

Change in male role in the home: 1960- present

[Family](#), [Father](#)



Change in Male Role in the Home: 1960-Present Traditionally the United States, along with the majority of the world has been a patriarchal society. The customary male role, specifically in relation to the home, has been the head of the household, the protector, and the provider. A male's duty was unquestionably embodied in these three ideas, until the 1970's. The growing feminist movement of that time began to question and displace these roles as solely belonging to a man, and the male role in society slowly began to shift.

Instead of being the sole breadwinner for his home, families with two working parents have become increasingly more common. Women in the workforce have allowed father's to spend more time at home with their children and helping out around the house. Over the last 50 years the male role has changed drastically, and while not all of the changes that have taken place are bad, the overall effect of these changes on society has been a negative one, creating a generation of fatherlessness, increased crime, and a general lack of respect for authority in any form.

For generations it has been a man's responsibility to provide for his family. Women were rarely even accepted into the workforce until after WWII. However, government encouragement for women to enter the labor force during the war, in combination with the rising feminist movement started a tidal wave movement of women pursuing higher education and careers. Women currently make up the majority of the workforce and 60% of all college graduates (Rosin). Donnalyn Pompper, a professor at Temple University, expands on this further in her article about the masculine gender role conflict theory.

She explains that that after WWII, the increased female presence in the labor force “ destabilized the breadwinner role as a basis for male identity, and now men must accept working wives and a more active parental role” (Pompper). And while it is true that the shift to equal opportunity in the workforce is almost universally agreed upon as a positive change, the balance and delicateness of the male psyche and ego are seldom taken into consideration. For many men, the ability to provide for one’s family is an integral part of the definition of masculinity.

In interviews conducted by Dr. Pompper, when asked to individually define masculinity, a reoccurring theme in both the younger and older men interviewed was the ability to provide for one’s family. One of the young men interviewed said, “ Being masculine means you are able to look at your wife and say ‘ I got this’. To be able to look at your kids and say ‘ I’ve got you’. That to me is the epitome of masculinity...being able, at the end of the day, to look at your family and say, ‘ get on my back, I’ve got you the rest of the way’. Another man expressed similar feelings and said, “ I think that every guy feels like it’s his place not to be the stay home Dad” (Pompper). Even in today’s forward thinking society, men are wired to be the provider. To take that role completely away is emasculating to him and leaves him feeling like he is unnecessary in the home. Although a family where, either both parents, or just the mother provide financially may be a little tough on the male ego, it is not detrimental. Provider is not the only established male role, protector and ‘ head of the house’ are equally important to the equation.

The traditional man of the 1960’s was indisputably the head of his home. There was a clear hierarchy, and while the husband and wife still often

worked as a team, the culture of the time dictated that a man was undeniably in charge of his home, and his family. In many ways, this has been one of the most distinct changes between the 1960's and 2012. Because men are no longer the sole breadwinner for their home, they are required to spend a larger portion of their time taking an active role in the home. No longer is the kitchen and house exclusively a woman's domain, but rather shared by both parties.

Men are expected to help out around the house and with the children, as much as women are. The idea of "team parenting" has evolved and taken root in today's society, and has had excellent outcomes. Research has shown that children who are raised by two parents (a mother and a father specifically) have greater cognitive ability and success rates than children whose fathers are absent or uninvolved (Hofferth). This style of parents working together as a team to raise their children has been a great strategy, but looking at the big picture, it is shown that "Team parenting" has also unknowingly created some problems.

Studies have shown that a child's success throughout their life is largely dependent on the structure of their childhood (Hofferth). Given that men's taking a more proactive role in the home and in the lives of their children is a good thing, the way that it has been approached has been problematic because it has undermined the hierarchy of the home. Similar to a man's need to be the provider is the need to be the protector of his home. In addition, a man is not the only one who craves a distinctive hierarchy in the home, so do the children. According to Dr. David Bjorklund and Dr.

Anthony Pellegrini, children need a clear authority figure. Often times by approaching parenting as a team and as equals, the mother and father undermine each other's authority (Bjorklund, Pellegrini). Furthermore, without a specific and defined role, the position of father has been diminished as unimportant. For generations men have been noted as head of the house, and hailed for that important position. However, without that distinct role to play, it begins to seem like their participation is unnecessary as their wife is obviously much better suited to caring for and developing relationship with a child.

