interact and what is this something else? Durkheim argues that it is the social facts, and why it is created or it is constituted by the individual, it is much more than the individual, because individual has very limited control over the social, over the social fact, whereas the social fact or the social has enormous control over the individual.

Durkheim argues that the 'social' compose a definitive collective reality. So, this reality is a collective one, it comes into existence because of the collectivity and it also has an impact on the collective life of people. So, once human beings come together, a collectivity forms and this collectivity is formed by the people, but once this collectivity is formed, this has an enormous influence on the lives of each and every individual, they originate from and are characteristic of the group rather than the individual.

It emerges from the group and not from an individual, an individual alone cannot, an individual alone cannot create that, a particular way of acting, or a particular way of explaining certain things. For example, the way you are supposed to worship, when you go to a temple or the way in which you are supposed to express your sorrow in somebody's house, or express your happiness. There are very specific social conventions, what you are supposed to do, what you are not supposed to do, for the very act of say, you need to get married with somebody and what are the kind of rituals that are socially accepted rituals? How is it? Is there other example? How is a dead body cremated? How do you dispose of a dead body?

If you put it that the starkly, you cannot really dispose off, you cannot get rid of this dead body the way you want and I am not here talking about the legal implications. But in every community, there is a particular way of properly dealing with the dead body, and y an individual cannot change that. So, this quality requires that social facts be studied

sociologically. So, he very strongly argued that since the social facts have this collective character, it needs to be studied sociologically.

There is no other discipline, which can study this social fact the way sociology can study, because this belongs, this specifically belongs to the subject matter of sociology. No other discipline studies that and sociology emerges only specifically, exclusively to study this social facts. To say that they are factual, so what does it mean to be a fact? Why that he is using this term social fact? To say that they are factual means they have an objective reality outside the mind of an individual. And this is a very important point, because you can just look at how it is very different from a kind of an idealist understanding which completely negates the existence of individual existence outside people's mind.

Durkheim argues that these social facts, these particular way of doing certain things, particular way of thinking about certain things, social institutions, social norms, and all this very definition of social fact is very broad. How do you educate a child? How do you worship? How do we raise a family? All these have an objective reality outside the mind of an individual, this quality requires that social facts be studied scientifically.

So, here we can see that how the positivistic argument of Durkheim is very evident, he wanted to study following Auguste Comte's argument. He wanted to fashion sociology as a scientific discipline and he very strongly believed that sociology has to be treated as a science and it has all the ability to look at social facts and then study them scientifically, the way a biologist or a physicist uses a laboratory equipments to study their facts and their facts in a laboratory could be what they see or what they see under microscope or the kind of experiments that they do, or the kind of data that they read as a result of certain experimentations.

Here, Durkheim is arguing that the social facts need to be seen as factual as the kind of data that are being used by other scientists. So, three defining characteristics of social facts, one is externality, second one is constraint and third one is generality. Each of these three terms is mentioned in his definition that we discussed.

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Externality



- Social facts are ways of thinking and acting that exist prior to and “outside the consciousness of the individual.”

- We are born into a world consisting of already formed and often long-standing social institutions, cultural ideals, and customary practices.

Examples of institutions of religion, marriage, expressions of anger, hunger, authority,

- They are *social facts*, collective realities. They exist external to us as individuals, products of our historical heritage and social milieu. We can understand neither their nature nor their causes “by searching within ourselves.”



Now, let us examine them one by one. Externality, so Durkheim argues that social facts are ways of thinking and acting that exist prior to an outside the consciousness of the individual, this is something that we just mentioned. Why that is external? Because it is external since it exists outside an individual, when a child is born, there is nothing biological inscribed or there is nothing genetically inscribed in that child's body about how he or she should behave in certain kind of social situations.

It has nothing biologically inscribed, there is no genes at play here, it is purely a social phenomenon, a child understands the social facts only through the process of socialization i.e. how to behave in certain ways, how to conduct their activities in society, each of these things are understood through the process of socialization. So, it exists a prior to an outside the consciousness of the individual. We are born into a world consisting of already formed and often long standing social institutions, cultural ideals and customary practices.

Now, each one of us, if you, by now, you are familiar with this whole idea of sociological imagination and if you take a step back, and then try to understand what are the kind of social institutions, cultural ideals and customary practices that govern our life, whether it is about food habits, what are the things that we are supposed to eat, we are not supposed to eat, how we are supposed to eat, or about our religious practices or our family

practices, customs associated with marriage, the practices associated with the education, practices associated with the delinquency or deviance or law.

