

The normal and the pathological durkheim

Excerptied by Robert Alun Jones. Emile Durkheim: An introduction to four great works. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1996. In 1999, 100,000 people were booked in 1988. Overview of topics What is a social fact? The reader of The Division of Labor reality up of phenomena different from those studies by understood that sociology and psychology and psychology included. It was for these phenomena that Durkheim reserved the concept of social facts, that is, a category of facts that present very special characteristics: they consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling outside the individual, which are invested with a force by virtue of which they exert control over him. 1 Since these facts consisted of actions, thoughts and feelings, they could not be confused with biological phenomena, but neither were they province psychology, for they existed outside the individual manifestations is most obting the individual most. This distinction is most obting the over control over him. 1 Since the collective mind, from the forms these states assumed when they were manifested through private, individual manifestations is nost obting in the Division of Labor - such as custems, moral and legal rules of sociological Metrowere, it is significantly less obvious where the social facts, which here subject of point or elucive flows of opinion reflected in lower or higher were social, for they were actually manifestations, but precisely because in the statistical aggregata. 2 Durkheim, of course, did not deny that such individual manifestations were somehow social, for they are also sociology. 3 It can still be argued, social facts, which here resord the uses of additions in the collective mind, invidual manifestations or conditions in the collective mind, individual manifestations or conditions in the collective mind, individual manifestations were somehow social, for they were actually manifestations of course, did not they social facts, which here

on the individual. Finally, again invoking a distinction introduced in the Division of Labor, Durkheim insisted that social facts were not only limited to ways of being (e.g. the number, nature and relationship of parts of a society, the size and geographical distribution of the population, the nature and scope of the communication networks, etc.). 5 The second class of structural facts, Durkheim argued, shows exactly the same characteristics of externality and coercion as the first - a political organization limits our behavior no less than a political ideology, and a communication network no less than the idea of being conveyed. In fact, Durkheim insisted that there were no two classes at all, for the structural characteristics of a society were nothing more than social functions that had been consolidated over long periods of time. Durkheim's social fact thus proved to be a practical elastic concept, covering the area from the most clearly delineated features of social structure (e.g. population size and distribution) to the most spontaneous streams of public opinion and enthusiasm. Rules of observation of social facts In his Novum Organum (1620), Francis Bacon discerned a general tendency to the human mind which, along with the serious flaws of today's learning, had to be corrected if his plan for scientific knowledge should succeed. This was the rather natural tendency to take our ideas about things (what Bacon called performances vulgares, praenotiones, or idols) for those things themselves, and then to construct our knowledge of the latter on the basis of largely undisciplined manipulation of the former; and it was to overcome such false notions, and thus to restore man's lost mastery over the natural world, that Bacon had planned (but never completed) the great instauration. It was right that Durkheim should refer to Bacon's work in the rules, for he clearly conceived of his own project in similar terms. Just as roughly formed concepts of natural phenomena necessarily before scientific reflection on them, and just as alchemy thus precedes chemistry and astrology precedes astronomy, so men have not waited for the use of social sciences before framing ideas of law, morality, family, state, or society is even greater than those of chemical or astronomical phenomena, for the simple reason that society is a product of human activity, and thus seems to be expressions of and even similar ideas we have about it. Comtes Cours de philosophie positive (1830-1842), for example, focused on the idea only to install his own preconceivement of cooperation. But isn't it possible that social phenomena really are the development and realization of certain ideas? Although this was the case, Durkheim replied, we do not know a priori what these ideas are, for social facts ultimately do not have the most important features of things, we must begin our investigations as if they did. 13ut. truer to form, Durkheim immediately reclaimed his conviction of what Peter Berger has aptly called the choseité (literally, thingness) of social facts. The most basic rule of any sociological method, Durkheim thus concluded, is to treat social facts as things. From this first order, three additional rules for the discussion above, is that one systematically has to waste all notions. Durkheim thus added the method of Cartographic doubt to Bacon's warnings about praenotiones, arguing that the sociologist must deny himself from the fallible that holds sway sway the ordinary person's mind, shaking off, once and for all the field of the empirical categories that long habit often makes tyrannical. Secondly, the research subject must include only one group of phenomena defined in advance by certain common external characteristics, and all phenomena corresponding to this definition must be included as follows. Each scientific examination, Durkheim insisted, must begin by defining the specific group of phenomena that it is concerned with; and if this definition should be objective, it must not refer to an ideal conception of these