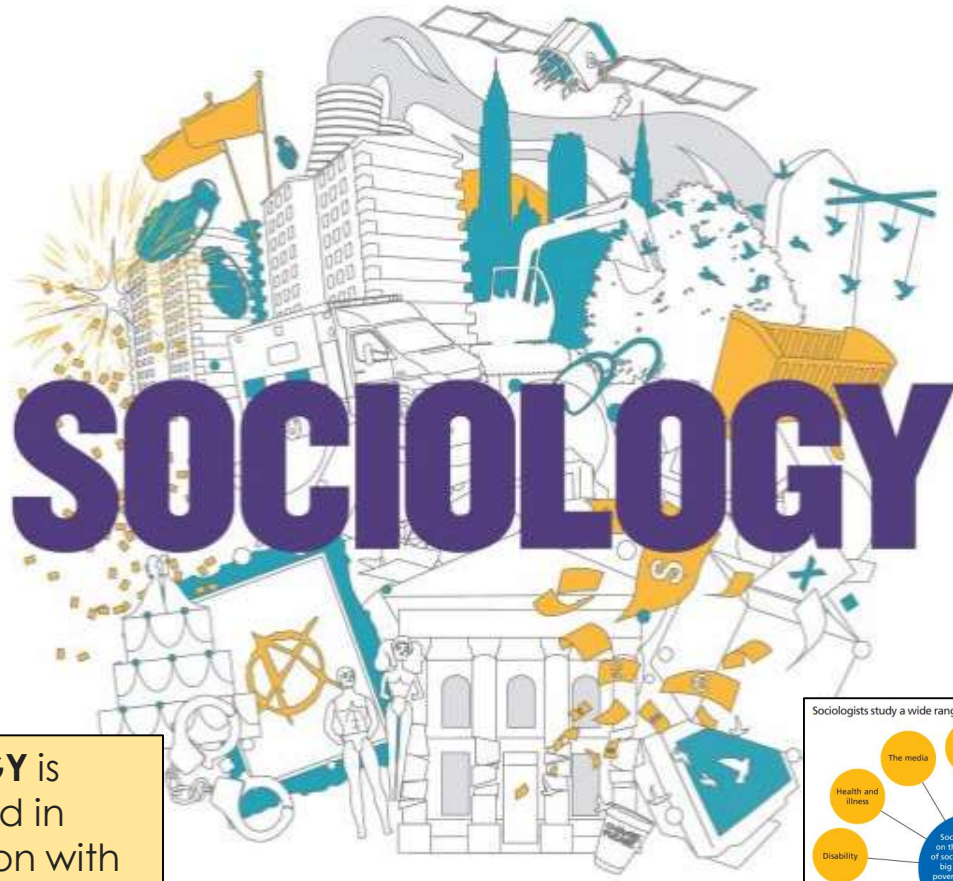
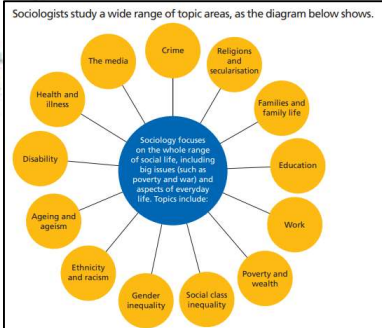


Y11 TRANSITION TO SOCIOLOGY



SOCIOLOGY is best studied in combination with

- Politics
- Geography
- Economics



| Section | Estimated time |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Section A: What is sociology? | 2hrs |
| Section B: Durkheim suicide study | 3 hours |
| Section C: Real life – London Riots | 2 hours |
| | |

Work through this pack and type it in a **POWERPOINT** document with your name on the first slide.

Please remember that if you need help, as this is A Level preparation, your first port-of-call is to do some research yourself.

If you still require help check the section and email us accordingly:

curtis.trudgeon@paddington-academy.org

Section A:

What is Sociology?

Sociology is the study of society, patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and culture that surrounds everyday life.

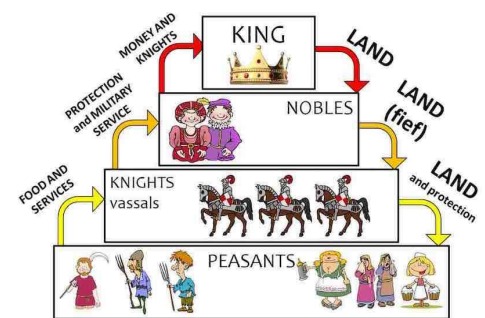
It is a social science, meaning that we try to use scientific methods (like observations, interviews, questionnaires, government data) to try to identify trends and patterns in society and seek to explain them.

However, lots of sociologists disagree over how society works.

Some sociologists (called **FUNCTIONALISTS**) believe that society works (functions) well. They say all the separate parts of society fit together like a jigsaw, because everyone is brought up with the same values and knowledge and they all get along well.



Other sociologists believe that society is based on inequality. They believe some groups have more control and use this to their advantage. A bit like the feudal system in Britain during medieval times. These are called **CONFLICT** sociologists because they believe society is based on conflict.



Feudal Pyramid of Power

We don't ever know which sociologist is correct and spend most of our time evaluating the extent to which the statements put forward by sociologists is valid.

TASK 1:

Read the information on the next few pages and complete the tasks on Page 6.

Social structures and processes

In investigating society and how it is organised, sociologists examine the various parts that make up society. They use the term '**social structures**' to refer to the parts of society such as families, the education system, the political system and the criminal justice system. Sociologists are interested in understanding the connections or relationships between the different structures (or parts) of society. They might study, for instance, the relationship between students' family backgrounds and their achievements at GCSE.

