

ROUTLEDGE SOCIOLOGY CLASSICS



PROFESSIONAL ETHICS and CIVIC MORALS

EMILE DURKHEIM

With a New Preface by Bryan S. Turner

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PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
AND CIVIC MORALS

In this book Durkheim outlined the core of his theory of morality and social rights which was to dominate his work until his untimely death in 1917. Durkheim saw sociology as a science of morals which are objective social facts; these moral regulations form the basis of individual rights and obligations. The book is crucial for understanding Durkheim's sociology, because it contains his much neglected theory of the state as a moral institution. It is also essential for understanding his critique of anomie and egoistic individualism.

The growing interest in cultural relations and moral regulation associated with recent contributions in historical sociology, makes this new edition of Durkheim's classic work especially timely. It shows that Durkheim had worked out a position on the modern state which is a genuine rival to the Marxian and Weberian traditions. Durkheim's stress on the moral regulation of everyday life chimes with current concerns with individual freedom and the contours of permissible behaviour. It is an essential resource in understanding the state and society and it can also be read as a crucial work in modern social theory.

Bryan S. Turner has done a superb job in showing the social and political influences on Durkheim during the writing of the book, not-ably the notorious Dreyfus affair. He also shows how the book should be interpreted in relation to other key works in Durkheim's *oeuvre* and its relevance for modern sociology.

ROUTLEDGE SOCIOLOGY CLASSICS

Editor: Bryan S. Turner

FROM MAX WEBER
*Translated, Edited and with an
Introduction by*
H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills

IDEOLOGY AND UTOPIA
Karl Mannheim

THE SOCIAL SYSTEM
Talcott Parsons

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
AND CIVIC MORALS

by

EMILE DURKHEIM

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With a new preface by

Bryan S. Turner



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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

As earlier translators of Durkheim have found, rendering the text in English requires interpretative treatment. Durkheim is often inclined to anthropomorphism, which is carried by the genders of French substantives. In English, fidelity to such liveliness would fail in its purpose and I have given such passages a more sober turn. Further, these Sorbonne lectures exist in the original only as Durkheim's personal Notes or working transcription of those Notes. The English version attempts to preserve a tone of the spoken word. And the repetitions of one or two passages have been left as found in the University of Istanbul publication. Where it has been possible to trace Durkheim's references (clearly for his own use in lecturing to his students) to volumes on his own library shelves, I have completed his mere indications to serve the English-speaking student. Finally, philosophic terms have been rendered as consistently as possible, after consultation with specialists in the various subjects discussed by the Author.

In regard to Professor Georges Davy's Introduction, there has been no escape for the translator in those abstruse excursions on to the high plateau of philosophic speculation. Here, fidelity has stood in the way of "plain" English.

C.B

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PREFACE

BY PROF. H.N.KUBALI

THIS work, brought out by the Faculty of Law in the University of Istanbul, is a collection of some hitherto unpublished lectures of Emile Durkheim.

In 1934, in Paris, I had set about the writing of a thesis for a doctorate in law on "The Concept of the State held by the Pioneers in the French School of Sociology". It then seemed to me that before all else I must make a study of the precise ideas and thought of Durkheim, as founder of this school, on the problem of the State.

As a sociologist, Durkheim had made no special study of this problem and was satisfied in his published works merely to raise certain questions relative to it. On that account I came to the conclusion that relevant and detailed exposition might perhaps be found in his unpublished work, if any such existed. To this end I approached the well-known ethnographer Marcel Mauss, the nephew of Durkheim. He received me most cordially and spoke of his great feeling for Turkey, which he had visited in 1908. He then went on to show me a number of manuscripts with the title "The Nature of Morals and of Rights". These, he said, were a course of lectures given by Durkheim between the years 1890 and 1900 at Bordeaux and repeated at the Sorbonne, first in 1904, and then in 1912, and revived in lectures some years before his death. Mauss had no hesitation in entrusting them to me, a fact which I recall with pleasure, and he handed over to me at my request a typescript copy of part of the manuscripts likely to be of especial interest to me. I take this opportunity of paying tribute to the memory of the late scholar: I owe him a debt for his invaluable help.

