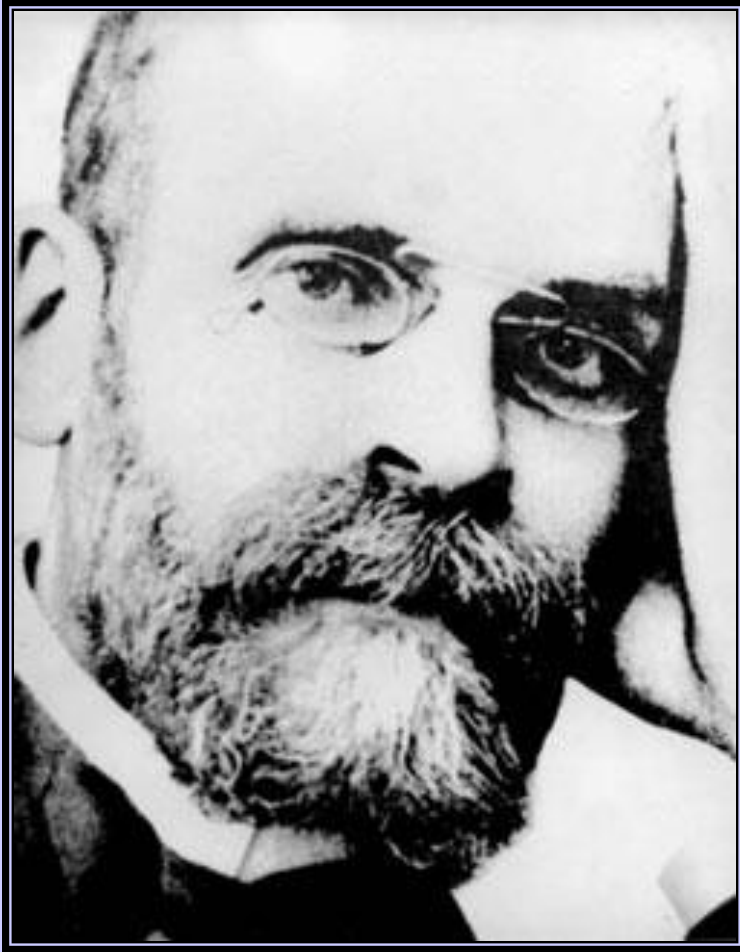


# Émile Durkheim



**THE CSS POINT**  
Yes We Can Do It!

April 15, 1858 - November 15, 1917

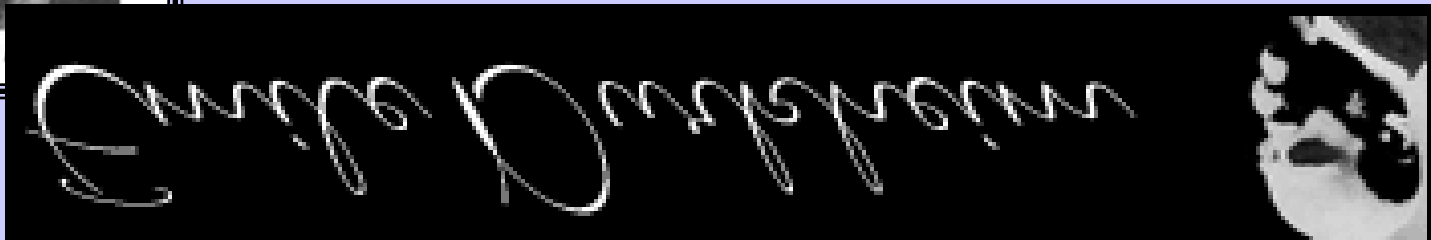
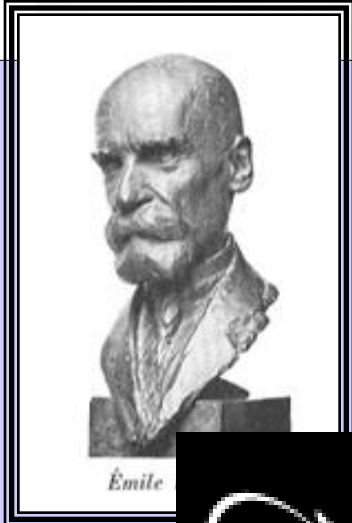
# Life and Influences

- Born April 15, 1858 in France.
- Father, Grandfather, and Great-Grandfather were all rabbis.
- He believed religion could be explained from social rather than divine factors.
- Read and studied with classicists with a social scientific outlook while in school.
- Spent a year studying sociology in Germany.
- 1893 - published *The Division of Labor in Society*.
- 1895 - published *Rules of the Sociological Method*, and founded the European Department of Sociologie at the University of Bordeaux.
- 1896 - founded the journal *L'Année Sociologique*.

