

# Emile durkheim – division of labor

People



The Division of Labor in Society by Emile Durkheim explains how in the modern societies the division of labor affects individuals and society contradicting Marx's belief that the division of labor will all result to alienation. Durkheim argued that the division of labor is not necessarily "bad" for it "increases both the productive capacity and skill of the workman; it is the necessary condition for the intellectual and material development of societies; it is the source of civilization.

More importantly, it creates a feeling of solidarity among the people. For Durkheim, the result of Division of Labor is positive for there is no need for competition in the sense of struggling just to survive but the division of labor may signify that there are sufficient material resources for all in the society, and in this division allows a certain form of cooperation and because people need each other this produces a solidarity in the society. As we noted previously, Marx saw both alienation and class conflict as inevitable (or "normal") in capitalist societies.

By contrast, rather than seeing social conflict as a "normal" condition of capitalism, Durkheim maintained that anomie results only in "abnormal" conditions of overspecialization, when the rules of capitalism become too rigid and individuals are "forced" into a particular position in the division of labor. Causes of Division of Labor: division of labor develops regularly as history proceeds. This fact certainly depends on causes that are likewise constant, causes that we shall investigate. " (p. 179). " The increase in the DOL is therefore due to the fact that the social segments lose their individuality, that the partitions dividing them become more permeable. IN short, there occurs between them a coalescence that renders the social

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substance free to enter upon new combinations. " {p. 141} The key to the expansion of the DOL is the increase in social interaction, particularly functional differentiation. This is what gives moral value to the division of labor. Through it, the individual becomes aware of his dependence upon society; from it come the forces which keep him in check and restrain him.

In short, since the division of labor becomes the chief source of social solidarity, it becomes, at the same time, the foundation of the moral order. Moreover, far from being trammled by the progress of specialization, individual personality develops with the division of labor. To be a person is to be an autonomous source of action. Man acquires this quality only in so far as there is something in him which is his alone and which individualizes him, as he is something more than a simple incarnation of the generic type of his race and his group.

The division of labor itself contributes to this enfranchisement, for individual natures, while specializing, become more complex, and by that are in part freed from collective action and hereditary influences which can only enforce themselves upon simple, general things. The most visible example of social solidarity that Durkheim mentioned was law. Law is the organization of social life in its most stable and precise form. The classification of law depends on the type of solidarity corresponds to it. The first type of law is the repressive law which imposes a fine or injury on the perpetrator.

The second one is the restitutory laws which refer to restoring the previous relationship which have been disturbed from before the crime was committed. Repressive law tends to stay diffused throughout the society, restitutory law works through more specialized bodies like in courts,

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magistrates and lawyers. Despite the removed role of restitutory law from society, society still intervenes in restitutory sanctioning. The formation of a contract directly concerns the parties involved: nonetheless, if a contract has a binding force, it is a society which confers that force.

If society does not give its blessing to the obligations that have been contracted, then these obligations are reduced to only moral promises. Hence the presence of society in restitutory law, although not necessarily felt, is nonetheless essential. negative control - regulations which make a person refrain from acting ex. do not help a farmer with his crop, simply prevent him from stealing his neighbor's positive control - regulations which make a person act ex. impose a certain method of farming upon a farmer. Mechanical Solidarity or solidarity by similarities, it is deeply rooted in everyone doing or feeling the same thing.

It is the type of solidarity that is associated with repressive laws that corresponds to crimes resulting in repressive punishments. Durkheim pointed out in his book that how the repressive or penal rules demonstrates the strength of resistance of collective response to a crime. Thus it is now called collective consciousness which is the " totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life. " Therefore, it is summarized as an act is only criminal if it offends the " strong, well-defined states of collective consciousness. Mechanical solidarity is typified by feelings of likeness. Mechanical solidarity is rooted in everyone doing/feeling the same thing. Durkheim maintained that this type of solidarity is characteristic of small, traditional societies. In these " simple" societies, circumstances

compel individuals to be generalists involved in the production and distribution of a variety of goods. Indeed, in small, traditional societies, specialization in one task to the exclusion of others is not possible because the society depends on each individual providing a host of contributions to the group.

For instance, men, women, and children are often all needed to pick crops at harvest time, and all partake in the harvest-time celebrations as well. Durkheim argued that a significant social consequence of the shared work experience characteristic of traditional societies is a shared collective conscience. People in traditional societies tend to feel "one and the same," and it is this feeling of "oneness" that is integral in the maintenance of social order. Yet, Durkheim saw that in large, complex societies, this type of solidarity was waning.