Mauss had told me at the time of our talk that he intended to publish these manuscripts in *Les Annales Sociologiques*, he being a member of the editorial committee. But he only published the first part of them, made up of the three lectures on

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Professional Ethics, and this was in 1937, in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*. He did this, as he writes in his introductory notes, to comply with the instructions given a few months before his death in 1917 by Durkheim, who intended some of his manuscripts for Xavier Léon, the founder of the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, in preference to others, as a mark of his friendship. In doing this, Mauss announced that he would publish later with these three lectures those on Civic Morals which followed them.

In 1947, I published a Turkish translation of six lectures on Civic Morals, which I had at my disposal, in the *Revue de la Faculté de Droit d'Istanbul*. I had seen no trace of the publication planned by Mauss but I wanted first to make sure whether it had been done. I enquired, but there was no reply from him. I then, with the help of M. Bergeaud of the French Embassy, appealed to Durkheim's daughter, Madame Jacques Halphen. Mme. Halphen kindly sent me word that Marcel Mauss was exhausted by all that he had suffered during the Occupation and was not in a fit state to give any details at all. She later let me know that she had been able to identify the manuscripts in question from the copy I had sent her and that they were now in the Musée de l'Homme with all the books and papers of the Marcel Mauss Collection. Besides the three lectures on Professional Ethics already published, these manuscripts included, as she told me, fifteen lectures on Civic Morals which had not so far appeared in France.

Some months later I considered getting the whole of these lectures published through the Faculty of Law of Istanbul. I consulted Mme. Halphen and she readily agreed to the plan, which the Faculty was pleased to approve.

Such are the circumstances in which the manuscripts came to light. According to Mauss, in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, they form the sole text of a final draft made between November 1898 and June 1900 and are now published in this volume. These facts, too explain how the plan I had at heart came to be carried out successfully.

I must therefore, before going further, express to Mme. Halphen the deep gratitude of the Faculty of Law of Istanbul as well as my own, for so kindly giving permission to us to bring out this unpublished work of her famous father. I must also give

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warm thanks to my very distinguished colleague, Monsieur Georges Davy for agreeing to undertake the difficult task of giving the finishing touch to the manuscripts and for writing an introduction. As a disciple and friend of Durkheim, no one had greater authority than Monsieur Davy, as an eminent sociologist, to give us this valuable help. I also want to give very especial thanks to Monsieur Charles Crozat, Professor in our Faculty, as well as to Monsieur Rabi Koral, Reader in the same Faculty, for reading the proofs and for giving such great care to seeing the book through the press.

The publication in Turkey of this posthumous work of Durkheim is not in any way a matter of chance but rather, we might say, the result of a kind of cultural determinism. For in Turkey, Durkheim's is the only sociology, apart from that of Le Play, Gabriel Tarde, Espinas and others, to have become a standard work, especially since the books and teaching of Ziya Gökalp, the well-known Turkish sociologist. There are many like myself in Turkey who bear the stamp of Durkheim's school of thought. It is therefore not surprising that Turkey, if I may say so, feels she shares a right to the heritage of this school. On this score, the country welcomes the publication with just pride. She certainly truly appreciates a fact without precedent—that the unpublished work of a European scholar of world-wide reputation is brought out here, through the good offices of one of her learned institutions.

For its own part, the Faculty of Law of the University of Istanbul has every right to be proud of having thus helped to strengthen the traditional ties of culture and friendship between Turkey and France. It is equally proud of having helped to enrich the heritage of learning common to both nations by securing the publication of a work of this distinction, and of having thus at last paid the tribute it owes to the memory of Emile Durkheim.

I feel a profound satisfaction in having had a modest part in setting this plan on foot, and I am glad to have done this service for my own country and to have been the means of spreading the light of French learning, to which I myself owe so much.

HÜSEYİN NAIL KUBALI,
Dean of the Faculty of Law of Istanbul.