If you take each of these examples, each one of them are outside the individual and they are already formed and often long standing social institution and that a number of examples, this example of marriage, how you want to get married to somebody, how do you ensure that or how do you get married to somebody else? You eloping with somebody simply does not work. There are also communities and societies where marriage by elopement is an accepted one. But if you are not living in those societies, if you marry, if you elope with somebody, then it can land you in trouble.

You are actually socialized into these institutions, cultural ideas, into these customary practices, examples of institutions, religion, marriage, expressions of anger, hunger, authority, everything, you know that expressions of anger or hunger, how are we expected to control our hunger. Even if you are really hungry, there are situations where I have to say that I am really hungry and eating food may not look good, it may not be welcome or we are we are trained to deal with our emotions, whatever fear for example, or sadness, for example, especially with the men, men are not supposed to cry, isn't it? Men are supposed to control their emotions far efficiently than that of women.

So, I am talking about the kind of social constructs which put enormous pressure on the individual, these are social facts, collective realities. They exist external to us as individuals, products of our historical heritage and social milieu. This brings in the most fascinating aspects they are of historical heritage, many of the things that we consider as the most authentic, essential aspects of our culture. And if you look at them with a historical lens, you know that many of them could be new additions, they are not as old as our civilization or they are not that they do not exist from the very time immemorial.

These things could be very recent, and they are products of our social milieu, they are the products of this particular socio cultural context, the kind of milieu and the moment you move out, if you travel back in history, you will see a completely different society, if you travel across the place, if you move to another society, you will see a completely different set of ideas, about how to live in a society. So, this relativity in terms of places and time

makes the study of sociology really fascinating, especially with a comparative perspective, we can understand neither the nature nor their causes by searching them within ourselves.

This is an important point that Durkheim highlights, you cannot really understand neither the nature nor their causes by searching within ourselves, why that we are doing it, why are we conducting our prayer in this particular manner? How are you disposing of the dead body of our relative in this particular manner an individually is unable to answer this.

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- Constraint**
- Social facts, in addition to being external to the individual, possess a "compelling and coercive power." They impose themselves on the individual from the outside, "like moulds into which we are forced to cast our actions."
 - But though we are continuously pushed and pulled by the power of social forces, we typically fail to recognize their coercive influence, falsely imagining ourselves to be perfectly free agents.
 - We realise it only when we break a norm or a law



The second one is Constraint, social facts not only they are outside you, but they have the ability to put enormous constraints on you, they can influence you, they can control you. Social facts, in addition to being external to the individual possesses a compelling and coercive power, they impose themselves on the individual from outside like moulds into which we are forced to cast our action. These are extremely powerful words.

So, he says that the social facts are so powerful, they act as very powerful constraints that we feel that they they act like moulds into which we are forced to cast our action. If we want to do certain things, we have to do it as per the dictates of the society and n number of example, maybe a country like India is the best example and it could be inter-caste

marriage or inter-religious marriage and you will know what does Durkheim mean by constraint the moment you talk about that, in most of the contexts inter caste or inter religious marriages are not welcome. When people go ahead with that, it can bring in quite a lot of negative consequences.

These negative consequences can vary from disapproval from the family and estrangement from the family to even to that of murder, what we very famously call us honor killing. So, the social facts are so powerful, that you are forced to act as per the dictates of the society, whether it is to be with example the way you are, you pray when you go to a place of worship, when you eat, when we sit together with others when we eat, what other kind of things that you need to be careful about it, the kind of decorum, the kind of practices, that kind of rituals. Each of these things are something very important that you need to look into that.

But though we are continuously pushed and pulled by the power of social forces, we typically fail to recognize their coercive influence and falsely imagine ourselves to be perfectly free agent. This is yet another very important argument, of course, the continuation Durkheim constantly reminds you that human beings are not free, you are not free, you cannot live in this world the way you want, he would argue that we all have a false consciousness or a false sense of freedom that we are free individuals we can do whatever we want, and we will come across quite a lot of people who think that I can lead the way I want.

