Functionalism

Functionalism is a major theoretical perspective in sociology that views society as a *complex system* composed of *interdependent parts* working together to promote stability and **social order**. It emerged from the work of early sociologists like *Émile Durkheim*, who emphasized the importance of **social integration** and shared norms in maintaining **societal cohesion**.

According to functionalist thought, every aspect of society has a role or "*function*" that contributes to the overall *stability of the system*. For example, institutions like education, religion, and family are seen as essential for socializing individuals, maintaining social **norms**, and addressing societal needs. Functionalism often uses a *biological analogy*, comparing society to a *living organism* where each part (like the heart or lungs) performs specific tasks to ensure the survival of the whole.

Critics argue that functionalism can overemphasize **harmony** and consensus while neglecting social **conflict** and inequality. However, it remains a foundational perspective in sociology, influencing studies of institutions, **social roles**, and the mechanisms of societal change.