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# Durkheim and the Social Construction of Emotions

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*Although Durkheim has been called the "architect" of the social constructionist approach to emotions, a careful review of his writings shows that he also accorded biologically constituted emotions a central place in his theory of social solidarity. Human society is created and renewed by the intense arousal that occurs in gatherings and assemblies. Mechanical solidarity is maintained by an instinctive emotional reaction (choler) to the violation of collective sentiments. The division of labor, however, leads to social construction of numerous and diverse emotions, apparently by directing or attaching primary emotions to social objects. Examples of social direction are given in Durkheim's analysis of the depression and anger that motivate suicide. In addition, the role of collective (rather than individual) interpretation in the social causation of emotions is stressed. The cult of the individual, an effect of the division of labor, accounts for the present need for the individual management of emotions.*

Durkheim has been called one of the "architects" of the social constructionist[1] approach to emotions (Scheff 1983). Indeed, nearly every article espousing the constructionist view cites Durkheim and usually presents his discussion of funeral services among Australian aborigines, in which he concludes that mourning "is not a natural movement of private feelings wounded by a cruel loss" but "a ritual attitude which (the mourner) is forced to adopt out of respect for custom, but which is in large measure, independent of his affective state" (1961, p. 443). Although it seems more fair to say that the constructionist view draws its inspiration from symbolic interactionism (Averill 1980; Gordon 1981; Shott 1979), citing Durkheim's views adds authority and legitimacy to the argument. Yet a careful examination of Durkheim's theory shows that his approach to the social construction of emotion, although involving symbolic interaction, is far more complex and more subtle than suggested by those who cite him.

A review of Durkheim's views on emotions is useful for two reasons. First, it is necessary to set the record straight because Durkheim has been cited out of context and has been misunderstood. Second, an appreciation of the role that emotions play in building social solidarity provides a broad context for understanding why the social definition and the individual management of emotions are important sociological variables.

## THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN SOCIETY

Although Durkheim's works address specific topics such as the function of the division of labor in society and the elementary forms of the religious life, one can infer that all of these discussions contain an underlying concern with the origins of human society. Durkheim often notes that human society is *sui generis*—that is, unique and qualitatively different from all other forms of society, such as are found among animals and insects. The collective consciousness is more than an

We are grateful for the comments of two anonymous reviewers, which were most helpful in clarifying the main arguments of this paper.

[1] According to the social constructionist approach, emotions "originate in social relationships," so that "most of the experiences that we usually attribute to human emotional nature are socially constructed" (Gordon 1981). The constructionist view is also called the "interactional" model (Hochschild 1983, p. 211) or the "culture-specific" position (Scheff 1983, p. 334). Alternative approaches stress psychological, biological, and physiological factors. The common element in these approaches is that emotions originate entirely within the organism.

The two approaches are not necessarily exclusive, however. For example, Hochschild's (1983) discussion of deep and surface acting as ways to meet the requirements of emotional display rules suggests that the social "work" of producing emotion consists in finding ways to elicit or suppress organic (i.e., biologically given) impulses. By contrast, most constructionist views assume that the organic component in emotion is a vague and indeterminate arousal, which must be given meaning through socially guided interpretation. Later we will argue that when Durkheim describes emotions as socially caused, he appears to be assuming the weaker view of constructionism, wherein social factors lead to the elicitation or suppression of emotion.

epiphenomenon of the individual consciousnesses that make it up. It is a synthesis that "has the effect of disengaging a whole world of sentiments, ideas and images, which once born obey laws of their own" (1961, p. 471). Durkheim sees society as a "fact," a "force" which imposes itself on man, constraining his behavior but at the same time enriching it (1961, p. 239, note 6).

The problem for Durkheim is to explain how this unique entity evolves or comes into being. It cannot exist without the individuals who constitute it, but if individuals are to rise above a life spent in solitude or in small bands, they must come together in a sufficiently large number (see 1984, pp. 284–85) so that their collective unity can be experienced emotionally.[2] To illustrate the process, Durkheim gives a lengthy description of a religious ceremony practiced by the Warramunga, an Australian aboriginal tribe.

