

## Transcript

*“My Country” by Nahko & Medicine for the People plays as a intro*

*“My country 'tis of thee  
sweet land of poverty  
for thee I weep.  
Land where my mother cried,  
Land where my father died,  
sweet land of genocide,  
Pride of my heart.”*

Dom: So what you just heard was an excerpt from the song “My Country” by Nahko & Medicine for the people.

BOZ: The lyrics in this song in many ways can accurately reflect the way that America is viewed not just by other countries but how it is viewed by itself too.

Dom: The lyrics “My country tis of thee, sweet land of poverty” may never have felt more accurate in our lives than right now. As college students with limited time and fund along with a crippling amount of student loans it's easy see how we live in broken system.

BOZ: What do you mean by a broken system?

Dom: In the last couple decades it has been widely agreed upon by the American people that America has seen a noticeable decline in the amount of social and economic mobility one possesses.

BOZ: So I can see how this is a problem but just how visible is this decline and more importantly how does this effect me? How does this directly effect anyone our age or in our generation?

Dom: That’s what we are going to take a closer look at today. To help us answer these question we are going to talk to a couple different people who have different views on social mobility along with taking a look at several interesting articles.

*Strumming of bass guitar indication transition*

Dom, Mike, Matt, and Kory: We are “American Students Talking about the real American Issues.”

BOZ: So before we delve deeper into social mobility why don't we first define what social mobility actually means. So I'm going to pose you the question, what is social mobility?

Dom: Well simply put social mobility is the ease at which a person can move through the social and economic ranks in in America. This concept is also very closely related to the American dream.

BOZ: Oh right the American Dream! So like Will Smith and the pursuit of happiness.

Dom: Exactly, but sadly social mobility is declining and it has become a huge obstacle in the way to achieve the American Dream.

Dom: Although the bulk of the world believes the American Dream is achievable to anyone who tries and works hard, most American's social status is rarely improved upon.

BOZ: Well dang that's depressing.

Dom: but still, one can work hard to achieve the American Dream but the majority of individuals do not make it much further from the life they were living.

BOZ: So you're saying there's a chance?!

Dom: Of course there is, the odds just aren't what they used to be.

BOZ: But how visible is the decline of the American dream? How noticeable is are the "odds" to someone who is in the system?

Dom: Well to help us answer that question we have Mikes good Nader Zee, Nader is a student originally from Saudi Arabia.

Mike: What made you want to come to America I the first place?

Nader: My family decided to send me abroad to study. I had no choice. My sister offered me the opportunity to come here and study.

Mike: Ok, alright...what does the American dream mean to you?

Nader: Well I think it means that the American dream is to have perfect job, perfect wife, ya know...

Dom: ...happiness

Nader: yeah happiness

Mike: Ok very cool. What is the difference between you home home country of Sudia Arabia and America? What are some of the major social and economic differences that you see?

Nader: First of all, as you said economic aspect is very different, here every thing is expensive and everything is cheap over there life.

Mike: You said your family was really supportive of you coming? Were their any negative aspects of coming?

Nader: Everything was good, because my sister was really sure that I could make it.

Dom: Do you feel like a person in a very low social and economic class can work his way up to the middle or even up class?

Nader: Sure, nothing is impossible, because if the person is working as hard as he can he can make it. Nothing is impossible.

Dom: Well, Nader we appreciate you coming here and it has been a pleasure talking with you.

*Guitar strums to indicate transition*

DOM: Nader provided an interesting perspective on how the American dream is viewed.

MIKE: It surprised me to see how optimistic Nader viewed the mobility in America.

DOM: Nader's situation reminds me a lot of Luma's situation in the book Outcasts United by warren st. james. Both their purposes in America were to get an education with the end goal of going back home and support their families.

MIKE: Do you think he'll end up dropping everything and coaching a soccer team?

DOM: Haha I wouldn't hold your breath, but no I think he'll become a successful engineer and fulfill his duties at home.

MIKE: And why do you think that?

DOM: Well in the book Luma came to America to study without any encouragement necessarily from her parents, but Nader said he had no choice in the matter.

