

Durkheim and Spencer

ABSTRACT

A limited effort is made in this article to compare and contrast Durkheim and Spencer, with particular emphasis on their theories of societal evolution and their basic approaches to social science methodology. It is concluded that, while Durkheim's sociology was heavily influenced by the work of Spencer, it differs in certain basic respects. To the extent that subsequent generations of sociologists have embraced the 'paradigm' of Durkheim and rejected that of Spencer, the effect upon macro-level sociological theory has been highly constricting. Much can be gained from a study of the strengths and weaknesses of both theorists, and from a more balanced perspective.

“Who now reads Spencer?” intoned Talcott Parsons (quoting Crane Brinton) in the opening line of his own now seldom-read work, *The Structure of Social Action*.¹ “Spencer is dead.”

Whether or not this declamation was a self-fulfilling prophesy, it is certainly true that Herbert Spencer – who had once been lionized as perhaps the greatest mind of the nineteenth century – went into eclipse and became a virtual non-person among many twentieth century social scientists.² Emile Durkheim, by contrast, came to be widely hailed as a ‘founding father’ of sociology, despite the fact that he owed much to Spencer. (Consider, for instance, the index to *The Division of Labor in Society*,³ Durkheim's pre-eminent and most frequently cited work. It contains forty-three references to Spencer. The next most frequently mentioned author, Auguste Comte, is cited only eighteen times.) Indeed, there is a curious tendency among historians of sociology to pass Spencer by and skip directly from Comte to Durkheim, despite the fact that Comte died in 1857, six years after Spencer's landmark *Social Statics* appeared, while Durkheim was born in 1858 and did not publish his first major work until 1893, near the end of Spencer's prodigious (albeit controversial) career.

While there have been some efforts in recent years to rehabilitate some of Spencer's theoretical contributions,⁴ as well as some penetrating critiques of Durkheim,⁵ to date there has been no systematic effort (to my knowledge) to re-examine Durkheim in light of Spencer. This is unfortunate, because these two theorists had very different views of society, and there is much to be gained from comparing and contrasting their theoretical constructs. Though it would require a lengthy monograph to do justice to the subject, I propose to take a limited step in this direction by focussing here upon their macro-level theories of society and societal evolution, and upon certain key aspects of their methodologies.

Let us first consider Spencer's work. The key to Spencer's sociology was its essentially biological *cum* economic character. That is, Spencer viewed society as a 'utilitarian' instrumentality; it arises out of 'the struggle for existence' (in Darwin's phrase) and constitutes, in essence, a system of exchanges and mutual benefits. Cooperation and a division of labor lie at its base, but the underlying principle and motivating force can best be described as 'egoistic cooperation'. Though Spencer frequently employed an organismic analogy to underscore the concept of functional integration in organized societies, he also was at pains to emphasize that a society is not *really* an organism. It is an agglomeration of sentient individuals who are pursuing their own needs, wants and interests. This vision was not original with Spencer, of course. It was shared by the classical economists, the liberal philosophers – and by Plato and Aristotle, for that matter. Spencer also held that there is a reciprocal relationship between Comte's social 'solidarity' and cooperation: 'Cooperation is made possible by society, and makes society possible. It presupposes associated men.'⁶ Furthermore, kin-based associations are likely to be the sorts of groups in which 'the greatest social cohesion and power of co-operation' are likely to occur.⁷ Elsewhere, though, he emphasized that the utilitarian ends are prior and paramount:

Cooperation... is at once that which can not exist without a society, and that for which a society exists, . . . The motive for acting together, originally the dominant one, may be defense against enemies; or it may be the easier obtainment of food, by the chase or otherwise; or it may be, and commonly is, both of these. In any case, however, the units pass from a state of perfect independence to a state of mutual dependence; and as fast as they do this they become united into a society rightly so called.⁸

In his earlier writings, to be sure, Spencer was an unvarnished Benthamite liberal – the last of the philosophical radicals and the inspiration for Social Darwinism (which ought properly to have been called Social Spencerism). But, in his mature work, notably *The Principles of Sociology*,⁹ he adopted the view that societal

evolution was the product of an *interaction* between what would now be called ecological, psychological and socio-economic forces, including both cooperative and conflictual forces. After providing a brief resumé of the various 'internal' and 'external' factors involved, Spencer concluded his overview chapter with a statement that, to my mind, is an underappreciated classic:

Recognizing the primary truth that social phenomena depend in part on the natures of the individuals and in part on the forces the individuals are subject to, we see that these two fundamentally distinct sets of factors, with which social changes commence, give origin to other sets as social changes advance. The pre-established environing influences, inorganic and organic, which are at first almost unalterable, become more and more altered by the actions of the evolving society. Simple growth of population brings into play fresh causes of transformation that are increasingly important. The influences which the society exerts on the natures of its units, and those which the units exert on the nature of the society, incessantly co-operate in creating new elements. As societies progress in size and structure, they work on one another, now by their war-struggles and now by their industrial intercourse, profound metamorphoses. And the ever-accumulating, ever-complicating super-organic products, material and mental, constitute a further set of factors which become more and more influential causes of change. So that, involved as the factors are at the beginning, each step in advance increases the involution, by adding factors which themselves grow more complex while they grow more powerful.¹⁰

Attention should be drawn to the fact that Spencer is here clearly suggesting the basis for resolving one of the more vexing problems in the social sciences – the nature of the relationship between the individual and society and the causal potency of each in social behavior and social change. Spencer's views, which were derived from both his psychology and his sociology, were parallel to, but also differed from, those of Marx. Human nature (man's psychological propensities and mental faculties) and society are involved in a co-evolutionary process, he maintained: '[T]he phenomena of social evolution are determined partly by the external actions to which the social aggregate is exposed, and partly by the nature of its units...observing that these two sets of factors are themselves progressively changed as the society changes.'¹¹ Elsewhere, Spencer used an illustrative metaphor that could readily have been endorsed by his nemesis:

These old forms which it [society] successively throws off, have all been once vitally united with it – having severally served as the

protective envelopes within which a higher humanity was being evolved. They are cast aside only when they become hindrances — only when some inner and better envelope has been formed.¹²

Though Spencer never developed a fully satisfactory explanation for *why* societies evolved, he did offer a hypothesis in a paper published in 1852 entitled 'A Theory of Population Deduced From the General Law of Animal Fertility.'¹³ In that paper, which relied on Malthus, Spencer asserted that the 'proximate cause of progress' was the pressure of population on resources:

It produced the original diffusion of the race. It compelled men to abandon predatory habits and take to agriculture. It led to the clearing of the earth's surface. It forced men into the social state; made social organization inevitable and has developed the social sentiments. It has stimulated men to progressive improvements in production, and to increased skill and intelligence. It is daily pressing us into closer contact and more mutually-dependent relationships.¹⁴