The ceremony is focused on the totem of the tribe, the snake Wollunqua, who is represented by a design made of red down and marked on a mound of wet sand. The ceremony begins between ten and eleven in the evening with the assembly of men from two clans from the tribe, the Uluuru and the Kingilli. The Uluuru men give their wives over to the Kingilli for sexual intercourse. The young men, newly initiated into the tribe, are brought forth, and the ceremony is explained to them in great detail. Singing then goes on without pause until about three in the morning. The singing is followed by a scene "of the wildest excitement" in which the Uluuru dance around the mound, kneeling and rising and swaying their bodies, "while uttering at each movement a piercing cry, a veritable yell, *'Yrrsh! Yrrsh! Yrrsh!'* " (1961, pp. 248–49). At the same time the Kingilli, "in a state of great excitement, clang[ed] their boomerangs." The scene, interspersed with quiet singing, is repeated many times during the night. The ceremony ends at dawn with the violent destruction of the mound, followed by a profound silence (1961, p. 249).

Scenes such as this are the data for Durkheim's analysis of the source of the sacred, and with it, because the sacred is found to be society itself, the source of society. The element on which Durkheim focuses in this scene is the collective emotional excitement. He notes that ordinarily these tribes are dispersed across the landscape, occupied with hunting and gathering food. Such a life is seen as "uniform, languishing, and dull" (1961, p. 246). Periodically, however, the different clans gather together to celebrate certain rites. These are occasions of utmost excitement: "On every side one sees nothing but violent gestures, cries, veritable howls, and deafening noises of every sort, which aid in intensifying still more the state of mind which they manifest" (1961, p. 247).

The effect of this collective "effervescence" is a new consciousness in each of the (male) members of the tribe. "Feeling himself dominated and carried away by some sort of an external power which makes him think and act differently than in normal times, he naturally has the impression of being himself no longer. It seems to him that he has become a new being" (1961, p. 249). The primitive "must connect these sensations to some external object as their cause" (1961, p. 252), but the clan, which is the source of this new consciousness, "is too complex a reality to be represented clearly in all its complex unity by such rudimentary intelligences" (1961, p. 252). The image of the totem, represented everywhere around him and common to the group, becomes by association the symbol of his feelings, so that "by it, the emotions experienced are perpetually sustained and revived" (1961, p. 252).

This reasoning is applied particularly to the selection of the totem as the object of religious cult, but Durkheim also sees it as the prototype for deriving the basic categories of human thought and the myriad social institutions that characterize human society. Religion is "the womb from which come all the leading germs of human civilization . . . . the most diverse methods and practices, both

[2] Durkheim does not explain how a sufficiently large number of individuals come to be gathered together. The evidence he presents, taken from observations of Australian aborigines, presupposes that some form of social norm or custom works to gather several clans together for the rituals which then can be understood to "create" society. Stated in this way, the argument is circular. It is difficult to know just what Durkheim intended by his argument. On the one hand, he wishes to explain the origin of religion by investigating its most primitive and least developed form (1961, p. 13). On the other hand, he views religion as the source of "all that is essential in society" (1961, p. 466). Our interpretation is that Durkheim was addressing the problem of human evolution, but avoided making the problem the focus of his writings because he did not have enough evidence to resolve it.

those that make possible the continuation of the moral life (law, morals, beaux-arts) and those serving the material life (the natural, technical and practical sciences), are either directly or indirectly derived from religion" (1961, p. 255).

Thus at the most general level, Durkheim's interest in the elementary forms of the religious life is motivated by an interest in the origin of human society. Most interesting to us is the crucial role that emotions play in this evolution. Durkheim does not specify what emotions in particular are activated when interactive concentration leads to collective consciousness. He notes that arousal, agitation, and excitement are high, but that the objects of such excitement are diffuse. In the example he gives, the mound containing the image of the snake (the sacred symbol) is an object of the ritual excitement, but the noise of the participants itself appears to be stimulating. Sexual intercourse occurs (in this case between clans where such contact is usually prohibited) both as a result of general excitement and as a contributor to it.

