



**Classical Sociological Theory**  
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**Suicide (1897)**

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**Altruistic Suicide**



- Altruistic suicide stems from excessive integration.
- Altruistic suicide is characteristic of a social environment, mainly found among “primitive peoples” and “inferior societies,” where the life of the individual is subordinated to the life of the group. People derive their sense of worth entirely from their membership and participation in the group.
- Examples from traditional as well as modern societies



Welcome back to the class. Let us get into yet another very important contribution of Emile Durkheim, an extremely popular and famous work of Emile Durkheim. It is his study on ‘Suicide’ which has attracted worldwide attention over these years and it has been widely seen as one of the foundational studies on sociological studies on suicide. A study that could fundamentally change the scholarly understanding or scholarly perspective on this particular phenomenon of people ending their own lives.

As a scholar of sociology, Durkheim was able to establish a very important an argument that even while suicide is an intentionally personal act, it needs to be studied sociologically or sociology as a discipline has a unique ability to offer a very distinct perspective to explain why large number of people commit suicide in different parts of the world.

So, in that sense a study is extremely important and it remains as one of the best illustration of his use of sociological methods to understand the society. This work was published in 1897.

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- Study of suicide to demonstrate his sociological methodology as outlined in the Rules of Sociological Methods
- Suicide, especially rate of suicide as a social fact
- problem of social solidarity and the relationship between the individual and society.
- would shed light on "the causes of the general contemporary maladjustment being undergone by European societies" and suggest "remedies which may relieve it"



As per Durkheim in the study of suicide he wants to demonstrate his sociological methodology as outlined in the rules of sociological methods. One of the most important primary reasons why Durkheim wrote this book was to establish or to illustrate that a scholar of sociology can actually use sociological methods to study an extremely important social phenomenon.

I hope you remember that we had an extensive discussion on his book. So, in this work, rules of sociological method we have discussed that Durkheim elaborates the very specific processes or the very specific steps that a scholar needs to adopt in order to understand a particular social phenomenon. So, he wanted to demonstrate how his book, this 'Rules of Sociological Method' can be used in the real life.

How somebody can actually employ the rules of sociological method to study a particular facet of social phenomenon and second, was of course to study this very enigmatic phenomenon that every year a certain number of people commit suicide and Durkheim observed that this number of suicides in many of his European societies are increasing and of course he was quite troubled with that.

These are the two prime motives why he wrote this monumental work. The most important point that he identifies is that suicide, especially the rate of suicide is a social fact which is an extremely important insight for us. As I just mentioned earlier, suicide is considered to be one of the most intense personal act somebody deciding to take one's own life and it is an extremely intense personal decision.

Especially if it is not under duress or if it is not under compulsion in most of the cases the person takes the decision to end his or her life and it has been widely studied across the history by reducing it to the mental activities of that person because most of the explanations and even during Durkheim's times the most prevalent explanations to understand suicide was that of psychological explanation.

Even now we attribute depression or mental agony or host of other psychological reasons behind this act of committing suicide, but while Durkheim agree that when an individual commits suicide it is a personal act. His focus was not on the individual act, but on the rate of suicide in a large population. This is an extremely brilliant entry point to understand this phenomenon of suicide as a sociological phenomenon.

The rate of suicide in comparison with the different population or the rate of suicide in comparison with the same population in different periods in history and there are variations in it. According to Durkheim it is a very important entry point for the discipline of sociology because if you say 10,000 people committed suicide in this year in a given population and next year also you will have more or less 10,000 people or the year after again you will have more or less 10,000 people. So, we do not know who the people who will be committing suicide are, but out of this huge population 10,000 people more or less are destined. Destined in the sense not because of some divine entity, but this 10,000 people are bound to commit suicide and this is a disturbing statistic.

Durkheim argued that it has to be related with the problems of social solidarity and the relationship between the individual and the society. So, unlike psychological explanation or there were quite lot of other explanation that during his time which connected for example climatic changes, climatic changes with that of suicide rates or there were quite lot of psychological explanations connecting with mental health and individual psychological composition of people.

