THE IMPACT OF FUSTEL DE COULANGES' *LA CITE ANTIQUE* ON DURKHEIM'S THEORIES OF SOCIAL MORPHOLOGY AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY*

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ABSTRACT

Although long recognized as a formative influence on Durkheim's theory of religion, Fustel de Coulanges' contributions to Durkheim's thinking on social morphology have not been accorded the recognition they deserve. The paper reviews the relevant sections of Fustel's classic essay, *La Cite antique,* originally published in 1864, and demonstrates their impact on the arguments on segmental social organization in *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893). Drawing special attention to the critique of utilitarianism which is common to both books, the article counters the recent tendency to overstate the materialistic elements in *The Division of Labor in Society.* By showing the continuity between Durkheim and Fustel on the matter of social morphology, it provides circumstantial evidence that Durkheim's 1895 "revelation" regarding the importance of religion in social life was in many ways a rediscovery of Fustel's analysis of the religion of antiquity.

History has established that, except in abnormal cases, each society has in the main a morality suited to it, and that any other would not only be impossible but also fatal to the society which attempted to follow it.

-Emile Durkheim
"The Determination of Moral Facts,"
1906 (1953:56)

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INTRODUCTION

One guiding presumption of Durkheim scholarship over the years has been that the progenitor of academic sociology laid the conceptual pillars of his theoretical system early in his intellectual career. As Nandan put it recently, "Durkheim was one of those few philosophers or social scientists who never changed his fundamental ideas" (1980:13).

Now a different approach to Durkheim has been offered, one which focuses explicitly on the discontinuities of his thought. Jeffery C. Alexander effectively argues in *The Antinomies of Classical Thought: Marx and Durkheim* (1982) that Durkheim's attempt to reconcile individual freedom and external constraint through the concept of the division of labor ended in failure in 1893. Nisbet (1966:85-86) had noticed earlier that the concept of organic solidarity, which promised to account simultaneously for both the voluntaristic and necessitarian aspects of social action, disappeared midway through *The Division of Labor in Society.* Whereas Nisbet attributed this to ideological concerns, however, Alexander argues that the instrumental pole of the dialectic collapsed during Durkheim's "middle period" (1894-1896). During this period Durkheim shifted from a rational, "substantivist" concept of man to *homo duplex* and defined social facts as "ways of thinking, acting and feeling" at once external and internal to the individual. According to Alexander, what prompted this presuppositional shift was Durkheim's deepening interest in the emotionally charged and ritually preserved association known as religion.[1]

Alexander and other proponents of the discontinuity thesis, such as Jones (1981), place considerable emphasis on Durkheim's unusually reflective 1907 letter to the editor of *Revue neo-scolastique,* in which he wrote that the "studies of religious history which I had just undertaken [for his 1894/95 lectures on the sociology of religion] and notably... the works of Robertson Smith and his school," marked "a dividing line in the development of my thought." Indeed, Durkheim described the "clear sense of the essential role played by religion in social life" thus achieved as a "revelation" (Lukes, 1972:237; see also Alexander, 1982:235, 478).

While there is little reason to doubt that Smith's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* [1887] had the impact Durkheim recounts, it can not be inferred that religion was incidental to Durkheim's earlier work or that no previous author addressed the subject in a manner consistent with Smith's subsequent treatment, such that Smith's insights served to restimulate an earlier doctrine

which had lain dormant and undeveloped during Durkheim's flirtations with instrumentalism.

Alexander, in fact, proposes just such an influence model, although he makes no effort to explain from whence Durkheim's earlier ideas developed. Rather than overdramatize Durkheim's "revelation", Alexander states:

> The subjective model of association was already in place by early 1894. When Durkheim encounters religion later that year, or in 1895, there is more of a convergence than a radical break. Rather than a call to start anew, Durkheim sees in [Smith's] writing on religion a means of finally completing his own theoretical system. He reads this theory of religion in a way that meshes perfectly with his own developing theory of association (1982:236).

In contrast to his later writings, Durkheim's sociological interest in religion before 1895 is largely expended in two lines of inquiry. One looks at the role of ritual and ceremony in generating social solidarity, mainly in pre-modern societies. The other looks at the correlation between the types of social solidarity and the size and complexity of social organization. The former inquiry aims at what may be called, following Alexander (1982:236), a "theory of association." The latter inquiry is more descriptive and typological; its goal is a "theory of social morphology." Alexander elaborates the elements of Durkheim's theory of association in detail (1982:240-242, 260-261), but not their origin, although he is aware that "By the time Durkheim encountered Smith, he already shared Smith's emphasis on the human practice, or association, that underlined any commitment to ideal beliefs" (1982:236). He expends even less effort on the theory of social morphology, referring only to the demographic and never the social organizational aspects (e.g. 1982:253-254).

