

**Lecture Four :**

# **Society and values**

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# Introduction

# 1- The Declaration of Independence and the American values

- ❖ The Declaration of Independence is the only national statement that insisted on the importance of maintaining human rights;
- ❖ As a result it gave birth to many other freedoms in the United States of America that may never have even been intended .
- ❖ The Declaration of Independence also paved the way and created equality among all men and women as a quest for an ending social justice .

## 2- American Individualism and Equality in the United States

- ❑ **Nathan Glazer** argues that American individualism is not unitary but two-sided ;
- ❑ The development of the new individualism could be linked to an emotional loss of confidence in old America ,
- ❑ Libertarian drive has changed those regulate surroundings about individualism by raising official racial ethnic classifications on the basis of which rights , privileges , and duties would distributed by administration.

### 3- Continuity and Change in the American Family

- Tamara Hareven , a central figure in the new social history of the family, discussed the myth of the existence of a harmonious family with three generations living together .
- In her essay “***Continuity and Change in the American Family***” , ***she*** covers a wide range of issues such as the organization of the family and the household, the networks available to children as they were growing up, the role of the family in the process of industrialization,

## 4- Women and American Society

- ❑ Women and their engagement with the outside world ;
  - the achievements of women in the 20 century ,
  - upward mobility of women 's stories especially during the 1960's because of the increase of house-holding that is followed by problems of race and class.
- ❑ Those problems has introduced a “ feminization of poverty” to America which was unresolved problem of personal liberty and equal opportunity .

## 5- Status and social class in America

**Edward Pessen**, an expert on American history, discussed the class system and class distinctions that plays a central part within the American society .

He argues that the Americans give more importance to personal responsibility rather than the social class system ; as they believe in institutional commitments to equal opportunity .

## 6- The American system of education

- John Orr in his essay “The American System of Education” describes an educational structure that is universal , decentralized , comprehensive, and professional ;.....the mobilization of the nation’s schools to integrate , to train , and to inspire the
- American population for its social and political tasks will be a compelling drama for the remainder of the century .



*I- Individualism and Equality in  
the United States*

## A- Individualism and American Society

« Individualism is a mature and calm feeling that leads each member of the society to serve himself from the mass of his fellows, he willingly leaves society to itself.

Even they are either rich or powerful enough to exercise any great influence over their fellows, have retained sufficient education and fortune to satisfy their wants.

They owe nothing to any man, they were always considering themselves as standing alone and their destiny is in their hands. »

## ***B-. The Double Edge of American Individualism:***

Individualism in USA has two faces, a positive one that was represented through its opportunities for the individuals, the freedom and its encouragement of diversity.

Therefore this individualism emphasizes the image of the American as a pioneer, it marks the American society and Landscape. Yet Individuals and groups were allowed more freedom, they could establish institutions without any restriction.

However the inefficiencies of the preservation of landscape or urban form which were resulted of this individualism represented its negative side.

## C- Individualism restrained ( 1960-1970s):

- Limiting Individualism, banning discrimination.
- Rising concern for the minorities, for women and for environment and the consumer.
- This new policy increased the power of government to intervene in what was seen as private decisions.
- In which many legislations were passed:
  - 1964 Equal Employment opportunity commission
  - 1968 banning discrimination in housing, renting and higher education
  - 1972 consumer and environment movements
- Hence , a question is raised about the American individualism whether it prevailed, rampant or otherwise.

## C.1. The Politics of Equality:

- That is the emergence of new kind of individualism ... the political aspect of it.
- The great civil rights movements, the women's rights movement.

## C.2. Two kinds of Individualism:

- The more rugged economic and institutional individualism, constituted the US's economic productivity, this one was opposed by a new kind that is devoted to self-realization , protection of environment...etc ,that drew limits on how this productivity would be realized. Yet both of them enlist government intervention .

- However, In the late 1970s the economic individualist (of the first kind) under the assault lost his former arrogance very likely its own children were to be found among pationate defender of one of the movements.

## **5-Disillusionment:**

- Lost confidence in Old America from about 1963 and on .
- 1970s witenessed a new devision inside the American society between conservatives and those who were asking for change a radical one yet the latter were the more influential group as they had control over the mass-media.

## D- Reagan and the Old Individualism:

- The Election of Ronald Reagan represented the victory of the older American Individualism, the one that calls for the freedom of the energies. Yet this new philosophy failed to restore the older economic individualism although it had some success.
- Reagan administration struck back for an older concept of equality against a newer one of 1970s.
- **Due process:**
  - to protect the poor and recipient of government funds ( Individuals can't be out from welfare , or tenants evicted from public housing projects).

- This vast expansion of equal « Due process » and « equal protection of laws » got interest among society, however its development has not received universal applause.