But Durkheim rejected all these arguments and then put forward very persuasive argument to it in the form of social solidarity and the relationship between the individual and the society that holds the crux of this whole question. Why that a certain number of people in a given society are bound to commit suicide and I hope you remember this definition of this word social solidarity i.e. the degree of affinity that a person experiences with his or her own group. So, he wants or he believed that the study would shed light on the causes of general

contemporary maladjustment being undergone by European societies and suggest remedies which may relate. So, as we discussed earlier, Durkheim very strongly believed that his sociological analysis must be able to do some kind of a good to the society.

It is not simply for the fact of understanding more about the society that he was studying sociology, but sociology must be able to remedy certain or it must be able to rectify certain maladjustments, it must be able to rectify certain kind of pathological conditions. We discussed about his idea of normal and pathology in the previous class. So, he also had this agenda in his mind to study why suicide takes place. Especially why certain abnormal levels of suicide takes place and he believed that his sociological inquiry might be able to rectify that.

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- "all causes of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself which he knows will produce this result." (Suicide)



- He did not study individual suicides but rather the general pervasiveness of suicide in a population—that is, a society's aggregate tendency toward suicide. Suicide as a social fact, as a 'thing.'

- while single cases constitute psychological facts, the rate of suicide—the proportion of "voluntary deaths" for a particular population during a specified time period—is a uniquely social phenomenon. Hence Sociology



He defines it is a very interesting definition. He defines suicide as all causes of deaths resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of a victim himself which he knows will produce this result. It is an interesting definition. He argues that it has to be an intended one the person who commits suicide must know its result, it should not be an accidental one and it has to be either direct or indirect or it should be a positive or negative act.

Positive in the sense you do something deliberately to kill yourself or negative for example if you deliberately do not take food for an extended period of life to commit to end your life then it is a negative act you are not doing which you are supposed to do. So, this is the way in which Durkheim defines suicide. He did not study individual suicide, but rather the general

pervasiveness of suicide in a population which is a society's aggregate tendency towards suicide. Suicide as a social fact as a thing. This is what we just mentioned. He is not interested in why x or y committed suicide because of various personal reasons, but he was interested in the kind of a general pervasiveness of a suicide in a population or to what extent people of a given population are inclined to commit suicide or what is the proclivity of a particular population to commit suicide. This is society's aggregate tendency towards suicide.

In that sense, Durkheim argues that suicide is a social fact. Just like your population growth or death rate, you know that every year a certain number of new members are supposed to come into the society, certain number of people are supposed to die. So, seamless and these things you can say that they are biological factors which are most decided by biological conditions on biological factors, but suicide is not something similar to that.

Suicide is a decision taken by an individual, but interestingly the suicide rate also is almost stable like birth rate or death rate and this was something really puzzled Durkheim. So, that is why he call that it is a thing it has its own existence, it is a *Sui generis*, it is outside even while individual takes the decision. There are whole lot of factors which are outside him which really pushes that person to commit this extreme act.

Why a single case constitute psychological fact, the rate of suicide, and the proportion of voluntary deaths for a particular population during a specified time period is uniquely a social phenomena. Hence the sociology as a discipline comes up exactly the same point that we discussed. While a single case constitutes a psychological fact the rate of suicide when you have hundreds of thousands of people committing suicide.

The psychological explanation really becomes insufficient you need to look at why that these 10,000 people experienced a kind of psychological breakdown or psychological problem at a given period in time and then in that respect psychology as a discipline has very serious limitations. So, as a particular population during a specified time period is uniquely a social phenomenon and hence the discipline of sociology.

