

# Family a half a century ago and now



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The American family has undergone a process of dramatic change over the recent decade, and changes are still ongoing. Families engage in an inconsistent view of the modern world. Families' principles are their main resource of social, emotional, and economic foundation for family members throughout their complete lives. Given the meaning of that concept, some aspects of family members whose behavior does not follow the families accepted values causes anxiety within the family. The same can be said about society as a whole. Groups within a society also have to accept value norms, and if members of that group do not follow those norms, that behavior can cause anxiety within the group. The existence of a family is not proof that it is automatically a secure refuge for its members. A family's value system and beliefs may not be automatically accepted by its children or by members of the social group in which it lives. The families whose beliefs are nonviolent do not ensure that a family member will not react in an aggressive manner.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss inclusively, aspects of family change, examine its genesis, explain its modern-day penalty, and identify and evaluate options to make the problems more tolerable. What are these changes and how are families different today than a quarter century ago? What has caused these changes and how have change agents offered support for these changes? Where are the changes likely to take us? All these topics are considered in this paper. Family changes such as family formation, family function, family structure, family values, and family law since 1960 are to be discussed starting with social changes in families. Research is presented that shows changes in the family in the last 25 years

have had a negative impact on American families. To turn this negative into a positive, individuals must place greater value on family practices and be aware of goals of a family as a group.

In the 1960s, the model American family consisted of a father as sole support, housekeeper mother, and several children, all living in dwellings in the suburban area on the outskirts of a large city. It was a limited perspective of a model family, yet it was present throughout the media and was widely recognized as the perfect and most normal. Husband and wife of 35 years or more and three children also fit that model very closely, but in the 2000s a family of this model became the minority. Today there is not the same consensus of family structure and lifestyles that existed in the 1960s when almost everybody matched the prototype of early marriage and several children.

In the 1960s, sex was supposed to be restricted to matrimony, and premarital sex was forbidden. The most significant change seems to be the role of women in the family. Today women are still mothers, but few of them stay home full time with children. They usually are the primary homemakers creating a difficult double duty for themselves. In the 1960s, women often had too little to do, and in the 2000s women often have too much to do. Man's traditional roles have changed too. With working wives, they are gaining an emotional connection with their children that was previously part of a mother's realm because they often are forced to be the caretaker while the woman is at work. Even in traditional families, gender roles are less rigid in the 2000s than they were in the 1960s. Some fathers provide financial support, some do not.

There have been changes in families over the last 25 years that have had an impact on the stability of the family. Among these changes are more divorces; however, the frequency of remarriage shows that people want to have a stable, fulfilling family lifestyle and are even willing to suffer through divorce in order to be in a better marriage. Problems and pressures caused by rigid family expectations in the 1960s created changes with new problems and pressures in the years in between then and now. Society is changing much faster than in previous decades and centuries. One of the last variations on family life to be accepted is the gay family. Their family structure is far from the 1960s normative family, but eventually what some people perceive as a threat to society may appear to be benign as the other previously unacceptable families that are now accepted into mainstream society.

In the 2000s, there were traditional families with parents and children like in the 1960s, but the definition of a family broadened considerably. Children were brought up by many varieties of loving adults: single parents, grandparents, kin-networks, homosexual couples, and others. Still conventional families were often blended families of children from different biological parents. Partial kin-based and friendship systems provided more people to distribute responsibilities and incomes than a nuclear family was able to give. Softening of firm gender roles and stiff racial disassociation was also changing. Interracial marriage was nearly unparalleled for about 60 years. It was ordinary to know at least two families in which children in the 1950s and 1960s married African Americans. Even Caucasians and Native Americans married, but the marriage was not accepted by one's own family

in the 60s. Statistics show that the fertility rate was down, divorce rates were up, marital relationships began at an older age, and the marriage rate was descending. All these factors point away from the 1960's exemplary family and toward a variation of a family.

The U. S. Census Bureau defines a family as “ a group of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together” (U. S. Census Bureau, 2010, Family). To understand this definition of the family, one must first understand the language used by the Census Bureau to depict the broad diverseness of living arrangements in the United States. In gathering its statistics, the Census Bureau starts with the American household. The U. S. Census Bureau of 1980 defined household as,

A single housing unit occupied by a person or group of people. Group quarters, such as correctional institutions and nursing homes, are not counted as households. Family households are further divided into the traditional family maintained by a ‘ married couple’ and ‘ other families’ maintained by a male or female householder with no spouse present. These might include a single parent living with a child or children, siblings sharing a home, and any combination of relatives other than the householder's spouse. In virtually all cultures, the family is considered the basic societal unit (Shulman, 1999).