But Durkheim reminded them that you are only following the rules of the society, there is nothing that you have created as new, maybe barring a very few exceptions. So, we realize it only when we break a norm or a law. We will realize that there is a law exist or a norm exist, as long as we obey them, we never realize it, you only flow along with the tide, you never realize that you are even flowing, but the moment you stop it, the moment you do something against that, then you will realize, the moment you try to do something which is against the taken for granted assumption of the society. Then you will see the kind of constraint that which is imposed by the society, you will see that the coercive power of society.

So, that is whether it is a norm whether you disobey a particular norm or you disobey a law you will realize it, whether it is the case of marriage or dressing habit or the way you, the kind of occupations that you are doing in whatever you consider even as your personal actions are will come under scrutiny, the moment you break this norms or a law.

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Generality



- Social facts also have the characteristic of being general within a group. Social facts are not collective phenomena because they are widespread; they are widespread because they are collective phenomena. Common ways of doing/behaving in certain groups

- Durkheim proposes a conception of society not only as a "reality sui generis" and a distinct object of knowledge, but as something superior to and even dominating the individual. He explicitly challenges the commonsense view that individuals are the "completely autonomous" authors of their own lives.



The third feature is generality, which is again very interesting. Social facts also have the characteristic of being general within a group. Social facts is as we have seen, it is not the product of an individual, an individual cannot bring in a social fact neither she or he can change it, most of the time they only go along with that so, they are being general within the group. But he makes a very interesting point here, he says that social facts are not collective phenomena, because they are widespread whereas they are widespread because they are collective phenomena.

They become collective phenomena, not because they are widespread, but the logic is the reverse, it is so important, it is a collective phenomena, so that it has to be seen among almost everybody. It is not that you identify certain things looking into whether that particular practice is followed by everybody and then you decide, that it is a collective phenomena, that is not the way Durkheim goes about it, Durkheim will look into whether it is something so important, then if it is so important as a collective phenomenon, then it

must be general for everybody, you can have so many different things for people who belong to a particular society.

It is general because it is a collective phenomena and not the other way around. A common way of doing and behaving in a certain group, even punishment in a particular society, how are punishment delivered or how do you distinguish between good and bad? What are the accepted and non-accepted ways of behaving in certain different contexts? Whom can you get married to for example, whom can you get married to? In every society there are certain groups of people whom you can get married, certain other groups who you are not supposed to get married.

And each of them Durkheim would say that they are collective phenomenon, and that is why they are found in every society. There's something so crucial. Durkheim proposes a conception of society not only as a reality but a reality of sui generis, a reality of its own and a distinct object of knowledge, but as something superior to an even dominating the individual. He explicitly challenges the common sense view that individuals are the complete autonomous authors of their own lives.

Rather now you realize that Durkheim has a rather pessimistic view about human beings, he is not somebody who will grant that you are free agents, you can leave the way you want, you can mould the world according to your ideas and aspirations but Durkheim takes a rather negative and pessimistic view, he would say that the social structure is something so rigid that you are supposed to live in that, it is something like a cage. In a cage that you are put, you can behave the way you want only, but only within that particular cage.

This particular pessimistic idea about human freedom, how human agency have come under a lot of criticism by a lot of other scholars, we will take them up later. But the argument as a completely autonomous people who order their own lives, as per Durkheim is only fallacy, it does not exist, nobody is the master of their own lives, there is a major overarching force known as the society is watching, it is controlling and even Durkheim would say that even our choices about alternatives are specific and they have a social origin.

There is very few thing that you can really credit to yourself as your own idea, your own way of living, in a very distinct manner. So, Durkheim would say that even your possibilities of choices, your spectrum of choices are limited by the very existence of society, I found it as an interesting argument. It is of course a very depressing argument, but it is interesting when you look at experiments, you look at alternative forms of living. When you look at some people who say that they are very free, they are very independent, they are exceptional, then this question comes into picture.

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- Society for Durkheim is more than the sum of the individuals who make it up, and the qualities of society are likewise different from the qualities of its constituent members. The "system" formed by individual relationships, he says, "represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics." This distinctly social reality, an outgrowth of human interaction, is the particular subject matter of sociology.



- His explanation is meant to legitimate the independent status of sociology, to show that it is not simply a "corollary of individual psychology."

- "collective consciousness," is fundamentally different from the "states of the individual consciousness,"



Now, society for Durkheim is more than the sum of the individual who make it up and the qualities of societies are likewise different from the qualities of its constituent members. So, this point I mentioned earlier, society is something more than the sum total of the individuals who make it up. So, if you put a group of people together, what emerges as a society is much complicated and is much more than that the total number of these people and the qualities of society are likewise different from the qualities of its constituent members.