phenomena, but to the characteristics that provoke the remotely ascertainable reaction known as punishment. The predictable objection to such a rule was that it attributes visible but superficial phenomena to an unjustified meaning. When crime is defined by punishment, for example, is it not then derived from punishment? Durkheim's answer was no for two reasons. Firstly, the function of the definition is neither to explain the current phenomenon nor to express its essence; rather, it is to establish contact with things, which can only be done through punishment that crime is revealed to us and thus punishment must be the starting point for our investigation. Second, the constant conjunction of crime and punishment suggests that there is an insoluble connection between the latter and the essential character of the former, so that, no matter how superficial, punishment is a good place to start the investigation.7 Finally, when the sociologist commits to examining any order of social facts, he must strive to assess them from a point of view where they present themselves isolated from their individual manifestations. Science, as we have seen, must reject these praenotiones formed through common, additional scientific experience, and re-create their concepts on the basis of systematically observable data. But Durkheim was also aware that even in science, the sensory experience itself could be subjective, so that observable data for personal to the observer was discarded, and only those who showed a necessary degree of objectivity were retained. Sociological observations should be equally objective, and thus social facts should be loosened as completely as possible from the individual facts as they are manifested. In particular, Durkheim thus supported the study of the aspects of social reality that had crystallized - legal and moral rules, facts about social structure, proverbs and personal applications. Rules for distinguishing the normal from the pathological as indicated in book three of the Division of Labor, but Durkheim felt that social facts show both normal and pathological forms; and he now added that it was an important part of the sociological method of providing rules to distinguish between them. The main objection to such a provision, of course, was that such valuations of value have no place in science, whose sole purpose is to tell us how causes bring their effects, but not which ends we should pursue. The practical usefulness of social science will thus be limited to revealing which causes at will. The ends as a result of these reasons can then be pursued and achieved for reasons beyond the science itself. Durkheim's answer was that there are always more means to achieve any end, and that the determining our highest goals. The problem is to find an objective criterion, externally ascertainable, but inherent in social facts themselves, which will allow us to distinguish scientifically between social health and social disease. This was an issue that was not easy to solve, and it was only after a tedious search that Durkheim's criterion, would simply be those found in most, if not all, individuals, within limited limits of variety. Social facts that, on the other hand, are pathological, however, will be those that occur only in a minority of cases, and only for short periods of time in the life span of the individual even where they occur.9 If we adopt the term average type to refer to the purely hypothetical device that contains the most frequently occurring characteristics of the species in their most common forms, it is clear that what is normal or pathological can be so only in relation to a given species, and if that species varies over time, relative to a certain stage of development.10 Hence Durkheim's first rule for the distinction of the normal from the pathological: a social fact is normal for a given society of that species, assessed in the corresponding phase of development. But if generality is thus the criterion with which we recognize the normality of a social fact, this criterion itself still requires an explanation. Durkheim's initial request for such the explanation would be less questionable if it could be shown that its external signs (generality) were not only clear, but quickly pondered by the nature of things; and secondly, that the practical application of knowledge thus acquired would be facilitated by knowing not only what we want, but why we want it. But Durkheim's more basic motivation was derived from his realization that in certain transitional periods (such as what he obviously lived through), a fact of extraordinary generality can persist, through blind habit power, despite his lack of correspondence with the new conditions of existence. Having determined this general fact and determined by observation that a fact is general, the sociologist must still reconstruct the conditions that determined this general fact and determined by observation that a fact is general, the sociologist must still reconstruct the conditions of existence. fact normal, while in the second the normality is only evident. 12 Therefore, Durkheim's second rule: The results of the preceding method can be verified by showing that the general nature of the phenomenon is related to the general conditions of collective life in the social type under consideration.13 It was Durkheim's illustration of these rules, which provoked the immediate interest of his contemporaries; For the example he chose was crime, whose pathological nature, by almost every other criterion, seemed undeniable. Nevertheless, Durkheim said that crime exists in all societies of all kinds, and despite centuries of efforts at extinction, has rather increased with the growth of civilization; thus there is no phenomenon that represents more indisputable all the symptoms of normality, since it seems to be closely linked up with the conditions of all collective life. 14 But for Durkheim to describe crime that normally did not mean parting to a necessary evil; On the contrary, it meant that crime was useful, a factor in public health, an integrative element of a healthy society. 