

Emile durkheim and max weber sociology essay



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Emile Durkheim was a French sociologist. He formally established the academic discipline and, with Karl Marx and Max Weber, is commonly cited as the principal architect of modern social science and father of sociology.

Max Weber was a German sociologist, philosopher, and political economist whose ideas influenced social theory, social research, and the discipline of sociology itself. Weber is often cited, with Émile Durkheim and Karl Marx, as one of the three founding architects of sociology. They have different theories and methods of social science. Durkheim was a key thinker of positivism, and he thought that social structures that exist independently of the individual (Durkheim, 1895). On contrary, Weber was a key thinker of interpretivism, and he thought verstehen involves an understanding of what someone is thinking, which needs an understanding of the culture that person lives in. Because human behaviour is purposeful

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and meaningful, the explanation of it must be related to the values of social objects of analysis. This essay will introduce, compare, and contrast their theories and methods. However, although they are two very important key thinkers of social science, their theories and methods are quite different. This essay will divide into four main sections. First of all, it will show Durkheim's two famous publications: the Rules of the Sociological Method (1895) and On Suicide (1897). These two books present Durkheim's belief in the existence of "social facts". The second part will talk about Weber's "Verstehen", which is the interpretive understanding of social action. The third part will compare and contrast these two thinkers' theories and methods regarding social behaviour. Finally, it will come to the conclusion of this essay. Both of their theories and methods played very important role in the development of people's understanding of social science discipline.

2. Emile Durkheim's theory and method

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) is an extremely important sociologist from France. In his career, Durkheim has several methods that including social facts, society, collective consciousness and culture, suicide and religion. This essay will focus on social facts and suicide methods.

2. 1 Social facts

For social facts, he thinks that social structures (institutions, traditions and beliefs, patterns of behavior, such as: language, law and culture.) exist independently of the individual. That means social facts already exist before we are born. "A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time

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existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.”

(Durkheim 1985) That is to say, social structures have a ‘coercive power’ over the individual, which means that we are coerced into following the established rules of our society. Social facts have four main features. Firstly, external to the individual. Secondly, coercive of the individual. Thirdly, general throughout. Lastly, not attached to any particular individual. The authors argue that the basic norms of social facts are things to examine.

Matter of understanding is a confrontation with the concept, is the object of the intellect cannot be naturally understood by all who know and understand cannot have their own views on the matter, cannot be influenced by their views, observation of the use of objective and impartial attitude (Durkheim 1985 & Prager, 1981 & Turner, 1990). First, the author criticizes the existing sociological research, he believes sociology specializes in almost all of the concept. Such as Comte concepts as part of the study, Spencer prejudice study are not scientific and reasonable. Then the authors believe that ethics, politics, economy, psychology and other disciplines, not to clarify social fact, their research methods and cannot really understand the laws of nature (Durkheim 1985 & Prager, 1981 & Turner, 1990). Therefore, only the sociology of social phenomena as things to study, to get rid of the subjective, objective and impartial study of the external features, in order to obtain the truth of sociological research. Sociologist trying to study a type of social facts, they must try to break away from the social facts exist independently side to inspect the performance of the individual.

2. 2 Suicide method

On Durkheim's suicide method, Durkheim argued that suicide rates are not caused by non-social factors, such as race, genetics and climate. It caused be social factors, such as religious faith, employment and marital status.

Selection of the object of study (Durkheim, 1897). Suicide is a pathological phenomenon exists in the society run Durkheim wanted to prove their sociological proposition that social life would govern the extent to which the fate of the individual through the study of the phenomenon of suicide.

Because suicide seems entirely personal behavior, it is Durkheim analysis of suicide with a lot of risks and challenges, but if they can prove that this phenomenon is also dominated by society, then Durkheim can most circumstances not conducive to his assertion, confirmed own methodological principles superiority. The study defined. Durkheim attaches great importance to the operational definition of the object of the study and application of it as the first step of the empirical research program literature collection and quantitative analysis method. Empirical research objective material from real life. Compared with other sociological work " suicide theory" a significant feature in possession of a large number of documents and statistics based on analysis of research. In short, the " suicide theory", we once again see a fundamental thesis of Durkheim positivist research methods: the social fact is the existence of an objective, it is not the subjective value factors; collective or social and personal different qualitative, collective or social level much higher than the individual, rather than the simple sum of the individual; All personal, collective social facts can be generated, which social facts can only be explained by the collective to. (Morrison, 1990 & Pope & Cohen & Hazelrigg, 1975 & Prager, 1981)

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3. Max Weber's theory and method

Sociology is an interpretative understanding of social action related to the description of the relevant scientific and causality of the process and results of the social action. (Prager, 1981) On the sociology of Weber's understanding, understanding is one of the most basic concepts. Understand the concept originated from the field of hermeneutics, the understanding and interpretation of the advent of the writings of a special method, which aims at the understanding of ideas and the basic structure of the text. Weber agreed to Dilthey's view that the humanities and natural sciences; On the other hand, the difference lies in Weber's understanding of "understanding": understanding and description are not antagonistic, to understand the description of the premise, or preparation phase to establish a causal relationship; Di understanding of object is the text of the spiritual life, or simply as the result of the spiritual life, and Weber attempted to promote the understanding of the scope to the entire social life, and that understanding of the interaction between the actors, actors and even the development of the entire human history. Weber, understand only things in the field of culture and science like the extent of social action. Natural science research object simply without understanding. Understand that there are two forms; "the subjective meaning of a particular action direct observational understanding" through such direct observation, we can understand what happened, if we want to learn more about why you need by virtue of another understanding" (Prager, 1981) explanatory understanding, motivation actors given the significance of the action understood. Further, sociology should go to people's beliefs and values affect their actions. Social scientific insight into the interpretive understanding of social phenomenon, it is necessary to re-

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explained from the causal relationship between these phenomena. Attitudes towards causality, positivist and historicist school is very different: the former social sciences to the natural sciences should be that you want to seek the establishment of the law of cause and effect, or a universal law of; while in the latter the eyes of society or culture scientific narrative is unique and cannot be a repeat of the history of the event, and therefore it is futile to seek the law of cause and effect (Prager, 1981). Weber's understanding of causality is to reconcile the two extreme views of positivism and historicism school. On the one hand, Weber does not agree with the view of historicism, he thinks Sociology is science explanatory understanding about social action, but must also be causal description of the process and results; On the other hand, in the consciousness of Weber illustrated causal relationship is not necessarily just a possibility or an opportunity.