Durkheim provides a brief description of the emotional traits of the Australian aborigines, whom he regards, in terms of social and religious organization, as the "most primitive and simple which is actually known" (1961, p. 115). He notes that the (male) primitive has very little control of his emotions. When he receives good news, "there are at once transports of enthusiasm. In the contrary conditions, he is seen to be running here and there like a madman, giving himself up to all sorts of immoderate movements, crying, shrieking, rolling in the dust, throwing it in every direction, biting himself, brandishing his arms in a furious manner, etc." (1961, p. 246). This group apparently experiences a measure of emotional expressiveness and arousal which far exceeds that of civilized man. Yet it is not so different from the emotional volatility observed in rhesus monkeys (Buck 1988, p. 299) and in chimpanzees (Goodall 1986, p. 518).[3] Thus we find, on the one hand, that society has the effect of transforming human emotion from "coarse" to "subtle" levels and modes of expression, to use the distinction made by William James (1890); on the other hand, the very superfluity of man's original emotional expression makes society possible.

[3] This is not to deny that rhesus monkeys and other social animals can be remarkably "subtle" in their expression of emotion, as one reviewer observed.

## RE-CREATION OF SOCIETY

Just as a collective group experience is required to bring society into being, the same sort of experience is needed to re-create social solidarity and to bring about social change. Every society feels the need to reaffirm the collective ideas and sentiments that make up its identity. Yet "this moral remaking cannot be achieved except by means of reunions, assemblies, and meetings where the individuals, being closely united to one another, reaffirm in common their common sentiments" (Durkheim 1961, pp. 474–75). In such assemblies the "strengthening and vivifying action of society is especially apparent . . . we become susceptible of acts and sentiments of which we are incapable when reduced to our own forces" (1961, p. 240).

Without such a renewal, social sentiments wane and solidarity is achieved only imperfectly. Steven Marks (1974) argues convincingly that for Durkheim the problem of anomie was to find for very large-scale societies the kind of intermediate-sized group activity that could effect social integration. Durkheim looked successively for a solution in representative government, the cult of the individual, occupational groups, education, and finally in a cyclical theory of social change stressing periods of creation or renewal.

Major social movements, such as the Crusades or the French Revolution, occur when "under the influence of some great collective shock, social interactions have become much more frequent and active. Men look for each other and assemble together more than ever" (Durkheim 1961, p. 241). The participants in such assemblies become stimulated by passions so intense "that they cannot be satisfied except by violent and unrestrained actions, actions of superhuman heroism, or of bloody barbarism" (1961, p. 241).

The assemblies that generate epochs of collective effervescence replicate in many ways the religious rituals of the Australian aborigines, although there are differences that correspond to the more extensive social and cultural development of civilized society. The collective sentiment is given objective representation, not as the totem or emblem of

social unity but in the "great ideals upon which civilization rests," including (for example) "Scholasticism, the Protestant Reformation, the Renaissance, and the revolutionary epoch and the socialist upheavals of the nineteenth century" Durkheim 1953, pp. 91–92).

The emotions and sentiments that arise in such assemblies are like those of the aboriginal prototype in that they are intense, unrestrained, and, as feelings, largely undefined. The man who speaks to a crowd expresses "a grandiloquence that would be ridiculous in ordinary circumstances; his gestures show a certain domination; his very thought is impatient of all rules, and easily falls into all sorts of excesses; . . . sometimes he even has the feeling that he is dominated by a moral force which is greater than he and of which he is the only interpreter" (Durkheim 1961, p. 241). In speaking to the crowd the orator articulates an ever-increasing awareness of the collective sentiment that is overwhelming the assembly and the one who addresses it. By a form of positive feedback, the words of the speaker "come back to him, but enlarged and amplified . . . It is no longer a simple individual who speaks; it is a group incarnate and personified" (1961, p. 241).

## MECHANICAL SOLIDARITY

As societies develop and become more organized, a number of beliefs and sentiments become shared. All of these are integrated in some way with the primordial collective consciousness that is born of extreme but coordinated collective agitation. The result is a "determinate system with a life of its own . . . independent of the particular conditions in which individuals find themselves" (Durkheim 1984, p. 39). Although it is impossible to specify collective sentiments because they are so many and so diverse (1984, p. 40), they are distinguished from other, noncollective sentiments by their intensity. They are "deeply written" (1984, p. 37) in us; more important, they "must be precise . . . every single one relates to a very clearly defined practice. . . It is a question of doing or not doing this or that" (1984, p. 38).

