

# Social institutions



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Social s Social s Social s Social s enables human beings to meet their basic needs. It serves as a response for the society's need of food, order, emotional expression and allocation of resources. The role of social Institutions they play in the society is better understood by analyzing the strength and weaknesses of the functionalist, conflict, and interaction perspectives. The strength of Functionalist perspective is its idea of stability within the social institutions because all parts are working together. For instance, in a family, the father has to work for the needs of the family, the mother takes care of the house, provides love and care to the other members of the family, and children has to do their role to attend school to meet their goal and to abide by their parent's rules. Functionalist perspective looks at family as having its members with roles to play in order to for the institution to survive. In times of disruption within the family, members have to adjust to go back to its equilibrium. For example, if large families were desired many years ago, today it is considered a threat to the society. To maintain equilibrium, the government provided birth control thus the family has to adjust to the changes. This perspective necessitates the function of each member not only for the family but to contribute to the survival of the society as a whole. However, Functionalist theory is being criticized for its idealistic point of view of the social Institutions. It ignores the fact that conflict or problems may arise as they are inherent part of the society. In addition, this perspective encourages inequalities because it is conservative in nature. Conflict perspective on the other hand views at social Institutions as having conflicts, misunderstandings or problems as a result of scarce resources like money, employment, power and prestige. The strength of this perspective includes promoting social change. An example of this is the <https://assignbuster.com/social-institutions/>

protest that happened in Libya recently. People went against the powerful people in the government because they want change. They believe that social change could be achieved through conflict. The authors of conflict theory regarded harmony within the social Institutions to be an illusion because equilibrium is not considered a natural condition but rather stressed that conflict is a part of everyday life. Weakness of this perspective includes ignoring competition as rules are enforced by dominant groups to protect their interest. It emphasizes more on the tensions between groups with economic factor as the cause of the conflict. While Functionalist and Conflict perspective is centered more on larger groups, Symbolic Interaction perspective is focused on small groups giving emphasis on group interaction and processing of symbols and gestures by individual members. The strength of this perspective lies on understanding the meaning of people's interactions through analysis of actual experience. Individuals interacting face to face create a consensus definition and meaning of things. A finger sign showing circled figure might be agreed by the group as a symbol of money. Thus this approach has a greater depth into human behavior and personality. Interestingly, this strength is also a source of its weakness. Individuals who want to analyze behavior of a group may have a difficulty where to start with their analysis as they do not know whose perspective to begin with. There is the inability of precise guidelines of focus (Ferrante, 1998). Looking at the society, I am most aligned with the functionalist perspective. This is because the society cannot survive if members of each social Institution cannot function well. If physicians do not do their job to treat sick individuals, health care institution would be a failure resulting in dysfunctional society. In like manner, stability of the society would be

disturbed if certain groups within the social institution are bias. Choosing Functionalist perspective however does not mean other perspectives are wrong or weak. All approaches are useful in understanding the society completely. Reference Ferrante, J. (1998). *Sociology: A global perspective*. Belmont CA: Wadsworth Publishing.