

Durkheim and social solidarity

Explain Durkheim's view of shared values and specialist skills without assuming universal agreement.

Core learning

- Durkheim argued that education helps create social solidarity by transmitting shared values.
- Schools are also claimed to teach specialist skills needed for a complex division of labour.
- A sociological evaluation asks whose values are transmitted and whether integration works equally for all groups.

Concepts, studies and perspectives

- Social solidarity: Shared rituals, rules and expectations may help learners feel part of a wider society.
- Division of labour: Modern societies need specialist knowledge and cooperation between different roles.
- Consensus problem: A society may not agree on values; schools may reproduce dominant values rather than neutral shared values.
- Durkheim / consensus: Education binds people together and prepares them for social roles.
- Marxist challenge: So-called shared values may reflect ruling-class interests.
- Feminist challenge: Shared values may include gendered assumptions about roles and behaviour.
- Interactionist challenge: Pupils interpret and resist school messages; transmission is not automatic.

Before the lesson

Read the core terms and write a one-sentence definition for each. Bring one question about evidence quality.

C → B → A → A* development

- C: accurate definition and simple example.
- B: clear mechanism and some application.
- A: evidence and alternative explanation.
- A*: qualified judgement linked to group differences and evidence limits.

Source / accuracy note

Source note: This lesson teaches Durkheim's consensus view through original explanatory material and fictional classroom examples.