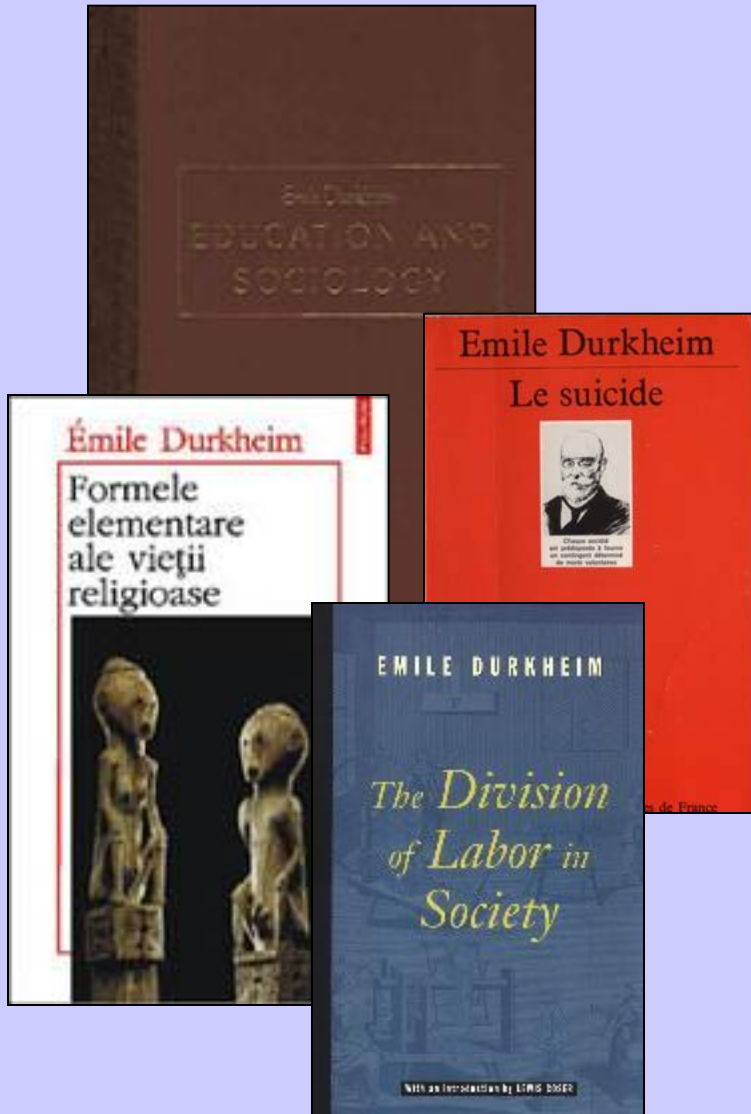


# Life and Influences

- 1897 - published Suicide
- 1902 - awarded a prominent position in Paris as the chair of education at the Sorbonne.
- 1912 - published Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, and his position became permanent and he renamed it the chair of education and sociology.
- Later that year on November 15, he died at age 59 from exhaustion.



# Contributions and Theories



- He sought to construct one of the first scientific approaches to social phenomena.
- Said that traditional societies were held together by the fact that everyone was more or less the same.
- Along with Herbert Spencer, he was one of the first to conceptualize the idea of Functionalism:
  - Functionalism views society as a system of interdependent parts whose functions contribute to the stability and survival of the system.
- Thought that society was more than the sum of its parts, and coined the term social facts:
  - Social Facts have an existence all their own, and are not bound to the action of individuals.

# Contributions and Theories

- **Durkheim on Education:**

- Believed that education served many functions:

- 1) To reinforce social solidarity

Pledging allegiance: makes individuals feel part of a group and therefore less likely to break rules.

- 2) To maintain social roles

School is a society in miniature: it has a similar hierarchy, rules, expectations to the “outside world,” and trains people to fulfill roles.

- 3) To maintain division of labor

School sorts students into skill groups, encouraging students to take up employment in fields best suited to their abilities.

- He was professionally employed to train teachers, so he used his ability to shape France’s curriculum to spread the instruction of sociology.



# Contributions and Theories

- **Durkheim on Crime:**

- His views on crime were unconventional at the time.
- Crime serves as a social function, meaning that it has a purpose in society.
- He saw crime as being able to release certain social tensions and so have a cleansing or purging effect in society.

