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The American Women's liberation  
Movement 1848/ 1970

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# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my loving parents who provide me with all what I need by their endless support, patience, encouragement and their blessings.

To my dear brother that was by my side and supported me .

Thank you for being the best brother

I also dedicated this work to my dearest friends: Imen, Chahinez, and Assia the most precious people to my heart.

I am very grateful to my classmates and my master teachers for their efforts and advice .

To all who shared with me a happy time at university during the years of my study .

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# List of Abbreviations

**U.S:** The United States

**NAACP:** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

**SNCC:** The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

**NAWSA:** The National American Woman Suffrage Association

**AWSA:** The American Woman Suffrage Association

**NWSA:** The National Women Suffrage Association

## **Abstract**

This study aims at presenting the American women's struggles they faced based on their sex and race, starting with the history of both white and African American women in America , and the different arguments and theories that the patriarchy society created for the oppression of woman , also the African American women's suffering during slavery and after the abolition. This work examines the different movements that women founded for their liberation and to obtain their rights as American citizens, also show the role of black women and their contributions in several movements to secure and protect their rights as members of the community. This work also sheds light on the differences between the white and black women's rights movement and their objectives.

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### **General Introduction**

The United States of America a country known for its freedoms, democracy, and equality between members of society and races, but behind this powerful country there is a history of discrimination and oppression against women. From the first arrival to this country women were under male jurisdiction, deprived from their rights and liberty and considered as an inferior creature without identity. Both white and black women lived under white male supremacy, however, African American women's position was worse than the white women and they experienced many hardships because of their race and their sex. White women founded many movements and conventions to gain political power and liberty as citizens, while black women also fought for their freedom, justice, equal rights, and be part of society through participation in many national and local movements and creation of movements.

This research is attempts to answer the following questions:

- How was the white and the African American women's position in the early America?
- What is feminism movement and the several women's participation in the American movements?
- What was the main objectives of the black and the white women's movement?
- Was there a difference between black and white women's movement?

As possible answers to the mentioned questions, the following hypotheses are suggested:

- The women's position in ancient America was inferior, where white and black females lived in bad conditions under the male supremacy. The black women were slaves and white women were under the control of men with no rights or legal status.
- Feminism is a movement that fought for women's rights and was divided into three waves each wave represented a great achievements in women's rights. American women participated and contributed in several movements especially the African American women to improve and claim their rights as American citizens. They were a part of the civil rights movement, the liberation movement and many other movements.
- Both black and white movements fought for many reasons and goals. For whites, their main goals were to gain and to be part of the legal system, to occupy professions in the politics and economic fields and to be a part of the governing power as the white men.

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However, the black females' major concerns were to be recognized as part of the community, to struggle against racial and gender discrimination, and to end the arbitrary laws and system.

- Although the white and the black women's rights movement were fighting for women's rights and freedom, however they had many differences in terms of organizations, goals, beliefs, and the methods used to achieve their goals.

The work analysis follow a qualitative method of research based on a complete detailed description of observation, including the context of events and circumstances on the topic. In attempt to investigate the issue and to find suitable answers to the previously mentioned questions, I analyzed different documents, books and many articles to collect information and facts.

This dissertation is divided in three chapters. The first chapter deals with the history of the American women, the laws, ancient assumptions and civilizations that affected their rights, the several arguments and theories that sought to confirm their inferiority. In addition, it transacts with the black women position during slavery and after the abolition. The second chapter reviews the feminist movement and its major three waves that demonstrated women's path to civil rights, the role of women in the civil rights movement, also provides a look on the women's civil rights movement. The third chapter highlights the white women's right movement and its main concerns, leaders, and organizations. Also it talks about the black women movement and its major objectives, activists, and associations. And at the end of the chapter there is a comparison between the white and the black women's movements.

### Introduction:

For many decades, and in various civilizations women were recognized as an inferior vassal with no rights and was created to implement man's desire. Men deprived them from their identity and liberty and defined them as "the frail sex". This concept was a parcel of the American society for many ages, where the white supremacy was dedicated for males rather than shared with white women. Both whites and African women approximately lived under this concept, suffered from racial discrimination but differed in conditions and the skin color. Woman was defined as a passive object without history. Like Elizabeth Fox Genovese writes in her article "Placing Women's History in History»: *To the extent that male dominance, like class dominance has obtained throughout human history, there is no women's history, nor forms of female power apart from it.*" This chapter deals with women's position and the different assumptions that affected the American society, it also examines the African American women life in the new continent.

