

**MAX WEBER AND EMILE DURKHEIM: A COMPARATIVE  
ANALYSIS ON THE THEORY OF SOCIAL ORDER AND THE  
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY**

*Max Weber ve Emile Durkheim: Toplumsal Düzen Kuramı ve Toplumun  
Anlaşılmasında Yöntemsel Yaklaşım üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çözümleme*

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to compare Max Weber and Emile Durkheim's theoretical and methodological approaches. Coming from two different theoretical traditions, these two sociologists have some similarities and differences in their sociological approaches. Weber, inspired by the German intellectual position, emphasized meaning and the interpretation of individual action in his studies. Durkheim, on the other hand, represented the French intellectual orientation in sociological theory and proposed ideas like collective consciousness and social collectivity. In order to compare both theorists, this study, first, deals with their theoretical approaches in terms of the constitution of social order or social reality. Second, we will discuss their methodological approaches improved to understand this social reality. Thirdly, depending on their theoretical and methodological departures, we will investigate how Weber and Durkheim differ in terms of their opinions about the role of sociology in society.

**Key Words:** Weber, Durkheim, sociological theory, sociological method, social order.

**ÖZET**

Bu çalışma Max Weber ve Emile Durkheim'in sosyolojik teori ve yöntemlerinin karşılaştırmasını gaye edinmektedir. İki farklı sosyolojik gelenekten gelen bu iki sosyolog, sosyoloji anlayışlarında bazı benzerlik ve farklılıklar gösterirler. Weber sosyolojik düşüncede Alman geleneğini temsil eder ve çalışmalarında anlam ve bireysel davranışın yorumlanması üzerinde

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durmuştur. Oysaki Fransız geleneğinden gelen Durkheim çalışmalarında ortak bilinç, toplumsal birliktelik gibi kavramları konu eder. Bu iki kuramcuyu karşılaştırmak için birinci olarak bu iki sosyologun toplumsal düzen ve gerçekliğin oluşumu hakkındaki teorik yaklaşımlarını, ikinci olarak ise bu toplumsal gerçekliği anlamak için geliştirdikleri sosyolojik yöntemlerini tartışacağız. Üçüncü olarak da, teorik ve yöntembilimsel farklılıklarından yola çıkarak Weber ve Durkheim'in sosyolojiye toplumla ilişkisi açısından nasıl bir rol verdikleri sorgulanacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Weber, Durkheim, sosyolojik kuram, sosyolojik yöntem, toplumsal düzen.

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This study attempts to treat two of the main figures in sociological theory: Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. One of these sociologists, Max Weber (1864-1920) developed his intellectual orientation in the German rationalistic tradition and under the influence of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. Emile Durkheim (1858-1918), on the other hand, emerged as a philosopher and sociologist through the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* and under the influence of a positivistic and idealistic intellectual *milieu* in France (Coser, 1977: 143-49 and 234-43).

Weber's attempt to constitute his sociological orientation was based on concepts such as meaning, social action, interpretation, methodological individualism, etc. Durkheim, however, tended to emphasize the importance of social collectivity and its determination over individual consciousness whereas pointing out concepts like *sui generis* of social facts, function, causality, generality, etc. in his studies. This study, in order to depict the main convergences and divergences<sup>1</sup> of both theorists, first, deals with how both sociologists understand social order or social reality,<sup>2</sup> namely, their ideas about the basis of social order at the theoretical level. Second, it will show how they tended to approach this social reality in order to understand it at the methodological level. Thirdly, having looked at their theoretical and

<sup>1</sup> These terms are taken from Münch (1988) who used them on the same subject in comparing Weber and Durkheim.

<sup>2</sup> In this study, both terms will be used in the same sense, referring to the web of social relations people are living in.

methodological trends, we will discuss their views on the role of sociology in society.

### **1. The Comparison of Weber and Durkheim on the Theory of the Constitution of Social Order<sup>3</sup>**

Examining Max Weber's sociological studies, it can be said that he generally focused on tension in regards to individualistic autonomy in terms of ideas and desires vis-à-vis social regularity. The question of how social regulation arises from the chaos of indeterminacies of infinite individualistic needs and desires is tackled at the individualistic level; how does social action in regularity come forward?

