

Emile Durkheim

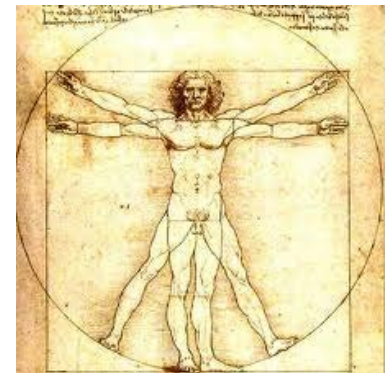
Durkheim and Functionalism

Functionalism is the idea that **society is a whole made of integrated parts that work together** (like the human body).

- Society is ‘more than the sum of its parts.’
- All parts are interdependent: change to one part of society will affect all others.
- **Consensus about values and norms is necessary for a ‘healthy’ society.**



1858-1917



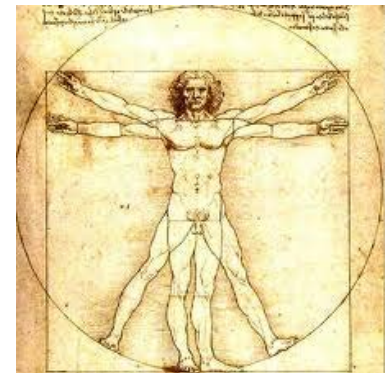
Durkheim and Functionalism

A function is a purpose.

A functionalist is someone who explains why some social phenomenon exists by answering the question: *What function (purpose) does it serve?*



1858-1917

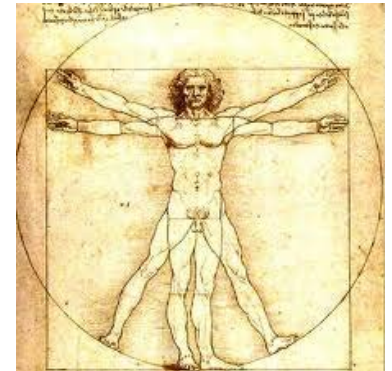


Emile Durkheim and Social Order

- How is social order maintained amidst social and economic change?
- Society as a complex system of component parts, which are **interdependent** and **interrelated**
- Society, like an organism, is 'more than the sum of its parts.'
- **Structural functionalism**



1858-1917



'Social Facts'

- **Definition:** “[social facts] *consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him.*”
- **Explanation:** *Social facts are those social forces in our environment that influence us but which we cannot change or control.*
- **Social facts have a reality *sui generis***
 - ‘*Sui generis*’ = Latin phrase meaning, ‘of its own kind’
 - Social facts cannot be reduced to individual facts.



Studying 'Social Facts'

- We study society by studying social facts, and we can study these 'social facts' *objectively*!
 - All social facts can be studied independent of the sociologist's attitudes toward the phenomenon being studied
 - Social facts include marriage, divorce, religion, crime, homelessness, education
- Some 'social facts' (e.g. social integration) cannot be *directly* measured, so we use indicators...



Durkheim and Division of Labor

<u>Traditional Society</u>	<u>Modern Society</u>
Mechanical solidarity = a form of social interdependence based on commonly shared beliefs and strong group identity. Based on very simple division of labor .	Organic solidarity = form of social interdependence based on differentiated/specialized division of labor .
Similar to simple organism or machine: individuals are mostly functionally equivalent and substitutable.	Similar to a complex organisms; its organs are not interchangeable.
‘Society is in the individual’	‘The Individual is in Society’



Collective Conscience

- **Collective conscience** is a collection of beliefs, ideas, and sentiments shared by members of a community. Basically, a shared sense of reality, morality, and identity based in common/shared experiences.
- **Socialization:** Teaches individuals the norms and expectations of the group.
 - We internalize these expectations and habituate to the obligations and customs of the group.



Collective Conscience

- Your 'conscience' is your sense of morality. Durkheim says we have to learn right and wrong from others. **Morality is thus a 'social fact'**. Your 'conscience' is the internalized memory or echo of your parents telling you how to behave!



Ritual Solidarity

- **Ritual solidarity** refers to the bonds experienced by both participants and spectators of rituals, who focus their collective attention on a common object of perception.



‘Mass Games’ of North Korea

Durkheim and 'Anomie'

- **Anomie** = sense of disconnectedness, “alienation,” loneliness, and isolation.
- This occurs more frequently in modern society, where people are less integrated and often feel they don't belong. This is experienced individually as a 'personal trouble', but is, according to Durkheim, also a '**social fact**'- i.e. has social (not individual) causes.



Functionalism and Religion

- A functionalist asks, *what function (purpose) does religion serve?*
- **A religion = a moral community.**
 - **Religion is *social*.** Durkheim argues that there is no such thing as a private religion.
 - **A religion is a marker of social identity:** to say ‘I am a Christian’ is to communicate to other Christians, “I am one of you.”
- **Religion serves many functions, including social integration.**



Functionalism and Religion

- There are social pressures or incentives to identify with a particular religion. These pressures and incentives are called **sanctions**.
 - **Positive sanctions** = rewards.
 - **Negative sanctions** = punishments.