PREFACE TO
THE SECOND EDITION

Bryan S. Turner

INTERPRETING EMILE DURKHEIM

EMILE DURKHEIM (1858–1917) remains a major figure in social science as a whole and he is unambiguously a ‘founding father’ of sociology. Whereas other social theorists from the classical period of sociology (1890–1920) were often somewhat ambiguous about their status as ‘sociologists’, Durkheim appears to have had a clear vision of the importance of building sociology as a science of social facts. His sociology continues to play a profound role in shaping contemporary thought about the nature of modern life, and anybody who wants to understand modern French social thought must take Durkheim seriously. His work remains a rich and challenging resource for comprehending the complexity of the modern world, a complexity which Durkheim described, by adopting the moral philosophy of Jean Guyau (Oru 1987) as ‘anomic’. Unlike other dominant figures who have shaped modern social theory (such as Georg Simmel, Max Horkheimer, or Talcott Parsons) and who often wrote in a dense and often obscure prose, Durkheim’s writing is direct, concise, and comprehensible. His books often start with a difficult analytical problem such as the meaning of ‘religion’ in the opening sections of *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Durkheim 1961), but his arguments are invariably logical and clear. From the point of view of a student of sociology, Durkheim is in this sense an accessible author. Yet the clarity may be deceptive, because the underlying problems of Durkheimian sociology—can one have a *science* of morals?—are clearly immense.

The style and contents of *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* are, in this sense, typical. Durkheim’s purpose was to explore the moral problems of an advanced, differentiated, and complex society, in which the economy had become somewhat detached

from other social institutions. Much of the text is concerned to establish a clear analytical understanding of major concepts (sanction, property, morals, and contract), but this search for definitional clarity in order to remove the misconceptions of existing theories prepares the way for Durkheim's major concern, which was: how can we find a system of moral restraint which is relevant to modern conditions? The answer was, at least in part, in terms of the evolution of systems of professional codes and civic values, which would contribute to a regulation of the economy rather as the guilds had regulated medieval economic activity (Black 1984). The state, which Durkheim saw as part of the moral apparatus of society, had an important part to play in regulating social life, but also, as we will see, in protecting the rights of the individual. This answer also provided a sketch of his sociology as a whole, which was, for Durkheim, essentially a science of morals.

Although the style and the content of the argument appear at this level to be relatively simple, Durkheim's sociology has been surrounded by a forest of contradictory and often misleading interpretation. Before turning to the thesis which is embedded in *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* (hereafter *Civic Morals*), we need to understand some of the principal exegetical frameworks within which Durkheim's work has been received, especially in the English-speaking world. This overview of the tradition of interpretation is important, because I wish to argue that *Civic Morals* is a challenge to these paradigms of interpretation and reception. In particular, it is important to question two conventional views of Durkheim's sociology. The first is that his work is, in some sense, conservative, because it was primarily concerned to understand social order rather than social change, and the second is the claim that there is a major break between his early and his later sociology. I shall address these issues in this order.

FRENCH SOCIETY (1789–1918)

Between 1789 and 1914, France was subject to profound revolutionary changes which not only transformed French society but, in a real sense, created 'modern society' as a global phenomenon. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic period experimented with and then exported the elementary principals of modern democracy, namely liberty, equality, and fraternity (or

secular solidarity). The destruction of the *ancien regime* resulted, however, in The Terror, and produced throughout Europe a conservative reaction against the excesses of the liquidation of the aristocracy and the monarchy. Perhaps the most famous response in the English-speaking world was Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* which became, possibly in contradistinction to Burke's own ideas, a manifesto against revolution. Jeremy Bentham in his *Anarchical Fallacies* called the idea of natural rights in the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen', with his characteristic vigour, 'nonsense upon stilts' (Waldron 1987:53).

The period between the Second Restoration (1815), the death of Napoleon (1821), and the Revolution of 1848 was marked by various unsuccessful attempts to create a stable government under a constitutional monarchy (Cobban 1961). Marx in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* wrote rather contemptuously of these political struggles as a 'farce' (Feuer 1969:360). However, the 1848 Revolutions throughout Europe raised once more the hope of a liberal, bourgeois alternative to the reactionary regimes which ruled over European affairs after the fall of Napoleon. The failure of the 1848 Revolutions, especially in France and Germany, was the context in which conservative social forces were able to maintain their traditional political role, despite the industrialization of Europe which placed considerable economic power in the hands of the urban bourgeoisie, which embraced various combinations of reformism, nationalism, and liberalism.

