

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.

Concept	Meaning	Exam use
Institution	Organised pattern of roles, rules and resources	Use to explain schooling
Mechanism	Process connecting cause and outcome	Use for AO3
Solidarity	Sense of shared belonging	Use in Durkheim
Evaluation	Testing the strength of an explanation	Use in paragraph endings

Source / accuracy note

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