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The Correlation Between Anomie, Identity Fragmentation, and Neurobiological Transformation of Society: Perspectives from Émile Durkheim and Neuroscience in the Era of Globalization

Toplumsal Anomi, Kimlik Parçalanması ve Nörobijolojik Dönüşüm Arasındaki Korelasyon: Küreselleşme Döneminde Émile Durkheim ve Nörobilim Perspektifleri

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Abstract

Globalization has profoundly transformed societal dynamics, bringing attention to phenomena such as anomie and identity fragmentation. Additionally, the digital era, marked by social media, digitalization, and information overload, has significantly influenced human neurobiology, altering cognitive patterns, emotional responses, and biological functions. This study examines the relationship between anomie, identity fragmentation, and the neurobiological impacts of globalization, with a focus on how rapid social changes weaken social norms and cohesion. Using a qualitative, exploratory approach, the research synthesizes relevant theories, concepts, and empirical data, situating globalization as a framework that connects these phenomena. The findings reveal that anomie, as described by Émile Durkheim, refers to the weakening of social norms that leaves individuals disoriented and diminishes social cohesion. Identity fragmentation, on the other hand, arises from environmental, cultural, and digital pressures that disrupt individual identity. From a neuroscientific perspective, these conditions affect brain function, including heightened stress due to amygdala hyperactivation, reduced emotional regulation by the prefrontal cortex, and increased reliance on the brain's reward system through social media validation. Social isolation, linked to anomie, further reduces oxytocin production, exacerbating alienation and interpersonal disconnection. This study highlights the critical need for integrative approaches to address the socio-neurobiological impacts of globalization.

Keywords: Anomie, Identity Fragmentation, Émile Durkheim, Neuroscience

Öz

Anomi ve kimlik parçalanması gibi fenomenler. Ayrıca, sosyal medya, dijitalleşme ve bilgi aşırı yüklemesi ile işaretlenen dijital çağ, insan nörobijolojisini önemli ölçüde etkilemiş, bilişsel desenleri, duygusal tepkileri ve biyolojik fonksiyonları değiştirmiştir. Bu çalışma, anomie, kimlik parçalanması ve küreselleşmenin nörobijolojik etkileri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Çalışma, hızlı toplumsal değişimlerin sosyal normları ve toplumsal uyumu nasıl zayıflatığına odaklanmaktadır. Kalitatif, keşifsel bir yaklaşım kullanarak, araştırma ilgili teorileri, kavramları ve ampirik verileri sentezlemekte ve küreselleşmeyi bu fenomenleri birleştiren bir çerçeve olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Bulgular, Émile Durkheim tarafından tanımlanan anominin, bireyleri yönstüz bırakan ve toplumsal uyumu azaltan sosyal normların zayıflaması olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Diğer yandan, kimlik parçalanması, bireysel kimliği bozan çevresel, kültürel ve dijital baskılardan kaynaklanmaktadır. Nörobilimsel bir perspektiften bakıldığında, bu durumlar, amigdala hiperaktivitesi nedeniyle artan stres, prefrontal korteks tarafından azalan duygusal düzenleme ve sosyal medya doğrulaması aracılığıyla beyin ödül sistemine artan bağımlılık gibi beyin fonksiyonlarını etkilemektedir. Anomi ile ilişkilendirilen sosyal izolasyon, oksitosin üretimini daha da azaltarak yabancılaşmayı ve kişilerarası kopukluğu artırmaktadır. Bu çalışma, küreselleşmenin sosyo-nörobijolojik etkilerini ele almak için bütüncül yaklaşımlara duyulan kritik ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anomi, Kimlik Parçalanması, Émile Durkheim, Nörobilim

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought profound transformations in social dynamics, with digital technologies like the internet and social media accelerating global integration and redefining human interaction (Juris, 2012:438). As a process that connects economies, politics, and cultures across nations, globalization fosters positive impacts, such as broader access to information, technology, and cultural exchange. However, it also presents challenges to social cohesion and the stability of societal identities. Exposure to diverse values, norms, and cultures often leads to identity fragmentation and feelings of disorientation (Dedu, 2019:122-123; Kowalkowski et al., 2025:3). Additionally, globalization seems to erode traditional moral orders rooted in customs and noble values, such as respect, responsibility, honesty, and harmony, which are increasingly replaced by individual freedom (Kudaibergenov et al., 2025:65). Unrestricted access to alternative cultural narratives fosters more pluralistic identities but simultaneously heightens the risk of identity fragmentation within increasingly interconnected social environments (Thompson, 2010:17).

One prominent phenomenon emerging in this context is anomie, a term first introduced by Émile Durkheim to describe the breakdown of norms and values in society due to rapid social change (Durkheim, 2002:3). Anomie not only impacts social structures but also affects individuals by fragmenting their identities as they struggle to adapt to cultural and technological heterogeneity. This issue becomes more intricate with neurobiological transformations induced by digitalization and social media, which accelerate patterns of interaction and emotional responses in society (Hari, 2018:230; Durkheim, 2002:201).

