

American family not
in decline just
changing sociology
essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

According to (Herbert, 2004), the American family has changed profoundly in the past 20 years. For all these changes it has experienced in fertility and mortality since independence till today, surprisingly the bigger change in family structure occurred in the last quarter of 20th century. Till this point, the age of marriage has changed from time to time, however, only a minority of ladies never got married and birth's occurring out of wedlock were less than 10 percent of all births.

According to my personal experience, the fundamental social institution changed since 1980s. If I was to define the most original demographic features by 180 in America, then it will be the changes that were happening in both families and household for all section of the national population. The original American family has undergone many changes for all races, ages, and even the ethnic groups. My experience shows that, every American family concept is experiencing some sort of change. For instance, long ago, more adults were married, but currently only a handful get married, there were also many children in a house hold, but I was suppressed to hear a couple saying that, it does not need a child, and if any, only one child is enough. Other areas include the number of non-family households, the roles of women in economy and the significance of marriage in accounting for total births, (Herbert, 2004).

The proportion of individuals who have attained 15 years and never married reached a historic level by the year 2000, when a quarter of men and a third of women were not married, (Biblarz & Judith , 2010). Though there has been a decline in married in both the whites and the blacks, there are also rising trends in adults that are unmarried. This increase in ratio of unmarried

<https://assignbuster.com/american-family-not-in-decline-just-changing-sociology-essay/>

individuals is also shown in changes in relation between households and families in history. Furthermore, the non-family household used to exist just as a small proportion of the household in total, normally made of elderly men with no families left. On the other hand, in the current times, instead of being made up by elderly individuals, it is made up of young adults, most amongst them not married. Although the percentage of a couple household, or two parent households with kids is on decline, there has been an increase in a single parent-plus children households. Going by the 2000 population census however, their account was 53% of them, a decline that seems to have taken place in the past few years.

Currently, non-family households, accounts for around 31% of the household, while the rest is accounted for by the families headed by single parents that makes up to 27% of all the families that have kids. The families of blacks are the once highly affected by the decline in dual-parent household. By the end of 20th century, married couple having children accounted for only around 4 out of 10 black family households having kids. Nevertheless, there has been no group that has remained immune to the increasing trend of single-parenthood.

Elderly individuals are also living alone. The decline in morbidity and mortality, improved social security and other benefits accrued from retirements, aimed at ensuring that aged individual are in positions of financing themselves, healthier in general, and lived more years as compared to the earlier periods. A change in values of culture that occurred in the second half of the 20th century, lead to an increase to the privacy

value amongst aged individuals. For instance in 1910, most widows above 66 years lived with their children, while only around 10% were living alone.

However, by 1990, the figure rose to 75% of aged widow living alone. The same period experienced a rise in empty nests households, with aged couples having no resident children regardless of the age. The arrangements of extended families were disappearing slowly in the population majority. Under the same time, more couples were surviving to the older age as compared to the past, as an effect, by 2000, more than half of the adult of 65 years of age and above were living in different households, lived with their spouses. With the help of better health and better income, most of the aged people still have the capability and the aspiration of buying their privacy as never in history, (Amato, 2005)..

The point of single-parenthood and childless couples, have resulted to the family household decline and women giving birth to fewer kids a part from spacing them far apart, as well as ending their fertility very early. All these in general, have given rise to lower levels of fertility. During colonial periods, average women had more than 7 kids, but this has changed to two children. Among all women, it is only Hispanic women that still have at least higher fertility rate of around 2.5 children as compared to others who have 1.8 to 2.1, (Herbert, 2004). Though the fertility rates in U.S have reduced, to the lowest degree in the history of America, the higher percentage of these having children now is help by single-women.

The high rates of births out of wedlock mean that women in marriage are no longer the only arbiters of fertility. However, in the mid century, such like

extramarital births were just insignificant, as they only accounted for 3% of the total births, this rose to a third of all births by 2000, and the same rate is rising. Though all groups are experiencing this change, non-Hispanic whites are experiencing a slower rise as compared to all other groups. Though this has been thought as temporal aberrations in history; the rising legitimacy proportions in Europe shows that Northern America is following the advanced trends of Western Europe.

There has also been a change in the role of women in the economic development, even including dual-parent household having kids. Traditional families had male as single breadwinners in the family. It was a norm for them to work alone to sustain their families, this norm has drastically changed. By the end of the 20th century, only one in five household couples had male being single breadwinners. Amongst married couple having children less than six years of age, only 36 of them had mothers staying. In families that women had given birth to a child in the previous years, many of these mothers at the end year were not working at home. The true is that, not only having more women in places of work, the ratio has been increasingly constantly in the recent times.

In mid 1970s, teenagers were the once having higher rates of child birth out of wedlock, and such like birth rates were increasing as per that time.

However, by the end of 20th century, the rate of aged women illegitimacy was high and rising. The reverse was now taking place on the rates of teenager ladies, as their rate was reducing in both relative and absolute numbers. The increase in births out of wedlock, were attributed to poverty per se can be looked upon in the fact that, “ the fact that the United States <https://assignbuster.com/american-family-not-in-decline-just-changing-sociology-essay/>

was not unique in this new pattern of births" (Herbert, 2004), as well as the reduction in the significance of traditional marriages. Other developed countries like Sweden also have experienced similar trends.

While, the difference is, in 1950s, it Sweden had fertility rates similar to that of U. S, but towards the end of the century, its illegitimacy births was more than half of total births. Even countries like Spain and Portugal that deeply follows Catholic believes, has scored above 16% and 22% rates of illegitimacy respectively. So believing that, this was just a temporal North American development does not hold in any way. Factors affecting such like trends in the developed countries seem to be all similar. For instance, late marriages, women participating in the workforce hence higher revenues, as well as changing beliefs on the role of marriage, (Biblarz & Judith, 2010).

All these changes have impacted on the U. S. fertility rates. Not only formal marriages are exclusive arbiter of fertility, but more ladies have been reducing the number of kids to bear. This is not based on the fact that, ladies are foregoing kids, as a matter of fact, the number of ladies going without kids has remained constant and is much less. The decline in fertility is attributed to the fact that women are taking an option of having fewer children. They are also marrying very late, hence reducing their marital fertility; as an effect, they are starting bearing of children at a very late stage, as well as spacing their children wide apart. On top of all these, they are terminating their fertility earlier than before. Apart from rising the average age of mothers bearing children from 1960-1999 by 2. 7, it significantly rose for every child being given birth as well, (Herbert, 2004).

As a matter of fact, American family state, just as other family states in most industrialized countries, is much different from what it used to be in the past days. It is characteristically a family with few kids; both parents do work, as well as mothers producing children at a very old age. On top of all these, more aged individual are living alone, or with companions that are unmarried, and giving birth outside marriage. All these trends collectively have changed the American family state other than declining the family state.