

The american family institution

Business



The past several decades have seen nothing short of a revolution in Americas' family institutions.

This important social institution has undergone a profound change since 1980. It goes without saying that if a person was asked today to define the most original demographic feature that has occurred in the past three decades, it would be the changes that have occurred in both households and families in all sections of the American society. As Basirico (2009) argues, the traditional American family has seen many changes for all races, ages, and ethnic groups. Every facet of the American family has changed, including the number of households that are run by married couples, the number of adults who get married or marry, the economic roles of women, the number of children that are born, the increase in unwed childbearing, the number of single and non-family households, and the occurrences of marital disruptions such as divorce and separation. It goes without saying that emerging adult populace faces a myriad of challenges within the context of broader cultural and social changes in the family institution.

There are many reasons that indicate that the American family is in turmoil. For example, not only have American family households experienced a declining trend as a result of childless-couple homes and the rise of single-parents, but mothers are terminating their fertility earlier than ever before, they give birth to fewer children and space them further apart. Additionally, more and more women are getting married later, therefore reducing their marital fertility. As a result, the fertility levels in the United States have gone down in the country's history (Klein, 2004). In colonial America, an average American woman bore at least seven children in the course of her lifetime, <https://assignbuster.com/the-american-family-institution/>

but since the 1970s, the number has dropped to less than three children for the majority of non-Hispanic white women. Similarly, more adults are living with unmarried companions or alone, thus, many women are giving birth to children out of wedlock than ever before.

This trend can also be seen in the changing economic roles of American mothers in both single and dual-parent households that have children. The contemporary family with a father as the sole bread winner working alone to take care of the family is no longer the norm. Present-day Americans tend to define a good marriage in terms of the satisfaction or fulfillment it brings to an individual partner rather than to the longevity of a marriage. Recent studies have revealed that only 36 percent of married couples with children below six years had the mother staying at home to take care of children and household chores. For this reason, Kefalas & Kathryn (2005) hold that the American family has been changed from a public institution with clearly laid down functions and roles to a postindustrial private body that is founded on personal fulfillments, such as companionship, affection, and self-discovery.

These trends and behaviors have greatly changed the American family institution. It is very unfortunate that these trends are unlikely to be reversed any time soon (Charles & Jeremy, 2005). In conclusion, experts in family matters are in consensus that much needs to be done to save this fundamental institution. To begin with, people who want to marry should ensure that they ready before committing themselves to this important institution to avert unnecessary separations and divorce. On the same note, the youth should desist from engaging in pre-marital sex and unwed relationships to sustain the sacred nature of this institution. Although the <https://assignbuster.com/the-american-family-institution/>

tough economic time has forced many people to consider the number of children they bear, they should not go to the extremes of terminating their fertility.