The system formed by the individual relationship, he says, represents a specific reality, which has its own characteristics. So, Durkheim says that, when you come together, when people come together, it forms a society, but that society has its own forms. So, you

give birth to certain thing, and that thing that you have given birth becomes much bigger, it assumes its own feature, and then it begins to control.

This distinctly social reality, an outgrowth of human interaction is the particular subject matter of sociology. It is the most dominant theme in his entire narrative, that there is a particular domain called a 'social' and he uses the term social facts and it has to be studied exclusively in order to understand how a society works. He argues, that is the job of sociology and no other discipline can study that. His explanation is meant to legitimate the independent status of sociology to show that it is not simply a corollary of individual psychology.

Durkheim takes major issue with the psychological explanation, and we will see that when he discusses the whole idea of suicide, a classic study, the best example to distinguish the perspective between sociology and psychology. He is very categorical that sociology cannot be or society cannot be seen as a corollary of individual psychology, rather, it has its own independent existence.

Now, collective consciousness is fundamentally different from the states of the individual consciousness. This is a term which we will come across in detail when we study Division of Labor in the next class, but he argues that this collective consciousness is fundamentally different from the state of individual consciousness. This also has been many times used as conscience and not only as consciousness. So just like an individual has a consciousness, an individual has a conscience about what is right and what is wrong, what is good for something, what is bad for something. Durkheim would argue that even society also has something a kind of a collective consciousness and that is quite different from the state of the individual.

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Rules for the Observation of Social Facts



- (1) Personal biases and preconceptions must be eliminated.
- (2) The phenomena under study must be clearly defined.
- (3) An empirical indicator of the phenomenon under study must be found, as was the case for "law" in *The Division of Labor*.
- (4) Social facts must be considered "things."



Now, let us very briefly go into some of this important chapters in his work. The first one, the Rules of Observation of Social Facts. Durkheim argues that or Durkheim suggest what are the rules when you observe the social facts, the first one he says that the personal biases and preconceptions must be eliminated. A very important argument and this is where you will be forced to critically look at your own subjective biases in terms of your opinion, in terms of your ideology, in terms of your religious belief, in terms of your caste outlook, in terms of your gender outlook, you are supposed to keep away all your personal biases claimed that they are able to do that.

But we know that it is impossible for a researcher to completely move away from all their identity markers, their ideas, but a person can be quite reflexive to be sensitive to their own biases and try their level best not to influence their biases or not to get influenced by their biases when they study something. So, here Durkheim is making a distinction between this subjectivity and then objectivity and pre conception must be eliminated. The phenomenon under study must be clearly defined. So, what exactly are you going to study? What are its boundaries? What are its conceptual categories? How do you define that?

So, this phenomena that you want to study must be very clearly defined and cannot have very vague terminology and vague understanding about the stuff that you want to study, that has to be very specifically delineated. An empirical indicator of the phenomenon

under study must be found as was in the case of law in the Division of Labor. So, this is something that distinguishes sociology from philosophy for that matter. You need to have an empirical indicator of the phenomenon and a kind of a concrete example.

He gives the example of law when he talks about the Division of Labor, we will discuss it in the coming class. For example, he says that the kind of law that exists in simpler societies, in tribal societies is very different from the kind of law that exists in modern complex societies or industrial societies. So here, law is an empirical indicator, whether it is a written law or an oral law or if you broaden the definition of law to include social norms, but irrespective whether it is written or oral, it is an empirical reality.

Durkheim argues that for a sociological exploration, a sociological study and analysis, you need to have an empirical indicator, whether it could be law, it could be marriage, it could be a crime, it could be suicide rate, it could be anything, but it has to have an empirical foundation and social facts must be considered as things because they have their own existence, they are outside of an individual and individual cannot change it, in spite of an individual's like, like or dislike. So, it must be seen as thing it is sui generis.

