Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

First official sociology professor (1913)

Key books:

The Division of Labor (1893) (doctoral thesis)

Mechanical solidarity vs. organic solidarity

Anomie: absence of clear rules of behavior, normlessness, unrealistic aspirations and expectations

Anomie is the major "pathology" of modern (organic) society

The Rules of Sociological Method (1895)

Suicide (1897)

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1912)

Influences of Durkheim's work:

As interpreted by Parsons, his work shaped structural-functionalism. Parsons helped Durkheim become a major influence on U.S. sociology.

Elementary Forms influenced sociology of religion and interactionist tradition.

Suicide is exemplar of sociological research.

Concept of "social fact" has helped define discipline.

Social Facts

Durkheim attempted to differentiate sociology from philosophy and psychology.

> Sociology is empirical (unlike philosophy)
>
> Sociology deals with "social facts" (unlike psychology)

Social facts are external and coercive

> "Here then, is a category of facts with very distinctive characteristics: it consists of ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him." (p. 60)
>
> Coercion may not be felt unless social facts are resisted. Successful socialization may lead to a lack of perceived coercion because social facts are internalized.

Social facts may be material or nonmaterial:

> Material: technology, housing arrangements, population distribution, etc.
>
> Nonmaterial: norms, values, roles (ways of acting, thinking and feeling), systems (language, currency, professional practices)

Social facts?

The English language

The grading scale (A-F)

U.S. violent crime rate

Most common baby names

Serotonin levels in the brain

Men’s greater physical strength than women

Your life plan

Cancer rates

Positive mental attitude

Clothing fashions

My state of mind

Dollars

The internet

ADHD

Addiction