Returning to this theme in *The Principles of Sociology*, Spencer suggested that a division of labor would arise 'spontaneously' whenever people were thrown together in large numbers — that increased size alone would be sufficient to stimulate cooperation, and the pressure of needs would automatically transform competition into cooperation. He also noted that various factors can facilitate occupational diversity, including environmental variations and variations in individual abilities and skills:

Stress of needs leads men severally to adopt occupations for which they are best adapted. . . and it becomes possible for the number of special occupations to increase as the increase of population affords men for each. . . . Thus in all ways increase in population by its actions develops a social organism which becomes heterogeneous as it becomes larger.¹⁵

Though Spencer is often painted as a conflict theorist who sought to account for societal evolution through a competitive struggle for the 'survival of the fittest', actually he abhorred war and held a dualistic view. He suggested that societies can be ranged along a continuum between two ideal types (to borrow Weber's term), 'militant' and 'industrial' (economic). Where the former type had predominated in the past, it was Spencer's view that the latter would do so in the future, and that the direction of societal evolution was toward material affluence, peaceful integration, personal freedom, and a withering away of the state (a vision quite close, in fact, to Marx's). In other words, the processes of societal evolution, though based on utilitarian motives, would in time bring about an integrated, harmonious social order.

Turning to Durkheim's *Division of Labor*, what Durkheim extracted from Spencer (often without attribution, or in a way that misrepresented Spencer) exhibited many of the same merits and weaknesses, while the elements that were unique to Durkheim turned Spencer upside down, in essence. For Spencer (and Darwin and the classical economists) the paradigm problem was the struggle for existence, and the division of labor was viewed as being functionally related to this problem. That is, the division of labor is associated with satisfying human needs and wants and is therefore fundamentally an economic phenomenon (broadly defined). Spencer did recognize the problem of social solidarity (integration), but for him it was secondary and instrumental to the overarching problem of meeting survival and reproductive needs. Durkheim, however, inverted this relationship and made solidarity – the Hobbesian problem of 'order' – and the 'moral health' of society the primary problem, thus deliberately putting himself at odds with the utilitarian viewpoint – and with the Darwinian paradigm. He began by stating the obvious:

Nothing seems easier to determine, at first glance, than the role of the division of labor. Are not its effects universally recognized? Since it combines both the productive power and the ability of the workman, it is the necessary condition of development in societies, both intellectual and material development. It is the source of civilization.¹⁶

Durkheim then proceeded to challenge the obvious by, in effect, discounting the biological fundamentals and the role of economies in meeting them. He did so by claiming that civilization *per se* – and, perforce, the division of labor that makes it possible – has no inherent moral value. '[C]ivilization is morally indifferent,' he asserted:¹⁷

If, then, the division of labor has no other role than to render civilization possible, it would participate in the same moral neutrality. . . . Moreover, if the division of labor does not fill any other role, not only does it not have a moral character, but it is difficult to see what reason for existence it can have. We shall see that, taken by itself, civilization has no intrinsic and absolute value; what makes it valuable is its correspondence to certain needs. But the proposition will be demonstrated later that these needs are themselves results of the division of labor. Because the latter does not go forward without a demand for greater expenditure of energy [sic], man is led to seek, as compensation, certain goods from civilization which, otherwise, would not interest him in the least [sic]. If, however, the division of labor replied to no other needs than these, it would have no other function than to diminish the effects which it produces in itself, or heal the wounds which it inflicts.¹⁸

In other words, it is the division of labor that creates economic wants, not the other way around. Later on, in a section on ‘The Progress of the Division of Labor and of Happiness,’ Durkheim pursued the argument by asserting that economic advance does not necessarily produce happiness or reduce such social pathologies as crime and suicide. ‘The more one has, the more one wants, since satisfactions received only stimulate instead of fulfilling needs’.¹⁹ Therefore, it cannot be said that the division of labor advances human welfare.

Of course, Durkheim’s conclusion does not follow *a fortiori*; the overall benefit-cost ratio may still be favorable. Nevertheless, he argued that the social and moral order is of primary importance to human well-being. The moral order (which he tended to equate with society) is something that is prior to and independent of the economic sphere, and it is a real entity – a concrete ‘social fact’: ‘The domain of ethics is not so nebulous; it consists of all the rules of action which are imperatively imposed upon conduct, to which a sanction is attached.’²⁰ This ‘normative infrastructure,’ to borrow Edward Tiryakian’s characterization,²¹ is central to Durkheim’s concerns (and to subsequent generations of sociologists) for he saw *it*, not the economy, as the real basis of society. Moreover, society is a reality *sui generis* – a social organism that exists apart from any of its members:

It is very certain that there are in the living cell only molecules of crude matter. But these molecules are in contact with one another, and this association is the cause of the new phenomena which characterize life, the very germ of which cannot possibly be found in any of the separate elements. A whole is not identical with the sum of its parts. It is something different, and its properties differ from those of the component parts.²²

Never mind the fact that Durkheim’s metaphor is self-contradicting. (The organic analogy, as Spencer well understood, does not apply to units that are only in juxtaposition with one another but to a *functionally* integrated system with a division of labor! The emergent characteristics of organisms arise precisely from their combinatorial properties.) The point is, Durkheim was claiming that the social organism has its own separate needs and requisites, of which social solidarity is the paramount one. Now, in a small, primitive society without an extensive division of labor, solidarity is maintained by what Durkheim called the ‘*collective conscience*’ (also sometimes rendered as the ‘conscience collective’, or ‘common conscience’) – the system of commonly held beliefs, sentiments and norms that together create a normative infrastructure. Durkheim characterized societies of this type as being based on ‘mechanical solidarity.’

However, as societies grow larger and as the division of labor

increases, the collective conscience becomes progressively weakened as a binding force for the social order. Despite this fact, Durkheim claimed, 'the more we advance, the more profoundly do societies reveal the sentiment of self and unity. There must, then, be some other social link which produces this result.'²³ And what is this other binding force that produces a very different type of society based on what Durkheim called 'organic solidarity'? It is none other than the division of labor. Durkheim triumphantly concluded that it is the division of labor that 'more and more fills the role that was formerly filled by the [collective] conscience. . . This is a function of the division of labor a good deal more important than that ordinarily assigned to it by economists.'²⁴ Let us savor Durkheim's thesis for a moment:

In all these examples, the most remarkable effect of the division of labor is not that it increases the output of functions divided, but that it renders them solidary. . . . It is possible that the economic utility of the division of labor may have a hand in this, but, in any case, it passes far beyond purely economic interests, for it consists in the establishment of a social and moral order *sui generis*. Through it, individuals are linked to one another. Without it, they would be independent. . . . [T]he economic services that it can render are picayune compared to the moral effect that it produces, and its true function is to create in two or more persons a feeling of solidarity. In whatever manner the result is obtained, its aim is to cause coherence among friends and to stamp them with its seal.²⁵

Assuming for the sake of argument that the division of labor does have the social-psychological 'function' that Durkheim claimed (Durkheim's tendency to conflate organizational and psychological aspects of solidarity obscured the issue), the question of which function (economic or social-psychological) is more important involves a value judgment; both functions are being weighed according to an explicit external value criterion. It is clear that the criterion for Durkheim was human happiness, and he argued that social solidarity is more important to happiness than is the division of labor and the satisfaction of material wants. In order to make this argument, however, Durkheim had either to downgrade the relationship between basic material needs and happiness, or to deny that the division of labor contributed significantly to the meeting of basic needs, or both. Durkheim chose to do both.

