

## The Cambridge Companion to Durkheim

Long recognized as a foundational figure in the development of social scientific thought, Emile Durkheim's work has been the subject of intense debate over the years. This authoritative and comprehensive collection of essays re-examines the impact of Durkheim's thought, considering the historical contexts of his work as well as evaluating his ideas in relation to current issues and controversies. Eminent authorities in the field have contributed to this up-to-date overview, giving readers – both students and academics – a chance to engage directly with leading figures in the field about contemporary trends, ideas, and dilemmas. This volume reflects the cross-disciplinary application of Durkheim's theories and will interest scholars of anthropology, political science, cultural studies, and philosophy, as well as sociology. It is a landmark that redefines the relevance of Durkheim to the human sciences in the twenty-first century, highlighting in particular the significance of his insights for contemporary moral philosophy and his ever-growing centrality for cultural theory.

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THE CAMBRIDGE  
COMPANION TO  
DURKHEIM

EDITED BY  
JEFFREY C. ALEXANDER  
AND  
PHILIP SMITH



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We would like to dedicate this book to  
Morel Morton and Philippa Smith  
our partners  
and to the memory of  
Philippe Besnard  
the Frenchman whose pioneering contributions  
to Durkheim scholarship have proven invaluable  
to rethinking Durkheim and whose generosity as  
a colleague and friend will be sorely missed.

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This collection has been a long time in the making. We thank the contributors for their patience. It was Catherine Max, then an editor at Cambridge, who proposed to us at some point in the late-1990s that there should be a Cambridge Companion to Durkheim. It was her successor, Sarah Caro, who saw this project through to completion several years later. We thank Sarah for her suggestions, both positive and critical, her steady faith in the project, and her continued support during its long developmental life. Isaac Reed prepared the chronology and bibliography in consultation with the editors. Tanya Goodman battled heroically with a copy-editing and coordination task of Olympian magnitude and kept the project on track in the final months before the typescript was submitted. Ann Fitzpatrick provided further secretarial and administrative assistance. The chapter by Philippe Besnard was translated by Philippa Smith. Susan Beer and Jackie Warren oversaw the final stages of production at Cambridge University Press.

Despite the great renaissance of Durkheim scholarship and Durkheim-inspired contemporary social science, the present volume is the first broad collection of original Durkheim scholarship to have been fostered in the United States in almost four decades. The whats, whys, and wherefores of this explosion of interest are topics we address in our introduction. If the structural preconditions for this text are disciplinary, the proximate causes are personal and biographical. One editor of this collection (Alexander) traces his first sympathetic contact with Durkheim back to Berkeley, to Leo Lowenthal and Robert Bellah, the latter of whose Durkheimian interest traces back to the earlier generation of W. Lloyd Warner and Talcott Parsons, who began their scholarly work less than a decade after Durkheim's death. The other editor (Smith) first encountered Durkheim through a reading of the classics of British structural-functionalist anthropology, Mauss, Hertz, and Victor Turner, as an anthropology undergraduate in Scotland at St Andrews and Edinburgh. The editors' mutual interest in Durkheim converged in Los Angeles during the late 1980s, at UCLA, and was nurtured

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locally by the members of the “Culture Club,” nationally and internationally by a growing movement of cultural sociology, and particularly by our immediate Durkheimian collaborators – Steven J. Sherwood, Ron Eyerman, Roger Friedland, Bernhard Giesen, Ron Jacobs, Tim Phillips, Steven Seidman, Ken Thompson, and Brad West.



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ALEXANDER RILEY is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Bucknell University. He is the author of numerous articles on the Durkheimian sociology of religion and the co-editor (with Philippe Besnard) of the correspondence of Robert Hertz *Un Ethnologue dans les tranchées* (CNRS Éditions, 2002).

CHRIS SHILLING is Professor of Sociology at the University of Portsmouth. His books include *The Body and Social Theory* (Sage, 1993), *Re-Forming the Body* (Sage, 1997 with P. A. Mellor), *The Sociological Ambition* (Sage, 2001 with P. A. Mellor), and *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society* (Sage, 2004).

