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**Ethnic and Racial Diversity**  
**in Post-war II America (1945-1960)**

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## **Dedication**

*I dedicate this humble work to my dear parents.*

*To Amel, Salem, Hicham and Ahmed Mokitio.*

*To my beloved teachers Souad and Aicha BELBACHIR.*

*To all my friends, colleagues and pupils.*

*To Dr. Safia ABDELMALEK.*

## **Acknowledgements**

In memory of my teacher Dr. Bouhend Mohammed Reda and his wife. I should express my great admiration to my supervisor Dr. Zoulikha BOUHADIBA for her great sense of sacrifice, generosity and responsibility. I should also express my gratitude to Dr. Taher BELHIA, Dr. Djazia FERGANI, Dr. Abdelkader BENCHATTAB and all my teachers at the Doctoral School of English. I am equally indebted to the great sense of understanding and support of my dear parents, my beloved sister, her husband and my brother. A special thank to Dr. Zoubida SEBANE for her assistance.

## **Abstract**

This dissertation deals with Ethnic and Racial Diversity in Post-war II American society between 1945 and 1960. In a multicultural society, some clashes may occur around issues like assimilation and multiculturalism, the sharing of the welfare in a prosperous society and the equal versus unequal life chances. These ethnic groups have contributed in a positive way in making America a world super power. It is said that diversity is enrichment to the country as a whole. Nevertheless, some people warn that it may bring about issues such as which language they are going to speak and whether or not they should retain their specific markers. It is true that many Americans have chosen to assimilate and become part of the “melting pot” while others think that it is just a myth and that the pot (America) did not include every one especially the people of colour. Some people claim that racism and discrimination still exist in America but is less prevalent and apparent like in the past. Martin Luther King’s dream has not only become true but an African American President, Barrak Obama was elected. In his speech about race, he put it “out of many, we are truly one”

## Table of Contents

Page

Dedication	
Acknowledgements.....	I
Abstract.....	II
General Introduction.....	1

### Chapter One: Multiculturalism and Assimilation in America

Introduction.....	3
I. Multiculturalism and assimilation in America .....	6
I.1. Multiculturalism.....	6
I.2. Assimilation.....	9
I.3. America, a multiethnic society.....	10
I.1.a. Multiculturalism, a threat to the country.....	14
I.1.a.1 The language threat.....	15
I.1.a.2 The cultural threat.....	16
I.1.a.3 The racial threat.....	16
I.1.b Multiculturalism, an asset to the country.....	18
I.1.b.1 The language asset.....	18
I.1.b.2 The culture asset.....	19
I.1.b.3 The racial asset.....	20
II. Ethnic immigrant groups in Hamtramck: .....	21
Polish, Albanian and Arab Americans.....	22
II.1. Polish Americans.....	22
II.1.a. the maintenance of the heritage culture and language.....	23
II.1.a.1. Cultures and traditions.....	23
II.1.a.2. the heritage language.....	24
II.1.b.The maintenance of the heritage language and its use: .....	24
The alternative: the native language, English, or bilingualism.....	24
II.1.c. the Attitudes of the Polish toward other ethnic groups.....	25

II.1.d. Social distance.....	26
II.2. the Albanian American perspective.....	27
II.2.a. the maintenance of culture versus assimilation.....	27
II.2.b. the maintenance of the heritage language and its use: .....	28
The alternative: the native language, English, or bilingualism.....	28
II.2.c. Albanians' attitudes towards other ethnic groups.....	29
II.2.d. Social distance.....	29
II.3. the Arabs.....	29
II.3.a. the maintenance of culture versus assimilation.....	30
II.3.b. the maintenance of the heritage language and its use the alternative: .....	30
The native language, English, or bilingualism.....	30
II.3.c. Arabs' attitudes towards other ethnic groups.....	31
II.3.d. Social distance.....	31
III. Cross-group Comparison.....	32
Conclusion.....	33

## Chapter Two: Economy, Society and Culture in Post-war II America

Introduction.....	35
I. Post-war American Economy.....	37
I.1. Economy based on corporation.....	41
I.2. Labour unions and economic prosperity.....	44
I.3. Scientific development.....	46
II. Population in a post-war II American Society.....	48
II.1. Housing and progress in suburbia.....	50
II.2. the urban problem.....	51
II.3. Rural America.....	52
II.4. Poverty and social class.....	53
II.5. Women and the world of work.....	55
III. Culture in Post-war II America.....	58

III.1. Culture and Family relations.....	60
III.2. the uniqueness of the American culture.....	64
III.3. the American arts.....	65
III.3.a. American painting.....	65
III.3.b. American literature.....	66
III.3.c. Rock and Roll.....	68
III.4. the TV revolution.....	69
Conclusion.....	71

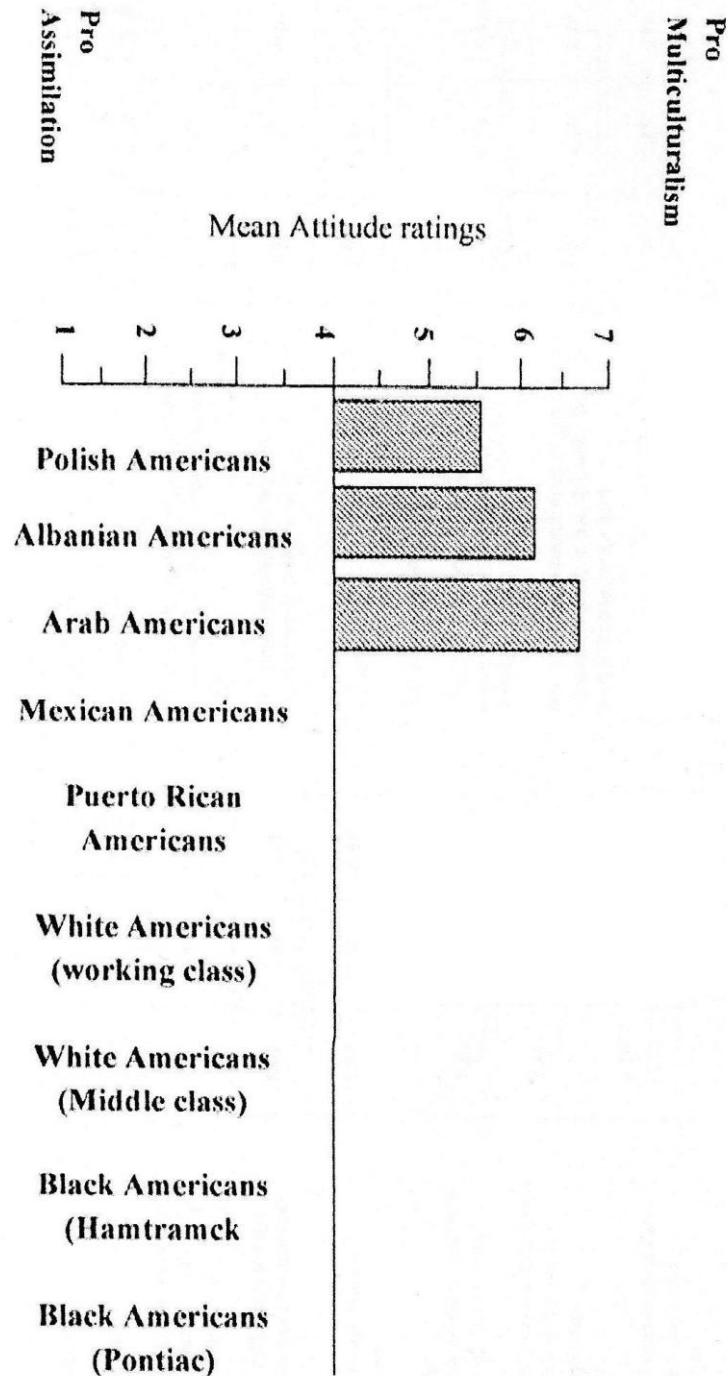
Chapter three: Race Issues in the United States

Introduction.....	72
I. Race relations in America.....	74
II. Categorising by race in America.....	76
II.1. Race classification of blacks and Indians.....	79
III. The colour of the nation.....	85
IV. The social construction of race.....	87
V. Race and racism.....	89
VI. Life opportunities in America.....	91
Conclusion.....	97
General conclusion.....	99
Appendix.....	101
Table 1 : Some Facts about African Americans .....	103
General Bibliography.....	105

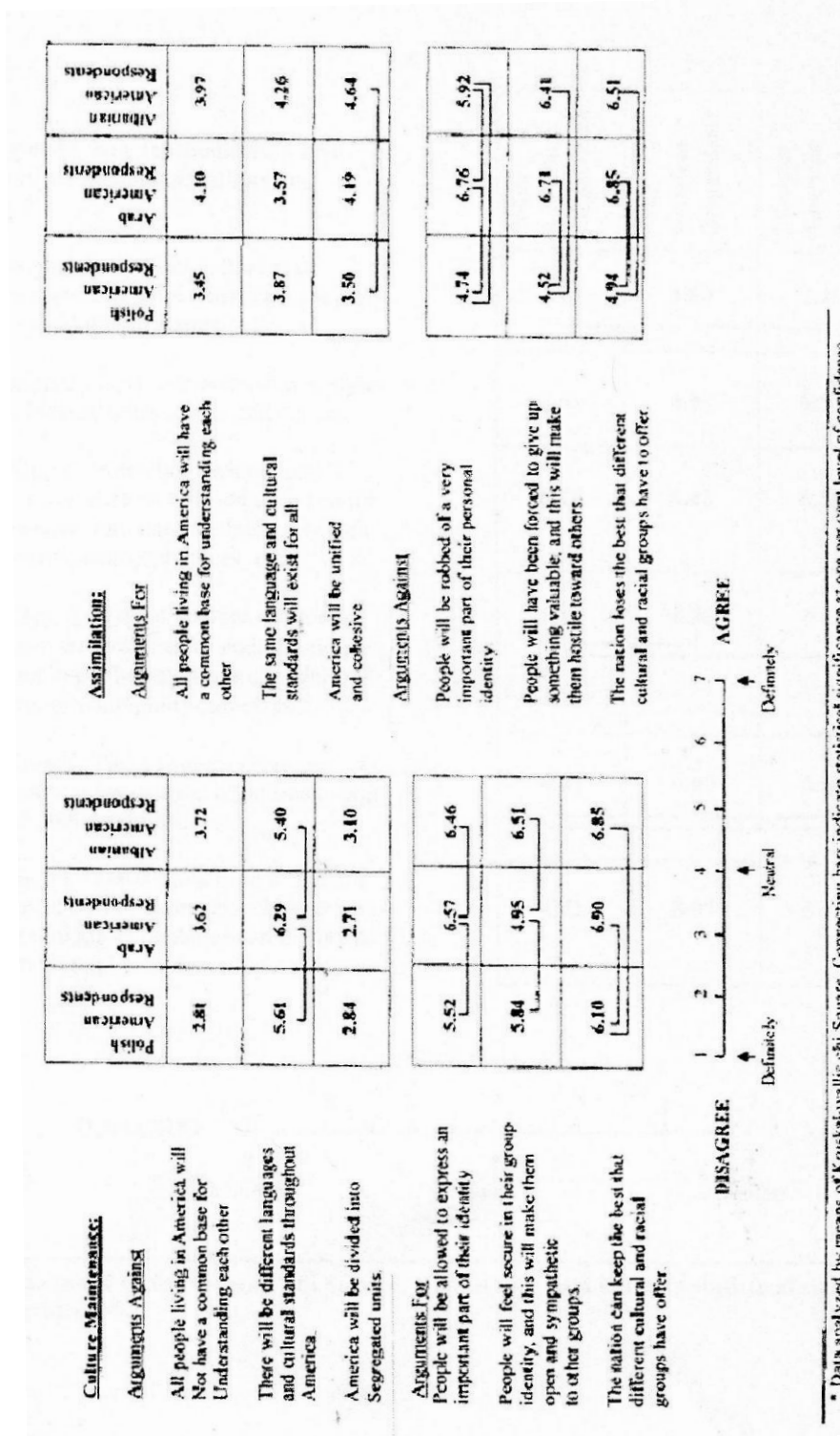
## **Tables**



**Table 1**  
**Mean Responses on the Debate over Assimilation versus**  
**Multiculturalism**



**Table 2**  
**Responses of Ethnic Groups in Hamtramck**  
**Regarding Assimilation and Culture Maintenance**



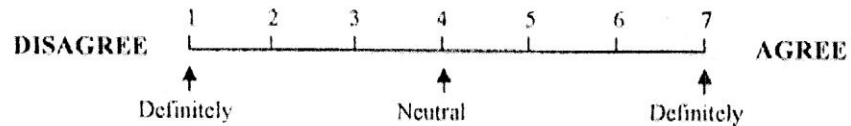
\* Data analyzed by means of Kruskal-wallis chi Square. Connecting bars indicate statistical significance at one per cent level of confidence.

**Table 3**  
**Mean Scores for Ethnic Groups in Hamtramck**  
**Regarding Retention of the Heritage Culture \***

In your opinion, how far should your own group go in maintaining its culture and traditions ?

1. Step A : since our culture and traditions are not American, they should not be maintained.
2. Step B : Keep our own cultural styles of foods, dress, songs and dances.
3. Step C : Keep our own cultural values, such as how children should behave with parents, husbands with wives, dating practices, etc
4. Step D : Attend courses about our own cultural history and traditions, not in public schools but in church-run or community-run classes.
5. Step E : Have courses about our own cultural history and traditions taught in public schools.
6. Step F : Have equal time in schools spent on our own cultural history and traditions as on American history & traditions

Polish American Respondents	Arab American Respondents	Albanian American Respondents
3.16	1.50	2.31
6.61	6.57	6.51
6.10	6.45	6.56
5.19	6.36	6.23
4.81	6.60	6.10
4.71	5.07	5.18



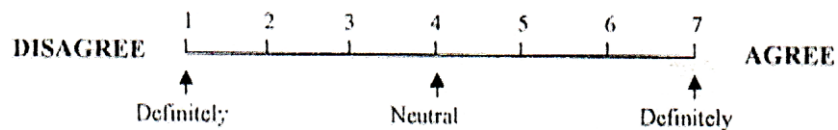
\* Data analyzed by means of Kruskal-wallis chi Square. Connecting bars indicate statistical significance at one Per cent level of confidence.

**Table 4**  
**Mean Scores for Ethnic Groups in Hamtramck**  
**Regarding the Maintenance of the Heritage Language \***

In your opinion, how far should your own group go in using its own language?

1. Step A: Cultural groups whose language is not Standard English should never use own language.
2. Step B: Use our own language for festival days, cultural songs, traditional stories, prayers and religious services.
3. Step C: Use our own language for speaking with older family members, like grandparents.
4. Step D: Use our own language for most or all speaking within the family
5. Step E: learn to read and write our own language not through school, but through church-run or community-run classes.
6. Step F: Use own language for part of the teaching and learning in public schools.
7. Step G: Give equal time in schools to the use of own language as to Standard English.

	Polish American Respondents	Arab American Respondents	Albanian American Respondents
1.	2.13	1.48	1.87
2.	5.87	6.91	6.87
3.	6.52	6.93	6.90
4.	5.77	6.74	6.87
5.	5.23	6.69	6.72
6.	4.52	6.74	6.21
7.	3.81	5.05	3.69



\* Data analyzed by means of Kruskal-wallis chi Square. Connecting bars indicate statistical significance at 1 Per cent level of confidence.

**Table 5**

**Mean Scores regarding the consequences of bilingualism \***

Would they:	If your son/daughter were bilingual	If your son/daughter spoke only Polish	If your son/daughter spoke only English	If your son/daughter were bilingual	If your son/daughter spoke only Arabic	If your son/daughter spoke only English	If your son/daughter were bilingual	If your son/daughter spoke only Albanian	If your son/daughter were bilingual
1. Feel accepted in America?	6.42	3.77	6.26	6.86	2.36	4.95	6.90	3.21	6.92
2. Feel a sense of pride?	6.13	4.45	5.71	6.86	4.52	4.48	6.88	2.60	3.18
3. Make their parents happy?	6.36	4.39	5.36	6.93	4.83	4.69	7.00	2.00	2.23
4. Feel open and relaxed with others?	6.13	2.90	6.00	6.76	2.14	4.31	6.68	2.64	4.87
5. Bring status and respect to their group?	6.19	4.45	5.65	6.74	5.38	4.48	6.72	2.67	2.92
6. Stand out as different?	2.74	4.61	2.36	2.41	4.29	3.31	4.03	4.33	3.33
7. Be treated like second-class citizens?	1.52	3.68	4.77	2.69	3.86	3.41	2.44	5.10	3.00
8. Get good marks in school?	5.26	3.45	4.77	6.88	1.79	4.12	6.00	2.03	4.90
9. Have a chance for certain jobs others can't get?	5.71	2.97	4.55	6.76	2.48	4.62	6.00	2.18	4.77
10. Be sympathetic to people?	4.74	4.03	4.39	5.67	5.07	5.05	6.08	3.51	4.74
11. Show intelligence?	5.74	4.65	5.19	4.60	2.60	2.60	6.59	2.39	4.59



\* Data analyzed by means of Wilcoxon sign-ranks test. Connecting bars indicate statistical significance at one per cent level of confidence.



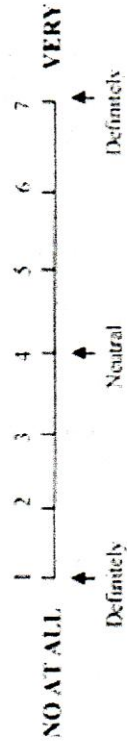
**Table 6**  
**Mean Attribution Ratings of own Group and Other Groups**  
**in Hamtramck \***

How... are...	most Polish Americans	most Arab Americans	most Albanian Americans	most Black Americans	most Polish Americans	most Arab Americans	most Albanian Americans	most Black Americans	most Polish Americans	most Arab Americans	most Albanian Americans	most Black Americans
1. Hardworking	6.16	5.80	4.97	3.87	4.21	5.12	4.65	2.86	5.08	4.70	5.23	3.10
2. Aggressive or violent	3.32	5.03	5.97	5.43	3.28	1.76	3.74	4.71	2.95	5.40	2.98	5.78
3. American	5.10	3.43	3.17	4.97	4.08	3.27	4.18	4.85	5.35	3.56	4.43	3.60
4. Likely to stick together as a group	6.10	6.20	6.10	6.20	5.21	5.60	5.13	5.26	5.48	5.08	5.92	4.65
5. Powerful	5.13	5.13	5.17	5.27	4.10	3.69	3.80	4.43	5.18	3.58	3.90	3.33
6. Similar to me	5.45	2.90	3.03	3.00	3.36	5.52	3.97	2.10	4.45	3.35	6.59	1.85
7. Intelligent at school	6.80	4.43	4.20	4.13	4.03	4.94	3.34	2.45	5.20	4.03	5.20	2.63
8. Smart with practical things	6.16	4.87	4.80	4.43	4.18	4.83	3.52	2.41	5.45	4.10	5.28	3.00
9. Trustworthy	5.97	4.17	4.20	4.07	3.69	5.76	3.41	1.64	4.59	4.43	6.26	2.28
10. Law-abiding (good citizen)	6.13	4.27	4.00	3.70	4.18	5.93	3.90	2.17	5.55	4.18	5.15	2.63
11. Unfairly treated	3.48	3.63	3.47	3.57	3.64	4.12	3.74	4.00	2.73	3.08	2.72	5.60
12. Likable	6.13	4.07	3.09	4.37	3.82	4.69	3.77	2.83	4.40	3.42	5.84	2.51

\* Data analyzed by means of Wilcoxon sign-ranks test. Connecting bars indicate statistical significance at one per cent level of confidence.

**Table 7**  
**Mean social Distance ratings in Hamtramck \***

	Polish American Respondents				Arab American Respondents				Albanian American Respondents			
	most Polish Americans	most Arab Americans	most Albanian Americans	most Black Americans	most Polish Americans	most Arab Americans	most Albanian Americans	most Black Americans	most Polish Americans	most Arab Americans	most Albanian Americans	most Black Americans
1. As a family member through marriage?	6.68	3.00	3.13	2.16	1.02	6.93	1.19	1.02	2.63	1.23	7.00	1.00
2. As a close personal friend?	6.77	4.36	4.45	4.10	2.76	6.48	2.64	2.36	4.73	3.03	6.90	2.00
3. As a close neighbor in my neighborhood or apartment building?	6.55	3.90	4.16	3.58	2.67	6.48	2.69	2.33	4.85	2.80	6.77	1.78
4. As a co-worker or partner at work?	6.52	4.65	4.68	4.84	2.17	5.71	2.17	1.98	4.93	3.20	6.62	3.29
5. As a citizen of the U.S.A.?	6.77	5.03	4.81	5.39	6.79	6.86	6.76	6.76	5.48	4.35	5.60	3.35



How willing are you personally to accept these people?-

1. As a family member through marriage?
2. As a close personal friend?
3. As a close neighbor in my neighborhood or apartment building?
4. As a co-worker or partner at work?
5. As a citizen of the U.S.A.?

\* Data analyzed by means of Wilcoxon sign-ranks test. Connecting bars indicate statistical significance at one percent level of confidence.

## **General Introduction**

This dissertation deals with Ethnic and Racial Diversity in Post-war II America. It seeks to demonstrate the hypothesis that claims that diversity is not all the time negative; in America it is rather perceived as enrichment to the nation. In addition, different immigrant groups, regardless of their races, religions, and/or sexual orientations try to live in harmony in the land where their dreams can come true, a land which gives them the chance to start anew.

To better deal with the issue, this very wide and debatable topic has been divided into three chapters:

The first chapter entitled “Multiculturalism and Assimilation in America” tackles two opposing ideologies which have always existed side by side in the most heterogeneous country in the world. My hypothesis is that multiculturalism strengthened the country. It also helped develop and even made America a world super power. The main purpose of the first chapter then is to show that Americans are ready to accept diversity as a source of unity. To better deal with the issue of diversity, a sample study with questions about three ethnic groups living in Hamtramck, Detroit with questionnaires will be provided.