Weber approached the problem of social regulation through the question of how this regularity becomes possible out of the chaos of individualistic ambiguity. In this manner, he searched for the underlying rules and principles in this order. According to Weber, social continuity or social order is constructed at the individualistic consciousness level through the ways in which social actors assign meaning to their actions. Weber asserts that:

The real empirical sociological investigation begins with the question: What motives determine and lead the individual members and participants in this socialistic community to behave in such a way that the community came into being in the first place and that it continues to exist? (Weber, 1968: 18)

Weber proposes that the reason behind regular actions is the meaning which individuals attribute to their actions (Weber, 1968: 29). Then, Weber defines what he understands from action "as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior - be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence" (Weber, 1968: 4). According to Weber, sociology is only

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<sup>3</sup> In using the term of social order in terms of Weber and Durkheim, we need to keep in mind that as Weber sees the basis of regulation in society in the meaningful sphere of social action, this regulation may or may not imply (that is probable) in society (Weber, 1968: 29). In this context, for Weber there is no any structurally determined social order. Then, we prefer to use 'social regulation' instead of 'social order' in terms of Weberian sociology. On the other hand, as society itself requires and determines an order for Durkheim, the term of 'social order' is more suitable to describe regulation in society in Durkheimian sociology.

concerned with 'meaning-attributed-action' within society (Weber, 1968: 12-13 and see: Graber, 1985: 89 and Coser, 1977: 217).

For Weber, people give meaning not only to their own behavior but also to behavior of other people in their reciprocal relationships, because "the action of each takes account of that of others" (Weber, 1968: 26). Weber understands social regularity as the harmony of individualistic social actions and meanings individuals attribute to the actions of other people. For Weber:

...in a sociological context to a state, a nation, a corporation, a family, or an army corps, or to similar collectivities [refers to] a certain kind of development of actual or possible social actions of individual persons. (Weber, 1968: 13-14)

Individuals' attribution of meaning to action and social relationships gives social life its regularity, "otherwise, social action would be impossible" (Graber, 1985: 91). In Weberian analysis, these regularities in social and individualistic levels merge in social action.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike Weber, Durkheim, when considering social order, essentially evaluates it as a whole, not as a set of individualistic actions or unique particularities. Despite Weber's "methodological individualism," which sees the essence of society as being constituted by individuals, the essence of society is considered as a social whole in Durkheim's "methodological collectivism" (Wrong, 1970: 22). Durkheim proposes that "to understand the way in which a society thinks of itself and of its environment one must consider the nature of the society and not that of the individuals" (Durkheim: 1964: xiix, preface to the second edition).

According to Durkheim, social continuity arises by the domination of social regulations over the ambiguity of the individualistic infinite and indeterminate biological and psychological needs and desires. As "society is a reality *sui generis*" in the case of Durkheimian approach (Durkheim, 1965: 16; italics original), "the problem of how social order is possible" is answered by the determination of social regulations over this individualistic ambiguity:

<sup>4</sup> Weber describes this with the following statement: "Action is 'social' insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course" (Weber, 1968: 4). This means that individualistic action through social actors' giving meaning to behaviors of other people in social life becomes social action.

Man is double. There are two beings in him: an individual being which has its foundation in the organism ... and a social being which represents the highest reality in the intellectual and moral order that we can know by observation. I mean society. (Durkheim, 1965: 16)

For Durkheim, because individualistic needs are infinite, "society imposes limits on human desires" (Coser, 1977: 132).

In this manner, Durkheim's idea of social action refers to "*sui generis* of social facts," namely, the determination of "external conditions," which implies not a probability but a certainty (Münch, 1988: 20). On the other hand, in the Weberian sense, social action has to do with not certainty but probability. For example, when Weber explains types of action orientation, he defines 'usage' as "if an orientation toward social action occurs regularly, it will be called 'usage' (*Brauch*) insofar as the probability of its existence within a group is based on nothing but actual practice" (Weber, 1968: 29).