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• **Rules for Distinguishing Between the Normal and the Pathological**

• Heavily influenced by the moral aspect of sociological knowledge so as to distinguish the normal between pathological

• Particular rate of deviance or crime as normal and exceeding that as pathological

functional



Then the other chapter, Rules for Distinguishing between the Normal and the Pathological and this is again a very interesting take. Here, Durkheim distinguishes between what he defines as normal and what he defines as pathological. And, as I mentioned in the previous class, quite a lot of sociologists have later found issue with this particular usage, because as per Durkheim society moves from the normal to pathological he considers it as something very negative, because pathology is a term that you quite often come across in medicine. When some pathogens enter into your body, you feel sick and you take some medicine to get rid of this pathogens, is not it when you are attacked by a virus or a bacteria, your whole system collapses.

So, that particular type of condition is what you consider yourself as a sick or doctors would declare you as ill and Durkheim takes a similar kind of categories. For example, if he says that if crime rates are very high in a particular society, he would consider it as a pathology and a society which has a reasonable amount of crimes, Durkheim would consider it as normal. This is essentially a position adopted by almost every scholar who belong to this structural functionalist school.

I am not going into the details, but structural functionalism really is based on these assumptions that there is a kind of an equilibrium, there is a kind of a balance and this balance is what Durkheim calls it as normal. Anything which disturbs that balance would

be seen as unwelcome. It would be seen as pathological. He was heavily influenced by the moral aspect of sociological knowledge, so as to distinguish the normal between pathological. So, what is good for the society?

Now, an example, are divorce rates good for society or not? If higher divorce rates, is it good for society or is it bad for society? And Durkheim will not hesitate, he would say that beyond the point, increasing number of divorce is always bad for society because he takes a very particular moral position. But whole lot of other sociologists may not take that, they may not take that they would argue that the increasing number of divorce rates are also indicative of another type of society, where women experience more freedom, women are more economically independent, or they have more agency they have better agency they are able to walk out or men or women for that matter, are able to walk out of a marital relationship and then continue with their life.

But Durkheim was different, he had a very specific moral position, and argued that a society must have a certain kind of moral foundation and the societies which fulfill these moral foundations he would call them as normal, others he would call them as pathology, which came under heavy criticism of course. Now, particular rate of deviance or crime as normal, and exceeding that as pathological. Durkheim has very interesting analysis about the crime, he says that there is no society without any crime, every society there is crime.

You cannot have a society without the notion of crime, because crime is what he calls it as functional. Durkheim says that crime is functional because the crime helps you to understand the boundaries of the accepted behavior. The crime helps you to get a more rigid understanding about what is accepted and what is not accepted. People who take up crime are punished and this punishment sends out a warning to others that such and such actions are not permitted. So, Durkheim say that a specific amount or proportional fine is welcome or specific rate of deviance is welcome or it is essential. But not beyond a point, exceeding that is pathological.

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- Rules for the Classification of Social Types



- Durkheim's evolutionary perspective, coupled with his strategy for diagnosing normality and pathology in social systems, made inevitable a concern with social classification. Although specific systems reveal considerable variability, it is possible to group them into general types on the basis of (1) the "nature" and "number" of their parts and (2) the "mode of combination" of parts.



Then, for Rules of Classification of Social Types. Now, Durkheim was a very important believer of classifying society into different sections, and specifically based on empirical positions? So, Durkheim's evolutionary perspective coupled with his strategy for diagnosing normalcy, normality and pathology in social systems, made inevitable a concerned with social classification.

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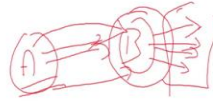
Durkheim following this evolutionary perspective had to come up with this scheme of evolution, moving from one state to the other and to the other in a qualitatively better manner in terms of increasing complexity, as we have seen in the case of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. So, all those specific systems revealed considerable variability, it is possible to group them into general types on the basis of the nature and the number of their parts, and the modes of combination of parts, and he is here, is talking about system.

So, this will become more evident when we discuss this Division of Labor, where he talks about society's transitioning from simple society to complex societies characterized by a mechanical solidarity to societies characterized by organic solidarity. This evolutionary schema that a singular, unilinear evolutionary schema, or something so important for almost every modern social sociologist as we have discussed, you will see this in Marx, you will see it in Comte, in Spencer, in Durkheim. They all believed that every society supposed to undertake this particular trajectory and Western Europe has already reached there and all other societies are supposed to do this, catching up business.

But this has to be based on the nature, the number of their parts. For example, a primitive society here in this area would be very simple. When I say complex society as per Durkheim's argument in Western Europe would be much complicated, and most of combination of parts will be much extensive here than in a simple society.