### 1- Women's Rights Changes over Time:

America or the "new world" as it was called was a heaven of freedoms and rights for many people from different races, religions, cultures and dialects. However, they shared the same view about woman. Because of the mentalities, traditions and the legal systems that the colonizers brought into America. The woman was considered a creature without identity and subordinate to the man. This was due to the affection of the laws especially the English law that was practiced at that period by the British ruler that was influenced by various civilizations, ancient assumptions and by the old religious rules such as the ancient Roman law and several religious faiths like Christianity that influenced the women's position in United States at that period. The writer Shane Mountjoy through her book "The Women's Rights Movement: Moving toward Equality." approve this concept.

Throughout history women have been subjected to unequal treatment from legal codes within various societies and cultures... The colonial and early American legal codes reflected the influence of English law which in turn was influenced by ancient Roman law. These roman practices provided insight into the legal codes that placed rigid restraints on women even in the United States. (Mountjoy14).

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Therefore, to understand the women legal position in the U.S we must comprehend the English legal codes.

English law or the "common law" was the legal framework applied in the early America under the mandate of Great Britain. Women in the new land were under the rule and controlled of the English code. Ancient Roman law affected many other laws in the past few centuries especially in the topic of women's rights and their stance in society. English law was not akin to the Roman law but when it came to the women, its influence was robust even after the slump of Rome, women continued to face legal discrimination and limited rights whether in private or public life. That what Sir William Blackstone showed in his "Commentaries on the law of England" that confirmed the Roman system was obvious and had a huge impact in English legal system. ("Women and the law").

Women in the Roman law were under the male jurisdiction. During her life, a woman might pass from the control of one male to another (from father to husband or male relative). In Roman society, she was forbidden from taking part in the political process or in any public practice. Women were expected to raise children, take care of the house, and obey her husband. They could not vote, hold public office, or even speak in public. Also she did not have her own full name just a feminine version of her father's family name. It was just one important public role that women could have "the vestal virgin" were women priestess to the goddess of hearth, and the keepers of the sacred fire of vista. (Mountjoy 16)

The English law recognized the men as the authoritative power. It was recognized as "master" of his family and the chief leader in community. Women unlike men had a subordinate function. Many women were illiterate, it was supposed that a woman do not require any sort of learning, she was supposed to take care of children and home. The discrimination and the humiliation that the females faced wasn't just in the American society but it was implanted by ancient civilizations that affected many codes. Also religion played a mighty role in deterioration of women in the old religious books and documents; it was considered as the source of iniquity and guiltiness. "*It is the entrance of Satan to the soul of human being, contradicting the laws of god and the distorting his image.*"(Saint Loyola). That is how religion defined women as a gaffe, and in Rome was recognized as a polluted animal that do not enter chapels. Women in almost religions and

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faiths were prevented from being equivalent to men. Christianity was one of faiths that excluded women from their freedom.

*"Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach. I do not permit a woman a woman to teach or to exercise; authority over man rather, she is to remain quiet". (1 Timothy 2: 12)* She was prevented from speaking in the church and teach. As it is shown in this passage from the bible. *"The woman should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the law also says. If they desire to learn anything let them ask their husbands at home..." (Paul Corinthians 14:34-35).* Well creeds were also the greatest support to marginalizing women and giving power to men by giving orders to women to subject to their husbands and men in other way be his slave.

The ancient America was constructed by those beliefs and concepts that detracted women's value. Instead of giving her freedom, they continued to suppress her. The new continent offered a chance to form a fresh and a new community, but the new arrivals reestablished the old orders in the new land asserting the political and social power to men and excluding women from achieving power or influence. This is due to the influence of the ancient laws and religious orders who instilled this view about the inferiority of females, and what made many American women suffer for a long time.

### **2- Women Inferiority Doctrine:**

*"There are three things in the world that women do not understand; and they are liberty, equality and fraternity." (G.K. Chesterton)*

"Inferiority" a simple word but has different meanings and impacts on women throughout time. Inferior can be defined as lower status, rank, quality or position. (Merriam Webster).