PHILIP SMITH is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Associate Director of the Center for Cultural Sociology at Yale University. His books include *The New American Cultural Sociology* (Cambridge University Press, 1998, editor), *Researching the Visual* (Sage, 2000 with Michael Emmison), *Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 2001), and *War Stories: the Cultural Politics of Suez, the Gulf War and the War in Iraq* (Chicago, 2005). He is the author of various articles deploying and developing Durkheimian themes.

EDWARD A. TIRYAKIAN is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Duke University. The author of *Sociologism and Existentialism* (Prentice-Hall, 1962) and numerous articles of Durkheimian sociology, his most recent volume is *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis* (co-edited with Said Arjomand, Sage, 2004).

## CHRONOLOGY OF DURKHEIM'S LIFE

April 15, 1858	Born in Épinal, Lorraine
1870	German soldiers occupy Épinal
1874	Receives Baccalauréat en Lettres, Collège d'Épinal
1875	Receives Baccalauréat en Sciences, Collège d'Épinal
1879	Admitted to École Normale Supérieure
1880	Fustel de Coulanges becomes Director of the École Normale Supérieure
July 14, 1880	Takes part in Republican demonstrations in the streets of Paris
1880–91	Ferdinand de Saussure studies and teaches in Paris
1882	Passes agrégation
October 1882	Begins teaching philosophy at Lycée de Puy (moves to Lycée de Sens in November 1882, and to Lycée de Saint-Quentin in February 1884)
1884	Begins work on <i>De la division du travail social</i>
1885–6	Visits German universities, including Berlin, Marburg, and Leipzig
October 1886	Returns from Germany, is appointed philosophy teacher at Lycée de Troyes
1887	Marries Louise Dreyfus; Appointed “Chargé d’un Cours de Science Sociale et de Pédagogie” at Bordeaux; gives first public lecture at Bordeaux, proposing to develop the new science of sociology in the course of teaching it
1889–90	Gives course, “Le Suicide”
1893	Publishes <i>De la division du travail social</i>
1894	Publishes “Les Règles de la méthode sociologique” in the <i>Revue philosophique</i>
1894	Gabriel Tarde appointed Director of Criminal Statistics office of the Ministry of Justice; Captain

## CHRONOLOGY OF DURKHEIM'S LIFE

	Alfred Dreyfus accused of spying, arrested, and found guilty of high treason
1894–5	Gives course, “La Religion,” including his engagement with the texts of Robertson-Smith
1895	Publishes <i>Les Règles de la méthode sociologique</i> (book version includes modifications and a preface)
1895–6	Gives course, “L’Histoire du socialisme”
1896	Begins work on <i>L’Année sociologique</i> ; appointed to full professor in social science, the first such post in France
1897	Publishes <i>Le Suicide</i>
1898	First volume of <i>L’Année sociologique</i> published
1898	Émile Zola publishes “J’accuse . . . !”
1899	President of France pardons Alfred Dreyfus
1900–1	Gives course, “Les Formes élémentaires de la religion”
1902	Appointed “Chargé d’un cours de Pédagogie” at the Sorbonne in Paris
1903	With Marcel Mauss, publishes “De quelques formes primitives de classification: contribution à l’étude des représentations collectives” as the lead article in Volume VI of the <i>Année sociologique</i>
1906	Appointed to Chair of the Science of Education at the Sorbonne
1906–7	Gives course, “La Religion: Origines”
1907	In a letter to the director of the <i>Revue néo-scholastique</i> , recounts how the course of 1894–5 on religion, and the intellectual encounter with the works of Robertson-Smith, were a “revelation” that marks a break in his thinking
1909	Exchange with Levy-Bruhl; publishes “Sociologie religieuse et théorie de la connaissance” in <i>Revue de métaphysique et de morale</i> , which will become the introduction to <i>Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse</i>
1912	Publishes <i>Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse</i>
1913	Chair at the Sorbonne renamed Science of Education and Sociology
1913–14	Gives course, “Pragmatisme et Sociologie”
August 3, 1914	Germany declares war on France

## CHRONOLOGY OF DURKHEIM'S LIFE

1915	Son André sent to the Bulgarian front; publishes <i>Qui a voulu la guerre?</i>
1916	André Durkheim confirmed dead
Late 1916	Suffers a stroke leaving a meeting
November 15, 1917	Dies in Paris