French society was further brutally transformed by military defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, in which Alsace-Lorraine, the birth-place of Durkheim and the focal point of a strong Jewish community, was annexed by Prussia. Military failure contributed to growing social tensions between social classes, and between Catholic conservatism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism, on the one hand, and liberal, secular, bourgeois groups, on the other. In France, these conflicts resulted eventually in the bloody confrontation of the Paris Commune of 1871. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, observing these events from London, expected an immediate, devastating, and final revolutionary struggle by the working class against the oppression of the capitalist system. Their revolutionary aspirations were soon dashed by the bloody suppression of the Commune.

The constitutional laws of 1875, which consecrated the Third Republic, emerged out of this traumatic period, but it did not provide a solution to the political divisions in France between a traditional Catholic political bloc and radical secular socialism. In this sense, the politics of the nineteenth century in France was an attempt to come to terms with the legacy of the French Revolution, and to settle the struggles between monarchy, republicanism, and Bonapartism within an effective constitutional framework. Military defeat in 1870 produced a deep nationalistic response in which the French population, including the intelligentsia, desperately sought a regeneration of the nation (Lukes 1875:41). In fin-de-siècle France, there was a significant wave of anti-Semitism, which had its parallel in most of the major cultural centres of Europe, but especially in Vienna. Jews were thought to be unpatriotic, but they were also assumed to be secular rationalists and therefore anti-clerical. They were, according to anti-Semitic mythology, simultaneously a threat to the state and the church. These tensions were the backcloth to the famous 'Dreyfus Affair' (1894) which divided the French nation for over a decade (Miquel 1968). Captain Alfred Dreyfus, an Alsatian Jew from a wealthy family, was accused of selling official military secrets to the Germans; he was eventually charged and convicted of treason. Knowing himself to be innocent, Captain Dreyfus failed to obey the code of military gentlemen by refusing to commit suicide or to confess. He was sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island (Fenton 1984:14), but the case remained stubbornly open and contested. After a retrial and a presidential pardon, the Dreyfus case was finally closed by the Appeal Court in 1906.

The Affair further divided French society into Catholic, conservative nationalists and secular liberals and radicals. Much of the emotional fervour of the anti-Dreyfusards was directed against 'intellectuals' who were held to be a corrupting force in French society. It was in the context of that attack that Durkheim wrote his 'Individualism and the intellectuals' (Durkheim 1969) for *La Revue Bleue* in 1898. Durkheim, who came from an established rabbinical family, was, as a university professor, inevitably caught up in the Affair, especially after a local newspaper in Bordeaux had suggested that Durkheim had encouraged his students to become politically active. Emile Zola's

letter 'J'accuse' which was addressed to the President of the Republic in January 1898, accused the officers and judges who directed the case against Dreyfus of incompetence and prejudice. Zola's letter intensified the polarization between intellectuals and conservatives. Durkheim's attitude towards the Affair is revealing. He wanted to avoid clouding the issue with conflicts over politics and personalities. For Durkheim, the Affair was a moral rather than political turning-point in the history of the nation. The case, which was in reality a legal farce, was in Durkheim's opinion an opportunity for national renewal.

France was further devastated in the catastrophe of the trenches of Normandy in 1914–1918. This national tragedy was also a personal disaster for Durkheim, many of whose intellectual disciples were slaughtered in the war. Over 30 per cent of the students from the Ecole Normale Supérieure who went to the firing line were destroyed. Durkheim wrote two pamphlets in connection with the war: *Qui a voulu la guerre?* (Durkheim 1915a) and *L'Allemagne au-dessus de tout* (Durkheim 1915b). Unfortunately, even during the war Durkheim, a Jew with a German name, came under criticism. His son André was killed in the Serbian retreat of 1915–16 (Giddens 1978:20). André Durkheim was a member of the intellectual community which had gathered around the journal *Année sociologique* which Durkheim had founded in 1896 (Nandan 1980). His death was simultaneously a personal and intellectual tragedy. As a result of exhaustion and grief, Durkheim eventually succumbed to a stroke and, after a brief recovery, died at the age of 59.