Sociologists are also interested in exploring **social processes** such as socialisation and social control.

The term 'socialisation' refers to the process by which we learn the culture or the way of life of the society we are born into. In exploring how this process operates, sociologists focus on how we learn the culture, who is involved in this learning and what role social structures such as families and schools play in the process.

The term 'social control' refers to the way our behaviour is regulated. In exploring how this process works, sociologists ask questions about:

- how control is exercised
- who exercises control
- how far individuals or groups resist or challenge the processes of social control
- in whose interests social control operates.

By studying these social processes, we can understand more about the workings of society. For example, we learn how such processes take place (the means or mechanisms) and why they take place.

Social issues

Social issues are the issues that affect communities, groups and people's lives. Contemporary social issues relating to education, for example, include academies and grammar schools. Issues relating to families include care of the elderly and forced marriage. Often, social issues are also **social problems**.

Social problems are the problems facing society such as racism, sexism, ageism, **poverty**, domestic violence and hate crime. Social problems are damaging to society and, as a result, they need to be tackled through social policies.

The table below gives some examples of social structures, social processes and social issues. As you read through the different chapters in this book, you will learn more about these key sociological themes.

| Social structures | Social processes | Social issues |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Families | Socialisation; Social control; The exercise of power | The quality of parenting; Forced marriage; Care of the elderly; Relationships between parents and children |
| The education system | Socialisation; Social control; The exercise of power; Labelling; Discrimination | Educational reform; Higher education funding; Academies |
| The criminal justice system | Social control; Social order; The exercise of power; Discrimination; Labelling | Violent crime; The media coverage of crime; The treatment of young offenders; The prison system |
| Social stratification systems | Discrimination; The exercise of power; Globalisation | Inequalities linked to class, gender, ethnicity, age, disability and sexuality; Racism, sexism and ageism; Homophobia; Poverty |

Sociologists draw on key concepts (ideas) including **culture**, **values** and **norms**. They believe people are socialized into these norms (taught to behave this way).

Culture

The term 'culture' refers to the whole way of life of a particular society. It includes the values, norms, customs, beliefs, knowledge, skills and language of a society. Sociologists appreciate that culture is not the same in different societies around the world. It varies according to place (where you are) and time (when). You can see this when looking at food and diet. For example, roast guinea pig is a traditional delicacy in Ecuador, while guinea pigs are often kept as family pets in the UK.



Values

Values are ideas and beliefs that people have about what is desirable and worth striving for. For example, privacy and respect for human life are highly valued by most people in Britain. Values provide us with general guidelines for conduct.

Not all societies or groups value the same things. Values vary cross-culturally, which means that they differ from one culture to another. In Western societies, for example, wealth and material possessions are often highly valued and considered worth striving for. In contrast, the Apache of North America gave away the property of relatives who died rather than inherit it. They believed that keeping this property might encourage the relatives who inherit it to feel glad

Norms

Values provide us with general guidelines for conduct. Norms are more specific to particular situations. For example, we value privacy, and the norms or rules related to this include not reading other people's emails or text messages without permission. Norms tell us what is appropriate and expected behaviour in specific social settings such as classrooms, cinemas, restaurants or aeroplanes. They provide order in society and allow it to function smoothly.

Norms are enforced by **positive sanctions** and **negative sanctions**. This means that people are rewarded for conforming to (or following) the norms, for example, by getting promoted at work. People are punished for deviating from (or breaking) the norms, for example by being 'told off'. Norms and **sanctions** vary depending on time and place. For instance, among the Apache of North America, rule breakers were banished from the group.



Primary and secondary socialisation

Primary socialisation refers to early childhood learning during which, as babies and infants, we learn the basic behaviour patterns, language and skills that we will need in later life. The agencies of primary socialisation are the groups or institutions responsible for primary socialisation. These are usually families and parents. Through interaction within their families, children acquire language and other essential skills.

Secondary socialisation begins later in childhood and continues throughout our adult lives. Through this process, we learn society's norms and values. The agencies of secondary socialisation are the groups or institutions that contribute to this process. Examples include: peer groups, schools, workplaces, religions, mass media.

Peer groups

Peer groups are groups of people who share a similar social **status** and position in society, such as people of a similar age or occupational status. They can exert pressure on their members to conform to group norms and values in settings such as schools or workplaces. People who do not conform to the group's norms risk being rejected.



Schools

During compulsory schooling, students learn how to interact in groups larger than the family. They develop important new skills. They also learn that they are expected to conform to rules and regulations – regarding punctuality and dress, for example. Some students, however, resist the rules and oppose their teachers' authority.

Workplaces

On starting a new job in an office, factory or hospital, for example, newly appointed employees must learn the culture of the workplace. They learn the formal rules regarding dress, punctuality, and health and safety. They may also pick up tips informally from colleagues on things such as how much work is expected and which of the bosses to avoid.



Religions

Religions provide guidelines for behaviour and sanctions when those guidelines are broken. Christianity, for example, provides the Ten Commandments as a guide to how followers should behave. Muslims are expected to put into practice the Five Pillars of Islam, including the alms tax (giving a proportion of one's wealth to the poor). However, some sociologists argue that a process of **secularisation** is taking place and the influence of religion is declining in society. For example, church attendance within the Church of England (the **established or state church**) is falling. If secularisation is occurring, it would suggest that religion has less of a role in the socialisation process today.