While Alexander's account is persuasive on the level of theoretical logic, there are gaps at the level of intellectual history. For, if Smith's research "converges" with Durkheim's thinking on religion, then Durkheim must already have had a reservoir of propositions from some other source. And since Durkheim did not explore the historical and ethnographic literature in great depth prior to 1895, his thinking on the role of religion in generating social solidarity and preserving social organization must have been influenced by a handful of major authors, among whom Fustel de Coulanges must have ranked highly.

If Alexander's thesis stimulates a new spate of studies on Durkheim's theory of religion, as it is likely to do, a deeper appreciation of Fustel de Coulanges *La*

Cite antique will be required. As is well-known, Fustel, the most distinguished and honored French historian of his day, was Durkheim's teacher at the Ecole Normale Superieure, as well as its director from 1880 to 1883. Durkheim dedicated his Latin thesis on Montesquieu to Fustel's memory (he died in 1889). Later, in his 1896 "Preface" to the first issue of *L'Annee sociologique,* Durkheim attributed his early interest in sociology to Fustel, who was fond of saying, "History is the science of social facts, that is to say sociology itself" (quoted in Momigliano, 1977:339; see also Lukes, 1972:58-63).[2] It is very likely that Durkheim reexamined *La Cite antique* during his "middle period," both in conjunction with the lectures on religion and in preparation for his article, "De la definition des phenomenes religieux," which appeared in 1899. But as this essay will argue, the impact of *La Cite antique* is more pervasive than the phenomenon of religion narrowly conceived. Reading *La Cite antique,* originally published in 1864 (it went through seven editions by 1878), from the argument of *The Division of Labor in Society,* one finds at least four large themes common to both books. They are:

1. religion as the font of the moral order and the source of social cohesion;
2. rejection of utilitarian and social contract theories of the origin of human association;
3. a morphology of premodern types of social organization, arranged in a sequence from simple to complex and linked to modes of social solidarity; and
4. a conception of institutions as "social facts."

The essay below approaches these themes through an examination of *La Cite antique's* contribution to Durkheim's theory of social morphology, by which is meant the theory of "social types" or "species" (Durkheim, 1938:76). Much of this work seems very dated today, as well it should, since it draws upon some of the earliest ethnographies of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, its location in the Durkheim corpus is pivotal. The theory of social morphology is the bridge between Durkheim's sociologism (or "social realism," the ontological postulate that society is a whole greater than the sum of its parts and therefore an entity irreducible and efficacious) and his vision of society as a moral community. As such, it is the genuine historical content behind the typology of mechanical and organic solidarity and the missing link without which Durkheim's discussion of the "causes of the division of labor" will invariably appear deterministic and neo-Darwinian.

This essay complements recent Durkheim scholarship by arguing that Durkheim learned three fundamental and lifelong lessons from *La Cite antique:* that morality is a product of the state of social complexity; that the social psychological conditions of right action vary with the number and types of "social segments" compounded in society at a given stage of development; and lastly, that overly swift changes in the social organization of society produce contradictory moral imperatives upheld by groups located in different junctures in social life, and thus states of anomie for individuals caught betwixt and between. The theory of ritual association embedded in *La Cite antique,* furthermore, is the very one Durkheim rediscovered in his 1895 "revelation." Despite subsequent modifications in terminology and a vastly deeper appreciation of the demographic dimension, the theory of social morphology still bears tell-tale marks of its intellectual origin. A fresh reading of *La Cite antique* is indispensible to anyone seeking to understand how Durkheim assembled his theoretical system.[3]

La Cite Antique

The subject matter of *La Cite antique* can be found in its subtitle, "A Study of the Religion, Laws and Institutions of Greece and Rome." The subtitle is most apt, for Fustel's thesis was precisely that the major institutions of ancient society were founded upon and presupposed religion. Not just any religion, but a peculiar and highly prehistoric kind: the cult of the dead. But what lifts *La Cite antique* above the idealist philosophies of history with which it is often superficially compared,[4] is the substratum with which it is ineluctably linked: the family, seen by Fustel as the original form of human association. Thus Fustel de Coulanges' central thesis involves two variables which are forever conjoined in Durkheim's systematic theory: religion and social organization. His method, too, is precisely the same as Durkheim's, for it obeys the same Cartesian imperative: to find in the earliest and simplest social facts the essence of the mature form.[5] The method reveals an evolution from moral particularism and concentric social organization toward moral universalism, rationalism and individualism. Indeed, the internal structure of *La Cite antique* is isomorphic to that of *The Division of Labor in Society.* But whereas Durkheim took as his object the whole of Western civilization up to the modern, urban-industrial societies, Fustel restricted himself to the period from the origin of the ancient city to its demise. Both books set out to refute the

utilitarian and social contract theories of the origin of human cooperation. Both insists that humans first associate with one another on the basis of sacred beliefs, and only then cooperate in the pursuit of profane ends. And both find that transformations in the social organization of society correspond to transformations in the moral order, specifically, that the more numerous the segments of society and the more frequent their dealings with one another, the more abstract and universal become their moral principles, and the further into the historical past recede the original, formative religious ideas.