TYPES OF SANCTIONS

	Positive	Negative
<i>Formal</i>	1	2
<i>Informal</i>	3	4

Religion and Social Order

- Religion is an expression of, and a way of creating, social order. -“God is Society”
- *‘God is created in our image’?*





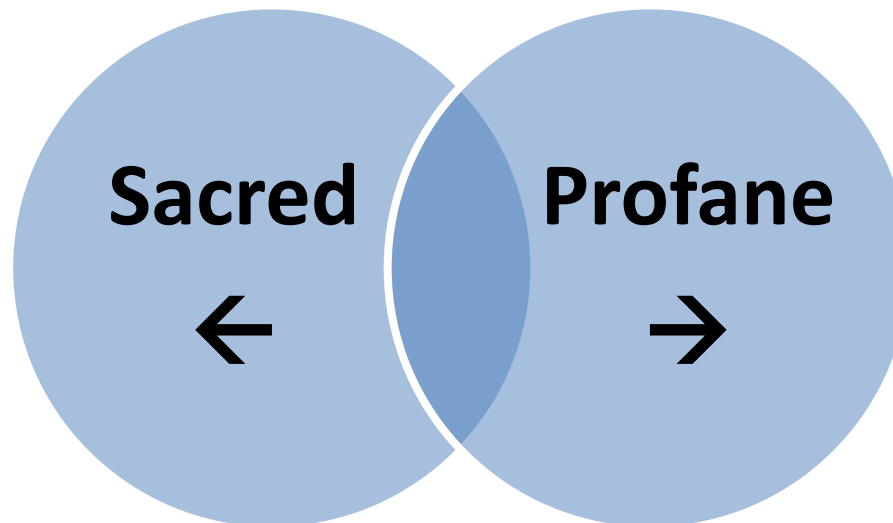
Durkheim and Religion

- He defined **religion** in the following way: "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to **sacred things, i.e., things set apart and forbidden**--beliefs and practices which unite in one **single moral community** called a **Church**, all those who adhere to them."
- **Religion** is an expression of, and a way of creating, **social order**. -
"God is Society, writ large"



Sacred and Profane

- All societies categorize things as either **sacred (holy)** or **profane (everyday)**.
 - **The Sacred:** all things set apart as special; have high symbolic value; society demands reverence/awe toward them
 - **The Profane:** ordinary or mundane things with no special symbolic significance



Sacred and Profane

- Societies unify around shared sacred symbols representing (and reinforcing) their shared beliefs and shared sense of common identity.
- A **totem** is an animal or other natural object that spiritually or symbolically represents a people and their common origin. Similar to a **mascot** or **logo**.



Sacred and Profane

- Each society designates the sacred through **symbols**; **collective representations** of a society's shared beliefs.
- Societies unify around shared sacred symbols



Sacred and Profane

➤ The Sacred:

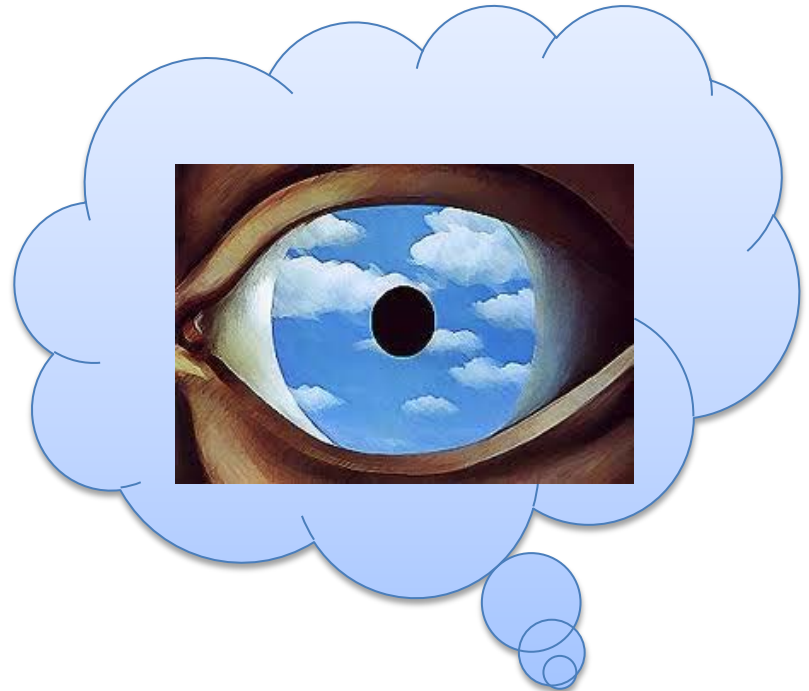
- Collectively shared beliefs
- Collectively shared rituals
- We see and experience the sacred at collective assemblies (e.g., funerals, sports events, national civic events)
- What makes a thing holy/sacred is the collective *feeling* attached to it

➤ Church:

- The collective coming together of people with shared beliefs and rituals
- A moral community; shared solidarity

Religion and Social Order

- **Religion** is an expression of, and a way of creating, **social order**.
- **“God is Society...”**
 - To say that ‘**Society is God**’ means that deities are reflections of ourselves. God’s beliefs mirror our own. We try to see ourselves as God would see us.
 - *If everyone shares the same perception of God, they also share the same perception or idea of how God is perceiving them. Hence, sharing the same perception of God is equivalent to sharing the same perception of themselves, of right and wrong, and of the world.*



Religion and Social Order

Thought Experiments: 1. Imagine that everyone in a community believes in a different god with a different morality and judgment. 2. Imagine each group has its own god, that only protects members of the group....

What would happen to social order??