Mass media

The mass media, which include television, radio and newspapers, are a powerful source of information and knowledge about the world. Magazines, for example, often give advice on life and relationships. The media sometimes put forward messages about **gender roles** by, for example, showing women advertising washing-up liquid and men advertising cars. In this way, the media contribute to **gender socialisation**. The media (along with families and workplaces) also contribute to **political socialisation**, that is, the process by which people acquire their political views.



TASK 1: Complete the following tasks (typed) Use headings and sub-headings to structure your work appropriately.

Social structures, processes, and issues

- a) Define the following words. Social structure/institution, socialisation, social stratification and social control.
- b) Choose ONE social structure/institution and identify 2 social processes and 2 social issues linked with it.

Culture norms, values

- c) Think about the following social settings: a cinema, an aeroplane, a GP's waiting room.

- i. Choose one setting and identify two norms related to this setting.
 - ii. Identify two sanctions that might be applied to people who deviate from the norms in this setting.

- d) Explain the norms for giving and receiving gifts such as birthday presents.

- e) In your view, which of these values in the blue box below is most important to people in British society today? Briefly explain your answer

- f) Which is least important? Explain your answer

- g) Explain what sociologists mean by the term "culture"

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| privacy | honesty and truth | respect for life | respect for elders |
| acquiring more consumer goods | educational success | 'getting on' in life at any price | helping the poor |

Socialisation and agents of socialisation

- h) Define the following keywords: primary socialisation, secondary socialisation, agent of socialisation

Now we're going to have a look through the key ideas of the main sociological perspectives:

- Functionalism
- Marxism

Read through the information and answer the questions on page 10.

Karl Marx and Marxism

Marx argued that in order to understand the development of societies in the past and today, we must begin by examining production. In other words, it is necessary to examine how people go about producing the things they need in order to subsist. Marx used the term 'mode of production' to describe how people produce the things they need to subsist. One example is the **capitalist** mode of production. Marx identified two key aspects of a mode of production: the means of production and the social relations of production.

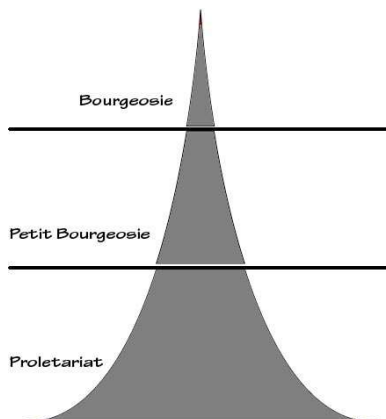
- **Means of production:** the materials, such as the raw materials or machinery, that people use in production. Under capitalism, these include capital, big businesses, machinery, factories and land.
- **Social relations of production:** the relations between people as they engage in production. Under capitalism, there are two main social classes: the **bourgeoisie** and the **proletariat**.



Karl Marx
Born: Germany
(1818-1883)

Pronounce bourgeoisie

"bore – jwa - zee"
It's French, so say "jwa" with a French accent!



Social classes

Marx identified two main social classes under capitalism: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

- The bourgeoisie are the capitalist class who own the means of production and private property. Marx saw the bourgeoisie as the ruling class in capitalist society. As owners, they have economic power and this gives them political power.
- The proletariat – the working class – own nothing but their ability to work as wage labourers and Marx saw them as the subject class.

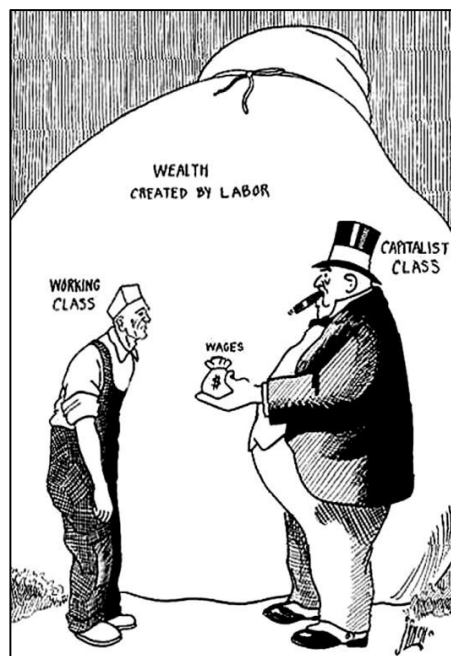
Other classes under capitalism included:

- the **petty bourgeoisie**, who own small businesses
- the **lumpenproletariat**, the 'dropouts' who sometimes sell their services to the bourgeoisie.

Marx saw the relationship between the bourgeoisie and proletariat as based on exploitation. The bourgeoisie exploit the proletariat by profiting from their labour. The bourgeoisie aim to maximise their profits and do this by paying low wages. The proletariat's interests lie in ending exploitation. These different interests lead to conflict between the classes.

Marx argued that the gap in the resources of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would get much wider over time. Members of the petty bourgeoisie would be unable to compete with bigger companies and would sink into the proletariat.

Over time, society would split more and more 'into two great hostile camps'. In Marx's view, the **class struggle** between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is the key to bringing about social change. Eventually, members of the proletariat would come to see themselves as a social class with common interests and they would take action to overthrow the capitalist class. This would lead to a period of social revolution and the move to **communism**. Under communism, the means of production would be held communally rather than by a small minority. In this situation, there would be no private ownership, no exploitation and a **classless society**.



However, we can't believe everything Marx says about society, it's important for us to be **critical** of his ideas, and to try to poke holes in it. These criticisms are essential for top grades at A Level Sociology.

Criticisms of Marx

- Marx analysed class but overlooked other social divisions such as gender and ethnicity.
- He saw social class as based on economic divisions. However, critics argue that class is also based on status (social standing or prestige) differences between groups.