Besides, in terms of the problem of causality in sociological theory, opposed to Marxian or Hegelian essentialist ideas, Weber searches "reciprocal relationships" of different factors in his sociology (Münch, 1988: 8) and emphasizes "a full spectrum of causal factors" (Kalberg, 1994: 50). For instance, Weber proposed that the explanation of the emergence of Western civilization cannot be reduced to only either materialistic or idealistic reasons. In this context, Weber's "aim" was not "to substitute for a one-sided materialistic and equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history. Each is equally possible..." (Weber, 1958a: 183).<sup>5</sup>

In terms of "the spectrum of causal factors" in his sociological theory, Weber considered individual-ethical, economic and political spheres, etc. as being intermingled when Western civilization emerged. In his study on Protestantism (Weber, 1958a) the Protestant ethic, primarily the Calvinist ethic, enabled people to make rational end-mean calculations by developing "a certain type of personality largely shaped by the preachments of Calvinist divines" and a type of "self-discipline" to Western peoples (Coser, 1977: 227). At the same time, a newly emerged impersonal bureaucracy, its laws limiting personal-arbitrary unpredictable political decisions and the absolute authority of rulers

<sup>5</sup> Please compare this Parsons translation with Stephen Kalberg's recent translation (Weber, 2002).

was in the arena during the emergence of Western civilization. All these factors played significant roles in preparing the objective, predictable and protected social conditions for individual decisions and rational calculations (Weber, 1968: 973 and 1394).

As we can see, for Weber, ideas can assume a role in social change and history. On the other hand, Durkheim, in his *Division of Labour in Society* (1949), attempts to demonstrate that individualistic ideas and thoughts can never affect the path of history or the existing social order. Durkheim, in this study, argues that "individuals are much more a product of common life than they are determinants of it" (Durkheim, 1949: 338). He argues that population growth, the advance of communication and transportation opportunities paved the way to a complex specialization in modern society (Durkheim, 1949: 257). That is to say that in the Durkheimian approach, social change comes out of "a nonsocial substrate operating outside the sphere of the exercises of human mind and will" (Westby, 1991: 251).

In terms of modern society, Weber evaluates legal-rational authority as the ultimate point in realizing human needs, as this type of authority introduces the universalization of values and the efficient usage of means to attain projected ends. In addition, it enables individuals to make rational decisions with respect to the selection of the most appropriate means to attain wanted ends under the legitimization and guaranty of rational-legal authority (Weber, 1968: 212-20).

In this manner, and equally true for Durkheim, although the organic solidarity of modern societies imposes complex principles on individuals, the interdependence of units on each other grants people more freedom in comparison to the dependencies and ties of traditional societies. For him, in modern society, individualistic actions are exposed to a "freer, more extensive" moral life with "a source of spontaneous activity" (Durkheim, 1949: 347-48). That is to say that Durkheim is very optimistic about Western civilization with its introduction of a large degree of human freedom through its developed institutions. For Durkheim, because "civilization is itself the necessary consequence of the changes which are produced in the volume and in the density of societies"... "from this general situation, there inevitably results a much higher degree of culture" (Durkheim, 1949: 337). Durkheim explains the difference between the organic solidarity of modern society and the mechanical solidarity of traditional society by the former's bringing advantages to individualistic freedom and independence. He gives the example of human freedom in large cities in comparison to its restriction by community life in small ones (Durkheim, 1949: 297-98).

Moreover, for Durkheim, even though all individuals and groups have different occupational specializations, they have common interests with respect to ongoing social relations in order to survive. This is the harmony of the rights of individuals and the rights of collective life, namely “a system of rights and duties...link (people) together in a durable way” in modern societies (Durkheim, 1964: 406). This means that modern society, along with its organic solidarity, brings a harmony of individualistic interests and collective interests. However, this freedom does not dissolve the social order.

Contrary to Durkheim’s optimistic opinion about modern society with its bringing of freedom and human individuality, for Weber this rationalization of the modern world has brought restrictions and limitations on human freedom. Weber was pessimistic about modernity creating an iron cage for human freedom with its formal rationality (Weber, 1958b: 139). Although Western civilization, through its rationalization process, brought an ultimate efficiency in regard to benefiting from natural and human sources, it also has to do with disadvantages for human freedom. For Weber, whereas the meaning of the world is fading with increasing formal rationality, our individualistic freedom is, at the same time, oppressed and disciplined by modern rational-legal institutions. He says that:

An inanimate machine is mind objectified ... Together with the inanimate machine it is busy fabricating the shell of bondage which men will perhaps be forced to inhabit some day, as powerless as the fellahs of ancient regime. (Weber, 1968: 1402)

Therefore, the universalization of values and human worldly interests “have stripped the world of charm ... and reality has become dreary, flat and utilitarian” (Freund, 1968: 24). Weber argued that modern rational devices such as science are eliminating the meaning of our living world for mankind. He accused modern bureaucracy of instrumentalization, i.e. the attribution of overwhelming importance of institutional means over the ends and goals of humanity (Weber, 1968: 1402).

