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Citations:

Bluebook 20th ed.
Jonathan H. Turner, Emile Durkheim's Theory of Social Organization, 68 Soc. F. 1089 (1990).

ALWD 6th ed.
Jonathan H. Turner, Emile Durkheim's Theory of Social Organization, 68 Soc. F. 1089 (1990).

APA 6th ed.
Turner, J. H. (1990). Emile durkheim's theory of social organization. Social Forces, 68(4), 1089-1104.

Chicago 7th ed.
Jonathan H. Turner, "Emile Durkheim's Theory of Social Organization," Social Forces 68, no. 4 (June 1990): 1089-1104

McGill Guide 9th ed.
Jonathan H Turner, "Emile Durkheim's Theory of Social Organization" (1990) 68:4 Soc Forces 1089.

MLA 8th ed.
Turner, Jonathan H. "Emile Durkheim's Theory of Social Organization." Social Forces, vol. 68, no. 4, June 1990, p. 1089-1104. HeinOnline.

OSCOLA 4th ed.
Jonathan H Turner, 'Emile Durkheim's Theory of Social Organization' (1990) 68 Soc F 1089

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Émile Durkheim's Theory of Social Organization*

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Abstract

Émile Durkheim's early analysis of structural differentiation and modes of integration is reconciled with his later examination of interaction and ritual. These ideas are reconciled by initially constructing an abstract causal model and then converting various causal paths into general laws of human social organization. It is argued that, despite a number of problems in interpreting Durkheim's analysis of cause and function, it is still possible to construct a general model that summarizes the basic classes of variables in his theory. And, despite Durkheim's failure to analyze power and inequality extensively, the contours of an important ecological theory are nonetheless evident. By converting the causal model into abstract laws, this theory is seen to denote some of the most basic dynamics of the social universe.

Commentary on the work of early theorists is one of the mainstays of contemporary sociological theory these days. Indeed, the term "metatheory" has been invented to acknowledge this intellectual tendency among current theorists. Yet the term has become a general "gloss" for just about any kind of commentary, and as a result, metatheory rarely produces scientific theory. Instead, it generates philosophical and historical discourse which becomes, by itself, a self-sustaining activity.

In contrast to this tendency in metatheorizing on Durkheim (e.g., Jones 1986; Alexander 1982; Lukes 1973), this article will examine those portions of Émile Durkheim's work that can potentially produce scientific theory. To this end, I will begin with a review of some problems in representing Durkheim's ideas scientifically; then I will construct a complex causal model of those portions of Durkheim's work that are amenable to theorizing; and finally, I will selectively translate the model into a series of abstract propositions that can legitimately be termed "Durkheim's Laws."

Problems in Articulating Durkheim's Theory

SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS

One substantive problem that immediately surfaces is Durkheim's nonscientific advocacy for a particular type of "moral society" (e.g., Durkheim 1922). If these ideological commentaries stood by themselves in separate volumes or passages, they could be easily ignored; but unfortunately, they are woven into the more scientific

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efforts to produce explanatory laws. For example, throughout Durkheim's discussion of social differentiation and integration are more moralistic statements on education, politics, and inequality; and in fact, these statements are so ideologically infused that they cannot be incorporated into more neutral theoretical statements. Other topics — anomie, egoism, normative regulation, solidarity-integration, and differentiation — are morally laden, but it is still relatively easy to extract less evaluative theoretical statements. Thus, in this exercise, I will be selective and focus only on those processes that can be separated from Durkheim's moral commitments. In so doing, some of the major deficiencies of Durkheim's theory become evident: the lack of an extensive conceptualization of the dynamics of power, inequality, and conflict.[1]

Another major substantive problem is Durkheim's inattention to economic or productive processes — a rather incredible oversight in light of the evolutionary thrust of his work. Indeed, "production" is rarely viewed by Durkheim as a variable; instead it remains implicit and is usually presented through proxy variables, such as transportation and communication technologies. Obviously, a theory of social organization that does not address the means by which actors are sustained reveals a major flaw.

A third substantive problem, which has often been commented upon (e.g., Giddens 1972), is the shift in Durkheim's work from a macrostructural level in the early 1890s (Durkheim 1938/1895, 1933/1893) to an ever more social psychological and interpersonal emphasis (Durkheim 1965/1912, 1951/1897; Durkheim & Mauss 1963/1903). Yet, in contrast to some commentators, I do not see this shift as a problem, but as an interesting theoretical challenge: to integrate the micro and macro levels of the theory in a manner that corresponds to Durkheim's intent.

CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS

In his most formal statement, Durkheim (1938/1895:95) presents a most problematic view of sociological explanation:

> When the explanation of social phenomena is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills.