Globalization has also led to identity fragmentation, a phenomenon that warrants serious attention. Identity fragmentation occurs when individuals feel torn between conflicting values, roles, or cultural affiliations, often caught between tradition and modernity or local values and global influences (Belamghari, 2020:1-2; Klodkowski et al., 2025:3). This condition can trigger identity confusion, alienation, and deviant behavior, reflecting a decline in morality and social etiquette, including within educational settings, and contradicting religious and cultural values. This phenomenon aligns with Durkheim's concept of anomie, wherein disorientation arises from the absence of explicit norms to regulate individual behavior, especially during rapid social changes (Durkheim, 1964:291-309; Durkheim, 2010:xiii). Globalization, as a formidable force of social transformation, exacerbates this situation by shifting norms in traditionally homogeneous societies toward dynamic multiculturalism, undermining previously firm social orders and creating challenges for individuals to find direction or meaning in their lives.

Moreover, globalization affects human neurobiological transformations. The emergence of social media, digitalization, and information overload have altered cognitive patterns, emotions, and biological responses. For instance, research indicates that intense digital interactions can impair focus, increase stress, and accelerate the brain's adaptation to a highly stimulating environment (Carr, 2020:31; Arnett, 2002:777). These neurobiological changes intensify the impacts of anomie and identity fragmentation, creating a self-reinforcing cycle among the three phenomena.

Globalization accelerates social change, influencing the structure of existing social norms. From Durkheim's perspective (Durkheim, 1973: 269-297), this instability in norms triggers anomie, which exacerbates individuals' sense of alienation from their communities. Neuroscience supports this view by demonstrating that social instability and anomie elevate stress levels in individuals (Hari, 2018:231). This stress, resulting from the uncertainty of norms and identity fragmentation, can affect brain function, particularly the amygdala, which plays a role in processing negative emotions, as well as the prefrontal cortex, which is associated with emotional regulation.

This article examines the impact of globalization on anomie and identity fragmentation through Durkheim's sociological perspective, highlighting rapid social change as the primary cause of the disintegration of social norms and identity instability. Neuroscience is then utilized to confirm the biological effects arising from these social phenomena, including their impact on the mental well-being of individuals isolated by anomie and identity tensions. According to Durkheim, unstable social structures reduce solidarity and create circumstances where individuals lose direction in a value system (Durkheim, 1973:275). In today's digital era, these dynamics are amplified by neurobiological changes, such as diminished attention spans caused by excessive information and intense digital interactions (Carr, 2020:30).

The interconnected challenges of anomie, identity fragmentation, and neurobiological transformation in the context of globalization are critical due to their far-reaching implications for individual well-being and the sustainability of social order. These three phenomena are intricately linked, forming patterns of social disruption that threaten societal cohesion, normative stability, and individual's capacity to function optimally in rapidly changing environments.

Anomie, marked by the weakening of social norms and values, directly threatens social solidarity. Durkheim (1897) demonstrated that the absence of normative guidance increases the propensity for social dysfunction, such as depression, suicide, and violence. Recent studies corroborate these findings, linking normative instability to rising mental health issues, particularly in countries undergoing rapid social and economic transformations (Wray et al., 2011:515).

Identity fragmentation further exacerbates this challenge by creating individuals who feel alienated both from themselves and their communities. In the digital age, individuals are exposed to a variety of roles and identities that often conflict with one another. Durkheim argues that when social norms no longer provide clear guidance, individuals become more susceptible to identity disorientation. Neuroscience explains that this identity uncertainty increases the cognitive load on the brain, leading to disruptions in decision-making and heightened anxiety, which is reflected in increased activity in brain regions associated with stress and tension.

In the digital era, individuals face pressures to conform to multiple, often conflicting, roles and identities (Turkle, 2011:159). This uncertainty hampers the development of a robust and stable identity, which is crucial for providing meaning and direction in life. When individuals lose identity stability, they become more susceptible to maladaptive behaviors, such as excessive consumption, social media addiction, and even ideological extremism (Baumeister & Leary, 1995:498).

Neurobiological transformations caused by changes in social interaction patterns and exposure to excessive digital information have direct consequences on brain function. Research shows that continuous exposure to digital technology reduces focus, heightens impulsivity, and diminishes the ability to form meaningful relationships (Loh & Kanai, 2016:11). These neurobiological shifts not only affect individuals psychologically but also socially, as they worsen social isolation and anomie.

This issue is significant due to its cross-generational and multidimensional impacts, involving individual psychology, social structures, and even fundamental biological changes. As global transformations accelerate, the risks associated with these three phenomena grow, reinforcing a cycle where norm disintegration, identity fragmentation, and neurobiological changes interact. The effects are felt at both the micro (individual) and macro (community and global society) levels, threatening social balance and the sustainability of human values.

This study makes significant contributions to two main fields—sociology and neuroscience—by adopting a multidisciplinary approach that integrates Émile Durkheim's classical theories with modern insights from neuroscience. Amid increasing literature on globalization, this research fills a crucial gap in understanding the interplay among anomie, identity fragmentation, and neurobiological transformation, particularly within the complex context of social change in the globalized era. Thus, the study offers both theoretical and practical contributions in several dimensions.

In the framework of social theory, this research extends the relevance of Durkheim's theory of anomie to the context of modern globalization. Durkheim (1897) argued that anomie arises when social norms fail to guide social changes. This study revisits the concept by incorporating the dimension of identity fragmentation resulting from exposure to diverse values in the digital age. This is vital because globalization has accelerated normative disruptions, impacting social cohesion and societal stability. The research also highlights how contemporary societies respond to these challenges through adaptation, resistance, or social innovation (Giddens, 1990:10,20; Durkheim, 2002:201).