## RULES OF SOCIOLOGICAL METHOD: applications

Personal Problems vs Public Issues  
(C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*)

Differential Association Theory, Group Therapy

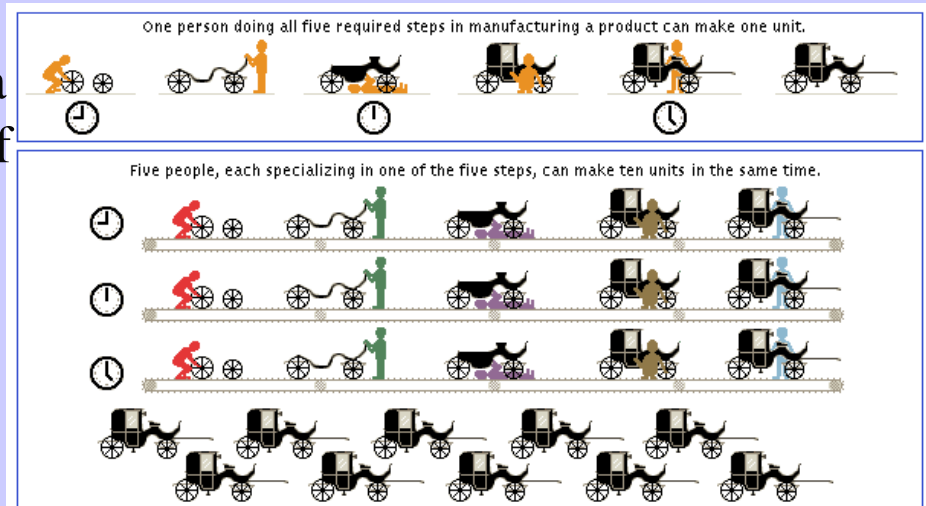


criminal techniques  
neutralizing of criminality  
group re-inforcement (rewards)



# The Division of Labor

- Division of labor examined how social order was maintained in different types of societies.
- Traditional societies were held together by the fact that everyone was more or less the same. The collective consciousness entirely includes individual consciousness.
- In modern societies, the high complex division of labor resulted in the binding of people together with different specializations in employment. This created dependencies that tied people to one another since no one person could fill all of the need by themselves.
- Anomie: Increasing division of labor can lead to rapid change in a society. This can produce a state of confusion with regards to norms and impersonality in social life. This leads to a state in which the norms regulating behavior have been broken down.



# Elementary Forms of Religious Life

- Thought religion was a form of social cohesion, which holds complex societies together.
- Believed that the function of religion was to make people willing to put the interests of others ahead of themselves.
- The model for relationships between people and the supernatural was the relationship between individuals and the community
- Saw religion as a mechanism that protected a threatened social order.





# Elementary Forms of Religious Life

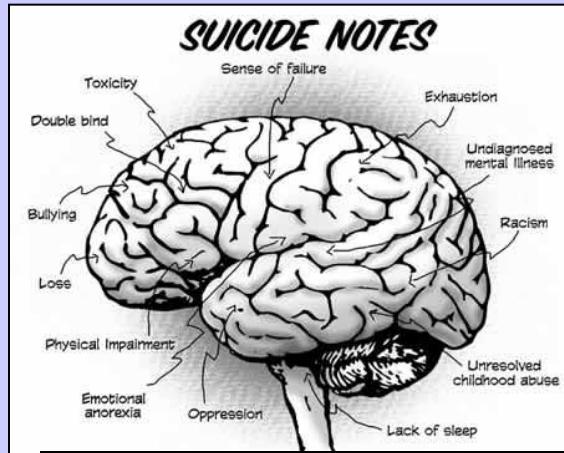
- ”
- Condensed religion into 4 major functions:
  - 1) Disciplinary: forcing or administering discipline
  - 2) Cohesive: bringing people together, a strong bond
  - 3) Vitalizing: to make more lively or vigorous, vitalize, boost spirit
  - 4) Euphoric: a good feeling, happiness, confidence, well-being



# Suicide

- Defined suicide as the act of severing social relationships.
- Goal was to show that an individual act is actually the result of the social world that he would show the usefulness of sociology.
- He explored the differing suicide rates among Protestants and Catholics. He explained how socially controlled Catholics had a lower suicide rate.
- Social integration: the integration of a group of people into the mainstream of society.
- Said that abnormally high or low levels of social integration may result in increased suicide rates.
- Results he found include:
  - Suicide rates are higher for widowed, single or divorced people rather than those who are married.
  - Rates are higher for those who have no children rather than those who do .
  - Rates are higher among Protestants than Catholics.
  - Coroners in a Catholic country are less likely to record a suicide as the reason of death because in Catholicism it is a sin.

# Suicide



- Suicide may be caused by weak social bonds.
- Social bond is made up of social integration and social regulation.
- Distinguished 4 types of suicide:
  - 1) Egoistic Suicide: Individual is weakly integrated into a society so ending their life will have little impact on the rest of society.
  - 2) Altruistic suicide: Individual is extremely attached to the society and because of this has no life of their own.
  - 3) Anomic suicide: There is a weak social regulation between society's norms and the individual and is most often brought on by dramatic economic or social changes.
  - 4) Fatalistic suicide: Social regulation is completely instilled in the individual. There is no hope of change against the oppressive discipline of the society. Feels that the only way to escape this state is suicide.

