

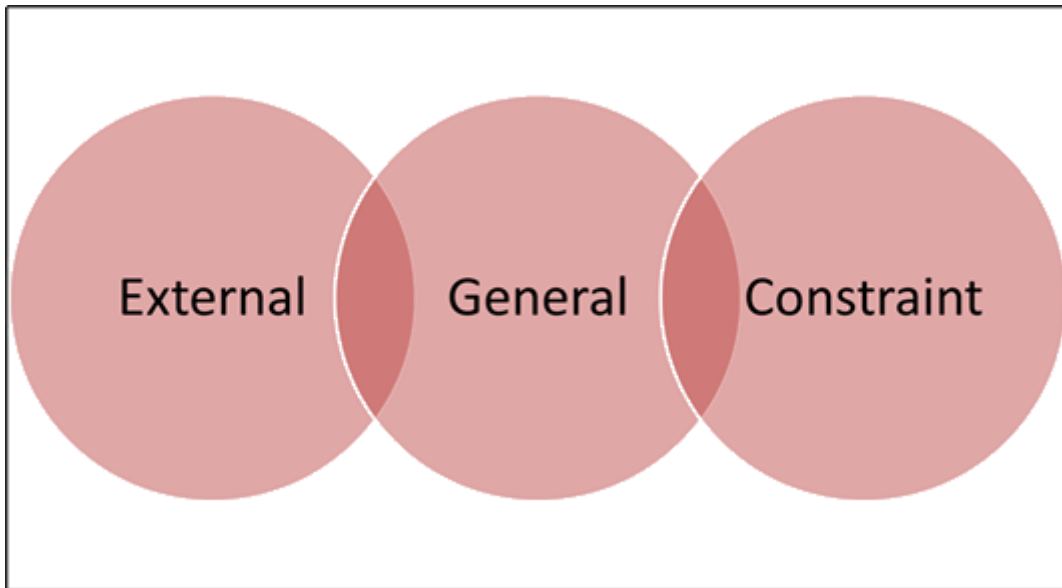
Examrace

Social Facts: Emile Durkheim: Introduction, Meaning and Characteristics

Doorsteptutor material for competitive exams is prepared by world's top subject experts: [get questions, notes, tests, video lectures and more](#)- for all subjects of your exam.

Introduction and Meaning

- Durkheim was a French Sociologist of the 19th century
- Known as Father of Modern Sociology
- He was influenced by August Comte and established Sociology as an empirical Science
- Some of his famous works include:
 - “The Division Of Labour In Society” , “Suicide” , “The Elementary Forms Of Religious Life” , “The Rules Of Sociological Method” , etc.
- He defined sociology as the science of social facts and stressed on having sociology its own independent subject matter away from science
- In his book, “The Rules Of Sociological Method” He proposed the theory of social facts
- According to him, Sociology is a science which is an objective science conforming to the model of the other sciences and whose object is social fact
- Social facts represent a category of facts with distinctive characteristics which are external to the individual endowed with the power of coercion by means of which they control him.
- The ways of thinking, acting and feeling which are external to individual, constraint in nature and general in character.
- We cannot control them
- They are sui generis i.e.. Of its own kind



©Examrace. Report @violations @https://tips.fbi.gov/

Characteristics of Social Fact

- They must be regarded as things and they must exercise constraint and be external to individual.
- By external to individual he means that it exists outside the individual and imposes itself on the members of the society. These facts have been there in the society even before the individual was born and it keeps on getting imposed as the individual grows up and socializes
- It is constrained in the manner that it is coercive, and it has the power to impose itself on the individuals and individuals have to follow it
- it is general in characteristic implies that it is equally implied and applied on the various members of the society irrespective of social differences.
- An example could be how girls and boys are treated to behave differently right from the childhood

Types of Social Facts

- Normal social facts or Institutional are helpful for the continuity and functioning of the society and they are beneficial for the society for e. g. occasional crimes
- Structural Morphological: Physical manifestation changes, change in clothing like in Jainism
- On the other hand, abnormal social or pathological (less accepted like gay marriage) fact is a fact which goes beyond the normal or functional rate in the society and it may lead to anomie. e. g. riots, suicide

- He also said that there can be psychological facts for example the likes and dislikes of people and they are studied as human behaviours and Psychology and in Sociology how society frames the individual that is studied

Study of Social Facts

- Rules of observation: Identify symbols
- Rules of classification: based on various classes
- Rules of distinction: normal or abnormal?
- Rules of explanation: empirical, objectivity

Criticism

- This theory was criticized on various grounds like the importance of individual was ignored and stress on society is given as said by L . A. Closser
- Gabriel Tarde said that it is difficult to imagine and appreciate his analysis of society bereft of individuals
- There is a lack of definition of the term 'things'

Conclusion

In spite of the criticisms, his effort to establish social facts as the study matter of Sociology cannot be ignored and has led to establish the foundation for functional approach.

MCQs

1. The term sui generis was used by

1. Karl Marx
2. Emile Durkheim
3. Max Weber
4. None of the above

Ans. B. Emile Durkheim

2. Durkheim's examples of social facts are

1. Laws
2. Morals
3. Beliefs
4. All of the above

Ans: D. All of the Above

#UGC-NET

#Emiledurkheim

#Functionalist

#Sociological Theories

 Manishika

Developed by: [Mindsprite Solutions](#)