

THE HISTORIC EVOLUTION OF FAMILY

Economy, society and family have progressively changed over the years. These changes have had a positive impact on the way we live and help us survive through difficult times. The economic division of society has 4 main periods: Primitive, Agrarian, Industrial and Post-Industrial. These societies are different in terms of communication and work.

Primitive, or hunting and gathering societies were the first ever societies to exist, expanding until 10,000 BC. To begin with, people back then lived in small groups (bands), usually related by kinship. The number of members in each group did not exceed 100. Being nomads, they would constantly move from one place to another as soon as they'd exhausted all food resources and they couldn't exploit the land because there were no agricultural tools invented. In terms of family roles and functions, both men and women participated in food collection and they both had a say on where the group should settle.

The invention of the plough led to the transition from hunting and gathering societies to agrarian societies (10,000 BC-Middle Ages), whose economies were based primarily upon agriculture, so people were no longer nomads and started to settle down.

People started settling in areas close to their fields which led to the building of towns and cities. As a result, governments were formed to hold the cities together under the governance of kings and priests. Furthermore, gender inequality started to develop as women couldn't use the plough to cultivate the land so this era was mostly run by men. Families in agrarian societies started to become more important as they were now divided in smaller groups than at the time of hunters and gatherers.

The most remarkable transition between the two eras happened between 1760 and 1840 which marked the Industrial Revolution.

Technology is now developed enough to make people leave hand-production and start manufacturing. The first industry to use the new methods was the textile industry. Even though the average income starts to grow, work and living conditions are getting worse and worse for families moving to overpopulated and terribly polluted cities. Apart from that, this is the time where influential ideas, like freedom of choice, equality and human rights start to positively affect citizen's lives. Now, moving on to families in the industrial societies, they are no longer economic units, and start to have more of a sentimental value. Also, both genders can work, and the inequality between the two starts to legally disappear.

The post-industrial era (1960-today) is the service-based society in which we live today. People start to fight for their rights, as the feminist and civil rights movements change the stereotypes and end discrimination of society against women and people of different race. Also, most of the economy in this era is based on services. Even though the nuclear family type remains dominant, ideas of single-parenting are on the increase, as single-parent families are more commonly found than 50 years ago.

To sum up, each and every society before us, has helped to make our lives better, but are we actually moving forwards or backwards?