Family formation has changed dramatically in the past 60 years. Adults are delaying marriage and wanting longer to get re-married after divorces. The American Psychological Association (APA) stated,

Between 1970 and 1988, the proportion of 20-to-24 year-olds who had never married rose by 70 percent for women and by more than 40 percent for men. Indeed, over the past 15 years, the percentage of young people still living with their parents has steadily increased to about 54 percent at age 24 and 30 percent at age 29 (Grant Foundation, 1988, as cited in American Psychological Association (APA), 1993).

The most important items that the Census reports about people currently and of the last quarter century is that they are sexually active, need the use of family planning, live in impoverishment, have parents with low levels of pedagogy, do poorly in school, and mature in single parent homes. Whereas the establishment of the family is conventional, its forms vary from social group to social group. All families, however, share lawful, economic and sacred alliances as well as duties and advantages and vary in the level of love, regard, and warmth. For example, extended families composed of blood relatives and their partners, provide financial benefits and participate in child rearing and social group modeling. Consequently neglect is almost unheard of in extended families.

Examining the effects of family structure in a child's access to care as a single parent is difficult when the breadwinner has to work. Leininger and Ziol-Guest (2008) put together an abstract for the single-father families, that included important considerations of the non-financial dimensions, speaking about the lack of social communication, and parental supervision skills, the abilities to arrange activities and supervision, this expression reflects that family structure is slightly complicating for single-fathers. Not only has the method of the single-father but that of the single-mother represented

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samples for research regarding emotional distress. Health statistics show that children in unsound homes are more likely to sustain mental difficulties. Measuring the behavior of children in one-parent homes, statistics indicate that they are more likely to have problems with emotional well-being than children living in two-parent homes. The National Center for Health Statistics compares “two percent of children aged 4-17 living in nuclear families were often unhappy, depressed, or tearful during the past 6 months compared to 4.4% of children in single-parent families” (National Center for Health Statistics, 2010).

The term function is defined as the particular component to assist a procedure. If one defines the function of the tires of a bicycle, for example, as the contributing factor of a bike's moving, then the outcome is the defined function. This does not define the direction of the tires. If one defines the tires as a function specifically to create motion, one has a clear idea of how the bicycle works. Many former functions of the family have been taken over by newer structures. Still, in any form, including the brand-new alternatives to the orthodox family, a family continues to satisfy these crucial functions. A family modulates sexual activity, it powers procreation, it is the primary cause of group action, and it furnishes tenderness and fellowship. If a family knows all its surroundings and the role that enforces the motion of the family, one realizes the family's function. As human relations change agent, clarity about one's role in the helping process is essential for effectively helping families.

In addition to knowledge and a sense of family function, practice values, ethics, and, increasingly, legislative and court decisions have basic

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expectations of values that alert us to potential missteps. Shulman quotes Barker's 1991 definition of values as " a standard of conduct, and principles that are considered desirable by a culture or group of people or an individual" (1999, p. 76). Shulman added that in 1991 Barker defined ethics as " a system of moral principles and perceptions about right versus wrong and the resulting philosophy of conduct that is practices by an individual or group" (1999, p. 76).

The question has the family's structures, practices, values, and responsibilities changed since the 1960s. The answer is yes. The goals, involvement in social structure that specifies, corrects, and powers the acceptable manners of accomplishing these goals have changed. Murray refers to socioeconomic status and roles, values, beliefs, and goals, of racial socialization, and that they all need new models. (2005, p. 509). These changes in societal structure resulted in becoming inefficient because some individuals failed to abide by the traditional standards, did not act according to the norms, or did not act expected and their roles in the society that they observed from their parents. The position of a parent in a family was a dramatized by the media and the majority of society. The kinship systems began to vary from society to society and dominance formed all varied enormously across cultures.

Insight and history shows that the real causes of the change in the family structure began with the family values, rules and the morals movement. The movement now, wants to preserve what is seen as advantageous about the past times in the light of the troubles that the changes in the family structure have made. The movement's method is to go backwards to 1960s values,

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but that is improbable. While change is not always seen as forward advancement by all, rarely do patterns return back to an earlier historic period despite idolization by conservatives. Society can only survey changes from the past and use the characteristics that it can improve, less the prejudice that can be left behind and travel forward to a social group thankful for what can be learned from humanistic discipline.

If value is also defined as the attribute or worth of a state of affairs, then to compound the words together as “ family values,” a conventional set of social measures defines family history and traditions that supply a natural foundation for raising a family. Social values are often times strengthened our sacred feelings and customs. A definition of family values consists of ideas modeled from examples of other people. Doctrine of how a family wants to live its life could be said to be another definition. Three basic elements that fall under these classes are work, play, and love. There is human activity that falls under these classes that defines family that is important and it takes work to proportion these elements. Nevertheless, people often drawback in other activities and disregard play and love. Frequently they work hard because they are vested in goals and financial rewards, yet without a counterbalanced life of integrating play and loving relations and lives become disagreeable, overpowering, and disappointing. Time-honored values of the family should come first; although, people find themselves with little time left over for family.