I believe the judgment of Talcott Parsons²⁶ is correct: Durkheim's *Division of Labor* was in part a polemic against the egoistic, utilitarian model of society – against the premises of the liberal economists (and Spencer) about human nature and the underlying nature of society. To understand Durkheim, in other words, it is

important to recognize that, at this stage in his career at least, he was more a moralist than a social scientist; his admitted objective was to establish 'a science of morality.'²⁷ (Indeed, as Durkheim used the concept of 'solidarité,' it had a strong psychic and moral content and implied altruism versus egoism in social relations.)²⁸

There are, to be sure, some important partial truths contained in this work. Cooperative activities may well encourage sentiments of social solidarity – though not equally well in all cases. Likewise, the social and psychological aspects of social organization are undeniably important and they were underplayed by Spencer and the liberals (just as they continue to be among present-day 'rational-choice' theorists. It is also true that the normative dimension of social life involves a dynamic that can work independently of, and interact with, economic life.

However, there are also many problems with Durkheim's formulation. For the sake of brevity, I will forego a detailed discussion and merely summarize some of the major points:

1. Durkheim was fuzzy in his use of terminology. The terms 'cooperation', a 'division of labor' and economic 'exchange' are not, in fact, isomorphic. Cooperation can occur without specialization of functions (or a division of labor); exchange (trade) among specialists need not involve an integrated division of labor; exchanges through third parties (trade) need not even involve direct cooperation. The point is theoretically important; by compressing a variety of processes into a single mold, Durkheim greatly oversimplified social and economic history.

2. Just as a division of labor may or may not be accompanied by social integration and psychological solidarity, so there are other important binding forces at work in complex societies – language, religion, charismatic political leaders and social mobilization processes, various ethnic, cultural and social practices and institutions, and, of course, kinship (which remains an important factor). Durkheim did not ultimately deny this, especially in light of his later works, but he did downplay these forces in *The Division of Labor*.

3. Paradoxically, the same social entities that serve to bind men together may also have divisive influences (often at the same time for different men), and this includes the division of labor. Consider the many historic conflicts between various economic interests (mercantilists and the landed aristocracy, northern manufacturers and southern plantation owners, western farmers and the railroads) – not to mention Marxian class conflicts. In short, a division of labor does not by any means ensure against fractionating – desolidifying – social conflict.

4. Durkheim's typology of societies on the basis of 'mechanical' versus 'organic' solidarity involves a dubious distinction. All societies that we know of involve at least a minimal division of labor (some

so-called primitive societies can be surprisingly differentiated) and various forms of economic cooperation (organic elements). It is not true, as Durkheim maintained, that society must precede a division of labor, or did so historically. (Like so many other social theorists, Durkheim tended to idealize primitive society.) Likewise, all societies have means of inducing and reinforcing social solidarity, from rules backed by sanctions to arcane and economically unproductive social rituals (mechanical elements). In fact, the evidence would seem to suggest that economic and political forces have always been important determinants of societal cohesion independently of the normative sphere and that such a typological distinction between societies is not very meaningful.

5. One wonders if it is not a bit captious to argue that the division of labor is at once responsible for weakening other forms of social solidarity and for causing solidarity – that is, for both the problem and the solution? In fact, Durkheim was vague about exactly *how* the division of labor acts to induce solidarity; the causal mechanism is, presumably, self-evident.

6. It is not true that a moral order – a normative infrastructure – is a necessary pre-requisite to a division of labor. (Indeed, it is still a matter of controversy whether or not such hypostatized entities actually can be viewed as having an independent existence.) All that is required is a common or complementary set of goals among various parties, appropriate motivation, a means of communication, and the ability to coordinate efforts (a cybernetic infrastructure, in other words). To take an extreme example, consider the Western alliance during World War Two, or the various forms of scientific collaboration and economic transactions between Russia and the non-Communist world in more recent years.

These criticisms pale, however, by comparison with Durkheim's discussion of the 'causes' of the division of labor. First, Durkheim libels Spencer by claiming that Spencer had based his explanation of the division of labor on the inherent instability of homogeneous societies and the consequent spontaneous trend toward heterogeneous societies.²⁹

But, says Spencer, [the division of labor] will come about of itself, because it follows the line of least resistance and all the forces of nature will invincibly bear in this direction: But why do they specialize? What makes them lean towards distinguishing themselves from others? Spencer ably explains in what manner evolution will be produced, if it does take place, but he does not tell us the source producing it. As a matter of fact, the question is not even raised for him [*sic*].³⁰

And what does Durkheim use to fill this supposed explanatory gap? In fact, Spencer's very own explanation – the struggle for

existence and the Malthusian dynamic:

If work becomes divided as societies become more voluminous, it is not because external circumstances are more varied, but because the struggle for existence has become more acute. Darwin justly observed that the struggle between two organisms is as active as they are analogous [sic]. Having the same needs and pursuing the same objects, they are in rivalry everywhere. . . . That settled, it is easy to understand that all condensation of social mass, especially if it is accompanied by an increase in population, necessarily determines advances in the division of labor. . . . One need not add that, if society effectively includes more members at the same time they are more closely in relation to each other, the struggle is still more acute and the resulting specialization more rapid and complete. . . . The division of labor is, then, a result of the struggle for existence, but it is a mellowed dénouement. Thanks to it, opponents are not obligated to fight to a finish, but can exist one beside the other. Also, in proportion to its development, it furnishes the means of maintenance and survival to a greater number of individuals who, in more homogeneous societies, would be condemned to extinction.³¹

Durkheim returned to this thesis in *The Rules of Sociological Method*³² and amplified upon it in ways that put his argument even closer to Spencer's. Citing his earlier analysis as a model of how to construct explanations of social facts, he claimed to have *shown* that:

