

What does it mean to be american

Sociology



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What does it mean to be American? The migration of people to the United States has always been a usual phenomenon. The United States is attractive by the spirit of freedom and a lot of opportunities, which seem magical for many foreigners. Notwithstanding that immigrants face many problems in the foreign country, such as problems with finding a job and a place to live as well as racial intolerance, these challenges can't stop them. Many people come to the United States in order to give their children an opportunity to be born in America and become Americans. The question is who Americans are today and if they are just the individuals, who were born in the United States. The contemporary America is not a country of citizens who were born in the United States more than 100 years ago. The majority of American citizens came to the United States not very long ago. According to Lee and Bean, "by the year 2002, the number of foreign-born people living in the United States exceeded 34.2 million, with the size of the U. S.-born second generation about 31.5 million, so that immigrants and their children accounted for almost 66 million people, or about 23% of the U. S. population" (Lee and Bean, 2012, p. 87). The number of immigrants is not going to decrease and foreigners keep moving to the United States searching for better life. Young people come to the USA in order to receive good education and then try to stay in America and build a family there. So, the United States is not only a multinational country, but also a mix of many different cultures, religions, values and principles. To be American means to have freedom of word, freedom of choice, many opportunities. There is no other country in the world, where one can have so much freedom. I am sure that it is the spirit of freedom and democracy that connects all the immigrants and makes them American. Certainly, immigrants have their own

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cultural identity that is determined by their religious beliefs, occupation, types of behavior. The attitude towards race and culture has also changed greatly as Smedley points out: “ today scholars are beginning to realize that “ race” is nothing more and nothing less than a social invention. It has nothing to do with the intrinsic, or potential, qualities of the physically differing populations, but much to do with the allocation of power, privilege, and wealth among them” (Smedley, 2012, p. 47). After the realization of truth about race in the American society, Americans became people who were treated equally, no matter what color of skin they have, what culture they belong to and what their sexual orientation is. As America represents the most developed country in the world, the changes in the attitude towards discriminative groups is also changing rapidly in this particular country. The most vulnerable question is the relation between sexes. Women are still being abused and face terrible discrimination. It is important to note that even in the United States the changes in relations between sexes and in the attitude towards women started happening not very long ago as Kimmel writes: “ a dramatic transformation in thinking about gender . . . has occurred over the past thirty years. In particular, three decades of pioneering work by feminist scholars, both in traditional disciplines and in women’s studies, has made us aware of the centrality of gender in shaping social life” (Kimmel, 2012, p. 120). Before the attention was paid mainly to social and racial discrimination, and all the changes that were made, such as providing women with the right to vote, did not change much in reality. However, during the last thirty years feminists did much to change the attitude towards women in the society. It is no need to say that feminists mostly succeeded in the American society. Many people criticize the idea of <https://assignbuster.com/what-does-it-mean-to-be-american/>

American dream saying that it is just a myth that disappoints foreigners, who come to America in order to improve their standard of living. They may be right to some extent, but the facts show and I think that the United States is really the most developed and democratic state in the world. To be American means to be free forever and to be treated equally and respectfully, no matter what country you came from. Certainly, racial, gender and other kinds of discrimination still present in the American society, but people suffer from unequally not so much as in other states. Modern Americans are people who were looking for good and found it in the developed state that provided them with a great number of opportunities. References Kimmel, Michael S. (2012). The Gendered Society. in Rosenblum, Karen E. & Travis, Toni-Michelle C. The Meaning of Difference. USA: McGraw Hill Lee, Jennifer, Bean, Frank D. (2012). America's Changing Color Lines: Immigration, Race/Ethnicity and Multiracial Identification. in Rosenblum, Karen E. & Travis, Toni-Michelle C. The Meaning of Difference. USA: McGraw Hill Smedley, Audrey. (2012). "Race" and the Construction of Human Identity. in Rosenblum, Karen E. & Travis, Toni-Michelle C. The Meaning of Difference. USA: McGraw Hill