

SOC-345

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From present day until the year 2035, I anticipate that a rollercoaster of patterns and trends among families will come and go. Families have changed in a various amount of ways over the last several decades and are only progressing from the point they are at now. While the concept of a family varies by person, it is textually defined by the relationship between a caregiver, typically a parent, and the one receiving the care, typically a child. Many believe that family is only the ones you are biologically connected to, but the expansion of families that have been seen over the years has challenged that statement.

One subject that I am expecting to see a change in patterns through is motherhood and the women's role in the home. Women did not always have a say in what they were and were not allowed to do; women would stay at home instead of having careers by ensuring they are solely available to be caregivers and to take care of anything and everything around the home. However, not all women actually wanted to stay home. Enough women wanted to break out of this cycle and create a career of their own to the point where they created a movement, which led to the allowance and rise of women's labor force participation. While we eventually got what we wanted, it was not necessarily what we were hoping for. The gender wage gap became a prominent issue immediately and is still an issue today. "Among full-time workers, women earned 81 cents on a man's dollar" (Budig) just a decade ago, hence leaving that difference and causing women to naturally be more behind than men financially in most standard careers. All of this being said, I predict that, due to the state that our government is in right now, we will revert

government is doing everything it can in order for its citizens to not become successful. The government has taken away women's right to reproductive healthcare and also has removed several women in the workplace due to the sole reason that they were all women. Medicaid and SNAP have also been cut, and while this is an issue for everyone, single mothers are most often the parents that struggle the most with their children and being able to afford to take care of them. However, I do believe that if our government shapes itself differently in order to not intentionally harm its citizens, women's wages may be able to match men's among every career by 2035. Women have become much more vocal with the rise of activism and the gender wage gap is not going unnoticed, both on paper and financially. Women have always "wrestled with concerns about gender inequality in the labor market... despite the long-term increase in women's labor market attachment, substantial gender differentials persist in both participation rates and hours," (Jacobs, Gornick). With this enhanced activism I also anticipate the advocacy of equal healthcare and benefits, leading to equality and assistance among every aspect between men and women.

I would also like to discuss the subject of queer and gay couples and their families. Gay couples did not identify as families for centuries and are just now becoming more common and accepted by the population in recent years. There are still examples today of couples being denied adoption or the option to begin a family in their own way simply due to the fact that they are gay. Gay marriage was not legalized in the United States until 2015 so the idea of a "family" was set in stone and was not negotiable. While I hope to see a strong nationwide acceptance of the acknowledgement of queer families, I do not think this will be reached by 2035. Though I do anticipate seeing some progress, I do not believe that enough people will be open-minded and

have been around forever. I only believe this to be the case, once again due to the state that our government is currently in today. Our government is actively attempting to prevent any gender affirming care from happening, including transgender surgeries. The transgender community is outwardly bashed by the government and are not treated as true people, reversing the law allowing them to serve in the military as well as the removal of the law that protects discrimination against transgender citizens. The government is also considering reversing the bill that allows gay marriage, which could cause gay couples to struggle even more to receive credentials to be considered a family. If we are able to escape this mindset within the government and queer couples become more protected, the higher the likelihood that queer families will be accepted and acknowledged. As a queer person myself, it feels like it is one step forward and three steps back with the acceptance of the queer community. I believe a lot of it comes from the stigma that family is only your blood and that two people of the same sex cannot biologically have a child together, therefore cannot “legitimately” make a family.

As briefly mentioned earlier, single mothers do typically struggle the most when it comes to families raising their children. The rise of single mothers becoming the face of a family has skyrocketed in the last few decades with help from the women’s labor market. I believe that the representation of single mothers will only further from here. Women today have more financial and personal independence. Workforce participation and higher education mean women can support children on their own if relationships end or if they choose to parent independently. While the gender pay gap and childcare costs remain challenges, women’s economic power has still grown enough to make single parenting more feasible, “mothers earning 83.1 cents to a single custodial father’s dollar (single moms are much less likely to be employed full-time

also less of a safety net for women in the workforce in comparison to the safety net features men receive.

While I hope to see some of these predictions in the future regarding families, I hope the most that families are united. The main purpose of a family is to provide emotional support, socialization, safety, and stability. It is crucial to develop safety nets in order to protect yourself and your family and it is equally as important to care for one another. I hope we can all eventually accept every family as they are, and that society realizes that family is not only biological, it is a system of relationships built on love, trust, and shared experiences.

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