## **E- Equality and Individualism :**

### an Enduring Paradox

- According to Tocqueville there are inherent conflicts between equality and individualism.
- The example of the French revolution so that « Legal equality to all men in which they were equal under despotic power »



- Equality threatened Individualism specifically because it is directed towards the great American problem « **The Race Issue** », eg; the fact of attacking quotas in employment was a way of defending one version against another.

## **II- CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN FAMILY**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

OVER CENTURIES THE FAMILY HAS BEEN SEEN AS THE NUCLEUS OF THE SOCIAL ORDER AND THE BASIS FOR STABLE GOVERNANCE. THIS BELIEF IN A LOST GOLDEN AGE HAD LED PEOPLE TO DEPICT THE PRESENT AS A PERIOD OF DECLINE IN THE FAMILY. THREE GENERATIONS LIVED TOGETHER HAPPILY IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD; FAMILIES WERE INTIMATE AND CLOSELY LINKED

## **\* FAMILY STRUCTURE**

THE MOST TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL FAMILY UNIT WAS NUCLEAR. FOR THREE GENERATIONS, AMERICAN FAMILIES LIVED IN HOUSHOLDS. THEY WERE A PLACE OF PRODUCTION, AND SERVED AS AN ABODE FOR SERVANTS, APPRENTICES, AND DEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY SUCH AS ORPHANS, OR OLD MEN AND WOMEN WITHOUT RELATIONS.

\* THE GREAT EXTENDED FAMILIES AND HOUSHOLDS BECAME A PART OF THE FOLKLORE OF MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY, BUT THIS BREAKDOWN IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE, BUT RATHER THE FAMILY'S RETREAT INTO ITS PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD

# **CHANGES IN THE LIFE COURSE:**

\* GREATER UNIFORMITY IN THE TIMING OF FAMILY TRANSITIONS DUE TO THE VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES WAS ONCE MORE ORDERLY AND STABLE

\* IN THE 19TH CENTURY, THE COMBINATION OF A LATER AGE MARRIAGE AND LIMITED FERTILITY PROVIDED LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR A FAMILY TO EXPERIENCE AN « EMPTY NEST » STAGE

\* NOWADAYS, LITTLE TIME ELAPSED BETWEEN MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD. THUS, « THE EMPTY NEST » PROCESS HAS MUCH INCREASED, AS A RESULT, A GREATER SEPARATION BETWEEN GENERATIONS TOOK PLACE WHILE PARENTS ARE STILL IN MIDDLE AGES

# IMPLICATIONS

# OF

# CHANGE:

– THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THE FAMILY FACES IN ITS ADAPTATION TO SOCIAL CHANGES, PARTICULARLY THE LOSS OF THE FLEXIBILITY IN HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP

– THE INCREASED TENDENCY TOWARDS HOMOGENIZATION OF AMERICAN CULTURE AS A PART OF « THE MELTING POT » PROCESS

## **CONCLUSION:**

WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING IN ALL THESE VARIETIES OF FAMILY STYLES ARE NEITHER NEW INVENTIONS NOR A FRAGMENTATION OF TRADITIONAL FAMILY PATTERNS, BUT RATHER AN EMERGENCE AND INCREASING ACCEPTANCE OF PLURALISM IN FAMILY LIFE

# III- WOMEN AND AMERICAN SOCIETY



## WOMEN'S PLACE IN AMERICAN LIFE

□ Women's place in American society can be expressed in the words of a woman in 18<sup>th</sup> century newspaper:

*"I am married and I have no other concern but to please the man I love, he is the end of every care I have, if I dress it is for him, if I read a poem or a play it is to qualify myself for a conversation agreeable to his taste."*

**However**, this didn't mean that all women acted to apply such ideals in their daily life.

# DURING THE MIDDLE AND LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

- ❑ As the Industrial Revolution separated home from workplace, women limited to domestic roles . Thus, women capacity to act in the public arena and pursue economic aspiration was limited.
- ❑ **However**, upper-and-middle class women still made a significant impact on public policy and calling for progressive reforms.

# SUFFRAGE AND OTHER CHANGES

- ❑ By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the vote for women was seen not only as a significant step towards equal legal status, but also as an essential requirement for achieving social reform. Women received the right to vote in 1920.
- ❑ women were divided over the meaning of equality.
- ❑ The winning of women's suffrage didn't lead to any major changes in their role at work place. By the 1930s all authorities approved discriminatory treatment against married women seeking employment .

# WORLD WAR II AND WOMEN AT WORK

- ❑ Women were urged to help win the war by replacing a soldier gone to the front. Between 1941 and 1945, over 6 million women took jobs for the first time. Wages were higher than ever before.
- ❑ After the war, more than 80% advised government researchers that they wanted to stay on the job. They enjoyed being paid for their work, receiving recognition from the society and having the opportunity to play an active role outside the home.