In order to comprehend the significance of this linkage between the number of "segments" in a social species and the degree of universalism in its moral order, it is necessary to discuss first the conditions of social solidarity in "prehistory," that is, the period before societies were complex enough to be differentiated into segments. At this time, according to Fustel de Coulanges, the embryonic form of society was the large paternalistic family group (the gens). The basis of its cohesiveness, however, was neither territory nor genes nor mutal aid, but religion. That claim, with all its ramifications, is what makes *La Cite antique* so important today.

Social Solidarity in Prehistory

According to Fustel de Coulanges, the key to understanding the legal and political institutions of antiquity lies in religion. Without a common faith, no purposive associations could be established between men. This is not to be understood abstractly, as some vague "precondition" or intellectual "legitimation." On the contrary, religion dominated the intimate sphere of everyday life. Religion "enveloped man... It regulated all the acts of man, disposed of every instant of his life, fixed all his habits. It governed a human being with an authority so absolute that there was nothing beyond its control" (Fustel de Coulanges, 1956:166).

What gave religion such power over everyday life was the cult it devised to ensure men a contented life in the afterworld. After death, ancient religion stipulated that the soul went to no distant realm; it continued to live beneath the soil. And just as a man was buried with the things he would need in the next life—clothing, utensils, weapons, sometimes slaves and horses—so too his soul required periodic nurturance in gifts of food and wine. It was the obligation of a man's descendants to supply these provisions regularly and, in conjunction, to maintain in the home an alter, before which burned an eternal flame

symbolizing the continuity of worship and ancestry (the "hearth"). Letting the sacred fire die down was one most reprehensible of crimes, punishable by death, for it meant that the ancestoral line had become extinguished. Only improper burial was worse. The soul suffering such privation haunted the descendants, bringing bad fortune and misery upon them. The responsibility for avoiding these catastrophies fell to the male head of the line. Anxious compliance with the cult marked his every move (see Fustel de Coulanges, 1956:16-38).[6]

The ritual obligations of the living toward the dead passed from generation to generation. More than that, they fixed the boundary and internal structure of the family group. The priestly rites sanctified patriarchal authority, kept affinal and cognate lines intact and prescribed domestic morality. It was not blood ties that defined the family. Kinship was not a natural bond of affection or need, but a community of worship. Indeed, an early meaning of the word "family" in Greek was "that which is near a hearth" (1956:40). On this basis, Fustel explained why rites associated with matrimony were conducted originally in two households—one to release the woman from her prior ancestoral obligations, the second to initiate her to the new hearth—why adultery was the greatest domestic crime, and why the male head had the right to reject a child suspected of being illegitimate or to adopt in case of sterility (1956:39-46). Religion *constituted* the family by imposing pervasive moral rules upon all members of the household, thus binding them into a system of rights and obligations.

Two features of this domestic faith should be noted. First, the delimited social organizational substratum constricted moral obligation to rather narrow bounds, outside of which obligations were not recognized as binding. Moral particularism held sway.

> The religion of these primitive ages was exclusively domestic; so also were morals. Religion did not say to a man, showing him another man, That is thy brother. It said to him, That is a stranger; he cannot participate in the religious acts of thy hearth; he cannot approach the tomb of thy family; he has other gods than thine, and cannot unite with thee in common prayer; thy gods reject his adoration, and regard him as their enemy; he is thy foe also (Fustel de Coulanges, 1956:95).

Secondly, Fustel emphasized not intellectual belief, but ritual, cult, as the source of familial cohesion, just as Durkheim would do in his analysis of totemism (see Durkheim, 1915:431).

> The word religion did not signify what it signifies for us; by this word we understand a body of dogmas, a doctrine concerning God, a symbol of faith concerning what is in and around us. This same word, among the ancients, signified rites, ceremonies, acts of exterior worship. The doctrine was of small account: the practices were the important part; these were obligatory, and bound man (*ligare, religio*). Religion was a material bond, a chain which held man a slave. Man had originated it, and he was governed by it. He stood in fear of it, and dared not reason upon it, or discuss it, or examine it. Gods, heroes, dead men, claimed a material worship from him, and he paid them the debt, to keep them friendly, and, still more, not to make enemies of them (Fustel de Coulanges, 1956:132).

