

Suicide and Work, Sociological View. Review article

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Abstract

Introduction For more than a century, the sociological study of suicide is due to Durkheim's classic *Suicide*. Essentially there are two central principles: that the structure of suicide rates in a society is a function of the structure of social relations and that vary in terms of integration and/or regulation. Suicide occurs predominantly among the group with the highest levels of social, political and religious solidarity. However, when Durkheim's theory is extended, and extension in the micro level is integrated. When individuals do not feel integrated into society, they can commit selfish suicide. In the ultimate analysis, higher levels of suicide in modern societies would reach equilibrium due to the stabilizing forces related to mutual interdependence and social mobility. **Objective:** This study aimed to characterize the studies produced in the last 5 years that address suicide and its main causes. **Methodology:** a systematic review that followed the reporting guidelines of PRISMA methodology to obtain relevant to the subject data was performed. The review was based on relevant articles published in three databases (SCOPUS, Science Direct and Web of Science). The keywords user were Suicide, Sociology and Military. The eligibility criteria of the articles contemplated only articles published and peer reviewed, published from 2014 to 2019, and written in English. **Results and Discussion:** 149 articles were selected, of which 8 studies were included, after applying the date criteria (period 2014 to 2019); document type criteria (only research articles) and the language criteria (articles in English). **Conclusion:** It is worth mentioning that little change has occurred in existing social theories, however, society is evolving, is the interpersonal mechanism at work or family. Such relationships between friends, the influences of mourning, require special attention.

Keywords: Suicide, Sociology, Military.

INTRODUCTION

In his literary work *"Suicide"*, Durkheim led to Tarde's "imitation" thesis, but eventually consider imitation as "a purely psychological phenomenon." (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2014a). It is clear that Durkheim's dismissal probably had more to do with the implications of Tarde's social psychological theory for his own suicide theory. As such, he has established a strategy to accept "that the idea of suicide can undoubtedly be communicated by contagion [and that] no other phenomenon is more readily contagious", while at the same time, arguing that the social rate of suicide was of true sociological significance. Tarde's eventual marginalization in American sociology and the conventional wisdom that Durkheim "won" the debate obscure a critical question: whether it is worth recapturing Tarde's social psychological theory about the diffusion of emotions, ideas and behaviors (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2014a). Durkheim argues in his famous work, *Suicide* that variations in the suicide rate in any country are related to the level of social integration and social regulation in the country. To further highlight more his theory, he outlines a typology of suicide that differentiates four types of suicide: selfish, altruistic, anomic, and fatalistic suicides (Edwards, 2016). When individuals do not feel integrated into society, they may commit selfish suicide (Ritz e Goodman, 2004). Individuals who are not well integrated into society feel that they are not part of the community, but the community also feels that individuals do not fit into their lifestyle (Recker & Moore, 2016). In this spirit, this article asks: How can we bring cultural sociology into dialogue with the structuralism of Durkheim's theory to better understand the social roots of suicide. Although Jack Douglas (1967) first drew attention to the importance of cultural meanings for the understanding of suicide, thinking about culture and suicide was widely undertaken by anthropologists, undermining efforts to generate a generalizable sociological theory (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2018). Although the sociology

of suicide has generally neglected the idea of culture, there is some evidence in both sociology and other disciplines that culture is important for suicide. In 1967 sociologist Jack Douglas was one of the first to defend an argument for analyzing culture in relation to suicide. Specifically, he argued that the effectiveness of the study of suicide rates in the Durkheimian's tradition was hampered by our lack of understanding of how society gives meaning to suicide. His evidence for this were substantial inconsistencies and now well documented; (Rockett, Samora & Coben 2006) in official statistics of suspicious deaths as suicides (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2014a). The question that gives the sense to this research is based on the need to know the main causes of suicide that are reported in articles published in a certain period of time. Based on previous statements, this study aimed to characterize the studies produced in the last 5 years that address suicide and its main causes.

METHODOLOGY

The review methodology used followed the guidelines for reporting the methodology PRISMA - Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (Moher et al, 2009; Liberati et al., 2009). The systematic search was focused on the literature regarding suicide and its main causes. The search strategy consisted of a comprehensive search that could locate the widest spectrum of articles for the aforementioned subject and was carried out in selected electronic databases, namely: Scopus, Science Direct and Web of Science. For each electronic database used, the search terms were as follows: Suicide. Sociology; Military. The Articles eligibility criteria contemplated only research articles published and peer reviewed, where information about suicide causes were found. Only papers published in the period from 2014 to 2019 and written in English were considered. It was admitted a possible bias inherent in the fact that non-English works were excluded from the search process. All studies considered for in-depth analysis were critically evaluated in questions such as the quality and content of the research methodology and the outcomes of the study. This evaluation is significant to minimize the bias of individual studies and thus prevent the inclusion of data that may compromise the acuity of the results of this review.