At the individual level, the study draws on neuroscience to understand how globalization, particularly through digital media, affects brain neuroplasticity and emotional responses. Neurobiological transformations, such as reduced focus or heightened stress due to information overload, are key factors in understanding how individuals experience anomie and identity fragmentation (Loh & Kanai, 2016:10-11). The study introduces a novel approach by linking neurobiological responses to social structures, explaining how disruptions at the individual brain level contribute to collective social dysfunction.

This research examines the impact of globalization on anomie and identity fragmentation through Durkheim's sociological perspective, highlighting rapid social change as the primary cause of the disintegration of social norms and identity instability (Loh et al., 2020:1). Neuroscience is then utilized to

confirm the biological effects arising from these social phenomena, including their impact on the mental well-being of individuals isolated by anomie and identity tensions. This research aims to explore the reciprocal influences of anomie and identity fragmentation within the context of globalization by examining how exposure to diverse values and rapid social change exacerbates normative disintegration and weakens social cohesion, as viewed through Durkheim's theoretical lens. Additionally, it seeks to investigate how contemporary societies address identity challenges stemming from globalization pressures. From a neuroscience perspective, the study aims to examine the neurobiological transformations driven by digital interactions and how these changes influence the dynamics of anomie and identity fragmentation in modern individual and societal life.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach based on a literature review to explore Durkheim's theory of anomie and identity fragmentation, while integrating findings from neuroscience literature to understand the biological impacts of social change in the context of globalization. This approach aims to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena through the analysis of relevant scholarly literature and theoretical frameworks. The primary data sources include Émile Durkheim's seminal work on anomie (Durkheim, 1897:204), neuroscience research on the effects of digital interaction on brain function (Loh & Kanai, 2016:35), and contemporary sociological studies on globalization and identity (Giddens, 1990:14-20; Turkle, 2011:158-169). The literature review process involves identifying key relevant theories and then synthesizing findings from both disciplines to construct a more comprehensive analytical framework regarding the relationship between anomie, identity fragmentation, and the neurobiological impacts of globalization.

A systematic literature review was conducted to identify relevant theories, concepts, and empirical data. Sociological literature was analyzed to explore how globalization influences social norms and individual identity fragmentation, while neuroscience literature was utilized to examine the neurobiological impacts of digital interaction, such as increased stress, reduced focus, and altered cognitive patterns (Carr, 2010:30). The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and relationships among anomie, identity fragmentation, and neurobiological transformations. The article aims to explore the interaction between social and biological aspects in the context of globalization, as well as to understand how rapid social change impacts individuals both in terms of social behavior and neurobiology.

This study also adopts globalization as a conceptual framework that connects the three main aspects of anomie, identity fragmentation, and neurobiological change to analyze the social and biological impacts of social change in modern society. The interpretation of these findings is conducted by comparing and contrasting Durkheim's theory of anomie with neuroscience findings related to stress, emotional regulation, and behavioral changes triggered by the uncertainty of social norms in an increasingly digitally connected society.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Exploring the Sociological Thought of Émile Durkheim

Émile Durkheim, one of the foremost figures in sociology, was born on April 15, 1858, in Épinal, Lorraine, Eastern France. Raised in an Orthodox Jewish family, Durkheim entered the prestigious École Normale Supérieure in Paris in 1879 at the age of 21. Known for his intelligence, seriousness, and critical thinking, Durkheim was profoundly influenced by two prominent professors, Fustel de Coulanges and Émile Boutroux (L. Daniel, 1996). After completing his studies, he taught philosophy at Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris from 1882 to 1887. During this time, he also traveled to Germany to study psychology under the guidance of Wilhelm Wundt. In 1887, Durkheim was appointed as a scholar in the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences at the University of Bordeaux (Damsar, 2015:101).

Durkheim was the first French sociologist to pursue comprehensive academic training in sociology. Recognized as a pioneer in social science and education, his research set a foundation for modern sociological inquiry. Over his career, Durkheim produced three major works and spent fifteen years in Bordeaux. His doctoral dissertation, *The Division of Labour in Society*, written in French, alongside his Latin thesis on Montesquieu, was published in 1893 (Beilharz, 2015:70).

In 1902, Durkheim was appointed as a Professor of Sociology and Education at the University of Sorbonne in Paris. One of his most notable works, *Les Formes Élémentaires de la Vie Religieuse: Le*

Système Totémique en Australie (1912), explores the influence of religion on social life. This book was later translated into English by Joseph Ward Swain as *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915). The work underscores the significance of religious theory and its impact on subsequent thinkers (Beilharz, 2015:70-75).

Durkheim's intellectual development was heavily influenced by the socio-political context of modern France in the late 19th century, a period marked by significant revolutionary change. Additionally, his mentor, Fustel de Coulanges, and other figures such as Auguste Comte, Saint-Simon, and Ernest Renan, contributed to the traditions that shaped Durkheim's thought (Veeger, 1993). His work primarily focused on how social structures influence individual behavior and the crucial role of social norms in maintaining societal stability.