Opposed to Weber’s critical approach about society, especially modern society and its ushering restrictions, the search for underlying principles, which make a social order possible, leads Durkheim into an “idealization” of social order. For Durkheim, sociology searches for how social particularities function for the sake of social order. He argues that “to explain a social fact it is not

enough to show the cause on which it depends; we must also, at least in most cases, show its function in the establishment of order" (Durkheim, 1964: 97). Social order as such takes importance in Durkheimian sociology, and according to his sociological point of view, social order is evaluated as if every particularity in this whole must perform its function. He classifies "social systems" in terms of "normal" and "pathological" "according to the "fulfillment" of their functions (Turner, 1992: 25 and See: Durkheim, 1964: 55-59).

At the same time, according to Durkheimian sociology, in the mechanical solidarity of pre-modern societies as well as in the organic solidarity of modern societies, there is always a prevailing morality among people, which enables them to live together. This morality also constitutes the collective consciousness of the people, rendering them united against the dissolution of society (Durkheim, 1949: 252-57). In other words, for Durkheim, the morality which holds people together is pre-given and comes from the very nature of society. Durkheim was not concerned in his studies with the type of legitimacy of social orders with respect to social actors and how people attain meaning through their experience of authority relations, as "moral constraint is indeed the essence of collective life for Durkheim" (Hilbert, 1992: 28).

Whereas for Durkheim morality is a given in any society and it is seen as the *raison d'être* of social life, the problem of how people obey these moral laws and principles is not a concern in Durkheimian sociology. In Durkheimian sociology, "individuals 'internalize' the content of the moral order and act 'spontaneously' to reproduce it" (Westby, 1991: 257). These moral laws are seen as preliminary to their behaviors as they are living in this social order. On the other hand, for Weber, the legitimization of the dominant rules and principles by people and how they obey political authority present themselves as sociological problems, which must be considered. Weber dealt with the problem of the rise of legitimate dominations with respect to social actors and how people give consent to actual political authorities (Weber, 1968: 31-33 also see: Albrow, 1990: 175 and Turner, 1981: 328).

Therefore, in Weberian sociology, social regulation is considered as a set of authority relations in a legitimate domination. That is to say that this order is constituted out of chaotic indeterminacies through reciprocal authority-consent relations among social agents, not from transcendental social laws and principles. The problem of how a social regulation as a legitimate domination emerges is a historical as well as an empirical problem, which deserves to be investigated, not pre-determined by pre-givens in social laws.



In this manner, opposed to Durkheim's "compelling external factors" approach which views social action as the repercussion of general social rules, in Weberian sociology in order to perform any social action there has to be a conviction that there is a suitable social environment for it. For Weber, "action, especially social action which involves a social relationship, may be guided by the belief in the existence of a legitimate order" (Weber, 1968: 31). People, in the Weberian context, first make themselves sure that their behavior or action is legitimate within their living socio-political environment. At the same time, power in the political arena acquires legitimacy and becomes authority after it attains the submission and consent of its subjects (Weber, 1968: 53-54 and 212-20).

## 2. A Comparative Approach to Weberian and Durkheimian Sociological Methodologies

Since Weber's methodological approach followed the path of Kant and neo-Kantianism, we will first deal with this trend before arriving at the comparison of Weber and Durkheim with respect to their methodological approaches. Whereas Weber tried to apply the positivistic method in his sociological studies, he always emphasized the difference between the subjectivity of the human world and the objectivity of the external world that is the focus of scientific studies. However, prior to Weber, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) had initially put forward this duality between the subjective-human world and the objective-natural sphere. In this regard, it may be argued that he constructed the main intellectual background of modern science or, more specifically, positivism. Kant basically asserted in his philosophy that there is an external world existing as an independent ontological reality as the source of our perceptions, and then our knowledge. On the other hand, he argued that although our perception depends on this external world, *a priori* concepts and forms of space and time in our mind construct the form of this perception (Kant, 1983: 30). In other words, although Kant accepted the existence of things in themselves as the external world beyond our knowledge, supplying perceptions to our knowledge, he asserted that we cannot know the real world because of the boundaries of mind-dependent *a priori* concepts and mental categories.