The second chapter deals with American Society, Economy and Culture in the period that followed World War II. This era has not been chosen at random; of course there were many reasons for such a choice: first, because the economy of the nation thrived and second because America took the leads in other fields like medicine, electronics and technology, which helped make this nation one of the richest and the strongest countries world wide. The third reason is that the whole society and culture of America were changing because of the scientific achievements and also the media. The family structure almost wholly changed and there has been more toleration of sexual practices. Also, what is special about this period is that women and different groups started claiming for their own rights.

Talking about rights and equality was also tackled in the third chapter entitled “Race Issues in America”. This chapter deals with the most debatable topic; that of race. Of course, to limit this broad and wide subject, two ethnic groups were chosen: the blacks and the Indians with more focus on the blacks. This choice was based on the idea that the blacks are the most worth



mentioning among all the other groups not only because they struggled hard but more importantly because of what they achieved. Today, the American President Barack Obama is a black man from African origins and hence we can say that King's dream was to a large extent successfully accomplished. The third chapter does not deal with the long history of segregation that the nation went through; it rather seeks to answer the following questions: do all ethnic groups receive equal treatment? Can we say that discrimination in America has finally come to an end?

Again, what is certain about Americans is that diversity and race are there in conversations even among the most ordinary people. Diversity is a very interesting and rich topic to deal with especially that it is creating clashes and misunderstandings elsewhere but not in the United States. The purpose of this dissertation is to show that diversity enhanced problem solving and increased productivity and that the power of America is based on unity and equality of opportunity. As Barack Obama put it in his speech about race: "Out of many, we are truly, one"

**Chapter one: Multiculturalism and Assimilation in America**

## Introduction

This chapter deals with Assimilation and Multiculturalism, two ideologies that have always existed side by side in the United States of America. It seeks to demonstrate the hypothesis which claims that although many of the immigrant groups agree that multiculturalism is a threat to the cohesiveness and unity of the nation, it is not all the time negative. Diversity is rather enrichment for the American society as a whole.

In the first part of this chapter it will be dealt with the difference between the two positions: that of the multiculturalists and that of the assimilationists. What this part explicitly reveals is that America has succeeded to find solutions to diversity problems. As Margaret Thatcher put it, I quote: “...*there is no other nation that has so successfully combined people of different races and nations within a single culture. After all, this country is called the United States of America*”<sup>1</sup> but what are the reasons behind this success?

A study will be provided to illustrate that multiculturalism is not always negative and instead of complaining about the new comers to the country, one should see the full part of the cup! What did these immigrant groups bring to this new nation at various points in its history? Why did old immigrants complain about the arrival of new ones while they were themselves immigrants? This part will focus on the positive sides of ethnic and racial diversity in America.

To investigate better this assumption, a case study will be provided on three immigrant groups— the Polish, the Albanian, and the Arab Americans in Hamtramck. This is a minacity community located within Detroit. It is located at the centre of an area of heavy industry— factories, steel and metal processing plants, and freight yards. The community covers nearly two square miles and it is composed of thirty thousand inhabitants, it is heavily settled and the majority of the inhabitants belong to the lower working class.

The Polish has always been the heart of Greater Detroit Hamtramck Community. But there are other groups living in the community such as the Albanians and the Arabs. The most leading group economically and culturally, is the Polish<sup>2</sup>. More recently, Arabs and Albanians have inhabited the area. The Albanians have emigrated through Yugoslavia and Macedonia and many of them did not plan to settle down in the United States. It has been said that the Albanians opposed many attempts of colonization, that they are proud that their customs strengthened

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<sup>1</sup> . Vanessa J. Lawrence, ‘Journal of black studies’, Vol. 27, No.3 (Jan, 1997), pp. 318-333.

<sup>2</sup> . Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, *Coping with Cultural and Racial Diversity*, (New York, Praeger publisher, 1990), pp 40-41.

family roles, that many things are still alive like the respect for the elders, education, the guests..., etc.

The Arabs living in Hamtramck come primarily from Yemen. It has been argued that Yemen has not been modernized and that in 1976, only 10 per cent of Yemen's population could read and write. Islam is the religion of the nation and this means that much concern is devoted to Islamic family, religion and social traditions. Traditions are respected within the family, for example, men have more status than women.

Hamtramck has witnessed changes because of the arrival of the Arabs and Albanians coming and settling in the area after the Second World War. The public schools in Hamtramck encourage diversity. There are four schools; two elementary, a middle school, and a high school. In 1983, the public school population was about 2,350 students and 678 were not quite good in the English language<sup>3</sup>.

The reason for choosing these three ethnic groups living in Hamtramck is twofold: first, because they are the largest groups in the community. Second, because it is interesting to find out how they cope with diversity. This will involve the ideas of groups about (1) keeping the cultural heritage versus cultural assimilation, (2) keeping their heritage language, and (3) their attitudes towards each other.

At first, this study will be concerned with the debates over the most controversial positions; that of the multiculturalists versus the assimilationists; however, in search for more reliability, tables would be provided with their analysis, in addition to headlines, and quotations. To gather the necessary data, it will be dealt with Polish, Albanian and Arab Americans. Data were collected first from the respondents' answers to the various questions and second from the books that deals with the respective topic.

It becomes necessary now to put the right enquiry whose answers may help explain the reasons of the power as well as the unity of this country. This may be formulated as follows: how did diversity increase productivity and enhance problem-solving? How did this nation manage a society with so many differences? In fact, diversity is creating divisiveness in countries like Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and India. It leads to clashes even in developed countries like Spain, Belgium, France, and Britain. Is there any multiethnic country that can find solutions to ethnicity problems better than America?

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<sup>3</sup>.Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, *ibid*, p. 42-3

## **I. Multiculturalism and assimilation in America**

The fundamental concern that Americans have about what is or is not American comes from points reported daily in news and editorial items. Controversies about multiculturalism versus assimilation can be felt nearly in every aspect of social life in the United States of America. Probably, the intensity of these controversies becomes higher with the presence of issues like equal opportunity in community and housing, and bilingual education at school.

### **I.1. Multiculturalism**

The American character has to do with issues like: war and peace, bread and butter, and black and white. Probably the most important question of the century is what it means to be American. It is very difficult to define what it means to be an American, yet we can describe him. It is said that even the Canadians and the Mexicans are also Americans in the technical sense.

America has always been a nation of immigrants, home to a wide variety of ethnic groups who have different backgrounds, races, religions, cultures and values. What is certain about these ethnic groups, whether minorities or hyphenated Americans, is that they consider themselves as Americans and nothing else. Before getting deeper into the reality of ethnic groups in United States, it is important to draw a distinction between multiculturalism and assimilation.

The term multiculturalism is used to mean ethnic pluralism or the existence of various ethnic, racial and/or cultural subgroups in a society side by side. In a multicultural society, ethnic diversity and variation can be clearly observed. At least some members of the same ethnic groups have kept their specific markers. Multiculturalists are for the maintenance of one's own cultural heritage. Assimilationists however, are against diversity because according to them it creates divisiveness in the country. Hence, some people consider multiculturalism as the opposite of unity; for them multiculturalism is nothing but pluralistic anarchy. Still others believe that multiculturalism is something perfect for the national unity by respecting the culture and ethnicity of the other.

Kessler-Harris defines multiculturalism as follows:

*If the fight for multiculturalism is a request for inclusion..... then we need to see the struggle over multiculturalism as a tug of war over who gets to create the public culture. (1992:331).*

Multiculturalism is characterised by eclecticism which welcomes pluralism and does not accept “*artificial hierarchies that privilege some forms of cultural expression over others.*”

(Fox-Genovese 1990: 1) However, there are opponents to this trend. C. Bencomo and E. Colla indicate that multiculturalism emphasises some groups and neglects others. They wrote:

*For instance, while Zionist politics in America has been successful in voicing concerns about anti-Jewish racism (anti-Semitism), no similar discourse yet exists for addressing anti-Arab racism... and so Jesse Jackson's comments about Jews have seemed unforgivable, yet the mainstream media routinely characterises Arabs as terrorists and fanatics without provoking comments (1993:3)*

Some critics also described multiculturalism as a war against a national American culture and Identity. Rosenthal calls advocates of these trend *new segregationists*, and says that they “*are undermining the great act of political genius upon which this country rests...the concept that this nation was to be based on a variety of identities from which one new identity springs.*” (Quoted in Kessler-Harris 1992:302) A member of an appointed committee of New York assured that multiculturalism “*opens the way for the kind of ethnic strife that has divided...nations where there is no consent on a common culture.*”

Fox-Genovese claims that multiculturalism is not divisive; on the contrary it rather recognises a collective and a shared identity which came out from distinct identities of the different groups, classes and communities that constitute the American society. Americans believe that their ancestors had added something special to their cultures, religions, beliefs, traditions and different races.

Is multiculturalism a negative approach? Generally speaking, the debate over multiculturalism is of great importance, not only in the United States of America, but elsewhere also in the world. Probably it is clearer in America than elsewhere. It has been said that the United States has managed diversity and that the American people are trying to live together without problems. Some of them even attend diversity classes in order to learn how to live with each other and cope with differences. However, they sometimes disagree on matters such as which language they are going to use. They often ask questions like: Can the United States be united if ethnic groups continue to speak their own languages? English, though widely used is not the official language of the country, so why should every one in the country learn and speak this language? This point will be tackled later.

Multiculturalism is different from assimilation, first by taking in a sum of various cultures and second by acknowledging cultural characteristics which are at the heart of group making, and third by giving all the ethnic groups equal rights. Assimilation advocates the motto E

Pluribus Unum (out of many, one) while multiculturalism was founded upon the principle of “In One, many”. America is not viewed as a country where various groups melted but rather as the country which included every one, no matter how different he is. This means that multiculturalism fights discrimination based on origin, colour, and/or sex. In fact, multiculturalism favours equality between and among ethnic groups in all fields: the media, schools, work places..., etc.

Multiculturalism defines the “other” as simply distinct when trying to treat every one in the nation in the same way. Whatever their differences : sex, age, colour of skin, they are recognized by the whole community. Thus, multiculturalism is a new social contract organised by culture. It is the recognition of various entities who contributed into the making of North America. For example, the black Americans have contributed to the welfare of the country.

To sum up, multiculturalism may refer to three major points;(1) the recognition of various ethnic groups,(2) the belief that all of them deserve to be treated, valued and represented equally in the society and (3)the promotion of democratisation.

## **I.2. Assimilation**

Assimilation refers to the mixture of groups and their traditions into one culture. It also means that the groups adopt the principles of the dominant culture. Assimilation was favoured during the Great Immigration in 1900<sup>4</sup> and through the Second World War. The dominant culture in the United States is that of the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Since early colonial times America was dominated by the English, followed by the Germans, Irish, Italians, and Russians. However, not all the ethnic groups were welcomed especially the Native-born American Indians and the blacks who were excluded because they had different physical appearance. Other white Europeans who did not belong to the WASP culture were allowed to become part of one common culture and to be under one nation even if they had different origins.

Assimilation may be described as the first theory of social and cultural adjustment in the United States where it has been equated to Anglo-conformity or the absorption of immigrants of non-Anglo-Saxon origins who had to get rid of their cultural heritage and become part of the

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<sup>4</sup> Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, Op. cit, p. 25-7

American mainstream way of life, the WASP style. It was favoured by the Founding Fathers as a way to avoid clashes and problems that diversity can bring. Though it largely benefited some, other minorities rejected the idea, and preferred to keep their specific markers.

One of the theories of cultural adjustment in America is the Melting pot. The idea suggests that America is a society which can include every one, and where the best traditions would be mixed so as to form a united nation. This conception came into being right after the American Revolution and is illustrated in Crèvecoeur's description of what it meant to be an American, in his "Letters from an American Farmer". The idea of the United States as a melting pot was strongly supported by people like Ralph Waldo Emerson and F.J. Turner. Also, the English writer, of Russian-Jewish origin, Israel Zangwill (1864-1926) made the idea of the United States as a Melting Pot popular in his play; he said that various ethnic groups melt to produce a new race of Man. Their views of the melting pot will be discussed in due time.

### **I.3. America, a multiethnic society**

It is obvious that the United States of America is a heterogeneous society, home to a wide variety of ethnic groups, traditions and values. Every one in this country is speaking about ethnic and racial diversity in schools, politics, the world of work, economy....etc. Today, immigrants continue to come to America in order to achieve the American dream, i.e., to own a house in the suburbs, a car, a good job and better standards of living.

However, America was not the nation they had been promised where the roads were covered with gold. The newcomers are not all the time welcomed and they are viewed in a negative way by the native-born Americans. Some of them claim that the new comers have taken their jobs away from them, or believe that the growth in population after the arrival of the new waves of immigrant groups brought about economic problems. To sum up, every one becomes hostile, violent, suspicious, afraid, and resentful when talking about the new presence of immigrants.

The newcomers are not the only ones suffering from prejudice, violence and racism, African Americans and native-born Americans do suffer from these problems as well. What seems ambiguous is the fact that every one in the country recognises diversity as a fact of every day life and still (old) immigrants begrudge and envy the (new) comers. In other words, they have attacked those who followed the same path as them.

According to some Americans, the earlier immigrants to the nation learned the language of the nation, adopted the lifestyles of the dominant culture, worked hard and became americanised.



However the new ones came to “share their bread with them”. They believe that the new comers do not want to assimilate, nor do they want to learn English and this threatens the homogeneity and the unity of the nation. In addition, they believe that the new immigrant groups do not deserve what they achieved.

Noted historian Arthur M. Schlesinger<sup>5</sup>, has denounced “the cult of ethnicity”— a desire to keep ethnic subcultures. He referred to the hostility among the Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs in the peninsula of Balkan; he said that the situation is frightening. In America, minority actions strengthen the hostility between the native-born Americans and the various ethnic groups in the nation; for example, the insistence of some organisations like the Leagues of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). They want to keep the Spanish language and culture at the public expense, both at schools and work places. Also, some African American leaders want a slavery reparation payment to all blacks. The white see their demands as illogical.

The debates and conflicts between and among ethnic groups will always continue to exist as long as America remains a heterogeneous country. But how can we describe the American society ? Several metaphors have been used to describe the United States of America such as the Melting Pot, the Salad bowl, the pizza, the Mosaic, and the tapestry..., etc. The Melting Pot is the way in which homogeneous societies develop, in which ingredients in the pot (people of different cultures, races and religions) are combined so as to constitute a multi-ethnic society. However it has been argued that the pot did not melt every one, so what is the reality of ethnic groups in the American society? Are there any new phenomena being born? Can we say that the newcomers have no will to assimilate? Is the country of E pluribus Unum (out of many, one) becoming E Pluribus Plures (out of many, many) as Diane Ravitch<sup>6</sup>warns?

Many Americans can testify through personal experience that the phenomenon of the Melting Pot did happen, while for others it is nothing but a myth. The Melting Pot is a metaphor used to describe the American society which absorbed a wide variety of ethnic groups, traditions and values. In fact, the United States has always been a heterogeneous society at various points in the nation’s history. Immigrants to this country were pulled or pushed by various religious, political, and/or economic factors.

The French immigrant to America J. Hector St. John (Michel-Guillaume De Crevècoeur) made

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (Knoxville, TN: Whittle Communications, 1991); Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America’s Immigration Disaster* (New York: Random House, 1995)

<sup>6</sup> Diane Ravitch’s much-discussed views appeared in her article, “Multiculturalism: E Pluribus Plures”, *American Scholar* 59 (1990): 337-54.

the concept of the Melting Pot popular, he wrote:

*What then is the American, this new man? He is either a European or the descendent of a European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch whose son was married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and prosperity will one day cause great changes in the world<sup>7</sup>*

The Melting Pot phenomenon is the result of intermarriage. Crèvecoeur talked about ethnic intermarriages to assure that this phenomenon happened and is still happening. When he spoke of English, Dutch and French intermarriages, he was referring to the situation in the late eighteenth century, and he wanted to show that ethnocentrism<sup>8</sup> vanished and that there was a strange mixture of blood that is unique.

However there is a problem with Crèvecoeur's description of the Melting Pot because he did not refer to Africans and Native Americans. So can we say he was ethnocentric? There is no doubt that he was conscious of the presence of other minorities in the colonies, so why did he neglect them? May be because he did not think they are part of the mainstream culture. Consequently, Crèvecoeur's model was not precise as he excluded people of colour like the blacks, Indians..., etc. He referred only to the whites who had political power (the French, the Dutch and the English).

Although Crèvecoeur's model is not really accurate, it helped others to make the image of the United States as a Melting Pot known to people at large. Ralph Waldo Emerson<sup>9</sup> wrote in 1845:

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<sup>7</sup> Crèvecoeur's famous statement appears in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782; reprint New York., Albert and Charles Boni, 1928), 54-55. Observation about Crèvecoeur's omission of racial minorities appear in Vincent N. Parillo, *Strangers to these Shores* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 98, and in all subsequent editions; Nathan Glazer's "Is Assimilation Dead?" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 530 (1993):124.

<sup>8</sup> Ethnocentrism is centrality of culture, i. e, the assumption that one's own culture is normal and natural, and thus, the corollary is that the other's culture is weird and abnormal. Ethnocentrism consequently involves the perception of members of other cultures in terms of stereotypes.

<sup>9</sup> Emerson recorded thoughts appear in the *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Ed, Ralph H. Orth and Alfred K. Ferguson (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1971), 9:299-33.

*Well as in the old burning of the temple at Corinth, by the melting and intermixture of silver and gold and other metals, a new compound more precious than any, called Corinthian brass, was formed ; so in this continent –asylum of all nations – the energy of Irish, Swedes, Poles and Cossacks, and all the European tribes– of Africans , and of the Polynesians will construct a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature, which will be as vigorous as the new Europe when came out of the smelling pot of the Dark Ages or that which earlier emerged from Pelagic and Etruscan barbarism.(6)*

Another important supporter of the Melting Pot theory is Israel Zangwill who wrote a play in 1908 which was called the Melting Pot. He wrote:

*Ah, what a stirring and a seething-Celt and Latin, Slave and Teuton, Greek and Syrian. America is God's Crucible<sup>10</sup> , the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming...Germans, and Frenchmen, Irishmen and English, Jews and Russians, into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American!  
...the real American has not yet arrived...He will be the fusion of all races, perhaps the coming superman.<sup>11</sup>*

Zangwill did not refer clearly to the people of colour; he mentioned other non-European immigrants like the Syrians but still his description of the Melting Pot resembles that of Crèvecoeur in the sense that both of them described the American as a “white” person.

### **I.1.a. multiculturalism: a threat to the country**

It is true that the various ethnic groups are trying to live together in peace, and that the United States is trying to escape divisiveness by forming one common identity. However, when it comes to the reality of ethnic groups, one should be realistic. Hundreds of people face problems daily (see news samples that show the struggles between and among ethnic groups in the index.)

What is observed from the articles in the index is that diversity is not all the time positive. Let us first consider the negative sides of a multicultural society. The drawbacks of multiculturalism have to do with race, culture and language. In addition to other ones like attitudes, values and the way they view each other; but the first three ones are the most important. In fact, the debate about diversity is not simply a debate about keeping one's cultural

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<sup>10</sup> The Crucible: A play by American playwright Arthur Miller (1915-2005), published in 1953, which makes a striking analogy between the Salem-witch hunt and the brutal persecutions of Mc McCarthyism

heritage or language; it is about this question: who is the most powerful group? And even more importantly, who will take it over in politics, the world of work, social welfare..., etc.

The arrival of new waves of immigrants to the country every day increased the hostility and anger of the Native-Born Americans and the Black Americans toward multicultural policies. They are asking why they are coming to take our jobs away from us and even worse to share the “Apple Pie” with us. Public opinion polls conducted by the Roper Centre in 1981 and 1982 found two third of all Americans favoured a decrease in immigration<sup>12</sup>. This reaction came right after the arrival of over 200,000 Vietnamese in a period of two years. What is worth mentioning also is that anti-immigration sentiments are not limited to one group.

### **I.1.a.1. the language threat**

For more than two centuries, immigrants who spoke a language other than English constituted a threat to the American society as a whole. In 1750, Benjamin Franklin expressed worries about the spread of the German language in Pennsylvania, and George Washington wrote to John Adams in 1798 against encouraging immigration because among other things, the new comers “retain the language which they bring with them.”<sup>13</sup> What is certain is that these two men views represented other views in the nation at that time.

Lots of people disagree about which language they are going to speak. It is said that two of every three immigrants speak Spanish and hence more than eighteen million Americans five years old and over speak Spanish. Another five million speak either an Asian language or any other pacific language. The result is ‘150 languages used by about five million children’, said some education officials<sup>14</sup>.

Many complaints have been made about the spread of non-English speaking generations. For instance, Japanese American S. I. Hayakawa, a former US senator from California and former president of San Francisco State University, originated U.S English, an organisation devoted to making English the language of the nation by law. According to him, this will reduce

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<sup>11</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot Drama in four Acts* (New York Macmillan, 1921), p. 33

<sup>12</sup> The Roper Polls are reported in Rita J. Simon, “Old Minorities, New Immigrants: Aspirations, Hopes and Fears,” *the annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 530(1993):62-63.

<sup>13</sup> Franklin’s and Washington’s comments are discussed in Vincent N. Parillo, *Strangers to these shores*, 4th Ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 145, 129.

<sup>14</sup> Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, *Op. cit.*, p.15-20

the growing bilingual programs in education, government, road signs <sup>15</sup>..., etc.

Many Americans, who are annoyed with those who cannot speak English, say that every person living in this country should speak it. They believe that the bilingual programs at school will affect the process of assimilation and which is rather regarded as a threat to the cohesiveness of the country. Opponents claim that if English is spoken by every one, it will promote unity and reduce separation among ethnic groups.

### **I.1.a.2. the cultural threat**

About eighty five percent of new immigrants are Hispanics or Asians. The power of an ethnic group over another is enhanced by the size of the group, the in-group harmony, and the sub cultural models. Without the regular mixture of new immigrants, the processes of acculturation and ethno-genesis would inevitably reduce group's segregation. Gradually, group members would study English and become part of a larger society.

People from Asia and Latin America constitute a majority in the United States with their languages, cultures, differences in physical characteristics and religions. Some Americans believe that if immigration is not limited, then the American culture and society will be parted. What really makes the US society in danger is the fact that the new immigrants have also moved to suburbs. Now, even Asians are living in areas outside the city centre. Skilled professional and businessmen who are looking for better places to live, where their children can get the best kind of education, brought about great changes into a homogeneous society, often by building mosques, temples,... etc.

