

CHAPTER 3

THE AMERICAN DREAM

3.1 The American Dream

The term of American Dream is generally defined as the opportunity to achieve success in America through hard work. American Dream always related to the success, thus, people most often define success as the attainment of a high income, a prestigious job, economic security (Hochschild 15). Therefore, American Dream is that everybody is going to have an opportunity and the chance to live a life with some decency and some dignity and a chance for some self-respect.

American Dream is the idea of America which assumes that everybody has an opportunity to get the prosperity and success. This idea formed base on the history of the immigrants from Europe firstly came to the America in 1630 called as The Puritans (Cullen 15). The Puritans immigrated to the American to make the colony Protestant called as Massachusetts Bay Colony. It happen because of the development of descrimination of Monarchic England, especially the freedom of worship, it is because the Puritans are regarded as very unpleasen people. Cullen writes “Puritanism is one of those word like racism, or democracy, or feminst” (Cullen 13).

The Puritans who took root in the New World were open to the vision that humanity could be reformed in a way that would display God’s work in man; this faith in reform became the central legacy of American Protestantism in New World and foundation of the American Dream (15). Most notably, some of the

most important reform in American life derived from conceptions of community and morality central to the puritan worldview (34).

The idea of the written American Dream, was taken from Thomas Jefferson's idea in the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson Writes "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". Throughout the Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson outlines the promise of American potential for freedom in a deistic sense. However as a realist, Thomas Jefferson recognized that what was guaranteed was not happiness itself but its pursuit. The living dream that is the Declaration couples life and liberty with happiness against the notion of materialism seemingly because pursuing physical possessions are momentary and do not support the true definition of freedom and opportunity to better one's character.

So far we know that American Dream is only true for immigrants who came to America. Based on the Declaration of Independence, the term American Dream has a few interpretation, but one of the most popular is "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" which is the dream that most Americans strive for. Therefore, everyone has the opportunity to achieve the American Dream depending on how much effort they put in or how fortunate they are.

The first element mentioned in a sentence of the Declaration which then became the idea of American dream is life. Individuals and families have come to a land called America in high hopes of them to have a successful life. They come

with high hopes for finding a job to support their family and in creating a new family here. The families do not only stop here but will continue for the times to come. The American Dream is not something they simply hope to attain one day but are willing to work for it. By whatever means necessary they are willing to work for their dream.

The other element is liberty. Hard work and perseverance are not the only factor in achieving the American Dream. It also comes down to how fortunate you are. Some people will be very lucky and be able to achieve their dream with ease. Some others unfortunately will get a “bad break” and have to work harder than most to get to where they want to be and achieve their dreams. This applies to all people with various races who live in the country, even including Black people, because there is a presumption that the Black people were far below the caste of white people. The issue of discrimination already exists and is growing old, and it's possible that this issue still exists to this day.

The last element is pursuit of happiness. America is the only country where the pursuit of happiness is actually guaranteed in writing. Pursuit of Happiness is one of the most famous phrases in the United States which was primarily written by Thomas Jefferson. He created the phrase Pursuit of Happiness in his book *An Essay Concerning human Understanding*. Thomas Jefferson took the phrase Pursuit of Happiness from the substituted of Locke's word property. Pursuit of Happiness is a necessity, and that necessity became the foundation of liberty.

from others. Therefore, people are responsible for their own situations in life and their own destiny.

In addition, there is a price to be paid for individual freedom, it is self-reliance, it means that being dependent on themselves. In the United States, by age eighteen or twenty-one, they must take care of themselves, solve their own problem, and stand on their own two feet. So, when they are dependent, they risk of losing freedom and they may also lose the respect of their peers. Although they are not truly self-reliance, most Americans believe they must at least appear to be so (30).

Equality is one of the dream that are associated in the American dream. The lower social class are trying to rise to a higher social position. Many immigrants found that they have a better chance to succeed in the United States than in the old country, because they believe in equality of opportunity (Datesman et.al 31). Immigrants believe that they have chance to success when they arrived in America. Therefore, they choose to leave their old country and come to American for better life.

On the other hand, for the equality opportunity also have price to be paid which is competition. It is person's duty to try get the equal change to succeed in the United States (32). People who are want to get the equal opportunity, they must struggle or compete to reach the opportunity.

The last values is the material wealth and hard work. They achieved material success and many became very attached to material thing. Placing a high value on material possessions is called materialism (Datesman et.al 32). Yet, the

Americans do not like to be called materialistic, it is because Americans feel that this accused of loving only material things. In addition, Hard work is the price that must be paid for the material wealth. Only by hard working the natural resources can be converted into material possessions, allowing a more comfortable standard of living (33).

