

Journal 8/23/18

IS FUNCTIONALISM A THEORY ABOUT
SOCIETY AT A MACRO AND/OR MICRO
LEVEL?

EXPLAIN AND PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE TO
DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING

Unit 1: Sociological Theory

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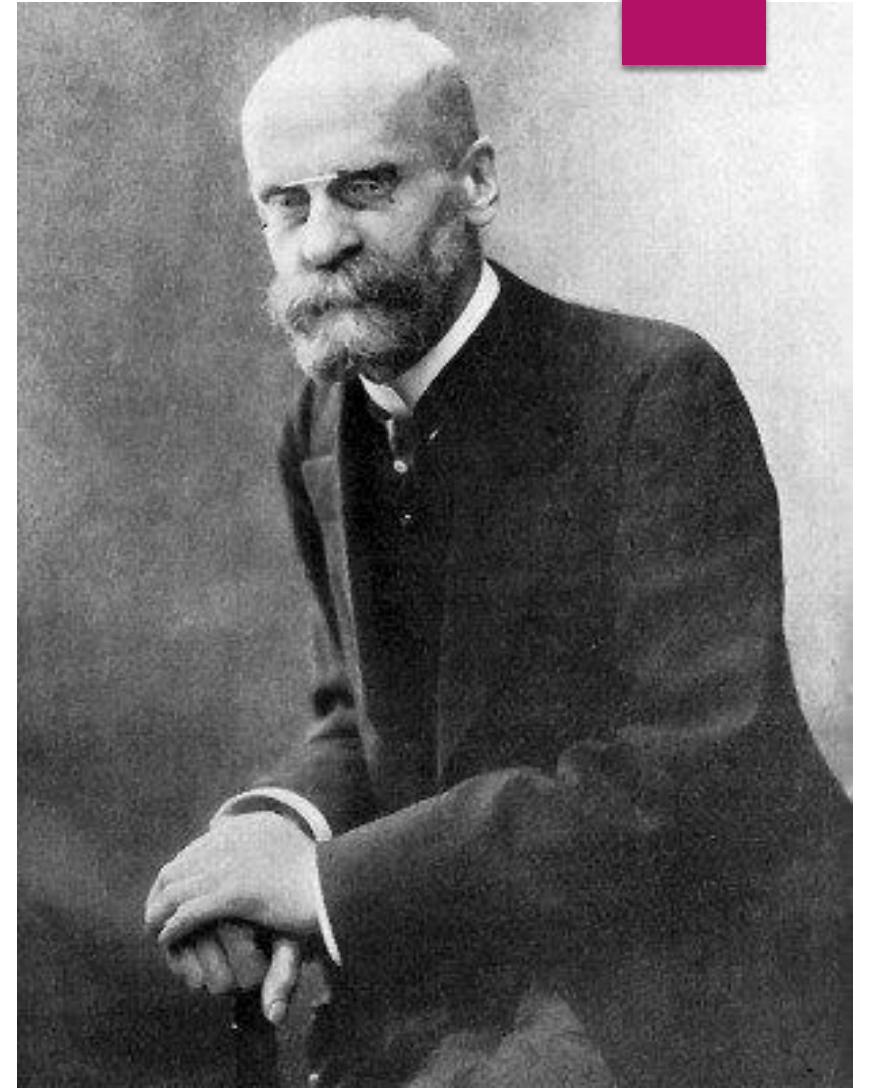
Functionalism

Functionalism

- ▶ A framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability.
- ▶ This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole
- ▶ Believes that society has evolved like organisms.
- ▶ This approach looks at both social structure and social functions.
- ▶ Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions.

Emile Durkheim

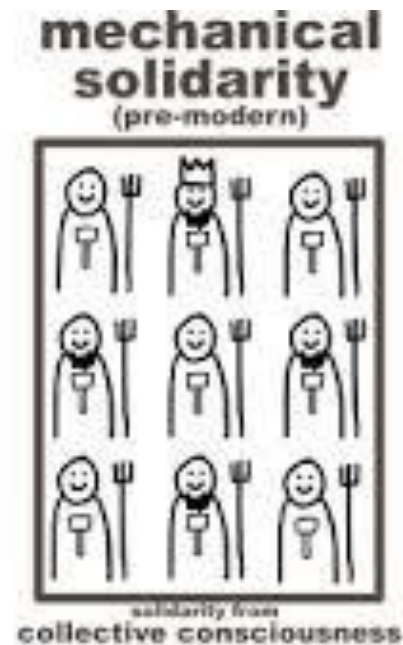
- ▶ Functionalism was inspired primarily from the ideas of Emile Durkheim.
- ▶ How societies maintain internal stability and survive over time.
- ▶ Wanted to explain social cohesion and stability through the concept of solidarity.



1858-1917
France

Solidarity

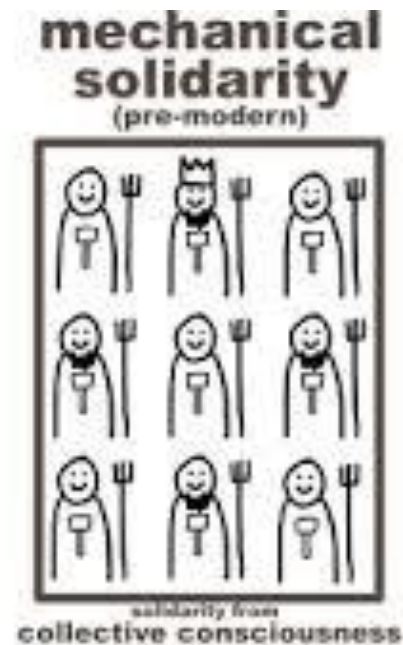
- ▶ Mechanical Solidarity
 - ▶ More “primitive societies
 - ▶ everyone performing similar tasks, that held society together.
 - ▶ Durkheim proposed that such societies tend to be segmentary, being composed of equivalent parts that are held together by shared values, common symbols, or systems of exchanges.



Solidarity

▶ Organic Solidarity

- ▶ Modern societies
- ▶ Members perform very different tasks
- ▶ Resulting in a strong interdependence between individuals.
- ▶ Based on the metaphor of an organism in which many parts function together to sustain the whole
- ▶ Durkheim argued that modern complex societies are held together by organic solidarity



Manifest Functions

- ▶ Intended Functions

Education as an Example

- ▶ Increase Knowledge
- ▶ Good Citizenship
- ▶ Prepare for Workforce

Latent Functions

- ▶ Unintended Functions

Education as an Example

- ▶ Develop Hierarchy
- ▶ Perpetuate Stratification

Equilibrium

- ▶ Central concern of functionalism is explaining the apparent stability and internal cohesion of societies.
- ▶ Many functionalists argue that social institutions are functionally integrated to form a stable system and that a change in one institution will precipitate a change in other institutions.
- ▶ The various parts of society are assumed to work towards the maintenance of the overall social equilibrium



Limitations of Functionalism

- ▶ Unable to account for social change because it focuses so intently on social order and equilibrium in society



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EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
MECHANICAL SOLIDARITY AND ORGANIC
SOLIDARITY.

HOW IS SOCIAL STABILITY MAINTAINED IN
EACH?