Durkheim's legacy remains central to understanding the complex relationship between social institutions, collective norms, and individual agency, providing a foundation for analyzing the dynamics of modern society, particularly in the context of globalization. This article connects Durkheim's views on anomie with findings from neuroscience to deepen the understanding of how social change impacts individual behavior in an increasingly digitally connected society.

Social Facts

In his seminal work, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Émile Durkheim emphasizes that social facts should be the primary focus of sociological study. According to Durkheim, social facts are structures and forces external to individuals yet possess a coercive authority over them. Social facts are defined as ways of thinking, acting, and feeling that exist independently of the individual and exert a constraining influence on their behavior. These facts significantly shape an individual's thoughts, emotions, and actions (Durkheim, 1895:33-45). Durkheim's perspective includes norms, values, customs, and social structures that govern human behavior within a societal context.

Durkheim argues that individuals are obligated to adhere to the requirements imposed by language, customs, traditions, and laws within their societies, regardless of personal circumstances. These elements constitute "social facts," which are not created by individuals but must be lived and adapted to. Failure to comply with or violation of these facts results in social consequences or sanctions. This perspective reflects a sociological idealism inherent in Durkheim's theory. Furthermore, Durkheim posits that social facts are more fundamental than individual facts. He contends that attempting to understand individuals solely through biological, psychological, or self-interest factors is futile. Instead, individuals should be analyzed within the context of their society, and societies must be explained through their broader social frameworks.

Durkheim categorizes social facts into two distinct types: material and non-material (Durkheim, 1895:46-60).

- Material social facts include observable, tangible aspects of society such as institutions, laws, and organizations. Examples encompass educational systems, legal frameworks, and family structures.
- Non-material social facts, on the other hand, consist of intangible elements like values, norms, and customs that cannot be physically observed but play a crucial role in shaping individual behavior. For instance, moral and ethical values upheld by a society fall under this category.

Durkheim's concept of social facts has become a cornerstone in sociological theory. His insights enable sociologists to comprehend how norms and values within a society influence individual behavior and social dynamics. The analysis of social facts remains a vital tool in sociological research, providing a framework to explore the relationships between social structures and individual actions.

Social Solidarity

Social solidarity is a concept central to Émile Durkheim's sociological thought, describing the ways individuals within a society are interconnected and interact. Durkheim argued that solidarity is the foundation of a well-functioning society. He viewed it as a necessary condition for maintaining social stability and fostering societal integration. Durkheim identified two distinct types of social solidarity that operate within different social contexts: mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity (Damsar, 2015:100).

Mechanical solidarity arises from the collective consciousness shared by individuals who exhibit similar characteristics and normative patterns. The primary feature of mechanical solidarity is the high

degree of homogeneity among individuals, accompanied by minimal interdependence between them (Damsar, 2015:103). This form of solidarity is evident in societies with a simplistic division of labor, where individuals possess comparable skills and perform similar tasks, enabling them to fulfill their needs independently of others.

Mechanical solidarity is reinforced by repressive laws, where acts of deviance or crime are met with punishment as a response to violations of the collective consciousness. In such societies, members share numerous similarities and place a high value on collective morality (Johnson, 1986). Consequently, any breach of shared values is not treated lightly. Offenders are punished for their actions as they are seen as transgressions against the collective moral system. Even minor infractions may result in severe penalties due to the societal emphasis on preserving collective norms.

In contrast, organic solidarity characterizes modern, complex, and heterogeneous societies. The defining characteristic of this form of solidarity is the specialization of roles among individuals within the society (Beilharz, 2015:71-73). In an organic solidarity framework, individuals perform distinct roles and functions, and their interdependence arises from the need to rely on one another to meet societal needs and fulfill responsibilities. Unlike mechanical solidarity, organic solidarity fosters more flexible norms and values, allowing societies to adapt to change and accommodate diversity, thereby enabling individuals greater freedom of self-expression.

Societies with organic solidarity are governed by restitutive laws, which aim to restore normal functioning in a complex society rather than merely punish transgressions (Damsar, 2015:100-103). In this context, lawbreakers are required to make restitution for their actions. Violations are perceived as offenses against specific individuals or groups rather than against the collective moral framework. As a result, societies governed by organic solidarity are less emotionally reactive to legal infractions, despite potential moral dissatisfaction.

The two types of solidarity exhibit significant differences. Societies characterized by mechanical solidarity tend to have strong communal bonds, traditional values, low levels of specialization, generalized division of labor, repressive legal systems, a high degree of collective consciousness, and an emphasis on shared similarities. Conversely, societies with organic solidarity operate with a modern structure, specialized division of labor, restitutive legal systems, low levels of collective consciousness, and a focus on individual differences.

Durkheim's distinction between these two forms of solidarity provides a foundational framework for understanding how societies evolve and maintain cohesion, whether through shared traditions and homogeneity or through diversity and interdependence. This dual framework remains a cornerstone in the study of sociology, offering insight into the dynamics of social integration in varying societal contexts.

Anomie

Anomie is a key concept in the sociological thought of Émile Durkheim, referring to a state where social norms are weakened or absent, leaving individuals feeling alienated and disoriented. Etymologically, the term "anomie" derives from the Greek word *anomos*, meaning "without norms." In Durkheim's framework, anomie describes a condition in which individuals lack clear normative guidelines for behavior, often resulting from rapid social changes or instability within societal structures. This state can cause individuals to feel disconnected, purposeless, and socially isolated (Serpa & Ferreira, 2018:690).