4. Compare & Contrast

4.1 comparison of the object of study

The sociology Standards Durkheim representative writings in this book, Durkheim sociological study identified as " social facts or social phenomenon. At the same time he gave sociology under defined: behavior, whether it is fixed or not fixed, all from the outside to give personal to constraints, or in other words, prevalent in the society , and has its inherent existence, regardless of the individuals who are called social facts. " look at Weber, we used to refer to Weber's sociology called" understanding sociology, his study social action. He said, " Sociology is a committed interpretative understanding of social action and make causal description of the process and impact of social science." (Morrison, 1990 & Pope & Cohen &

Hazelrigg, 1975 & Prager, 1981) From this we can see that the difference between the two masters representing the tradition of sociological theory. Social facts and social action is the scope of the concept of two different sizes, we can say a relationship is included In other words, the Weber study social action phase for Durkheim's social facts appear to be more specific . The reasoning is not difficult, due to macroeconomic reasons of social facts, Durkheim Sociological Theory in the study is an objective reality, the object is " material". Weber sociology specific, individual existence, will be in the actions of the people in the society as the object of study, and to get to know the " secret" hidden in concrete social action behind their understanding to make an interpretative make the final causal description. (Morrison, 1990 & Prager, 1981) The Weber two sociological research mandate for interpretative understanding of social action and causality Description. As a result, they produce a sociological study of the two major factions - faction of positivism and interpretative sociology research camp, and the growing differences between the two sides, resulting in both contradictory.

4. 2 the position of comparison

Durkheim basic stance of positivism. Sociological study of course, is a social phenomenon, in Durkheim, the study of the body should be a naturalistic orientation. The true state of the underlying social phenomenon is natural and true, when people go to study it should maintain this state live, human intervention should not be to undermine and disrupt the person has good mobility, feelings, a series of characteristics of prejudice, self-righteous, sloppy, etc., as long as the active insertion time outside of his social action,

these characteristics it inevitably caused to him or her to participate in the activities. So he is convinced that the principles are to the identity of the natural scientists to study social sciences, concepts, methods and computing equation borrowed from the natural sciences, the social phenomenon as “objects”, as figures to look at and research, including the study of theoretical experience can learn from the natural sciences. (Durkheim 1985 & Prager, 1981 & Turner, 1990) Epistemology, positivist empiricism, they advocate that the research results are confirmed by experience researchers through a number of experiments and observe, keep records, to grasp the feeling of all experience in the research process, and in order to do may be a simple way to describe them. Researcher’s own position should always maintain a neutral value, Do not exposure participation, attached together at every social action. Research data that prior validation studies assume that the information must come from the actual investigation of the social imagination rather than subjective. Positivism proposition cannot be isolated research methods to study a particular problem should be studied objects being placed in the community as a whole to recognize and understand, from the perspective that is a whole angle.

Weber’s interpretative sociology researchers believe that the object of their research is the social reality has local and situational characteristics specific construct and explain it. Interaction and participation should be taken in the process of research and get to know, from a subjective, it’s the final result is not found but created. The same time, the methods of sociological research, we should take the initiative to understand, to think, and even take the

initiative to create the necessary conditions, full of the humanistic nature of this process, when treatment should be a dialectical view of the problem.

4. 3 both sociological research principle of comparative

Durkheim said: “ decisive cause of a social fact, should be the first to look into the social fact of his existence, and the state should not be to the individual consciousness being to find.” (Morrison, 1990) He pointed out that, like classical economics Spencer as individual phenomenon to explain social facts only to be reduced to the level of psychology Sociology. “ The function of a social fact should always be to to find it with a social purpose relationship.” In addition, Durkheim added: “ When we try to explain a social phenomenon must be studied to produce the phenomenon reasons and it has “(Prager, 1981)in the course of the study, carried out the research object classification, to keep the true state of the social facts, including its combinations, structure, sequence and function should not be subject to human intervention.

Weber’s principle is an understanding of the principles. He firmly believes that social action is meaningful and can be understood. Social action behind a unique spiritual meaning and cultural significance, if that is not the way of understanding and description but impossible alone positivist methods of the natural sciences. Weber raised to understand there are two categories, the first one is the understanding of the direct observation of the subjective meaning; a Explanatory understand. Direct observation of understanding is an intuitive understanding of the social action; explanatory understanding is necessary according to the motives of the researchers to grasp the significance given to the actions of the actors. The two methods are

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complementary and mutually reinforcing. Durkheim and Weber can be said at this point on is entirely different.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this essay introduce several theories and methods of Durkheim and Weber. After compare and contrast their ideas, we could find that their theories and methods are quite different. Because Durkheim is a key thinker of positivism and Weber is a key thinker of interpretivism. Durkheim thought that structures that exist independently of the individual. But Weber thought that verstehen involves an understanding of what someone is thinking, which needs an understanding of the culture that person lives in. That is the key why their ideas are so different. Both of them played an important role in history. So it is suggested that the researchers should learn from them and use their idea to research social science.