

Liberty essay

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



Liberty is a term used to denote several kinds of freedoms that are granted to people depending on their form of governance. This includes a myriad of freedoms such as the freedom of expression, religious freedom, and political freedom. America was founded on the realms of justice, independence, and liberty. Although, the words liberty and freedom could sometimes be used differently, ideally, they mean almost the same thing. At the time of writing the constitution in 1770's, most American families had stayed in America for a long period of time (Choby 2). They were used to the concept of liberty. This prompted Jefferson to coin the word unalienable rights to refer to rights, which could not be taken away (such as the right to life and the pursuit for happiness) by the government during the constitution making process. The American constitution is established to safeguard economic, civil, personal, social, political and cultural liberty. This is best expressed through the chapter on the bill of rights. Economic liberty entails the ability to pursue interests that fulfill one's calling in life. The American founding fathers envisaged a capitalist country in which underlies the freedom to trade and engage in contracts. Free trade and free markets reign in both domestic and international trade.

America's founding fathers believed that civil liberty is enjoyed when the citizens can practice their freedom without restriction from the government (Nelson 59). They ensured that political liberty is guaranteed when people participate in a process that determines how they are governed. This also puts into consideration freedom of speech. When people enjoy the freedom to express themselves, they have a right of to engage in demonstrations and form associations. The founding fathers also envisioned personal liberty.

Personal liberty involves allowing people to do as their conscience pleases. The personal liberty also entails the right to exchange property with others and the right to own property. The people also have freedom of movement. Freedom of movement involves the right to migrate to other areas and the right to exit to a destination of choice. Social and cultural liberties are enjoyed when people choose the people they associate with, and their values are not interfered with. It also entails religious freedom. In America, there is a clear-cut difference between the state and faith. This is the reason why there is no religion enforced by the state. Therefore, people are able to profess the faith of their choice.

America's vision of liberty is based on the ideals of spreading freedom. As a result, the political, economic and social issues are put across in the context of furthering liberty and individual rights. This is meant to advance people's lives, health and prosperity and the nation's future (Fischer 57). Emphasis is on the rule of law that requires equality in front of the law courts and the right to a reasonable trial in a court of law. For example, Americans cannot be held in custody for a long period without filing charges against them. Suspects also have a right to representation and to a fair trial.

Liberty is acquired hence it is susceptible to loss depending on the place and time. This forms the basis for restricting some liberties. This occurs when people interfere with the liberties of other people. The state may also restrict or suspend some liberties in case of a national emergency (Wilson, DiIulio and Bose 78). For instance, this occurred under Lincoln's presidency when certain rights were suspended. It was at the time when America was experiencing civil war. The right of unions to associate was restricted as it

was deemed to be a threat to national peace (MacKay 10).

Liberty has a philosophical dimension, and this was expressed by philosophers such as John Locke and Jacques Rousseau. Both philosophers popularized the idea that human beings have rights that cannot be taken away by the society or by any external authority. This philosophical spirit informed the founding fathers when designing the constitution (Murrin et al 21).

The spirit of expressing liberty forms the backbone of American, foreign policy. There is a need to protect the people to enable them to exercise their liberty to the fullest. The government can only exercise powers bestowed to it by the people (Immerman 18). Governance draws a lot from the social contract theory as envisioned by philosophers such as John Locke. In exercising their liberty, the structures of government and the system of governance are determined by the people. The government is, therefore, entrusted to do all it can to safeguard the people's interest (Gill 13). This is the reason why the American government is based on trust, sovereignty and being answerable to the people.

The context of liberty in America has been evolving with time, as the minorities push to have their demands recognized and appreciated. For example, women and minorities are now able to vote and participate in democratic processes. This is a sharp contrast to the past when such rights were denied. Such calls also form the basis for the massive uproar need to enshrine same-sex marriage in the constitution. All in all, the pursuit to attain liberty informs most of the government policies as the scope of liberty expands day by day.

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