The division of labor. . . is necessary in order that man may maintain himself in the new conditions of existence as he advances in history. . . We were started in this direction, first, because the course we previously followed was now barred [?] and because the greater intensity of the struggle, owing to the more extensive consolidation of societies, made more and more difficult the survival of individuals who continued to devote themselves to unspecialized tasks [?]. For such reasons it became necessary for us to change our mode of living.³³

As secondary influences, Durkheim now mentioned factors that he had previously chided Spencer for advancing: individual differences, both hereditary and social, as well as the fact that it was 'the direction of least resistance'.³⁴

Having (evidently) derived his theory from Spencer, Durkheim displayed exactly the same deficiencies. Suffice it to say that the explanation of societal evolution involves an exceedingly complicated issue, but it has been anything but spontaneous. In fact, the progressive development of the division of labor has involved a configural and *interactional* process. A number of different, situation-specific

variables have been involved. Moreover, the relationship between population growth (in particular) and the division of labor has been complex:

a. Population pressures do not necessarily lead to increases in the division of labor; there are various alternatives (as Malthus observed).

b. Population pressures have not, historically, been the only cause of an increased division of labor; there have also been environmental and economic pressures.

c. There have been *positive* incentives as well as negative pressures involved in the historical development of the division of labor; opportunities and technological innovations have also been important variables.

d. Spencer recognized, as Durkheim apparently did not, that productivity improvements involving the division of labor might also be a *cause* of population growth, as well as a response.³⁵

It is, as Alice (In Wonderland) would say, a curious argument. According to Durkheim, the principal cause of the division of labor is its function in mitigating the struggle for existence (an economic function, that is). Yet this is not its most important function. More important is what Robert Merton terms a 'latent function' — social solidarity. Why is solidarity a more important function? Because, Durkheim argued, the economic function is 'picayune'.³⁶

Durkheim's basic methodology also contrasts sharply with that of Spencer. Indeed, it seems antipodal to Spencer's broadly synthetic approach. Whereas the latter was oriented to the individual and insisted on explaining the 'super-organism' in terms of an *interaction* between the individual's bio-psychological needs and motives and the social and physical environment, Durkheim was a radical holist who, in order to isolate social phenomena analytically, deliberately excluded whole domains of causation *a priori*, while crossing the border into metaphysics (in the name of science).

Durkheim's methodological stance was most boldly stated in *The Rules of Sociological Method*. He began by insisting that social phenomena must be explained without reference to biological, historical, economic and, especially, psychological causes (he expressly downgraded the role of individual consciousness and volition, particularly individual calculations of utility).

[E]very time that a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon, we may be sure that the explanation is false. . . . We arrive, therefore, at the following principle: *The determining cause of a social fact should be sought among the social facts preceding it and not among the states of individual consciousness. . . . The first origins of all social processes of any importance should be sought in the internal constitution of the social group* [his italics].³⁷

Durkheim did leave open a small loophole in his argument. Psychological training might be a 'valuable lesson' for the sociologist, he asserted, but, having received 'profit' from it, the sociologist must 'abandon psychology as the center of his operations' — except in so far as psychological facts might be 'fused' with social facts.³⁸ By this Durkheim meant to allow for the individual actions of a 'public official,' a 'statesman' or 'men of genius' who might independently influence social processes. However, '[t]he restriction on the principle enunciated above is not...of great importance for the sociologist.'³⁹ One is prompted to ask: If such fusions of individual and social facts apply to the 'Great Man', why should they not apply equally to all individuals, to the extent that their motivations, abilities and choices influence their behavior and thus shape the nature of social facts? Durkheim's implicit reply was that *external* forces, like B. F. Skinner's 'stimuli', are more important.

The constriction in Durkheim's methodology is clearly evident in the way he defined 'social facts'. Durkheim wanted to focus on the ways in which the social (i.e., non-economic) milieu creates a specific context that may shape social behavior, independently of individual motivations, perceptions, economic exchanges, etc.:: '[S]ociety is not a mere sum of individuals. Rather, the system formed by their associations represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics.'⁴⁰ Social facts, then, must lie outside of the individual. They are collective properties of the social group and are independent of any given individual and his/her motivations. 'When the individual has been eliminated, society alone remains,' he said, in a statement that sounds metaphysical at first blush.⁴¹ Nevertheless, he insisted that social facts are also real 'things'. They are recognizable because of their coercive effects upon the individual. 'Far from being a product of the will, they determine it from without; they are like molds in which our actions are inevitably shaped':⁴²

A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations [his italics].⁴³

Durkheim did not actually deny the reality of such biological facts as our individual needs for physical security, food, water, defecation, sleep, sex, etc. — the motivational substrate to which much of our behavior is either directly or indirectly oriented, and which is central to Spencer's sociology. Nor did he deny economic facts. But he was not much interested in these 'facts.' They were simply irrelevant to his sociology, which was concerned with the influence of autonomous social facts in social structures.

But how do we know social facts really exist if they are independent of any given individual and are out there, somewhere? We can identify them, Durkheim said, by their statistical effects, or through the use of an 'index' (indicators). Social facts, in other words, are like gravity waves: You can't see them, but they keep the social organism from flying off into space – or, more to the point, into an Hobbesian war of all against all. For, the way Durkheim defined them, social facts are the glue that holds the normative infrastructure together. They are the norms, rules, traditions – the socially sanctioned (or proscribed) ways of behaving – which underlie what Nisbet and Perrin call the 'social bond.'⁴⁴

What Durkheim was really trying to do, in other words, was to counter the Spencerian argument that the social order could be derived from egoistic cooperation (from the calculus of mutual self-interest). Not only is the moral order a necessary prerequisite for economic life (a pre-contractual framework), he claimed, but it cannot be built upon *egoism*; it depends upon *altruism* – upon subordination of the individual to society. But where Hobbes felt it necessary to impose moral order through sovereign authority, lest society degenerate into anarchy (*bellum omnium contra omnes*), Durkheim endowed 'society' (and, implausible as it may seem, the division of labor) with the ability to impress morality upon each individual.

In sum, Durkheim's sociology was not about the full dynamics of social life and social causation; it was a methodology for his 'science of morality.' The 'queen of the sciences' (Comte's term) had become in Durkheim's hands a science that specialized in moral forces. His social facts were moral facts, just as his 'functions' were functions in relation to 'social [moral] ends.'⁴⁵ Sociologists of subsequent generations have chosen to use the term 'social fact' in a broader and less moralistic sense, but Durkheim conceded that, as he defined it, his sociology 'comprises only a limited group of phenomena.'⁴⁶

The result of this strategy was a kind of self-imposed theoretical tunnel-vision; his efforts to explain the origin of a particular social phenomenon often seemed contrived and intuitively unsatisfactory. In attempting to account for how humans developed the concept of time, for example, Durkheim's antecedent social fact was the seasonal rites, feasts and ceremonies practised by primitive societies.⁴⁷ Setting aside the question of whether or not either the concept of time or social rituals *are* social facts by his definition, it displays a low opinion of our ancestors to think that they had no other than social referents for gaining an awareness of time (e.g., day and night, the seasons, animal migrations, the lunar cycle, etc.).