Émile Durkheim and Functionalism

Emile Durkheim is one of the founders of sociology as an academic subject. His **worldview** or perspective is very different from that of Marx in important respects.

The functionalist perspective

The functionalist approach explains social institutions (such as families, education systems and social stratification systems) in terms of the functions they perform for the wider society.

To understand functionalism, a biological analogy (or comparison) can be used. In other words, we can compare society to the human body. If we want to understand the human body and how it works, we could start by identifying the vital organs such as the heart, lungs or liver. We might then focus on one organ such as the heart and look at its job or function in pumping blood around the body. Next, we might examine how the heart is connected to other parts of the body such as the blood vessels. Finally, we could look at how the heart contributes to the survival of the body as a whole.

In the same way, functionalism views society as made up of different parts that interlock and fit together. The different social institutions such as the family, education and religion are important organs in the body of society. Functionalism examines these institutions in terms of their functions, that is, the job they perform to help society run smoothly. The different social institutions meet the needs of society by performing functions to ensure its survival.

Durkheim studied crime, religion and education by focusing on the functions they fulfil in meeting the needs of society. For example, he argued that the punishment of criminals has an important function in helping to bring people together. Punishment reinforces the values and beliefs that the majority of people in society hold. By binding people together in this way, crime can contribute to **social cohesion**.

Similarities between functionalism and Marxism

Although functionalism and Marxism are different in important ways, they are both **structural approaches**. This means that they focus on the structure of society and how this influences and directs human behaviour.

However, not all sociologists agree with structural approaches. Critics argue that these approaches view people as being like puppets who are at the mercy of social forces beyond their control.



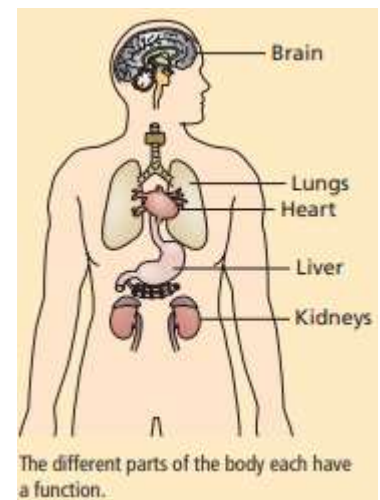
Émile Durkheim

Born: France
(1858-1917)

Pronounce Émile

"eh-meal"

*It's French, so say "eh"
with a French accent!*



Criticisms of functionalism

The functionalist approach focuses on the positive functions that things such as crime and religion perform for society. However, critics argue that functionalism overlooks their dysfunctional (or negative) aspects. In reality, crime and religion do not always perform positive functions for society. For example, knife crime can have devastating effects on individual victims and on communities; religion can cause long-term conflicts between different social groups such as Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

TASK 2: Complete the following tasks (typed) Use headings and sub-headings to structure your work appropriately.

Karl Marx and Marxism

- a) Draw an annotated hierarchy of the four social classes identified by Marx. Include a description of their position in society, examples of these people and a picture*
- b) What is capitalism?
- c) How did Marx say capitalism was exploiting the proletariat?
- d) Give an example of how the bourgeoisie may benefit from the capitalist system
- e) What did Marx say would eventually happen to
 - i) The petty bourgeoisie?
 - ii) The proletariat
 - iii) The bourgeoisie

Emile Durkheim and Functionalism

- f) In the “biological analogy”, what social feature takes the place (metaphorically) of human organs?
 - g) Explain what would happen to a human if a vital organ stopped working. According to functionalists, why is this similar to society?
 - h) Explain one similarity between Functionalism and Marxism.
-

WELL DONE!

You've now finished Section A “What is Sociology?”

Section B:

Durkheim - the 'father' of sociology

For the next part of your transition work we are going to study the work of Durkheim, the most famous sociologist. He's important because he effectively created the academic field of sociology by introducing the methodologies for it to be a 'science'. This section will go through the following areas of his work:



1. The social context of Durkheim's work.
2. Social facts and sociology as a science.
3. Collective consciousness.
4. Study on suicide

This section will be challenging – to support your thinking we will be following this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZfGGF-YYzY>

Part 1: Social context of Durkheim's work

Using the clip below watch from the start until 02.00 minutes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZfGGF-YYzY>

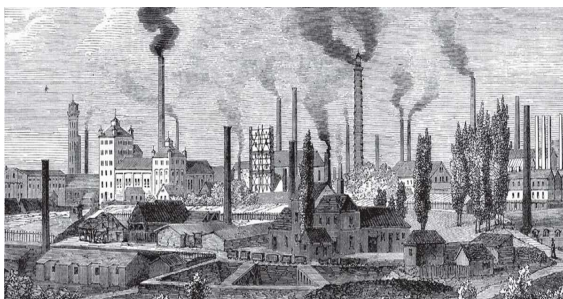
Durkheim lived in France from 1858-1917 during a time of great **social change**. Some of these changes include the following:



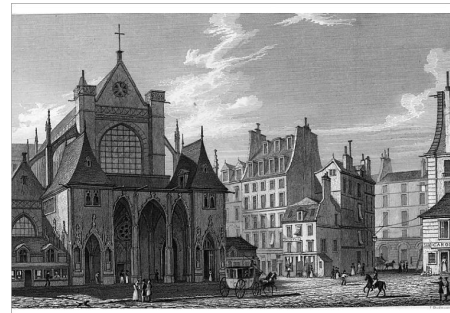
Political turmoil (change) – during the 1800's there was a revolution and a change of government 3 times



A weakening Catholic Church – religion had less authority in peoples lives.