Following Kant, and prior to Weber, some German philosophers such as Dilthey and Rickert constituted a neo-Kantian way of thinking, following Kant's subject-object duality in regard to the understanding of the real world (Freund, 1968: 37-38). Wilhelm Dilthey applied Kantian philosophy to the fields of human history and the social arena. Dilthey asserted that because of the

existential conditions of every person, we can not understand human history in its totality (Dilthey, 1988: 41). In this sense, he deviated from the Kantian idea of the possibility of universal knowledge through unchangeable human mental categories (Remmling, 1975: 28). According to the neo-Kantian perspective inspired by the Kantian distinction between the numenal and phenomenal worlds, our interested point of view determines or conditions our knowledge in our scientific investigations. That is to say that we cannot comprehend absolute Truth in social reality and human history.

In addition, Dilthey differentiated *Geisteswissenschaften* (cultural sciences) from *Naturwissenschaften* (physical sciences) in his studies. Dilthey argued that in the field of cultural sciences there is no determinacy as they are concerned with meanings in the socio-historical sphere, in contrast to the physical sciences, which essentially deal with the determinate field of natural laws (Dilthey: 1988: 45).

On the other hand, Weber, in comparison to Dilthey's dualism between the cultural and natural sciences, tried to synthesize both by connecting interpretative understanding and causal explanations in regards to social action. Weber describes this in the following excerpt:

Sociology (in the sense in which this highly ambiguous word is used here) is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences. (Weber, 1968: 4)

Thus, the attainment of meaning to social actors' actions and thereby making both the interpretative understanding of its unique situation and causal explanation of its connected relations brings forward Weber's method of *Verstehen*. Weber, by means of the *Verstehen* method, which focuses on particular differences rather than general laws, tries to derive not "laws but concrete causal *relationships*" and the unique differences and similarities of those particularities (Weber, 1949: 78; Weber's italics). In this regard, the "individualizing method, stresses the distinctive and qualitative aspects of phenomena" (Münch, 1988: 8) or "in Weberian terms, we cannot, or rather do not wish to, ignore the historical individuality of the phenomena we conceptualize" (Wrong, 1970: 15). Weber, by means of his "methodological individualism," attempts to understand particularistic facts as well as individualistic actions independent from general universal laws, because

“interpretative sociology considers the individual and his action as the basic unit, as its ‘atom’ ” (Weber, 1958b, 58).

Opposed to Weber’s methodological individualism and interpretation of individual action, Durkheim, “elevates the ‘social fact’ to the discipline’s subject matter” to attain objectivity and depart from the psychological states of individuals (Münch, 1988: 21). This method purposes to explain social reality causally by relating particular facts to general principles. According to Durkheim “sociological method as we practice it rests wholly on the basic principle that social facts must be studied as things, that is, as reality external to individual” (Durkheim, 1964: 37). Since sociology as the science of society totally differs from psychology which deals with individuals independently from each other, it only focuses on social facts which are “independent of...individual manifestations” (Durkheim, 1964: 13).

As can be seen, Durkheim’s sociological orientation was essentially focused on ‘social facts’ with the prominent assumption of the domination of those facts over individualistic consciousness and states of mind. According to Durkheim, because sociology deals with durable social facts and the main concern of psychology is the changeable, unstable individualistic state of mind, the former discipline has greater potential to become an objective science (Durkheim, 1964: 30-31). Even in his study on suicide, Durkheim tries to prove that suicide, which seems on the first hand a personal phenomenon, is dependent on social facts. Thus, he attempts to explain it in terms of social causes and conditions (Durkheim, 1956: 299).

