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| **Durkheim, Émile (1858-1917)** |
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| David Émile Durkheim was a founding figure of sociology in France. His conceptual development of the ‘division of labour’ (1893) remains key to a sociological understanding of modernity; in social terms, the highly-divided ‘organic’ solidarity of modern nations and industrial society stood against the simplified ‘mechanical’ solidarity of traditional communities. |
| David Émile Durkheim was a founding figure of sociology in France. His conceptual development of the ‘division of labour’ (1893) remains key to a sociological understanding of modernity; in social terms, the highly-divided ‘organic’ solidarity of modern nations and industrial society stood against the simplified ‘mechanical’ solidarity of traditional communities. Durkheim taught at the Sorbonne in Paris, starting in 1902 with lectures on ‘moral education’ in which he articulated that ‘society is more than the sum of individuals; it must constitute a being *sui generis*, which has its own special character distinct from that of its members’ (Durkheim 1961, 60). This precept of society’s ‘character’ existing above individual people is developed with methodological nuance in his best-known book, *Suicide* (1897). Through an innovative use of demographic statistics, he derived the concept of *anomie*, or normlessness, by comparing suicide rates against political and economic events. He found spikes in moments of social upheaval – both turns for the worse and for the better. Opportunities afforded by economic growth, he showed, came entangled with a degree of estrangement, ‘heightened by passions being less disciplined, precisely when they need more disciplining’ (Durkheim 1951, 253). Like Karl Marx’s alienation, Max Weber’s ‘iron cage’, and Sigmund Freud’s discontents of civilization, Durkheim’s anomie is a key sociological articulation of the modernist concern with constraints on individuality and agency in a world of institutionalized norms and social structures. List of Works (A complete bibliography of Durkheim’s French writings and English translations is available at <<http://bit.ly/MV1G8K>>; for a bibliography of secondary material pertaining to Durkheim and his works, see <<http://bit.ly/P7TZZi>>.)  (1984 [1893]) *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. W. D. Halls, New York: Free Press.  (1982 [1895]) *The Rules of Sociological Method and Selected Texts on Sociology and its Method*, ed. S. Lukes, trans. W. D. Halls, New York: Free Press.  (1951 [1897]) *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, ed. G. Simpson, trans. J. Spaulding and G. Simpson, New York: Free Press.  (1961 [1925]) *Moral Education*, trans. E. K. Wilson and H. Schnurer, New York: Free Press. |
| Further reading:  (Durkheim)  (Durkheim, Moral Education)  (Lukes)  (Stedman)  (Turner) |