Equally important, Durkheim posited that the prime function of the concept of time (and of such artifacts as calendars) is to order

social events. He quite overlooked the alternative hypothesis that 'time' (and its division into regular units) might have had vitally important economic (survival) functions for hunter-gatherers, horticulturalists, traders, etc., and that social rituals might have developed in an ancillary relationship to bread-and-butter functions, rather than being ends in themselves. To the contrary, Durkheim reasoned that the ancients' use as calendrical benchmarks of stellar or seasonal events was due only to the fact that 'objective signs are necessary to make. . . social organization intelligible.'⁴⁸

Durkheim also had trouble living up to his own dictum. For instance, he invoked supposedly taboo biological facts (hereditary differences) to help explain the division of labor and differences between men and women to account for sex differences in suicide rates.⁴⁹ He also had considerable difficulty in avoiding the involvement of psychological factors when it came to explaining 'anomie' or 'solidarity', or *how* the normative infrastructure acted to encourage or discourage suicide. The most stunning example, though, is to be found in *The Division of Labor*. Talcott Parsons, while not commenting upon the irony involved, was among the first to note that Durkheim's theory (i.e., Spencer's theory) to the effect that the division of labor is a response to population pressures was 'essentially biological' and amounted to a "biologizing" of social theory.⁵⁰ Parsons discounts its significance, however, by observing that this was not Durkheim's 'main line' of theoretical development and was 'soon abandoned.'⁵¹

It should be noted that Durkheim's theory has recently been severely attacked by Whitney Pope,⁵² an attack to which Parsons subsequently responded. Though their argument is muddled, it is relevant to my critique of Durkheim's work. Briefly, Pope charges that Durkheim did *not*, in fact, employ a biological explanation. It was not an increase in numbers that Durkheim used to account for the division of labor, he claims, but an increase in the 'dynamic or moral density' of a population – the proximity and level of 'active commerce' (economic activity? functional interaction?) among the different individuals.⁵³ Pope also notes (correctly), that Durkheim ascribed an increasing dynamic density to three factors (I) population concentration, (II) the formation of cities, and (III) improved means of transportation and communication. Population growth, Pope claims, was viewed by Durkheim as secondary. 'Clearly he is not treating increased numbers as biologically caused,' Pope concludes in a *non sequitur*. 'Far from manifesting any form of biological reductionism, then, the explanation of social differentiation in *Division* follows Durkheim's injunction. . . to explain social facts sociologically.'⁵⁴ (Of course, the division of labor was *not* a social fact in Durkheim's definition, and neither were population concentration, cities or technology.)

Quite apart, for the moment, from the question of whether or not Durkheim's concept of dynamic density or his reasoning makes any sense, Durkheim himself provided the definitive response to Pope. It was quoted in excerpt form above. The key question, as Durkheim himself phrased it, is: Exactly *why* does an increase in the 'material' (physical) 'volume' and/or 'density' of human populations 'necessitate' an increase in the division of labor?⁵⁵ Durkheim's answer was the struggle for existence – the biological *problematique*. To repeat Durkheim's key statements: 'Darwin justly observed that the struggle between two organisms is as active as they are analogous [i.e., similar in their mode of adaptation]. . . . Men submit to the same law. . . . The division of labor is, then, a result of the struggle for existence.'⁵⁶

Durkheim's statements here are unequivocal. Rightly or wrongly, he had bought into the Darwinian/Malthusian paradigm (population in relation to the means of subsistence) as the underlying cause of the division of labor. But how does this square with the notion of a 'dynamic or moral density' that he had introduced a few pages earlier? I don't think it does, and I find his argument obscure and contradictory. The most charitable interpretation is that Durkheim was trying to advance his overarching thesis that society (the moral order) is somehow prior to an economy and that, if population growth in relation to the means of subsistence (the Malthusian variable) is the necessary cause, it is not sufficient. His argument seemed to be that there must also be a breakdown of the segmented character of primitive societies and a coalescence of a larger societal framework. The question, though, is what causes this coalescence to occur in the first place? Durkheim's answer is unintelligible. After attempting to reconstruct the logic of his argument in the form of a set of propositions, it became apparent what the problem is. Durkheim was trying to make his case without recourse to ecology, biology or economics, but the effect is a little like viewing a four-color poster with three of the colors missing. Though Durkheim did identify some significant social factors, in order to make these the focal points of his argument he had to turn effects into causes, account for social factors with veiled references to economic forces (e.g., 'active commerce'), introduce midstream facilitators as if they were precipitating causes, possibly engage in some circularity, and proffer social (moral) causes that begged prior, economic, questions. Durkheim's 'theory' illustrates perfectly the shortcomings of any monochromatic approach to social theory.⁵⁷

The problems involved in adopting such a truncated causal paradigm and methodology are clearly in evidence in Durkheim's most famous empirical work *Suicide*. Durkheim wanted to show that suicide is not the result of individual pathology, or of the vicissitudes of economic life. So he proceeded, as he candidly admitted, by

'disregarding the individual as such, *his motives and ideas.*' [his italics].⁵⁸ Instead, Durkheim held that suicide is caused by factors in the social milieu – by what he called '*courants suicidogènes.*' Basing his analysis on a review of the available aggregate statistics on suicide rates across different societies and different socio-economic categories (occupation, religious affiliation, etc.), Durkheim advanced three different theories about what he postulated to be three different types of suicide. (A fourth type was alluded to but never developed.)

In a nutshell, 'altruistic' suicide was viewed as the result of social pressures operating in certain kinds of societies of social groups (e.g., nineteenth century Japan). 'Egoistic' suicide, on the other hand, results when an individual is freed from moral and social constraints and supports that might otherwise inhibit such behaviors. (The data for Protestants versus Catholics and single persons versus married couples were invoked here.) Finally, 'anomic' suicide is caused by social dislocations experienced by an individual when there are instabilities in the social environment, particularly in times of economic distress or rapid economic growth. Durkheim's most important overall conclusion, though, was that suicide varies inversely with social cohesion. As he put it in *The Rules of Sociological Method*: 'When society is strongly integrated, it holds individuals under its control.'⁵⁹

So what is wrong with this analysis? For one thing, it is not an explanation of suicide. It is at best only a proposed explanation of the observed statistical differences in the suicide *rates* for different sociologically defined groups within a reified entity called 'society'. As Parsons observed, 'Durkheim throws little light on the actual mechanisms by which the result is produced in the individual suicide.'⁶⁰ Durkheim could not, for instance, explain why the overwhelming majority of Protestants and single persons do *not* commit suicide, while a number of Catholics and married persons do. Clearly, Protestantism and singleton status are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for suicide to occur.