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- His data on the history of suicides in European countries from 1841 to 1872 show two tendencies: the incidence of suicide, though rising in some cases in later years, remains fairly constant over time for any particular country. Second, the rate of suicide varies substantially from one country to another, with some exhibiting consistently higher rates and others consistently lower rates.
- Each country, the statistics reveal, appears to have its own "particular disposition towards suicide." The propensity for suicide also varies according to the characteristics of groups within society, differing by gender, religion, family status, and occupational position.
- Rate of suicide higher among men, married men, protestants and so on



As we discussed Durkheim was one of the early sociologists who very systematically used data, statistical data. He used it, he classified it, and he did statistical analysis with that. So, in that sense it is extremely empirically rooted study. So, his data on the history of suicides in European countries from 1841 to 1872 showed two tendencies. The incidence of suicide though rising in some cases in later years remained fairly constant over a time for any particular country.

This is quite interesting why that a certain number of people decide to commit suicide over a period in time. Why that there is not so much of drastic difference, how is that a society is able to push a limited number of people to this extreme steps or why that a specified number of people decide to commit suicide every year without much of a variation and this is an extremely important question.

Second, the rate of suicide varies substantially from one country to another with some exhibiting consistently higher rates and others consistently low over rates and also when you compare different countries, when you compare different populations there is huge variations between the rate of suicide or between say for example France or Germany and Italy there is so much of variation and these variations seem to be kind of permanent without much of a disturbance.

Why that in certain countries people are more prone to commit suicide while in certain countries they are not. So, each country the statistical level appears to have its own particular disposition towards suicide and this is the kind of a very pertinent question, what is the kind

of a particular disposition towards suicide in a certain countries. The propensity for suicide also varies according to the characteristics of groups within a society.

Also, within a group Durkheim used other socioeconomic or cultural profiles of the population, their age group, their religion, their marital status, their income and a host of the usual socioeconomic and other data that you compile differing by gender, religion, family status and occupational positions. This is the reason why I mentioned that this is a classic sociological study where he brings in this very concrete categories.

Concrete labels or concrete concepts of frameworks within a group to differentiate and then try to understand how each of these categories have a bearing or how they act as variables. For example, gender or religion or family status they act as variables which has a kind of bearing on the output of suicide numbers. So, the rate of suicides are higher among men, higher among married men and higher among Protestants in comparison with Catholics and so on.

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- The rate of suicide, Durkheim concludes, is a product of social forces external to the individual; it can only be explained by the collective characteristics or "moral constitution" of people's immediate social environment.
- Individual factors are not irrelevant, Durkheim acknowledges, but their influence is always conditioned—suppressed under some circumstances, heightened under others—by the properties of the social environment.
- Eminently sociological analysis



The rate of suicide, Durkheim concluded is a product of social forces external to the individual. It is external to the individual, it can only be explained by the collective characteristics of moral constitution of people's immediate social environment. So, this is the crux of his argument even while an individual commit suicide purely on the basis of his or her own intentions, individual psychological intentions.


There is a host of social forces which are external to the individual that these forces are very powerful and this can be explained by the collective characteristics of a moral constitution of people's immediate social environment. He explains and he elaborates what it means the kind of an idea of a moral constitution, how people are morally connected with the larger group in which they inhabit.

Individual factors are not irrelevant. Durkheim is not completely making psychological factors as irrelevant, but Durkheim acknowledges, that their influence is always conditioned, suppressed under some circumstances, heightened under some others by the properties of the social environment. He would argue that the psychological factors that might drive the person into this extreme act is or the psychological factors are heavily conditioned by larger sociological or social processes.


Without understanding this larger culture or structural social factors you cannot really understand why a particular given population exhibit a particular rate of suicide every year. That is why it is considered to be an eminently sociological analysis. After very forcefully arguing that the rate of suicide is a social fact and it must be studied through the perspective of sociology, Durkheim proceeds to classify or categorize suicides into four types.