RESULTS

The entire details of the selection criteria processes are summarized in Figure 1. After screening and eligibility processes, thirteen articles were considered relevant to the study topic, Table 1.

Analysis of bias

Information or samples bias were not identified in the included articles, as they did not present contamination of information, in view, the theoretical analysis.

DISCUSSION

As an investigation question of this systematic review, the suicide, uncovered ways of investigation for the prevention of suicide, taking into account two basic types: suicide and self-inflicted injury; this second as the main cause of suicide, World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) data, are more than 804,000 cases worldwide and 25% more self-inflicted injuries. In the words of the General Director of the World Health Organization, this level of suicide in any country is sufficient to classify suicide as a public health problem and to investigate its causes and consequences (Edwards, 2016). If people expect to live in a democratically governed society

rather than imperial subjects, they must know where to apply moral and political influence (Worrell, 2015). The various characteristics of suicide and its consequences comprise what the sociologist Donald Black would call "social case geometry". Using Black's theoretical language, the law in the case of Isabel flows down through a great distance in "social space," a state centralized to an individual who was under the direct authority of the state and had lower social status. As Black's theory predicts, cases with this kind of social geometry attract the strongest legal responses (Tucker, 2015). However, other analyses of social capital and suicide showed that areas with high social capital increased suicide rates. Flavin & Radcliff (2009) examined social capital and suicide by the state in the United States. Using Putnam's index of social capital, the authors found that, as the index of social capital increased, suicide rates increased.

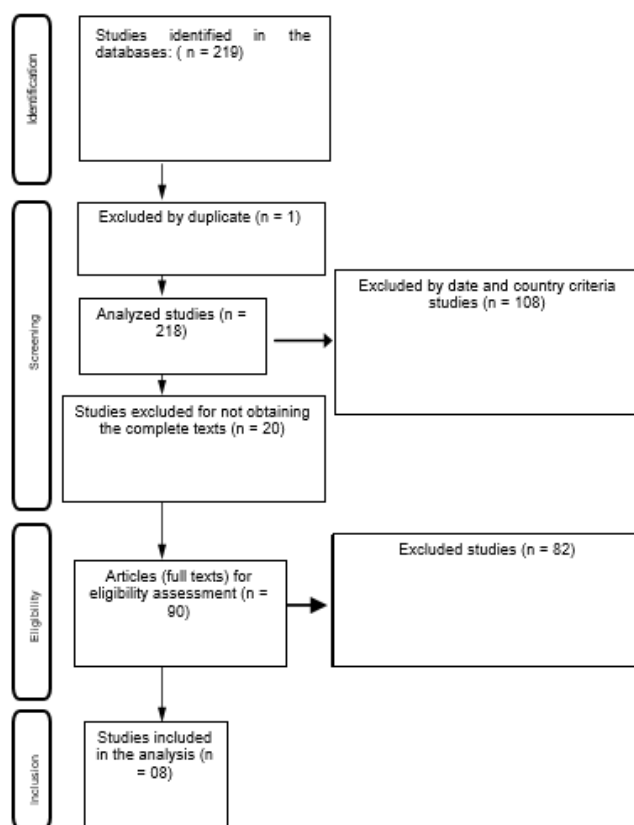


Figure 1. Flowchart of identification and selection of articles for systematic review.

Thus, they argued that social capital increased suicide. This conclusion is in line with the arguments of Kushner & Sterk (2005), who examined Durkheim's arguments on social integration and social regulation. They argued that high levels of social capital should increase suicides and affirmed that high levels of social integration were correlated with suicide (Recker & Moore, 2016). Cultural scripts - models for sequencing behavior over time - are similar to Swidler's concept of action strategies, as they both specify how to achieve desired outcomes or solve problems. In addition to guiding behavior within intimate environments, relationship scripts are crucial in developing ideal selves related to the roles of romantic and intimate partners (Soller, 2014).

Table 1. Studies of suicide and its main causes (8 studies)