## AFFLUENCE AND THE SECOND INCOME

- ❑ After the loss of jobs with postwar demobilization, women returned to the job market at rapid pace. These women were not part of any movement towards equality, they were taking jobs in order to help the family.
- ❑ Without the second income, owing a home or providing a college education for one's children would have been impossible. Women's spending their lives taking care of children was now the exception rather than the rule.

## WOMEN'S LIBERATION IN 1960S

❑ The black and white women discovered that their gender was used as basis for denying them an equal voice in policy-making councils. Protesting this second-class citizenship, they created their own movement that by the end of 1960s has spread to cities across the country.

❑ The movement attacked all the institutions and values that limited women and transformed the attitudes of many Americans .

❑ By the end of 1960s the women's movement had succeeded in challenging nearly all of America's traditional cultural assumptions about women proper place.

## ❑ Achievements :

- ❑ The administration of Reagan appointed the first women justice of the U.S Supreme Court, named two women to the cabinet, and claimed to be more committed to women's rights than any previous administration.
- ❑ The democratic presidential nominee Walter Mondale broke all political precedent by choosing as his vice-presidential running mate Geraldine Ferraro, congresswomen from New York and a strong feminist.
- ❑ By the middle of 1970s, the shape of women's participation in labor force had come close to matching that of men.

❑ Such success stories , however, described only one aspect of total picture, but there were millions of other women stories represented the opposite direction. For these women, one of the problem was the type of jobs , the work they entered in most cases not listed in Census Bureau and offered no possibility of economic advancement and upward mobility.

❑ There were also a difficulty of achieving sex equality simply by opening the top ranks of society to a few women.



## CONCLUSION

For millions of American women, gender continues to be an imposing barrier to full freedom and equality and, together with race and class, remains more a sign of oppression than a symbol of liberation. Perhaps only when the large issue of what Americans mean by equality and equal opportunity has been resolved, throughout their ranks, it will be possible for women to be free.

# **III- STATUS AND SOCIAL CLASS IN AMERICA**

# DEFINITIONS OF CLASS

- There are no single definition of the concept.
- Marxists: class as groups have social relations to economic resources.
- They emphasised on « class consciousness ».
- They believe that US is living in a contradictory situation.
- They divided it into 3 categories:



Capitalist class

Middle class

working class

- 
- ✘ Sociologists disagreed with the marxists' structure of class.
  - ✘ « Six level structure of class » is the correct structure of class which divided into: upper,middle and lower classes;indeed each one there are the upper and lower segments.
  - ✘ It thought that the six level is not only correct but it is important to see the social order easily.

# CONSEQUENCES OF CLASS OR SOCIAL STANDING

Class affects all the aspects of the society:

- **Socially:** it manages all kind of luxulary,atmosphere where people live eg houses and neiborhood,mariage and education.
- **Economically:** the quality and quantity of food, clothes , houses and its furniture, and the kind of work.
- It causes psychological , emotional diseases and increases criminal deeds.

# CLASS STRUCTURE IN EARLY AMERICA

- ✘ **Colonial period** : emerged in New England, Middle colonies and the South.
- ✘ Upper class = better sort → had slaves, landownership, dominated councils ,assemblies and churches.
- ✘ Lower class = meaner sort → black slaves,indentured servants,artisans and small farmers\NO power,No status
- ✘ **Revolution Era** : will be no more class differences as the declaration claimed. However there were no changes.

# CLASS LINES HARDEN FOLLOWING REVOLUTION

- ✘ Tocquivile and many scholars claimed that during the **Jacksonian Era 1783-1830** (the age of egalitarianism) all people seemed to have equal rights in addition the wealth was distributed equally(among at least the native whites) .
- ✘ In fact,insofar this claim is untrue:
  - ✓ class differences still exist.
  - ✓ wealth wasn't distributed equally.

# SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE GILDED AGE

- ✘ Despite of new technologies and inventions, the big cities , the flourished markets, transportation...etc but it had brought nothing to end the social classes differences.
- ✘ However , Gilded Age's tycoons were the embodiment of social mobility who had raisen from humble circumstances to reach to economic glory .
- ✘ A significant amount of upward mobility came from poor immigrants' children.
- ✘ In literature « rags to riches » was depicted in Horatio Alger's novels.



# CLASS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

- ✘ The concept of class scholarly remained the same but in reality its structure composed new norms eg:age,population, economic activity,resources...etc
- ✘ However, the regional and community disparities were still existed.

# CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ATTITUDE TOWARD CLASS

- ✘ The lower class positions' circumstances improved from one generation to another eg American workers' wages.
- ✘ Thus American economy had provided a suitable level of comforts to lower class of the social order.
- ✘ The gifted and creative persons always win regardless to economic circumstances.
- ✘ The American social order is the most clearer.
- ✘ Class is complex, changing and elusive phenomenon.