It is not merely the existence of various ethnic groups that creates clashes; the first-generation Americans live in the country but they rarely interact with the other ethnic groups; they rather keep close to those who belong to their group only. This means that the community is homogeneous and harmonious but it also means that it segregates other groups and hence there is a large social distance between them.

### **I.1.a.3. the racial threat**

In debates over diversity, the extremists like the Ku Klux Klan, the National Association for

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<sup>15</sup> Hayakawa's views are succinctly put in S. I. Hayakawa, "USA Needs to Have an 'Official' Language," USA Today, 11 November 1988.

the Advancement of White People (NAAWP), and the neo-Nazis talk sharply about multiculturalism, yet there are other organisations that talk freely about the subject. As a matter of fact, race is part and parcel in any controversy over multiculturalism.

The United States have overcome the problem of racism by enacting laws that promoted equality in education, jobs, election, politics,...etc. Nevertheless racism has not totally vanished yet from the country. May be it is less severe in some regions, but it does exist. One can feel it daily in a simple conversation, in the way groups treat, humiliate and keep away from each other.

The Affirmative Action is a federal program that requires employers to employ black workers and universities to seek black students. It is about policies initiated by John F. Kennedy in 1961 and carried out by his successor Lyndon B. Johnson designed to give special consideration or compensatory treatment to people who were underprivileged in the past like: African-Americans or women

Although the country has managed to integrate various national minorities, it has not managed to assimilate all the racial minorities. It has been said that the people of colour, the Africans and the Native Americans did not mix with everyone in the pot. As a matter of fact, the Americans have rarely tried to resolve a very ancient problem of racial integration; a problem which was strengthened by the new waves of immigrants from the Third World countries.

Today, even after the election of a 'black' President from African origins, Barack Obama, many Americans claim that it is nothing but a way to make obvious the idea that America is a democratic country and that every one in the country is treated equally. In fact, Black-Whites clashes continue and they can be seen clearly in the way blacks were beaten by a white group in New York's Howard Beach section. However, it is worth mentioning that this hostility does not only exist between blacks and whites but also between blacks and Hispanics, Hispanics and whites, and other groups.

Racial struggles have increased in some regions because of the arrival of racially different immigrants into localities unacquainted with their existence. When new comers arrive in the suburbs, the reaction of the inhabitants may be anger, irritation, and avoidance. Furthermore, some Americans even start to make complaints about the behaviour of their neighbours and totally oppose multiculturalism because according to them it favours one ethnic group over another.

### **I.1.b. Multiculturalism, an asset to the country**

Multiculturalism is not all the time negative, as many Americans claim, because America has always been a land of diversity, where dreams come true for millions. What some people consider a risk to the homogeneity and unity of the nation; many others believe it is an advantage to the nation. In fact, diversity has done more good to the nation than harm and therefore it should be accepted and encouraged everywhere. Any nation's power lies in its people, and America is not only a strong country but the most powerful country in the world today because of the diversity of its people. Every small member of every single group has contributed to the advancement and well being of the nation.

Today's huge and great cities, the system of transport, and the labour unions are the result of long hard working years. Ancient immigrants to the nation built roads, founded unions and developed industries. In short, they made endless contributions to the welfare of America through their jobs, businesses and purchase. However small, every ethnic group has tried to fight negative and wrong ideas about each other, and to show that although their size was growing, it is possible for them to live altogether and work hard to improve their country.

#### **I.1.b.1. the language asset**

Many people in the world are bilingual, but it is not the case for the Americans. Many Americans believe that if you can speak English, then you do not need to learn any other language. However, being monolingual(able to speak only the heritage language, but not English) increased ethnocentrism and provincialism. Instead, if non-English speaking members become bilingual, they will be more active, and they will bring enrichment to the nation at large.

If everyone in the country, especially Latinos and Asians, learned English, there would be more understanding and tolerance between ethnic groups. Many European countries have long been bilingual, but their cultures and homogeneity were not affected. Those who support bilingualism believe that it will not ruin the country.

A lot of newspaper polls and studies in California, Colorado, and elsewhere showed that 87 per cent of Hispanics think that they "must" learn English as quickly as they can<sup>16</sup>. Before, a survey by Rand Corporation concluded that 98 per cent of Latino parents in Miami believe that their children have to become proficient in English. Rodolfo de la Garza reported that most U.S.

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<sup>16</sup> . Vincent N. Parillo, *Strangers to these shores*, 4th Ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 553.

- born Latinos and Asians use English as their chief language<sup>17</sup>.

Although the Asians and the Hispanics are considered as a risk to the English language, Nathan Glazer (1993) thinks that assimilation keeps prevailing in the United States<sup>18</sup>. As the American Jewish Community puts it: “*The use of additional languages to meet the needs of language minorities does not pose a threat to America’s true common heritage and common bond— the quest for freedom and opportunity.*” The language issue and bilingualism will be dealt with later.

Cultural diversity, including language diversity was not only allowed in the United States but also promoted. In fact, using the mother tongue strengthened the sense of being for some immigrant groups like the German Americans who continued to use their languages in their schools, homes, churches, and business dealings. However, English gradually replaced the use of the German language and other languages, but may be the Spanish language will take it over the English language.

### **I.1.b.2. the culture asset**

The United States of America is a country that contains a large variety of subcultures. Like the Germans just referred to in the above passages, the native-born Americans believe that by keeping their heritage cultures, these ethnic groups threaten the mainstream culture.

Ethnic subcultures do not weaken the dominant culture for the United States has always contained various subcultures. Theodore Roosevelt once said “*there is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism*”<sup>19</sup>. He spoke of the same worries of insurrection of American culture that Schlesinger has called the “disuniting of America”.

When immigrants come to settle down in the United States they abandoned their lands, families and friends to live in a country where they wish to better their standards of living. They come to be part of the “whole”, not to keep away from the rest. Many Americans believe that the absorption of various ethnic groups into the mainstream culture will take a long time, while

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<sup>17</sup>. The Studies about the Latino Parental attitudes about English are from English as the Official Language, a position paper issued in 1987 by the American Jewish Committee, New York. Rodolfo de la Garza related the primary usage of English among second-generation Asians and Latinos in Latino Voices: Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban Perspectives on American Politics (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992).

<sup>18</sup>. Nathan Glazer, Is Assimilation Dead? The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 530(1993):123.

<sup>19</sup>. Vincent N. Parillo, *Strangers to these Shores*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. (New York: Macmillan,, 1994), 553.



others claim that the phenomenon of amalgamation happens and is still happening. The United States, by being a multicultural society, is enhanced by the various kinds of architecture, arts, creative works, cuisine, music, literature, and other cultural contributions made by various ethnic groups.

### **I.1.b.3. the racial asset**

It is very difficult to talk about race in the United States without referring to the long history of hostility between blacks and whites; a history of suffering, exploitation and violence. As it has been mentioned in the above passages even after the election of a “black” president, many people say that racism still exists. This problem could not be completely resolved because of two reasons: first, because there is always this categorization of Whites versus Non-Whites, and, second, because the American people always use “other” versus the “we”. This has brought about social distance, deprivation, and misery.

Nevertheless, the intensity of racism is not the same; today African Americans are mayors of major cities and members of Congress and they hold offices in all levels of the government—local, state and, national. In 1991, Clarence Thomas was the second African American to become a Supreme Court justice. President George Walker Bush chose Condolezza Rice as his national secretary of state. These two very powerful and important positions were assigned to people of colour. There are many famous sport heroes like Michael Jordan, Will Smith, Oprah and others. There are also university professors, medical doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and reporters.

Americans believe that if they can overcome the problem of racial discrimination, they will pass a big divisive problem that has long broken up this nation. This was Martin Luther king Junior’s dream, that one day his children would be judged by the content of their character and not the colour of their skin<sup>20</sup>.

Is multiculturalism a menace to the American society? Debates continue between the multiculturalists and the assimilationists but no one will take it over the other for both of them have always existed side by side in one nation. The United States will be always a land of hope, a land for people from everywhere with various cultures and traditions. Multiculturalism is no longer viewed as a risk to the solidarity of the country.

Social observers such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Gunnar Myrdal, Andrew Hacker and others believe that the distinct entities are not due to multiculturalism but to discrimination in education, jobs..., etc. They claim that only by good education, equality and tolerance racial amalgamation will improve. Multiculturalism is not the enemy, but discrimination is.

## **II. Ethnic immigrant groups in Hamtramck: Polish, Albanian and Arab Americans**

This study in Hamtramck deals with the three largest groups in the community—the Polish, the Albanian, and the Arab Americans. It also scrutinizes their opinions about (1) keeping ones' cultures versus assimilation, (2) keeping their heritage language or not, (3) their perception of their own group vis-à-vis other groups in the community.

### **II.1. Polish Americans**

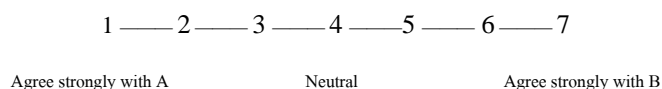
The prominent question that almost all the ethnic groups ask is: should we give up our specific markers when we arrive in the United States? Or should we keep our heritage cultures as much as we can? Again, the question is not easy to answer simply because we are not dealing with one ethnic group but with hundreds, and when it comes to speak about the human attitudes, nature and values, nothing is certain and so any generalization would be misleading.

When dealing with Polish Americans, respondents were asked the following questions: Do you believe that cultural and racial minority groups should give up their traditional ways of life and take on the American way of life? Or should they maintain their traditional ways of life as much as possible when they come to America? where do you stand in this debate?

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<sup>20</sup> .Martin Luther King Jr's famous "I have a dream" speech was delivered on August 28, 1963, during the march on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. His actual words were, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character".

Alternative A	Alternative B
Cultural and racial minority groups should give up their traditional ways of life and take on the American way of life.	Cultural and racial minority groups should maintain their ways of life as much as possible when they come to America.



A general picture clearly indicated in Figure 3.1 shows that none of the three groups prefers assimilation, which is really surprising; they rather put themselves toward multiculturalism between 5.68 and 6.69 while 4 is the neutral mid point. The Polish American group is particularly interesting in their own view, they favour the multiculturalism option<sup>21</sup>.

The Polish Americans believe that with assimilation, America loses the different things that various groups can bring, and that people in a way or another will be “stolen” their identity and by integrating, they tend to behave with hostility toward others. Hence, they do not believe in the idea that assimilation provides all ethnic groups with equality and understanding through a common language and culture.

However, they agree with multiculturalism; they consider multiculturalism as enrichment to the nation because of the presence of different cultures and races. Consequently, according to them people would be able to express their identity and this will help them become open-minded and tolerant with other cultures. In addition, there is no argument which proves that multiculturalism will divide the nation; the only reality available about multiculturalism is that it emphasises the idea that there are various languages and cultural trends.

### **II.1.a. the maintenance of the heritage culture and language**

If a parental group like the Polish favours a multicultural ideology, it is important to understand their conception of multiculturalism and to what extent should an ethnic group keep its heritage culture and language?

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<sup>21</sup> Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, *Coping with Cultural and Racial Diversity*, (New York, Praeger publisher, 1990), pp 48-9

### **II.1.a.1. Cultures and traditions**

Polish Americans do not believe that cultures and traditions which are not American should disappear, but they agree that ethnic groups should maintain their own styles of food, dress, songs, and dances. Likewise, they believe that they should also keep their cultural values and learn about the history and the traditions of their home countries (see Table 3.2)

### **II.1.a.2. the heritage language**

Another question was raised about to what extent the heritage language should be used and maintained. Should the rate of exposure to other languages be the same as English in the school system? The Polish agree that ethnic groups' native languages could be used for festival days, cultural songs, traditional stories, prayers and religious services. Also, they think that the heritage languages may be used by older family members speaking inside the family<sup>22</sup>.

To sum up, we may say that the Polish respondents put forward a reasonable agreement, yet when they were asked about the rate of exposure—hours devoted to the teaching of the heritage languages and cultures, they did not provide a clear answer and preferred to be neutral (see Table 3.3)

When the Polish respondents were asked the following question: to what extent should an ethnic group maintain its heritage language and culture? They claimed that they prefer to keep the heritage culture and language especially within the family members and at home but not in public life. They even agree that their heritage language and culture may be taught in public schools. According to them, teaching the heritage language and culture would have a positive impact: first, it would enhance the ethnic pride. Second, it would enable the children who are not quite talented in the learning of the English language, to compete with the Anglo-phone students in other subjects such as maths, science, or social studies. However, they have not thought of the pedagogical results; they simply wish to keep their heritage language alive.

### **II.1.b. the maintenance of the heritage language and its use:**

#### **The alternative: the native language, English, or bilingualism**

Language is the most important component of multiculturalism. For the language of

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<sup>22</sup> Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, *ibid*, p. 50-51

minority groups, the school plays a very important role. It can help the children whose mother tongue is other than English to learn English. It can strengthen or weaken the use of the mother tongue, and so it can limit the chance of being totally bilingual. For the Anglo-phones, the school chooses whether or not they should learn other languages and if the language being learned is an international language or simply a language of an ethnic group.

When the Polish parents were asked whether they preferred their daughter or son to be fluent in English, in the mother language, or bilingual, they answered that a son or a daughter who speaks Polish only is seen as unlikely to be successful. Consequently, the Polish parents prefer their child to be either bilingual or master the English language because according to them, they would be more accepted in the States. They would behave freely with others, instead of being isolated, or considered as second-class citizens which would be the case if they can speak only Polish (see. Table 3.4)

Concerning the very important issues like education, jobs and so on, the Polish parents agree that children who are bilingual or speak English fluently are regarded as more intelligent, as more likely to achieve top grades at school, and obviously to having better chances to obtain certain positions. This is understandable but can we say that a Polish child who is bilingual will be more successful than a Polish child speaking only English? The answer is “yes”; of course, the Polish-English bilingual children are more likely to succeed in their lives, to bring pride and respect to their ethnic groups.

### **II.1.c. the Attitudes of the Polish toward other ethnic groups**

The various ethnic groups live in a harmonious society referred to as the United States of America. The pro-assimilationists claim that if the focus is on the common characteristics of ethnic groups rather than on the cultural and linguistic variations, the atmosphere would also be harmonious. Hence, ethnic groups may keep their unique features while adopting some features of the host culture. How much intergroup harmony is there in Hamtramck where the three ethnic groups—the Polish, the Albanians, and the Arab Americans have chosen to keep their heritage cultures?

According to the statistics, the Polish American respondents have a strong positive image of their own group. They believe their group to be more dependable, cleverer and more faithful than any other group in the community. However, this may be explained as own-group pride. Nevertheless, they favour other groups except the black Americans because they consider them

lazier than the other ethnic groups, and they view the Albanians as cruel and violent. Still blacks are rather more agreeable compared to the Arabs or Albanians. In general, the Polish have no prejudice about a single group, but they think that other ethnic groups are less desirable.

But how does an ethnic group tend to see other groups? Researches have shown that people are attracted to those who are like them rather than to those who are different. As it is already mentioned, the Polish have a positive view of their own group and are more or less sympathetic towards other groups, but in what way are they viewed by other ethnic groups in the community of Hamtramck? The problem is that not all the ethnic groups have positive attitudes like the Polish. The blacks, for instance, view themselves as hard-working, clever and straight. At the same time, black Americans believe that the Polish Americans are unfairly treated. In addition, the Polish are believed to be very different from the blacks and somewhat less American than them while the blacks think that they have a long history in America<sup>23</sup>.

#### **II.1.d. Social distance**

Concerning the social distance, the three ethnic groups were asked some questions like whether they accept the intermarriage idea and whether they accept to have neighbours and colleagues at work from different backgrounds. All the groups' answers are in Table 3.6.

If we analyse table 3.6, we observe that the Polish Americans have no problem to have neighbours or co-workers from other groups, but they prefer them to be neighbours than close friends. The mixture between ethnic groups contributed in a positive way during the period of the Civil Right movement<sup>24</sup> of the 1960's in America. Detroit was involved in racial rebellion. Consequently, when asked if they accepted neighbours from other groups, the Polish respondents said that they were afraid about the safety and the effects that various ethnic groups could bring into the property values.

What is really important to investigate is to what extent can one accept a member of another ethnic group into his/her family through marriage?

The Polish claimed that they do not accept this; they do not like their partner in marriage to be from Albanian or Arabic origins and they do not like blacks at all. Blacks receive for

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<sup>23</sup> Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, Op. cit, p. 55-6

<sup>24</sup>The Civil Right Movement : the series of events and actions, in the 1950's and the 1960's, whose purpose was to overthrow the unjust measures of segregation and discrimination against African-Americans, measures established as a system of governance and ethnic relations in the United States since the end of the Civil War. The leading figures of this movement were mainly African-American, among whom Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and W. E. B. Du Bois were the most outstanding.

marriage, a vote of (M=2.16) and neighbours (M=3.85), friendship receive more or less better ratings (M=4.10), co-worker (M=4.84), and citizen (M= 5.39). Blacks are viewed in a particular way; they are accepted as far as they respect the laws; not only blacks actually all ethnic groups should behave according to the statement “should keep their place”.( see, Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, p.57-8)

## **II.2. the Albanian American perspective**

In Hamtramck, the Albanians try to make a place in the society. It has been estimated that they represent 80.000 in the whole United States. As a matter of fact, Albania is not quite known for most Americans. In addition, other ethnic groups are perplexed about their goals and aims<sup>25</sup>.

### **II.2.a. the maintenance of culture versus assimilation**

As it is clearly indicated in Figure 3.1, the Albanian Americans are for the maintenance of the heritage culture and language. According to what is revealed in table 3.1, the Albanian regard multiculturalism as a way for ethnic groups to keep the best that every ethnic group can provide the nation with. In addition, they think that multiculturalism allows various ethnic groups to keep their specific markers and so they preserve their identity. However, many ethnic groups believe that multiculturalism brings about division in the country. Yet, the Albanians believe that multiculturalism brings various languages to the country, whereas if all the ethnic groups assimilated, this would lead to hostility and destruction of various identities. Despite the fact that the Albanians favour multiculturalism rather than assimilation, they admit that there are some plus points in assimilating—like unity through common values, languages and laws.

### **II.2.b. the maintenance of the heritage language and its use: the alternative: the native language, English, or bilingualism**

Like the Polish, the Albanian Americans were also asked to choose whether they prefer their children to be fluent in Albanian only, fluent in both English and Albanian or in English only. The Albanian parents said that if their children speak only Albanian, they will not be able to function in all situations, and they would be less successful than those who are bilingual or can speak English fluently. (Their reactions are all indicated in table 3.1)<sup>26</sup>.

On a social level, the children who can speak only their mother tongue and in this case

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<sup>25</sup> Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, Op. cit, p. 58-74

<sup>26</sup> Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, Op. cit, p 60-6

Albanian, are perceived as less intelligent and unable to interact with other groups easily. In addition, the monolinguals are not likely to improve their families' situations and they may even develop a kind of resentment towards other ethnic groups; they will not have any self-confidence, nor would they be considered as part of the nation.

On the contrary, being able to speak English fluently is better than speaking Albanian only, but it is not the best alternative. It is true that if the Albanian children master the English language, it will help them a lot not only to communicate but also to get a good job later and even to have close friends and/or partners from other groups; still the Albanians want their children to be bilingual, i. e, fluent in both Albanian and English as well. Their choice of course is based on several beliefs; first, the Albanians believe that their children would become smarter, achieve better results at school and this will enable them to have better professions in the future. Second, by being bilingual, the Albanian children will not be treated as second-class citizens, but they would rather feel more comfortable, relaxed, and self-proud, and hence they can better their status in the community.

In short, the alternative of bilingualism is preferred by the Albanians more than the Polish. It is worth mentioning here that what is particular about the Albanians' responses is that bilingualism keeps bonds with the heritage culture and language, helps children do well in schools and also get better job opportunities in the future.

### **II.2.c. Albanians' attitudes towards other ethnic groups**

As clearly stated in table 3.5, the Albanian Americans regard themselves as the most preferable, dependable and assiduous, but they do not have the same image of other ethnic groups. They do not like the black Americans at all especially when it comes to matters concerned with intelligence, hostility, violence and honesty. The Albanians believe that the Polish are more or less like them, the Arabs as so only and the blacks as quite distinct from them.

### **II.2.d. Social distance**

The Albanians believe that it is improbable to establish positive relations with the Arabs or Blacks. As we can observe in table 3.6, the Albanians reject the Arabs and Blacks and they do not accept them into their families through marriage, but they say that they can have Arabs or blacks as friends, neighbours and colleagues at work. Nevertheless, they keep a distance between them when it comes to family relationships.



### **II.3. the Arabs**

The Arab respondents in Hamtramck come mostly from Yemen; they are recent immigrants who are contributing to the culture, racial diversity and linguistic form of the community. Because the Yemen Arab group in Hamtramck is small, the survey would be extended to other regions situated in the borders of Hamtramck–Ann Arbor; a detached community, nearly one hour’s drive from Hamtramck. Parents from this area are similar in status to those living in Hamtramck.

#### **II.3.a. the maintenance of culture versus assimilation**

As it is stated in figure 3.1, although the three ethnic groups in Hamtramck like better multiculturalism, the Arab Americans are the most faithful to the ideology. If we observe their responses in table 3.1, the Arabs believe that ethnic groups should keep their heritage languages, cultures and so identity to avoid hostility among groups. They do not agree that if they assimilate, they help America become unified or that by having a common language, they would be no misunderstanding in the country.

The Arab Americans prefer multiculturalism rather than assimilation because they believe that the nation can benefit from the variety of races, cultures, traditions and values. However, this does not mean that there would be no clashes or misunderstandings. In fact, troubles and conflicts may occur even within the members of the same ethnic group.