MIKE: Ah that is true, and Luma was a very unique individual, with impressive drive and determination- but I'm not saying that Nader doesn't have those qualities.

DOM: this is a good point, now, Luma possessing the qualities of hard work and determination, do you think she achieved the American dream?

MIKE: Not necessarily in the way that most Americans imagine, but yes i do.

DOM: What do you mean by that?

MIKE: Well Luma didn't become extremely wealthy with money, but her hard work gave her profits of happiness in the end. she was happy with life.

DOM: That's How Nader described The American Dream also, as having Happiness!

MIKE: So could the American dream just simply be described as obtaining happiness?

DOM: Yes, I think it possibly could. But here to talk more about the American dream we have Dr. Michael Meagher.

DOM: So Dr. Meagher, what makes the American dream unique to America? What makes it so no other country in the world has a concept like the American dream?

Dr. M: America is unique, there was never monarchy here. There wasn't an established class system class system like you would find in Europe.

BOZ: ok .... Then how would you define the American dream?

Dr. M: It's kind a myth and of course today its declining.

BOZ: What big reason do you think there is for social mobility to be declining?

Dr. M: It is globalization, it the change in the methods of creating wealth and its not just the Untied States. It's a question affecting a lot of western society's.

*Guitar strum to indicate transition*

Dom: So is the American dream a myth? Has our social mobility in America fallen to such a point that all the American dream has become is a myth? Well that depends if social mobility in America really is in fact decreasing. If you do a simple google search on the matter of social mobility in the U.S, what pops up on the search pages are of course articles condemning the U.S socially immobile future. But for at least every two articles in about the lack of social mobility, there is one that will claim something to the effect of "Upward mobility no tougher in U.S than two decades ago". Which is indecently the title of the first article to pop up defending Americas social mobility. The article was posted on the national public radio's web sit back in early 2014.

Dom: The article claims that no research on the matter of social mobility is 100% accurate and that the studies done have left out a lot of variables and a bunch of other stuff you would think study's done by colleges, economic experts and professors would account for. So what if the social mobility in America is determined not by where or when we lived but by how willing we are to make change toward the life we want. What if the American dream is a myth, but it's a myth that keeps all of us working for and eventually achieving a better life. Here to talk with us more about the American dream and mobility is Ms. Sarah Steelman

DOM: Can you introduce yourself for us?

Ms. S: I'm Sarah Steelman

DOM: So Ms. Steelman, can you define for us what's your version of the American dream?

Ms. S: I believe that the American dream is whatever you want to make it. It is the ability to peruse happiness as are declaration stated and so the wonderful thing about America is you have the freedom to do whatever it is that your heart desires. So the best of it, you can do well, you can choose the wrong path and fail, but then pick yourself back up and figure out a different path. So I guess it is the opportunity to peruse happiness I guess it what to me what the American dream is.

DOM: Do you think depending on whether or not the uh economy is good at the time or bad at the time determines the ease at which you can peruse the American dream or happiness?

Ms. S: I think more importantly it's the structure and the kind of environment that our economy creates for people to be able to peruse their dreams. So to that respect I would say that is you have to much government involvement in the economy restricting people's ability to maybe get in to the profession that they want to get in to or possibly putting up other barriers to entry - as we like to call it in econ - that can present a problem financially but again I think what is unique about America is usually if there is a will there's a way.

DOM: Would you consider there to be a direct correlation between the American dream and a good or bad economy or would you just say it depends...

*Ms. S interjects*

Ms. S: No

DOM: No? so it just depends of the person?

Ms. S: Well you'd have to define correlation, but in my definition of the American dream doesn't mean that everything's going to be easy it just means you have the opportunity to be able to go after what you want to be and to fulfill your purpose here however you interpret that. So that could be tough in hard economic times when the economy may be in a recession and it may be easy when the economy is booming but it doesn't mean that it effects your ability and your opportunity to go peruse what you want to peruse.

MIKE: So you believe that no matter what its possible it just has to be done through hard work and just drive and motivation?

Mr. S: I do believe that and again I'm saying there are things that happen to the economy that make it more difficult and that might create obstacles. Getting a college education for example, ya know its tough you might have to take out a student loan...

