

CALIFORNIA STATE
UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
DIVISION OF NURSING

N137 NURSING THE CHILDBEARING FAMILY

LECTURE NOTES

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONAL THEORY

- comprehensive and recognizes the important interaction between family and its internal and external environment.
- major theoretical frame of reference in sociology
- understanding a families structural (organization) dimensions and functions are key to this theory
- **general assumptions** include:
 1. A family is a social system with functional requirements
 2. A family is a small group possessing certain generic features common to small groups.
 3. The family as a social system accomplishes functions that serve the individual in addition to the society.
 4. Individuals act in accordance with a set of internalized norms and values that are learned primarily in the family through socialization.
- the structural functional approach primarily analyzes the family's structural characteristics - the arrangement of the parts that form the whole, and the function it performs both for society and its subsystems.
- **structure** is how a family is organized, the manner in which units are arranged, and how these units relate to one another.
 - different theorists base structure on:
 - family form
 - type of power structure
 - marital patterns
 - subsystems

- 4 basic structural dimensions are:
 - role structure
 - value systems
 - communication processes
 - power structure

- **function** - family functions are the outcomes or consequences of the family structure - what the family does, why does it exist, what purposes does it serve?
 - 5 basic family functions
 - affective function:

 - socialization and social placement function

 - reproductive function

 - economic function

 - health care function

FAMILY DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY

- attempts to account for change over time in the family system, including changes in interactions and relationships among family members
- families are long-lived groups with a natural history or life cycle that must be assessed if the dynamics are to be fully and accurately interpreted.
- each family goes through each developmental stage in its own way
- all families are considered examples of an overall normative pattern and follow a universal sequence of development
- family life is divided into a series of discrete stages that are relatively stable and distinct from adjacent stages.
- families change structure depending on ages of family members
- **general assumptions:**
 - families develop and change over time in similar and predictable ways

- as people mature and interact with others, they initiate actions as well as reactions to environmental demands.
- families and their members perform certain time-specific tasks that are set by themselves and by the cultural and societal context
- there is a tendency for families to have a discernible beginning and end
- Developmental tasks of Duvall (see ~~handout~~^{book})
- Developmental task of Erickson (see ~~handout~~^{book})

SYSTEMS THEORY

- the most inclusive and powerful of family theories
- used in education, game theory, computer science, systems engineering, cybernetics and information and communication areas.
- works with the family system as client rather than the individual as client.
- has stimulated most of the attempts to achieve a systematic understanding of the normal and troubled family
- **general assumption:** matter in all its forms, living and nonliving, can be regarded as forming systems that have discrete properties capable of being studied.
 - focus is on the interaction among the various parts of the system rather than on the function of the parts themselves
 - systems do not exist in a vacuum
 - interrelationships among the parts is the prime focus
 - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts
 - whatever effects the system as a whole affects each of its parts
 - causes and effects are interchangeable
- viewed as an open social system with boundaries, self-regulatory mechanisms,

interacting and superordinate systems, and subcomponents

- terms:
 - system
 - social system
 - open versus closed systems
 - wholeness or nonsummativity
 - feedback
 - adaptation
- family systems definitions
 - family vs. group
 - welfare system
 - educational system
 - political system
 - communication system
 - health care system
 - religious system
- family subsystems
 - spouse subsystem
 - parent - child subsystem
 - sibling subsystem
 - others - grandparents, aunts/uncles, extended family members

