

## **On the paradox of organic solidarity**

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*Abstract.* This paper tries to formulate the paradox of organic solidarity more precisely and propose a solution.

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Ian Craib's 1997 book *Classical Social Theory* tells us:

The paradox of organic solidarity based on division of labour is that members of society become more individuated and more dependent on society at the same time... (1997: 67)

So what is the paradox more precisely? Here is an attempt to state it as arising from these two propositions, though Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity is abandoned in the process:

(1) If a society's members are more individualistic, then its members are less connected to one another.

(2) If there is division of labour, then a society's members are more individualistic and more connected to one another.

From (2), we can deduce "If there is division of labour, then a society's members are more individualistic," and from that and (1), we can deduce, "If there is division of labour, then a society's members are less connected to one another," but from (2) we can also deduce a contradictory conclusion: "If there is division of labour, then a society's members are more connected to one another."

But there seems to be a solution: in short, distinguish different kinds of connection. Division of labour means one person specializes in one task and another person in another task, in order to achieve shared ends, or that is my preliminary understanding anyway. So they are more connected in the sense of, or in respect of, depending on each other for certain ends to be achieved. The man who builds houses also wants to eat, but is dependent on food providers, and the food provider desires shelter, but is dependent on the builder. But given an appropriate specification of the ends, it does not follow that they are connected to each other in the sense of being involved in close personal relationships: being friends, being family members, etc. (1) and (2) should be reformulated to refer to different kinds of connection, with (1) referring to close personal relationships.

### **Reference**

Craib, I. 1997. *Classical Social Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.