Durkheim also described anomie as a condition emerging from dysfunctions in the division of labor, particularly due to insufficient social regulation ensuring cooperation among diverse social roles. The lack of interaction among social roles often leads to conflict and competition, replacing collaboration. In such cases, individual values and goals become increasingly isolated from collective values, contributing to social disintegration and conflict (Serpa & Ferreira, 2018:689-690).

Durkheim identified several factors that contribute to the emergence of anomie:

1. **Rapid Social Transformations:** Processes such as industrialization, urbanization, and globalization can disrupt existing norms and values. In times of swift societal change, individuals may struggle to adapt to new value systems.
2. **Economic Instability:** Situations like recessions or mass unemployment can destabilize social structures and erode normative frameworks, leaving individuals feeling alienated and distrustful of society.

3. **Identity Challenges in Modern Society:** In complex, modern societies, individuals often face difficulties in defining their identity, leading to uncertainty and the loss of previously held norms (Marks, 1974:331).

Durkheim associated the concept of anomie with the types of social solidarity. In societies characterized by mechanical solidarity, norms are strong and widely shared among members. However, in societies with organic solidarity, where social structures are more complex, the risk of anomie increases, particularly when norms are insufficiently robust to regulate individual behavior. Anomie disrupts social cohesion, diminishing the sense of community and mutual dependence among individuals. Additionally, anomie can lead to increased deviant behavior and crime, as individuals no longer feel bound by existing norms. In his work *Le Suicide* (1897), Durkheim demonstrated that suicide rates often rise during periods of anomie. When individuals feel isolated and deprived of meaning, the risk of suicide significantly increases (Marks, 1974:330-331).

Durkheim defined anomie as a social condition where individuals pursue their desires without being constrained by norms. This reflects the boundless nature of human desires and the uncertainty regarding achievable goals, which are closely tied to societal values, institutions, and functions in modern industrial societies.

Suicide

Émile Durkheim's *Le Suicide* (1897) is one of the most influential sociological studies, addressing the phenomenon of suicide. In this work, Durkheim examines the relationship between social conditions and suicide rates, arguing that suicide is not merely an individual issue but a social phenomenon best understood within the context of society. Durkheim clearly outlines the connection between social integration levels and the propensity for individuals to commit suicide. According to Durkheim, suicide is influenced by social facts, meaning it is not solely caused by individual psychological factors but is deeply rooted in societal conditions and structures.

Durkheim employed two primary approaches to analyze suicide rates:

1. **Comparative Analysis:** He compared different types of societies or groups.
2. **Temporal Analysis:** He observed variations in suicide rates within a society or group over time (Damsar, 2015:105).

If variations in suicide rates were observed across groups or periods, Durkheim attributed these differences to variations in social factors or prevailing social currents. He categorized suicide into four distinct types: egoistic, altruistic, anomic, and fatalistic (Damsar, 2015:107-108).

This occurs when individuals feel detached from society. In less integrated societies, individuals lack strong social bonds, increasing their risk of suicide (Durkheim, 1951:126). Weak social integration creates unique social currents that influence suicide rates. Social coercion drives individuals to view suicide as an escape from overwhelming social pressures. For instance, a person living in isolation without social support is more vulnerable to this type of suicide.

This type occurs when individuals are overly integrated into a social group or community to the extent that their lives derive meaning solely from the group. Individuals may feel compelled to sacrifice themselves for the group's benefit, thus increasing the risk of suicide (Durkheim, 1951:175). Strong social integration can also drive individuals to endure hardships, while its absence may lead to despair and suicide.

This arises from a breakdown in societal regulation, social instability, and the lack of clear norms (Durkheim, 1951:201). Individuals may feel disoriented due to rapid social changes or economic crises, increasing their risk of suicide. For example, someone experiencing job loss due to economic instability may feel overwhelmed and resort to suicide.

This rare type occurs in situations of excessive regulation, where individuals feel trapped in oppressive conditions with no hope for improvement. For example, a prisoner facing bleak prospects might resort to fatalistic suicide.

Durkheim's analysis reveals that suicide rates in a society are directly linked to its social conditions. The relationship between individual actions and social integration is central to his argument. When social integration is weak, individuals may fail to conform to societal norms and values, leading to higher suicide rates. Conversely, strong integration encourages conformity to group norms and values, fostering solidarity. Durkheim emphasizes that the strength of social values and norms plays a crucial role

in either promoting adherence to societal rules or increasing the likelihood of deviant behaviors (Jadidi, 2025: 127).

Durkheim's work not only highlights the sociological underpinnings of suicide but also provides a framework for understanding how societal structures influence individual behavior and decision-making. His categorization of suicide types remains a foundational concept in sociology, offering insights into the interplay between social conditions, individual agency, and collective norms.