In arguing in this way, Durkheim ignored one of his intellectual mentors, Auguste Comte, who insisted that it is "vain" to conduct "research into what are called *Causes*, whether first or final" (Comte 1830:5, italics in original). Yet, while ignoring Comte's advice, Durkheim still sought to adhere to Comte's (1830:5-6) view that scientific sociology "regards all phenomena as subject to invariable natural *Laws*" and that "our real business is to analyze accurately the circumstances of phenomena, and to connect them by natural relations of succession and resemblance." In Comte's (1830:6) assessment, the "best illustration of this is in the case of the doctrine of Gravitation" — presumably Newton's famous formulas, $F=ma$, or $F_g = (Gm_1 m_2 / r^2)$.

Thus, a major problem in presenting Durkheim's theory is coping with what he means by explanation. The most difficult task is to sort out various types of causal explanations and reconcile them with (1) his articulation of non-causal laws, like Newton's principles of gravitation which leave causality ambiguous,[2] and (2) his statements about functions or how phenomena operate to meet needs for social integration.

One solution to this problem is to translate all functional statements into laws that simply state, like Newton's equations, a particular pattern of relation among variables — in Newton's case mass, distance, and gravitational attraction; or mass,

acceleration, and force. I will not present mathematical equations, but in principle, Durkheim's laws reveal the logic of equations without the corresponding precision. For example, Durkheim (1933/1893:262) often makes statements like "the division of labor varies in direct ratio with the volume and density of societies." Such statements are not causal arguments, but they are easily translated into an equation like many in science.

I will also translate Durkheim's ideas into a causal model, where the effects of variables on each other are arrayed. This latter task is particularly difficult, because Durkheim's theory reveals varying and vague conceptions of causality. Without being pulled into the philosophical quagmire that has always surrounded attempts to sort out causes,[3] let me indicate some of the types of causal arguments in Durkheim's work.

Many of Durkheim's functional statements, which might otherwise be viewed as tautologies or illegitimate teleologies, can be converted into less problematic statements by invoking a "social selection" argument, as is done with functional statements in biology.[4] For example, rather than imply, as Durkheim often does, that the "need for integration" directly causes the emergence of the division of labor (an illegitimate teleology[5]), it can be argued that certain kinds of structures and processes are retained because they had (and have) selective advantage over others for promoting social integration. It is necessary to recognize, then, that many of Durkheim's theoretical ideas are couched in such selection terms, because he was borrowing metaphors from Spencer (1874-1896) and Darwin (1859). The problem with selection arguments, however, is that the particular cause(s) of these structures and processes is obscured in favor of moral pronouncement of what *should* occur — that is, it is "good" to have social solidarity and integration.

Another way in which Durkheim treats causality is statistically, as is done in *Suicide* (1951/1897). Here, emphasis is on isolating "the cause" of an event through the successive elimination (through what he saw as statistical controls) of alternative hypotheses on causes. This type of causal analysis is not prominent in Durkheim's theoretical works, except to the extent that it forced him to clarify some important concepts, such as "anomie" and "egoism," which are very important in his theory but which were vaguely conceptualized in earlier works, such as *The Division of Labor* (Durkheim 1933/1893).

Far more important than statistically generated "causes" are those statements in Durkheim's analysis that examine "efficient causes." What these turn out to be are statements on the generic or general conditions that produce a basic class of results. For example, Durkheim asserts that competition among individuals is caused by the concentration of a population in ecological space, thereby increasing material and social "density" (Durkheim 1933/1893:266). These are not causal explanations of the type: this particular empirical event, perhaps in conjunction with other specific empirical events, sets off another concrete empirical event, say, the French Revolution. Instead, Durkheim's "efficient causes" are more abstract, stating a general condition that produces another general type of event. This is what makes them theoretical, but it is also what makes them less precise, since it is no longer possible to trace precisely how one empirical condition sets into motion another. Moreover, these statements are often weakened further by evolutionary assumptions that certain sequences of events are inevitable. Here, it is very difficult to discern how one condition produces another condition, which then causes yet another, and so on; rather, a sequence is just described, but the causal connections in the sequence are left implicit.