15 First consider the necessity. In Book 1 of the Division of Labour, Durkheim had shown that crime consists of an act that offends strong, well-defined collective feelings. But if this happened, Durkheim added, the weaker states of the conscience collective, whose milder reactions previously acknowledged only violations of the convention, would also be amplified, and what was unconventional would thus become criminal; and the elevation of all collective feelings to a force sufficient to stifle all dissentient voices was simply incompatible with the enormous of the environments that conform to the corresponding variation of individual conscience. Since it cannot be a society where individuals do not deviate to some extent from the conscientious collective, it is equally necessary that some of these discrepancies assume a criminal nature. Durkheim's more scandalous argument, however, was that crime is also useful, both in a direct and indirect sense. The argument for indirect benefit resurfaced in The Division of Labor, where Durkheim had shown that the gradual development of law and morality itself reflects more fundamental transformations in a society's collective feelings. However, in order for such feelings to change, they can only be moderately intense, while the only condition in which crime could cease (see above) must necessarily be one in which collective emotions had achieved an unprecedented intensity. Therefore, in order for moral consciousness to develop at all, individual creativity must be allowed. The criminal thus becomes the price we pay for the idealist. More directly, as in the case of Socrates, the criminal and the idealist are sometimes the same, and the crime turns out to be the expectation of the morality that is still coming. Rules of the constitution of social type or species. Durkheim's next stop was thus to establish rules for the constitution or classification of such species. In particular, he sought one via the media between historians, for whom different societies are just different societies are just different expressions of the basic characteristics of human nature. In other words, Durkheim was looking for an intermediate entity that would recognize the unity required by scientific generalization, as well as the diversity that lies in the facts. As means for this purpose, Durkheim again approved the method advocated in Bacon's Novum Organum - namely, to look for crucial or decisive facts that, regardless of their numbers, have scientific value or interest.16 But which facts are most crucial or conclusive? Clearly, the facts that explain other facts; and in this sense, Durkheim admitted, explanation and classification are interdependent, and none of them can continue very far in the absence of the other. But at least we know where to start: societies are made up of parts, and their character must thus depend on the species, number and relationships of the parts and thus combined. Durkheim thus initiated the classifying of social types according to the same principle that had guided this activity in the division of labour, and eventually codified it in a rule: We shall begin by classifying societies according to the degree of organization they manifest themselves, and take as a base the very simple society or individual segment communities. Within these classes, different variations will be distinguished, after whether a complete conspiracy of the first segments takes place.17 Rules for explanation of social facts The titles of the first two books of the Division of Labor, as well as most of the arguments in them, testify to Durkheim's aversion to any teleological confusion of the function of a social fact with its cause.18 This aversion followed naturally from Durkheim's prevail over individual wills, it becomes clear that no human need or desire, no matter how impenetrable, can be sufficient for such an effect. In fact, like the vestigial organs of its biological counterpart, a social fact sometimes exists without earning any important need or desires can desires can intervene to hasten or retard social development, but they can not even create any social fact; and even their intervention is the effect of more basic social causes. 20 Therefore, when committing to explain a social phenomenon, the effect of more basic social causes. 20 Therefore, when committing to explain a social phenomenon, the effective cause that produces it and the function 21 it meets must be examined separately. But what was thus denounced as telelogical was at least as degraded as psychological, for Durkheim regarded these as nothing more than different descriptions of the same methodological blunder. In fact, if society is just a system of funds set up to achieve certain ends, then these ends must surely be individual, for before society only individuals could exist. The origin and development of society will thus be the result of individual minds, and the laws of sociology no more than the corollaries of psychology. The organization of the family will thus be the consequence of the conjugal and parental feelings; economic institutions, that of these feelings provoked by fear of nature or awe at the charismatic personality, or even the religious instinct itself. At the risk of repetition, Durkheim regarded such explanations as insufficient to what should be explained - namely, a group of facts outside the individual who exerts a coercive power over him: It is not from itself that can come the external pressure that he undergoes; That's why it's not what's happening in itself that can explain it. 22 Here Durkheim faced two common objections. The first was that since the only elements that society is composed of are individuals, the explanation of social phenomena must lie in psychological facts. To this objection, Durkheim's usual answer to to the biological analogue - that is, the constituent components of the living cell are raw matter, but the association of such cells produces life. The whole thing, in other words, is somewhat greater than the sum of the parts. Similarly, the association of individual people creates a social reality of a new type, and it is in the facts of that association rather than the nature of associated elements that the explanation for this new reality is to be found. Therefore, between sociology and psychology, there is the same violation in continuity that exists between biology and the physical or chemical sciences: ... Every time a social phenomenon is explained directly by a psychological phenomenon, Durkheim concluded thus: We can be confident that the explanation is false. 