Identifying Anomie and Identity Fragmentation in Society

Contemporary society refers to the structure, dynamics, and characteristics of present-day communities, shaped by extensive social, cultural, economic, and technological changes. This term encompasses societies in the modern era, characterized by rapid and complex transformations across various aspects of life (Shedyakov, 2023:211). It reflects the global interconnectedness driven by globalization, urbanization, and advancements in information technology. The reliance on technology has become indispensable; abandoning it risks obsolescence (Firdaus, 2025:70; Firdaus et al., 2025:163). Consequently, the dynamics of contemporary society are deeply influenced by globalization, which, with its high mobility, emphasizes individualism and personal freedom. However, this often leads to social isolation and emotional dissatisfaction.

Social dynamics within society represent the constant motion that leads to changes in societal structures and order. These dynamics encompass the collective movements of individuals bound by shared cultural values, ultimately reshaping societal norms and practices over time. Several factors influence these changes, including:

1. Information Dissemination: The role of media in communicating ideas and messages.
2. Capital: Both financial and human resources.
3. Technology: Rapid advancements in technology driven by scientific progress.
4. Bureaucracy: Government policies that shape and strengthen authority.
5. Religion or Ideology: Influences on societal values and cohesion.
6. Actors or Agents: Individuals taking initiative to improve their circumstances (Tejokusumo, 2014:40).

Among these factors, globalization catalyzes accelerating social change. It is a multifaceted process that connects nations, economies, cultures, and individuals worldwide. By facilitating the exchange of goods, services, information, and ideas across borders, globalization transforms how people live, work, and interact (Alkharafi & Alsabah, 2025:2-23). While globalization offers positive outcomes, such as economic growth, enhanced access to global information and education, and cultural exchange, it also brings significant negative impacts. These include widening inequalities between developed and developing nations and threatening local cultural diversity through the spread of global cultural norms, often leading to the erosion of cultural identity.

The Role of Culture in Social Norms and Values

Culture serves as the foundation for societal norms and values. Elements like traditions, customs, beliefs, and knowledge systems shape the moral and ethical framework of a community. Through mechanisms such as education, socialization, and interaction, culture transmits moral values and behavioral expectations. Social norms function as guidelines for acceptable behavior within a particular cultural context (Durkheim, 2009:35). These norms dictate societal standards, allowing individuals to anticipate how their actions will be judged by others. For instance, if honesty is a key social value, social norms will promote transparency and discourage deceit, reinforcing the importance of truthfulness in both personal and professional interactions (Pentland, 2010:30).

Durkheim regarded social values as the cornerstone of societal morality. He argued that morality is not merely individual but also collective. Social values provide a framework for distinguishing right from wrong, forming a shared ethical foundation within a community (Durkheim, 2009:3). Furthermore, social values play an integrative role, fostering social solidarity by uniting individuals within harmonious and cooperative relationships (Sevinç, 2022:459).

Social Solidarity and the Mitigation of Anomie

Social solidarity significantly influences collective behavior and societal cohesion. Durkheim's dual concepts of mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity offer insights into how societies function

and maintain stability. Mechanical solidarity, typical of traditional societies, relies on clearly defined and internalized social norms that help individuals understand their roles and responsibilities. This reduces the risk of anomie, as individuals are bound by shared values and are more likely to conform to established rules. Conversely, organic solidarity, characteristic of modern societies, presents greater challenges. The diversity of roles and the complexity of social relationships in such societies often leave individuals vulnerable to normative ambiguity. If organic solidarity fails to effectively bind individuals, anomie can increase, leading to uncertainty about norms and life purposes, and leaving individuals feeling alienated and directionless.

The pervasive values introduced by globalization, such as individualism, consumerism, and hedonism, contribute to the rise of anomie in contemporary societies with weak social solidarity. Whether consciously or unconsciously, contemporary societies have become increasingly influenced by global norms and ideologies. While globalization offers efficiency and convenience, it also imposes psychological pressures. For instance, individuals in peripheral areas newly exposed to globalization may struggle to reconcile its influence with their collective cultural concepts. Without strong organic solidarity to support them, such internal conflicts can lead to severe consequences, including moral decline, criminal behavior, and even suicide.

Anomie and Identity Fragmentation

The increasing prevalence of suicide, as reported in the media, highlights the presence of anomie in contemporary society. Victims of suicide come from all age groups, from adolescents to the elderly, illustrating the emotional crises caused by weakened social norms. When individuals feel isolated and disconnected from societal norms, they face greater risks of emotional distress and suicidal tendencies. Anomie also exacerbates identity crises, where individuals feel alienated from their social groups. Without strong norms and values, individuals experience detachment, further fragmenting their sense of identity. This, in turn, undermines social cohesion, as fragmented identities within a community often lead to internal conflicts and reduced solidarity.

Identity fragmentation is particularly evident in individuals caught between tradition and modernity. For instance, someone from a traditional cultural background may feel pressured to conform to new norms that conflict with their deeply ingrained values. Failure to reconcile these conflicting influences can result in anomie and identity confusion. Durkheim emphasized the importance of social solidarity and collective norms in maintaining societal integration. To address these issues, educational programs and initiatives that promote awareness of collective values can play a critical role. Such efforts can help individuals contextualize their roles within a broader societal framework, strengthening collective identities and enhancing social cohesion. Programs that foster tolerance and appreciation for cultural diversity can further contribute to reinforcing societal bonds.