In other words, Durkheim was also pioneering in the commission of one of the most pervasive errors in social science theory: A statistical correlation tells you nothing, directly, about causation and should not be so interpreted, but this caveat is much abused in practice. No matter how ingenious the researcher's deductions, the presumed causal mechanism underlying a statistical correlation remains an *ad hoc* hypothesis until some means has been devised of testing it directly. Instead, explanations of this kind very often tend to rely on plausibility arguments which are heavily dependent upon appeals to the predispositions, moral and otherwise, of the reader.

Durkheim's theory of suicide was precisely of this sort. Sometimes the social facts he invoked were negative – social constrictions on

the individual or group norms that somehow encouraged the individual to commit suicide (for instance, if the individual is unable to fulfill his/her need to find meaning in life). At other times, though, he surreptitiously introduced what might be called 'positive' social facts – non-coercive influences that were seen as promoting cohesion and solidarity and reducing the likelihood of suicide. Sometimes, in fact, his rather free-wheeling explanations produced some striking (apparent) inconsistencies. For instance, the relatively *high* rate of suicide among army officers was explained as being the result of the stringent discipline and the behavioral constraints associated with army life, and with the subordination of the individual to a domineering organization (social cohesion?). In accounting for the relatively *low* rate among Catholics, on the other hand, Durkheim also invoked behavioral constraints and subordination to a close-knit organization (social cohesion?).

The shortcomings in Durkheim's methodology have been put into sharp relief by the rapidly accumulating research in psychology and psychobiology which suggests that, in point of fact, suicide is an exceedingly complex phenomenon involving an *interaction* between *internal* biological and psychological factors, as well as *external* factors. These factors range from the very personal and context-specific (physico-chemical disorders, job-pressures, family and social relationships, etc.) to more diffuse social conventions, expectations and structures.⁶¹

In short, Durkheim's methodology taps only a segment of the total causal matrix in social life. Social facts are supposedly about real things that act as causes of social behavior independently of the individual will; they are external influences that somehow become internalized and then act automatically to control behavior. Durkheim does not really avoid psychology, in other words. He merely rejects for the purposes of sociological analysis the postulate of autonomous *internal* influences – an internal purposiveness, or 'teleonomy' (utilitarian or otherwise) that necessitates a recourse to 'psychological facts' in order to explain social behavior.⁶² Accordingly, suicide is attributed to the operation, or dis-operation, of social (moral) facts. But how does Durkheim know that social facts *alone* are responsible? And why does he think they are so potent? In actuality he does not. He only *infers* that social (moral) facts impinge upon a passive internal screen, or 'photographic plate' (in Parsons's metaphor). However, we are perfectly free to posit an alternative model in which (i) social facts are not autonomous but are always *embedded* in people and continue to exist only as long as people believe in them and act toward one another as if they exist, and (ii) the internal screen is not passive but is a purposive information processor with cybernetic properties; it can passively accept, selectively adopt or even reject what is received.

To summarize, then, for Durkheim the central theoretical problem was the moral order, and he defined society essentially in those terms. Spencer, on the other hand, was concerned with the 'struggle for existence' and defined society in terms of an economy with a division of labor. Both Durkheim and Spencer were concerned with functional analysis, but where Spencer's interest centered on functions in relation to the biological *problematique*, Durkheim was more interested in functions (or dysfunctions) in relation to the social (moral) order (structural-functions). One of the more outlandish examples is Durkheim's dead-serious assertion that the function of crime is to arouse collective sentiments of antagonism toward the criminal and therefore to strengthen the normative order. 'Crime brings together upright consciences and concentrates them.'⁶³ Presumably, then, the more crime there is the more solidarity there will be and the more happiness will ensue.

Durkheim and Spencer were also alike in being interested in 'structural differentiation,' and both defined societal evolution in those terms. In Spencer's case, this interest flowed logically from his underlying conception of society. In Durkheim's case, however, the conception was derivative (he acknowledged Spencer as the source), and for him differentiation was not really of great concern – except in so far as it impacted upon the normative infrastructure. Sociologists who give Durkheim credit for this 'master idea' are therefore quite mistaken.⁶⁴ As Durkheim himself observed, Spencer 'set out, not to study social facts in themselves and for themselves, but to show how the evolutionary hypothesis can be verified in the social realm.'⁶⁵ (It was for this reason, Durkheim wrongly claimed, that Spencer should be considered a philosopher and not a social scientist.) On the other hand, Durkheim said he was more interested in studying social phenomena 'for their own sake,'⁶⁶ or, more precisely, for the sake of their relationship to the moral order. Therefore, he was more scientific!

This is not to say that Durkheim was indifferent to the problem of social change ('social dynamics,' in Comte's term), as many sociologists of succeeding generations were led to believe. However, it is not quite correct to say, as Anthony Giddens does, that change is 'the central issue' informing all of Durkheim's major works.⁶⁷ Durkheim did not abandon an evolutionary perspective, but he was more interested in studying specific *slices* of his own society (the division of labor, suicide, religion, crime, and so forth) and was concerned primarily with relating these phenomena to the moral order (to *solidarité*) – albeit from an historical perspective. Even less correct is the attempt by Roscoe Hinkle⁶⁸ to portray Durkheim as a major evolutionary theorist, when in fact his approach and his key concepts in this domain were almost wholly derived from Spencer and, to a lesser degree, Comte.

Methodologically, Durkheim differed from Spencer (and other major nineteenth century theorists) in at least three important ways. First, he banished what biologists call teleonomy (or internal teleology) from social theory. The term 'function' is preferable to 'end' or 'purpose', he declared, because 'social phenomena do not generally exist for the useful results they produce'.⁶⁹ (Well, not always.) 'So successful has his faulty "scientism" been,' observes Ronald Fletcher, 'that, to this day, the term "teleological" has a bad smell in sociology: as being a term redolent of metaphysics and theology.'⁷⁰

Second, Durkheim was clearly guilty of committing what the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead called the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness.' That is, Durkheim attributed independence and causal efficacy to disembodied social facts, to the reifications created in his own mind, or to statistical artifacts. Accordingly, Durkheim's 'social organism' was very different from Spencer's. It was not a limited analogy but a real entity.