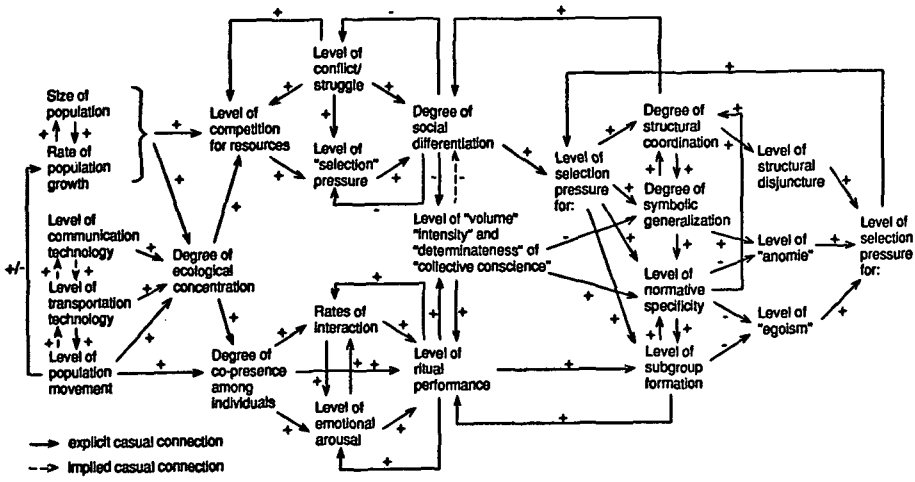
Yet another way in which Durkheim addresses causality is through complex statements of multiple causes: a number of events — say A, B, C — is seen as operating simultaneously, and perhaps interactively, to bring about a given outcome — D. For example, transportation and communication technologies, in conjunction with ecological concentration, are viewed by Durkheim to increase the number of individuals in interaction (Durkheim 1933/1893:260). There is a sense in which these variables simultaneously produce this effect, but the result is a rather vague kind of causal statement. Moreover, the implied interaction effects among transportation, communication, and concentration make the causal statement even more imprecise; and as a consequence, it becomes difficult to pinpoint causal effects, except in an aggregate way.

An additional type of causal argument in Durkheim's work is what Stinchcombe (1968) has called "reverse causal chains." In such causal statements, the outcome of causal sequence determines the subsequent flow of this sequence. For example, the emergence of a division of labor out of "competitive struggles" among individuals "feeds back" and decreases the intensity of the struggle and provides a basis for social integration among potentially competitive actors (Durkheim 1933/1893:266-69). These are not true "feedback" arguments because goals, purpose, and parameters are not conceptualized as components of a self-regulating system. Since Durkheim had such a poorly developed conceptualization of power and political regulation — except some rather grandiose ideas adapting Tocqueville to Montesquieu (1748)[6] — a true set of cybernetic processes revolving around system goals, output, feedback, and correction cannot be imposed on Durkheim's theory. I will, at times, loosely refer to these reverse causal chains as "feedback," but I do not mean by this term a true system of cybernetic self-regulation.[7]

A final type of causal argument in Durkheim's analysis is by "causal mechanism": a given set of conditions causes a particular process to be activated; in turn, this process operates in ways that make certain outcomes more likely. These kinds of causal arguments are more complex because the mechanism is often a cluster of processes which, for the explanation at hand, goes unanalyzed. For example, Durkheim's (1933/1893:266) analysis of ecological concentration, struggle, and competition (as the selective mechanism) and the emergence of the division of labor is an argument in terms of a mechanism. In this case, two events (concentration and specialization) are connected via a rather vague set of processes (competition and struggle) operating as a mechanism.

In sum, these problematic issues present us with points of ambiguity in Durkheim's theory. I have dwelled on them because they help explain why I go about analyzing Durkheim's theory in a certain way. As noted earlier, I will begin by converting Durkheim's ambiguous statements into a complex causal model; then I will translate portions of the causal model into sociological laws which, by their nature, leave the question of causality implicit and, instead, highlight the form of relationships among variables — much as is the case with Newton's laws on attraction, force, and gravity. This movement between complex causal models and lawlike statements is a useful theoretical strategy (Turner 1988, 1987, 1985a) because it allows us to see complex configurations of causal connections and, at the same time, to postulate what forces in the social universe reveal lawful relations to each other, without introducing the complexity and philosophical ambiguities that always plague causal analysis. Moreover, models and laws can serve as correctives for each other: laws beg for models outlining causal connections informing us why and how variables are related in a particular way (e.g., the formula $F_g = (Gm_1 m_2 / r^2)$ led to

FIGURE 1: Durkheim's Dynamic Causal Model of Social Organization



a search for the causal processes or the mechanism accounting for the "pull" or "force" of gravity), whereas complex models need to be translated into simpler statements involving fewer variables if they are to be tested (since complex models cannot be empirically assessed as a whole).

Durkheim's Dynamic Model of Social Organization

If we take the entire corpus of Durkheim's work and combine it into a parsimonious model, what would his model look like? Figure 1 presents my best efforts along these lines. Figure 1 is not a theory, *per se*, but a dynamic modeling scheme. In constructing such a model, the goal is to (1) translate selectively Durkheim's ideas into generic classes of variables and (2) highlight various causal paths that can suggest abstract propositions or laws. This model can be considered "dynamic" because it emphasizes the flow of causal processes through direct, indirect, and feedback (actually, reverse causal) paths. As the signs on each causal path denote, Durkheim posited a certain type of relationship among the variables.