If these sentiments are violated, a terrible emotional reaction by others in the collective is unleashed. The response, embodied in penal law in organized societies, can be described only as vengeance seeking expression, despite attempts to define it as a preventive deterrent. Durkheim describes the emotion behind the penal response as "choler," an ancient label for anger, hostility, and even rage. He insists that despite widespread social disapproval of this motive, our attempts to redefine it are merely cosmetic. "If we suppose that punishment can really serve to shield us in the future, we esteem that above all it should be an expiation for the past. What proves this are the meticulous precautions we take to make the punishment fit the seriousness of the crime as exactly as possible" (1984, p. 46).

From the perspective of the sociology of emotions, the above statements give no suggestion that the emotions which give rise to and maintain mechanical solidarity (i.e., collective agitation and choler) are socially constructed. Social norms are at work, indicating what is to be done or avoided and what sort of punishment should be meted out to offenders, but there appear to be no rules governing how one is to feel if the norms are violated. These feelings are described as welling up instinctively from man's biological nature, even resisting attempts to redefine or suppress them. At best, the feelings about dealing with norm violations show attempts at social regulation, but in a way that appears to mask the feelings which are actually at work.

## ORGANIC SOLIDARITY

The effect of the division of labor is to integrate the members of society. Durkheim chooses restitutive law to indicate the presence of the organic solidarity generated by the division of labor. In this case, however, with only a few exceptions, the prescriptions of restitutive law "do not correspond to any feeling within us" (1984, p. 69). More precisely, they do not correspond to *collective* sentiments, because "if something is to be the object of shared sentiments, the first condition is that it should be shared, that is, present in every consciousness, and that each individual may be able to conceive of it from a single, identical viewpoint" (1984, p. 82).

Organic solidarity is born of necessity. As the volume and the moral density of society increase, mechanical solidarity weakens, anxiety builds up, and a division of labor is instituted to allow for sustenance. "Thanks to it, rivals are not obliged to eliminate one

another completely, but can coexist side by side" (1984, p. 213). The higher "volume and density of societies" make it necessary that their members work harder to maintain their position (1984, p. 276). "From this stimulation there inevitably arises a higher level of culture"; yet "the benefits it renders in this respect are not a positive enrichment, an increase in our capital stock of happiness, but only serve to make good the losses that civilization itself has caused" (1984, p. 276). Thus the motivation to enter into the division of labor is not happiness or novelty but the desire to survive. This motivation is externally imposed, instinctive, and in this respect comparable to the sense of obligation that motivates mechanical solidarity. This view accords with Durkheim's general position that social life is constituted by constraints which are external to the individual.

The constraint imposed by the division of labor is a source of stress and fatigue, which require some form of compensation. Humans are rewarded for their efforts by further division of labor, leading to the development of the individual self. Society, of course, cannot exist without individuals; the self and the individual conscience exist, even in the most primitive societies. "There is a sphere of psychological life which, no matter how developed the collective type may be, varies from one person to another and belongs by right to each individual . . . This first foundation of all individuality is inalienable and does not depend on any social state" (1984, p. 145). Even so, when mechanical solidarity is dominant, individuality in one person's relationships with others is very weak. Mechanical solidarity "enables society to hold the individual more tightly in its grip, making him more strongly attached to his domestic environment, and consequently, to tradition . . . the individual personality is absorbed into the collective personality" (1984, p. 242). With organic solidarity, however, "individual differences, at first lost, mixed up in the mass of social similarities, begin to emerge, take shape and multiply . . . Yet this growth in the psychological life of the individual does not weaken that of society, but merely transforms it" (1984, p. 285).

With the advance of organic solidarity, a number of new psychic entities emerge, including certain (but unspecified) emotions. "Thus the cause that provoked the differences separating man from the animals is also that which has constrained him to rise above himself . . . if his emotions and inclinations, at first few in number, have multiplied and diversified, it is because the social environment has constantly been changing" (1984, p. 285). As a consequence, "whatever progress takes place in the psycho-physiological field, it can only ever represent a fraction of psychology, since most psychological phenomena do not derive from organic causes" (1984, p. 286). Investigation of these phenomena is "dependent on another positive science that might be called socio-psychology," because "they have the same essential traits as other psychological facts, but they derive from social causes" (1984, p. 286).