Social Facts

Many of Fustel's insights, made in the absence of archaeological and ethnographic research, can be (and were) disputed, especially his derivation of the idea of private property from the sepulture.[7] In social theory, however, ideas can be rehabilitated, either by making them into assumptions or by finding new sources of evidence to support them. Durkheim did both. He turned to the ethnographic evidence when Fustel's assumption of a common Indo-European heritage became suspect and when scholars disputed whether the religion of the dead was truly universal, or merely the ideology of the aristocratic gentes.[8] Historians of sociology too often cite Durkheim's keenness to criticisms like these as indicative of fundamental differences (e.g. Lukes, 1972:63). They overlook the other strategy of rehabilitation, conversion of disputed-yet-attractive ideas into assumptions. Durkheim did just that by making Fustel's insights into the origin of the institutions of antiquity into insights into the nature of institutions as such. Similarly, rather than defend the empirical veracity of statements about specific aspects of ancient society, he used Fustel's analysis to define the nature of society itself. Thus, by dialectic, he arrived at a conception of society as a moral community.

As for institutions, it is well known that Durkheim defined them as "ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him" (1938:3). The prototype of all institutions is, naturally, religion, for it is both the historical source of moral obligation and the embodiment of collective power greater than the individual. As Durkheim sought to define the nature of social facts in order to

claim them as the subject matter of a natural science, he had only to generalize from Fustel's conception of religion. As the following passage demonstrates, often he did not have to generalize very far.

> The social tie was not easy to establish between those human beings who were so diverse, so free, so inconstant. To bring them under the rules of a community, to institute commandments and ensure obedience, to cause passion to give way to reason, and individual right to public right, there certainly was something necessary, stronger than a material force, more respectable than interest, surer than a philosophical theory, more unchangeable than a convention; something that should dwell equally in all hearts, and should be all-powerful there.
>
> This power was a belief. Nothing has more power over the soul. A belief is the work of our mind, but we are not on that account free to modify it at will. It is our own creation, but we do not know it. It is human, and we believe it a god. It is the effect of our power, and it is stronger than we are. It is in us; it does not quit us: it speaks to us at every moment. If it tells us to obey, we obey; if it traces duties for us, we submit. Man may, indeed, subdue nature, but he is subdued by his own thoughts (Fustel de Coulanges, 1956:132).

Religion and Social Morphology

The standard account of Fustel de Coulanges' relation to Durkheim confines Fustel's influence to the limited bounds of "the sacred" (Nisbet, 1966:243). Indeed, many commentators presume that Fustel's influence was somehow put "on hold" until Durkheim turned to this subject again in *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life.* On the contrary, this paper argues that it can be found in the axis of concepts dealing with ritual, ceremony, solidarity and morphology in *Division of Labor in Society,* Durkheim's most materialistic work. Secondly, it is important to broaden the terms of the relation from religion to mechanical solidarity in general, as Lukes has done (1972:61). To do so is to recognize that mechanical solidarity, which is based on "resemblances" between people and is characterized by a strong "collective conscience," pertains not only to the earliest society in the scale of social evolution, but to any society formed on the principle of "segmental" social organization. Once mechanical solidarity and segmental social organization are coupled in this way, a dynamic of generalization quickly becomes evident. As the number of segments is compounded, the

moral universe is generalized to provide grounds for common obligations between groups accustomed to moral particularism. There must be a connection between religion and social organization such that the types of social organization can be placed in a series corresponding to the progressive generalization of mechanical solidarity.

That accomplishment, so central to the thesis of Durkheim's first book, belongs to Fustel de Coulanges. As with other ideas drawn from this quarter, it is rehabilitated into an a priori commitment lying at the foundation of sociology. In Durkheim's systematic theory, it can be found under the rubric of "social morphology" (on which see Nandan, 1980:xvi). This field is concerned with constructing a taxonomy of societies, which in the nineteenth century was thought to tally with an evolutionary series from simple to complex. For Durkheim, the construction of such a taxonomy was crucial to the establishment of sociology as a natural science.[10]

It is standard to imagine Spencer as Durkheim's precursor in matters of social types (Alpert, 1939:186; Timasheff, 1967:119-120). While there is much in common between the two men in terminology and purpose, it is equally true that Spencer's classification was rift with utilitarian assumptions Durkheim could in no way countenance. What's more, Spencer's "simple society" was itself a complex, consisting of nomadic peoples and settled agriculturalists, "headless" groups and groups with "stable political organization," tribes and villages (see Spencer, 1876:572).

The last issue would be decisive for anyone standing in the Cartesian tradition, as Durkheim did self-consciously. The starting point in the Cartesian tradition had to be the most elemental unit in the order of things, one which reason beheld as "primary and existing per se, not depending on any others" (Descartes, 1927:59). Rejecting Spencer's indistinct starting point, Durkheim declared, "A simple society is, then, a society which does not include others more simple than itself" (1938:82). Later he would find a close descendant in Australia.