Finally, where Spencer (and other nineteenth century theorists) insisted on the interdependence of biological, psychological, economic and sociological processes, Durkheim insisted on their radical separation. I cannot imagine a greater chasm on this issue than the one between Durkheim and Spencer. Where the former asserted that the 'causes of social phenomena are internal to society'⁷¹ and that the principle causes of historical development must be located, not in past history, but 'among the concomitant [social] circumstances,'⁷² the latter espoused a multi-faceted, multi-leveled interactionism, however imperfect.

In one important respect, though, Durkheim's position was vastly superior to Spencer's, I would argue. His view of the political realm occupied a middle-ground position between Spencer (who denied any organic relationship between the polity and society) and both Hobbes and Rousseau (who, in different ways, set the political order above, or *over* the social organism). Like Comte, Durkheim viewed the political sphere as both an integral element which evolves with society (he explicitly adopted the analogy with the brain and nervous system, which Spencer pointedly eschewed) and which may serve positive functions – normative included. It is a 'natural reality,' he said, that does not need to be imposed by force, though there may in practice be pathological cases that do act autocratically.⁷³

In conclusion, if Durkheim's sociology was more compatible with a nascent social science that was striving for disciplinary autonomy, it may well prove to be the case that Spencer's sociology will be more compatible with a social science that is in the process of reaching out to embrace the full range of causation in human social life. If so, we may eventually come to recognize and give equal weight to the contributions and shortcomings of both theorists.

For there was in each of these nineteenth century pioneers an admixture of good and bad, and we have much to gain from viewing them in the round, and in relation to each other.

Peter A. Corning
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NOTES

1. T. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, Chicago, The Free Press, 1949 [1937], p. 3.
2. As recently as 1978, the contributions of Spencer were still being given short shrift in T. Bottomore and R. Nisbet (eds), *A History of Sociological Analysis*, New York, Basic Books.
3. E. Durkheim, *Division of Labor in Society*, trans. G. Simpson, New York, Macmillan, 1933 [1893].
4. E.g., R. L. Carneiro, 'Introduction,' in R. L. Carneiro (ed.), *The Evolution of Society: Selections from Herbert Spencer's Principles of Sociology*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1967; R. Fletcher, *The Making of Sociology: A Study of Sociological Theory*, vol. II, New York, Scribner, 1971; D. Wiltshire, *The Social and Political Thought of Herbert Spencer*, New York, Oxford, 1978.
5. E.g., R. Needham, 'Introduction,' in *Primitive Classification*, by E. Durkheim, trans. M. Mauss and ed. R. Needham, Cohen & West, London, 1963; R. Fletcher: *The Making of Sociology*, op. cit.
6. H. Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, New York, Appleton, 1897 [1874-5], II(1), pp. 262-3.
7. *Ibid.*, II(1), pp. 285-6.
8. *Ibid.*, II(1), p. 244.
9. *Ibid.*, I.
10. *Ibid.*, I(1), pp. 14-15. See also pp. 435-6.
11. *Ibid.*, I(1), pp. 435-6.
12. Cited in J. W. Burrow, *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 1970 [1966], p. 223.
13. H. Spencer, 'A Theory of Population Deduced from the General Law of Animal Fertility,' *Westminster Review* LVII, 1852, pp. 468-501.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 501.
15. Spencer, *The Principles*, op. cit., II(1), p. 368.
16. Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, op. cit., p. 50.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-4.
19. E. Durkheim, *Suicide*, trans. J. A. Spaulding and G. Simpson, Chicago, Free Press, 1951 [1897], p. 248.
20. Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, op. cit., p. 53.
21. E. Tiryakian, 'Emile Durkheim', in T. Bottomore and R. Nisbet (eds), *A History of Sociological Analysis*, op. cit., pp. 187-236.
22. E. Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. S. A. Solovay and J. H. Mueller, G. E. G. Catlin (ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938 [1895], p. 102.
23. Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, op. cit., p. 173.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 60-1.
26. Parsons, op. cit., p. 343.
27. Quoted in G. E. G. Catlin, 'Introduction to the Translation,' in E. Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, op. cit., p. xxix.
28. Many students of Durkheim have recognized the moral preoccupations that, in Dominick LaCapra's

phrase, run 'like a red thread' through Durkheim's thinking. (D. LaCapra, *Emile Durkheim: Sociologist and Philosopher*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1972, p. 4). See also Parsons, *op. cit.* R.A. Nisbet, *The Sociology of Emile Durkheim*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1974. L. A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*, New York, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971. R. Fletcher, *op. cit.* A. Giddens, 'Introduction: Durkheim's Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy,' in A. Giddens (ed.), *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1972. E. Wallwork, *Durkheim: Morality and Milieu*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1972. R.N. Bellah, 'Introduction,' in R.N. Bellah (ed.), *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973. Anthony Giddens, quoting from Durkheim, provides a succinct summary:

The endeavour to contribute to the founding of a sociological 'science of morality' very rapidly led Durkheim to a concern with the nature of sociology and of social phenomena more generally; but he always conceived of his contributions to sociology as being primarily focussed within the more specialized field of the 'sociology of moral facts.' As he wrote in 1900: 'Instead of treating sociology *in genere*, we have always concerned ourselves systematically with a clearly delimited order of facts: save for necessary excursions into the fields adjacent to those which we were exploring, we have always been preoccupied only with legal or moral rules, studied in terms of their genesis and development. . . ' Thus Durkheim's first major work. . . was conceived as 'an attempt to treat the facts of moral life according to the method of the positive sciences' (*op. cit.*, p. 3).

In effect, Durkheim represented a transitional stage in the emergence of the modern social sciences. It is not coincidental that, as historian Richard Hofstadter has pointed out, sociology in its early days attracted an extraordinary number of ministers and ministers' sons. Durkheim's father, for instance, was a rabbi. (R. Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1955 [1944].) Times have changed, but the problem of order (and a preoccupation with norms, values and social 'pathologies') continues to run like a red thread through contemporary sociology.

29. Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 266-70.

32. Durkheim, *The Rules*, *op. cit.*

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-3.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Spencer was sophisticated enough to avoid entrapment in the sort of simplistic proposition that Durkheim was bold enough to offer (one which subsequent generations of sociologists have discreetly allowed to recede into obscurity): 'We can then formulate the following proposition: *The division of labor varies in direct ratio with the volume and density of societies, and, if it progresses in a continuous manner in the course of social development, it is because societies become regularly denser and generally more voluminous* [his italics].' (*Division of Labor*, *op. cit.*, p. 262.)

36. Sometimes, though, one suspects that the source of Durkheim's self-contradiction was his tenuous grasp of economics. How else can one explain statements such as the following, which is flatly opposed to the one quoted above — and to itself.

The division of labor appears otherwise to us than it does to economists. For them, it essentially consists in greater production. For us, this greater productivity is only a necessary

consequence, a repercussion of the phenomenon [of population growth and a more acute struggle for existence]. If we specialize, it is not to produce more, but it is to enable us to live in new conditions of existence that have been made for us. (*Division of Labor, op. cit.*, p. 275).