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**Typology of suicide**



- Four types of suicide: **altruistic, fatalistic, egoistic, and anomic**. These are social types.
- Each type refers to a social milieu where there is an imbalance in the relationship between the individual and the group.
- The relationship between the individual and society is unhealthy, according to Durkheim, whenever the presence of the group in the life of the individual is felt either too strongly or too weakly.
- Presence across two dimensions: **integration and regulation**. While integration depends on people being attached to social groups, regulation depends on people being subject to social control.



Four types of suicide; one is altruistic, fatalistic, egoistic and anomic and these are social types. These are the four broad categories on the basis of his formulation that the suicide rate, differing suicide rates must be understood on the basis of relationship between the individual and the society. The moral relationship between individual and society so each type refers to



a social milieu where there is an imbalance in the relationship between the individual and the group.

We are going to discuss what exactly this imbalance is. Each of these four categories he argues it refers to, emerge from particular social context or particular social milieu where there is an imbalance in the relationship between the individual and the group. The relationship between the individual and the group is unhealthy according to Durkheim whenever the presence of the group in the life of individual is felt either too strongly or too weakly and this is an extremely important point.

To what extent is the presence of the group or presence of the society is felt in the lives of the individual. What is the kind of a connection between the individual life and the society in which that individual lives and he argue that if that link is too strong or if it is too weak. These two extreme conditions are not really healthy for the individual as well as that of the society.

It is a very fascinating argument. It should not be too strong or if it is too strong or if it is too weak then both these conditions will produce unpleasant consequences like the higher degree of suicides. How do we categorize this relation between the individual and the group? So, he talks about it in two dimensions, one is the degree of integration and the question of regulation.

While integration depends on the people being attached to social groups, regulation depends on people being subjected to social control. In other words integration refers to attachment and regulation refers to social control and these two axes, they are very important for us to understand.

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### Altruistic Suicide



- Altruistic suicide stems from excessive integration.
- Altruistic suicide is characteristic of a social environment, mainly found among “primitive peoples” and “inferior societies,” where the life of the individual is subordinated to the life of the group. People derive their sense of worth entirely from their membership and participation in the group.
- Examples from traditional as well as modern societies.



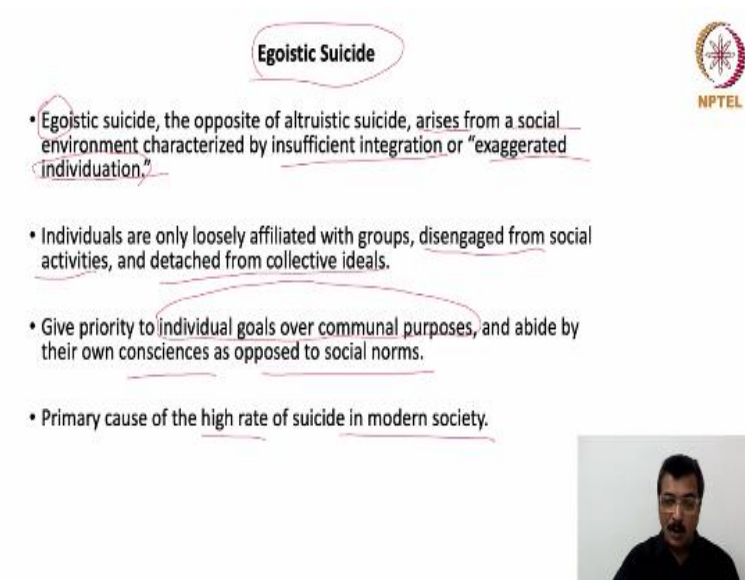
First one; the altruistic suicide. Altruistic suicide, Durkheim argues it emerges when there is an excessive integration, the kind of a connect between the individual and the society is too strong if that there is an intensely strong connection between the individual and the group then that society is supposed or that society has higher chance of producing more altruistic suicide.

Altruistic suicide is characteristic of social environment mainly found among primitive people. He mostly say that this is a characteristic of a primitive tribal society where this group’s solidarity is very strong and inferior societies where the life of the individual is subordinated to the life of the group. People derive their sense of worth entirely from their membership and participation in the group and this is an extremely important point.