For Durkheim, because “all sociological phenomena (as well as biological phenomena) can assume different forms in different cases, while still conserving their essential characteristics” (Durkheim, 1964: 55), we can achieve objectivity in our sociological investigation. In other words, although he uses the comparative method for social analysis (Durkheim, 1964: Ch. 6) like Weber, Durkheim argues that social phenomena are not unique but universal because of the objectivity of social facts. Then, the methodology to understand one social fact can be applied to other facts despite Weber’s emphasis on the uniqueness of historical facts (Münch, 1988: 21).

As we have already noted, Durkheim evaluates social facts as things, namely that they are external and constrained to individual psychological states of mind. In this regard, “social objects really do have objective qualities that *are the same as those of the objects of the natural world*” (Westby, 1991: 265, italics in the original text). This means that in Durkheimian sociology, social facts combined with social principles constitute the basis of society at the ontological

level. Thus, for Durkheim, our sociological investigations are directly related to the social order or social reality itself. According to Durkheim's realistic approach, the externality of human behavior that is determined by social regulations enables sociologists to attain knowledge of actual things in society: "Generality combined with externality may, then, be easier to establish ... for if a mode of behavior whose existence is external to individual consciousnesses becomes general" (Durkheim, 1964: 10). By giving social facts ontological status, namely 'things over there' and determines individualistic actions and proposing the ability to understand those facts through general social principles, Durkheim approaches sociology "as a naturalistic discipline on *ontological*, as distinct from epistemological grounds," (Westby, 1991: 265; Italics in the original text).

Despite Durkheim's insistence on the ability of understanding the general laws of society, Weber followed the Kantian position with respect to the definition of the subject of science i.e., history as well as nature as an infinite phenomenal world which cannot be entirely realized by our scientific investigations (Weber, 1949: 73-75; Coser, 1977: 219-23). For Weber, our scientific strife is only a search for this ideal world. Weber called this type of understanding of the objective world through our specific point of view "one-sidedness," and in the field of cultural studies of which he was concerned, he tried to understand this world through his constructed "ideal types" (Weber, 1949: Ch. 2). According to Weber, there is no absolutely "objective scientific analysis of culture"...but our subjects are "expressly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously"..."selected, analyzed and organized for expository purposes" (Weber, 1949: 72).

On the other hand, in the scientific endeavor, although we choose objects out of ongoing facts according to their "significance" (Weber, 1949: 81-83), for Weber this does not mean that objectivity in science is entirely impossible. According to him, objectivity in science is possible as soon as we know what our interested point of view is, or from which value we approach our problems (Weber, 1949: 159-60). We can only construct causal relations after selecting our interested problem, even though they never correspond to real relations in the actual world (Coser, 1977: 220). Weber's idea of social science rejects the idea of the ability to comprehend the total reality of the social world, as he asserts that we can approach this reality only through our specific point of view. Sociology examines the meaningful action of individuals and tries to explain their behaviors causally in their historical context. However, our scientific investigations can never apprehend the ultimate Truth about our

sociological focus and can only supply us with insight about Truth, which is beyond us (Weber, 1949: 95).

### **3. Weber-Durkheim Departure on the Role of Sociology**

Having pointed out these theoretical and methodological differences, we can observe that, although both sociologists apply positivism to their sociologies, their approach to positivism is different. The positivism that is understood by Weber is Kantian, or more broadly neo-Kantian, arguing that our studying of objects through scientific investigation is dependent on our subjective conditions. For Kant, the unchangeability of our mental capability provides objectivity for science and this, then, makes science possible. However, the possibility of science, Weber argued, is dependent on the subjective experience of the scientist, or, here the social scientist and his or her personal endeavor “in becoming aware of the ultimate standards of value” (Weber, 1949: 152) after considering his or her own point of view and inspired values. In this regard, Weber “was convinced that objectivity could be safeguarded only if it were given permanent sanctuary within an academy” (Coser, 1977: 259).

On the other hand, Durkheim was not concerned with value-free science, unlike Weber. For him, scientists can construct a link between moral values and their studying of facts. In this context, “Durkheim feels under an obligation to do the same and to cross the bridge from the *is* to the *ought*” (Catlin; introduction to the English translation of Durkheim, 1964: xxix; italics in the original text).