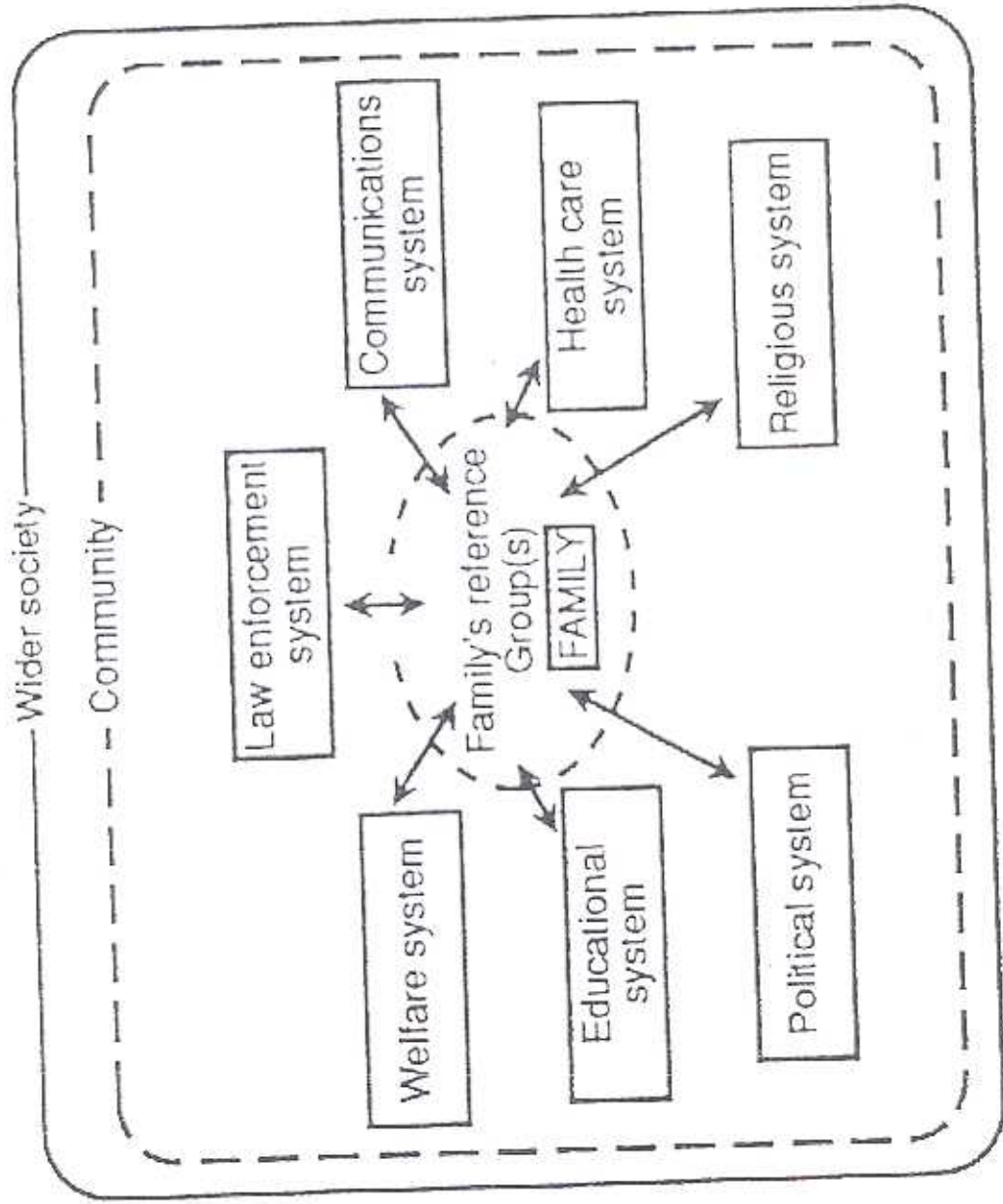


Figure 7-5
Schematic illustration of the family and its external environment.

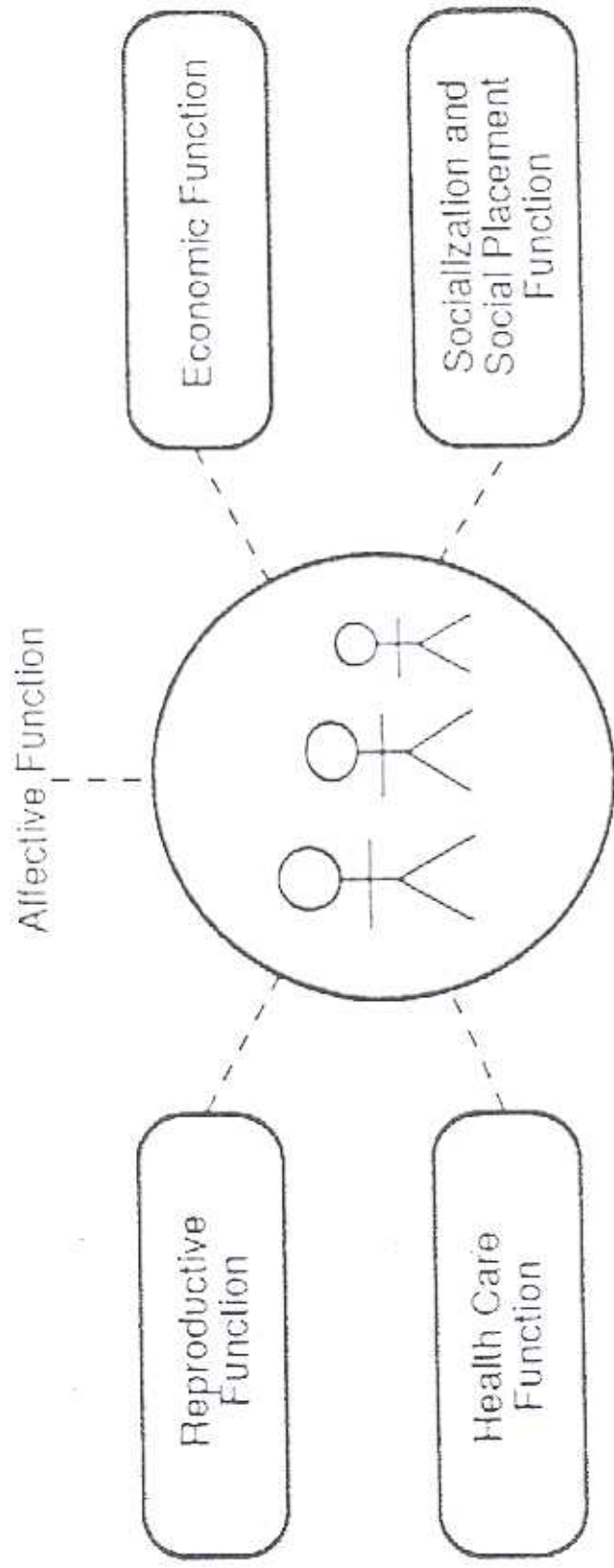


Figure 5-1
The five basic family functions.