These personal misgivings in combination with the media reinforcing the idea that the father role is superfluous, are huge contributors to why more and more fatherlessness is becoming the social epidemic of the generation (Pompper). This is an important issue that needs to be addressed, because Fathers are vital to the family unit. In their article about the role of fathers in children's development, Amanda Quesenberry M. Ed. , Michaelene M. Ostrosky Ph. D. , and Robert Corso Ph. D. , note " Fathers are critical members of the family system who influence their children and their families in unique ways" (Quesenberry, Ostrosky, Corso).

The article states that even in today's society, father's hold a huge amount of influence over society, enough that their presence and involvement is necessary to not only the success of the family as a unit, but also to the individual children. However, since the importance of fathers and fatherhood has not been stressed, and in fact the opposite has been emphasized, approximately one out of every 3 children does not have an active father or father figure in their lives (Hofferth). Acceptance and affection from a father

or father figure is vital to a child's cognitive development, and recent statistics show that behavioral problems among children, adolescents, and young adults with no active father in their lives are far greater than those of children living with both a father and a mother (Quesenberry, Ostrosky, Corso), and also tend to deal with one or more of the following issues: personality and psychological adjustment problems, behavioral problems (including aggression towards people and animals, property destruction, deceitfulness, and theft), delinquency, and psychopathology (substance abuse, depression) (Rohner).

The rate of violent crimes have gone up roughly 300% since the 1960's, and of the juveniles who have been incarcerated for serious crimes 70% of them have been raised with no real father figure. In addition, 70% of all girls who become pregnant were raised without fathers (Lykken). These alarming numbers demonstrate the profound effect a father can have on the development, and therefore future of a child. The final issue that has come out of male's displacement from his traditional roles is a generation with no respect for authority. Teachers are having increasing difficulties with classroom control.

Students no longer have it ingrained in them to respect their elders, and as a result don't care what the teacher or the principal say. Because school is no longer a priority to students like this, the drop out rate has increased significantly, with just over half of all dropouts being fatherless (Lykken). In today's economy, it is next to impossible to find a job without at least a high school diploma, and employers no longer have to put up with any employee who cannot do what they are told, because there is someone who would be

happy to take their place who most likely has more experience or education and can do what they are told.

To conclude, while equal opportunity is beneficial and has helped to move our society forward, it has also drastically changed the traditional male role. And while some of these changes are good ones, they unfortunately have had negative effects due to people's ignorance of the possible consequences. For example, it is good that women have been able to pursue their goals and passions in the workforce, and it is good that men are able to help out more at home. However, what is not good is that men have become completely displaced from many of the roles that, to them, define them as men.

The way their roles have changed has slowly and subconsciously emasculated and caused them to doubt their importance and purpose in the family unit, which in turn has led to a growing number of fatherless children, increased crime rate, and a lack of respect for any kind of authority. Works Cited Bjorklund, David F, and Anthony D. Pellegrini. " Child Development and Evolutionary Psychology. " Child Development. 71. 6 (2000): 1687-708. Print. 05 Mar. 2012 Hofferth, Sandra L. " Residential Father Family Type and Child Well-Being: Investment Versus Selection. " Demography. 43. 1 (2006): 53-77. Print. 03 Mar. 2012. Pompper, Donnalyn. Masculinities, the Metrosexual, and Media Images: Across Dimensions of Age and Ethnicity. " Sex Roles. 63 (2010): 9-10. Print. 05 Mar. 2012. Quesenberry, Amanda, Michaelene Ostrosky, and Robert Corso. " Skilled and Knowledgeable Caregivers: the Role of Fathers in Supporting Young Children's Development. " Young Exceptional Children. 10. 4 (2007): 11-19. Print. 05 Mar. 2012. Rohner,

Ronald P. " Father Love and Child Development: History and Current Evidence. " *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. 7. 5 (1998): 157-161. Print. 03 Mar. 2012. Rosin, Hanna. " The End of Men. " July-Aug. 2010. *The Atlantic*. Web. 03 Mar. 2012.