Before proceeding, however, I should emphasize several problems with this model. First, it is too complex to ever be tested empirically; and even if we sought to employ simulations, it may still be too complicated. At best, we can use portions of the model (particular causal paths) for tests and simulations. Second, there are many points of ambiguity in the nature of the causal connections denoted by the arrows and signs. These are partly the result of Durkheim's portrayal of cause (as outlined earlier), but also the inevitable result of *any* causal analysis that, by its very nature, will be problematic. Third, while Durkheim's concepts are all converted to variables (and are re-labeled somewhat), his definitions are often imprecise, forcing

a certain amount of guessing as to what the variable denotes. Fourth, the model is too endogenous and filled with self-reinforcing causal cycles. For adequate tests of the model to occur, we would need to add exogenous forces as these influence the values for the variables in ways that reduce the closed, mutually reinforcing cycles.

Yet, despite these problems, the model is a useful heuristic. It pieces together Durkheim's major theoretical ideas and delineates the configuration of processes that Durkheim saw as crucial. And it does so without the functional and moralistic overtones that typify much of Durkheim's work.

The most characteristic feature of Figure 1 is that it outlines an ecological theory, because the instigating causal forces are population size, growth, movement, communication, and concentration. Such is the case at both the macro and micro levels, since it is the concentration of individuals in space that sets into motion both the macro-level processes of competition, conflict, selection, and differentiation as well as the micro-level processes of co-presence, interaction, emotional arousal, and ritual. Thus, ecological variables initiate various macro and micro processes, which are delineated, respectively, across the top and bottom portions of the model. But, once initiated, other important causal dynamics become operative, as is illustrated by the causal paths in the middle and right portions of the model. Another feature of the model is that macro and micro level processes are "linked" together in a complex set of causal connections among those variables influencing the degree of integration in a social system (the right portions of the model). Hence, it is when Durkheim addresses the question of integration that we can see how his early macro-structural ideas can be reconciled with his later micro-interpersonal focus. With these general features in mind, then, let me begin with macro-structural processes, then move to the micro-interpersonal, and finish with how the two models can be reconciled.

DURKHEIM'S MODEL OF MACRODYNAMICS

The Division of Labor (1933/1893) is, of course, the main source of Durkheim's macrostructuralism. Basically, Durkheim views the concentration of a population in ecological space — what he termed "material density" — as crucial to the division of labor, with population size and rate of growth as central "causes" of such density. But ecological conditions exert an independent effect, since the same sized population can be concentrated or dispersed as a result of varying amounts of space and geo-social configurations (natural barriers, cities, etc.). Material density is also "caused" by "the number and rapidity of ways of communication and transportation" (Durkheim 1933/1893:259) because these technologies "suppress" and "diminish" the "gaps separating social segments," thereby increasing the concentration or "density" of contact among actors in ecological space. Similarly, migration and mobility, as "caused" by transportation technologies, increase contact and potentially provide a means for further concentration of a population. Since population growth, and its effects on size and ecological concentration, are affected by net migration (immigration less emigration), this variable exerts an indirect causal effect on concentration through its influence on population growth. Thus, Durkheim posits a "multiple cause" argument with some interaction effects for increased ecological concentration, or "material density." Presumably each variable exerts an independent effect, but together the variables exert an even greater effect.

Ultimately, the "division of labor," or what I term "social differentiation," is "caused" by the increased "moral density" that follows from escalated "material

density." It is at this point that Durkheim's causal argument gets slippery, because he invokes a selection argument, positing natural selection as a causal mechanism that translates ecological concentration into a division of labor, or increased social differentiation. This occurs because the "struggle for existence is more acute" (Durkheim 1933/1893:266), thereby increasing selection pressures. Durkheim implies that concentration increases competition for resources which, in turn, causes this "struggle for existence" when he notes (ibid.):

> Darwin justly observed that the struggle between two organisms is as active as they are analogous. Having the same needs and pursuing the same objects, they are in rivalry everywhere. As long as they have more resources than they need, they can still live side by side, but if their number increases to such proportions that all appetites can no longer be sufficiently satisfied, war breaks out, and it is as violent as this insufficiency is more marked; that is to say, as the number in the struggle increases.

I have also drawn a causal arrow directly from the population variables to competition for resources to acknowledge what this passage emphasizes: population size, *per se*, exerts a direct influence on scarcity of resources. Competition for scarce resources thus causes conflict, under conditions of material density; and it is at this point that Durkheim invokes a selection mechanism, presumably because competition and conflict create selection pressures for specialization. After offering biological examples on speciation, Durkheim asserts that "men submit to the same law" (Durkheim 1933/1893:267) and concludes that "it is easy to understand that all condensation of the social mass, especially if it is accompanied by an increase in population, necessarily determines advances in the division of labor" (Durkheim 1933/1893:268). Thus "social speciation" or "specialization" occurs as a result of the mutually escalating effects among competition, struggle, and selection pressures (note direct, indirect, and reverse causal arrows among these processes in the model).