#### **II.3.b. the maintenance of the heritage language and its use:**

##### **The alternative: the native language, English, or bilingualism:**

There is no doubt that the Arab Americans prefer multiculturalism over assimilation but to what extent do the Arab Americans believe that ethnic groups should reserve their cultural heritage and languages? The results are shown in table 3.2 and 3.3. Like the Polish and Albanians, the Arabs believe that their heritage language should be used at home. However, the Arabs want more than that; they prefer their language to be used in other places apart from the house—in the community and public schools. They believe that other groups should be able to use the native language not only at home but also in the community. Consequently, the Arabs want to retain their own language, culture and traditions but they also want the other groups to preserve theirs.

The Arabs in general are fluent in their native language but they showed a big interest

towards English. But which alternative would be the best for them? Do they want their children to master Arabic only, master Standard English only or become bilingual? The Arab Americans, like the Albanians believe that their children will not achieve much if they are able to speak Arabic only. They think that they will remain indifferent, and hence feel strange and alien in their community and in America as a whole. Furthermore, they will not obtain the best jobs<sup>27</sup>.

### **II.3.c. Arabs' attitudes towards other ethnic groups**

The Arab-Americans in Hamtramck are worried about their image and identity as well. Unlike the Albanians, of who little is known to the other ethnic groups, the Arab Americans' image is debatable because of what is said in the mass media. This phenomenon has been referred to as 'Arab-blushing'; which means that the Arabs are criticized strongly.

As it is revealed in table 3.5, the Arab sample is almost similar to that of the Albanian one, with more ethnocentrism. Being Arabs, they try to provide a positive image of themselves, but they do not like to have neighbours or friends from other groups. Besides, they also provide a negative image about the Black Americans.

### **II.3.d. Social distance**

What we can deduce from results presented in table 3.6 is that the Arab Americans are ethnocentric. This is may be due to the fact that because the other ethnic groups keep the Arabs at a distance from them that they react this way. It is clear that every ethnic group which is different from them is believed to be abnormal and deviant (see ethnocentrism).

## **III. Cross-group Comparison**

After the comparison between the three groups in Hamtramck, it is clear that ethnocentrism exists in this area as well as division and social distance. Another feature that the three groups share is that they are for the maintenance of the heritage culture and language. This will lead us to ask the following question; do they live in harmony? The answer is obviously "no" because there are daily intergroup' tensions especially with the new immigrants to the nation but it has been said that through time most of them are accepted and hence become part of one nation. From the multicultural perspective, the multiculturalists agree that the problems exist between ethnic groups and that they can be reduced only if there is a policy allowing each of them to keep its cultural identity while still be part of a common identity.

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<sup>27</sup> Op. cit, p. 66-71

## conclusion

So far in this chapter, a hypothesis was put forward which claims that diversity enhanced problem-solving and increased productivity. In this chapter, it has been dealt with two opposing views: that of the assimilationists and that of the Multiculturalists, in addition to a study of an area called Hamtramck which is located in Detroit. This study was accomplished mainly to show how the three ethnic groups (The Polish, the Albanians and the Arabs) co-exist together, how they view each other, and what they think of issues such as bilingualism, multiculturalism and assimilation.

Earlier in this chapter, an argumentation was put forward that ethnic and racial diversity in the United States is enrichment to the country rather than an impediment. As a matter of fact, the power of America has always been in its people— they have contributed into the making of the most powerful nation today and their involvement was in all fields: literature, sport, music and Arts. Many people today dream to move to the States.

Perhaps in the next fifty years, the influx of the various immigrant groups coming especially from developed countries will stop because the world is changing rapidly. It is probable that developed countries will help developing ones to improve their citizens' standards of living, and of course, it is the developed countries which are going to benefit at the end by cutting down the flood of immigrants coming from developing countries.

As we have seen in the case study which was done on three ethnic groups living in Hamtramck, in Detroit; most of them are ethnocentric— believing that ones own group is the best, and they do not prefer to have friends, neighbours or colleagues from other groups especially the blacks and the Arabs.

It is true that those who belonged to non- Anglo American origins especially those who did not assimilate are not quite welcomed. Being aware of the variety of races, traditions and values in the States has brought about understanding and unity and this makes the United States of America a super power, taking up people from all parts of the world.

Probably, the best metaphor to describe the United States of America today then is the Mosaic because it is helpful and more precise than the Melting Pot. This theory is also known as the Salad Bowl, Cultural Pluralism or multiculturalism, which emphasises the idea that America is strengthened by diversity. It views America as a “*multiplicity in unity, an orchestration of mankind*” (Horace M. Kallen, 1915). America as a mosaic of cultures involves giving and taking

and more importantly, the sharing of and the mutual respect for ideas, customs and values as if the whole world is summarized in one nation or as Ben Wattenberg put it “the first universal nation”.

To sum up, we can say that multiculturalism is not a recent phenomenon but an old one which continues to exist and this means that it enhanced America. Furthermore, we can say that diversity contributed to the welfare of this nation in all levels especially after the Second World War and that is the main concern of the second chapter.

**Chapter two: Economy, Society and Culture in Post-war II  
America**

## **Introduction**

This chapter will basically deal with the post-war American society, economy and culture because during this period America witnessed a tremendous economic growth. The purpose of this chapter is to find out how the participation of America in World War II impacted the American economy in a short term. All the inventions made the period between 1940 and 1960 a period of progress in the history of America. The aim of this chapter is to find out what makes the United States of America a world super power.

In the post-industrial society, not only could the skilled but also the unskilled and the semi-skilled new comers better their standards of living. New kinds of jobs were introduced in different fields such as the service sector but unfortunately many of these jobs were temporary and low-paying. The highly skilled immigrants were more successful than the unskilled or the semi-skilled ones. In addition, their salaries enabled them to live in good regions.

Today, most of the suburbs in America have a racial and cultural diversity which was once restricted. It becomes a fact of the American daily life, and it is not particular to some regions. Some areas certainly receive more immigrants than other regions but there is no American state which is completely homogeneous.

People of different ages, interests and experiences consider themselves as unique; this was the tendency in which Americans viewed themselves after World War II. In addition, the population rate increased after the baby boom, but this period was also shaped by what happened in the Depression years. The post-war years witnessed a lot of changes like variable sexual practices, the mass media, mobility, and other political changes but all these transformations were not new. However, with all the everlasting past problems, post-war II years appeared to achieve American hopes and ideals like the American dream.

Generation-gap problems, race tensions and other problems were just ready to be resolved. The economy no more witnessed upturns and downturns. Liberation from customary practices in culture and social life became a reality. Epidemics and the illnesses of poverty and malnutrition vanished. Freedom, material comfort and technological advancement all flourished and spread optimism in the country.

The American life styles changed quickly in the years that followed World War two. The family structure changed, too, the collapse of control and the influence of advertising and the mass media, the toleration for more sexual practices, testing in the use of drugs. Probably the

most important change was in the attitudes of women, blacks and other minorities who started claiming for their own rights. Their demands were accepted by the society, permitting some black Americans to become part of the middle strata of jobs. As far as women were concerned, they were given the same payment as men doing the same jobs. All these issues will be tackled in due time.

## Post-war American economy

After World War Two saved the nation from the great depression, America enjoyed a tremendous economic growth. There were downturns in 1949-1950, 1953-1954, 1957-1958, and 1960-1961. However, none of these slumps lasted for a long time or had deep effects. The immediate after-war era witnessed an increase in prices. In addition, the national product and income augmented; gross national product was approximately \$ 101 billion in 1940, \$ 285 billion in 1950 and \$ 503 billion in 1960. Per capita<sup>28</sup> income rose 146 per cent between 1940 and 1950 and another 48 per cent between 1950 and 1960<sup>29</sup>.

Many industries witnessed extra ordinary prosperity; one of these was the aircraft industry. In the mid 1930's, the United States had had about five hundred planes in commercial use. The "China Clippers"<sup>30</sup>, the Pan-American airways flourished in 1935 and became the pioneer in carrying travellers across the Pacific. The number of travellers augmented to 17,000,000 in 1950 and more than 62,000,000 in 1960. Airlines changed from propeller driven<sup>31</sup> to jet-prop aircraft, then to all-jet planes which were supersonic and that could transport two hundred passengers on the same plane. By 1960, the aircraft industry which is one of the manufacturing industries, turned out to be the second greater company of labour. Its position in the economy became as superior as inspiring as that of the car industry.

Another flourishing field was that of the electronics. The electron vacuum tube, developed by Lee De Forest, in 1906, had primarily been used in radio. After the war, the electronics industry made aircraft communication pieces of equipment, radar, missile guidance system, and progressively developed business machines. The most important of these equipments was the computer which was able to solve any kind of equations, and even to computerize industrial machines and other industrial plants. In addition, the industry made bigger its original base. In 1941, commercial TV broadcasting started in New York, and later, many TV sets were sold. There were one million TV used by 1949, ten million by 1951, and about sixty million by 1960. This shows that there was at least one TV set in every house. Meanwhile, there was a quick advancement in sound reproduction like the long-playing record and the stereophonic one. By

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<sup>28</sup>Per capita (from Latin): for each person.

<sup>29</sup> John W. Caughey and Ernest R. May, A History of the United States, Mc Nally Company, 1964, pp 704-705

<sup>30</sup>China Clippers: a two-engine hydroplanes

<sup>31</sup> . Propeller driven: contain a device with two or more blades that cause aircraft to move forward



the end of the 1950's, the electronics industry was as important as that of the steel industry in what concerns the numbers of workers and the value of product<sup>32</sup>.

Another vital industry was the plastic industry. Much of the essential research had been done in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The production of plastic was not as popular as in the post- World War II era. By 1960, industry was turning out about four pounds of plastic products a year for every man, woman and child in America.

New industries were not the only reason for the economic expansion. The car industry grew more than in the 1920's. Consequently, the petroleum industry also grew. Natural gas output increased ten folds between 1940 and 1960, and the importance of gas used by people increased from under \$600 million to more than \$6 billion. The output and incomes of the electric power industry doubled between 1950 and 1960. The same is true for the sales of the electrical pieces of equipment. According to some figures collected by the Commerce Department, almost all the industries were enjoying a tremendous growth that the country has never experienced before.

Part of the industrial boom was fed by the government defence spending. In each year this expenses reached nearly one out of ten of the gross national product. The aircraft industry relied mostly on government contracts. Because no one knew the real reasons behind series of development and downturns, no one could assume that the entire progress of the period was merely a role of a quasi-war situation. Some economists claimed that bringing back peace will destroy the economy. However, other believed that the economic growth and development could be kept if the government used the money to make peace rather than war.

"No body's job is safe" remarked a woman sales clerk in Hollywood classic movies in 1946, *The Best Years of Our Lives*. With the return of twelve million soldiers and the loss of ten million jobs during the war time, the American people feared another era of "Great Depression" like the one in the 1930's. Instead, the American economy flourished and witnessed a boom in production and productivity. Profits had been enlarged and hence personal income rose. By 1955, the six per cent of the world population living in America corresponded to two third of the world manufactured items for consumption. In 1965, the average American income per a year was 50 per cent higher than in 1929. Although post-war good conditions spread quickly in the American society, there were some social groups which were still suffering from some problems

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<sup>32</sup> John W. Caughey and Ernest R. May, *ibid*, pp 704-705

like poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, it has been said that this huge economic growth resulted in a loss of values which lead to tensions for the next generations<sup>33</sup>.

Because of the decline in the demand for war production in 1944, Donald Nelson, head of the War Production Board (WPB)<sup>34</sup>, suggested that small business produces peace products instead of war productions whereas larger businesses may keep producing goods for the military needs. But corporate leaders refused this suggestion because they feared that small business would win advantages in the conversion to civilian production. Military officials, who wanted an increase in war production, also defended the most important war contractors. Consequently, the wartime expansion of big businesses was protected.

Cooperation between the Federal government and big businesses gave a clear image of a post-war economy. The (WPB) put forward some wartime acts in 1945 without paying much attention to the problems of small businesses. This unexpected end of government control over the lack of resources suited best the larger businesses, which took the majority of these materials. As a result, many small businesses were sold to bigger ones because they could not obtain basic materials. Also, big businesses benefited from the Washington generous change in the prices of plants and materials at a small amount of money. Such practices show that the big businesses would continue to monopolize the economy. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reported that in 1947, 2,450 self-governing mining businesses vanished since 1940. The (FTC) stated that the greatest dramatic challenge to the American theory of competitive enterprise was the concentrated economic power. Consequently, a small business committee was created in the 1950's and small business administration emerged in 1953.

The lack of government check over businesses brought about problems like consumer shortages. Since businesses benefited from the high prices of products such as gowns instead of housedresses—producers manufactured expensive goods instead of cheap ones. This scarcity in necessary goods like clothing resulted in an increase in the costs and also the illegitimate market. Builders benefited from the high prices of houses especially because there was a lack in housing. As a matter of fact, because of the lack in products, prices increased and the black market

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<sup>33</sup>Horowitz Carroll Lee, *On the Edge, a History of America Since World War II*, WEST PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1989, p.46

<sup>34</sup> War Production Board or WPB, was created by Roosevelt and it is a body set production goals and priorities for the allocation of resources

remained a major political issue in the elections of the 1946; but the consumption, as it is indicated in index 1-1, rose 30 per cent from 1946 to 1948<sup>35</sup>.

The federal government also helped the big business in directing veterans' advantages under the "GI Bills of Rights", which Congress passed in 1944. The Act offered for joblessness insurance (\$20 a week for one year), life insurance, and home credit insurance and learning scholarships. But when only 1/15 of the first one and half a million veterans decided to keep on GI life insurance, the armed forces united with commercial life insurance businesses to start a promotion campaign to oppose the movement. It has been argued that life insurance was one of the biggest businesses in the post-war years. In the period between (1950-1960) trades of individual policies rose by over 200. The organization of GI home credits also profited from private industry. By 1947, more than one million soldiers benefited from government-insured home credits and this helped people possess their own houses without the usual own-payments.

The veterans also benefited from government-educational scholarships. Between 1945 and 1950, more than two million veterans enrolled in universities. Others returned to high schools and professional training programs. In 1952, the federal government devoted about \$13.5 billion for the education of veterans. The great flood of soldiers had its positive sides like the opening of campuses and evening learning. By guaranteeing tuition bills, federal budgets increased the growth of university circles and founded a model for next support of education.

### **I.1. Economy based on corporation**

Several Americans worried about other downturns like those during the Depression period. However, amassed reserves during the war and the purchase of long-lasting products helped solve these worries. Industry also made huge profits by exporting to war-torn Europe. When the demand for long-lasting products decreased in 1949, leading to a considerable downturn, expanding expenses for housing, supported by government credit insurance, reduced the recession. Other following downturns in 1954 and 1958 evoked the same government support to the lodging business<sup>36</sup>.

Government expenses for the armed forces' use increased the post-war boom. Despite the fact that both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower tried to organize the military financial plans, the "Cold War" with the Soviet Union required enormous military appropriations. During the

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<sup>35</sup> Horowitz Carroll Lee, *ibid*, p.43

<sup>36</sup> Horowitz Carroll Lee, *Op.cit*, p.53

Korean War (1950-1951), for instance, the spending grew dramatically from \$ 14 billion to \$ 34 billion and more than \$ 50 billion by the end of the war. Later, armed forces' spending symbolized more than 13 percent of the mass national product, whereas the charges of other activities that had to do with the armed forces increased the number to 21 percent. Consequently, joblessness decreased to 1.8 percent in 1953, with over one million inactive employees. Huge sums of money devoted to military purposes remained the main constituent of the post-war economy. During the Eisenhower Administration, the government expenses represented over \$ 350 billion on security, and 77 percent of the whole fund went to other military purposes.

In his farewell in 1961, Eisenhower cautioned about the improvement of a "military industrial complex". He said: "*We have been compelled to create a permanent weapons industry of vast proportions... we annually spend on military security alone more than the net income of the United States corporations*". Government treaties with businesses related to the war clarified an indivisible relation between armed forces' awareness and businesses based on corporation.

The federal government also sustained technological advance and industrial growth by countersigning investigation and programs of progress. In the period between 1950 and 1959, the government spending for "Research & Development" reached \$12 billion, with assistance for university research at a fee of \$300 million a year. The plane industry, one of the time biggest industries, took the majority of its business from military organizations. The aircraft industry witnessed a tremendous economic growth with 1.25 million employees. Part of the government spending went to another industry, that of the electronics. The invention of the transistor in 1948 and the introduction of the computer in the market in 1951 fuelled 15 percent yearly development in electronics, allowing it to be the fifth biggest industry by 1960. Most of the profits derived from electronics went to the federal government to cover the military purposes.

When the Soviet Union surprised the world with the first man-made earth satellite, "Sputnik"<sup>37</sup>, in 1957, public pressure asked for more government aid and attention to research and development. Congress formed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1958 to manage the national space program, while the Defence Department worked in secret on missiles and satellites. The spending of the government for Research and Development (R&D) leaped from \$ 6.2 billion in 1955 to \$ 14.3 billion in 1961. This great attention and support to R&D shows the eagerness of America to take the lead in every thing: in science and technology, business, electronics, nuclear weapons and in space. Here it is possible to answer the question:

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<sup>37</sup> . Horowitz Carroll Lee, Op.cit, p. 54

what makes America a world super power? The answer is that immigrants contributed in a positive way. In 1959, NASA exposed to the American public a plan for human space flight, namely referred to as Project Mercury. However, in the international “space race”, the Russian rocketry was victorious.

**Research and Development, 1955-1960**  
**(Current dollars in billions)<sup>38</sup>**

year	Total	Defense and Space-related
1955	\$ 6.2 b	\$ 3.0 b
1960	\$13.5 b	\$ 7.4 b

Early Soviet satellites weight was worth thousands of pounds and even took a dog as cargo; however, the first successful American start on, was in early 1958 with the ‘ Amy Explorer’, which was called by the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev the “grapefruit”. In the decade that came after, electronic efficiency brought to the United States dominance in space hard exertion.

The generous government assistance for the oil production can also be justified by the American military dominance. The national interest relied on keeping US oil while making use of other nations’ oil, basically from the Middle East countries like Saudi Arabia and this is another field where America has sought primacy and strength. It has been argued that the United States of America possesses about ¾ of the world’s oil. This shows the desire of this nation to monopolize the petroleum industry as well as other fields like Electronics, Science and technology, the armed forces, the nuclear weapons, and the aircraft industry.

**I.2. Labour Unions and economic prosperity**

Although America emerged from the war very strong, many Americans were jobless. Frightened by another downturn like the one of 1929, Congress enacted the Employment Act of 1946, an exceptional assessment that obliged the federal government to take full advantage of employment through intervention in the economy. The law also formed a Council of Economic

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<sup>38</sup> Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States.

Advisers to be of assistance for the President. However, both Eisenhower and Truman refused to open jobs in the government to lessen the effects of unemployment in the country.

Apart from joblessness, there was a real threat to the national economy: prices' increase. The workers responded to the inflation by organising strikes and walkout. Consequently, the government increased the workers salaries and adjusted the prices. What is noticed here is that, unlike some countries, America has fought some domestic problems which are both social and economic like inflation and unemployment. This does not mean however that now it does not suffer from these problems, may be currently America is going through the worse economic crisis in its history; but after World War Two, the economic stability was restored to the nation.

Labour-business relations took new kinds under the Taft-Harley Act<sup>39</sup> of 1947. In order to protect the people from labour-management disagreements, the Act permitted the government to look for a restriction against strikes and offered a period of sixty day tranquillity and peace. During this period, the federal negotiators were trying to resolve the disputes. Taft-Harley forbade "closed" shops (which obliged managers to take on only union members) but allowed "union" shops (in which workers are obliged to join a union after being employed).

Planned labour also experienced denial of the uncontrolled parts of the work force. During the Second World War, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) combated with racist unions so that the blacks would be accepted, but not all the whites had been convinced to change their guiding principles. Women also were denied by several unions because they had been considered as a danger to men's jobs. As an alternative, competitor the American Federation of Labour (AFL) and Congress Industrial Organization (CIO)<sup>40</sup> unions discussed matters and competed for membership. The majority of professional employees had no unions. Consequently, union membership, which had increased considerably,

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<sup>39</sup> The Taft-Hartley Act was passed over the veto of Harry S. Truman on 23rd June, 1947. When it was passed by Congress Truman denounced it as a "slave-labour bill". The act declared the closed shop illegal and permitted the union shop only after a vote of a majority of the employees. It also forbade jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts. Other aspects of the legislation included the right of employers to be exempted from bargaining with unions unless they wished to. The act forbade unions from contributing to political campaigns and required union leaders to affirm they were not supporters of the Communist Party. The Taft-Hartley Act also gave the United States Attorney General the power to obtain an 80 day injunction when a threatened or actual strike that he/she believed "imperilled the national health or safety".

<sup>40</sup> The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, commonly AFL-CIO, is a national trade union center, the largest federation of unions in the United States, made up of 65 national and international unions (including Canadian), together representing more than 10 million workers. It was formed in 1955 when the AFL and the CIO merged after a long estrangement. From 1955 until 2005, the AFL-CIO's member unions represented nearly all unionized workers in the United States. The largest union in the AFL-CIO is the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), with more than a million members.

continued to increase but not like before, from 15 million in 1945 to 18 million in 1955, whereas the number of unionised urban employees decreased 14 percent in 1960. At the same time, differences between the AFL and CIO had minimised. The AFL agreed to unionise in business whereas the CIO maintained labour steadiness.

Union leaders denied home troubles of the ordinary workers with main concern on manufacturing-wide steadiness. A business executive admitted, “*We need the union to insure enforcement of the contract we have signed...to settle grievances, to counsel employees in giving a fair day’s work..., to help increase productivity*”<sup>41</sup>. Consequently, illegal and violent strikes assailed both the employees and labour leaders. The critics protested against the labour managers and investigated about the way they were using the funds. In 1960, the militant labour movement of the 1930’s had almost vanished.

### **I.3. Scientific development**

Engineering during the war period and progress in science confirmed the benefits of Higher Education. The advance of radar and jet impulsion, the use of insect killers, the success of “miracle drugs” like penicillin, the emergence of man-made compounds as an alternative for limited sources like rubber—all gave evidence to the great role science played in the development of society. In fashionable imagery during the time of war, the scientists and engineers were regarded as heroes.