New technologies and industrialisation



Urbanisation – people now lived in cities as opposed to close knit communities.

With these rapid social changes and the change to a society where many people believed in different things Durkheim asked himself 'what keeps a society together'?

Part 1: Social context of Durkheim's work

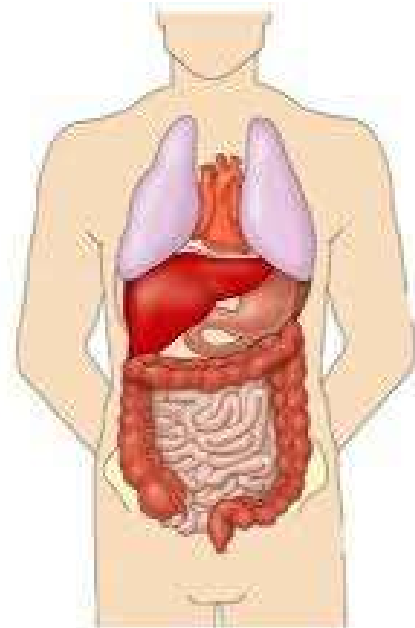
The question of '*what keeps society together*' was the foundation of a new science called 'sociology'. According to Durkheim, sociology could do the following things for society:

- Understand its normal and abnormal functioning
- Diagnose how it is changing
- Deal with the consequences of societal change

Durkheim hoped that by studying society in this way France could deal with its rapidly changing society and avoid any further turmoil in the future.

For Durkheim, sociology was for society what biology was for the body. It was a method to understand how society functions, how to structure a society which is optimal for its functioning.

Each organ represents a part of society (such as family or education) which must all function correctly for the organism (or society) to work.



This made Durkheim a **STRUCTURALIST** thinker as he believed the structure of society influenced the behaviour of individuals and groups.

Part 2: Social context of Durkheim's work

Using the clip below watch from 02.00-04.45 minutes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZfGGF-YYzY>

If sociology is a science, then what does it study?

Social Facts

"Social facts consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they can exercise control over him"



There are three important things to note about what social facts are:

- 1) **They are very broad** – it essentially means anything in society which can influence how groups or individuals behave. For example, family, religion, laws, social class, urbanization, population distribution.
- 2) **They are external to us** – social facts live independently to us. For example, you may think the act of giving gifts at Eid is something you have decided. However, you did not originally come up with this idea yourself - it was already there.
- 3) **They exercise coercive (forceful) control over us** – Durkheim argued we have little control over these social facts. For example, imagine if you wanted to stop believing in birthday celebrations. If we don't believe in them, we tend to just go along with it anyway – that's the power of social facts. Language is another – it is external and constrains our ability to express ourselves.

Part 2: Social context of Durkheim's work

Once you have watched the video and read through the information complete the tasks below:

Task 1: Create a spider diagram and write down as many social facts as you can. For example you could put – religion, the law, rules at school, reality TV etc. Think about what your values and beliefs are.

Task 2: Use two examples of the social facts you have identified and explain why it is external to you and how it controls your behaviour.

E.g. Language

Language is external to the individual as individuals do not make up their own language. The language we have is simply a lottery of geography – every society has a different language.

It control the individual as it limits their ability to express themselves.

Part 3: Collective consciousness

Using the clip below watch from 04.45-06.25 minutes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZfGGF-YYzY>

The study of 'social facts' can help us to understand how societies hold together as well as how they fall apart:



Social facts create the common consciousness...

THE COMMON CONSCIOUSNESS IS BASICALLY THE COLLECTION OF ALL THE BELIEFS, MORALS, AND IDEAS THAT ARE THE SOCIAL FACTS IN A GIVEN SOCIETY.

If these social facts are good and functional = **functional society**

If they weaken or are replaced by bad social facts = **dysfunctional society**

Part 3: Collective consciousness

Social dysfunction is when parts of society do not function well – it is like a disease to the body. A disease will cause part of your body to not function well which will potentially cause damage to all your body. The same thing can happen in society. For example, dysfunction in the family such as poor parenting may cause a child to distrust authority and lead to harm in wider society such as criminal behaviour. Remember society is interconnected (all parts of society affects each other).

Let's look at a contemporary example:

Social issue: High rates of depression

You might say that **depression** is caused by the brain. However, Durkheim would argue that you need to look beyond the individual and study **social facts** to understand the causes of this dysfunction. The cause of depression is not just biological is caused by society. For example two of these social facts may be:

Societal values – we view money and glamour as the benchmark for success over more meaningful values like love and compassion.

Weak identity– today we are a collection of individuals as opposed to a community. We are much lonelier than ever before.

Did you know: A survey in the USA found 39% of Americans would describe themselves as 'not close to anyone'!

Part 3: Collective consciousness

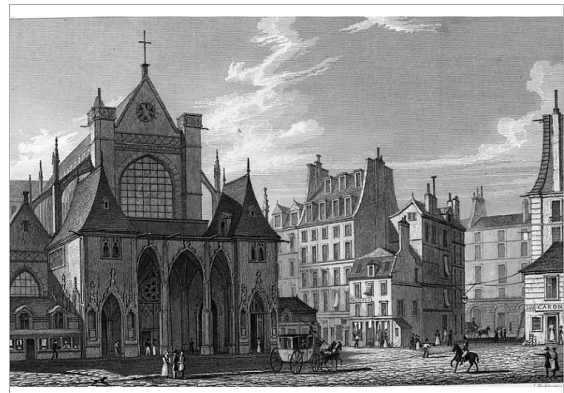
How do you stop social dysfunction?