An individual finds the meaning of his or her own life on the basis of the group that he or she belongs. So, what happens to the group would be the ultimate yardstick to evaluate the worth of that particular group and host of examples and he gives examples of Samurais in Japan and host of people especially that of the primitive societies who commit suicide if their side faces a kind of a defeat or a host of new examples that we can talk about from these modern societies. Almost every case of this suicide bombers is a perfect example of this altruistic suicide because the person commit suicide, the person blows up himself or herself for the sake of the group that she or he belongs.

A person who volunteers to become a suicide bomber knows that he is committing suicide, of course by inflicting larger destruction on the enemy, but that person thinks that his or her life is worthless for a greater glory of their own group.

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The slide features a title 'Egoistic Suicide' at the top center. To the right is the NPTEL logo. Below the title are four bullet points, each with some text underlined. A small video inset of a man is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide area.

- Egoistic suicide, the opposite of altruistic suicide, arises from a social environment characterized by insufficient integration or "exaggerated individuation."
- Individuals are only loosely affiliated with groups, disengaged from social activities, and detached from collective ideals.
- Give priority to individual goals over communal purposes, and abide by their own consciences as opposed to social norms.
- Primary cause of the high rate of suicide in modern society.

On the other hand, the opposite group or the opposite type is this egoistic suicide, is diametrically opposite to that of altruistic suicide. Egoistic suicide as the word ego refers to is the opposite of altruistic suicide arises from a social environment characterized by insufficient integration or exaggerated individuation. Here the link between the individual and the society is too weak.

There is an exaggerated individuation, an individual is something as inward looking. Individual finds no sense of belongingness to the group, individual is kind of isolated all the time, individual does not feel any sense of belongingness, he or she is not able to identify herself with the group. There is an insufficient integration. Individuals are only loosely affiliated with the groups.

Disengage from social activities and detach from collective ideals. They would be mostly loners, people who are not able to identify themselves with the larger group, they do not share the ideals of the group, they do not find much meanings in their own life, they are not able to participate in the larger processes of society, and they are detached from the collective ideals.

They believe that they do not really fit into the larger group, they do not really feel a part of that. Give priority to individual goals or communal purpose and that is why he talks about, it

as egoistic suicide their individual sense, their self, their ego is on the forefront and abide by their own consciousness as opposed to that of social norms and primary cause of high rate of suicide in modern societies.

This has been a usual cultural trope as people are becoming modern and once they become modern they lack all the kind of connections with the society, they later become disenchanting, they become dissolution and then finally commit suicide.

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- Durkheim finds the the rate of suicide is higher among Protestants than either Catholics or Jews. Protestantism is a more individualistic religion, allowing for greater "freedom of inquiry," and it includes fewer "common beliefs and practices," leaving ample room for the individual to be "the author of his own belief."
- Suicide rate is lower for people with children, and the larger the family, the stronger the effect. As compared to the childless, parents have tighter social bonds, close and highly affective ties to others, and a more active social life.
- Declines during "major political upheavals," "electoral crises," and national wars. These events "sharpen collective feelings" and concentrate people's "activities toward a single end," thus fostering heightened levels of social integration.



Durkheim finds this the rate of suicide is higher among Protestants than either Catholics or Jews. As I told you he also undertakes, he also takes up a kind of analysis of the socio cultural characteristics of each of these groups and while doing that he found out that the suicide rate among the protestants is much higher than that of the Catholics and the Jews and we had a very interesting and important observation, a very important one.

He argued that Protestantism is more individualistic religion allowing a greater freedom of inquiry and it includes fewer common beliefs and practices leaving ample room for the individual to be the author of his own or her own belief and it is an extremely important argument and you must know the kind of difference between the Protestantism and Catholicism.