However, there was something wrong with this scientific invention which was debatable: it is the atomic bomb and the unchecked scientific research. In the war time, the government had categorized atomic energy research (the “Manhattan Project”) top secret, though the theoretical foundation of the bomb was understood by physicists around the world. The Manhattan Project had collected secretly control of uranium and thorium needed to make the atomic bombs, but could not obtain a total monopoly. In 1945, American scientists could guess that other countries could develop the same kind of weapons in a period of three to five years. However, President Truman believed that America could dominate atomic bombs for at least 20 years. Consequently, the President refused to share information about the atomic bombs with Russia. The United States became a world super power because it could monopolise the research about the atomic

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<sup>41</sup> Horowitz Carroll Lee, Op.cit, p.45

bomb especially after the Atomic Energy Act in 1946 which founded the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).

J. Robert Oppenheimer, chief of the Los Alamos research team that developed the atomic bomb, stated the worries about the future of scientific research. He said: *“In some sense, which no vulgarity, no humour, no overstatement can quite extinguish.... The physicists have known sin; and this is a knowledge which they can not lose”*<sup>42</sup>. Such worry emerged on a popular level in post-war science fiction writers like Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury who wrote about the people who wanted to prevent decisive destruction. Similarly, if we look at Hollywood movies after World War Two, they all picture American scientists in two ways: capable of evil and good at the same time. A Scientific American concluded *“To the average civilised man of 1950, science no longer means primarily the promise of a more abundant life, it means the atomic bomb”*<sup>43</sup>

Although the atomic bomb was controlled, almost all the nuclear investigations and progress involved military experiments. However to diminish the worries of people, the Atomic Energy Commission initiated an open relations division in 1947 to emphasize that atomic energy is already there for the benefits of the people. Hand in hand, with private freelancers like General Electronic and Westinghouse, the Atomic Energy Commission or AEC supported expositions and educational programs, which put forward the statement that the atomic energy is there for the improvement of the society. The government also neglected the drawbacks of radiation. Such trickery increased the nuclear weapon store. Despite the fact that America owned very small number of atom bombs in the years that followed World War Two, Truman Administration stressed a military plan which relied on nuclear weapons. When America knew about the atom bomb test which was done by the Soviet Union in 1949, Truman urged the development of a stronger hydrogen bomb the following year. Hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific and the Atom bomb tests in the western states frequently spread radiation on innocent people.

Although many Americans showed great worries about the Atomic bomb, they welcomed the technological advance in general. Fibres made of nylon, rayon, and Dacron gradually substituted wool and cotton. Concerning the house furniture, wood and leather were replaced by plastic. In addition, there were other products which wholly changed the American life styles

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<sup>43</sup> Horowitz Carroll Lee, Op.cit, p.47



such as the non-natural flavour, colours and preservatives. However, these products affected the environment in a negative way; for instance, by using the artificial manufactured goods, they threatened the environmental balance. But later on, people started to be aware of the dangers of radiation especially when scientists announced in 1950 that these radiations were toxin milk.

How can we then say that America, by owning this scientific technology, is becoming a super power if it is destroying humanity? The technological advancement did more good than harm. For example, using Fluor in water lessened tooth decomposition, especially among children. At first, water that contained Fluor was rejected by the majority of the Americans but by 1963, 50 million Americans were drinking water with Fluor. In the years that followed World War Two, America took the lead in the production of precision scientific devices. New machines that have greatly served humanity were discovered like kidney dialysis machine (1945), artificial heart valve (1953), and electronic heart pacemakers (1957). In addition, thousands of open heart surgeries had been performed by American surgeons as early as 1960. There was also the introduction of the polio vaccine by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1955. Such inventions saved thousands of victims each year.

These inventions helped develop the United States but also the rest of the world. Some of these discoveries threatened nature; the automobiles disturbed the environment with their gasoline and burnt petrol. Some prophetic ecologists warned against the dangers of such inventions but the American people, in general, believe that the same technology which produced the nuclear weapons, cars and synthetic goods, is the one which is going to find solutions to whatever problems.

## **II. Population in a post-war II American society**

The young Americans were the most optimistic people about the future of the country after the Second World War. The soldiers who came back from the war soon got married and wanted to build their families. In May 1946, nine months after the V - J Day<sup>44</sup>, the birth rate in America rose till 1957. The unexpected baby boom came out from the marriage of young couples, and this increased fertility but there were more methods to control the birth rate. As a matter of fact,

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<sup>44</sup> **Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day**, also known as **Victory in the Pacific Day** or **V-P Day**) is a name chosen for the day on which the Surrender of Japan occurred, effectively ending World War II, and subsequent anniversaries of that event. The term has been applied to both the day on which the initial announcement of Japan's surrender was made in the afternoon of August 15, 1945 (August 14 North American date), as well as the date the formal surrender ceremony was performed in Tokyo Bay, aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri on September 2, 1945

there was an increase in population from 140 million in 1945 to 152 million in 1950 and more than 179 million by 1960. This growth is partially due to medical advancement which certainly saved millions of people. Thus, life expectations for non-whites rose from 69.1 to 70.5 from 1950 to 1959 while for the non-white it increased from 60.8 to 63.5.

The rapidly growing population increased long-standing models of mobility. Fascinated by the industrial development during the Second World War, employees and their families had assembled in the South-Western and Western states. In Texas, the increase of the petrochemical industry increased the population by one third. Arizona, Tuscan ,and Phoenix grew rapidly into big cities. However, the most inhabited city was “Los Angeles” while other Americans preferred to reside in California, the home of famous industries like electronics and planes. The number of its inhabitants was twice that of New York residents which was once the most metropolitan. Those people, who wanted to move west, chose to live in Alaska and Hawaii.

As many Americans were moving to the west, urban population grew faster than ever before. In 1960, the majority of Americans preferred to live in urban locations. Using machinery in agriculture, mainly in the south, obliged 22 million Americans living in rural settings to move to cities between 1940 and 1960<sup>45</sup>. This movement radically changed the social composition of urban life. Black and Hispanic farm-workers moved to centres, while the whites gradually moved out. In 1960, the majority of blacks were living in central cities.

## **II.1. Housing and progress in Suburbia**

America witnessed scarcity in housing due to the return of soldiers after World War II. Consequently, many veterans accepted to live in poor rooms or camps. The problem was certainly aggravated by the post-war baby boom. The current American history was revealed by the housing shortages. In 1945, the entire cost of housing was worth 7 per cent fewer than during the Depression years. The scarcity in housing was also aggravated by the prices suggested by the estate agencies. To cut down these prices, builders started building new shelters in the suburbs. With the lack of flats, many American families decided to obtain credit for housing sponsored by the federal government under the Federal Housing Authority (FHA)

To answer the great command for housing, builder William J. Levitt and his son started offering bulk-produced, consistent units at reasonable prices for the lower-middle class. Levitt produced 4½ room Cape Cod houses for \$8,000 in 1949 with simple tools and materials. Levitt

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<sup>45</sup>Horowitz Carroll Lee, *ibid*, p.47-48

and sons preferred suburbia to cities and in 1950 there were more than ten thousand houses in the first Levitt community, inhabited by more than 40,000 people. To keep the prices down he did not include the living rooms, underground stores, as well as the unnecessary accessories. Between 1947 and 1951, Levitt built more than 17 thousand houses in Levittown, transforming many agricultural lands into communities. Well-organized production means allowed the builder to raise one four-room house every sixteen minutes.

Levittowns had been criticized as being identical and hence Levitt started changing the colour of the outdoors, rounded streets, and houses placed in somewhat different positions. Levitt houses were copied by other builders around the nation. John Keats, a pop sociologist wrote: “ *if you lived in the new post-war suburbs, you can be certain all other houses will be precisely like yours, inhabited by people whose age, income, number of children, problems, habits, conversation, dress, possessions and perhaps even blood type are also precisely like yours*”<sup>46</sup>. Probably, the critics were not totally wrong because living in the suburbs had its disadvantages too. Mothers were obliged to drive children everywhere; to schools, to lessons, to the supermarket, and to the dentist. Another drawback of living in the suburbs is that many Americans missed a lot of things especially at the cultural level like going to the cinemas, theatres, concerts, and museums.

Levitt houses also lacked libraries, schools, hospitals, means of transport, and restaurants. When fathers drove to work, the housewives and children stayed remote from city life. The older people preferred living in the suburbs but it was not the case for youngsters. However, the problem of isolation was soon resolved by the use of cars. A new phenomenon came into being, that of a second car for the housewives to drive children to work or to go shopping. It is true that this solution reduced isolation but it increased, on the other hand, the use of oil and, hence, air pollution. Consequently, electricity was suggested for a better and a cleaner environment.

## **II.2. the urban problem**

With the growing population, new houses in the suburbs contributed in a limited way to lessen populous overcrowding. Urban poor districts were criticised as being a stage for crimes, especially adolescent’s law-breaking. When the local government could not resolve the problem of housing, President Truman, together with Senator Robert Taft tried to convince Congress to

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<sup>46</sup> . Irwin UNGER and Debi UNGER, *Post-War America, The United States Since 1945*, St Martin’s Press, N Y, 1990, pp, 17-8.

pass the Housing Act of 1949. The law permitted the clearance of old and poor districts and the construction of more than eight hundred thousands houses for rent at affordable prices. However, the federal housing plan was digressed by the Korean War expenses and more weakened by the estate interests and the indifferent Eisenhower government. The Federal government continued to support private housing. In 1962, government housing support for the low-paying class reached \$820 million; during that year, tax deductions for private proprietors amounted to \$ 2.9 billion<sup>47</sup>.

As country residents migrated to urban locations, the suburbanisation of middle-class taxpayers minimized the city tax foundation, and this deprived public services. Another problem from which cities like Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and St. Louis suffered is the traffic jam even after the construction of new freeways which bordered almost all the major cities. Urban schemers found out dodges in the Housing Act of 1949 that authorized the demolition of old housing without building cheap houses. Under this Act, more than one million houses experienced the destroyed ball while less than 350,000 took their position. Consequently, city renovation regarded old neighbours as ethnically identical, and uprooted to take on gathering centres, office buildings, and parking lots. These traditions worsened the problem of people living on the streets. After the Second World War, 'skid rows' could be seen everywhere in cities including no less than 5-10 thousand shelterless people.

### **II.3. Rural America**

Farm production rose by 6 percent per year thanks to the use of machinery in 1949 and a decade later. However, the population in rural settings decreased again and again. Farmers benefited from the advance in science and technology: a new technology and new machines were introduced in agriculture. In addition, farmers started using fertilizers, chemical addition, and antibiotics. But these chemical products and machines required huge sums of money; small farmers did not have enough money. Consequently, possession of lands moved to big agribusiness companies.

This change in agriculture was supported by the federal government. Right after the Second World War, Europe was suffering from food scarcity and America benefited from markets. When the outlets decreased, Agricultural Acts of 1948 and 1949 were passed to permit the government price assistance for necessary crops. In 1956, farmers had been paid by Congress to

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<sup>47</sup>Horowitz Carroll Lee, Op.cit, p. 48-9

stop planting some crops; at the same time the Soil Bank Act of 1956 offered compensations for transferring farms into non-industrial preservation farms. It has been said that farmers hardly made any profits from government prices support legislation; those who really benefited were the rich farmers. Mutual business deals subjected producers to foreign competition which was allowed to lower the prices of production.

**Table IV.1 Price Index, Fresh and Processed Vegetables, 1946-1960<sup>48</sup>.**

years	Fresh	Processed
1946	57	69
1948	64	81
1950	62	75
1952	78	83
1954	72	85
1956	77	88
1958	84	92
1960	85	93

Mechanical farming also imposed food produced in bulk on a nationwide diet. From 1950 to 1959, the consumption of each person of necessary manufactured goods, fresh fruit, and fresh vegetables decreased. Thus consumers tried to balance by eating greater amounts of processed and canned food. Likewise, drink consumption was also influenced and there was also a decline in beverage. In the alcoholic drink commerce, the number of alcoholic drinks factories decreased from 450 in 1950 to 170 in 1960 to 70 in 1970. Such transforms pushed the American people to regulate their food and drinks.

**II.4. Poverty and social class**

It is true that the post-war years witnessed huge economic conditions; yet, there had been several social changes and problems. The advance in social consumption deteriorated the public sector. In the 1950's, America benefited from a remarkable prosperity; joblessness did not go

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<sup>48</sup> Source: Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 (1975).

beyond eight percent, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, unemployment insurance reimbursed only 20 percent of missing worker’s revenues.

It has been argued that the elders above the age of sixty five were the most underprivileged among the Americans. A report which was conducted in 1960 showed that “*at least one half of the aged approximately eight million people can not afford today decent housing, proper nutrition, adequate medical care, preventive or acute, or necessary recreation*”<sup>49</sup> . Compulsory retirement programs pushed several workers who were still capable of working, into poverty. During the 1950’s, the number of people who benefited from social insurance augmented to 9.6 million. Yet their needs were not completely answered by the government and this resulted in shortages in incomes especially for the elders over sixty five, whose revenues did not exceed \$ 3,000 in 1960.

Not only did the whites suffer but also the people of colour. There is no doubt that the non-white Americans suffered from discrimination at all levels– economic, social and racial. The salary of a non-white worker was certainly less than a white employee all over America and they were not allowed to fill higher positions. Black women, for instance, were not permitted to do other jobs than housekeeping, nursing and/or waitressing. Some of them, however, managed to work in factories but still their wages were less than those of white women and hence the blacks grew poorer and poorer. As opposed to immigrants who came from Europe, blacks who moved from suburbs to cities did not find jobs that required physical efforts because of the technological advancement and the use of machines that substituted man. In 1959, the gap between black and white incomes became wider.

**Joblessness Rates by Race, 1948-1960**

	1948	1951	1954	1957	1960
White	3.5	3.1	5.0	3.8	4.9
Black	5.9	5.3	9.9	7.9	10.2
Total	3.8	3.3	5.5	4.3	5.5

In 1959, one million and half of farmers, among whom the majority were whites, had incomes below \$ 3,000. They lived in miserable conditions and in old houses without electricity and plumbing. Even worse, migrant farm employees were not protected against illegitimate working actions and this kept them deprived and reliant. The incomes of non-native Americans

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<sup>49</sup> Horowitz Carroll Lee, *ibid*, p. 59

like Puerto-Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Native-Americans and Asian-Americans were extremely low and they did not have any rights; 80 percent of Puerto-Ricans' families living in New York city received salaries lower than the minimum levels. The average wages of Japanese and Chinese in California in 1959 was below \$ 3,000. The poorest of all non-whites however were not the Hispanics but the American Indians who were living in dirty and unpleasant conditions; their death rate was triple the national average.

## **II.5. Women and the world of work**

Women entered the world of work especially after the participation of men in the Second World War. Even after the end of the war when GI's (American Soldiers) returned, women continued to work outside their homes. The employment of women increased remarkably after the Second World War; between 1940 and 1960, the number of female employees boosted two folds, and by 1960, about 40 percent of adult female population was working. If we look at the average age of women employed in 1960, we notice that it was 41, and that 60 percent of female employees were married. Families, in which both the husband and wife worked, attained the ten million by 1960. The fact that both husband and wife were working, persuaded young couples to have more children. Before the Second World War, the working mothers usually worked in order to support their families, but after the war, even wives whose husbands' incomes were considerable, joined the world of work<sup>50</sup>.

Women continued to work first because they wanted to improve their financial situation. Married mothers, widows, divorced and/or separated women, helped their families by working outside; they worked as shop assistants, secretaries, or did semi-skilled jobs. But if we compare women salaries to those of men, we can say that they were lower and hence women who supplied their families' needs remained among the poorest in the nation. Second, families required extra money to purchase luxurious products and therefore it was mandatory for both the husband and wife to work together. The third reason why women continued to work is the rise in the prices and services in the late 1950's.

Women wanted to change the old belief that the real place of the woman was at home and that she exists solely to do the housework, take care of the children and /or answer the husband's needs and desires. It has been argued that many women were successful in business and this shows the wish of women to create outside their homes and contribute positively into the welfare

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<sup>50</sup> Horowitz Carroll Lee, Op.cit, p.61

of the country. But what should be done with female workers if they continued to work? A main task which was carried out by the federal government was hiring women into jobs inside the country in shipbuilding or aircraft for example. Black women in particular worked in factories specialised in the manufacture of small arms and ammunition. As a result, we can say that not only did minorities contribute into the development of America but so did women.

Several working females chose to stay in their jobs even after the coming back of their husbands from the war. In many interviews, the majority of women said they did not want to abandon the jobs they had made huge efforts to develop. Factory buildings had been transformed to fit women positions— restrooms, cafeterias, aerobics, plastic jigs, weight lifting devices. In local communities, more than 3,000 child-care centres were founded to take care of children whose mothers worked outside their houses.

The issue of working mothers became very debatable in the United States; lots of women entered the world of work after the war over two million in 1946 but others were made redundant or chose to go back to family life again.

A successful house wife and mother should be able to play different roles at the same time; she has got to master social life and take care of the children. As a wife, she has to do all the house work as well as answering her husband's needs and sexual desires. Probably, during that period every female would better find a husband because what society valued most were the housewives and families. If not, the single women would carry the burden of rejection and guilt.

The huge participation of women into the labour force and industry had deep effects outside the factory. Women registered in professional training in order to be highly skilled and attain good positions. However, the problems of discrimination and antagonism between men and women employees continued especially after the enormous contribution of women in the industry. Some industrial units like General Electric and Westinghouse set up “women rates” that fixed payment under the usual salary for men doing the same jobs.

As a result to inequality between male and female employees, justice was secured to women. The Republican in 1940 and the Democrats in 1944 supported an Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution. It was also supported by the Federal Women's Bureau which investigated sex discrimination in labour. In addition to the Equal Rights Amendment, another Act was passed in 1945 namely referred to as “Federal Wage Discrimination Act” but unfortunately both of them failed to protect women's rights



Black workers like women were regarded as short-term employees and hence a problem to post-war change. Black workers equally suffered from discrimination and restrictions which were different from white women's discrimination and limitations, but still not very different. Like in the First World War, the bad conditions and poverty pushed hundreds of blacks to move from the south upwards. However, they faced a lot of problems like segregation. In 1941, black leaders faced the Roosevelt government to guarantee equality. A strong black trade union, threatened a demonstration to emphasize the dilemma of black employees. President Roosevelt thereafter passed executive order # 8802<sup>51</sup> on June 25, 1941, setting up Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC). This Act was issued to guarantee equal rights and to make companies hire employees without giving much importance to their race, creed, colour or/ and national origins.

### **III. Culture in Post-war II America**

Earlier in the first chapter, it has been dealt with cultural diversity in America and we reached the conclusion that it is regarded as a point of strength rather than weakness. Nevertheless, diversity has its own problems in every country: problems like discrimination, assimilation, adaptation and so on. Racial minorities fought problems like overcrowding, poverty and even worse segregation especially towards the people of colour. Despite the existence of 'restrictive covenants', white proprietors refused to rent houses to the non-whites. These policies were supported by the federal government. The FHA preferred the possessions to be inhabited by identical social and ethnic classes. The FHA also rejected any plan which equated the whites to the people of colour.

The southern states imposed discrimination in a variety of community accommodations such as schools, restaurants, theatres, toilets, drinking fountains, dry cleaner's, buses and other public places. These "Jim Crow"<sup>52</sup> Acts were not banned until 1964. There had been shops, restaurants and toilets on which it was clearly written "White only", this shows the segregated places which were forbidden for the blacks as well as for other minorities. Discrimination in housing echoed

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<sup>51</sup> J. G Burkhart, *Another Chance : Postwar America ,1945-1968, College Park, Maryland, 1981, p.18-19*

<sup>52</sup> Jim Crow: laws enacted by Southern states, after reconstruction and the end of slavery, that segregated and discriminated against blacks by creating 'Whites only' schools, theatres, hotels and other public accommodations, and deprived blacks from their civil rights. Jim Crow laws finally came to an end by the enactment of the Voting Right Act by President Lyndon B. Johnson on August 6, 1965, after decades of the Civil Rights Movement's struggle.

the attitude of “separate, but equal”; expressed by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson*<sup>53</sup> in 1869. After the Second World War, blacks gradually attacked residential segregation. A National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People-sponsored lawsuit led by Shelley v. Kraemer, at last succeeded to convince the Supreme Court to reject the legitimacy of government assistance of restrictive covenants in 1949. Because segregation had its negative sociological and psychological consequences, the Court put down the foundations for later review of the Plessy principle.

Nevertheless, segregation in housing continued to exist; the problem is that not only did it affect the blacks but also the Spanish-speaking and other minorities. It has been estimated that 40 percent of Puerto Ricans living in New York in 1960<sup>54</sup>, inhabited insufficient dwellings. Still, they continued to rent houses which took up a large amount of their earnings. The groups which suffered from segregation in housing were the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Jews, who decided to inhabit homogenized centres of population like Levittowns. However, blacks were not accepted to live in Levittowns until 1960. As it has already been suggested in the first chapter, the existence of ethnic groups in urban settings showed how much diversity was welcomed in urban setting and that no minority group is obliged to assimilate into the dominant culture: that of the WASP.

American Indian neighbourhoods fought the problem of integration. Before the Second World War, federal policy vis-à-vis reservation tribes had trembled between the maintaining of American Indian ancestral rights and the adjusting into the dominant culture. In 1946, the Indian Claims Commission Act permitted the tribes to carry official action against federal government for abusing earlier agreements. In 1954, Congress embraced detribalization enacting a number of legislations to break up tribal organizations, to lay out tribal positive features and put an end to federal support.

Joblessness rates on camps seemed surprising: more than 68 percent along with the Blackfeet of Montana and the Hopi of New Mexico and more than 86 percent among the Choctaw of Mississippi. Several people who were looking for jobs migrated to close cities where they accepted to live in indecent circumstances. The Native American customs were weakened by the media. Customary tribal ceremonies appeared to be less significant and the number of

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<sup>53</sup> *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896): an eight to one Supreme Court decision upholding a Louisiana statute that made it possible to segregate Blacks and Whites on passenger trains; it became the basis for the “separate but equal” doctrine, ridiculed by its opponents “separate but unequal”, and was used to justify the passage of Jim Crow laws.