How do you treat disease? You understand the causes! Durkheim argued that to understand the **causes** of social dysfunction you must study the **structure** of society (social facts).

The main cause of social dysfunction was 'social change' – as explained in part 1...

Remember this change:

When people all live in a tiny community in the middle of nowhere it is easy for there to be a collective consciousness. Everyone knows their place and life is straightforward. Identity is clear as the community is small. However, as people moved to cities and became part of a fragmented (broken up) community their sense of community was lost. This weakens collective consciousness because society is made up of people who have different values, cultures and norms. It causes more social dysfunction!



Urbanisation – people now lived in cities as opposed to close knit communities.

Part 3: Collective consciousness

Task 1: Below are several things in society which arguably help to create a collective consciousness. For each one explain why it does this:



Religion



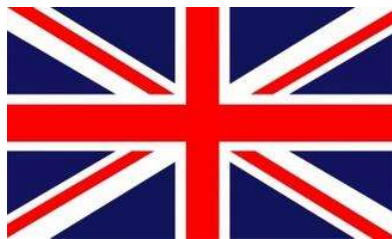
Football World Cup



The Law



Christmas



The Flag



Human Rights

Task 2: Below are three things in society which arguably erode (stop) collective consciousness. For each one explain why it does this:



Unemployment



Materialistic Values



High Crime²⁰

Part 4: Suicide

Using the clip below watch from 06.25 minutes to finish:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZfGGF-YYzY>

To prove his theory that social facts drive our actions, Durkheim studied the causes of suicide. He used official statistics to show how a range of **social facts** caused suicide:

Religion

Political or national crisis

Economic problems

Family size

Divorce rates

Occupational groups

Conclusions

- Suicide rate varies between societies.
- Suicide rate varies between different groups within the same society.

Durkheim, therefore, discounted **individualistic** explanations of suicide. He also eliminated statistically factors such as climate, seasons, alcoholism, heredity and mental state.

Part 4: Suicide

Durkheim found there were four types of suicide:

| | |
|---|---|
| Egoistic – bonds which unite groups weaken, and individuality increases. Too little integration | Anomic – individuals are not regulated by norms and values of the group, or social order. Too little regulation |
| Altruistic – bonds between groups too strong, so individuals sacrifice themselves. Too much integration into norms/values | Fatalistic – norms of society oppress too much and stifle individuals. Too much regulation by rules of society |

The blue represents types of suicide found in modern society whereas the orange is types of suicide found in traditional society.

What examples are there:

Egoistic suicide – Not being part of a social group = isolated and helpless in times of crisis.

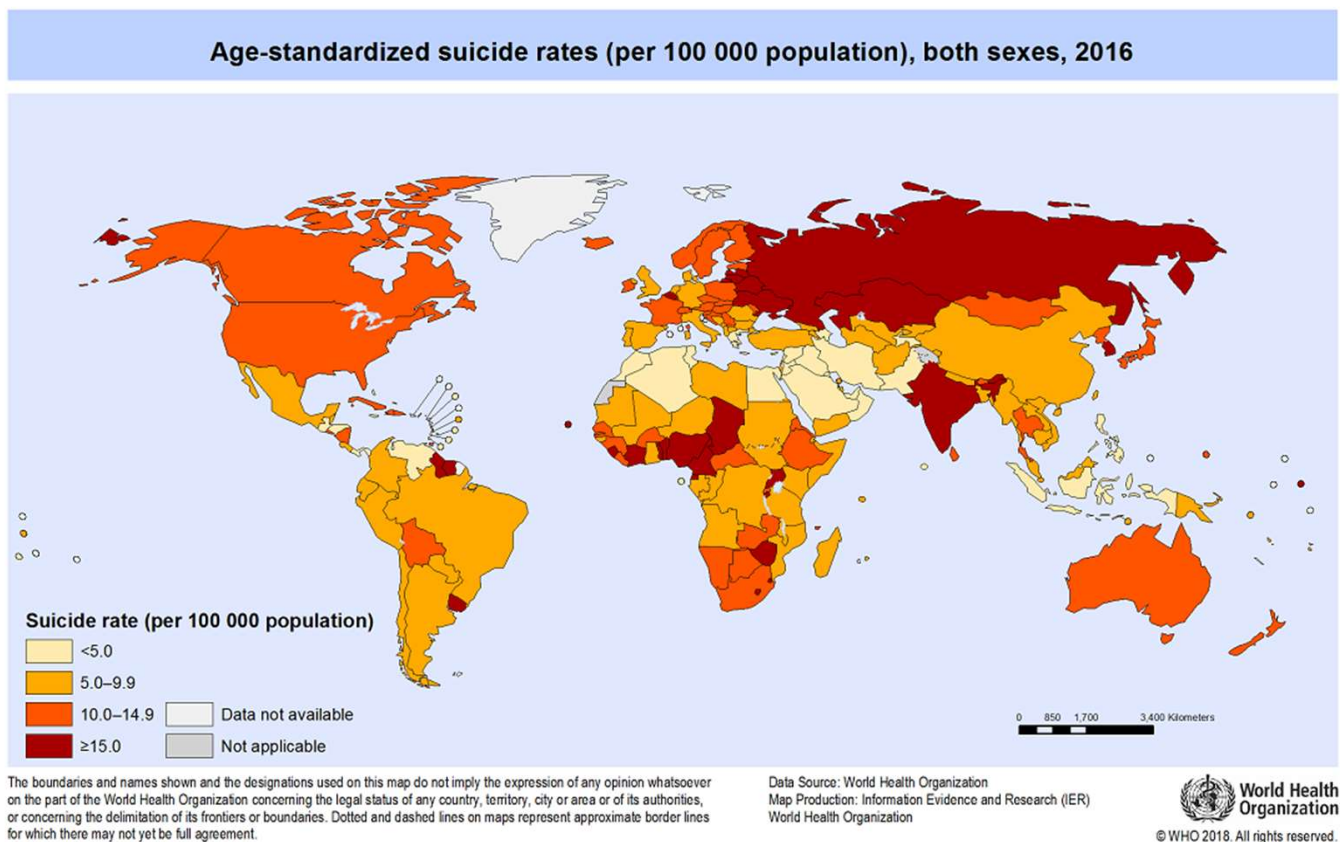
Anomic suicide – No clear modes of behaviour or morality to guide the individual = confusion that life is meaningless when there is major disruption in life.