Once specialization or social differentiation exists, it exerts a feedback effect (actually a reverse causal effect, unless "directed" by a regulatory agent such as government) on conflict and selection pressures, for while "the division of labor is . . . a result of the struggle for existence . . . thanks to it, opponents are not obliged to fight to a finish, but can exist one beside the other" (Durkheim 1933/1893:270). Hence, I have drawn feedback (or reverse causal) arrows back to conflict and selection pressures.

Social differentiation, in turn, changes the nature of integration in social systems. Durkheim's discussion of these changes marks, I think, his most important theoretical contribution to macrostructural analysis (since his argument, thus far, simply repeats Herbert Spencer's position without Spencer's sense for the effects of power and regulation on selection processes). For all its insight, however, this portion of Durkheim's theory has to be disentangled from his moral preachings on the "good society" and his rather extreme functionalism. This disentangling is further complicated by an implicit selection argument which is difficult to portray in a causal model, although I have sought to do so. Nonetheless, the right portion of Figure 1 represents my best effort to delineate the causal processes as I think Durkheim conceived them.

Social differentiation creates selection pressures for a decrease in the "volume," "intensity," and "determinateness" of the collective conscience (Durkheim 1933/1893:152,167) — that is, collective symbols, such as values and beliefs, become less likely to be shared ("volume"), less powerful and constraining ("intensity"), and less

clear ("determinateness"). At the same time, and presumably as a result of this "enfeeblement" of the collective conscience (Durkheim 1933/1893:171), there are selective pressures for what Parsons (1966) was later to term "value generalization." I have phrased this process "symbolic generalization," because Durkheim uses the term "abstractness." Hence, the collective conscience

> changes its nature as societies become more voluminous . . . the common conscience is itself obliged to rise above all local diversities, to dominate more space, and consequently to become more abstract (Durkheim 1933/1893:287).

A phrase like "is itself obliged" is causally vague, to say the least, but I would suggest that Durkheim intends a selection argument here: In the competition among symbol systems, those which are general and resonate across the diverse experiences of differentiated units will be retained, especially since there are additional selection pressures stemming from disintegrative tendencies in social systems (see last variable on right of Figure 1).

Yet, as we will see in examining Durkheim's micro-level theory, there are microprocesses working to promote a high "volume," "intensity," and "determinateness" of the "collective conscience" (note arrows from "ritual performance" to "collective conscience"). These processes, which are based upon micro encounters, create pressures for a low level of abstraction in cultural symbols. This tension is "resolved" by the creation of subgroups (what Durkheim [1902] termed "occupational groups") and normative specificity within and between such groups. Even before the new preface to *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim (1933/1893:205) emphasized:

> If society no longer imposes upon everybody, it takes greater care to define and regulate the special relations between different social functions.

And goes on to stress (Durkheim 1933/1893:302):

> It is certain that organized societies are not possible without a developed system of rules which predetermine the functions of each organ. In so far as labor is divided, there arises a multitude . . . of moralities and laws.

Such processes are created and sustained by interaction rituals at the micro level, but such rituals are "selected" because of the potentially disintegrative effects of structural differentiation and symbolic generalization. Thus, selection pressures, as they encourage certain kinds of ritual practices, produce the subsolidarities, and normative linkages between them, which mitigate against differentiation and symbolic generalization.

The last causal effect in the model is what Durkheim termed "another abnormal form." I labeled this process "structural disjuncture," because this is what Durkheim had in mind. The basic idea is that social differentiation creates selection pressures for structural coordination — exchange and interdependence among units, structural overlap, and perhaps structural inclusion (units inside more inclusive units). Failure to produce such patterns of coordination creates disjunctures which escalate selection pressures to re-coordinate relations among units. If not, the system "dies" through disintegration.

Similarly, other outcomes of the selection pressures emanating from social differentiation can potentially produce "pathologies." As Durkheim clarified in later works, anomie is the result of symbolic generalization without a corresponding normative specification to regulate passions and desires (Durkheim 1951/1897:257-58), whereas egoism is the lack of embeddedness and participation in group

structures (Durkheim 1951/1897, 1902). Any of these "pathological" or disintegrative outcomes, resulting from the failure of the selection pressure emanating from social differentiation (and the failure to produce rituals at the micro level), escalate selection pressures for a particular pattern of integration: structural coordination (for structural disjuncture), normative specification (for anomie), and subgroup formation (for egoism).

DURKHEIM'S MODEL OF MICRODYNAMICS

By the time that Durkheim had turned to suicide (Durkheim 1951/1897), he had become concerned with social psychology. And later, when he wrote on religion, he could argue that "the collective force is not entirely outside of us . . . this force must also penetrate us and organize itself within us" (Durkheim 1965/1912:209). Whatever the merits of Durkheim's speculations on the origin of religion, his work on this topic contains a powerful theory of microdynamic processes. As perhaps Goffman (1974, 1967, 1959) and Collins (1986, 1985, 1975) were first to recognize and appreciate fully, Durkheim's statements on ritual have broader theoretical implications, as Durkheim himself consistently hinted (see especially Durkheim 1965/1912:194-298). This theory, abstracted from the context of religion, is modeled in the bottom portions of Figure 1.