37. Durkheim, *The Rules, op. cit.*, pp. 104, 110, 113.

38. Durkheim, *Division of Labor, op. cit.*, pp. 111-12.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 112n.

40. Durkheim, *The Rules, op. cit.*, p. 103.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 13. Durkheim later denied as 'absurd' charges that he had claimed for society some sort of independent physical (causal) existence (*Suicide, op. cit.*, p. 320). This denial is not convincing though (see below). Durkheim also later modulated his methodological posture, both in word and deed. However, some of the works that reflect Durkheim's methodological evolution were not available in English until quite recently. Among subsequent generations of English-speaking sociologists, therefore, Durkheim's methodological posture has been known chiefly through *The Rules of Sociological Method*. More important, to the end Durkheim was unclear about the distinction between emergence, independence and causal potency, and he conflated the three.

44. R. A. Nisbet and R. G. Perrin, *The Social Bond* (2nd ed.), New York, Knopf, 1977, p. 28.

45. Durkheim, *The Rules, op. cit.*, p. 111.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 10. Modern-day structural-functionalists still tend to be oriented to the problem of the normative order. (See W. E. Moore 'Functionalism,' in T. Bottomore and R. Nisbet *op. cit.* However, the problem is today defined more in social-engineering terms. Moreover, the social order is clearly acknowledged to be an instrumentality rather than an end in itself, as Spencer maintained. 'Thus

the first emergent property of human aggregates, requisite for their physical survival, comprises the elementary mechanisms of interdependence. [T]he next emergent system property is that of order: rules carrying effective negative sanctions if necessary, rendering social encounters in any and every differentiated context predictable' (*Ibid.*, p. 346). Nevertheless, there remains the essentially untested assumption in sociological theory that social solidarity (the social bond) is an empirical problem that requires special binding forces independently of economic and political transactions. Sometimes this presumed need is defined as a societal need and sometimes as a personal psychological need. Sociologists also have a tendency to suggest that the economic bonds (the bonds of mutual self-interest) and political bonds are somehow less important than social bonds. Common sense suggests that all are important, but, to my knowledge, no systematic study of the relationship between them has yet been undertaken – an astounding fact and a testament to the parochialism of the various social sciences.

47. E. Durkheim (with P. Faconnet), '*Sociologie et Sciences Sociales*,' in A. Giddens (ed. and trans.), *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1972 [1903], pp. 264-6.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

49. Durkheim, *Suicide, op. cit.*, pp. 272, 384-5.

50. Parsons, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

51. *Ibid.*

52. W. Pope, 'Classic on Classic: Parson's Interpretation of Durkheim,' *American Sociological Review*, XXXVIII, 1973, pp. 399-415.

53. Durkheim, *Division of Labor, op. cit.*, p. 257.

54. Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

55. Durkheim, *Division of Labor, op. cit.*, p. 262.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 267, 270.

57. It might also be noted that Parsons, in his reply to Pope, incorrectly disowned his own earlier judgment: 'Pope was right that

Durkheim did not in fact introduce a version of the Malthusian principle of population.' (T. Parsons, 'Comment on "Parson's Interpretation of Durkheim" and on "Moral Freedom Through Understanding in Durkheim"', *American Sociological Review*, XL, 1975, p. 109). To which Pope incorrectly responded with an exultant touché: 'Parsons...acknowledges that I was correct in rejecting his claim that Durkheim introduced a version of the Malthusian principle of population. But it is precisely this appeal to "population pressure"... [that Parsons] cited as evidence of the breakdown and biologizing of social theory... In short there is no breakdown, biologizing or other reduction of social theory...' (W. Pope, 'Parsons on Durkheim, Revisited,' *American Sociological Review* XL 1975, p.111). Wrong! Parsons was right the first time. By contrast, Robert Bellah gives an essentially accurate rendering of Durkheim's views, and comments: 'Although his conception is schematic and oversimplified, Durkheim is unquestionably correct in seeing structural differentiation in response to adaptive exigencies as a major aspect of social change,' (R.N. Bellah, 'Durkheim and History,' *American Sociological Review*, XXIV, 1959, p. 452). Herbert Spencer could not have said it better.

58. Durkheim, *The Rules*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

60. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

61. See especially L.D. Hankoff and B. Einsidler (eds), *Suicide: Theory and Clinical Aspects*, Littleton, Mass., P.S.G. 1979.

62. Durkheim's ambivalence about human nature has already been noted. Two different desiderata combined to shape his position on the relationship between individual psychology and the external environment. On the one hand, Durkheim wanted to adhere to the aspirations of positive science and confined his sociology to external

observables. Accordingly, he assumed the rather 'schizoid' posture, to quote LaCapra (*op. cit.*, p. 11), that inner goals and 'intentions' (including utilitarian calculations) were 'subjective' and therefore not amenable to scientific analysis (he didn't quite deny their existence, but he treated them as unimportant), whereas such reified (emergent) phenomena as 'solidarity' and 'anomie' were scientific because they existed *outside* of the individual and had causal efficacy (though, of course, he also denied their independent physical existence). The other consideration for Durkheim was the distinction he wished to establish between egoistic (utilitarian) and altruistic (moral) sources of behavior. Thus, his *Homo duplex* was sometimes treated as a screen that passively receives and reflects 'moral dictates' (*tabula rasa*?) and sometimes as a cauldron of desires and appetites that must be carefully contained, lest the individual engage in destructive or self-destructive behavior. Likewise, morality was sometimes treated as something that benefits society at the expense of the individual and sometimes as something that is conducive to individual happiness (enlightened self-interest?) because it constrains the tyranny of the appetites. Durkheim's *implicit* psychology is, obviously, a complicated subject, which sociologists have not, in the main, confronted head on. But, for that matter, neither have sociologists been very self-critical about their own implicit assumptions (and hidden causal theories). Here, again, there is a sharp contrast with Herbert Spencer, whose breadth made him also one of the pioneers of nineteenth century psychology. (In fact, his *Principles of Psychology* was used as a text by, among others, William James at Harvard.)

63. Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

64. E.g., Bellah, *op. cit.*, p. 452n.

65. Durkheim, 'Sociologie et Sciences Sociales,' *op. cit.*, p. 53.

66. Quoted in Giddens, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
68. R. C. Hinkle, 'Durkheim's Evolutionary Conception of Social Change,' *Sociological Quarterly*, XVII, 1976, pp. 336-46.
69. Durkheim, *The Rules*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
70. Fletcher, *op. cit.*, v. II, p. 258.
71. Durkheim, *The Rules*, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
73. Quoted in Giddens, *op. cit.*, p. 100; also see pp. 189-202.