



'CHILDREN'

VICTIMS OF FAMILY CHANGES IN WEST

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There has been considerable public concern about the changing shape of the family in developed countries, particularly the effects that changes in family structure may have on parenting and children's behavior.

In the last 25 years, significant changes in family structure have been experienced in countries around the world, particularly in developed nations. Official statistics show that Australia, the United States, and most European countries have experienced higher rates of divorce, falling marriage rates, and an increase in the number

of couples living together outside of marriage (Edgar 1988, Clulow 1993).

The US has been a leader in family change with an early (rising in the late 1960s) and a high increase in divorce, followed by an explosion in non-marital birth with or without cohabitation. Divorce increased in most other Western nations a decade or two later; industrializing Asia appears to be in the midst of change. Today, only about %60 of US children live with their married, biological parents, a low second only to Latvia.

In Norway, 25,000 children experience their parents' divorce and separation

each year, and one in four children live in a family constellation other than with both of their parents (Statistics Norway, 2018).

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in this regard said, “Western culture made the family collapse. Today one of the great problems of the Western world is the breakup of the family and the increase in the number of abandoned children. The West will suffer from the consequences. Social developments build up over time. The West will be harmed most by this problem and the flashy materialistic civilization of the West will collapse along the fault lines of this problem.” (July 2012 ,11)

The transformation of the family in the West affected by secularism, industrialization, urbanization, feminism and individualism in line with modernism and postmodernism caused the reduction of social power and the loss of family functions, especially, with the current trend of the capitalist system, the existence of children is considered as an obstacle to the parents’ material success.

Unfortunately, in the modern era, parents are increasingly absent from their children’s formative years. Sweden is one of the countries where the meaning of parents has been diminished to a great extent.

Parents voluntarily and easily separate, and children spend most of their childhood with one of their parents and are deprived of the warm and intimate atmosphere of a healthy family. As a result, the social environment for raising children in Sweden is deteriorating.

“Social or economic changes that cause people to become indifferent and uncaring with regard to each other is not something to be praised. It is a change deserving of blame. If you hear that a child and a father live in the same city in some Western countries, but the child does not ask how his father is doing year after year, or that families do not get together, or that children do not receive affection from their father and mother, these are signs of a decline,” Ayatollah Khamenei said. (November 2006 ,9)

Various studies in Europe and the US show that children’s depression or the desire to commit suicide and delinquency, which is very common nowadays, originates from the weakness of the family environment.

Research evaluating the impact of family structure on the health and well-being of children demonstrates that children living with their married, biological parents consistently have better physical, emotional, and academic well-being.

“The family is a warm, blessed center in which the strongest foundations of a person’s upbringing are laid. It is in the heart of the family that the first, most important foundations of a person’s spiritual and intellectual upbringing are established. The home is the best place for the comfort of the body and the soul. It is the best center for relieving the fatigue of one’s body and soul. It is the truest environment of intimacy. No intimacy can be imagined or exists in any environment as much as it does in the family between the mother, the children, the father, and the spouses,” the Leader of the Islamic revolution underlined.