23 Recognizing that society, once formed, is the proximal cause of social phenomena, but another objection insisted that the original causes of association seems to be the most obligatory of all, for it is the origin of all other obligations. We were born into a family, granted a nationality and given an education, without choosing any of them; and it is these associations that in turn determine the more voluntary commitments in which we later eriguiesce. All societies are born of other societies, Durkheim concluded, and throughout the course of social evolution there has not been a single time when individuals have really had to consult together to decide whether they would enter collective life together, and into a kind of collective life rather than another. 24 Durkheim thus came to another rule: The decisive reason for a social fact he must seek among the foregoing social facts and not among the states of the individual consciousness. But the arguments that lead to this rule, Durkheim added, apply equally to the function of a social fact - while a social fact - while a social fact can have consequences that serve the individual, this is not the immediate reason for its existence; On the contrary, the function in the production of socially useful effects consists. Durkheim thus complemented the rule above by a second: The function of a social fact must always be sought in the relationship that it carries to a social fact to be found? If the peculiar state of the emergence of social (as opposed to psychological) phenomena consists in the fact of association, Durkheim argued, social phenomena must vary according to how the constituent elements of a society are connected. Durkheim called this the inner environment of a society, thus suggesting yet another rule: The primary origin of social processes of some must be sought in the constitution of the internal social environment.26 The arguments presented in support of this rule largely reproduce the 27 discussion of social volume and dynamic density contained in book two of the Division of Labour. But isn't this inner environment itself dependent on other social reasons, either inherent in society itself, or involving interaction with other social volume and dynamic density contained in book two of the Division of Labour. science, and that a fact is primary only in the sense that it is generally enough to explain many others. But the internal association, but these groups are themselves subject to the influence of the general internal association, and are similarly less important. A correspondingly reduced importance was given to the external environment; and secondly, because this would make presenting social facts depending on past events. The second consequence was particularly inappropriate, for Durkheim always insisted that the relationship between past and present states in any society was only chronological, and could be made causal only on the exorbitant cost of postulation, as had Comte and Spencer, a metaphysical inner tendency in social evolution.28 In the end, it is only in relation to the internal social environment that the utilitarian value (function) of a fact can be measured; for among the changes caused by this environment, are only the useful ones that somehow correspond to the most important conditions of society itself. Moreover, the internal social environment alone can account for the undeniable diversity and complexity of useful social facts without resorting to quite arbitrary and ad hoc causal hypotheses; and this again indicates the extent to which the constitution of qualitatively distinct social types is related to their explanation of a number of contemporary relationships. 29 The rules thus established made it possible for Durkheim to aptly characterize his own perception of collective life as opposed to hobbes and Rousseau, on the one hand, and Spencer, on the other hand. The first two thinkers viewed the individual human nature, and thus its imposition with power represented an abnormal condition. Durkheim's own theory, as we have seen, contains elements of both - he agreed with Hobbes and Rousseau that restriction is an important feature of social facts, and with Spencer that society is part of nature. But precisely because society's limitation is the consequence of its natural superiority, it is not necessary to resort to Hobbes or Rousseau's social contract to explain the individual, but from a social reality sui generis, the limitation it exerts is not only physical, but also moral and intellectual. It is the superiority with which religion gave the earliest, symbolic representation and science the later, more accurate explanation.31 Rules for demonstration of sociological evidence How can we then show that one phenomenon is the cause of another? According to Durkheim, we can only compare those cases where both are simultaneously present (or absent), and ask whether the variations they show under these different circumstances indicate that one depends on the other. Where the two phenomena is impossible, we compare them as they have been produced naturally, a procedure called indirect experimentation, or comparative method. Durkheim was convinced that sociology was limited solely to the latter method, and this led him to reject both Comte's historical method, which depended on an acceptance of his tenuous laws of social progress, and Mills's suggestion that even indirect experimentation is inapplicable for the study of social