Co-presence among individuals, especially when involving movement to a high-density situation (note causal arrows to the co-presence variable), causes people to interact; and the higher their rates of interaction, the greater the emotional arousal (Durkheim 1965/1912:240-43). Conversely, as the causal arrows in Figure 1 underscore, emotional arousal will increase rates of interaction. Co-presence will also produce, directly by itself, the emission of rituals, especially under conditions in which actors move into situations of high density. However, Durkheim (1965/1912:240) also indicated that rituals are more likely when rates of interaction are high and emotions are aroused — a situation he typified as "effervescence." High levels of ritual performance, Durkheim argued, feed back to increase the desire for increased interaction and to raise the level of emotion. Such a closed interpersonal system obviously cannot cycle in this mutually reinforcing manner forever — if only because of physical exhaustion — but Durkheim clearly understood the critical interpersonal dynamics producing "solidarity." Structurally, such solidarity is manifested in two ways: (1) increasing the "volume," "intensity," and "determinateness" of the "collective conscience" for the individuals involved and (2) increasing the level of subgroup formation, or density and intensity of ties among individuals. Reciprocally, high levels of "volume," "intensity," and "determinateness," coupled with high "intensity" and "density" of ties in subgroups, will feed back (in a reverse causal chain) and increase the level of ritual performance — at least to the point where the social relations are deified as an external and sacred "force." More typically, however, everyday rituals produce common sentiments and group ties that fall far short of such connotations of "sacredness."

Durkheim recognized these processes by the time he wrote the preface to the second edition of *The Division of Labor*, since here he advocates subgroup formation, coupled to an attendant subcollective conscience, as the basis for integration in differentiated societies (Durkheim 1933/1902). At this time, however, he had not articulated the interpersonal processes — co-presence, ritual, interaction, and emotional arousal — or their causal connections that produce and reproduce such subgroups.

As the model indicates, these group formation processes will produce "egoism" if co-presence and interaction do not increase ritual performance as well as "anomie" if normative agreements do not emerge as part of the "determinateness" of the collective conscience. Such conditions will escalate selection pressures for group formation through increased ritual performance, as indicated by the feedback loops on the bottom right of Figure 1 (again, these are more like reverse causal chains than true feedback loops in a purposive, self-regulating cybernetic system).

DURKHEIM'S MICRO-MACRO LINKAGE

While the model in Figure 1 is too complex, and perhaps reveals too many vague causal connections, it provides a sense for how Durkheim visualized social reality at the macro and micro levels. Moreover, the model gives us a set of proposals, if only implicitly, for how the two levels can be reconciled. Macro structures are produced and reproduced through co-presence, interaction, emotional arousal, and ritual as these create subgroups, norms, and other collective symbols. Conversely, macro structures set the parameters for these micro-level processes by generating selective pressures associated with differentiation, patterns of structural coordination, and symbolic generalization. These pressures for activization of micro-level processes can be escalated where levels of structural disjuncture, anomie, and egoism are high.

There is, of course, only so far that we can go with this kind of micro-macro analysis, since Durkheim's conceptualization of two critical processes — power and inequality — is so weak. Because of this, I have not included power and inequality in the model, but obviously power/control and inequality/stratification need to be inserted into the model to complete the micro-macro linkages suggested in Figure 1. This task is far beyond my intent here. Instead, my goal is to represent the strong points of Durkheim's theory, first as a causal model and next as a series of abstract laws where causality is a secondary consideration.

Durkheim's Laws of Social Organization

My vision of scientific theory is deductive in this sense: (1) formulate abstract laws that pertain to generic social processes; (2) later, derive corollaries that pertain to basic classes of empirical events; and (3) finally, develop specific hypotheses to test the plausibility of the abstract laws and corollaries. Without elaborating my views, and the controversy that this positivistic argument now generates (see Turner 1987, 1985a, 1979), let me assert that such a view of theory is far closer to Durkheim's than many commentators on Durkheim appear willing to acknowledge or admit (e.g., Alexander 1982). Thus, the conversion of Durkheim's ideas into formal laws is in keeping with his underlying position on scientific sociology (Turner 1981).

THE LAW OF STRUCTURAL DIFFERENTIATION

This principle was borrowed by Durkheim from Spencer, with relatively few alterations (see Turner 1985b, 1981, for more detailed commentary on this point). Let me state the law, and then, offer a few discursive comments.

(1) The degree of differentiation among a population of actors is a gradual s-function of the level of competition among these actors, with the latter variable being an additive function of (a) the size of this population of actors, (b) the rate

of growth in this population, (c) the extent of ecological concentration of this population, and (d) the rate of mobility of actors in this population.