According to Weber, however, since we can only handle the sphere of “what is,” namely, facts through our scientific investigations, scientists cannot talk about the sphere of “what ought to be,” i.e. morality (Weber, 1958b: 143). On that matter, Durkheim was very enthusiastic about the duty or, in a Durkheimian sense, the “function” of science in social life. He asks “Why strive for knowledge of reality if this knowledge cannot serve us in life?” (Durkheim, 1964: 48)

In this regard, Durkheim proposes that, “by revealing the causes of social phenomena, science furnishes the means of producing them” (Durkheim, 1964: 48). This means that, because science investigates and derives causes and results concerning social phenomena, and what is functional and what is not, it can help us determine what is good and what is not about society. Then, we can reconstruct social order in a better way. In this manner, “science will be in a

position to throw light on practical problems and still remain faithful to its own method" (Durkheim, 1964: 49).

Therefore, according to Durkheim, under the light of science we can cure pathological societies (Durkheim, 1964: 55-57). For him, if we talk about a distinction between the social and natural sciences, it is not due to their methodological distinction, but from the social sciences' ability "to play in any scheme of social construction" (Westby, 1991: 263) and generate "more durable social structures" (Freund, 1968: 12).

In Durkheimian sociology, the determination of social facts over individualistic consciousnesses gives the sociologist truth and objectivity if he or she applies the scientific method to those facts. In this manner, he argued that, opposed to Weber, as sociology can provide us Universal truth, and sociologists deal with the morality of society, science and its supplying of universal knowledge could solve "moral problems" in the social order (Durkheim, 1964: 49-54).

### CONCLUSION

In this paper, two main classical trends in sociological theory, Weberian and Durkheimian sociologies, have been compared. This comparison has been made in three stages. First, we dealt with how both sociologists theorize the basis of social regularity, which makes social order possible out of the chaos of individualistic indeterminacies. In this study, we argued that although both authors try to investigate the main reasons behind the possibility of social regulation, they see the main factor, which turns the chaos of infinite individualistic needs and desires into a harmony of cosmos, namely social order, differently.

Max Weber tackled this problem at the individualistic consciousness level, looking at how people regulate their behaviors by giving meaning to their actions and the actions of other people. At the same time, for him, this issue of giving meaning to actions plays a role in the legitimization process of authority relationships during the constitution of a legitimate domination. On the other hand, according to Durkheim, the possibility of the constitution of social order out of chaotic individualistic desires and ambiguity is dependent on the prevalence and domination of society itself and social principles over the indeterminate world of individuals. Therefore, for Durkheim, individuals with their authenticity and individuality that implies the world of meaning do not play a role in creating the social world.

Second, both sociological approaches have been concerned with understanding society methodologically as a scientific practice. Weber, by means of his method of *Verstehen*-understanding, tried to interpret the meaningful world of social actors, and to discover the underlying causes in their actions. However, for him, this method never attains the ultimate reality of social life, nor gives us universal laws concerning this world. Weber's idea of objectivity proposes "one-sidedness" and it rejects our ability to comprehend the ultimate Truth about the world we investigate. Our scientific findings never give us the absolute Truth of the objective world, but only supply us with an "insight" about this infinite reality. Therefore, science cannot confer upon us "what ought to be," namely, universal normative truths.

Nevertheless, for Durkheim, because sociology studies general social laws and constraining social facts over individual indeterminacies, it can apprehend ultimate Truth and objectivity in the social arena. For him, the findings of our scientific investigations are universal and applicable to other social phenomena, giving us true knowledge of social reality.

This means that although both sociologists try to apply the positivistic method in their sociological studies, they differ in terms of how they understand positivism to be a scientific method. Weber, following neo-Kantianism in sociological theory understands positivism in its "atomistic" sense. He denies the possibility of comprehending the universal Truth of the objective world. On the other hand, Durkheim applies positivism in its "realistic" sense. He proposes the possibility of comprehending the universal Truth about the social world by using sociological theory and its methodological application.

Thirdly, it has been seen that Weber does not give sociology a role in submitting us the knowledge of the ultimate Truth. Hence, we cannot bring forth moral judgments or knowledge about "right and wrong" and the "what ought to be" through sociology. However, Durkheim, arguing the possibility of apprehending the universal Truth, put forward that this universal knowledge can confer on us moral truths about our living world. Then, for him, sociology as a science can supply us with the solutions for social problems and discussion about the reconstruction of a "better" society.

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