phenomena. In particular, Durkheim Mills attacked the postulate that the same effect may be due to various reasons as one that would make the scientific analysis of such reasons completely impenetrable. As the first rule for demonstration of sociological evidence, therefore, Durkheim Suggested: To the same effect it always corresponds to the same cause.32 But not all forms of comparative method, Durkheim argued, are equally applicable to the study of social facts, a view that led him to a critique of the five canons of experimental examination found in Mill's System of Logic (1843). Mill's Method of Agreement, for example, had stated that if two cases of a phenomenon only share one circumstance, it is either their cause or their effect; his Method of difference, on the other hand, suggested that if a case where a phenomenon occurs and one in which it is not difference consisted in combining the first two, putting together knowledge of what is common to all cases of the phenomenon and what alone is different when it is absent. For all three, Durkheim protested on the ground that they assume that the cases are either agreed or different when it is absent. of phenomena as complex as sociology. Mill's Method of Remains suggested that we subtract from a phenomenon what is already known to be the effect of certain causes, residues are the effect of the remaining biases; but here again, Durkheim objected to the assumption that a significant number of causal laws are already known, and that the effect for all reasons, but thus one can be eliminated in a science as sociology. Mill's fifth cannon, however, was that of simultaneous variation - that phenomena that vary together are associated through some fact of causation. And this search for a mere parallelism in values where two phenomena pass survived all of Durkheim's objections to the first four. For the way a phenomenon develops reveals its inner nature, and where two phenomena develop in the same way, there must thus be some internal connection between nature that is thus revealed. Durkheim could thus do quite well without the massive collections of facts gathered by historians, etnographers and sociologists pursuing the Method of Agreement and Differences. At the same time variations alone, as long as the variations were serial and systematic rather than isolated and sporadic, was always sufficient to establish a sociological law.33 Durkheim then proposed three methods in which such serial, systematic variations could be formed. Firstly, when we work with very general facts (e.g. suicide) that we have comprehensive statistical data on,34 the sociologist can limit his study to a single, unique society. But another method - it wants that gathering facts from multiple communities of the same social type - makes available a more comprehensive comprehensive statistical data on, 34 the sociologist can limit his study to a single, unique society with another, to see if the same phenomenon develops over time in response to the same conditions. But this method applies only to phenomena that have arisen during the existence of the relevant societies, thus ignoring the part of a society's social organization that is inherited finished from previous societies. This observation led directly to Durkheim's third method; to take into account a social institution belonging to a species that has already been determined, we should compare the different forms that it assumes not only among people of that species. 35 This genetic method, Durkheim argued, at the same time provides both an analysis and a synthesis of facts during studies - by showing us how each component element of the phenomenon was successively added to the other, it reveals them in their dissociated state; and using the wide comparison field, the basic conditions in which the formation and association of these elements depend on Specific. Accordingly, one cannot explain a social fact of any complexity except on the condition that one follows its entire development through all species. In as far as it ceases to be purely descriptive and attempts to explain social facts, therefore comparative sociology is not a single branch of sociology, but is coherent with the discipline itself. Finally, Durkheim warned against a flaw characteristic of such extended comparisons - that is, in attempts to judge the direction of social evolution, the sociologist compares the state of a social fact during the decline of one society with its state in the early stages of its successor. But the new society, Durkheim insisted, is not just a continuation of the old; Thus, the revival of religious traditionalism is often observed at the beginning of a society's history, for example, a product of the special conditions of the early stage rather than evidence, the religious decline found in the latter stages of its predecessor. To serve as evidence, therefore, the comparison of social facts must check for the stage of a society's evolution; and for this purpose, Durkheim concluded that it will be sufficient to assess societies that one compares in the same period of their development: According to whether, from one of these stages to the next, it shows more, less or so much intensity, one will be able to say whether it develops, regressing or remaining static. 