Catholicism is considered to be more traditional, it is more traditionally bound. It has this Church and the Priest as this ecclesiastical authority. It gives so much of importance to freedom and this figure of priest undertakes all the responsibilities to explain the theology for

the Laity. The relation between the Laity, the ordinary believer and the God is mediated through the priest. In that sense the Laity or then ordinary believer is only supposed to mechanically adhere to that.

Whereas in the case of Protestantism you simply do not have this much of important role given to clergy. A person is supposed to establish his or her terms of reference with the kind of a relationship with him and the almighty, God because Protestantism also emerged as a result of a kind of a rationalist explanation of the scriptures. It is a kind of a rationalist understanding of the scriptures.

Protestantism is definitely a more rationalist explanation or rationalist attempt to make sense of rather than the traditional one and that puts more emphasize, more pressure on the individual to chart out his or her own spiritual cause which would inevitably will ask more and more questions which and you do not have any final authority like a clergy or a priest who will give a full stop to all these kind of different interpretations and questions.

In other words the degree of individual freedom, the space of individuality in Protestantism is much higher than that of Catholicism. So, that is why there is ample room for the individual to be the author of his own belief and while on the one hand we think that being the author of one's own belief is a sense of empowerment.

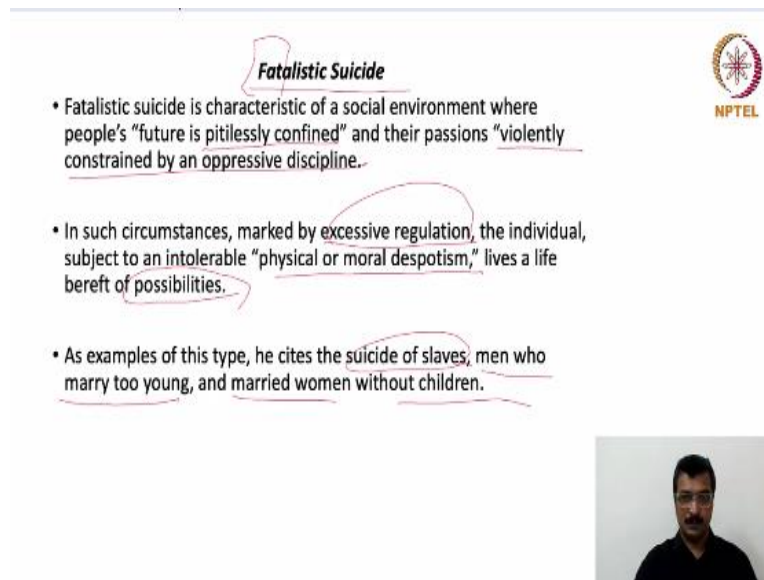
But on the other side there is also a tremendous pressure because a believer needs to be always sure that he or she is on the right path and that puts enormous pressure on a true believer whereas in the case of a traditional society, a traditional worship pattern this believer can completely handover this responsibility to the clergy, to the priest and he or she is only supposed to obey what is commanded by the priest.

Because Priest are holy people they are the kind of intermediate between the God almighty and this ordinary mortals. So, suicide rate is lower among people with children and larger the family, the stronger the effect as compared to the childless parents have tighter social bonds, close and highly affective ties to others and more active social life. The role of family Durkheim explains on the basis of the quality of ties among the people and it declines during "major political upheavals", this rate of suicide comes down during major political upheavals, "electoral crises" and national wars. These events sharpen collective feelings and concentrate people's activities towards a single end. Thus, fostering heightened levels of social

integration. We know that at the time of a social or a natural calamity or a war between different countries.

There is an increased sense of national consciousness, there is an increased sense of national unity and integration and Durkheim argued that during these times the rate of suicide comes down because even this egoistic person who otherwise does not identify herself with the society does identify during this particular time in comparison with the earlier period.