But long before his analysis of totemism, Durkheim had before him a theory of social organization that presumed to identify both the simplest independent society of prehistory and a scale of higher types concluding in the city-state. While it would be difficult to prove that Durkheim's conception flowed exclusively from Fustel de Coulanges, since segmental social organization also figured prominently in the accounts of Morgan and Spencer, it stands to reason that the early exposure to *La Cite antique* would leave a lasting impression, especially since it contained a critique of utilitarianism similar if not identical to the one Durkheim later adopted as his own.

The exposition below will first present Fustel's version of the "segmental addition theory," as it shall be called. It will then provide textual evidence that Durkheim's theory of social morphology, at least as it appeared in 1893, attended to the same non-materialistic variables of ritual and solidarity, followed the same additive logic and even employed similar historical examples. The implications of this discovery for Durkheim's discussion of "the causes of the division of labor" will be taken up last.

Segmental Social Organization

According to the segmental addition theory, family, gens, phratry, tribe and city were "societies exactly similar to each other, which were formed one after another by a series of federations" (Fustel de Coulanges, 1956:127). Each segment, modelled on the original family group, was patriarchal in governance. Each had an internal sphere of authority unbreachable by the wider association. Domestic morality was the province of the family patriarch; the customs and obligations of the phratry fell rightly to the *archon* or chief; in the city, the king decreed law and administered justice pertaining to the obligations of citizenship. Originally, in Rome, the army was also organized into gentes, phratries and tribes. Initiation by religious ceremony accompanied one's entry into each segment. The child was recognized and admitted into the gens six days after birth by the patriarch; some years later, by a similar ceremony, he was incorporated into the phratry by the *archon;* finally, at 16 to 18 he was presented for admission to the city and became a citizen (1956:127-131).

Most importantly, each initiation enjoined one to worship new deities and observe a new cult. Each segment has its gods, its holidays, its rites and sacrifices, its insignia, its sacred fires, its communal meals and libations. To exist at all, the wider association had to adopt the principle of cohesion of the earliest. Obedience to common deities alone made cooperation possible. "[T]hese families conceived the idea of a divinity superior to that of the household, one who was common to all, and who watched over the entire group" (1956:118).

When the city of Rome was founded, the same bonds of faith had to be established, lest men remain strangers to one another. The ceremony of the founding was a religious act. A small trench was dug at the center of the chosen site. Each tribal head tossed into it some soil from his ancestor's graves or the ashes from the sacred hearth of his previous place of residence. Thus assuaged,

the souls of the ancestors could now peaceably reside in Rome. An altar was erected on the spot. This area, known as the Forum, was the site of all major festivals and politico-religious gatherings. During these mass occasions, the members ate a communal meal and recited the appropriate prayers. The King presided as chief priest, just as the father would in the home. He was, indeed, "the priest of the public hearth" (1956:174). The relationship between ritual and solidarity is stated explicitly by Fustel de Coulanges.

> These old customs give us an idea of the close tie which united the members of a city. Human association was a religion; its symbol was a meal, of which they partook together. We must picture to ourselves one of these little primitive societies, all assembled, or the heads of families at least, at the same table, each clothed in white, with a crown upon his head; all make the libation together, recite the same prayer, sing the same hymns, and eat the same food, prepared upon the same altar; in their midst their ancestors are present, and the protecting gods share the meal. Neither interest, nor agreement, nor habit creates the social bond; it is this holy communion piously accomplished in the presence of the gods of the city (1956:158).

As structurally identical segments were compounded into a larger whole, a new moral universe emerged to govern the more complex activities of city living. It is important to see the potential for moral universalism in this dynamic. Although strangers to each other's hearth, male heads of households could create a common hearth to unite them. Although they owed primary loyalty to their family gods, they could establish other gods alongside or above them. The new deities were not ancestors, but mythical heroes of the tribe, and later with the city, natural forces like the sun, the clouds, thunder. They did not compete with the ancestors as rivals; nothing therefore prevented other families from worshiping them. These gods had their own home, the temple, their own eternal fires, their own priests. Different ancestoral lines could then participate in a common cult. A common morality, too, could be forged, one naturally wider in its sphere of influence, for it pertained to civic and not family duties. Less particularistic and heteronomous, the new faith "lent itself more easily than the worship of the dead to the future progress of human association" (Fustel de Coulanges, 1956:125).

> Let us take in at a glance the road over which man has passed. In the beginning the family lived isolated, and man knew only the domestic

> gods - ..., *dii gentiles.* Above the family was formed the phratry with its god - ... *Juno curialis.* Then came the tribe, and the god of the tribe - ... Finally came the city, and men conceived a god whose providence embraced this entire city - ..., *penates publici;* a hierarchy of creeds, and a hierarchy of association. The religious idea was, among the ancients, the inspiring breath and organizer of society (1956:125).