36 When Durkheim came to summarize the most important characteristics of the sociological method, he specifically mentioned three. Firstly, it is independent of all doctrines, whether philosophical or practical. Sociology is thus neither positivist, nor even naturalistic in as far as this term is taken in the doctrinal sense, which involves the reduction of social facts to cosmic forces; Nor does it have to take sides on metaphysics, or confirm free will instead of determinism (or vice versa). Focusing on the latter is the only condition that social facts can be explained by natural causes, a condition that Durkheim considered less a rational necessity than a legitimate inductive inference.37 Similarly, practical doctrines, whether communist, socialist or individualistic, are of no scientific value, and if they interest the sociologist at all, it is because they themselves are social facts that reflect the interests and desires of certain groups in society during studies.38 Second , the sociological method is objective, in the sense that social facts are things and must be treated as such. This means that we can no longer dream of explaining them by their benefit or by deliberate reasoning from their agents; On the contrary, social facts are externally coercive forces, which can only be created by other forces. Thus, to take into account social fact cannot be explained except for another social fact, which for Durkheim meant that the inner social environment is the primary motivator that under the foundation of all social reality is so important to the sociologist. Durkheim argued, that a purely sociological culture, an autonomous scientific discipline, is essential to cultivation. Three years later, l'Année sociologique was born. Critical remarks Steven Lukes has observed, 40 The rules of sociology, and the manifesto of the emerging Durkheim School; and it is important to weigh their flaws in light of these multiple, disagreemental intenitions. Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is Durkheim at his worst, and that he is at his best when, where, to exactly that extent, and even because he left these programmatic utterances. The concept of social fact itself, for example, must be described as extraordinarily spatial if not downright indiscriminate, incorporating the full range of potentially explanatory social phenomena - population size and distribution, social norms and rules, collective beliefs and practices, flows of meaning - from infrastructure to the overbuilding level; and as Durkheim's willingness to focus on the latter rather than the former increased during his career, the rules - guite embarrassing for such impenetrable a piece - seemed to straddle an ambiguous, intermediate stage.41 It can be argued, of course, that these ambiguities are somewhat relieved by Durkheim's insistence that social facts can be distinguished from their biological and psychological counterparts by their externality and powers of limitation; but here, similar difficulties persist. The suggestion that social facts are external to a particular individual, for example, raises few objections, although a concern about balanced statement may add (as Durkheim increasingly did) that they are also internal to specific individuals; but the suggestion that social facts are external to a particular individuals can be justified only in a limited sense that they have a previous temporally existence, and any extension beyond those limits is subject to (as Durkheim often was) to accusations of hypostating any metaphysical group mind 42 The term restriction seems to have had an even greater elasticity, for Durkheim used it differently to refer to the authority of laws that manifested through oppressive sanctions; the need to follow certain rules in order to perform certain tasks; the influence of features of a society on its cultural norms and rules; the psychological pressure of a crowd on its members; and the effect of socialization and accumulation on the individual. The first of these applications, lukes have observed, seems more felicitous than the second (which is perhaps better described as a means-end relationship), and the last three seem something completely different - that is, far from being cases of restraint or coercion, they rather describe how men are led to think and feel in a certain way, to know and appreciate certain things, and to act accordingly.43 It was these latter uses, moreover, as Durkheim increasingly adopted when his interests shifted from the structural emphases of the Division of Labor to the focus of collective representations characteristic of The Elementary Forms; when he did, restriction became less an important attribute than a noticeable sign. 44 and eventually it disappeared completely. Like his definition of social facts. Durkheim's rules for their explanation represent a commendable effort to establish sociology as a science independent of psychology; but here again, psychology; but here again, psychology; but here again, psychology; but here again, psychology as a science independent of psychology as a science independent of psychology. conditions; and, most often, explanation in terms of individual mental states or dispositions. 45 In each case, Durkheim discovered logical facts, it is at least equally true that even the most particular sociological explanations necessarily depend on certain assumptions, explicit or otherwise, about how individuals think, feel and act in special circumstances. Sociology may not produce many laws, W.G. Runciman has observed, 46 but it certainly consumes them - especially those of psychology. 47 Durkheim's insistence that social facts can be explained only by other social facts was thus both excessive and naïve. Durkheim's attempt to find objective criteria where normal can be distinguished from pathological social facts was a fairly transparent attempt to give scientific status to the social and political preferences we have already observed in book three of the Division of Labour. In addition to the logical difficulties of deriving social health from the generality of a phenomenon, Durkheim himself recognized the practical obstacles to drawing such inferences during transition periods as his own; but since economic anarchy, anomaly and rapidly rising suicide rates were all general features of organized societies, Durkheim's second criterion - that this generality may be related to the general conditions of the social type in guestion - could make them pathological by reference to a future, integrated society that Durkheim somehow considered latent in the present. Durkheim, in short, tended to idealize future societies while rejecting current realities, and thus seems to have been unaware of the sheer historical readiness of all social arrangements.48 The example chosen to illustrate these criteria - the normality of crime - reflects the same conservative biased perceptions. Although we accept the argument that the punishment induced by crime confirms that solidarity based on common beliefs and feelings, for example, we still have to ask a number of more specific guestions - What beliefs and feelings? Shared by whom? What degree of punishment? What criminal offenses? Committed by whom? For in the absence of concrete answers to such questions (Durkheim's handling of these questions (Durkheim's handling of these questions), the claim that crime is functional for social integration can be used to justify any favored set of beliefs and practices, and any form or degree of punishment, only by claiming that the failure to punish would be followed inevitably by social disintegration. Durkheim's assertion - that crime is functional for social change - was a simple extension of the view discussed in Chapter 2, that the law is the direct reflection of the conscientiousness collective. But, as Tarde was quick to point out, there is no necessary connection between violations of these laws that constitute crimes and the sources of moral and social innovation.49 Brought together, these criticisms suggest that Durkheim's assertion that his sociological method was free of philosophical and political doctrines must be considered an instance of what Jürgen Habermas might call his self-understanding. Philosophically, for example, Durkheim was clearly a social realist and rationalist - he believed that society is a reality independent of individual minds, and that the methodical elimination of our subjective notions will enable us to know it as it is. In as far as social facts are transmitted culturally from one generation to another, and individuals learn and thus are shaped by them, this is unobjectionable: But it is equally true that social facts themselves are made up of the meanings associated with them by those agents whose actions, thoughts and feelings they are, and that such subjective interpretations are thus part of reality to be known. The question of which religion is, for example, is hardly one that can be decided apart from the meanings associated with it by those whose religion is under investigation; and any effort to study it regardless of such meanings risks not only abstracting any essential definition of religion that bears no relation to the belief and practice in guestion, but also of subconsciously imposing one's own subjective interpretation under the guise of scientific observation.50 Politically, as we have seen, Durkheim argued that scientists make poor activists, refrain from participation in socialist circles, and generally presented themselves as a sociological expert who advised their contemporaries about their true social interests; but it is hard to see how theories that so consistently and emphatically supported the secular democratic, egalitarian, anti-royalist and anti-revolutionary values of the Third Republic could reasonably be regarded as devoid of political goals, or even that these ends were Durkheim's own; Rather, it is that here the distinction between social thought and social action becomes elusive to the point of non-existence; for Durkheim's entire social sciences, including the choice and formulation of problems, definition of problems, definition of concepts, classification of social types explanatory hypotheses, methods of proof - yes, even the denial of all philosophical and political obligations themselves - was a profound political act.51 Notes 1895: 52. The classic demonstration of this point was, of course, Durkheim's suicide (1897). In 1893 he became 345-350. Durkheim saw such facts as analogous to the mixed phenomena in nature studied by combined sciences such as biochemistry. This, of course, had been an important source of Durkheim's disagreement with Spencer in the Division of Labor (cf. 1893). 200 -229). In Rules, Durkheim expanded the same argument to oppose Gabriel Tarde's ingenious system : imitation, as generality, is seen as the consequence rather than the cause of the compulsive nature of a social fact (cf. 1895: 57). The distinction corresponds to, and was to a significant extent the source of, the more common sociological distinction between structure and function, and for convenience these terms will be adopted hereinafter. According to the biological to refer to social structure. 1895: 73. 1895: 80-81. It was a recognition of this need for reflective thought as an action

guide, felt Durkheim, who had for so long preserved the ideological method degraded in the past; But Durkheim insisted that the problem could be solved without sacrificing the claims of reason to the ideology (cf. 1895: 91. The latest condition, of cours, describes Durkheim's view of all three pathological forms discussed in book three of the Division of Labour (cf. 1893: 353-395). 1895: 92. Cf. the point raised in chapter 2 above, that is, what is normal for the savage is not normal at the criterion of generality, Durkheim insisted that it remained a which must not be replaced the first (cf. 1895: 96). This was the procedure used by Durkheim in the Ministry of Labour to demonstrate the normality of declining religious beliefs. 1895: 97. 1895: 98. Crime can, of course, show abnormal forms, such as at a too high speed for a given type of society; but the existence of crime itself, in any society, is normal. 