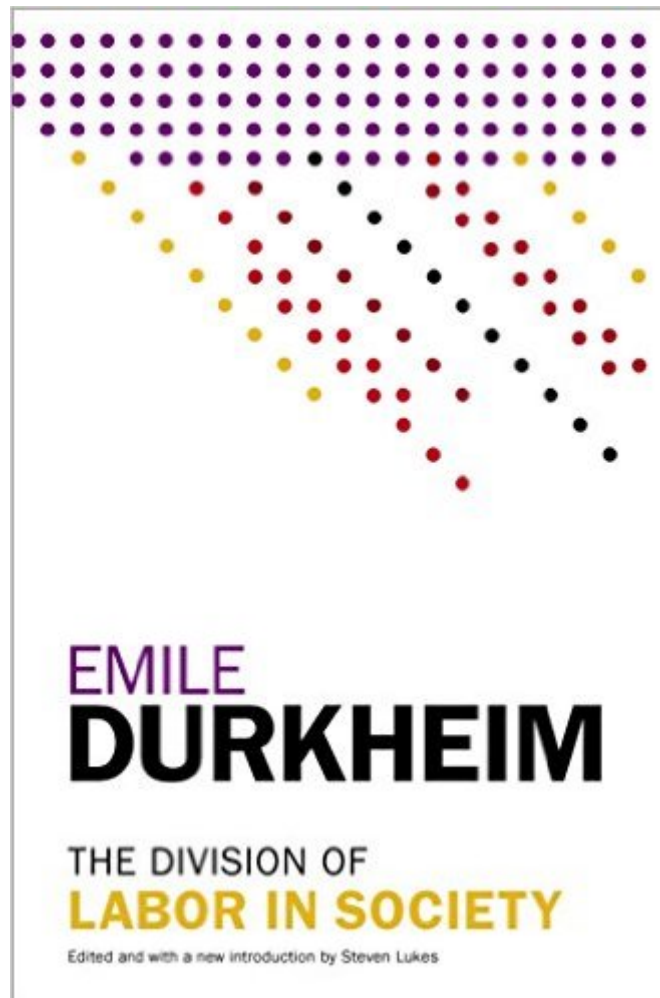


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# The Division Of Labor In Society



## Synopsis

Revised for the first time in over thirty years, this edition of Emile Durkheim's masterful work on the nature and scope of sociology is updated with a new introduction and improved translation by leading scholar Steven Lukes that puts Durkheim's work into context for the twenty-first century reader. When it was originally published, it was an entirely original work on the nature of labor and production as they were being shaped by the industrial revolution. Emile Durkheim's seminal work studies the nature of social solidarity and explores the ties that bind one person to the next in order to hold society together. This revised and updated second edition fluently conveys Durkheim's arguments for contemporary readers. Leading Durkheim scholar Steve Lukes's new introduction builds upon Lewis Coser's original which places the work in its intellectual and historical context and pinpoints its central ideas and arguments. Lukes explains the text's continued significance as a tool to think about and deal with problems that face us today. The original translation has been revised and reworked in order to make Durkheim's arguments clearer and easier to read. The Division of Labor in Society is an essential resource for students and scholars hoping to deepen their understanding of one of the pioneering voices in modern sociology and twentieth-century social thought.

## Book Information

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Durkheim is sometimes characterized as "the sociologist of constraint," meaning that, as he saw it, an unregulated life is devoid of meaning and a source of misery. In a very limited way, one might argue that Durkheim, in contrast to Marx, held that man does have a rudimentary nature, at least in

terms of social and cultural needs. People need norms, standards, and social ties to provide them with direction, purpose, knowledge of realistic limits, and a sense of belonging. This is one reason for Durkheim's life-long interest in religion as a social phenomenon. His emphasis on constraint and stability also helps explain why he is commonly regarded as a conservative. Durkheim was less optimistic than Marx with regard to prospects for the variegated development of human potential. While Marx envisioned opportunities for people to develop a broad range of talents in a self-actualizing way, Durkheim was more cautious. His emphasis on an evermore complex division of labor characterized by increasingly narrow specialization held his expectations in check. At the same time, however, Durkheim was convinced that a more complex division of labor and the organic solidarity it occasioned enabled individuals to become more independent and self-determining. As with Marx, however, Durkheim was aware that increasing specialization did not serve all interests equally well. While Durkheim and Marx have more in common than is typically acknowledged, Durkheim did not view the antagonistic character of the capital-labor relationship as inevitable or basic to the structure of capitalist society.

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