In large, modern societies, labor is specialized; people do not necessarily all engage in the same work or share the same ideas and beliefs. "Since the rules are inscribed upon everyone's consciousness, all are aware of them and feel they are founded upon right." "Undoubtedly if an act is punished, it is because it is contrary to a mandatory rule, but this rule is not expressly spelt out. There can be only one reason for this: it is because the rule is known and accepted by everybody." (p. 5) "we should not say that an act offends the common consciousness because it is criminal, but that it is criminal because it offends that consciousness." (p. 42)

What separates repressive law from civil law - law that simply restores previous order? First, recall that crimes are those things that affect the common consciousness: Thus, "...since the sentiments that crime offends  
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within a single society are the most universally collective ones of all, since they represent especially powerful states of the common consciousness, they cannot possibly brook any opposition. .... e need a more violent form of satisfaction. " (p. 55) The kinds of offenses that give rise to repressive law assault transcendent values, " when we demand the repression of crime it is not because we are seeking a personal vengeance, but rather vengeance for something sacred which we vaguely feel is more or less outside and above us. " (p. 56) At this point (right around p. 57 and 58), E. D. makes a subtle and important point. That punishing criminal activity reinforces the common consciousness. " Crime therefore draws honest consciousnesses together, concentrating them. " He provides an example.

In a small town, everyone talks about the criminal scandal. Just like when horrible things happen in the news, we respond. By discussing the crime and punishment with people we know, we reinforce our opinion about the immorality of the action. " In short, since it is the common consciousness that is wounded, it must also be this that resists; consequently, resistance must be collective. " But why this resistance is organized remains to be explained. " Thus, it is certainly the nature of the collective sentiments that accounts for punishment, and consequently for crime. " Organic Solidarity, on the other hand is characterized with the other type of law which is the restitutory law.

Organic solidarity assumes that people are different from each other and they are interdependent with other forming a complex web of cooperative associations. Unlike the mechanical solidarity, the solidarity in this case is from each person cultivating individual differences and knowing that each

one is doing something for the betterment of everyone. Moreover, Durkheim said that the organic solidarity arises only when the division of labor is spontaneous or voluntary. Because the division of labor is pushed too far then it becomes dangerous for the individual for it may result to the isolation of in their special activity or skill. Thus making the division of labor a source of disintegration for the individuals and the society.

" Damages awarded have no penal character: they are simply a means of putting back the clock so as to restore the past, so far as possible, to its normal state. " (p. 69) • Restitutory laws put the world back together -- they restore what was before. • Restitutory laws are not (usually) part of the collective common consciousness. Instead, they apply to very specific areas (corporate law, accounting law, housing law, contract law, etc. ) and, E. D. claims, a violation of such a law does not elicit the emotional need for expiation that a criminal offense does. " The idea that murder can be tolerated sets us up in arms, but we very readily accept that the law of inheritance might be modified, .... Since these prescriptions do not correspond to any feeling within us, and as generally we don't know their scientific justification, since this science does not yet exist, they have no deep roots in most of us. " [137] • Since restitutory laws do not affect everyone, the solidarity that restitutory laws relate to cannot rest on a uniform similarity across everyone in the group. For Durkheim, organic solidarity refers to a type of solidarity in which each person is interdependent with others, forming a complex web of cooperative associations. In such situations, solidarity (or a feeling of " oneness") comes not from each person believing/doing the same thing, but from each person cultivating individual

differences and knowing that each is doing her part for the good of the whole. Thus, Durkheim argued that the increasing specialization and individuation so readily apparent in modern industrial societies does not necessarily result in a decline in social stability or cohesion.

Rather, the growth in a society's density (the number of people living in a community) and consequent increasingly specialized division of labor can result in simply a different type of social cohesion. Abnormal Forms. Anomic Division of Labor is caused by the lack of regulation or a weakened common morality that can occur in modern society. Usually surfaces when there are industrial or commercial crises or there are conflicts between capital and labor. Durkheim discusses conditions of the worker under capitalism and it is somewhat very close to Marx's description of alienation and exploitation. However, he says that situations like this are not in the normal form but are something resulting from an individual who does not have a sufficient vision of the whole process of production. Forced Division of Labor is where the division of labor is not allowed to develop spontaneously and where some act to protect themselves and their positions. It is the consequence of a structural condition where the distribution of social functions does not match to the distribution of natural talents.

Durkheim's observation that the function of an organism can become more active only on the condition that they also become more continuous one organ can do more only if the other organs do more, and vice versa. When this continuity is missing then the functional activity of the specialized parts decreases, resulting in wasted effort and loss of productive capacity. Increased activity also results to a stronger bond of solidarity but when



mismanagement arises, the activity of the worker is reduced, functions become discontinuous, and solidarity is destabilized.