

Notes for Social Theory
02/09/06
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We first talked about any questions we had regarding Durkheim. There was a reference made on page 143 that Durkheim was talking about change over time. The way that society changes over time is known as an evolutionary process or progress.

We then began to talk about Jon Elster and his modes of scientific explanation.

Modes of Scientific Explanation

1. **Causal:** Temporal Asymmetry- Cause comes before effect and it is vital to know what happens first. There should be consistency in a relationship between two things. If this happens, then that happens. Another important thing about causal explanation is that there are two parts of determination. One is necessary determination and the other is sufficient determination. Necessary determination- it has to be there. In sufficient determination is all that has to happen is that and the consequence will come after.

Ex. Doing well in a course- participation is necessary but not sufficient.

The last part of causal explanations is proximity.

2. **Structural:** How law/family works and it's interconnectedness.
*Logics of institutions and their interconnections
Interconnections-systems of institutions of kinship, labor, sexuality/affect
-We can characterize system by its institutions and its interconnections
3. **Functional:** Logic and institutions are dictated by system or institution needs for functions they fulfill in order for society or institution to reproduce itself.
The problem with this is dealing with variation- there seems to be no change.

Definition- Tautology- explaining means by reference to the ends. The ends is the cause and the means is the effect.

(Personification & Anthropomorphism)- attributing human characteristics
*The functionalist view tends to view society as organic-metaphor for society as a system and the needs of a system.

4. **Intentional:** Explaining something by the intention of the actors involved.

Durkheim's Division of Labor

-Collective consciousness

-Solidarity: 2 types

a. Mechanical

b. Organic

-The more societies become organized and differentiated the greater the *social cohesion*: common plight

-Specialization causes more differences in society; there is a problem of social cohesion in the context of diversity

2 types of society:

Traditional (pre-industrial) vs.

-Mechanical

-Similarities- ppl doing same things ancestors did, which get passed on to next generation.

-Punitive, criminal, repressive

Industrial (Modern)

-Organic

-specialization (division of labor)

-interdependent, civil, retribute

*In tradition society anything that violates sense of similarity is considered a crime-reference on page 133.