Contemporary society is increasingly influenced by the forces of globalization and rapid social change, leading to the erosion of traditional norms and the rise of individualism. This dynamic exacerbates anomie and identity fragmentation, which pose significant threats to social cohesion and individual well-being. In a society that is becoming ever more digitally connected, individuals are often trapped in an identity conflict between tradition and modernity, intensifying feelings of alienation and identity confusion.

Correlation of Anomie, Identity Fragmentation, and Neurobiological Transformations in Society

Based on research on Émile Durkheim's ideas, several core concepts serve as foundational discussions within the context of neuroscience, which also confirms the biological influences of anomie and identity fragmentation in the context of globalization. By integrating Durkheim's theory, this article deepens the understanding of how rapid social change impacts the psychological and neurobiological well-being of individuals. Durkheim emphasized that social facts, norms, and collective values exert a profound influence on individual behavior. Concepts such as social solidarity, anomie, and suicide illustrate how social structure impacts the psychological and emotional well-being of individuals, particularly in societies undergoing significant transformations such as globalization. By integrating findings from neuroscience, this article delves into how the disintegration of social norms in a globalized society can affect the brain and individual behavior, including increased stress and disruptions in emotional regulation.

These findings can be extended within the framework of neuroscience to explore the relationship between social dynamics and human brain function. Neuroscientific research suggests that social norms and positive social interactions play a crucial role in influencing brain structures, such as activity in the prefrontal cortex and limbic system, which are associated with decision-making, emotions, and stress regulation (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008:376). When norm disintegration or anomie occurs, individuals tend to experience chronic stress, which disrupts neuroendocrine functions and can impair brain functions such as concentration or lead to impulsive decision-making (McEwen & Gianaros, 2011:431-455).

Durkheim's concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity also have neuroscientific relevance. In traditional societies characterized by mechanical solidarity, intense interactions and normative homogeneity foster a sense of connection and emotional well-being, influencing neurotransmitter release, such as oxytocin. Conversely, in societies with organic solidarity, the need to adapt to diverse roles may trigger neurobiological challenges, particularly when norms and values fail to adequately support individuals.

Durkheim's concept of anomie also correlates with neurobiological conditions such as stress disorders, depression, and suicidal tendencies. When individuals feel directionless due to weakened norms, activity in the amygdala (a center for processing negative emotions) can increase, while regulation by the prefrontal cortex diminishes. This explains why anomie profoundly impacts individuals' mental health in modern societies (Marks, 1974:358).

By exploring these relationships, neuroscientific discussions in the context of Durkheim's research deepen our understanding of how social pressures and normative changes in the era of globalization affect not only social behavior but also the biological functioning of individuals' brains. This interdisciplinary perspective can help identify intervention strategies to improve social and mental well-being.

The findings on identity fragmentation and anomie provide relevant insights for further analysis through a neuroscientific lens. Identity fragmentation, defined as a condition where individuals lose unity in their sense of self, is increasingly common in contemporary society due to globalization, technological developments, and rapid social changes. This condition forces individuals to manage conflicting identities, often exacerbated by social media usage. From a neuroscientific perspective, identity fragmentation increases the cognitive load on the brain, particularly in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision-making and conflict management. This tension often results in mental fatigue, chronic stress, and impacts neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to adapt to changing environments (Spitzer, 2012; Loh & Kanai, 2016:35-37).

Social media significantly accelerates identity fragmentation by creating spaces where individuals frequently present multiple versions of themselves. This stimulates excessive activation in the brain's reward system, particularly the ventral striatum, which provides satisfaction when receiving social validation, such as "likes" and "comments." However, the instability of this validation also triggers anxiety and chronic stress, affecting the limbic system, which regulates emotions and stress responses (Montag et al., 2020:909). As a result, individuals experience not only identity confusion but also emotional imbalance.

Durkheim's concept of anomie, referring to the weakening of social norms, has significant neurological implications. In conditions of anomie, where norms no longer provide clear guidance, individuals often experience chronic stress, heightening amygdala activity, which governs fear and negative emotions. The weakening of social norms reduces the effectiveness of the medial prefrontal cortex in regulating emotional responses, making individuals more prone to impulsive behavior and feelings of alienation (McEwen & Gianaros, 2011:432). Furthermore, the social isolation often associated with anomie impacts the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), which processes social pain. This isolation creates a sense of loneliness comparable to physical pain, exacerbating identity fragmentation and anomie.

Identity fragmentation and anomie reinforce one another within contemporary societies, where globalization pressures and individualistic values often weaken social solidarity. Social solidarity, which Durkheim emphasized as vital for fostering interpersonal connections, plays a significant role in reducing stress and enhancing oxytocin production—a hormone that strengthens social bonds. When solidarity weakens, oxytocin production decreases, further intensifying alienation and isolation in modern society (Kosfeld et al., 2005:673-674). Over time, this imbalance leads to serious neurobiological consequences, including increased risks of mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety.

Understanding identity fragmentation and anomie through the lens of neuroscience provides deeper insights into how social and cultural pressures influence not only social dynamics but also human brain function. This perspective opens opportunities to develop neuroscience-based interventions, such as mindfulness programs and social relationship enhancement, to help individuals manage identity pressures and build healthier social connections. Additionally, promoting digital literacy to encourage mindful social media usage can reduce the effects of technology-induced identity fragmentation.

