

Good essay on emile durkheim's views on the nature of humans and its implication f...

[Environment](#), [Nature](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t

2. [Discussion](#) \n \t

3. [Conclusion](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

Emile Durkheim shared a number of views on what he considered being the nature of humans and its overall effect in the society. The purpose of this essay is to bring out the ethical issues that arise from the character of humans and how they eventually affect the society as a whole. In order to identify this I will first identify the nature of humans according to Durkheim. I will then show the effect they have on the society and eventually analyze the contribution of his work in general. Durkheim gave a number of views about human nature such as them having the capability to follow rules, interdependence and also the fact that they have a deviant behavior.

Discussion

Durkheim viewed the aspect of division of labor as being part of human nature. According to him, there was what he termed as 'organic solidarity' in the modern society. This kind of solidarity led people to be dependent on each other because they had different skills and competencies. For instance, people had different kinds of specializations in their areas of employment, and it is their dependency on each other's skills that led them to be

successful. In organic societies, there is specialization thus people can rely on each other for things like clothing and groceries. On the other hand, the traditional societies mostly had a 'mechanical solidarity' given that they had several things in common, and thus they did not depend on each other so much. For instance, subsistence farmers were mostly self-sufficient given that they shared a similar job. Another category is the hunter and gatherers who shared the same values and morals owing to the fact that they did the same job. This system thus led humans to carry out certain activities and behave in a particular way simply because they had for a long time been done that way. The individuals in the organic form of solidarity greatly need each other in order for them to survive despite their varied interests, beliefs and values.

The capitalist societies allow people to coexist through the organic solidarity as it appreciates the unique abilities possessed by every human being, the transition of solidarity from the mechanical to the organic form is advantageous to the society as a whole. Its impact in the society is that it provides room for development of human beings in various spheres. This is because the interdependence allows everyone to specialize in those areas they are best skilled. People can easily get what they need through transactions or getting involved in an exchange process thus, they do not have to be good at everything. However, organic solidarity may have a negative impact on the society such as that of promoting alienation. This is because people do not have the same interests in common, and this leads them to drift away from each other. The contribution of this work is that it brings out the significance of interdependence, which has largely become

part of human nature in the modern day. Therefore, Durkheim has used the concept of the division of labor to clearly bring out the aspect of interdependence of humans.

According to Durkheim another aspect of human nature is that they follow rules. This means that humans are willing to conform to disciplinary measures. To begin with, man was conceived with a limitless appetite and a certain degree of disorganization. As such, these appetites have the potential to lead human beings to self-destruction because unlike animals they do not have instinctual checks. Therefore, the intellectual and moral faculties of man are indispensable because it helps humans to be able to follow the universal rules. Rules tend to put a limit to certain actions by individuals and thus act as a constraint and subdue a person's actions. Even so, the limits imposed on people should be legitimate to a certain extent, and it is for this reason that Durkheim insists that those rules should be from a group. The group in this context is that of the society because of the vital role it plays. The society plays the role of giving individual various obligations through the activities it imposes on him and also gives a meaning to the universe in general. In this regard, Durkheim looks at culture, which governs the life of humans and eventually shapes the life of the society in general. The effect of rules is that it makes man social and thereby gives meaning to the society in general. Rules, which are believed by Durkheim to be part of human nature, have the effect of ensuring that there is orderliness in the society. They also ensure that people live in harmony with each other in spite of their unique differences. Durkheim's work on rules contributes in the sense that it shows that humans are in need of a system of governance

even if it is cultural.

Another view shared by Durkheim was that human nature was influenced by social solidarity. This social solidarity was related to things like religion, shared geographical location and kinship. Consequently, an individual's social solidarity influenced the way he would respond to various situations and circumstances as well as the way they would be viewed in the society. To justify this concept Durkheim looked at various theories. For instance, he discovered that an individual's religious affiliation could affect how they handled a situation. In this regard, he established that individuals who belonged to the protestant religion were more likely to commit suicide than those who professed the catholic faith. Actually, the rate of suicide that was witnessed between these two groups matched with the differences that existed in the suicide rates. Another example that can be used to ascertain Durkheim's view is that of micro-level theories which are very specific on the relationship between small groups or individuals. A micro-theory can be such as the one that seeks to explain the reason why teenage girls belonging in the middle class prefer to communicate by sending text messages rather than just calling. In a sociologist's perspective, it may be concluded that texting is preferable because they consider it silent and thus it is more private. The effect to the society is that an individual's social setting will lead him to do good or bad thus affect the society either positively or negatively. Durkheim's contribution in this regard is important as it shows the role the society plays in influencing human nature like that of the high rate of protestants committing suicide than is the rate among Catholics.

Finally, Durkheim was of the view that it was human nature to be deviant. It

was difficult to find a society, which was free from any kind of wrong not even in the most sacred places. Even so, humans tried their best to behave so that they would. For instance, even in the monastery where there were monks who were considered to be saints there was some sort of deviance. Perhaps in this setting, there were no major wrongs but small things like untidiness and being too loud would be categorized as deviance. Besides this in societies where there were no serious crimes like rape, murder, theft and robbery small things like lying or rudeness were considered to be a deviation from the norm. The impact of deviance in the society was that it made people uncomfortable no matter how small. Take a case where there are problems like robbery in the society, people will not give so much attention to a problem like lying. However, in the absence of a major problem like robbery people will detest the small deviations like lying with the same magnitude that they would be against a major problem. Durkheim's contribution in this situation shows that despite people's deviant nature, they would want to have a perfect society free from all the harm caused by people's deviant actions.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the nature of humans cannot be overlooked when looking at the overall effect of humans in the society. According to Durkheim, human nature consists of behaviors like deviance, interdependence, conformists to laid down rules as well as possessing social solidarity. All these affect the society as can be witnessed in the case of deviance, which cause people to be sensitive and uncomfortable when people's behavior fall

short of societal expectations. Generally, Durkheim's use of theories and examples to justify his arguments has made it possible to have a clear understanding of human nature and how it influences the society thus giving weight to his contributions within this context.