CONSERVATISM AND SOCIOLOGY

The origins of not only French, but of classical European, sociology have to be understood in the context of these profound social and political crises. Robert Nisbet (1967) in *The Sociological Tradition* has argued that sociology was an aspect of diverse intellectual movements which were responses to the industrial and the French Revolutions. This sociological response was filtered through three doctrines: socialism, conservatism, and liberalism. However, the most significant force shaping early sociology was in fact conservatism. The key

ideas or 'unit ideas' of sociology, such as the problem of authority, the sacred, community, the problem of the individual, status in relation to social change, and organic wholeness are primarily aspects of this conservative intellectual legacy. Thus, sociology was an intellectual response to the sense of a lost community, the disappearance of the sacred as a source of values, the isolation of the individual in the city, and the resulting crisis of meaning. In this sense, sociology was a nostalgic reflection on the loss of authenticity, personal spontaneity, social wholeness, and community (Stauth and Turner 1988). Ferdinand Tönnies's famous distinction between *gemeinschaft* (community) and *gesellschaft* (association) (Tönnies 1957) was a crucial contribution to the subsequent idea that modern societies are fragile and superficial, because they are not grounded in lasting values.

How did Durkheim stand, according to Nisbet (1967), within this tradition? Although Durkheim's search for a rational and positivistic theory of morals was a legacy of the Enlightenment project, Durkheim adopted and developed five themes which were derived essentially from a conservative tradition. These conservative themes were: the primacy of society over the individual; the necessity for moral restraint over human passions; the importance of authority in the organization of communities; the dependence of society on religious values; and the organic character of social relations. It is important to consider each theme in order to grasp fully the argument that Durkheimian sociology was part of a conservative reaction to social change. In order to clarify this presentation, it is important to note that, while there is much to commend Nisbet's interpretation, I shall eventually depart decisively from his exegesis to offer an alternative view of Durkheim.

Durkheim criticized the liberal and utilitarian traditions by arguing that 'society' is ontologically prior to the 'individual'. For example, in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (Durkheim 1964), Durkheim defined sociology as the scientific study of social facts which are to be treated as things, that is social phenomena which exist independently of the subjective appraisal of individuals. Social facts are *sui generis*. Although this approach to sociology has often been condemned as positivistic and inadequate, it is possible to provide a defence of Durkheim's

account, if we realize that he was not trying to define the research methods which sociologists are to employ in routine sociological inquiry (Gane 1988). Durkheim was also trying to offer a method of 'reading' social facts which would avoid ideological and personal bias. By 'a social fact', Durkheim meant social phenomena which are external to an individual and which exercise a social or moral constraint over behaviour. Social facts include such phenomena as legal institutions, religious belief systems, and financial systems; they also include 'social currents' (Durkheim 1964:4) or what we would now term 'social movements'. The data of *Civic Morals* (legal sanctions, moral codes, customs, and so forth) are social facts in Durkheim's terms. The 'rules' of sociology attempt to outline how true knowledge of these social facts might be produced. Now Nisbet takes this treatment of the relationship between the individual and society in sociological methods as an example of conservatism, because the 'ideas, language, morality, and relationships' of an individual 'are but reflections of the anterior reality of society' (Nisbet 1965:25).

Second, human nature is such that moral constraint is essential for the well-being of humans and for the stability and safety of society. As Nisbet points out, the Enlightenment tradition saw Man as a creature of almost infinite capacity, whose nature had been stunted by religious control, political tyranny, or social corruption. As Rousseau had argued in *The Social Contract*, Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains. By contrast the conservative tradition, especially under the influence of the Christian doctrine of the sinfulness of Man, regards human beings as creatures who need discipline in order to regulate their desires. We can take one famous example of this form of reasoning in Durkheim in his study of suicide (Durkheim 1951), where the idea of anomie plays a pivotal role.

