

# FUNCTIONALISM AND FAMILY LIFE



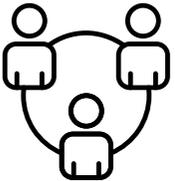
Functionalists believe the family is a key institution in maintaining social order and stability. It performs essential functions like socialising children and providing emotional support.



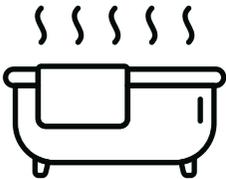
## TALCOTT PARSONS

Focused on the family's role in modern industrial society, particularly its two functions:

### PRIMARY SOCIALISATION



### STABILISATION OF ADULT PERSONALITIES



### CRITICISMS OF FUNCTIONALIST VIEWS



## G P MURDOCK

Identified four universal functions of the family



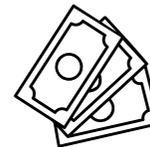
### SEXUAL REGULATION



### REPRODUCTIVE



### ECONOMIC



### EDUCATIONAL



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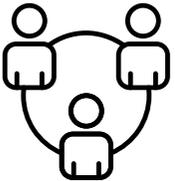
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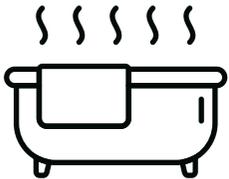
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### PRIMARY SOCIALIZATION



Teaching children societal norms and values through family, including gender role socialisation - *instrumental and expressive roles*

### STABILISATION OF ADULT PERSONALITIES



Providing emotional support to adults, akin to a *“warm bath”* to relieve stress. This allows men to return refreshed and replenished to work the next day to perform instrumental role

## CRITICISMS OF FUNCTIONALIST VIEWS



Feminists argue that functionalism overlooks the oppression of women in the family.

Marxists claim they ignore how the family supports capitalism.

Overly focused on functions that the nuclear family can provide without considering the diversity of family life  
Focused on a 'golden era' of American family life that ignored dysfunctional elements such as domestic abuse

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Identified four universal functions of the family



### SEXUAL REGULATION



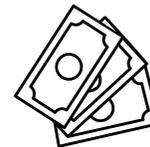
Family regulates sexual behaviour through heterosexual relationships that stop individuals having multiple partners and provides sexual satisfaction

### REPRODUCTIVE



The family produces society's next generation through heterosexual, monogamous relationships that are controlled through marriage

### ECONOMIC



At least one person in the family unit provides for the economic support of its members, meaning it is not reliant upon outside financial assistance

### EDUCATIONAL



Children are socialised into society's norms and values, as well as gender appropriate roles