*Dom interjects*

DOM: Or two

*Laughter from DOM, Ms. S, and MIKE*

Mr. S: or you might end up paying it off the rest of your life, but then again you at least have the opportunity to choose what college you want to go too. To choose what profession you want to be in and to go after it and usually you can figure out a means. As opposed to some European country's where they limit the number of people going into a certain profession or they tell you in high school that "your aptitude isn't quite right to be an engineer, we think you should be a history professor" or something else. So what I'm saying again is that is a person's individual ability, will, determination, hard work that creates the American dream.

DOM: Our last written question was "Do you think the American dream is realistic" but you have kind a clearly answered that already. Of course you do, from what you've said of course you think its realistic and you think its very plausible.

Ms. S: I do. I think the American dream isn't necessary measured by the size of your pay check. I guess that's an old fashion way of looking at it, but I know today there is a lot of people worried

about the future of this country particularly from an economic point of view, that the middle class is shrinking, that there's too much wealth concentrated at the top all those things are true and I think they can be changed depending on the way our politics goes in Washington, but as far as keeping the American dream alive that is what America is all about and that's what burns in the hearts of individuals and it's not effected by what goes on outside of what they believe of what they want for themselves. That's the beauty of America it's called freedom.

*Bass starts to play indicating a transition*

DOM: Ms. Steelman defiantly provided some wise words. I was really interesting hearing those words coming from her because she's an economics professor, let alone was in politics and she knows the in's and the out's of the situation that our current economy is in and even though we might not have overwhelming amounts of social mobility, and she knows that, she still firmly believes that you can do anything. That is that you want to achieve your dream you can go out and achieve your dream and maybe that's what it comes down to. Maybe it doesn't come down to will the economy allow me to have my dream, maybe it just comes down to how much am I willing to work for my dream.

DOM: Ms. Steelman also mentioned briefly about how she thinks depending on the way politics goes in Washington our social mobility can be changed. But what exactly can our government do to increase social mobility in America? Well according to "The Equality Trust" and their article "Social Mobility and Education". The best way for our government to make an impact on social mobility is by investing in the American people through education. By investing in education, especially in underfunded areas, it would give underprivileged kids an opportunity to better themselves through education. In doing this America would produce better educated adults who would be more likely to go on college or a trade school therefore improving their current social class.

*Guitar strums to indicate transition*

DOM: Social mobility and the American dream. Two concepts that go hand in hand. It's easy to see how having a lot of social mobility can make the American dream more achievable but that's not really the case. The American dream is just that a dream. It's an idea made to make you work harder and eventually better yourself socially and economically throughout your life. So even though there are probably hundreds of articles out there telling us that social mobility is declining and that basically our generation is screwed, that should in no way impact how you view your goals or dreams. It should in no way effect how you go out and achieve them. Look at it this way, Nader Zee and Mrs. Steelman had extremely similar views of the American dream. Two people that have completely different back ground and are very different people, still view the American dream the same way. So it doesn't matter who you are. All that matter is if you willing to go out and work for your dream? If you work hard it can be done. So how

does social immobility effect you? It doesn't, and you shouldn't let it. Life isn't easy. It's an uphill battle all the way, but it's the battle we all fight and whether or not we win that battle is (*Tug-O-War*" by *Pre-fight Hype* starts to play) up to us. So I'm going to leave you with some inspiring word by Shia LaBeouf that hopefully gives you the motivation to achieve your dreams.

*"Tug-o-War" by Pre-fight hype continues playing*

SHIA: (*Yells*) Do it! Just do it!

SHIA: Don't let your dreams be dream. Yesterday you said ya said tomorrow.

SHIA: (*Yells*) Just do it! Make your dreams come true! Just do it!

SHIA: Some people dream of success while your gonna wake up and work hard at it!

SHIA: (*Yells*) Nothing is imposible!

SHIA: You should get to the point where anyone else would quit and you're not gonna stop there!

SHIA: (*Yells to the point of exhaustion*) NO! What are you waiting for?!?! Just ..... DO IT!!! JUST DO IT!

SHIA: Yes, you can! Just do it!

SHIA: If you're tired of starting over... stop giving up.

*(Shia fades out)*