In the past, spirituality played a role in conventional norms and family values that were associated with loving relationships were included in all human relationships. However, today that is not true. Young people today do not

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place an importance in the value of religion when choosing a spouse or making friends in general. For example, people a quarter century ago married within their religious beliefs, economic status and level of education. A quarter of a century ago marriage and dedication were prospected as role that played on emotions and it was thought that others shared your feelings about responsibility, as common as language that was shared by the spouses and family, and shared actions. How the family experienced beliefs regarding religion and family customs were constituted. Often times a premise is made about what another individual believes or their values.

Misunderstandings can happen because of these things. Shulman regards this as a fact that, the family is seen as a normal living social unit adding that all those persons who share recognition with the family and are powered by it in a circular transaction of emotions. The family has a possibility for common reinforcement that can be closed by misunderstandings and anxieties of individual family members. This leads to family disorders and the family's inability to carry out its undertakings (1999). Transaction of emotions plays a part in connection that is believed to be a need to endeavor. More and more researchers are substantiating that emotions are to be an invasion. Eye-to-eye validation like smiles brings flectional significance in the world. On the far side of that, detecting results from others brings connection, like empathy. Josselson injects advise that, “ the persisting need for empathy not only serves structure and growth but also sustains us through whatever frustrations and disappointments there may be” (1996, pp. 106-107). How the family relationships were to be viewed was important.

In the 1960s and 1970s some parents used the methods of their grandparents to discipline in ways that were believed, by some now, to be inappropriate and some parents did away with discipline altogether. Yet, there were still the many parents who felt that kids needed discipline. Parents began to give reinforcement and affirmative discipline to teach their children to behave, nevertheless, in circumstances, a child was turned over the knee for a spanking. The children that felt the spankings of the 60's and 70's were now becoming young adults and possibly many did not want their kids to suffer that same sting. They felt that emotions of that child could be misinterpreted. The relationship between facts, opinions and values based on opposing facts are not a standard for many children, this began a new movement in disciplinary actions.

Human needs for affection and companionship appear to be fundamental. Perry and Perry states, hence numerous studies have indicated that lack of affection in an individual's developmental years may lead to an antisocial personality and even physical illness (2000). Issues that affect human relations agents are the needs of the family and children alike. Individuals have their own distinctive shape of needs, although there are some shared desires that move all people. Romanyshyn termed these as needs of the physical body which are the survival and animate being, needs of the heart which is love, closeness, and interchange of lovingness, needs of the ego which is the awareness of adequateness and self-assertiveness, and needs of the soul which is termed the importance of life outside of one's own natural being (2002). Knowing which of these needs should be used in civilization and what is to be supplied next is the question. Abraham Maslow (1943)

paper suggests prioritizing, or using a hierarchy of human needs in his theory of human motivation. Others like Morales' and Sheafor's approach that is an influential action connecting how we feel and how we function. This cognitive-behavioral approach is built on social learning theories, it evokes how one thinks, and also moves with behavior (2001).

Dysfunctional behavior and psychological deformation are combining to study outcomes by using models that teach behavior. The American Psychological Association referred to the studies based on the work of Aaron Beck (1976), and of Tian P. S. Oei and G. J. Shuttelwood (1996), which calculated Beck's cognitive theory. Oei and Shuttled used three dimension of Beck's theory in 1993. It is stated in the book *Losing Generations* that,

“ first life experiences lead people to form assumptions about themselves and the world schemata, which is a cognitive framework or concept that helps organize and interpret information, second automatic thoughts that are associated with negative emotions can lead to soft statements such as “ I am a failure”. Negative thoughts can develop into a vicious cycle, then depression which then lead to more depressive cognition. Third automatic thoughts lead to errors of logic termed by Beck as cognitive distortion. Overgeneralizing, minimization and personalization the treatment approach disrupts the cycle of depression by teaching the patient to question negative thoughts then to challenge the assumptions of the schemata on which they are based. (1993, p. 94).

Outside stressors shape the family and their everyday lives, so when Repetti, Wang, and Saxbe stated in the *Association for Psychological Science*, that

“ Stressors on family dynamics can have cumulative, long-term implications for family health and functioning. Naturalistic studies that incorporate daily diaries, observational, and physiological measures began to offer new insights into families’ everyday stressors responding and coping processes” (2009).

This article proposed that over time by everyday experiences and by the interpersonal-relationships within which we all exist, shapes people. Kelly too studied implications of functioning of deviant behavior and came up with the conclusion that, “ people of a community spend most of their lives in close contact with one another, sharing a common sphere of experience which makes them feel that they belong to a special kind and live in a special place” (1996, p. 64) some of the ways that we see this action is within our communities. Struggles because of divorced parents, uncertainty and being caught in the middle of anxiety, begins behavioral struggle, promiscuous acts, not just because of divorce but drug and alcohol use, this begins relationship trust issues. Then the rules and regulations started changing to meet societal problems.