| Title | Author | Date | Objective | Summary |
|--|--------------------------------------|------|---|--|
| Reconsidering Durkheim's Assessment of Tarde: Formalizing a Tardian Theory of Imitation, Contagion, and Suicide Suggestion. | Abrutyn, S., & Mueller, A. S.(2014b) | 2014 | Revisiting Tarde, the paper examines why Tarde's theory | Emile Durkheim rejected the imitation of Gabriel Tarde's thesis, arguing that sociology only has to worry about the rates of social suicide. |
| Toward a Cultural-Structural Theory of Suicide: Examining Excessive Regulation and Its Discontents. | Abrutyn, S., & Mueller, A. S. | 2018 | Despite his enduring perceptions, Durkheim's suicide theory. | We conclude with implications for future sociological research on suicide and suicide prevention. |
| Suicide in Guyana: a Parsonsian corrective to Durkheim's theory of suicide. | Edwards, D. C. | 2016 | The present paper aims to make the point that Durkheim's theory of suicide requires a theoretical extension. | Suicide occurs predominantly among the group with the highest levels of social, political and religious solidarity. |
| Socio-Economic Development, Economic Fluctuations, and Age-Specific Suicide: A Cross-National Test of the Durkheim, Henry, and Short, and Ginsberg Theories. <i>The Sociological Quarterly</i> | Piatkowska, S. J. | 2018 | This study is based on Durkheim, Henry, Short, and Ginsberg theories. | We used a set of grouped transactional time series data, composed of 17 Western European nations, covering a period of more than 50 years (1956 to 2012). |
| Durkheim, social capital, and suicide rates across US counties. | Recker, N. L., & Moore, M. D. | 2016 | Finding out whether there are municipalities with higher rates of social capital, diversity and population density have experienced lower rates of suicide. | Suicide is a very contemporary issue. This paper draws on Durkheim's approach, using social capital theory as a framework for examining suicide rates. |
| Caught in a Bad Romance. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> | Soller, B. | 2014 | Applying the sequence analysis to data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. | Integrating insights from cultural sociology and identity theory. |
| The geometry of suicide law. <i>International Journal of Law, Crime, and Justice</i> | Tucker, J. | 2015 | In this article, Donald Black's theory of law and social control is applied to explain the variation in suicide law. | It focuses on the three variable characteristics of the social geometry of a suicide case - the centralization of the state in which Self-death occurs, the relationship of the Auto assassin with the state and the social status of the Auto-assassin. |

| Title | Author | Date | Objective | Summary |
|--|----------------|------|--|---|
| Imperial Homunculi: The Speculative Singularities of American Hegemony | Worrell, M. P. | 2015 | This article explores the domain of symbolic imagery to understand the mechanisms and effects of neoliberal deregulation | Instead of something that needs to be defeated, terror is an enemy that cannot be defeated, but it cannot prevail against an empire either. |

Durkheim proposes a type of suicide resulting from being very integrated. Durkheim solved this dilemma by arguing that "inferior societies are the theater by excellence of altruistic suicides," with only the most exceptional cases - such as the soldier throwing himself on a grenade to save his unit to be present in modernity - an assertion that lacks empirical validity (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2014a). The society also has to regulate the behavior of the individual. Durkheim described anomic suicide as suicide when societal regulation is disrupted (Ritzer e Goodman, 2004). The rupture can occur during an economic boom or depression. The interruption leaves individuals with little guidance as to the norms and values that apply to the new situation, or to those who should be following. This lack of regulation leaves some people feeling overwhelmed and increases suicide in society (Recker & Moore, 2016). This brief review demonstrates the sophistication of Tarde. Imitation was not psychological, but psychological social. As Kral (1994) and others (Katz, 1999) have argued convincingly, ideas not only jump from one mind to another but must be communicated: "An idea, once planted, can become easily accessible and difficult to replace." it may seem simplistic to suggest that telling someone about their thoughts, plans, or suicidal attempts will contribute to the spread of these behaviors, but it does bring suicidal suggestions to the social psychological world of Tarde (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2014a). A careful reading of his chapter, Durkheim, on altruism reveals a very emotional discourse: he postulates that the egoist suffers from "feelings of incurable fatigue and sad depression," while the motivation of the altruist "springs from hope... because it depends on the belief in beautiful perspectives beyond this life. . . [and] implies even the enthusiasm and impulse of a faith that earnestly seeks satisfaction, affirming itself by acts of extreme energy " (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2014a). It is also known that social relations, groups, and environments are composed of recurrent and emotionally charged interactions that generate unique emotional profiles and biographies that are a mixture of intergroup relationships and idiosyncrasies and experiences of group members. This point is essential to understand and explain suicide because some groups probably have biographies and more intense negative emotional profiles due to their low-status position with other groups, biographies and exclusive emotional profiles of its members or the intersection of the same (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2014b).

CONCLUSIONS

The systematic review proposed to answer the question of investigation regarding the possible causes of the suicidal act described in the literature. Overall, the results of the studies provided a clear vision of the determinants of the suicidal act. Due to the nature of the results, it was well evidenced that suicide is a multi-causal phenomenon and can be associated with the determinants of the most varied shades. The possibilities for the motivation to commit the suicide proposed by the authors give a good measure of this diversity. However, the act, conscientious and solitary, this being a desperate mechanism to end the anguish that only the individual experiences — affecting everyone around you — potentially causing mourning for your peers. Also, we cannot say that there is a form of prevention for the suicide act or its ideation. It is pointing thus to need more studies on the subject. Taking into account the ethical and aesthetic standards of research, to register that in the face of the transversal theme,

transdisciplinary attention it is necessary: Biological, Psychological and social. Considering indispensable the dialogue between the knowledge and the long way for the search for possible suicide prevention. It is noteworthy that little change occurred in existing social theories; however, society is in evolution, either the interpersonal mechanism at work or in the family. Such relationships between friends, the influences of mourning, require special attention.

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