This striking linkage between morphology and religion runs throughout *La Cite antique.* Yet, although Durkheim's analysis of the sacred is commonly attributed to Fustel (e.g. Nisbet, 1974:161-163), Spencer is usually thought to be Durkheim's source in matters pertaining to social morphology. And on good grounds. Durkheim's discussion of the segmental addition theory is generally accompanied by references to Spencer. This is because Spencer's terminology of "simple polysegmental society" (the phratry), "polysegmental society simply compounded" (the tribe) and "polysegmental society doubly compounded" (the city) was more exact. Indeed, it virtually promised a mathematization of social types meeting the Cartesian requirement of order.[11] Spencer also collected the ethnographic data disdained by Fustel, who relied on literary sources (see Finley, 1977:311-313).

If these distractions were not enough, Durkheim also disputed Fustel's contention that "in the beginning the family lived isolated," arguing that the family could only exist as a differentiated part of a more inclusive association, and never as a society itself (1958:43-45). Although he appears to forget that by "the family" Fustel meant the multi-generational, cognate association (the gens), rather than the simple extended family, Durkheim nevertheless substituted "the horde" as the most elemental and homogeneous unit, citing Morgan and Spencer as authorities (1933:175, 260). Understood as a self-subsisting, clan-like grouping without political organization which subsequently became differentiated into family and gens, the utter homogeneity of the horde recalls Spencer's evolutionary dictim of "homogeneity to heterogeneity." The attractiveness of the concept may have been more formal than substantive, however. The horde functioned in Durkheim's social morphology largely to meet the Cartesian requirement of simplicity. "Once this notion of the horde or single-segment society has been established," explains Durkheim in his methodological treatise, "we have the support necessary for constructing the complete scale of social types" (1938:84). Indeed, Durkheim was quick to explain that his conception of the horde "does in no wise resemble" Spencer's (1933:179n).

These terminological issues notwithstanding, Durkheim's description of the scale of social types coincides with Fustel's account on the fundamental point: the original principle of association. Durkheim's presentation is still couched in terms of the progressive subsumption of one moral system by another, so that the link between social solidarity and social organization is never broken.

> We know, indeed, that societies are formed by a certain number of segments of unequal extent which mutually envelop one another. These moulds are not artificial creations, especially in origin, and even when they have become conventional, they imitate and reproduce, as far as possible, the forms of the natural arrangement which has preceded... Thus, the tribe is formed of an aggregate of hordes and clans. The nation (the Jewish nation, for example) and the city are formed of an aggregate of tribes... [E]ach species is constituted by a repetition of societies of the immediate anterior species (1933:260-261).

Note that the social species are described as "natural arrangements." Fustel's conception of societies as morally-integrated kinship communities remains paradigmatic. Here the critique of utilitarianism is central. The problem with all utilitarian and social contract theories, according to Fustel, is that they "suppose human societies to have commenced by a convention and an artifice" (1956:107-108). Spencer's version is no different. According to him, society is produced by cooperation among previously isolated and independent individuals; the division of labor is the rational motive of the association (Spencer, 1972:44). By the same token, segmental society compounds itself into larger units for the purposive goals of war and conquest. To which Durkheim responded, "What bring men together are mechanical causes [in the sense of mechanical solidarity] and impulsive forces, such as affinity of blood, attachment to the same soil, ancestor worship, community of habits, etc. It is only when the group has been formed on these bases that cooperation is organized there" (1933:278).

The same issue lies behind Durkheim's comment that his conception of the horde "does in no wise resemble" Spencer's, for in Spencer "homogeneity is completely secondary; it may look towards an ulterior cooperation, but it is not a specific source of social life" (1933:179n). Rejecting yet again the fictitious utilitarian individualist existing before society, Durkheim says, "We have, on the contrary, just seen that they [societies] have a very strong collective life, although *sui generis,* which manifests itself not in exchanges and contracts, but

in a great abundance of common beliefs and practices" (1933:179n). As if to give proper due to his former teacher, Durkheim seals his debate with Spencer by saying, "Retracing by analysis of only classical texts until an epoch completely analogous to that of which we are speaking, Fustel de Coulanges has discovered that the early organization of these societies was of a familial nature, and that, moreover, the primitive family was constituted on a religious base" (1933:179).

Bringing together the themes of social solidarity and segmental organization here under review, Durkheim says further:

> For social units to be able to be differentiated, they must first be attracted or grouped by virtue of the resemblances they present. This process of formation is observed, not only originally, but in each phase of evolution. We know, indeed, that higher societies result from the union of lower societies of the same type. It is necessary first that these latter be mingled in the midst of the same identical collective conscience for the process of differentiation to begin or recommence. It is thus that more complex organisms are formed by the repetition of more simple, similar organisms which are differentiated only if once associated (1933:278).