E.g. Durkheim found that suicide rates are much higher among Protestants than Catholics – this could be due to suicide being a sin in Catholicism and not in Protestantism.

Part 4: Suicide

His study was revolutionary as he was the first person to put forward the idea that a very personal act like suicide is determined by social forces external to the control of the individual.

In some ways we can apply this today:



You may, for example, notice that Middle Eastern countries have relatively lower suicide rates. Most people in those countries are Muslim and in Islam suicide is a sin. Durkheim would argue that 'anomic suicide' is less likely there.

Part 4: Suicide

Over the past decade depression rates for young people in the UK have nearly doubled. Throughout history the cause of depression was often seen as biological such as low serotonin levels. However, Yohan Hari suggests this is only partly true. Like Durkheim, he argued that social forces (or the way we live) is causing depression.

Task: Watch the following Ted Talk clip by Hari:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MB5IX-np5fE> and write a summary of his finding (thinking mainly about how it is like the ideas of Durkheim).

Your summary should include the following:

- How have doctors traditionally diagnosed depression?
- What biological factors can cause depression?
- What social factors cause depression (these are social facts!)?
- Focus on 'loneliness' and 'junk values' and explain how they can cause depression.
- According to Hari, how should we therefore treat depression?
- What are the similarities to Durkheim's study of the causes of suicide?

WELL DONE!

You've now finished Section B "Durkheim Suicide Study"

Section C:

The London Riots

The 2011 London Riots – Background/ Context

Between 6 and 10 August 2011, several London boroughs and other cities and towns across England suffered widespread rioting, looting and arson.

The first night of rioting took place on 7 August 2011 after a peaceful protest in Tottenham, following the death of Mark Duggan, a local man from the area, who was shot dead by police on 4 August 2011. Police failed to notify Duggan's family of his death and no senior police officer was available to meet the protest, creating anger at perceived disrespect. The protesting crowd outside the police station set light to two police cars, and the pictures of this circulated on social media attracted other people to the area – what started as a relatively peaceful protest quickly descended into a riot involving mass looting.



The following days saw similar scenes in other parts of London with the worst violence taking place in , Brixton, Chingford, Peckham, Enfield, Croydon, Ealing and East Ham. The city center in Oxford Circus was also attacked. From 8 until 10 August, other cities in England including Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool, along with several towns, saw what was described by the media as 'copycat violence'.

The riots were characterized by rampant looting and arson attacks of unprecedented levels. As a result, Prime Minister David Cameron returned early from his holiday in Italy and other government leaders also ended their holidays to attend to the matter. All police leave was cancelled and Parliament was recalled on 11 August to debate the situation.

There were a total 3,443 crimes across London linked to the disorder, including 5 deaths and at least 16 others injured as a direct result of related violent acts. An estimated £200 million worth of property damage was incurred, and local economic activity was significantly compromised.

The riots have generated significant on-going debate among political, social and academic figures about the causes and context in which they happened.

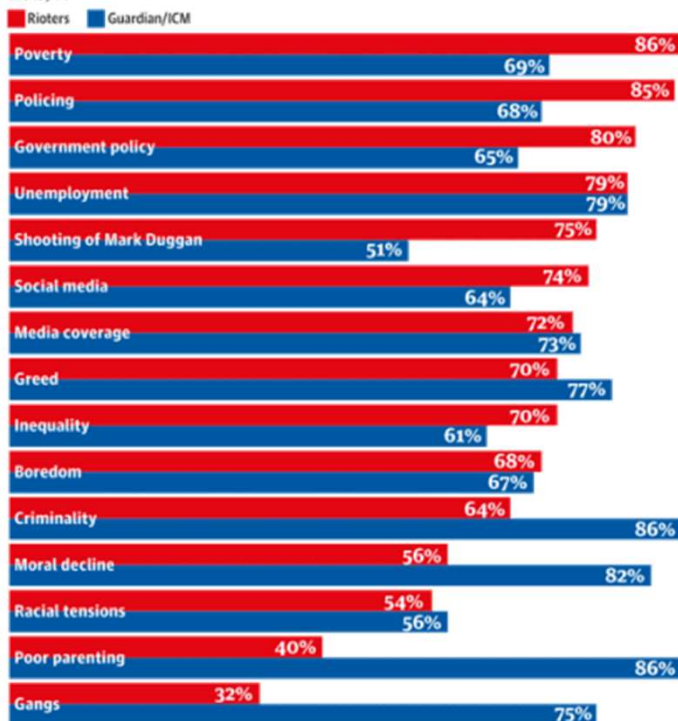
London Riots

What were the main causes of the riots?