<sup>54</sup> . J. G Burkhardt, *Another Chance : Postwar America ,1945-1968, ibid, p. 20*

Native American languages almost disappeared. However, traditionalist resisted to assimilation and they totally rejected the white culture. Hence, the post-war period also witnessed a reawakening of Native American religion and identity. Claiming the rights of Native Americans facilitated the end of the termination program in 1960's

### **III.1. Culture and family relations**

TV programs such as "The Honeymooners", "Fathers Know Best" pictured happiness of married couples, but also provided another picture of family problems. TV advertisements also strengthened the problems of sexes. Conflicts at home pushed many relaxing adults to visit the psychiatrists; most cases required just simple "adjustment" to the modern life styles. New treatments came out like chemical tranquilizers which were mainly prescribed for upset and irritated housewives. Numerous Americans, who suffered from the psychological depression, tired to escape their situations by drinking alcohol or practising robbery. Consequently, delinquency spread and there was an increase in divorce rates and a decline in the marriage rates.

There was a change in the traditional values of sex and marriage. In the past, popular values required virginity before marriage; however after 1948, the majority of men and nearly 50 percent of women have already experienced sex relations outside the marriage. Alfred Kinsey, a sociologist and a writer who conducted a research about sexual practices concluded that sexual habits are affected by aspects like age, society, economy, job, race and region. Kinsey also said that nearly 2/3 of marriages had serious sexual problems and hypothesizes that they were at the heart of divorces in the nation.

The Kinsey's report also indicated a terrible rate of homosexuals; 37 percent of the men and 13 percent of the women asked by Kinsey said they had experienced homosexuality during their adolescence. The number of homosexuals in America increased after the Second World War. During the 1940's and 1950's, many homosexuals had been made redundant and this pushed them to form groups like the Mattachine Society (1951) and the Daughters of Bilitis (1955)<sup>55</sup>.

Apart from homosexuality, there were other phenomena happening on post-war society like sex crimes, sex clubs, prostitution and rape. Conservatives believed that juvenile delinquency was the result of the working mothers and the solution, according to them was the return of the working mothers back home. However, some sociologists disagreed; they rather believed that young criminal behaviour and law-breaking is due to poverty and as a solution they suggested

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<sup>55</sup> Horowitz Carroll Lee, Op.cit, p.62

more employment opportunities for the young. Dr. Kinsey believed that teenage sexuality was not a big deal and that it should be accepted by their parents and the law as well.

After the Second World War, the American family suffered from the problems and the troubles of a post-war peaceful society. Adaptation to new life styles seemed very difficult for both men and women. Probably women went through more serious problems; they risked losing their jobs after the return of soldiers from the war and many female workers were forced to leave their jobs in factories.

Another problem which emerged was an increase in divorce rates in 1946. As a matter of fact, 1946 was a year in which divorce reached its peak: 18.2 percent of broken marriages. As it is indicated in the tables below, the divorce rates increased dramatically after the war, decreased for 15 years, and increased again after 1968.

**Divorce as a Percentage of Existing Marriages<sup>56</sup>**

1942	10.0%	1947	13.9%
1943	10.9%	1948	11.6%
1944	12.3%	1949	10.6%
1945	14.3%	1950	10.2%
1946	18.2%	1951	9.9%

The influence of the war on family life also registered in marriage rate. The majority of countries which participated in the Second World War witnessed a climb in marriage rates; between 1944 and 1948, America was among the countries that witnessed the highest number of marriages. These figures show that lots of Americans got married before or since that period. In 1950, nearly 70 percent of men and 67 percent of women over 15 were married. If we compare these numbers to those during the Depression, we can say that the number nearly augmented two folds.

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<sup>56</sup> Source: Paul Jacobson, *American Marriage and Divorce* (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 90.

**Divorce as a Percentage of 1,000 Population<sup>57</sup>**

1944	2.9%	1954	2.4%
1946	4.3%	1956	2.3%
1948	2.8%	1958	2.1%
1950	2.6%	1960	2.2%
1952	2.5%		

As a result of the increase of marriage rates, there was a baby boom. Primarily, the birth rates increased because of marriage rates but there had been other reasons; the death rates decreased after the technological advancement in the post-war II era. Furthermore, many Americans decided to have more babies.

The baby boom was also the result of the huge prosperity that America enjoyed after the Second World War (the national product increased two folds from 1945-1962). America experienced an economic stability, with many job opportunities and few immigrants. After the Depression period, the post-war era was a period of mass production, prosperity , and development.

**Birth Rate Per1, 000 Populations<sup>58</sup>**

Date	Percentage	Date	Percentage
1940	19.4%	1952	25.1 %
1942	22.2%	1954	25.3%
1944	21.2 %	1956	25.2 %
1946	24.1%	1958	24.5%
1948	24.9%	1960	24.0%
1950	24.1%		

The field of psychology appeared to be more important in the post-year II period. Before the war, psychology was concerned with the individual but after the war, its concern moved to the family. In the 1950's, the number of family therapists increased.

<sup>57</sup> Source: Historical Statistics of the United States, Bicentennial Edition, Vol. I, p 64

<sup>58</sup> Source: National Center for Health Statistics: Natality Statistics Analysis, U.S, 1965-1967, p.2.

In the years following the Second World War, nearly 35 percent of Americans were for more stringent divorce laws, 31 percent were neutral and only 9 percent thought it was necessary to be relaxed. Those who were for stricter laws were mainly those old people and many conservatives appeared to be against women wearing shorts or slacks in public or holding office.

The Catholic Church and the conservatives were against birth-control rates. In the twenty years after the Second World War, access to family planning devices was not allowed by the federal and states laws. This limitation did not prevent the spread of contraceptive means and abortions, but it conveyed a religious opinion of the family in the past.

Nevertheless, during the 1950's there was a great advancement that helped control the birth rates –the reinvention of the intrauterine apparatus and the development of oral contraceptive from women. Despite the fact, that these devices were strongly opposed by the Catholic Church, the Protestants were for such devices. Control on contraceptive devices had been gradually lessened in Connecticut and New York. Consequently, talking about sexuality and contraceptives became more common place.

One of the famous birth control methods, abortion, was doomed illegal in the whole of America till the 1960's. In 1959, the American Law Institute suggested that abortion for healthy reasons should be allowed, i. e, malformation, incest or rape. Laws concerning abortion were enacted in some states like Maryland but it was after the very controversial Supreme Court decision (1973), namely referred to as Roe vs. Wade<sup>59</sup>, which made abortion legal in America.

### **III.2. The Uniqueness of the American Culture**

Americans have various backgrounds, values, capacities, and specialities which make them different from each other. Yet, they try to live in a harmonious setting. They work, live and coexist as members of a team, or more precisely as an American society. Americans believe that unity through diversity worked in the past; it works today and will certainly work in the future. For them, diversity is not a problem and it is regarded as an asset to the country rather than a threat. Diversity in any country is not a problem if every individual understands that mutual respect is the key to a more organised and peaceful society. Unity in variety is the solution to groups' problems.

Probably, a simple answer can be provided to the most important question of the century: what it meant to be American? To be American is to learn to accept other ethnic groups as they

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<sup>59</sup> Roe vs. Wade: the very controversial Supreme Court decision (1973) which legalized abortion in the United States.

are, to be open-minded, to respect them, and to bear in mind principles like community participation and fair play. To be American is to believe strongly in the American values like equality of opportunity, hard work, competition, education, family unity, self-reliance and freedom.

America, more than any other country in the world has successfully maintained a society with so many differences, how? The answer is to accept the principle that this nation does not belong to one ethnic group, neither to the American Indians nor to the Native-born Americans. All ethnic groups should be treated equally in this nation. America should be regarded as an example in the sense that it absorbed all the ethnic groups. Besides, diversity is taught in colleges and universities.

What is amazing about the Americans is that some of them do not even know if he has got a culture of his own or not. As one student exclaimed “I did not know I had a culture!” Many Americans are astonished and somewhat happy to know that they do have a culture.

The American culture is founded on unity and diversity. America has been a nation that took in various immigrant groups since early colonial times, ranging from the WASP’s who came from Northern Europe. They are of English, Scottish, and Welsh ancestry. This description of the American society has never been precise. The frontiers of America have always included Native Americans, Spanish and French as well as English speakers. Nowadays, there are migrant from all over the world that have chosen to live in North America.

### **III.3. the American arts**

It has been argued that the American art is simply an appendage of Western European culture. As it has already been said, the American culture is unique and hence is the arts. The American art has its own traditions which are totally different from the European art. This argument shows that the American people wanted to see themselves as being unique and different from their ancestors which were of European origins. Thus, the American people developed their own art and this can be compared to the new founding fathers that rejected their mother country and claimed for their own identity. As Ralph Waldo Emerson puts it: “*We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds*”<sup>60</sup> His declaration of cultural independence would work not by chance but by believing in equality and self reliance.

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<sup>60</sup> . Luther S. Luedtke, Making America, the Society and culture of the United States, Washington D. C, 1987, pp.162

### III.3.a. American painting

During the era that followed World War II, the art centre moved from Paris to New York. American painters who trained in France, Italy and/or Germany have imitated the French impressionists or the Cubists. Painters like Ben Shahn, Jack Levine, William Gropper, and Isabel Bishop depicted climate-beaten farmers or workers, burdened mothers, and down-and-outers, subjects oppressed by harsh conditions and repressiveness. They equally painted allegories of political and social inequality like race demonstrations and the Sacco-Vanzetti issue<sup>61</sup>.

In the post-war period, a new group of American painters such as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, Franz Kline, Joan Mitchell, and others put an end to the conventions of the past and invented an astounding new type which would be named in different ways: *action painting*, *Abstract expressionism* or the *New York School*.

Similar to former generations of painters, the action painters lived, worked and drank in the studios of Greenwich Village in New York. However, they were different from the previous American artists in the sense that they did not give big importance to representation. For them, a painting was something visual which should follow the horizontal planes of canvas. As opposed to other artifacts of nowadays which are designed and standard, it has got to be unplanned. Motherwell noted in 1950 that in the view of his colleagues: “*the process of painting...is conceived as an adventure, without preconceived ideas.*” “*The need*” was for “*felt experience—intense, immediate, direct, subtle, unified, warm, vivid, and rhythmic.*”<sup>62</sup> Action painters dripped, threw and splashed paint on canvas to draw splashes with various colours, lines and forms. Their paintings had been criticised as a fraud. Their friends regarded it as an imaginative revolution in visual art similar to any kind of enormous artistic and visual advance of the past.

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<sup>61</sup> Sacco and Vanzetti: two Italian immigrants and anarchists in the United States, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, arrested for alleged bank robbery and murder in Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1921. Their trial and conviction became a cause célèbre for leftists (socialists) and liberals who came together to denounce anti-foreign sentiments and anti-Communist campaigns. As Vanzetti put it “*The jury were hating us [because it was] time when there was a hysteria of resentment and hate against the people of our principles, against the foreigner, against slackers.*” Despite much opposition and protest, they were executed in 1927.

<sup>62</sup> Irwin UNGER and Debi UNGER, *ibid*, p.,55-6



### III.3.b. American literature

The American literary success during the fifties was not new. For more than a hundred years, American authors had been widely recognised on the international level. However, during the fifties American novels, poetry, and plays became largely highly praised.

We can not talk about literature in the post-war years without mentioning two outstanding literary men: William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. Both of them won the Nobel Prize during the decade following the war, but both were authors from another era. Hemingway, in particular, appeared to be monosyllabic and his writings were much more masculine. On the contrary, Robert Frost and Robert Lowell needed more time to be more successful. The majority of their work was to be done during the ten years that followed the war.

A young man from Brooklyn called Norman Mailer was among the most important writers. In his first work entitled *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), he wrote about the war in the antagonist way to the depression. He was somewhat radical but gradually he became the leader for new cultural awareness. In his significant essay, "The White Negro" (1957), Mailer admired the "hipster", the enduring stranger of the ghetto who lived in risky circumstances, and who tried to confront the law to get stronger "highs".

Serious American theatre figures thrived during the 1950's. Eugene O'Neill became more creative than in the twenties with his works, *The Iceman Cometh* (1946) and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956). Other giant theatrical figure was Arthur Miller with his well-known plays, *Death of a Salesman* (1948), *The Crucible* (1953), and *A View from the Bridge* (1955). The plays described the personal as well as the social prices of conformity. An outstanding figure from the south, Tennessee Williams wrote *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), all of which described the relationship between illusion and reality which appeared to be an obvious fact in the South.

When talking about post-war II American cultural life, we should refer to two social groups; the Jews and the Southerners, who provided prominent literary works during the fifties. Both of Faulkner and Williams were from the South, but there were other writers in the post-war period. The most remarkable and outstanding of them was Flannery O'Connor from Georgia who wrote novels like *Wise Blood* in 1952 and *A Good Man is Hard to Find* in 1955, and William Styron with his novel *Lie Down in Darkness* which was written in 1951. The whole story is about the terrible life and death of a girl from the south.

Probably, the most important work of the decade that followed World War II was *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison. This novel strikes the attention more than any other novel because literature is the mirror of society. The reader can feel that the black Americans were marginalized, discriminated and humiliated. Another African-American novelist, James Baldwin, who became well known two decades after the Second World War, wrote a novel entitled *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (1953). The novel is about the black migration from the South to the ghettos in the North.

### **III.3.c. Rock and Roll**

The usual beatnik was a young person with artistic desires and some higher education, but the majority of adolescents tried to find ways to convey their disobedience. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the adolescents have often taken on the music of foreigners, of racial minorities, and the lower class as an approach to differentiate from their parents and their beliefs. In the immediate era which followed World War II, folk music emerged which was supported by the political left to show its unity with “the people”. There had been other black musicians like Charlie Parker, Dizzie Gillespie but the music of adolescents in post-war II era was *rock and roll*.

Rock and Roll is a mixture between black music “gospel”, “rhythm” and “blues”. It also includes “country”, and even jazz. The original home of Rock music was the black urban ghettos, but it reached the white community thanks to a disc jockey called Alan Freed, who in 1951 started to play rhythm and blues. In 1954, he came to New York to play a new music in front of millions of people.

The most well-known rock star of the period was “the King”; Elvis Presley, a white young singer from Mississippi. Elvis was also a man admired by ladies in America and worldwide. He mixed the rhythm with the blues of black musicians with white country music. His audience were mainly the youth who had been excited at the strong rhythm of his music but he was not appreciated by older people. For them, Elvis was not a good example for the youth.

Youth culture revealed the tendency of post-war Americans looking for group recognition. Sociologist Riesman talked about the “other-directed” personality as opposed to the “inner-directed” one<sup>63</sup>. The inner directed man is a person who listened to his conscience and followed a self-constructed gyroscope to guide his life. This kind of personality was described by Riesman

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<sup>63</sup> J. G Burkhardt, *ibid*, p.117-8.

as “self-willed”, “aggressive”, “aggrandizing”, “creative” and “destructive”. It is believed to be the best personality for capitalism and the quick expansion of population in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The “other-directed” personality is the one who says “*I would like to be able to fly if everybody else did*”. As described by Riesman, it is the kind of personality that seeks to please people, to follow the rules, and to be flexible in order to get along with—to be superficial— these were the requirements of a society whose main activity has twisted from work as production to work as direction of people. Inner-direction aimed success while other-direction pursued security.

### **III.4. the TV revolution**

Television was merely a toy before the war, despite the fact that by 1939 there had been already basic technological devices. The war delayed the manufacture of home TV sets but in 1946, the first black-and-white TV appeared. TV sets were not very developed but were very expensive in the beginning. In addition, there were not many programs to be watched. In 1947, the first live television dramas started to be broadcasted but the viewers were limited.

In the early 1950’s, some top shows had been launched like Milton Berle’s “Texaco Star Theatre” and Ed Sullivan’s “Toast of the Town”. Another famous show was “*I Love Lucy*” describing Lucille Ball and her husband. Movies of the era pictured sexual pleasure as a prize of prosperity; actresses like Marilyn Monroe, Jayne Mansfield acted as foils for the comfort of sexual patterns among rich men. As a matter of fact, psychologist Kinsey said that sexual images and nakedness appealed to men with education rather than to those without or with less education. TV shows, especially the erotic ones, made some men irresponsible and careless about family life and this partially explains the reasons for the divorce rates discussed above in this chapter.

Nevertheless, television had other positive sides which no one can deny. Thanks to TV, the whole world became like a small village and this means the unification of various experiences. Television persistently gave the viewer an access to other’s experiences. It beamed visions of prestige into poor districts and pictured the private life of some journalists. Probably the most prominent role it played was that it selected immediate truth from the vague impressions.

## **Conclusion**

So far in this chapter, it has been dealt with the American economy, society and culture. It has also been dealt with a period which had timeless effects on the United States; it is the era following World War II. America witnessed a tremendous economic growth in all fields: technology, science, and discoveries. This era was chosen because while people may think that the Depression and the war conditions would devastate her, America emerged from the Depression and the Second World War stronger than before which is not the case for other countries.

The other reason why it has been dealt with this decade right after World War II is to give a sense out of the experience of men, women and children. It has been written about ordinary people, about what it meant to be old or poor, a woman black or white, during those years. The chapter also tried to shed the light on the American society, in an attempt to understand the way they worked, entertained themselves, married and divorced.

The most significant source of power in the post-war II world was America's unquestionable economic success and stability. This accomplishment created opportunities but also duties to take part in world issues. On the domestic level, it allowed other minorities to share the prosperity and the right of citizenship. In the late 1960's, America played a prominent role in the revolution of rising expectations inside and outside the country—a role which was both tough and exciting.

## **Chapter three: Race Issues in the United States of America**

## **Introduction**

The main concern of this chapter is to investigate race issues in America. It seeks to put forward the hypothesis that blacks are treated equally in the United States especially after the election of a black President, Barack Obama. There is no doubt then that America is a democracy because during the election campaign, Hilary Clinton was about to be elected the first woman President in the nation's history.

It has been argued that in America, whether you are black, white, Asian, and/or Hispanic, you are indifferent. The majority of Americans do not make individual distinctions between groups of people. This idea is vivid but can we say that the long history of discrimination between "whites" and the people of color has finally come to an end in America? The main question to be asked is, are the blacks and other minorities treated in a fair way in the most "democratic" country in the world?

Race has become a serious issue in America as the nation grew larger and as the population has become multiethnic. The people of color experienced a distinct treatment and even racism. Immigrants from all countries have come to America; hundreds of blacks were forced to leave West Africa to the United States as slaves; and slavery is still remembered as "American weird institution". The era of segregation seems to be slightly felt today. The aim of this chapter is to uncover this resistant problem in America which has long existed because of the "color line" –an obstacle that separated between whites and the people of color.

Also, in this chapter it would be dealt with definitions of some key words like racism, discrimination and prejudice for a good understanding of the issue at stake.

In the most heterogeneous nations in the world, intergroup relations are harmonious. But what is observed in America is that the educated elites and professionals are white through different generations though other minorities and people of color tried to improve their status in the last thirty years. Similarly, the WASP culture tries to reflect the white Americans who are heterosexual, centrist, secular, middle-class, and in good physical conditions. What is strange about the mainstream culture is that it gives little importance to minorities, extremists, homosexuals, the poor, and the handicapped. The question that arises here is whether or not the blacks and other minority groups live like the whites in the country in which they were born?

It has been said that blacks receive equal treatment today for they fill very high positions; they are mayors of major cities, university professors, doctors and so on. However, one should not believe all what he/she sees; after all it is the media!" They just hire black people into different jobs for the image of the nation. Where is the truth then? These questions would be dealt with in this chapter.

## I. Race relations in America

Race relations in America can be classified in terms of paradigms (monoracial, biracial, multiracial) that went hand in hand with current debatable issues and the people who lived within a particular region. The monoracial paradigm in which the whites matter most in American life, described race relations in America from 1789 to 1954. Recently, there are some regions which are still monoracial, where the whites represent the majority of the population. Yet, the whites refer to race only when they are asked to fill application forms and/or the census forms, but they rarely think they are white and very different even when they discuss about ethnicity and religion in America. Being a white or a black does not matter today, although America had always been a white-majority country at various points in its history<sup>64</sup>.

Race became a nation-wide issue in the twentieth century especially after the migration of blacks from the South to the North and the North West. From 1910 to 1970, many blacks left Dixie to better regions; this phenomenon had been referred to as “the Great Migration”. In 1910, about 89 per cent of blacks were living in the Southern States and the District of Columbia. By 1940, the number of blacks in these areas dropped to 77 per cent and to 53 per cent in the seventies. There had been a variety of factors which pushed and/or pulled the blacks to migrate. The “pull factors” were the job opportunities and the huge prosperity in Western Northern and Midwest cities. The “push factors” were: the racial hostility and the use of machines which substituted man in cotton factories.

After the arrival of blacks in North Eastern, Western and Mid Western regions, race became debatable all over America<sup>65</sup>. The South became less black after the “Great Migration”. For example, Mississippi was a Southern state in which the blacks constituted a majority, but this changed after the Great Migration. Many race clashes occurred in cities like Los Angeles and Chicago. Other cities which had been known as white-majority changed and took in large size of blacks; among these states were Detroit and Milwaukee.

The second paradigm was the biracial paradigm which was based on black-and-white coexistence from 1954 to 1990. The 1990 census was the first in the nation’s history in which the

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<sup>64</sup> . Barbara Flagg, « Was Blind, But Now I See: White Race Consciousness and the Requirement of Discriminatory Intent », Michigan Law Review (March 1993), 953-1017; I an. E. Haney Lopez, *White By Law: the Legal Construction By Race*, (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 155-195

<sup>65</sup> Leman, *The Promised Land*; passim



total of non-black (minorities) inhabitants increased faster than the African-Americans<sup>66</sup>. However, this paradigm describes to a certain extent race relations and it is regarded as a precise structure of reference from Detroit to Mississippi and to the District of Columbia.

But the Americans are not very interested in the white-and-black conflicts, first because there are other growing groups such as the Hispanics, Asian Americans, American Indians, and other mixed-race people that represent about 18 per cent of the whole population. These growing groups do not talk so much about black-and-white issues. In addition, race issues need far more serious solutions than the ones suggested during the 1960's. The appearance of a multiracial society brought about new subjects for discussion like bilingual education and illegal immigration, which were not there three decades ago. Therefore, the third paradigm of a multiracial society is more accurate than the other two.