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The slide is titled "Fatalistic Suicide" and features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner. It contains three bullet points, each with a red circle around a key phrase. The first bullet point states that fatalistic suicide is characteristic of a social environment where people's "future is pitilessly confined" and their passions "violently constrained by an oppressive discipline." The second bullet point describes such circumstances as marked by "excessive regulation," where the individual is subject to an "intolerable 'physical or moral despotism,'" leading to a life bereft of "possibilities." The third bullet point provides examples, citing the "suicide of slaves," "men who marry too young," and "married women without children."

- Fatalistic suicide is characteristic of a social environment where people's "future is pitilessly confined" and their passions "violently constrained by an oppressive discipline."
- In such circumstances, marked by excessive regulation, the individual, subject to an intolerable "physical or moral despotism," lives a life bereft of possibilities.
- As examples of this type, he cites the suicide of slaves, men who marry too young, and married women without children.

The third one according to Durkheim is a fatalistic suicide. Fatalistic suicide is characteristic of a social environment where a people's future is pitilessly confined and their passions violently constrained by an oppressive discipline. So, in the case of fatalistic suicide people, you know the fatalistic this comes from this whole idea of fate, once you think that this is your fate what does it mean, something is we always and we have heard people saying that we cannot do anything that is the fate.

Fate has a sense of helplessness once you believe or you accept certain things as your fate. You think that there is nothing much can be done. You only will have to accept the fact, accept the fate, but you cannot change that. So, Durkheim talks about increasing number of suicide committing during this particular time when people feel that their life is pitilessly confined, they cannot do anything.

Their life is sealed and the examples, he gives the example of suicides of slaves. A slave he has very little to aspire for or even examples in military that the number of murders and

suicides taking place in military is very high because there is an absolute sense of authority which controls each and every aspect of a person's life and many of these suicides are explained on the basis of fatalistic suicide.


Because the soldier believes that he cannot escape this kind of very oppressive system. So, in such circumstances marked by excessive regulation, the individual is subjected to an intolerable physical or moral despotism lives the life bereft to possibilities. So, this emerges from the excessive regulation, that is so much of regulation on an individual's society, individual's life and he or she thinks that there is absolutely no possibility of altering it.

The person feels so powerless, a slave feels so powerless, and it is destined to end like that. A soldier feels that he is too powerless to question the authorities and Durkheim also gives the examples of men who marry too young, the married women without children those who have very less opportunities or less options to alter seriously alter their life.

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**Anomic Suicide**

- Anomic suicide, the opposite of fatalistic suicide, prevails in a social environment where individuals are subject to insufficient regulation, where there is no moderating force restraining their desires and ambitions.
- Anomie as 'normlessness' *lack of clarity*
- To achieve a happy and healthy existence, humans need well-defined limits to rein in their otherwise infinite appetites. In the absence of an authoritative moral framework specifying the kind of life they can reasonably hope for, the ends they can realistically pursue, and the needs they can legitimately expect to satisfy, people will never be "content with their lot."



And the fourth one Durkheim argues which is again diametrically opposite that of fatalistic argument suicide in the anomic suicide. Anomic suicide, the opposite of fatalistic suicide prevails in a social environment where individuals are subjected to insufficient regulation where there is no moderating force restraining their desires and ambitions. So, here the individual is on a free ride, individual is on a ride by himself.

There is no regulations about their desires, the kind of means that they adopt to achieve these goals and so in that sense there is lack of control, there is lack of regulation. Individuals are

kind of completely free flowing and that is why it is considered to be anomic suicide and Durkheim makes it very clear that anomie is not normlessness in that sense of the word. It is the not complete lack of norms, but there is lack of clarity on the norm.

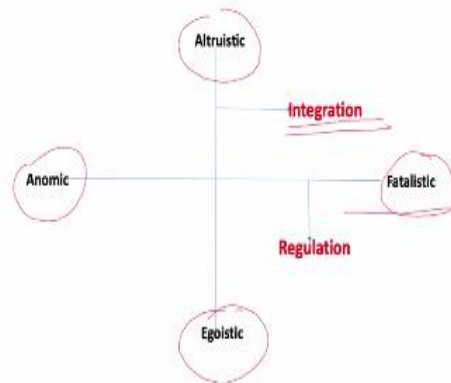
Because you cannot have a society where there is no norms, but by using the term Anomie Durkheim is talking about the lack of clarity on the social norms. For example, what are the things that we can aspire for, what should be our legitimate goals, what should be our objectives and what are the socially accepted institutionally sanctioned ways of achieving these goals?

