

Durkheim “On Mechanical and Organic Solidarity” (excerpt from The Division of Labor in Society)

1. “...relations of individual to social solidarity. Why does the individual, while becoming more autonomous, depend more upon society? How can he be at once more individual and more solidary?” (38a.8)
2. First thought: it is because solidarity transformed due to division of labor

Introduction: The Problem

3. DOL not new but study of it only 100 (now 200) years old (Smith 1776). It is ubiquitous, even in agriculture which Smith thought likely immune to it.
4. DOL ⇒ solidarity (cooperative law and restitutive sanctions)

EXPLAIN: elsewhere in Division of Labor in Society Durkheim uses the type of legal system in a society to “read” features of the solidarity in that society:

	cooperative law	repressive law
sanctions	restitution	punishment
rules	rules are local, particular	rules are common to all, general offense is taken
goal or requirement	making someone “whole” is satisfactory	some expiation, expression of community sentiment is necessary

Durkheim’s point in the selection (at 39a.2-5) is that under a DOL there is lots of behavior that might need to be controlled but the rules of which cannot be located in the “collective consciousness” because they are specialized, niche behaviors that not everybody even knows about.

E.g., does the whole world need to know about the rules of this classroom? Does the whole world need to know about the details of the contract you sign with your landlord? In general NO.

Think about how we divide law into two big systems: criminal law and civil law. What’s the difference? Civil law involves “injuries” (torts) that can be dealt with by getting the offending party to “make it up” to the offended party. By comparison, in a criminal case, we are all angry with the perpetrator, whether or not we are or know the actual victim. Robbery, rape, murder are wrong because they offend all of us.

And think for a moment about how things proceed in civil and criminal law. In civil cases each side has a lawyer and the state simply plays the judge. In criminal law, however, one part of the state prosecutes the case ON BEHALF OF SOCIETY.

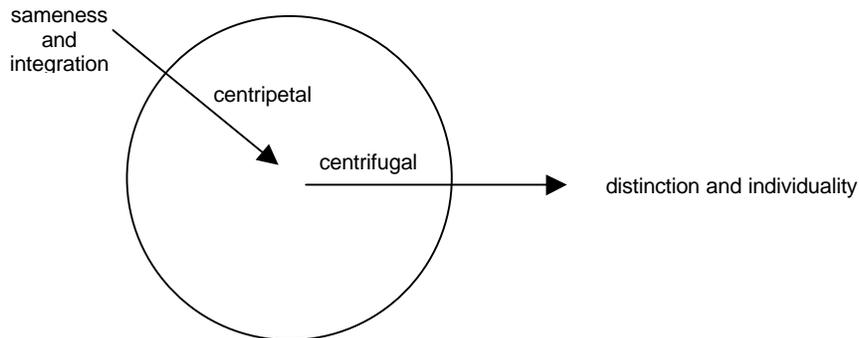
But notice that there are specialized groups in society and these groups can have their version of “general rules” and a “collective consciousness” – thus, as a sociologist one must obey the sociological code of ethics (and methods!) and if not then penal sanctions might be applied within/by the group.

5. 39b.4 "...these counter-blows are exceptional." POINT : yes, there are "civil matters" which incur punishment but these are unusual cases. Most repressive sanctions result from matters that are offensive to us as members of society.
6. 39b.5-7 POINT: we will be able to use the existence of restitutive law and DOL as an indicator of societal development.

Two Kinds of Solidarity Source/Style Society Name

Individual Relates To				
Society as a whole	Collective	"more or less organized totality of beliefs and sentiments"	social ideas and tendencies must be greater than individual ideas and tendencies	inverse of personality
Part of Society		special functions united by definite relations		

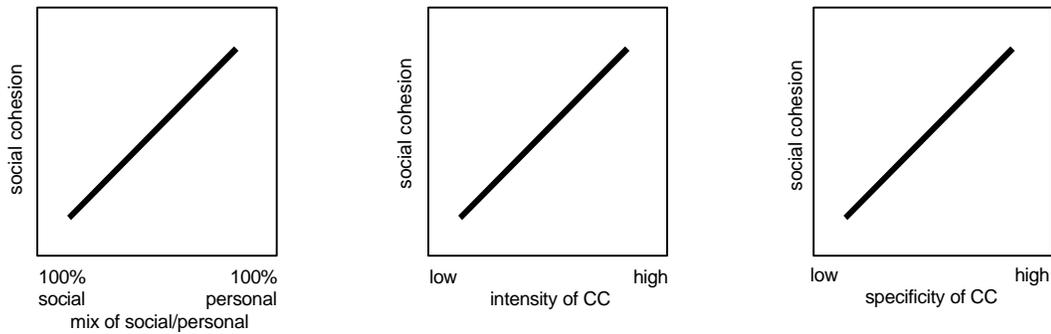
7. An important TAKEAWAY. "Personality" and "society" or "solidarity" or "collectivity" as opposite poles. Note the language "personality is how much of our own individual qualities we have, what distinguishes us from others" (40a.4). When we think of our "mental contents" (who we are, etc.) we need to recognize that a part of it is "I" and a part of it is "US." Thus, TWO CONSCIOUSNESSES (40a.5).
8. Solidarity based on likeness or similarity depends on the social part being big and the personal part being small. OPPOSING FORCES, centripetal and centrifugal.



9. Durkheim calls the solidarity of sameness "mechanical" "by analogy to the cohesion which unites the elements of an inanimate body" (40b.2).

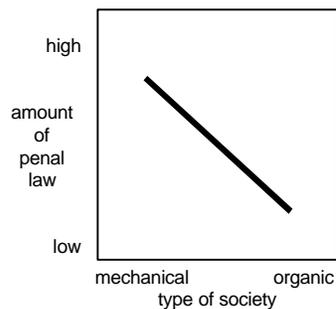
mechanical	resemblance	no "personal" rights	weaker bond
organic	difference		stronger bond

10. The more differentiation, the more dependence on others.



11. Strong and specific CC are roots of penal law.

12. Hypothesis 41b.3



13. So, does the CC go away? No, it just becomes more diffuse. More focus on general principles than strict and detailed admonitions and prohibitions. Cf. new testament and old (love your neighbor, do unto others vs. 10 commandments vs. hundreds of highly specific rules).

14. IMPORTANT: 41b.6 “There is even a place where it is strengthened and made precise: that is the way in which it regards the individual. As all other beliefs and all other practices take on a character less and less religious, the individual becomes the object of a sort of religion. We erect a cult in behalf of personal dignity, which, as every strong cult, already has its superstitions. ... it is individual in its object.”

This is pretty much Erving Goffman in a nutshell.

15. LAW: All social links which result from likeness progressively slacken (42a.2)

16. POINT : CC can't get stronger along with increases in individuality. If society sticks together something else must do it. It's organic solidarity.