The Causes of the Division of Labor

From the above, it would seem that Fustel de Coulanges not only anticipated the core elements of the theory of mechanical solidarity, namely (1) natural association based on resemblance, (2) moral obligation, internally directed, and (3) mechanisms of communion, for stoking the bonds of cohesion, but also linked them to a scalar classification of premodern societies. As long as historians of sociology were concerned with the *typology* of mechanical and organic solidarity, however, this connection remained opaque, since attention was naturally drawn to comparisons with Spencer or Tonnies. In the typology, social evolution appeared linear and unproblematic.

It is quite otherwise when one looks at the same terrain from the perspective of *taxonomy* (social morphology). Then one can see that morphological progress from family or horde to city-state is associated with a progressive universalization of mechanical solidarity that is necessarily finite: it does not and cannot continue in a linear fashion into organic solidarity. Organic solidarity has a different foundation—complementarity of social roles within the division of labor. It is not a continuation, but an antithesis.

These insights can be used to elucidate a troublesome section in *The Division of Labor in Society* on "the causes of the division of labor." Whereas the utilitarians saw the division of labor as a motivating factor in the creation of all societies, thus making society an instrumental association, Durkheim saw the division of labor (understood in the non-trivial sense of specialization pursuant to contractual exchange) as a phenomenon contingent on the partial *disappearance* of segmental social organization. Thus sociological explanation had to account for the disappearance of segmental organization, on the one hand, and the rise of the division of labor, on the other.

Here it must be recalled that the different segments are morally particularistic, or stated another way, that there are "moral gaps" between them (Durkheim, 1933:257). The hold of these segments had to weaken; only then would it be possible to bring individuals from different segments into contact with one another, to form relationships which would normally be precluded, for "the segmental arrangement is an insurmountable obstacle to the division of labor, and must have disappeared at least partially for the division of labor to appear" (Durkheim, 1933:256).

The famous causes, then—population growth, urbanization, and improved transportation and communication—actually serve a dual explanatory purpose. First, they fragment the particularistic bonds of "natural" association, thus hastening the disintegration of segmental society. Only then, and perhaps secondarily, do they trigger the "progressive condensation" of societies, meaning literally, the evolution of complex compounds of greater density from simpler molecules. The mechanistic language of the metaphor, with its neo-Darwinian flavor, can be misleading. The "density" at issue here is actually *moral* density, the condition opposite that of the "moral gaps" in late segmental societies. Moral density is the outcome of the expanded utilitarian network of exchange which began to appear in the urban centers after the moral universalization of mechanical solidarity had reached its maximum extension in the city-state. Neither moral universalism nor voluntary exchange could appear in Western history until the original, primitive organization of social life had been duplicated again and again, each time on a larger scale. When this inclusive particularism reached its limit, the stage was set for the emergence of a new moral system capable of protecting the individual (the new locus of moral obligation) from bourgeois market relationships.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Aside from some interest in the semantics of organic metaphors (Hawkins, 1930), historians of sociology have largely ignored the interface between social morphology and Durkheim's theories of religion and social solidarity. Because of this, the story has grown that, to quote Jones, "Durkheim's early treatment of religious phenomena was rather shallow and mechanical and thus contrasts sharply with the monumental achievement of *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*" (1981:184). Without denying the deepening rigor and sophistication of Durkheim's study of religion after 1895, it must also be said that the later theory of religion builds upon, and does not displace, core concepts which can be traced to *La Cite antique.* A greater concern with totemism and sacrifice, to be sure, but not a fundamental reorientation. From the beginning Durkheim sought the secret of religion in the mechanisms of communion which held the concentric social organization of ancient society in fusion. And this, the *sine qua non* of his mature work, must be credited to Fustel de Coulanges.

Alexander's discontinuity thesis, which argues from transformations apparent on the presuppositional level, requires little modification. Durkheim does progressively discard the instrumental, deterministic aspects of his earlier work after *The Division of Labor in Society* and the analysis of ritual association did indeed stimulate the break. Having rejected Fustel's idealism in a famous passage in *The Division of Labor in Society* (1933:179), Durkheim spent the remainder of his life slowly working his way past his own objections. Nevertheless, even during his most materialistic period, the linkage Fustel de Coulanges established between religion (the paragon of ritual association) and social morphology remained fundamental.

FOOTNOTES

1. Alexander was not the first to demonstrate that the instrumental-functionalist theory of *The Division of Labor in Society* was incompatible with Durkheim's subsequent sociological idealism (see Uricoechea, 1979). Nor was he the first to draw attention to Durkheim's self-reported "revelation" regarding the religious origin of social association (see Lukes, 1972:231; Hawkins, 1979:444), although he does show how it ramified throughout his entire subsequent work. But his thorough and competent discussion of the reviews and essays which preceded *The Division of Labor in Society,* and the analytical concepts of "action" and "order" he employs, advance Durkheim scholarship markedly. The specialist will be displeased by the absent or inadequate discussions of Kant's philosophy (see

Wallwork, 1972; Pickering, 1979), the antecedents of the *homo duplex* conception (see Meddin, 1976; Hynes, 1975), and the German organicists (Hawkins, 1980) and historical economists (Lacroix and Landerer, 1972). Nevertheless, Alexander's synthesis is likely to serve as a focal interpretation for some time.