The social constructionism implied in these remarks has two aspects. On the one hand, the socially constructed emotions appear to have the same nature as biologically constituted emotions because Durkheim refers to them as having the "same essential traits as other psychological facts." That is, each specific emotion has a physiological component, making it an object of study in the "psycho-physiological field." On the other hand, the emotions and drives (called tendencies) that are a part of human physiology are multiplied and diversified because they become directed or attached to objects that would not exist apart from the social milieu. Durkheim gives as an example "the social organisation of kinship relationships that has determined respectively the sentiments between parents and children. These sentiments would have been completely different if the social structure had been different." (1984, p. 287). In addition, certain organic emotions can be strengthened when they are integrated into the social structure. Sympathy is given as an example: "Individuals always have a distinct organic life, and this is sufficient to give rise to . . . sympathy, although it becomes stronger when the personality is more highly developed" (1984, p. 125, note 49).

## A CONSTRUCTIONIST VIEW

Durkheim's view of constructionism does not emphasize the plasticity of emotions (e.g., Shott 1979), whereby specific emotions are labels applied to vague states of arousal. Nor does it require that individuals interpret or define their own situation in order to

experience a particular emotion (e.g., Averill 1980). The process of interpretation is accomplished by interaction, but collectively rather than individually or dyadically, and is passed on to the individual as a social norm. Thus Durkheim's view of emotion can support feeling rules (e.g., Hochschild 1983), as specific emotions and emotional displays are linked with specific occasions. The best-known example of the operation of such rules is the analysis of the funeral rites of Australian aborigines cited at the beginning of this article.

Looking more closely at this example, Durkheim finds that the rite itself has little to do with mourning. It demands that the mourner "beat himself, bruise himself, lacerate himself, and burn himself . . . What reason has the dead man for imposing such torments upon (his mourners)" (Durkheim 1961, p. 444)? Durkheim explains that the rite is really a rite of re-creation, meant to renew the solidarity of the group: "It, too, is made up out of collective ceremonies which produce a state of effervescence among those who take part in them. The sentiments aroused are different; but the arousal is the same" (1961, p. 445). The group assembles to react against the loss of its member. "Not only do the relatives, who are affected the most directly, bring their own personal sorrow to the assembly, but the society exercises a moral pressure over its members, to put their sentiments in harmony with the situation" (1961, p. 445).

The loss of a single life affects the whole group. Those who are close to the deceased feel sorrow and mourn. Their grief is organic, not socially caused. The involvement of the entire collectivity, however, is mandated by the common interpretation of the event as a diminution of the group; the grief that is expressed by the individuals in the group is effected with little or no inner sorrow. The display is more a behavior than an emotion, and can be described properly as surface acting (Hochschild 1983). "If, at the very moment when the weepers seem the most overcome by grief, someone speaks to them of some temporal interest, it frequently happens that they change their features and tone at once, take on a laughing air and converse in the gayest fashion imaginable" (Durkheim 1961, p. 443).

Durkheim also emphasizes how emotions that are mandated can lead to other emotions that have a genuine internal component. The "impression of a loss" that brings the group together and associates them "in the same mental state" elicits in them "a sensation of comfort which compensates the original loss" (1961, pp. 447–48). The consolation that the members of the group receive is not the result of deep acting on the part of individuals in the group. That is, individuals need not try to feel comforted by imagining a comforting object and then acting *as if* it were present (Hochschild 1983). Rather the function of intense group activity is to create the conditions under which individuals spontaneously experience the emotions that are necessary for and constitutive of group life. The activities performed by the group generate the object. Individuals may not understand it; they may explain its presence in mythological terms involving the spirit of the departed relative. In that way the object acts *as if* it were a reality, thereby eliciting the emotion. The deep acting, however, is done by the collective consciousness working in the individual via collective beliefs and sentiments (understood here as attitudes reflecting obligations, rather than specific emotions such as love or fear). In this way Durkheim adds to the list of ways in which emotions are socially constructed.