The whole image of the nation then has changed and it will continue to change with the arrival of new waves of immigrants. The population is changing, even the color of the country is changing, and it is said that it is becoming darker. Racial debates affect the lives of Americans especially in the most heterogeneous cities. Probably, race is the most significant and debatable issue in American life. It has been argued that the observable differences of physical characteristics which separate the races are the most noteworthy features that shape intergroup relations. In addition to the social, cultural, economic, and political factors, these biological factors strengthen the endless challenges for power, identification and resources that happen between, among, and within American racial groups.

In the past, America was a white-dominated country but recently it has changed and the non-whites are becoming more and more visible. Consequently, race has appeared to be a major issue that influences the American daily life. It is certainly a big challenge that America is experiencing to deal with diversity and to find solutions to groups' problems and tensions. Race relations are improving in America these last thirty years. This does not mean, however, that tensions between various racial groups have completely vanished but there is no other nation which has so successfully taken in large and wide range of immigrants like this nation.

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<sup>66</sup>. Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), 64.

## **II. Categorizing by race in America**

It has been argued that classifying by race created clashes in America because of many reasons. First, the number of multiracial children increased, and, second, because large number of immigrants, who were visibly different, entered the country from the Caribbean, Arabia, and Latin America. The third reason is that some minority groups that had different physical appearance and who had been long rejected by the whites may reject other multiracial groups for the same reasons. Something should be done about it; every ethnic group should treat other groups as it wishes to be treated. Furthermore, though diversity is very important it should not be given more attention than it really deserves. But why are people classified by race? What race is all about?

Race has been defined as follows: a group of people who share the same biological and genetic features. Although it is sometimes used to refer to some distinct groups in the United States (we talk of racial relations for example), this concept is obsolete and is actually inappropriate to distinguish, in the twenty-first century, between human beings as no group can pretend to have conserved biological or genetic purity, with members who share the same physical attributes mainly because of intermarriage. As early as the nineteenth century, anthropologists have admitted that race could no longer answer issues of human difference and turned to a more realistic concept, the concept of culture.

Currently, observable differences can be explained by two competing viewpoints: “the Out of Africa and Multiregional evolution theories”. The whole problem is about where today’s people are from and how they developed noticeable race differences. The theory of “Out of Africa” is about those who originated in Africa thousands of years ago. Later, they left Africa about 80,000 years ago because of population pressures, and went to all parts of the world. Those who opposed this theory said that visible biological differences are due to geographical regions, and the necessary adaptation which gradually occurred after the arrival of various groups in different regions of the country.

Of course human beings have different races, characteristics, colors of skin, and ethnicity because of the weather conditions as well as the geographical regions. Therefore, the various ethnic groups have various languages, religions and so forth which bring about what is called observable differences. May be today, they are more observable than before simply because in the past people did not have as many means to travel as nowadays. And also, because of the role the media plays which shows us as really different.

Human races have been characterized by scientists based on physical features like the appearance, the color of the eye, hair type, and the color of skin. This characterization puzzled those scientists who wonder why race is used to classify human beings<sup>67</sup>. Before we can answer this question, let us first define this concept of race. Race is a social phenomenon that is widely related to social, cultural, political and historical context<sup>68</sup>. Race is given a great attention because of the meeting points of race with power and opportunity.

The biggest economy worldwide is the one with the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP); the American economy followed by the Chinese, Japanese, German, and then India. The United States of America has 4.6 per cent of the world's population and represents 22.7 percent of GWP (Gross World Product). In America, the most prosperous group is that of the whites. They live in the most powerful nation world-wide and their incomes are very high. No explanation has been provided so far to clarify the great difference between people and countries. Is it related to race? Are they successful and powerful just because they are white?

America remains the most powerful, richest and most important country in the world today. As we have already seen in chapter two, it becomes powerful due to the contributions of various immigrant groups and because diversity is part and parcel of American daily life. Also, American Brands and Products such as Coca Cola, Mickey Mouse, Mc Donald's, and Levi's control the world's market, thoughts, trade, and culture. Americans have always believed that they had been endowed with a special mission, to save the world. After the beginning of the "American Century" in the 1940's, it became necessary that America would play an important role in world's affairs. America fought against the Soviet Union for power in different political spheres around the universe.

In the post-Cold War period, scholars believed that "the policeman of the world" should guarantee security and well-being for its people first and then for the rest of the world. Countries have been divided into powerful countries like the United States, Japan, Germany and second world countries such as South Korea and third world countries like African countries. America spends huge sums of money to help the poorest countries all over the globe. Her help is

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<sup>67</sup> . Stringer and Mc Kie, *African Exodus*, 64; Jared Diamond, "Race Without Color", *Discover* 15 (November 1994): 83-89; David L. Wheeler, ' A Growing Number of Scientists Reject the Concept of Race', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 17, 1995, A9, A 15; Natalie Angier: " Do Races Differ? Not really, Genes Show", *New York Times*, August, 22, 2000, at F1.

<sup>68</sup> . Haney Lopez, *White by Law*, *passim*, especially 111-153; *Michael Omi and Howard Win ant, Racial Formation in the United States: from the 1960's to the 1990's*, 2 nd edition. (New York: Routledge, 1994) particularly 53-76, Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: the Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999)

insufficient because global problems like joblessness, poverty, malnutrition and inadequate health care continue to exist especially in the African countries where millions of people are suffering and starving to death.

Native-born Americans really benefit from the richness and prosperity of this nation simply because they were born in America. It has been argued that Americans do not fear any rebellion and/or political threat. Price rises is not a potential problem for Americans. Another prominent privilege is that Americans speak English which is the second language of most educated people in the world. The American currency is believed to be the most stable, the most changed and the most convertible. This currency is also dependable in exchanges between countries in trade, even by countries that use languages other than English. All these factors indicate the impact of American values, culture, American people and institutions on the rest of the world.

It has been said that Americans do not know the merits of being American till they leave their country, especially to a developing country. In these countries, second-class American visitors may experience bad conditions such as unpaved roads, the absence of electricity, and lack of communication means. But these ordinary Americans are considered as rich foreigners when compared to people from developing countries like Vietnam. In these bad circumstances, the Americans learn to be thankful and proud that many people around the world would envy them and admire them because they were born on the American soil.

But what is alleged about this country is that every one is living in good conditions; this is at least the image shown by the media. However, no one is sure whether or not every one shares the “Apple Pie” equally. To be sure, the whites dominated the work place while the people of color had been marginalized not only in the work place, but in universities, schools and elsewhere. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union tried to attack the United States with statements based on the unequal treatment of African Americans<sup>69</sup>. But today, America is trying to show itself as a place that represents its population. To what extent does this nation represent minority groups?

## **II.1. Race classification of Blacks and Indians**

Since the first US census in 1790, the ten-year orientation of Americans has always required questions about race, although the American population has changed over the years. During the 1960’s and the 1970’s, the Federal government’s civil-rights foundation required racial and

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<sup>69</sup> Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000)

ethnic statistics. So American schema was designed which was described in a document called Statistical Policy Directive N° 15. This document was chosen for *de jure* races: (white, black, Asian, Pacific Islander and American Indian) and for two ethnic categories (Hispanic and non-Hispanic).

The next classes were the one put forward by the Office of Management and Budget, in the revised version of Statistical Policy Directive N° 15:

White: “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa”.

Black or African American: “A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa”

Hispanic or Latino: “A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race”

Asian: “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam”.

American Indian or Alaskan Native: “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment”.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands”<sup>70</sup>.

Hispanics are considered as a distinct group and so David Hollinger called the five other classes: “the ethno-racial pentagon”. The five ethno-racial groups that constitute a pentagon are the five major races”: whites, blacks, Hispanics, African Americans and American Indians. The new adjustment to the US government’s racial choices after the addition of Pacific Islander” does not constitute an ethno-racial hexagon. In fact, groups like Hawaiians, Samoans, Guamanians, Tongans, Fijians, and other groups are considered as minority groups.

Problems of race go back to the first English contact with the blacks and Indians during the early European exploration. The English considered the blacks and Indians as barbarians, savages and inferior. However, they enslaved them and treated them in a very bad way, even worse; sometimes they were extremely unfair and cruel to them.

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<sup>70</sup> . Office of Management and Budget, “Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity”, Federal Register (October 30, 1997): 58782-58790.

Like the Africans, the Indians also suffered a great deal but their number did not exceed the one percent of the whole population, whereas African Americans constituted the largest minority. As a matter of fact, the Indians were treated in a better way compared to the blacks. This does not mean however that there were not any terrible and violent clashes against some Indian tribes. Some clashes are still remembered in history such as the Trial of Tears in 1830, the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864 and the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890.

When the whites took the Indians' lands and properties, they started to consider them as "noble savages" because they had never been a threat to the white Americans. Great Indian soldiers like Tecumseh and Sitting Bull were respected by the whites and even admired for their bravery and their will to maintain their own ways of life.

In the postwar II era, Native Americans remained a prominent part of the national legend. The Western in the 1950's and 1960's was more popular than the Wild West Shows. In these films, Native Americans were pictured either as bad characters, loyal and subservient henchmen or anonymous additional characters added to create an "authentic" picture. Also, in these films, Native Americans were most of the time the losers.

The black-white marriages were not very common in the United States in the past. It was even considered as something forbidden by law; however, the African women had been sexually abused by slave-owners, male relatives and/or those strangers who came to the United States. The children that resulted from these illegal relations whose skin was fairer were brought up as slaves, and if they joined schools reserved for the whites, they were considered as inferior to white children. It was a way to avoid troubles and to continue without obstacles. That is how the "one-drop" rule came into being which classified the biracial children who resulted from the marriages between blacks and whites. This classification was as follows: mulattoes (part-black in general), Quadroon (one-quarter black) and octoroons (one-eighth black)<sup>71</sup>. This rule has been referred to as the "one-drop rule".

White men also had sexual relationships with Indian women especially in regions where white females were rare. Although there were few laws to restrict these relations and/or marriages, the white men continued to marry Indian women and favored the mixed marriages. As a matter of fact, the children who were half white and half Indian appeared to be able to

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<sup>71</sup> Joel Williamson, *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (New York: 1980), 5-59; F. James Davis *Free Press, Who Is Black? One Nation's Definition* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 31-42; Kathy Russell and al, *the Color Complex, the Politics of Skin Color Among African Americans* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 9-29; Christine B. Hickman, "the Devil and the Drop Rule: Racial Categories, African Americans, and the US census", *Michigan Law Review* 95. (March 1997) 1161-1265.

assimilate into a white community rather than in any Indian one. Moreover, unions were formed which included blacks and American Indians mainly in the Southeast but the whites did not like such combinations. In the period prior to 1970, according to the US Bureau of the Census, “persons of mixed white and other parentage were usually classified with the other race. A person of mixed parentage other than white was usually classified by the race of his father, except that mixture of Negro and Indian were classified as Negroes unless the Indian stock was clearly predominant or unless the individual was accepted in the community in which he resided as an Indian”<sup>72</sup>

The “one-drop rule” was finally accepted in the twenties; the size of mulattoes and pure blacks increased, creating a new color which was brown. Their race was a mixture of African, European and American Indian origins. The Census Bureau’s classification provided a new face to the black population. From 1850 to 1920, the nation counted the number of blacks in the country, but after 1920, they stopped classifying the blacks and therefore a new definition of blacks was put forward. “A black was a person with some African blood who was different physically from a white person”<sup>73</sup>.

It has been argued that the “one-drop rule” still matters today. “A majority white person can self-identify, says Dominic Pulera, “as a black or American Indian and, in some cases Asian or Hispanic—and be considered a *de jure* racial minority in the United States—based on his or her fractionized amounts of non-white blood”. Some blacks may even have some European ancestry but they prefer to be identified as African Americans to show their pride and solidarity to their groups”<sup>74</sup>.

The problem is that many American people identify themselves as non-whites in order to benefit from Affirmative Action programs. A Eurasian woman identified as white but she was Asian American in order to take advantage from the financial-aid programs. Therefore, many mixed-race people are trying to identify as non-whites in universities and else where to receive special treatment.

The classification of blacks brought about interracial color segregation between African Americans. The majority of African American professors, doctors, teachers and businessmen were not dark-skinned or half black until the civil rights movement of the 1950’s and the 1960’s.

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<sup>72</sup> US Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Bicentennial Edition, Part 1.3

<sup>73</sup> Davis, *ibid*, 22, 42-80; Williamson, *ibid*, 61, 106, 108-109, 111-139

<sup>74</sup> . Dominic Pulera, *Visible Differences: Why Race Will Matter to Americans in the Twenty-First Century?*, The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2002, p.32-36

African Americans used various terms to classify the blacks in the United States. “High Yellow” described mullatoes who imitated racial inequality of the whites and tried to differentiate from the blacks by behaving differently and by having other traditions and practices. One of these practices was the “blue-vein” test, in which only people with visible veins were allowed to particular social settings. Another was the “brown paper” bag test, in which only people whose color of skin was fairer than the color of brown paper bags were permitted to be part of some church congregations. These classifications were racist and they aggravated the situation between blacks and whites.

The outstanding figure Marcus Garvey was the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL) and struggled hard to claim for blacks’ rights. During the 1920’s, some African Americans considered those blacks with a dark skin as really “black”, making some of their sisters and brothers with fair complexion to prove the things they say about their identity. During the late 1960’s, “blackness” became an ideology and a subject widely discussed among whites and Native Americans.

A similar interest was used to describe American Indians. Indians may be classified into three groups: those whose blood comes from an ancestry which belongs to one tribe, those who are physically Indians and whose heritage comes from more than a tribe, and/or biracial and multiracial Americans who categorize themselves with the Indians even though they have white, black or Asian blood. So who is an Indian? According to Dominic Pulera, a rare self-trained scholar, an Indian: *“is dependent on a particular tribe’s membership policies regarding the granting, denial, revocation, and qualification of Indianness. The tribal imprimatur is necessary if one wants to receive tribal benefits, occupy tribal land, and participate in tribal programs”*<sup>75</sup>.

Racial exogamy is the way to stop classifying by races. Amalgamation, whether through marriage or any other relations between and among races, is tolerated in the United States of America. Getting married to someone whose race is different from yours became common place especially among the youth. As a matter of fact, interracial marriage occurs between a white and a minority, not between two people of color or various races.

The media has a deep influence in shaping people’s opinion inside and outside America. The new image provided by the media in almost all the American movies is the role blacks play in

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<sup>75</sup> Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History since 1942* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 42-293, Rogers Worthington, “Who Belongs to Tribe? Casino Raises Wealth Raisers the Stakes”, *Chicago Tribune May Tribe Is at Odds Over Quarters; Fiction Wins Tribal Vote to Open Membership Rolls*”, Washington Post, April, 21, 1995, A3, David Foster, “Intermarriage Cloud of Indian Ancestry”, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, January 27, 1997, 13.



the American society. We always see a white policeman working hand in hand with a black or Asian one. Apart from movies, other blacks such as the famous golfer “Tiger Woods” who is the first “Cablinasian”; Asian, black, African American also add a positive image to the blacks living in America. Is the image provided by the media on the situation of blacks in this nation real? May be it is just fashionable today among youngsters to say that they have a black, an Asian and/or an Indian friend.

The blacks are becoming less visible simply because America is becoming more and more heterogeneous. The number of newcomers from Africa and the Middle East increased. As a matter of fact, most people coming from Africa and/or the Middle East are confused with the whites because they have a similar appearance with white Americans. However, it has been said that even though many Arabs are highly skilled and professional, they are sometimes segregated and marginalized simply because they were ethnically different or because they were Muslims.<sup>76</sup>

### **III. The Colour of the nation**

Some ethnic groups and minorities had long been excluded from America’s text books of the late twentieth century. Probably, unconsciously film makers and producers did not include various ethnic groups. Nowadays, however diversity in America is portrayed at least in text books so that the children at school would see different faces while they are learning. Again, America has made a big effort to put forward curricula that reflects issues like bilingualism and multicultural education. Also, it has tried to make all its inhabitants and citizens satisfied and never excluded.

But how can every citizen be satisfied in this nation of millions of people? Can we say that all the Iraqis living in America do not care about what is happening in their country? The same is true for the Japanese. Is it possible that all the Japanese living in America today have forgotten what occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945? Can blacks forget the long history of black conflicts and racism, and live as if nothing has happened?

Concerning the relations between Japan and America, it has been said that they enjoy friendly relations. There are several bilateral relations between the two countries; they exchange products and items of culture. Americans largely know some Japanese brands such as: Sony,

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<sup>76</sup> . for background on these issues, see Samia El Badry, “the Arab-American Market”, *American Demographics*, (January 1994):22-27, 30, Mehdi Bozorgmehr, Claudia Der Martirosian and Georges Sabagh, “Middle Easterners: A New Kind of Immigrant”, in Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, eds, *Ethnic Los Angeles*, (New York. Russell Sage Foundation, 1996) 345-378.

Suzuki, Honda, Toyota, and Toshiba. The Americans also like Japanese pop culture like Karaoke and Hello Kitty. Similarly, in Japan, some businessmen are trying to promote some American products and films. What is amazing is that even the movie Pearl Harbor was widely viewed by millions in Japan. The same is true for the blacks in America; the blacks are trying to live with the fact that slavery was a black point in the nation's history, but the new generations accept to coexist with the whites and the best proof is the number of black-white marriages in the United States.

In the past, there was an ethnic group which represented the majority: the one with the British ancestry. Europe was once the main supplier of immigrants until the 1990's. Nowadays, immigrants whose ancestors are from Britain do not consider themselves as an ethnic group. Despite the fact that the Welsh and the Scottish have their own cultural practices, there is no English American identity by itself. The power of the WASP was even strengthened by the fact that many African Americans have English surnames, which helped the Anglo-Saxons identify and appear as Americans.

Years ago, questions about citizenship involved racial classification and it had racial regulations. The native-born white Americans have been US citizens since 1789. The blacks were accepted later in 1868 while the other minorities like the American Indians became citizens in 1924. The Asians were accepted in 1952. In America, if a child is born on the American soil, even if his/her parents are without papers, he is an American citizen<sup>77</sup>. In addition, legal inhabitants of the nation who have been there for three to five years or more are entitled to apply for naturalization. May be, it is easier in America than elsewhere to get the citizenship for the foreign-born Americans and this is a positive point which can be added to the nation which has been referred to as the land of the Rising Sun.

Although the United States of America is predominantly Christian, Christianity is not the religion of the nation. It has been estimated that 59 per cent of Americans were Protestants and are the main sources of black communities. The White-Anglo Saxon Protestants (WASP), composed of old-stock Americans, mainly the English, dominated America for a long time. Gradually, other religious groups appeared like Irish Catholics, American Jews.

Liberal multiculturalists favor celebrations of non-western and non-European cultures. It has been argued that America is ruled by "white" standards with the exclusion of minorities, women, homosexuals and every one who is different from the white heterosexual men. Currently, the

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<sup>77</sup> . Ian Henry Lopez, *ibid.* p.

issue of “whiteness” is becoming very important, even universities and colleges now provide lectures about whiteness. As a matter of fact, whiteness has long and widely been observed by scholars, academics and students because it is an overarching fact; they are trying to investigate about race in its biological, legal, cultural, political and economic context. The antiracists believe that by studying the white majority in America, they will enhance better understanding of “white privilege” and hence get rid of racism and endorse diversity.

Before we can talk deeply about racism, it is necessary to define it as an institution which has long existed and will probably continue as long as there are visible differences. Racism is related to discrimination against some minority groups because they are powerless, without authority and/or because of their biological characteristics. Generally, minority groups are subordinate; they have less power and less protected supplies than do majority groups which are dominant and controlling. The problem is that the word “minority” has always been associated with numbers which is not the case today it has to do with incomes, authority, and power.

#### **IV. The social construction of race**

“Never judge a book by its cover”, this is what classifying by race is all about. The proverb informs about those who give so much importance just to the shapes and colors of things. Why have Americans misinterpreted this proverb when they started classifying by race? What really matters beyond black and white, blue or green is that we are human beings. It is true that we cannot be homogeneous but this really gives a flavor to our lives.

If you ask a white person what he thinks about a black person and how he/she would like him to be, what would he say? Why those who abused the blacks and mistreated them did not think for example about other things apart from the physical features. Why have not they considered their intellectual, emotional, and social qualities? What skills do those blacks have? What language or languages do they speak? What are their cultures? How do they spend their free time?

When the white person answers these questions, he/she would be able to classify using dimensions other than race, according to their values or cultures for instance. If this person could not accept people into his/her own circle, community and/or country, he/she is a racist. A racist then is someone who carries beliefs about categorical superiority and inferiority of socially defined groups assumed to share biological characteristics. Thus, the definition of blacks as

African Americans is the first step toward more understanding and more trustworthiness for these groups.

Racists should learn to see other groups which are visibly different from them as groups with rich cultures and that they were born equal exactly like them. So it is high time to stop giving much importance to biological features; instead let us view others with an eye of respect. It is the only way the United States can come out of divisive troubles that may threaten the future of this nation.

As part of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, political activists and antiracists artists and intellectuals of different cultural backgrounds came together to fight racism and segregation. To do this, they accepted the argument that human beings are biologically different, even if this idea was at the heart of racism and racial problems. To cure historical discrimination that included the blacks and other minorities, these reformers took in biological classification as legitimate. They believed that in order to achieve equity, there should be some race-based initiatives like affirmative action. This tactic appeared to be helpful in developing admission to privileges and sources by people of color.

But this plan emphasized visible differences and stratification. It makes race the most important measure for the share and allocation of commodities, services, and value. In this case, paying attention only to the physical appearance and mainly to the color of skin is justified by those who think that success has always been linked with biological features rather than culture. Some people even believe that the whites had dominated all fields simply because they were whites. This is totally wrong because if the whites had more power and privileges, it remains just insignificant and merely an exception. The Europeans are no more the dominant group in North America; there are some poor whites like other racially defined minorities. Their achievement to power and privilege is restricted and proscribed. Whiteness was said to be a positive feature, but it is by no means synonymous to natural economic, political and/or social superiority.