Durkheim adopted a view of Man which is best described as 'homo duplex'. Rather like the famous story of Jekyll and Hyde, human beings have two opposed natures. One is violent and passionate; the other is rational and sociable. The requirements of social stability demand the subordination of the animality of human beings by reason, if society is to avoid anarchy. Theories of society which are based on the assumption of 'homo duplex' typically argue that, whatever the individual cost, human

sexuality must be regulated in the interests of social order. Sigmund Freud's treatment of this issue can be found in *Civilization and its Discontents* (Freud 1930). For Durkheim, the problem of modern society is that, with the decline of the principle of mechanical solidarity which is based on a shared system of beliefs and morals (that is on the *conscience collective*), human beings are exposed to their own unregulated desires and ambitions, and they are exposed to profound changes in the organization of society. In particular, utilitarian individualism, which he thought was promoted primarily in the social thought of the English sociologist Herbert Spencer, encouraged egoism, ambition, and unlimited aspiration. The consequence of egoistic individualism (Marske 1987) is that the social malaise of a society without an adequate normative structure or 'anomie' is intensified, and in *Suicide* (Durkheim 1951) which he published in 1897, Durkheim attempted to show that the suicide rate was highest among those social groups which were most exposed to these anomic currents in society. Without normative restraint, individuals would succumb to such 'suicidal currents'.

In fact, Durkheim's argument in *Suicide* was far more complex than I have suggested, and he identified four different types of suicide, which have a specific causality. Some forms of suicide, such as fatalistic and altruistic suicide, are the products of too much regulation and social integration. Egoistic and anomic suicide were the types of suicidal behaviour which are most characteristic of contemporary society. Durkheim's analysis of suicide has been much debated and criticized (Atkinson 1978; Giddens 1965; Giddens 1966; Lukes 1973:31), but I cannot in this introduction enter into this argument. The importance of *Suicide* for understanding *Civic Morals* is in terms of the light which it throws on Durkheim's critique of egoistic individualism as a process which uncouples the individual from the social structure.

Nisbet's third theme is the importance of authority in the conservative theory of society. The notion of authority 'runs like a leitmotif through all of Durkheim's works' (Nisbet 1965:59). It is an essential feature of his view of morality, where authority, especially in the form of discipline, plays an important role in shaping 'personality' through moral education. Once more, Durkheim was particularly critical of the liberal utilitarian tradition of Bentham and James Mill, who, according to

Durkheim, confused liberty with lawlessness. Without restraint and authority, human beings would be committed to a life of anarchy. The problem of modern society is indeed the slow erosion of moral authority, and the task of *Civic Morals* was to describe this crisis and to offer a set of solutions for the creation of authoritative moral guide-lines. The problem of modern society is to discover an effective principle which will give moral force and ethical authority to social norms and practices, without which discipline will be merely an external regulation. In *The Elementary Forms*, Durkheim wanted to show how obedience to religious practices produced self-restraint and altruistic actions produced personal asceticism as a necessary basis of social life as a whole. It is only on the basis of 'a certain disdain for suffering' (Durkheim 1961:356), that society is possible at all.

This discussion allows Nisbet to get at the heart of Durkheim's conservatism, namely the centrality of religion, or more specifically the sacred, to Durkheim's sociological project as a whole. Here again Durkheim's approach departs significantly from the sociology of religion of Marx, Weber, or Simmel (Seger 1957; Turner 1991). Nineteenth-century theories of religion were largely individualistic and rationalistic, that is they treated religion as primarily a cognitive activity which was false from a scientific point of view (Goode 1951). Religion was the consequence of Man's misunderstanding of natural reality. For example, animism was an attempt to explain nature by reference to spirits. Since these theories are false from a positivistic perspective, religion will disappear with the advance of science. Durkheim departed radically from these cognitive orientations, by treating religion as social, collective, and practical. His theories of religion were heavily influenced by the arguments of William Robertson Smith whose *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889) showed how the sacrificial meal between men and the gods created a sacral community, and by Fustel de Coulanges's study of *The Ancient City* (1901) where the changing structure of classical society is examined in terms of theological changes.