Neurobiological Implications in the Neuroscience Perspective

Globalization, identity fragmentation, and the weakening of social norms, such as anomie, significantly impact the neurobiological functioning of modern societies. From a neuroscientific perspective, rapid social changes, identity pressures, and the absence of clear norms affect not only individual psychology but also structural and functional changes in the human brain. The following provides a comprehensive analysis of these neurobiological impacts:

Identity Fragmentation and Cognitive Load

Identity fragmentation occurs when individuals feel divided between various social roles and expectations, particularly in the context of globalization, which accelerates cross-cultural interactions and technology usage. In the brain, this condition generates a significant increase in cognitive load, particularly in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making, conflict management, and planning (Spitzer, 2012). Constantly managing diverse identities strains the prefrontal cortex, leading to mental fatigue, reduced focus, and impaired rational decision-making.

Furthermore, this situation creates cognitive dissonance, where the brain navigates conflicting traditional values and new norms introduced by globalization. This dissonance activates the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), which manages cognitive and emotional conflict. Repeated activation of the ACC increases stress, affecting individuals' emotional balance (Loh & Kanai, 2016:11-13).

Anomie and the Limbic System

Anomie, defined as the weakening of social norms, has broad neurobiological effects on the human brain. When individuals lack clear normative guidance, the brain enters a state of chronic stress. The amygdala, responsible for emotional responses like fear and anxiety, becomes hyperactive under these conditions. Excessive amygdala activation leads to increased stress hormones, such as cortisol, which disrupt emotional regulation and fosters impulsive behavior (McEwen & Gianaros, 2011:432-435).

Weak social norms also affect the medial prefrontal cortex, which typically regulates emotional responses from the amygdala. When its regulation weakens, individuals become more susceptible to feelings of alienation, hopelessness, and social isolation. Over time, this condition increases the risk of depression, anxiety, and even suicide, as highlighted by Durkheim's sociological studies on anomie (Durkheim, 1897; Marks, 1974:358).

Technology, Social Media, and the Brain's Reward System

Digital technology and social media, integral to global society, also profoundly affect human neurobiology. Social media encourages individuals to create multiple versions of themselves, stimulating the brain's reward system, especially in the ventral striatum. This activation provides temporary satisfaction when individuals receive social validation, such as "likes" or "comments" (Montag et al., 2020:912). However, dependency on social validation creates imbalances in the brain's dopamine system, making individuals more vulnerable to anxiety and feelings of inadequacy.

Social validation instability also affects the limbic system, regulating emotional responses. This often results in recurring cycles of emotional stress, impairing individuals' ability to form meaningful social connections and exacerbating identity fragmentation as they struggle to meet inconsistent social expectations.

Social Isolation and Oxytocin

Anomie and identity fragmentation often lead to social isolation, which impacts oxytocin production—a hormone that enhances social bonding and reduces stress. Normally, oxytocin fosters interpersonal connections, increases trust, and strengthens relationships (Kosfeld et al., 2005:673-676). However, in societies with weak social solidarity, oxytocin production declines, exacerbating isolation and alienation.

Reduced oxytocin also negatively affects neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to adapt to changing social environments. Without strong social connections, individuals are more vulnerable to chronic stress and structural brain changes, ultimately undermining their overall mental health.

Neurobiology of Social Solidarity

Social solidarity, as emphasized by Durkheim, provides significant neurobiological benefits. In societies with high mechanical solidarity, strong social norms create emotional stability and enhance a sense of connection. This is supported by higher oxytocin production, reducing stress and strengthening social bonds. Conversely, in societies with weak organic solidarity, the lack of social connectedness increases the risk of anomie and identity fragmentation, disrupting neurobiological equilibrium.

CONCLUSION

The concepts of anomie and identity fragmentation are highly relevant in understanding the dynamics of contemporary society in the era of globalization. The weakening of social norms, as described by Émile Durkheim, leads to individuals losing direction, feeling alienated, and experiencing a decline in social cohesion. Within the context of globalization and technological advancement, individual identities become fragmented due to various roles, expectations, and the influence of global cultures, creating confusion and social isolation.

This phenomenon also affects human neurobiology, manifesting in increased stress, impaired emotional regulation, and social isolation that hinders the ability to form meaningful connections. Global values such as individualism and consumerism further exacerbate identity fragmentation, especially in modern societies characterized by weak organic solidarity.

To address identity pressures and their impacts, an integrated approach is necessary, including mindfulness programs, digital literacy, and the strengthening of social relationships. Neuroscientific perspectives can also be leveraged to design policies that promote social solidarity, minimize identity fragmentation, and safeguard mental health in the age of globalization.

Ethics Committee Approval:

This study does not require approval from an ethics committee as it is solely based on literary text analysis. Object of study and does not involve human or animal subjects, nor does it use sensitive personal data. Therefore, there are no ethical risks necessitating review or approval by an ethics committee.

Informed Consent:

This study does not involve human participants, animal subjects, or sensitive personal data. Therefore, informed consent is not required for this research.

Author Contributions

Concept -SN; Design-SN; Supervision-TF; Resources-SN; Data Collection and/or Processing-TF; Analysis and/or Interpretation-SN; Literature Search-SN; Writing Manuscript-TF; Critical Review-TF.

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