This proposition summarizes Durkheim's (1933/1893:256-82) basic line of argument on the "causes" of the division of labor. I have simply raised the level of abstraction somewhat and stated the form of the relationship, without delving into causality. Is this law plausible? I think so, although it has been assessed empirically only in two literatures, organizational theory (e.g., Hannan & Freeman 1977; Meyer 1972; James & Finner 1975; Hendershot & James 1972; Blau 1970; Childers, Mayhew & Gray 1971) and social ecology theory (e.g., Hawley 1986, 1950; Nolan 1979).

THE LAW OF CULTURAL DIFFERENTIATION

(2) The degree of consensus over, and intensity of, cognitive orientations and regulative cultural codes among the members of a population is an inverse function of the degree of structural differentiation among actors in this population and a positive, multiplicative function of their (a) rate of interpersonal interaction, (b) level of emotional arousal, and (c) rate of ritual performance.

In this law, Durkheim's argument sees potentially contradictory, or at least intersecting, forces as operating. Social differentiation reduces not only the degree to which actors share the same cognitive orientations (beliefs, interpretative schemes, stocks of knowledge, etc.) and regulative codes (specific normative understandings of rights and duties) but also the intensity of these orientations and codes (that is, their power to circumscribe thought and action). Structural differentiation can also decrease rates of interaction and ritual performance by partitioning actors; and thus, Durkheim implicitly (although in a rather groping way) specified the mechanism by which differentiation produces these "weakening" effects on the collective conscience — i.e., reduction in rates of interaction and solidarity-producing rituals. Yet, if rates of interaction and ritual can remain high under conditions of differentiation (as Blau [1977] suggests in his theory of "intersecting parameters"), then the culturally disintegrative effects of structural differentiation are muted. Hence, Durkheim's theory proposes two contradictory forces whose respective values determine the level of pressure for sociocultural disintegration.

THE LAW OF SOCIOCULTURAL DISINTEGRATION

(3) The level of disintegrative pressures among a population of actors is a positive function of the degree of structural differentiation among members of this population and an inverse multiplicative function of their (a) rate of interaction, (b) level of emotional arousal, and (c) rate of ritual performance.

As indicated above, this law qualifies proposition (2) above in this sense: if differentiated actors can sustain high rates of interaction and ritual, these interpersonal activities encourage common cognitive orientations and regulative codes, even among actors situated in very different locations in the structural morphology of a population. Hence, for Durkheim, there is a fundamental relationship in the social universe among differentiation, rates of interaction, and levels of ritual performance, on the one hand, and disintegrative forces, on the other. Some of the corollaries to this law suggested by Figure 1 can, I think, incorporate Durkheim's analysis of "pathological forms" and, at the same time, specify some of those conditions influencing the values for the variables in law (3).

(3a) The greater the level of structural differentiation among members of a population, the more likely are they to develop abstract and generalized cognitive orientations and regulative codes to bridge their differences in structural location; and the more this process occurs without a corresponding increase in normative specificity and subgroup formation sustained by ritual performances, the greater the level of anomie, and hence, the greater the level of disintegrative pressure among members of this population.

(3b) The greater the level of structural differentiation among members of a population and the more members of this population fail to develop specific regulative codes as reinforced by ritual performances, the greater the level of structural disjuncture in their social interdependencies, and hence, the greater the level of disintegrative pressure among members of this population.

(3c) The greater the level of structural differentiation among members of a population and the more members of this population fail to develop normatively regulated subgroupings that increase their rates of intra-group interaction and ritual performance, the greater the rate of egoism, and hence, the greater the level of disintegrative pressure among members of this population.

Although Durkheim viewed selection pressures for avoiding (3a), (3b), and (3c) above as inevitable, I would argue that the values for the variables in these propositions are an empirical question — that is, particular historical systems have, for a wide variety of situationally specific reasons, been able to increase or decrease the values of these variables. Such historical processes are not, of course, the subject of theory, but the data to assess the plausibility of Durkheim's argument.

THE LAW OF SOCIOCULTURAL INTEGRATION

The converse of propositions (3), (3a), (3b), and (3c) can be formulated as a law of integration — that is, of those forces increasing coordinated interrelations and group attachments among the members of a population.

(4) The degree of socio-cultural integration among the members of a population is an inverse function of the degree of structural differentiation and a positive, multiplicative function of (a) the degree of consensus over cognitive orientations and regulative codes among members of this population, (b) the rate of interaction among members of this population, (c) the rate of ritual performance among members of this population, (d) the level of interdependence among members of this population, and (e) the density of group/subgroup relations or networks among members of this population.