## AN ORGANISMIC VIEW

In examining the causes of suicide Durkheim elaborates further the role of collective impressions in eliciting and directing the emotions. Although suicide is an individual behavior, and although Durkheim is especially interested in showing that it springs from problems within the larger collectivity, he makes it clear that the process involves socially elicited feelings of sadness and anger. We consider the two forms of suicide that are characteristic of modern societies: egoistic and anomic suicide.

Egoistic suicide arises from the individual's lack of integration into the social group(s) to which he or she belongs: "Society cannot disintegrate without the individual simultaneously detaching himself from social life, without his own goals becoming preponderant over those of the community, in a word without his personality tending to surmount the collective personality" (Durkheim 1951, p. 209). Once individuals are detached, suicide becomes probable, first because

society no longer "possesses the requisite authority to retain them in their duty if they wish to desert" and second because "they, on their part, have no reason to endure life's sufferings patiently" (1951, p. 209). Individuals who are attached to a group "cling to life more resolutely . . . so as not to betray interests they put before their own. The bond that unites them with the common cause attaches them to life and the lofty goal they envisage prevents their feeling personal troubles so deeply" (1951, pp. 209–10).

In this respect, socially constructed emotions—particularly reverence, which creates the sense of obligation—serve as a barrier against the effects of other emotions, especially sadness, which would be induced organically. Still there is more: "Excessive individualism not only results in favoring the action of suicidogenic causes, but it is itself such a cause. It not only frees man's inclination to do away with himself from a protective obstacle, but creates this inclination out of whole cloth" (1951, p. 211). Even though the products of social life—science, art, religion, law, and customs—abound, such that "social man is the essence of civilized man" and "the masterpiece of existence," if the collective experience that generates a sense of solidarity and obligation to the group is diminished, "whatever is social in us is deprived of all objective foundation," leaving us "bereft of reasons for existence" (1951, p. 213). It is clear that "in such a state of confusion the last cause of discouragement may easily give birth to desperate resolutions. If life is not worth the trouble of being lived, everything becomes a pretext to rid ourselves of it" (1951, p. 213).

Yet individuals in this state are not required to reach these conclusions on their own. The society itself generates the reasons they can use to intensify their sadness and to justify the eventual taking of their lives. "Since we are its handiwork, society cannot be conscious of its own decadence without the feeling that henceforth this work is of no value. Thence are formed currents of depression and disillusionment emanating from no particular individual but expressing society's state of disintegration" (1951, p. 214).

In only two more social steps, these collective feelings are shaped sufficiently to deliver the *coup de grace*. First, "metaphysical and religious systems spring up which, by reducing these obscure sentiments (of depression and disillusionment) to formulae, attempt to prove to men the senselessness of life and that it is self-deception to believe that it has purpose" (1951, p. 214). These systems contain ethical doctrines that "commend suicide or at least tend in that direction by suggesting a minimal existence" (1951, p. 214). In the second step, the collective authority of these currents reinforces the individual's inclination toward self-destruction. "Thus, at the very moment that, with excessive zeal he frees himself from the social environment, he still submits to its influence" (1951, p. 214).

Anomic suicide arises from a breakdown in the regulatory forces of society. Although Marks (1974, p. 332) points out Durkheim's many difficulties in maintaining the distinction between anomie and egoism ("both spring from society's insufficient presence in individuals" [Durkheim 1951, p. 258]), there is a difference in the emotions that motivate the individual act of suicide. Egoistic suicide is motivated by "melancholic languor" (1951, p. 278), whereas anomic suicide is motivated by "anger and all the emotions customarily associated with disappointment" (1951, p. 284). "Anomy, whether progressive or regressive, by allowing requirements to exceed appropriate limits throws open the door to disillusionment and consequently to disappointment. A man abruptly cast down below his accustomed status cannot avoid exasperation at feeling a situation escape him of which he thought himself master, and his exasperation naturally revolts against the cause, whether real or imaginary, to which he attributes his ruin" (1951, p. 285).