Durkheim believes that every society needs to have these words very well defined otherwise individuals will be on their own. To achieve happy and healthy existence humans needs well defined limit to rein in their otherwise infinite appetite. So, this infinite appetite it could be in terms of all kind of pleasures. It could be for more wealth or sexual pleasures or any kind of such kind of desires.

In the absence of an authoritative moral framework specifying the kind of life they can reasonably hope for, the ends they can realistically pursue and the needs they can legitimately expect to satisfy people will never be “content with their lot.” So, here in this absence of this institutionalized framework which tells you what the legitimate goals that you can aspire for are. What are the specific routes or specific means that you can accept, you can look forward to people fall into thing of anomic suicide.



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So, this is the kind of a graphic representation of these two axes in which Durkheim elaborates his position. On this vertical axis you have altruistic suicide and then egoistic suicide which talks about the whole question of social integration and on this vertical axis you have fatalistic suicide and the anomic suicide. When you have extreme form of regulation you have fatalistic suicide when the regulation comes down you have anomic. When you have integration comes down you have egoistic, when you have extreme form of integration you have altruistic. So, this represents Durkheim's larger scheme of things.

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**The conclusions**

1. Humans can potentially reveal unlimited desires and passions, which must be regulated and held in check.
2. Total regulation of passions and desires creates a situation where life loses all meaning.
3. Humans need interpersonal attachments and a sense that these attachments connect them to collective purposes.
4. Excessive attachment can undermine personal autonomy to the point where life loses meaning for the individual



So, let us conclude what looking into his major arguments and why that this study of suicide assume so much of significance or why that it attracted so much of attention from scholars of all these years. So, he argues that humans can potentially reveal unlimited desires and passions which must be regulated and at held in check. Human beings and each individual is capable of desiring or having ambitions without any kind of limit.

If left to their own imaginations and ambitions they can come up with very wild or extremely dangerous or extremely diverse kind of imaginations and goals. So, Durkheim believed that it needs to be contained, it needs to be shaped, it needs to be given a kind of a direction and total regulation of passions and desires create a situation where life loses all meaning.

On the one side if you cannot really let people live the way they want on the other hand you cannot really confine everybody, you cannot really control everybody to live the way some more powerful agency wants and that kind of a society where people will feel that they lose the meaning of life, they will not find anything meaningful. So, human needs in the personal attachment.

These attachments connect them to the collective purpose the whole lot of social solidarity and again Durkheim argues it should not be too much, it should not be too weak as well. So, excessive attachment can undermine personal autonomy to the point where life loses meaning of the individual. So, here again this is the whole host of striking a balance, you cannot have too much of excessive attachment. And you cannot have too less attachment as well.

So, these are the larger arguments that he put forward in his sociological analysis suicide, but as I mentioned earlier the significance to his work lies in its methodology as well. He was successfully able to use how to put his methodological argument into practice.

Defining certain things or identifying a social fact, collecting information and then studying them objectively and then coming up with certain hypothesis and doing analysis to verify the kind of a conclusion that you reach with that. So, that is why the study of suicide still continued to be one of the most fascinating initial classical works of Emile Durkheim which really help us to understand the kind of a sociological perspective on certain things.

Why that a sociological perspective should not limit to the individual phenomenon rather it must look at the collectivity. It must ask larger questions and to understand that even the most acute, most intensive personal actions can be or are influenced by the larger social processes.

So, let us stop here and we will come back with maybe two more lectures on Durkheim in the coming classes. Thank you.