

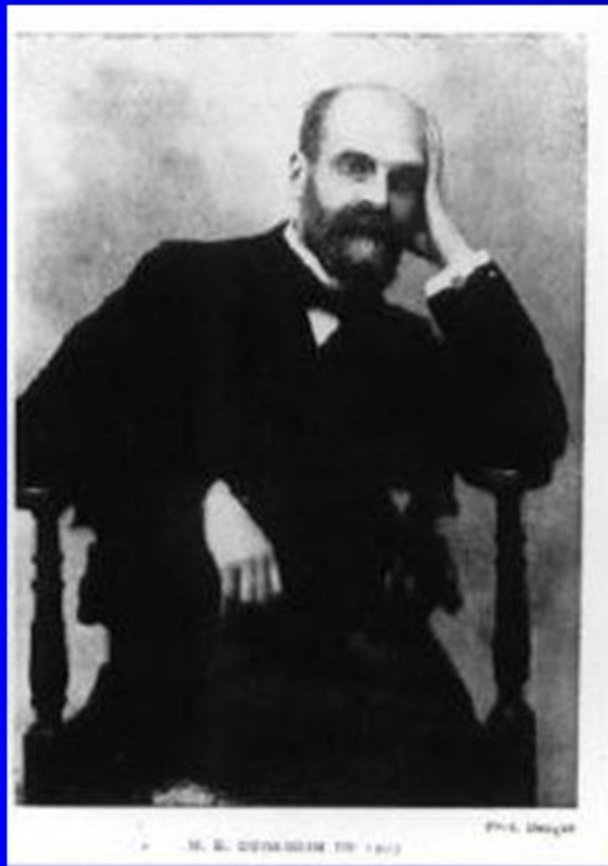
NAKSHALBARI COLLEGE
DEPT. OF SOCIOLOGY

TOPIC-THEORY OF SUICIDE
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Theory of suicide



Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)



- Along with the German Max Weber, one of the most notable sociologists of the early 20th century
- French
- In some ways, fulfilled Comte's dream of a scientific sociology

The Study of Suicide (1897)

- Durkheim chose to study suicide for several reasons:
- 1. He wanted to demonstrate the usefulness of sociology in understanding human behavior
- 2. Little was known about the subject and he was interested in the topic
- 3. Data was readily available (death records, etc.) making the study fairly easy to conduct

MEANING



Suicide is the act of intentionally causing one's own death.

DEFINITION

- According to Merriam Webster: the act or an instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally especially by a person of years of discretion and of sound mind.
- According to Oxford Dictionary: The action of killing oneself intentionally
- According to Emile Durkheim: the term suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result.

Durkheim's Variables

- Based on what was available, Durkheim centered his study on several variables and how they influenced the suicide rate
- A. Gender– male/female
- B. Religion– Catholics/Protestants
- C. Military Status– military personnel /civilians
- D. Economy– good/poor
- E. National Status– wartime/peacetime

Durheim identified three basic types of suicide

- a) Egoistic suicide
 - b) Altruistic suicide
 - c) Anomic suicide.
- } social breakdown



Types of Suicide

Altruistic suicide
(Ex. Sati practice ,
Army)

Egoistic suicide
(Social ego not strong
enough to counter
individual ego)

Anomic suicide
(undergoing rapid
change)

Egoistic Suicide

- **Egoistic suicide**, on the other hand, results from a lack of attachment of the individual to the society.
- The less integrated into society individuals are, and the more they must depend on their own egos or selves, the more likely they are to commit suicide.

Altruistic Suicide

- **Altruistic suicide** occurs when the degree of attachment of the individual to the society is very great.
- It is not always defined by the society as suicide.
- This would be the case with soldiers who volunteer for a dangerous mission, in which they are likely to lose their lives, out of zeal for and devotion to their country.

Anomic Suicide

- **Anomic suicide**, like egoistic suicidal occurs because the individual is forced to make decisions without any strong social attachments. However, in anomic suicide the individual is unattached because the whole society is undergoing rapid change and the old rules no longer seem to apply.
- Anomic suicide occurs during periods of uncertainty, such as times of crisis, revolution, or economic depression.

The Generalizations and Conclusions

- From his evidence, Durkheim concluded that the suicide rate was determined by the degree of social attachment.
- He discovered, however, that the relationship was a complex one.
- Suicide seemed to result from both unusually high levels and unusually low levels of social attachment.

Thank You