At first blush, this law appears to be an obvious tautology, since (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) above are the defining characteristics of sociocultural integration. The power of law (4), however, rests on the effects of structural differentiation, *per se*, and the independent as well as multiplicative relations among the variables denoted in (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e). The values for these variables will differ depending upon empirical conditions, but at the same time, they can exponentially increase each other's effects, or perhaps cancel each other out. For example, different patterns of sociocultural integration will ensue when we compare a population revealing high structural differentiation, high levels of consensus but low intensity (i.e., generalized symbolic codes with low regulative power), low levels of interdependence among others, moderate rates of interaction and ritual, and low network densities in

subgroup formation with another population that evidences high values for all the variables. Durkheim's famous distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity represented an attempt to illustrate how varying profiles of integration ensued depending upon the values of the variables in proposition (4); but my representation of Durkheim's ideas allows for many more diverse patterns and profiles of integration than a dichotomous distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity. Structural differentiation, as its effects are compounded by the variety of possible interactive combinations of (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) in proposition (4), can create a wide variety of sociocultural profiles, or patterns of integration. In this way, I think, the seeming tautology in law (4) is obviated, in much the same way as plugging empirical values obviates other famous tautologies, or statements of equivalence in science, such as F = ma (since "force" is defined in terms of mass x acceleration) — that is, as one makes deductions to specific classes of empirical cases, the tautological character of the variables is obviated.

Conclusion

Laws (1), (2), (3), and (4) capture, I think, the essence of Durkheim's theory. One can, of course, make many deductions from, as well as elaborations of, these four laws. For example, Merton's (1957) famous theory of deviance is, in essence, an effort to explain rates of deviance in a population by creating a corollary to laws (2), (3a), (3c), and (4) — that is, Merton conceptualizes the rate and type of deviance as a function of the particular profile among differentiation, consensus and intensity of cognitive orientations/regulative codes, and subgroup formation. Or, to illustrate further, much of the human ecology school (Hawley 1986, 1950) in American sociology represents an implicit deduction from law (1). Further, Collins' (1975) theory of interaction ritual chains is an effort to make deductions from law (3). And Durkheim's (1951/1897) own analysis of suicide is a similar deductive explanation in terms of the values for the variables in principles 3a (anomic suicide) and 3c (altruistic and egoistic suicide). But my purpose here is not to make such systematic deductions for these and many other "Durkheimian" theories, especially since I am not sure that I have stated the laws in their most exhaustive and, at the same time, most parsimonious form. My purpose in this article is to suggest how we should be treating the genius of Émile Durkheim, at least from the point of view of science.

Notes

1. Durkheim does, of course, address the dynamics of power and inequality. In his analysis of the "forced division of labor" (Durkheim 1933/1893:374-88), the relationship between social class and anomie (Durkheim 1951/1897:248-54), and the portrayal of political processes revolving around occupational groups (1933/1902) all contain interesting insights. Indeed, the discussion of class and anomie in *Suicide* clearly becomes the basis for one of the most interesting theoretical ideas of this century: Merton's (1957) famous social structure and anomie theory of deviance. Yet, despite hints and glimpses, each of which provides theoretical leads, Durkheim does not develop or extend his analysis of inequality and power in the same ways as the ideas to be analyzed in this article.

2. It could be argued that *the cause* of Newton's formulas is "gravitational attraction," but this is simply a gloss because the mechanisms or processes by which gravitational attraction operate are unclear. What is it that makes gravitational attraction a force in the universe? Or, why are bodies "attracted" to each other?

3. For example, Wallace (1987) recently addressed the issue in sociology, and in the same issue of *Sociological Theory*, a "symposium" on "cause, law, and probability" was organized. Hence, the issue of cause is still very much with us and as controversial as ever.

4. For example, if a biologist or physiologist asserts that the function of the heart is to circulate blood and air to the cells, there is an implied selection argument: among larger warm-blooded animals, those that could develop a more efficient pumping and circulatory system were more likely to survive and reproduce.

5. This statement is an illegitimate teleology because there is no purpose/goal built into the system, such that decision makers establish "system integration" as their goal and then engage in a series of initiatives to bring about a division of labor to realize this goal.

6. Durkheim's (1933/1902) vision of a political system involved representative democracy in which the centralized power of the state was checked and balanced by the power of "occupational groups." Such groups would elect representatives who were to assure that the power of the state would not become too great and would remain responsive to the needs of members in diverse occupational groups, whose varied interests would serve as another check and balance on concentrated power.

7. Perhaps Durkheim had a regulatory political system in mind that was indeed self-regulating. But his statements are so moralistic that it is hard to sort out just what he meant. Hence, it is better to conceptualize these processes as reverse causal chains, although further development of Durkheim's theory would, no doubt, involve a conceptualization of power/decision-making and true feedback processes of self-regulation.

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SOCIAL FORCES

Forthcoming Issue

SEPTEMBER 1990, VOLUME 69, NUMBER 1

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