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### The Functionalist Perspective

**Assumptions:**

- Society tends to be a stable and orderly system
- Structures develop to serve the "function" of meeting the needs of society
- Dysfunctions tend to be short term

**The Organic Model:** Social structures are analogous to organs in a body

**Functional Society:** Structures are meeting the needs of society

**Dysfunctional Society:** One in which the structures do not meet needs

**Anomie:** A state of normlessness (unclear rules)

- Rapid social change
- Lack of integration

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### Analysis of Functionalism

<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Model</li> <li>• Forces innovative analysis</li> <li>• What is the positive function of things often considered negative</li> <li>• Optimistic Theory</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critiques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social change linked to dysfunction</li> <li>Tends to lend itself to acceptance of negative social phenomena               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• War</li> <li>• Sexism/Racism</li> </ul> </li> <li>Tautological</li> </ul>
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### Structural Functionalist Perspective



What is the social function of Prostitution?

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### Emile Durkheim

- ☞ Established sociology
  - ☞ Franco Prussian War
  - ☞ Scientific understanding to help maintain social stability
  - ☞ Founder of Structural/Functionalist Tradition
- ☞ Rules of the Sociological Method
  - ☞ Social facts
    - ☞ External
    - ☞ Independent of the Individual
    - ☞ Impacts the individual



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### Durkheim: Suicide

Suicide can be explained by looking at social factors.

Social Change: Normlessness

- Anomic: Too much
- Fatalistic: Too little

Social Integration

- Egoistic: Too little
- Altruistic: Too much



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## Manifest and Latent Functions



Manifest Functions:

Latent Functions:

What are the manifest and latent functions of education?



Robert Merton

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## Conformity



Behavior that coincides with group norms and values

- Requirement for group participation
  - Enforced through sanction
- Conformity limits independent thought
  - Solomon Asch Experiment

**CONFORM**

Your one of us now



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## Conformity and Jury Duty

Duty



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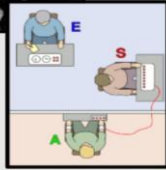
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# Authority



- ☞ Authority: Perceived legitimacy of status role
  - ☞ Legitimacy of power within a group
  - ☞ Legitimacy = Deference
- ☞ Stanley Milgram Experiment
  - ☞ 60% of subjects submitted completely to unreasonable authority

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# Questions you might ask from a structural functionalist perspective



- ☞ How does the phenomenon contribute to how society functions?
- ☞ How does the phenomenon confirm and/or reinforce existing social arrangements?
- ☞ How is the phenomenon related to integrating individuals and groups into society?
- ☞ How is the phenomenon related to a balance in social change?

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# Assumptions



- ☞ Assume that the phenomenon that you are studying has a positive function.
- ☞ Avoid moralizing. Just because something is unjust, immoral or unethical does not mean that it is not functional.
  - ☞ Morals and ethics are functional phenomenon in and of themselves.

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