The arousal of anger and aggression stems from a frustration of the individual's desires. This process is seen as "natural," not as socially constituted. The social causation lies in the manner in which the desires are awakened and sustained. In animals desires are regulated automatically and spontaneously, but in man society must provide the regulation. "Irrespective of any external regulatory force, our capacity for feeling is in itself an insatiable and bottomless abyss" (1951, p. 247). Thus when social regulation is withdrawn or fails to keep pace with the progress of the division of labor, unfulfillable desires for pleasure and material goods are excited, leading eventually to disappointment and exasperation.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is beyond the scope of this review of Durkheim's treatment of emotions to offer a critique of his theories; nor are we proposing a neo-Durkheimian approach to the sociology of emotions. Rather, an appreciation of Durkheim's thought heightens our awareness of a number of issues in the sociology of emotions that either are not raised or are addressed insufficiently. We also believe that Durkheim's views demonstrate that emotions can and should play a crucial role in sociological theory.

It is important to consider whether emotions provide the mechanism by which society is created. Most current studies in the sociology of emotions treat emotions as a dependent variable, something to be explained by social causes. For Durkheim, the emotional experience of collective effervescence is a necessary condition for generating and maintaining society. Feelings of reverence and obligation create the social bond that holds the individual to society, overcoming any tendency to move away from it. Later theories—Mead is a good example—drifted away from emotions as the source of social solidarity, focusing instead on shared symbols and their interpretation. There are indications, however, that this trend is being reversed. A recent study by Scheff (1988) explains social conformity by the emotions of pride and shame. Durkheim's theories suggest a number of additional areas where emotions might play an explanatory role.[4]

It is important to study emotions in this context of groups. Current theories focus on the individual actor. This actor must define or interpret his or her situation, usually with the aid of some other with whom he or she engages in real or imagined transactions. Durkheim argues that society is defined by groups, not by interactions. If certain emotions have social causes, it is because groups provide definitions of the situation for its members and because groups determine the feeling rules. Hochschild's (1983) study of emotions in the airline industry shows that much can be gained by taking the group context explicitly into account.

It is important to know the organic components of emotion because they form the substrate of socially constructed emotions. For Durkheim, social causation of emotions appears to consist in linking biologically given emotions to an ever-increasing range of social situations, and in eliciting, intensifying, or suppressing the emotions that have been linked in this way. These mechanisms also are identified by the various writings of the proponents of the constructivist school (see especially Hochschild 1983). Yet it is doubtful that the role played by social factors in determining emotions can be understood without incorporating physiological information into the explanation. For example, Kemper (1987), drawing on the work of physiologists, argues that autonomic constraints "limit variability in the experience of emotions" (p. 263). Durkheim's perspective on emotions encourages us to identify the emotions, "at first, few in number" (Durkheim 1984, p. 285), that were transmitted to us by evolution, and then to specify explicitly the ways in which social factors make use of these emotions to diversify and expand the range of human emotion.

It is important to explain why the management of emotions is now so important for individuals. Hochschild (1983) believes that emotions have become a commodity, and that individuals now sell their emotions as part of their labor. The constraints imposed by the marketplace, however, lead to the experience of alienation. Workers in service industries are concerned not only with earning a living but also with feeling sincere and authentic, and the search for authenticity extends to all aspects of social life. Durkheim suggests a broader and more fundamental reason for this search in the cult of the individual that arises from the division of labor. The individual psyche is itself a sacred object, an expression of the collectivity. Therefore it is constrained

[4] It would be worthwhile to go back to the question that Durkheim posed: "why men, instead of living as solitary creatures or in small bands, began to form larger societies" (1984, p. 285). Although Durkheim sees collective effervescence as the mechanism that creates and strengthens social bonds, one reviewer noted that wolves and chimpanzees, and probably other mammals, exhibit similar forms of collective excitement. Durkheim regards animal societies as much simpler than human societies, much less changeable, and fixed by instincts to a particular biological form, in which social facts are transformed into "biological facts" (1984, pp. 283–84). Although mammalian societies are more complex than Durkheim implies, one can make the argument that the evolution of language made it possible for humans to form "larger societies" which are *sui generis,* but that collective excitement, which we share with other social mammals, provides the glue that holds the larger groupings together.

to feel the need for wholeness and authenticity. In conditions of organic solidarity, social life, which is characterized by external constraint, paradoxically must become spontaneous life (Durkheim 1984, p. 377). Considerations such as these integrate the sociology of emotions into the broader context of social theory to which it, as part of the whole, must make its contribution.

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