1895: 98. Durkheim rejected the alternative method of detailed monoographic comparison as incompatible with the main purpose of the classification, which is to replace a limited number of types for an indefinite diversity of individuals (cf. 1895: 110-111). The term colivssen refers to the degree of concentration of the component segments, and complete co-concocence is achieved where these segments no longer affect the administrative or political organization of society (cf. 1895: 115). Here, again, the primary objects in Durkheim's criticism are Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer (cf. 1895: 195). Here, Durkheim sometimes seems to argue with himself. While he insists on the need for functional as well as causal explanations of social facts, for example, he says that a social fact in general must be useful if, and yes, society of which it is part should survive (cf. 1895: 124-125). The most charitable interpretation attaches particular importance to the words vital and general. This argument, by the way, reflects Durkheim's deeply uniform conception of social evolution. If historical development depended on the desired end and purpose pursued, he observed, social facts would be as infinitely different as human desires and purposes themselves; but the extraordinary regularity with which the same facts appear under the same circumstances suggests that less variable causes are at work. As in the Division of Labour (cf. p. 49). Durkheim used the term function (instead of end, goal or object) recommended. Even where dealing with the function of a social fact separately from the cause, the question was solely one of determining the nature of correspondence between the fact and the general needs of the social organism, regardless of whether this correspondence was intentional. All such questions of intent, Durkheim said, are... subjective to be treated scientifically (1895: 173). 1895: 128. 1895: 128. 1895: 129 instincts, etc.) in which the individual consciousness is made up. Durkheim thus considered an education in psychology even more important than one in biology in preparation for a sociologist; but nevertheless, collective life does not stem from the individual life, and cannot explain the former (cf. 1895: 134-135). The constituent elements of this environment are not limited to persons, but include both material and non-material objects (e.g. literature, art, law, custom, etc.) that also affect the direction and speed of social evolution. Although these must be taken into account in an attempt at explanation, Durkheim, however, denied that they had the motivating power to produce social transformations, and instead focused on the particularly human environment (cf. 1895: 138). Durkheim acknowledged an overweight in the Division of Labor on physical density, but adds that such equivalence is surely justified when dealing with the economic effects of the latter (cf. 1895: 146 n.21). This restrictive emphasis on the search for contemporaries rather than prior causes again reflects the deeply uniform notion of social evolution held by Durkheim (cf. 1895:139-140). 1895: 141. This became a central idea of The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1912); Cf. Durkheim (1895: 143-144). This principle had already been used in the Division of Labor, where Durkheim insisted that the punishment seemed to be the result of various reasons just because we have not perceived the usual clement - that is, the offence made to strong. well-defined states of the conscientious collective - in their ancestors (cf. 1893: 96-105). The same principle could also be used in exactly the opposite way: thus, where suicide (cf. 1897b: 145-148). Durkheim insisted that there were actually several types of suicide (cf. 1897b: 145-148). Durkheim was of course aware that such laws required interpretation, as in the not rare case (some found in suicide) where simultaneous variation occurs not because one phenomenon is the cause of another, but because both are the effect of a third; But this, durkheim observed, applies to any method, and only imposes certain rules of methodical interpretation (cf. 1895: 152-153). Even here, the fact must be widespread throughout society while varying from region to region; For otherwise, the comparison provides only two parallel curves, one expressing the development of the fact studied and the other's hypothetical cause - interesting but hardly evidence (cf. 1895: 157. 1895: to show how sociology, once well characterized by philosophy, can once again shed light on some of the oldest philosophical dilemmas. Again, it hardly needs to be added that this is not to say that sociology has no practical On the contrary, the whole of Durkheim's sociology was motivated by practical social problems. But scientific solutions to these problems, he insisted, would be forthcoming only when sociologists liberated themselves from doctrinal parties and studied social facts as things. 1895: 161. 1972: 226. In The Division of Labor, for example, Durkheim criticized Fustel for suggesting that the primitive family was made up on a religious base, and thus for having misunderstood the cause of the effect (1893: 179), while his review of Antonio Labriola's Essais sur la conception materialiste de l'histoire insisted that from religion have come all the other manifestations of collective activity ... (1897a: 129). Lukes, 1982: 3-4. Cf. Luke, 1982: 4. Cf. the preface to the second edition of the Rules of Sociological Method (1901: 47). Apart from his attack on psychology as a way of explanation, Durkheim often described it in terms of the object - that is. conscience and its représentations. As interest in such phenomena increased in his later work, Durkheim often distinguished between individual psychology, which studies individual représentations and sociopsychology, which studies their collective counterparts; And although his own interest lay entirely in the latter, he considered both studies legitimate (cf. Luke, 1982: 7). In 1983 he was 32 years old. Essentially, the same point is made independently of Luke's (1982: 17-18). 1972: 29. It was this very conservative perspective that led Durkheim to see sociology as analogous to medicine, and the sociologist as a kind of doctor. Cf. Luke and Scull (1983: 15-19); And Tarde, Criminality and Social Health (1895), in Lukes and Scull (1983: 76-92). Both risks are, of course, repeatedly taken in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1912), with predictable results. See chapter 5 below. Lukes, 1982: 22-23. To return to Durkheim's website, click here. For more information, send a message d.barberis@shimer.edu. d.barberis@shimer.edu.

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