Socioeconomic partition is divided by educated leaders of various colors who dominate the political, cultural and economic spheres. One of the results of superficially planned partition and classification is the construction of internal collaboration, faithfulness, and behaviors by individuals. This organization helps to distinguish and protect one group of people from another. Race has long been used to distinguish between people, to protect some of them and make use of others. The racist Adolf Hitler used race to give reason for the extermination of Jews and

Gypsies in an attempt to strengthen German nationalism. Afrocentrists rely on race and racial centrism to organize and unify the “Black Atlantic”, including the sons and grand sons of the slaves.

Race is still regarded as either a disgrace or an indicator of superiority. Racial differences are at the heart of discrimination and they strengthen stereotypes about the nature and the culture of social groups. But mainstreamers are able to understand today that race is not simply a matter of color; is no more black and white. Race has not totally vanished but it is less important than in the past. The only way America can get through racial problems is by paying more attention to culture instead of race.

## **V. Race and Racism**

Like ethnicity, race is a matter of classes and classification and is not merely a biological fact. Ethnic groups, including races, originate from differences recognized and perpetuated in some societies, instead of scientific categorization based on universal genes.

Members of various groups may be regarded as different and particular by others because they have different languages, religions, countries, histories, ancestors, and/or physical appearances. When a group shares biological traits like blood or genes, it is referred to as a *race*.

Fifty years ago the famous anthropologist Ruth Benedict observed that: “*in world History, those who have helped to build the same culture are not necessarily of one race, and those of the same race have not all participated in one culture. In scientific language, culture is not a function of race*” (Benedict 1940, chapter2) Although there had been many scientific proofs which contradicted the segregation of people on the basis of race, discrimination continues today in America. Abolition and the Civil Right movement ended discrimination in behaviors but not in the minds of people. Americans are still hearing about the needs of the black race and the blame of the white race. The classification of human beings based on physical characteristics has been important in international and interpersonal relations for a long time. Unequal opportunity to employment, and education excessively continues to affect the people of color and minorities.

Moral codes have been also equally neglected. We tend to give more importance to economic and/or political position more than personal qualities or values. The Importance given to race often prevails over consideration of individual moral values. Parents may forbid any case of interracial marriage in the family. Youngsters of mixed unions may fight to establish and to emphasize an acceptable racial identity.

Racism rests on the belief that some groups are inferior by nature to others, and hence they must be dominated by other groups, by the superior groups by nature. In America, until the 1960s, blacks were dominated and this was an institution supported by the government. African Americans were deprived from their rights and they were neither allowed to do some jobs, nor to vote or be part of social life. Despite all attempts to say that racism exists in America, many people can assure through personal experience that it is less harsh than before. The antiracists reject the classification of human beings on the basis of their physical appearance and they also reject the superiority and inferiority of groups. Instead, they suggest abandoning the behavior based on one's physical characteristics and participate in activities to fight racism.

Legislations have played a prominent role in increasing social equality. Federal actions against racism included the Civil Right Act of the 1960s which fought segregation in public places like in factories and schools, the Voting Right of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Affirmative Action can be described as a set of policies put forward to raise the involvement of blacks and other minorities in places which had long been dominated by the whites. These strategies which are not yet totally accepted require employers to hire black workers and universities to accept black students and other minorities.

The Civil Rights movement and the black movement encouraged a second look of race as a concept and grouping. Such procedure has gone faster through the Afrocentric orientation of many African Americans and the native movements of other minorities. Race and culture have been reclaimed, redefined and reexamined by minority leaders and their supporters. In these new rights, there was more justice, more privileges and freedom. The leaders tried to correct the injustices of the past by stating race as the basis for their unity, identity and strength. They used race as the basis for explaining segregation and organizing trust and unity. The united voice of these cultural founders of color announced "it is about race, everybody!" The table in the index is a proof that African Americans are represented in the American society and that they fill high positions.

## **VI. Life opportunities for Blacks and Whites in America**

Some white children living in Saint Paul, in Minnesota would not think that their mother tongue and the language they learn at school, is different from the English spoken by Americans who live outside the Midwest. In Saint Paul, native English speakers speak simple English, in which no accent can be detected. Probably, those kids living in Saint Paul do not even know how

they speak English; they only learn about the way they should speak when they meet someone from another region. Apart from that, in every region, every one believes that his accent is the best.

The introduction of radio and television helped the promotion and the advancement of a homogeneous kind of American English. Although this accentless English was homogeneous, dialects like Southern Regional English<sup>78</sup> remain resilient. As far as some one remains in Saint Paul, for example, s/he will not experience any differences in accent, nor will he/she suffer from any accent discrimination. However, if he/she leaves Saint Paul to another area in order to study or get a job, he/she may face regional prejudice simply because of the use of a different accent.

During the twentieth century, white residents of Saint Paul developed a homogeneous accent, similar to the European new comers' and their descendents and they assimilated into the English-speaking culture. Consequently, the majority of whites in Saint Paul speak English as their first language. Even in the past, there had been few people who spoke a foreign accent. Also, few newcomers have entered the region of Saint Paul and this clearly shows that the region remains, to a large extent, homogeneous.

Of course, even within the white people speaking English in Saint Paul, there are different levels of proficiency. These linguistic differences are generally due to socioeconomic status. Most of the time, skilled people speak better English where the uneducated people's speech is non standard and informal. Nonetheless, the white residents of Saint Paul generally have no regional dialect.

In Saint Paul or any other area in the United States, linguistic differences exist side by side with observable differences. Similar to Minneapolis, Saint Paul is currently heterogeneous. As it was estimated by the newest census, whites represent 64 percent, Asian 12.3 percent, African Americans 11.4 percent, Latinos 7.9 percent, multiracials 3.1 percent and native Americans 1 percent. There are many Latinos living in Saint Paul region. As a matter of fact, more than 4/10 students in Saint Paul public schools have been speaking a language other than English since their childhood<sup>79</sup>.

Those who are proficient in the English language are more willingly to get a good job in Saint Paul and elsewhere in the United States. In addition, black vernacular English is widely used in Saint Paul, where there are hundreds of poor, working-class people who speak informal

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<sup>78</sup> Dominic Pulera, *Visible Differences: Why Race Will Matter to Americans in the Twenty-First Century*, p.40

<sup>79</sup> . Sandra Stotsky, *Losing Our Language : How Multicultural Classroom Instruction Is Undermining Our Children's Ability to Read, Write, and Reason* ( New York: Free Press, 1999)

English. Yet, many of African American people living in Saint Paul speak Standard English and some of them are proficient. Currently, the city is marked with the linguistic diversity which clearly reveals the homogeneity of Saint Paul city.

When they speak, Americans define themselves; they talk about their social class, their level of education and if or not they learned their English from a native speaker. To a certain extent, the linguistic characteristics are very important. Accent discrimination is obviously illegal; no one can discriminate the English used for example by an employer simply because he/she does not like a particular accent. If a firm hires only English speakers whose accent is similar to the one spoken by native-born inhabitants of Twin Cities, no body will apply for such jobs.

Yet, for simple jobs all over the United States, especially ones which require employees to communicate, any type of regional or foreign accent is similar to an impediment-ungrammatical language. Consequently, many Americans from the South or the Northeast started going to speech coaches and special schools so as to avoid anything that might lessen their progress. To sum up, the native-born inhabitants of Saint Paul are beneficial in the sense that their accent is accentless by nature.

The very important question posed in this chapter is: does every group benefit from the welfare or the “Apple Pie” equally? Of course the answer is not and any example may remain merely an exception. There are many black Americans who are very successful like Oprah Winfrey; this lady is about to be the first black woman billionaire in the American history. The black Americans started to benefit from the American dream but it would be really wrong to say because Oprah made it out of poverty and became successful that other African Americans are not affected by segregation and racism. The gap between Oprah and the poor people living in the ghettos today is very wide and shows that the black people live in different socioeconomic settings.

The majority of African Americans are sons of slaves and even when slavery ended, they continued to be affected. It is true that racism in the United States almost disappeared but it took a long time and movements like the Civil Right Movement to arrive to what we see in today’s America. In 1896, the Supreme Court made a decision known as the *Plessy vs. Ferguson*; it is about the doctrine of “Separate but Equal”, which brought about segregation by law between blacks and whites in the South until the Court decision made in 1954<sup>80</sup>. During the five decades

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<sup>80</sup> *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, 163 US. 537 (1896) ; *Brown vs. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)



that followed, the program of second-class citizenship for blacks was referred to as “Jim Crow” which meant the creation of segregated schools, theatres, hotels and other public accommodations.

The Civil Right movements of the 1950’s and the 1960’s put an end to *de jure* discrimination. During the Truman government, discrimination in the armed-forces had come to an end. Also among the white educated elites, there had been better understanding of blacks in America. However, during the mid-1950s, the racial regime which occurred after Reconstruction had not changed almost everywhere.

In the North real segregation or racism could hardly be noticed. African Americans had good positions and could vote like the whites. However in the South, discrimination could be felt in public schools, restaurants, hotels ...etc. Gradually, discrimination started to affect housing, salaries, education and health of blacks in the northern areas.

The situation in the South was unbearable. The segregation which was called “Separate but equal” was still there and developing in buses, schools, public places and in every aspect of daily life. The law segregated the blacks and the whites; black children went to segregated schools. In addition, blacks had their own buses, streetcars, trains, and in waiting rooms; even churches were discriminated as if the blacks were affected by an epidemic.

There had been several attempts to end these laws which segregated the whites and the blacks. However, in the case of the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896) the Supreme Court stated that the places may be kept separate but equal. After the end of the Second World War, and exactly in the 1950s, the black facilities were very inferior compared to the whites’.

Also, there had been important issues of voting. As a matter of fact, in the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment of the U.S constitution, it is clearly stated that blacks’ exclusion from the vote is illegal. However, in the South, African Americans were not allowed to vote. The result of Jim Crow and the lack of civil rights was a system that existed in the south which made derision of American democracy.

Despite the fact that the non-Southern white Americans supported the efforts to end discrimination, they did not support Affirmative Action policies and social welfare programs which helped many African Americans and minorities in the 1960s and the years which came after.

The crucial question when dealing with black and white issues is how can we then define equality and equal opportunity before we can tell whether every ethnic group benefits from the

welfare or not? It has been argued that equality is not a fact in the American society, and that the government is making big efforts to control it. Many Americans treat people differently according to their race, clothing styles, and possession. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that one day blacks could be free. He believed that all men were created equal. One ideal of American Democracy was expressed in King's words: *"I have a dream that one day my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today."* King's meaning of that was people must value others on the basis of their values, not their physical appearance. Martin would have been so glad if he were alive today to see, not only mixed black-white schools and universities, but a black president from African origins.

The answer to the question of "is America indeed built upon equal opportunity and for equality in general" is yes. Americans must bear in mind that they are still a baby country in progress compared to a kingdom like England; they are still developing. They are trying to develop those opportunities every year. The real assumption is that diversity will follow equality making people equal, and society will be less separated and more diverse. As prejudices, hatred, and obstacles to political action decreased, people on both sides will be more willing to come together with those of different races. At least, equality should be the primary focus, with diversity being a secondary objective.

## Conclusion

So far this chapter has dealt with one of the most controversial issues in the United States: Race relations. America is more willingly able to undertake bigger power to include every citizen in this country; every one can share the welfare provided that he/she works hard to achieve the America Dream.

Throughout the country, and especially in the South, efforts to seek racial reconciliation share three aims: to get beyond the black past, and to stop showing feelings of grudge and/or establish interracial amity, and to help more Americans be part of the American Dream. These events show clearly that racial problems in America remain of central importance.

The topic of race continues to rise hundreds of questions even within American ordinary people daily lives. No one can deny that there had been a long history of hostility, hatred, prejudice and anger but most Americans today are trying to make up for the past mistakes, to clear stereotypes and to promote communication between racial entities in this nation.

It has been said that no one in the country is ever oppressed by inequality imposed on minorities in America. Yet, slavery was such a black past for a powerful country like the United States. Of course, many Americans, even the whites who once were racist, believe that freedom is the right of every human being which was given by God and that all humans are all created equal by God. Why racism at all, then? Americans can come out of divisive colour problems only if they understand that despite the fact that they have various colours, they are great with amazing features that have to be appreciated.

Of course, America is trying to reimburse for those whose parents and grand parents were slaves. Slaves served in wars but also worked hard in lands and farms; they made endless contributions to the development of the US economy. Advocates of reimbursement do not agree on the way they would repair for the mistakes of the past and how much would be the budget to “clean” or at least lessen the dishonour and troubles of slavery.

This trial to repair for slavery started to gain huge support by African-Americans in the 1990’s, especially after the payment of \$ 20,000 to those Japanese Americans who survived during World War II. But what is surprising is that there is no formal apology made by the government to the sons and grand sons of slaves. However, Affirmative Action repaired for blacks and they are the first to be remembered in any event.

Despite the big troubles (caused by discrimination and racism) and the uncertainty that the nation still faces, America remains united. As we have seen in the first and the second chapter, Americans united faster since World War II, getting over ethnic, racial, religious and socioeconomic boundaries. America has got over its dilemmas by believing in mottos like “united we stand, divided we fall”, “In God We Trust” and “Out of Many, One”.

Looking toward the future, even if the whites became a minority in America, they are not going to be powerless. White-dominated states like New Mexico and California and cosmopolitan cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles are a good example. In this case, the power is shared. In order to keep stability, power in the United States should be divided between the dominant groups and the racial and ethnic minorities.

## **General Conclusion**

In general, race and ethnicity have always been debatable issues in the United States and elsewhere. For some, race and diversity have created clashes and divisiveness in and between nations. Others believe that diversity does more good than harm and they tend to see race as a fact which had always existed and will continue to be part of the American society in the future.

This dissertation has sought to investigate about the state, conditions, and opinions of some ethnic groups like the Albanians, the Arabs and the Polish Americans vis-a-vis issues like multiculturalism, bilingualism and assimilation. The results of the questionnaire revealed that they believe in unity and in diversity and that it is an enhancement rather than a barrier. Also, there was a demonstration that despite the misunderstandings, the prejudices and the stereotypes, all the ethnic groups live in harmony in the most heterogeneous country. After all, this nation is their country and it does not belong to one ethnic group only.

It also tried to examine why America is a world super power and how it emerged from the Second World War so strong in all fields. What is interesting about the period right after World War II, is that all the problems seemed ready to be solved. The economy was flourishing, and medicine as well as other sciences developed. Even the family structure changed the impact of the mass media and the toleration of more sexual practises. But the most important of all these events is that women and minorities started asking for their rights.

Finally there was an attempt to investigate whether or not racism still exists in the country which is said to be a democracy. It was also dealt with some major events and how problems of discrimination are related to biological features and race. Surely, racism will always exist not just in America but in the world as long as people have different colours of skin. Racial relations have improved greatly especially with Obama. However, this does not mean that America is not undergoing dilemmas related to race and/or ethnicity. Today; clashes between and among ethnic groups have been there since early colonial times especially between the blacks and the whites. The only difference that is worth mentioning is that these problems are not as serious as they were in the past. At least today, there is nothing like segregated buses and/or schools.

Americans overcame the problem of divisiveness by admitting that diversity is power rather than a weakness, an asset rather than a threat. Even when they accepted diversity and they worked hard under the motto "Out of Many One", it was not all the time true because it has been said that some of them had been marginalized. This saying is to a certain extent true if we

consider the long years of racism and segregation of the blacks but this has almost come to an end in the nation where dreams come true.

Hence, the present dissertation was an attempt to prove that diversity is strength to the nation, that ethnic groups have contributed to the making of a world super power and that America is a land where equal life chances are given to every individual regardless of his/her origins, religion, race and/or sexual orientation.

## Appendix

### **Headline: President Assailed On School Bill Veto:**

*Civil Rights advocates and Chicago school officials have denounced the presidential veto of a bill that would have provided \$20 million to help desegregate Chicago's public schools...of the 435,000 students in Chicago's board of education said, 61% are black, 20 % Hispanics, 16% are white and 3 % are Asian. Officials said black and Hispanic children accounted for 90% of the enrolment in schools that would have received aid....The Administration has cited Chicago's desegregation plan as a model of how to integrate urban schools, without mandatory bussing, but has opposed court orders to help bring about desegregation by financing the upgrading of education in Black and Hispanic neighbourhoods. (International Herald Tribune, August, 16, 1983)*

### **Headline: Latinos Charge Administration Ignores Them:**

*Four national Latino organisations have attacked the administration on issues ranging from jobs to foreign policy, charging that the president has misrepresented his record on issues affecting Hispanic Americans:... 'This president has done very little to address the problems of Hispanics', Arnold Torres, of the Latin American Citizens, said... 'I guess we are third in line' He scoffed at M. Reagan's statement to a Mexican American audience at El Paso that he had served enchiladas to queen Elizabeth of Britain when she visited his ranch. 'That was not a joke', Mr Torres said. 'Hispanics want more than to know what is on the menu'. (International Herald Tribune, August 26, 1983)*

### **Headline: Asian-Americans See Growing Bias:**

*Asian-American leaders say they are alarmed by what they regard as rising discrimination against their people. As a result, they are forming political action organisations around the country that are unifying traditionally rival ethnic groups, including Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, and Vietnamese... 'It has come to the point that as long as you 'look' Asian, you are open to attack, regardless of which group you belong to', said Stewart Kwoh; director of the Asian Pacific Legal Centre... 'the only road open for us is to get active politically, by unifying all the Asians to form a viable force, so when we speak, we speak in one voice', said Lin Chung...The rising tension between Asians and blacks was reflected this month in the Los Angeles Sentinel which calls itself the largest black-owned newspaper in the west. In a blunt, four-part series, the newspaper reported that scores of businesses in black areas had recently been 'taken over' by Asians... 'It is usually other minority groups who resent Koreans and give troubles to them', said Dongo Soo Ha, of the Korean Association of New York. 'Some are Hispanics, some black, some Haitians, it depends on the neighbourhood.'... 'A lot of the Anglo parents think these kids are slowing down classes', said Betty Waki, Japanese American high school teacher. Some parents have complained that the inability of many Asian*

*children to speak English has required bilingual teaching programs that they say impede the progress of other children. (New York Times, September, 10, 1983)*

**Headline: quixotic Sentencing:**

*Two nights before he was to be married, Vincent Chin and three friends went out to celebrate in a Detroit bar. During the course of the evening, a fight broke out between Mr Chin and his friends and two white men. An eye witness said that Mr Chin, a Chinese American, was mistaken for Japanese, and that hard times in the Motor City have increased racial animosity toward Asians in general but whatever the cause of the dispute, no one denies that Mr. Chin was beaten to death with a baseball bat by the two white men. (New York Times, May, 6, 1983)*

**Table1.1 Some Facts about African Americans**

*Population*

In 2000, there were about 35.5 million American; 12.3 percent of the US population.

*US population*

In 2000, 54 percent of all African Americans lived in the South (versus 33 percent of whites), 18 percent in the Northeast, 19 percent in the Midwest, and 8 percent in the West.

The nation’s African-American population is young, with an estimated median age of 30, five years younger than the median for the US population as a whole.

The African-American population is expected to grow more than twice as fast as the white population between 1995 and 2020, reaching 45.1 million. After 2016, more African-Americans than non-Hispanic whites would be added to the U.S. population each year.

*Business*

Between 1987 and 1997, the number of businesses owned by African Americans almost doubled, growing from 242,165 to 823,499.

Between 1987 and 1992 receipt for black-owned firms rose 63 percent, compared with 67 percent for the United States as a whole.

*Education*

In 2000, 78 percent of African American aged 25 and over had a high school diploma, versus 51 percent in 1980 (and 88 percent for whites in 2000).

In 2000, 16.5 percent of African Americans and 25 and over had a college degree or higher; versus 8 percent in 1980. (The corresponding figures for whites were 28 percent in 2000, compared with 18 percent in 1980)



### *Marriage and family*

In 1980, 45 percent of African American women 15 years old and over were married. By 2000, the percentage had dropped to 30.5 percent. The corresponding figures for African Americans men were 49 and 38.5 percent. Considering the percentage of families headed by women, with no husband present, the 2000 figure was 44 percent for African Americans, versus 13 percent for non Hispanic whites.

In 1998, the typical African American family consisted of 3.4 members, larger than the average of 3.0 members of non-Hispanic white families but smaller than the average of 3.9 members for Hispanic families.

### *Occupation and earnings*

African-American women, age 16 and over, were more likely than white women to participate in the labor force (64 percent versus 61 percent). For men the reverse was true, with 68 percent participation by African Americans and 74 percent by whites.

In 2000, the proportion of African American men in managerial and professional jobs was 18 percent, versus 32 percent for white men. African American men were twice as likely as white men to work in service occupations (19 percent versus 9 percent).

For women in 2000, 25 percent of African American women, versus 35 percent of white women, worked in managerial and professional occupations.

### *Income and poverty*

Median household income of African Americans increased from \$30,439 in 2000, the highest ever, in terms of real income. The 2000 figure for non-Hispanic whites was \$45,856. Half (51 percent) of African-American married couple families had incomes of \$ 50,000 or more, compared with 60 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

Between 1993 and 2000, poverty rates dropped for African Americans (from 33 percent to 22 percent) and for whites (from 12 percent to 8 percent)<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Source: Collins 1996; and U. S. census 2002.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation deals with Ethnic and Racial Diversity in Post-war II American society between 1945 and 1960. In a multicultural society, some clashes may occur around issues like assimilation and multiculturalism, the sharing of the welfare in a prosperous society and the equal versus unequal life chances. These ethnic groups have contributed in a positive way in making America a world super power. It is said that diversity is enrichment to the country as a whole. Nevertheless, some people warn that it may bring about issues such as which language they are going to speak and whether or not they should retain their specific markers. It is true that many Americans have chosen to assimilate and become part of the “melting pot” while others think that it is just a myth and that the pot (America) did not include every one especially the people of colour. It is said that racism and discrimination still exist in USA but is less prevalent and apparent like in the past. Martin Luther King’s dream has not only become true but an African American President, Barrak Obama was elected. In Obama’s speech about race, he put it “out of many, we are truly one”

### **Key words:**

Multiculturalism; Assimilation; Social Distance; Diversity; Ethnic Groups; Gender; Racial Equality; The Civil Right Movement ; The Affirmative Action Programs; Life Opportunities; Racism; USA; Eliminating The Racial Barrier.