In his religious studies, Durkheim attempted to show that Australian aboriginal totemism, as the simplest known religion, provided an insight into 'the elementary forms' of all religious life. His second task was to identify the genesis of the fundamental categories of human thought (such as time and

space); this issue in the sociology of knowledge was also considered in *Primitive Classification* (Durkheim and Mauss 1963). His third objective was through an analysis of totemism to identify a number of generalizations about the universal functions of the sacred in social institutions.

Durkheim's work, which is a classic in the sociology of religion, has received ample commentary (Goode 1951; Pickering 1975; Robertson 1970; Scharf 1970; Seger 1957; Turner 1991). The core of his argument proceeds along two lines. First, he attacked existing, typically individualistic, arguments about the nature of religion, in order to arrive at his own solution. For Durkheim, religion is a 'unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them' (Durkheim 1961:62). His second line of approach was to argue that the 'elementary forms' of religion, by which he meant the basic structural characteristics of religion, provide an insight into social structures and processes as such. Religious beliefs are to be interpreted as the 'collective representations' of society; the unintended consequence of religious practices is to create a social bond; the practice of religious rituals creates a social enthusiasm or 'effervescence' by which social commitments are renewed; the training of the faithful in sacrifice and asceticism creates important norms of altruism and social service; and religious mythologies, which are dramatically re-enacted in the ritual, store up the collective memory of the social group, without which the continuity of this historical narrative of generations would be impossible (Wach 1944). Talcott Parsons was probably correct or at least insightful, when he argued that Durkheim, starting with the proposition that society is the basis of religion, concluded with the equally revolutionary equation that the basis of society is sacred. The problem of modern society is that we are in a transitional period; the old gods are dead, and new ones are yet to be born. Nationalism may prove to be such a god, inspiring devotion and sacrifice.

Finally, Nisbet argued that the underlying metaphor in Durkheim's sociology was that society is organic, and that its developmental laws can only be understood in terms of collective processes such as social differentiation which cannot be reduced to individual psychology, and especially to individual rationality.

Against the utilitarian tradition, Durkheim rejected the idea that society was the result of a social contract drawn up between individuals, and that the development of society could be conceived in terms of an original contract (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1986). Society is organic rather than contractual in Durkheim's more holistic perspective. He argued that a contract between individuals would be meaningless and ineffective unless it was based on deeply held values and beliefs, and unless it was sanctified by custom, ritual, and morality. The rejection of this utilitarian tradition occupied Durkheim in *The Division of Labor in Society* (1960), where he provided a specific attack on Spencerian sociology, but *Civic Morals* constitutes the core of Durkheim's critical offensive against individualistic/utilitarian accounts of property and contract; I shall turn shortly to this argument in detail in providing a description of the contents of his lectures on professional ethics and public morality. In conceiving of society as an organic whole and not as an aggregate of individuals, Durkheim has often been identified as a founder of 'structural-functionalism' as a distinctive school of sociology. Certainly Durkheim's view of historical change was primarily in terms of the dichotomy between mechanical and organic solidarity which he explored fully in *The Division of Labor in Society*.

This interpretation of Durkheim as a social theorist who laid the foundations for the analysis of social integration in social systems was promoted by Parsons in a number of major publications such as *The Social System* (Parsons 1991:367ff), and in so doing Parsons has also, somewhat less directly than Nisbet, promoted the idea that Durkheim has to be seen as a theorist of social stability and social integration. For example, Parsons (1974) argued that Durkheim's account of solidarity in *The Division of Labor in Society* in terms of the *conscience collective* in mechanical solidarity in primitive societies and of social reciprocity in organic solidarity in advanced societies was a major solution to the Hobbesian problem of social order in the utilitarian tradition. Durkheim's analysis of the integrative functions of religious practice in both making and sustaining social communities provided Parsons with a theoretical source in classical sociology for his own emphasis on the importance of common values in the social cohesion of modern societies. In Parsons's early academic career, Weber's analysis of capitalism

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