**Law and society**

**Student’s Name**

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**Two specific events in US history**

**Grandfather laws of the 1870s**

The 15th Amendment of the American constitution ratified in the 1870s provided for equal voting rights for every American regardless of race. However, this was not the case in the context of African- Americans because “grandfather” acts/clauses were introduced, which stripped them right to free voting. The clause limited African- American’s right to exercise their democratic duties by placing restrictions that included requirements to pay taxes and pass literacy tests before they are allowed to vote. The clause discriminated Africans by gifting whites with an unfair advantage to not only exercise their political rights but also right to elected leaders of their choice.

In the 1870s, American society was occupied by a discussion concerning slavery and racism. Racist laws such as Jim Crow Laws were planted especially in southern states to discriminate against African- Americans. Such laws created inequalities against black Americans in different socio-economic and polities activities such as labor, voting, and education.

**Shelby County V. Holder of 2013**

The voting rights in American have gone through different historical phases. Major changes in voting rights were made in 1965 when congress enacted the Voting Rights Act which prohibited different forms of racial discrimination when exercising democratic rights. The act made various changes in voting laws including the right of every American citizen to vote without abridge. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 required federal preclearance meaning that states or local governments needed to seek permission from the US Attorney General before making changes in voting laws. In 2013, a Supreme Court ruling termed as Shelby County V. Holder ruled that it was unconstitutional for some states to seek preclearance from the Federal government since the preclearance was based on histories of voting discriminations (Ang, 2019).

**How events and society changed**

American society has had a long history of voting rights spanning decades of changes and amendments. From exploitative Jim Crow Laws of 1860s which imposed voting restrictions such as poll taxes and literacy tests to civil rights movements of the 1950s that pressure the federal government to tighten voting rights and subsequent voting rights act of 1965. Changes in society were experienced in different social and economic as well as political activities, for instance, great changes were seen in labor and education. Equally, voting rights evolved through tremendous changes especially in 1965 when congress passed the Voting Rights Act. The rights activities fervently fought the discriminative laws through litigations, court interpretation and rulings, and congressional enactments. Through these struggles, society changed greatly and discriminative laws faded. These voting rights corrected problems created by “grandfather” clauses used during the Jim Crow era.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its subsequent amendments including Supreme Court changes of 2013 rectified historical injustices and discriminations created by grandfather laws. The voting rights gave freedom to every US citizen to exercise political right without restrictions or abridge. It abolished clauses that stripped every citizen’s right to freely vote and elect leaders of their choice. New voting rights equalize society by removing the unfair advantages that whites received concerning the voting exercise. The voting right laws gave equal opportunities for racial minorities to exercise their political right by participating in the electoral process without hindrance.

**Application of Multiculturalism**

The concept of multiculturalism according to Rosado’s definition and description applies to the two events described above. Rosado sees multiculturalism as beliefs and behaviors which recognizes, acknowledges and values every socio-cultural difference and empowers their continued contribution in the society. Multiculturalism, as Rosado discussed, is relevant in analyzing the above events through the seven important actions that Rosado described (Rosado, 1996). The first action is an aspect of the**recognition** of diversity in society. Rosado says historically minorities have lacked recognition, and they have to remain discriminated in education and other socio-political aspects. I believed that in the view of the above events minority black Americans, for a long time, have lacked recognition in terms of the right to exercise their political duties which include the right to vote.

Rosado emphasizes **respect** which is treating others with compassion, deference, and courtesy to preserve their dignity, value, and integrity. American society has had a long history of not respect the rights of black Americans. As noted in the above events, the black Americans were subjected to Grandfather Laws that disrespected their right to vote. Unlike other races, they were put through disrespectful literacy tests and taxes before allowed to exercise their political rights.

Rosado highlighted the importance of **acknowledging** cultural contributions and expressions of different groups. This means valuing every cultural expression that differs from those of dominant groups. Acknowledging diverse ethnic-racial groups in America has not been easy practice. Black Americans have been most discriminated and their cultural expression not acknowledged especially in democratic practices such as voting. Fourthly, Rosado emphasizes the value of **encouraging** and **enable** contributions of different groups. Encouraging and enabling related to empowerment meaning strengthening people to achieve their potential. Various diverse groups in American society lack empowerment; many do not feel worthy, valuable and respected because they have been denied fundamental rights including rights to exercise their democratic duties.

**References**

Ang, D. (2019). Do 40-year-old facts still matter? long-run effects of federal oversight under the voting rights act. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *11*(3), 1-53.

Rosado, C. (1996). Toward a definition of multiculturalism. *Retrieved from*.<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.564.5910&rep=rep1&type=pdf>