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- Rules for the Explanation of Social Facts



- Durkheim emphasized again a point he had made in *The Division of Labor*: "When the explanation of social phenomena is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills." Causal analysis involves searching for antecedent conditions that produce a given effect. Functional analysis is concerned with determining the consequences of a social fact (regardless of its cause) for the social whole or larger context in which it is located. Complete sociological explanation involves both causal and functional explanations, as Durkheim had sought to illustrate in *The Division of Labor*.

- Sociology as a science, superior to conventional wisdom about society



In Rules for the Explanation of Social Facts, he comes to the question how do you really explain the social part? Durkheim emphasized again the point he had made in the Division of Labor. When the explanation of social phenomena is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills. So, it is a very important distinction that he brings in between the causal explanation and the functional explanation, a causal analysis something what gave birth to that as other thing, something that actually gave birth to certain things and which caused a certain thing.

A causal analysis involves searching for an antecedent condition that produce a given effect. Why that A has given birth to B? That is a kind of a causal analysis, A give birth to B whereas, a functional analysis is concerned with the determining the consequences of a social fact. Now, functional analysis will be bothering about what B does, what are the features of this particular B? So, he makes a distinction between the causal analysis and the functional analysis.

Now, the causal analysis is about the antecedent conditions that produce a given effect. If B is the effect A is the antecedent condition, A is the causal effect. And what is a functional analysis? Functional analysis is concerned with determining the consequences of a social fact. So, what are the consequences of B? And there is often, there is a misunderstanding between or there is a confusion between the causal analysis and a

functional analysis. Often, there is a possibility that this functional analysis could be explained on the basis of causality.

These functions, thus, are there because of a particular cause. So, there is no automatic correspondence between the cause and the function, and these two needs to be seen as separate forms of inquiry, what gave birth to a particular condition, and what are the own sequences of the particular condition, or what are the specific functions that this particular condition fulfils. These two cannot be clubbed together, they cannot be taken for granted, or they cannot be seen as a kind of very closely connected rather they need to be seen as two separate analysis.

Functional analysis is concerned with determining the consequences of a social fact, regardless of its cause. So, we do not analyze this particular functions that B carries out and then, reducing it to that of this particular cause could be always problematic, for the social whole regardless of its cause or larger context in which it is located. Complete sociological explanation involves both the causal and functional explanation, as Durkheim has sought to illustrate in the Division of Labor.

So, he argues that when you analyze the social fact, you need to be really clear about the context of the reasons, why it came into existence, and also what it actually does. And sociology as a science superior to conventional wisdom about society. This is another very important point. I remember, I hope that you remember when we discussed about common sense. When we discussed about common sense, when we discussed in one of the first classes, we talk about how sociology is different from common sense.

So, Durkheim very strongly argued that the kind of perspective that sociology offers about social reality is definitely superior to the conventional wisdom about society, the kind of popular understanding about society and the commonsensical understanding about the society. That is why he argued that a sociological method or a sociological theory must be given its due credit. This is his fundamental argument and you need to understand the context in which he was making it.

He was talking it in the formative periods of the establishment of sociology as a distinctive discipline, and probably not compared to any other sociologist, he was the one who very strongly argued for the independent status of this particular discipline. It has to be seen as distinct and separate from psychology from philosophy, because it has a unique subject matter and this unique subject matter is what he calls it as social reality or as social fact.

So, once if you are winding up, once we try to wrap up this session, this book, this Rules of Sociological Method is considered to be canonical work in sociology especially in classical sociology because Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of sociology explains what, why and how you must look at sociology in a methodological manner, in a methodical manner and what are the kind of underlying methodological and epistemological assumptions.

This is the reason why I began this class by saying that it has both a philosophical angle, as well as a sociological methodological angle. So, he has a particular philosophical argument about the nature of society and the relation between society and the individual and also very specific elaboration about the sociological, the sociological methodological protocol, and a protocol that you need to undertake when you carry out sociological analysis.

So, the book, Rules of Sociological Method, really cemented the position of sociology as an independent discipline, and even now it is widely referred to, it is considered to be one of the most important classical works. It is a methodology work, it really defines the discipline in a particular way, and it defines the discipline as an empirical positivist scientific discipline, by arguing for an exclusive character for this discipline.

So, let us stop here and we will take up his work, his magnum opus Division of Labor in the next class. Indeed, we will have two classes, two sessions on Division of Labor because it is a lengthy discussion. So, see you then and I am winding up. Thank you.