Family law was one of the most expanding careers in the last quarter century were divorce, guardianship, and adoption are highest legal filings of family law. Individual rights and liberties were being expressed more openly, and then in the 60s guidance was necessary. Presently in 2011 there have been more criminal filings and caseloads than ever before. Hence, the most cases ever filed within State and Federal government, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Department of Human Services, Social Security filings, etc. Fostering change through human rights law, and work with <https://assignbuster.com/family-a-half-a-century-ago-and-now/>

legislation for changes have been processes of great importance for the human relations manager. Levesque believed that,

“ the faith in the control of maternal rights infused numerous policy mandates and reflects idea societal perception that parents should, can, and do control their children. The reality, for example, those parents have a physical and psychological advantage over their young children allowing the belief that parents could mold and direct their child’s upbringing” (2001, pp. 9-10).

If one looks at the human rights theory and practice of the 60s and compare it to now, one would find there have been so many changes in the American legal system that city and county libraries have a huge amount of documents and books that have to be housed. Levesque also believed that, “ The paradoxical ideal and reality of family life finds parallels with current visions of human rights principles. Human rights are envisioned as noble, idealized images of how governments treat their citizens. Most people reserve their image of human rights” (2001, p. 8). This concern relates to conceptions and analyzes of violence and family life are the things that no one talked about in the 60s and are all that is thought about now in the media. These outside pressures outline families and change American family values which are declining. Social and demographic trends show us that the decline of marriage and the rise of new single-parent families have affected individuals. It seems the virtues of nothingness are where we are now. People’s activities are often a better measured by their own intentions; therefore, people’s actions are the only guide we have to their compassion.

Some guidelines for families are to be named as family life education. The attributes of family life can sometimes be reinforced through activities that fall under the brand of family life education. This social work movement recognizes that all families face undeniable kinds of stress, and it seeks to avoid family breakdown, by educating families to manage with predicted problems. It teaches about communicating, family, and sexual relationships. Family life education is a preventive approach to human services that has the promise for reaching a large number of people. This is one way that can be proposed when one looks at how individuals and change agents of the human relations field can solve the problem. Bennis, Benne & Chin, evoked that,

“ Value considerations have appeared in discussions of planned changes and the change- agent role throughout time, even where the focus of the discussion has been upon historical, cognitive, or technological matters. Understanding how life at the place of employment, family functioning, and a child’s school and care settings are linked, and can help us to understand how to help parents and children flourish in their development. While people often like to compartmentalize our roles and pretend that we can leave behind concerns from different arenas of our life, what happens in one arena does connect with what is happening in another arena. (1969, p. 580).

Finding direction in planned change starts with change agents that discuss ways to actually change the problem, beginning with educating the society. Bennis, Benne and Chin, again approaches this change by stating that, “ Whatever else, planning may mean it signifies anticipation of some future state of affairs and the confirmation of a vision of that future in the present

in order to motive, guide, and direct present action” (1969, p. 529) it is the fact of the change in the state of affairs on human life that makes planning important and essential to families, and acting of need within the channel of history that has taught individuals these facts. It is the fact of change that makes planning problematic for men. If the future were to be like the present, there would be no need to give thought to preparing for it. We have spoken so far of the predicament of human planning in general. Yet planning always occurs within some historical time frame because of circumstances as we have today. If men are to create their own future, they must evaluate and progress in that future. Assessing the modes and sorting approaches in the social services, social trends, forecasts, operational systems, overriding problems, accounting schemes, alternative future, and decision theories are the ways to begin.

Misunderstandings in theology and culture can be greeted differently around the world. Living in the United States allows us the privilege to learn about many cultures within our society. But just as many theologies and social scientist are finding that the insights held over a half century are experience changing principles, one can't help to think about the progress in the current problems we face. As Carl Jung conveys that the planning process depends on humanity, the power of destruction and the question is whether families can create the will to use it, and can temper the will with the spirit of love and wisdom (1952, Par. 745).

To sum up the matter of family changes and the current problems that surround them , one can conclude that family values is the number one reason for change in the last half century.

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First family views of the modern world began to change, then principles changed. Value norms began to change as a whole when the formation of the family and structure of the family started accepting options without rules and guidelines. The function in the last half century shows a negative impact on the families manners. The goals of the family are without purpose .

Families can find that positive change through family life education to avoid penalties of aggression and emotional distress. These changes could likely take families to find legal problems and breakdown in the circle for which they are held together. Moral attainment was the historical development for man in the beginning and shall be a good testimony or a prediction of failure.