2. Fustel defined the subject-matter of history idealistically. "History does not study material facts and institutions alone; its true object of study is the human mind: it should aspire to know what this mind has believed, thought and felt in the different ages of the human race" (1956:94). Durkheim's definition of social facts as "ways of seeing, acting, and feeling," which presaged his later sociological idealism, encompassed materialistic phenomena as well.

3. Alexander accords but a single reference to Fustel (1982:488). Wallwork's study of Durkheim's lifelong concern for the nature of *la morale,* which nowhere cites Fustel de Coulanges, also would have been improved if the connection between morality and morphology had been explored. Wallwork places extraordinary emphasis on the "social instincts" such as sympathy in analyzing Durkheim's theory of morality, a notion which he properly traces to Comte, but which is altogether tertiary in Durkheim. It is wrong to look to Comte for the interpretation of Durkheim's remark, "For men to recognize and mutually guarantee rights, they must first love each other," as Wallwork does (1972:29), for it is not innate sympathy that creates the bonds of love, but ancient religion.

4. In many places, Fustel's idealism converts itself into a "cultural lag" thesis, as when he says, "If the religious sentiment was satisfied with so narrow a conception of the divine, it was because human associations were then narrow in proportion... Man does not easily free himself from opinions that have once exercised a strong influence over him. This belief might endure, therefore, even when it was in disaccord with the social state. What is there, indeed, more contradictory than to live in civil society and to have particular gods in each family?" (1956:112). This is the "abnormal case" referred to by Durkheim in the quotation at the head of this article. Passages like this one readily lend themselves to "standing Fustel on his head." For a discussion of Fustel's philosophy of history, see Humphreys (1980:xx).

5. For Fustel de Coulanges' application of Descartes' rules of method to history, see Tourneur-Aumont (1931:173, 217-220) and Herrick (1954:20-21). Durkheim's genuflections to Descartes, for example in *Rules* (1938:31), may be seen as a self-conscious attempt to stand in the tradition of French rationalism. Both men laid claim to the Cartesian method of doubt in order to free their respective disciplines from presuppositions which had hampered theoretical progress. In bowing to Fustel's philosophical mentor, Durkheim was also claiming for sociology the epistemological legitimacy Fustel had earlier exacted for history.

6. These are among the very crimes against cult which Durkheim mentions in his discussion of repressive law. "What social danger is there in touching a tabooed object, an impure animal or man, in letting the sacred fire die down, in eating certain meats, in failure to make the traditional sacrifice over the graves of parents, in not exactly pronouncing the ritual formula, in not celebrating certain holidays, etc.?" (Durkheim, 1933:72).

7. Momigliano and Humphreys discuss the gaps in and contemporary motives of Fustel's account of the origin of property in their respective "Forewards" to the John Hopkins University Press reissue of *The Ancient City* (1980:xi-xii, xv). A slightly modified version of Fustel's theory of the origin of private property appears in Durkheim's *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* (1958:149-158).

8. Finley (1977:311-313) examines the weaknesses in Fustel's use of the comparative method; Humphreys (1980:xx) tackles the question of ideology.

9. Even Coser has contributed to this misconception. "Fustel de Coulanges' stress on the central role of domestic religion and religious association," he states, "influenced Durkheim, if not in his student days, then at a later period when he came to be fascinated by religious phenomena" (1977:151). Another author who persists in seeing Fustel as a "lesser influence" is Tiryakian (1978:213).

10. See Durkheim's essay on Montesquieu: "To interpret things is simply to arrange our ideas about them in a determinate order, which must be the same as that of the things themselves. This presupposes that an order is present in the things themselves, that they form continuous series (sic), the elements of which are so related that a given effect is always produced by the same cause and never by any other" (1960:10).

11. The universal second-order ontology of order or measurement (*mathesis universalis*) which Descartes bequeathed to Western rationalism was rejected by Comte, whose attempt at the unification of knowledge was more traditional (see Standley, 1981:93-101; also Prendergast, 1979:33-45). Durkheim's preoccupation with Cartesian method is here largely stylistic and legitimating. The ease with which it is imposed on the theory of social morphology, however, betrays a lack of concern for or familiarity with the ethnographic data of the time. By *Elementary Forms* the Cartesian flourish was replaced by a sober empiricism. In place of the quest for simplicity and order in the scale of social types, he now emphasized the "concrete reality...historical and ethnographic observation alone can reveal" (1915:16). Spencer's discussion of compounded segments can be found in *Principles of Sociology* (1876:572-576).

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