The findings below are based on the research findings taken from Reading the Riots. Researchers spoke to 270 rioters: 185 people in London, 30 in Birmingham, 29 in Manchester, 16 in Liverpool, seven in Salford and three in Nottingham. Thirteen were in prison

Cause of the riots

Respondents who said listed item was an 'important' or 'very important' cause of the riots, %



Riots happening again

The riots will happen again



Of respondents expressing a view When?



Would you get involved again?



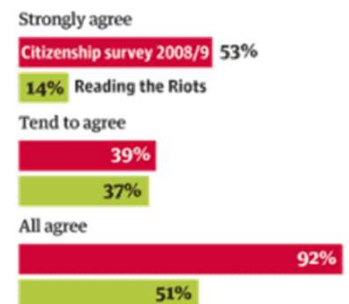
Policing

Respondents saying police in their area generally do an 'excellent' or 'good' job



Integration

'I feel I am part of British Society'

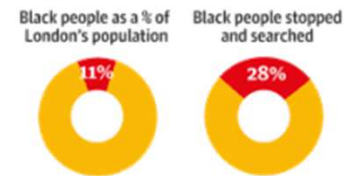


Stop and search

Have you been stopped and searched in the last 12 months?



Stopped and search in London, 2009/10



SOURCE: ICM/BGS/GUARDIAN RESEARCH/ POLICE POWERS & PROCEDURES BULLETIN

Based on the above interviews, the rioters themselves stated the following five main causes (percentages reporting this as a factor in brackets)

- Poverty (86%)
- Policing (85%)
- Government Policy (80%)
- Unemployment (79%)
- The shooting of Mark Duggan (75%)

However, what the rioters said isn't necessarily valid (true).

London Riots

Task 1: Watch the documentary linked below (1hr) which explains the causes of the riot and make notes outlined below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkeKQl56-7c>

Task 2: Make notes under the following subtitles:

1. Where did the riots take place (specific areas of London/UK)?
2. What was the 'trigger' cause of the riot?
3. Why do some people argue that the main cause of the riots was due to racism?
4. Why do some people argue the main cause of the riots was due to poverty?
5. Why do some people argue the main cause of the riots was due to the influence of gangs?
6. Why do some people argue the main cause of the riots was due to poor socialisation (upbringing)?
7. Why do some people argue the main cause of the riots was due to mindless young 'thuggery'?
8. Any other notes.

London Riots

The London Riots are a clear example of societal dysfunction which means it is a very important case study for sociologists to study. As you know, there are many different perspectives in sociology who all analyse society and the causes of crime in society differently. Read the summaries below which outlines how each sociological perspective would interpret the riots.

Functionalism – argues that society needs crime. Rather than looking at crime as a purely negative phenomenon, crime also has positive social functions. The riots, for example, lead to a temporary suspension of inter-gang violence, and, as a media event, it gave the rest of us something unite against, thus increasing unity in society more generally.

Bonds of Attachment Theory (Functionalism) – The cause of deviance is the breakdown or weakening of informal agencies of social control such as the family and community. Criminal activity occurs when the individual's attachment to society is weakened. This theory would blame poor parenting as the main cause of the riots.

Consensus Subcultural Theory – argues crime is a collective response to the above situation of frustration – If you can't gain status by getting a job, you seek status by some other means within a subculture (possibly a gang) and riots can offer you an opportunity to gain status by 'going further than the next person'.

Left-Realism – Argues there are two main causes of crime – Marginalisation and Relative Deprivation – largely borne out by the Guardian research above.

London Riots

Traditional Marxism – Argues that crime is a response to a Capitalist system that breeds materialism, greed and selfishness. They also point out that many members of the Elite classes are criminals themselves, but it is generally only the powerless that get punished for their criminal acts, while elites tend to avoid punishment. The rioters were largely teenage youths living in poor areas and many got disproportionate punishments for their involvement in the riots, while politicians engaging in criminal acts often get away without punishment.

Interactionists – See criminal behaviour as a response to labelling by agents of social control – mainly the police. Focusing on the riots – Interactionists would argue that police racism over the last 3 decades has led to black youths being disproportionately targeted by stop and search – and it was this history of negative attention from the police that sparked the riots.

Right Realists – Argue that the riots were caused because of a basic breakdown of both informal and formal social control – weak communities and too few police on the streets, and society not being tough enough on crime. Rioters had too much freedom and felt like they could get away with their crimes.

Post-modernism – Argues that the riots are a response to a postmodern society characterised by consumerism, an obsession with self-identity and a quest for excitement. For many the riots were a 'scene' where they could 'play a game' – engaging in vandalism and challenging the police provide both status and excitement – much more than any nightclub could offer.

London Riots

Task: Write an essay explaining the sociological causes of the London Riots, 2011.

“The main cause of the London Riots was poverty” – to what extent do you agree?

Success Criteria

Introduction

- Describe some details about the riots
- Outline which sociological arguments you will evaluate

Paragraph 1

- Identify sociological perspective which agrees with the statement (for example Left Realism)
- Write a PEEL paragraph (point, evidence, explain, link (evaluate the extent to which))

Paragraph 2

- Identify a competing theory (for example Functionalism or Post Modernism)
- Write a PEEL paragraph (point, evidence, explain, link (evaluate the extent to which))

Paragraph 3

- Identify a competing theory (for example Interactionalism or Right Realism)
- Write a PEEL paragraph (point, evidence, explain, link (evaluate the extent to which))

Conclusion

- Weigh up the arguments and come to a judgment.

WELL DONE!

You've now finished Section D "The London Riots"

WELL DONE!