

# Critical thinking on the american dream

[Art & Culture](#), [American Dream](#)



There is no doubt that the American dream was a wonderful concept designed to invoke a sense of prosperity and independence in addition to portraying a patriotic imagery of motherhood and homemade happiness. To a larger extent, the American dream meant some prosperity in form of re-examining American cultural affiliations. The American Dream was defined from a narrow minded perspective where individuals were expected to have a family composed of a husband, wife, and kids. While husbands were expected to work, wives were supposed to stay at home and take care of the children (Kate 113). In situations where husbands had to be separated from their families because of work, the wives left behind were forced to undergo difficult times and uncertain moments (Kate 117, 120). As depicted in the film *Iron Jawed Angels*, women were deprived their rights to fight for voting rights and any efforts to fight for these rights was followed by suffering characterized by tough conditions. Today, defining the American Dream implies a different concept depending on sex, sexual orientations, and gender identity among others. This new definition can be attributed to the existence of gay people, single individuals, and homeless people. By virtue of this new definition, these individuals have different “ American Dreams” from those with a family or those hoping to have a family with children.

Public display of affection among individuals with similar sexual orientations was a subject associated that generated heated debates and raised many a controversy among many individuals based on the definitions of the American Dream. However, the Stonewall Riots of 1969 sparkeded a new generation of “ gay families” whose sexual orientations inspired the need for their liberations. Humphreys (5) depicts a situation where members of the

Gay community referred to each other as Sisters and Brothers drawn together by their commitment. By speaking publicly about their love and pride in being Gay, these new generation provided a new dimension to the American Dream. The situation depicted by Annie Proulx in the Brokeback Mountain where homosexuals (Ennis and Jack) made a resolution to keep their passionate encounters a secret shows denial among gays. In the contemporary American society, gays and bisexuals have received legal recognition in several states. Anti-discrimination laws based on sexual orientations have been passed thereby allowing same-gender individuals to marry.

With the above implications, defining the new American dream based on sexual orientations and gender identities will entail the re-imagining the current events and focusing on issues that matter. The new American dream involves encapsulating and representing the new found freedom on issues once considered controversial such as same-sex couples and the liberty to work irrespective of gender or race. The new American dream is characterized by seeking happiness from an individual perspective rather than seeking happiness from an individual perspective. Same-sex couples are allowed to openly declare their public display of affection without raising elicited feelings. Federal laws have been passed where same-sex marriages are recognized. This has significantly reduced cases of gay rights activists fighting for their rights. Equally, the rights of women to seek electoral positions and make important leadership decisions are highly recognized. Interestingly, a women is a contender for the upcoming presidential elections with a higher possibility of being elected. Democracy is open and equality

exists between men and women. Married women can go to work and men take care of the home and kids. Simply put, there are no discriminations in gender, sexual orientations, and sex whatsoever in the new American Dream. However, the new American Dream is faced by endless opposition from conservative religions who uphold different dogmas.

The revolutionary American dream is primarily based on the freedom to make personal choices that lead to individual happiness. This definition eliminates boundaries that only limit the focus of Americans to living a life of success and prosperity. Based on this new definition of the American dream, the biggest beneficiaries include the minority groups who mostly tend to be disadvantaged because of sex, gender identity, and sex identity. The early definition of the American dream tended to lean more towards education and religion as the primary factors that shaped culture and mindset of people to prosper. However, the redefined American dream focuses away from the religion and education.

Since the early times of the great awakening, the American culture has always been shaped by the religious beliefs of Christianity. The second awakening spawned reforms in the education sector. This made it possible for the well educated members of the middle class to receive opportunities for personal development. The idea of success in the market place was based on a college degree (Proulx 23). However, the market tends to become more competitive as time moves by and the focus is now not on college degrees but on the value people add in the market place. Therefore women would tend to be one of the biggest beneficiaries of the redefined American dream. The idea of limiting the options women have to just staying

at home and take care of the families is no longer borne within the new definition of American dream.

The idea of basing the general American culture on Christianity meant that people who lean towards a certain sexual orientation would not have their place in the society. They would be discriminated upon and unable to live freely with the acceptance of whom they are. At the same time, the position that religion took when it comes to gender is that women are generally a weaker sex (Proulx 34). Therefore, men got to enjoy most of the privileges that life had to offer while women stay in the homes taking care of their families. Freedom to make choices aimed towards personal satisfaction and happiness places women and gay people as the biggest beneficiaries of the redefined American dream.

The idea of giving people freedom to make choices on their own does not benefit everyone as some segments of the society will be affected. If the redefined American dream tolerates gay rights, then this implies that conservatives would be affected. Homosexuality is one area that is strongly condemned in the society. Before the gay liberation movement in 1970, there was little concern about the rights of gay people (Stonewall). However, the American culture has had quite some significant shifts as gay culture came out of the closet. Basically, the people against gay and homosexuality will be the biggest casualties of the redefined American dream. As the society tends to change its perception against the gay community, conservatives will only be forced to watch and accept situations the way they are. Concerns are however on the moral implications of homosexuality. Despite the fact that gay people need their own rights, morality tends to

decay and this is the biggest worry of the people against same sex orientation (Stonewall).

On the other hand, encouraging women to pursue whatever they focus their minds in may not be entirely pleasing to everyone. It has been argued that women who pursue careers and the need to rise up the corporate ladder would be forced to balance between family and work or simply opt for either family or work. Neglecting family will have a negative impact in the society as children will be raised in an environment that is perceived to encourage deviant behaviors. Less restricting boundaries of the American dream would have meant more freedom for everyone within the American society. The main problem was the fact that the early culture was primarily built upon religion which encouraged ideas that limit people with a particular gender identity and sexual identity.

In conclusion, the redefined American dream will tend to focus on the freedom of individual to make personal choices that makes them happy. This will involve being non-discriminatory upon the gay community and the women. This category of people have been involved in decades of battle their rights to be recognized. The feminist movement during the 70s and the gay liberation movement in 1970 were the two main vehicles used to bring acceptance of women and gay. Earlier definition of the American dream was based on religion and education which created boundaries that limited sections of the society into experiencing prosperity and success. Redefining the American dream still creates hopes for achieving success and prosperity however the boundaries need to be less restricting in order to include everyone within the society to live the American dream.

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