

Depth Study 2: The History of the USA, 1945–1990

Answer any two questions.

- 5** Assess the causes and consequences of the ‘move to the suburbs’ in the 1950s. [30]

- 6** ‘Attempts in the 1960s and 1970s to improve their lives proved short-lived and unsuccessful.’ How accurate is this statement with regard to either Hispanics or Native Americans? [30]

- 7** ‘The rise of the New Right in the 1980s was sudden in speed and dramatic in impact.’ How far do you agree? [30]

- 8** How successful was US policy towards Cuba in the period from 1956 to 1963? [30]

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The move into the suburbs during the 1950s was caused by the booming economy following the war and was aided with ~~idealistic~~ flight. Following the transformation of flight to the suburbs consequences included a deepening social divide racially and formed toxic corporate personae.

After the war soldiers returned to their families in the 50s partaking in the baby boom with babies being born every 7 seconds in 1957. After years of rationing during the war and a stabilized war economy the transfer into the 50s was moved to a consumer economy that fixated itself around growing families. The suburbs were fully supported by private corporations and the government pushing people to move from inner-city areas.

Levittown built around 40,000 small bungalow houses perfect for the growing American family. FHA loans were handed out to around 67,000 Americans, not only provided space in the suburbs for these families to move to, but providing adequate funding for those desiring the cookie cutter suburban life. The economy was in stable condition to support private industry and manage increasing housing loans fueling the American

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family. This safety net financially caused white flight to the suburbs, as it was a reasonable living situation for families who were earning significantly more than in years before. With families usually earning \$4,000 a year this numbered and averaged to about \$6,000. ~~the~~ The economy caused Americans to move to the suburbs, because ultimately they could at this point in the economies success.

Coinciding with the stabilized economy during the 50's consumerism put suburban life on an idealized pedestal, that could be seen across the nation. With millions of television sets being sold and 102 different models existing, the suburban life style could be sold. For women, being a housewife was the dream and having a Kitchen Aid and washing machine in the house was treated as a bucket list goal. With millions of children born and the suburban lifestyle marketed across the nation a family could only desire to purchase a car and move to the suburbs. 8 million cars were being made each ~~other~~ year during the 50's, and this not only sold the car but sold the idea of where the car could be parked. The green lawn and the crisp white picket fence was the marketing look of the century, with a happy husband inside and a

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phased housewife. Shows like "Father Knows Best" played on all of the small TV screens showing a glimpse of suburban family dynamic to those purchasing houses out of the city. Through consumerism and the increased production of home appliances and the model housewife, the suburbs were sold to Americans.

But, with many Americans moving to the suburbs and a new American being displayed, many Americans were forgotten. White flight into the suburbs increased racial divide and classism in the 50s. Only 40% of Americans lived in the suburbs while 60% were left in underfunded city housing. FHA loans were solely given to white people as out of the 67,000 loans given only 100 were given to people of color. Redlining African Americans in these cities as whites fled gave a regional divide ~~particular~~ that supported bigotry. Levittown refused to house African Americans and when POC did make their way to suburbia their houses were set on fire and they were socially excommunicated by the rest of the white community. The consequences of the suburbs are clearly represented in the racial separation that increased blatant bigotry.

Along with racism infiltrating suburban communities the corporate and fake personas

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taken on by white families proved to be toxic. Alcoholism was rampant among neighbourhoods through James Bond like marketing that transformed into failed livers. Increasing spending put debt on American families and the pressure to be the perfect cookie cutter family destroyed homes. Between 1975-1. of men were having affairs with their wives and about 20% of women were also having other relations outside their marriages. The competition to be the perfect suburban family destroyed relationships and many women were unhappy in their housewife positions, as Betty Frieden proves in 63, but

✓ no one would admit to their unhappiness. The suburban lifestyle created dysfunctional families with no true understanding of happiness outside of materialism, and created a generation of children with false ideas of life's pleasures.

✓ The causes of the move to the suburbs were fully supported by the stable economy and increased consumerism, but through these corporate successes the suburbs created a deepened racial divide and a misguided, toxic, American dream.

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✓ The ethnic movements of Hispanic and Latino Americans were short-lived in all the fact that much of the attention was directed towards other movements in the 60s and 70s which took

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Question Part

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in the movement's failures. As the movement was may have been short-lived and unsuccessful Hispanic Americans still gained notoriety within the court system and grass-root movements.

During the 60s and 70s America failed to notice the attempted improvements Hispanics and Latinos made within their roles in society. During the 70s no notice could be made to minority movements as black power was taking a different route and the focus of the country was on the Vietnam War. With billions of dollars being spent on the war a loss of the Tet offensive and student led counter culture movements taking the forefront of America, these minorities failed to gain major notoriety.

College led anti-war movements had taken place at over 200 schools and even mentioned educational classes on Asian Americans, but there is a failure in looking towards Hispanic rights.

Cesar Chavez proved to be a great labor and civil rights leader, but his name was not nearly as shed light to as MLK or Malcolm X. ~~Malcolm X~~ That was a failure of inclusiveness in the ethnic civil rights movements, and ~~attention~~ attention was directed elsewhere leaving the Hispanic movement behind as the Vietnam war escalated and African American Civil Rights were the forefront of America's attention.

Question Part

6 While the focus of the American people being directed towards anti-war movements and African American civil rights, it can be argued that Hispanics did see success in the movement to improve their lives. The Grape Boycott led by Cesar Chavez was successful in rallying Hispanic grape pickers in looking towards better wages and acceptable working conditions. The movement in California was a success in consumers looking to buy grapes elsewhere or consuming other fruits, as the workers received acceptable wages. This was a massive success in a movement that was purely Latino. The Latino/Hispanic movement also proved to have success and longevity within the educational system as ~~Rosa~~ Hernandez v. Texas was won by the people, and it was just 10 math classes in languages some students couldn't understand. Having Native languages being taught in schools proved another success in a climate that was home to racial turmoil. In the 70s, going along with language discrimination the Miranda Rights were provided after a Latino American was unable to understand his rights under arrest, and was forsaken his right to a lawyer. The success among supreme court cases that resulted in favor of Hispanic Americans demonstrates the progress being made not only within the communities but on National level.

Question Part

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