Women had been recognized as an inferior creature under the male ascendancy, a creature with no rights, personality or anything to demonstrate them, created for man. Women's inferiority is the output of a social system that seeks to demolish woman, keep it under men's mercy, and repeal her personality and rights in society to maintain leadership for men. This social system has generated incalculable differences, discrimination between the two sexes.

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For many centuries men tried to prove women's incapability and her lower status by different arguments and theories to wipe her from community and from leadership and keep it under man's supervision. Women have no souls; they are super-aware slaves whose duties are to help and to serve men. (Charles Mansons)

Many arguments and theories sought to prove that women are by nature inferior in terms of body, spirit and of temperament. There are four arguments used by Claudette Fillard and Colette Collomb-Boureau in their book "Les mouvements féministes américains". To confirm women's subordination. Four arguments in this book were used to determine women's position in society as the weaker sex.

### 2-1 The Medieval Argument:

Women's real place was home. They were excluded from working outside house or to teach or even to have an education. At that time, they were defined as child bearers and housewives. Her own job is to take care of her husband, children and to do the domestic chores: cleaning and cooking. Because at that period it was rumored that most of women ailments at that time were due to the infirmity of her nervous system. According to doctors, the fragility of her nervous system predisposed her to psychic disorders and mental illnesses, so she needed tranquility and only home could give her that. "*... Traditionally, women were defined physically and intellectually as the weaker sex , in all ways subordinate to male authority.*" (Marsh)

### 2-2The Biblical Argument:

*"... For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; nor was man created for woman, but woman for man."*(S.T Paul)

Women was born of the man and for the man. That what has been thought for many centuries. An old scripture version that demonstrated that woman must be inferior to man ,a gift from god to man. Many religious groups forbade women to sin and even to speak in both public and religious life. "*What else is a woman but a foe to friendship; a cosmic punishment , a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril , a delectable detriment, a deadly fascination, a painted ill!...*" (Chrysostom, Matthew19) Religion was a major factor that served to reinforce women's inferior status. Female submission was announced to be part of god's decree. In church, women were obliged to sit in noiseless and

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had no opportunity to have any sameness with men or occupy any higher mission . "*I suffer not a woman to teach, or to usurp authority over the man, but to be silence.*"(S.T Paul, 1 Tim. 2: 12)

### 2-3 The Scientific Argument:

Science was also a tool used to prove that the female sex is inferior by using different views and theories such as the "Great Chain of Being Theory" is a stratified structure of all matter and life. In this theory woman occupied a middle place between man and monkey. Which makes her inferior and unimportant individual in this chain, also considered as an animal. At that time, a hypotheses appeared that proclaimed that women's brains are smaller than of men. (Fillard, Boureau 12)

Therefore, females could not coequal them in the intelligence or in the way of thinking so it is impossible to have equality with males. Also it was said that women's brains ruled by hormone they use their feelings to think . Paul Borca argued that men of the black races have brain scarcely heavier than of the white women.( Borca ).This citation showed how men tried to make women inferior and submissive thing by making comparison with a black male brain as a metaphor.

### 2-4The Legal Argument:

Women's legitimate position under the American legal system was as a slave in some ways, but had a suitable life conditions than the blacks. Marriage was as a civic tomb for women, where the wife and the husband were regarded as one person in the legislative system. This unity was ruled by the husband where he became the controller of her properties, heritage even her own personal needs like clothes. By marriage, the husband and the wife are one person in law. (Blackstone442)

Many biologists and philosophers like Charles Darwin, Aristotle and many others encouraged the inferiority of woman and tried to prove it by submitting various hypotheses and theories. Darwinism was a famous theory at that period and many societies were affected by it such as the American society was one of those societies. Through the evolution theory, which is the mechanism that deals with the changes of organisms over time, Darwin longed to confirm women's inferiority. He thought that women are organically inferior to men."...*Constant companion (friend in old age) who will feel interested in one, object to be*

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*beloved and played with better than a dog any how home, and someone to take care of house.*"That was his view about women and tried to prove it. He thought that males are more progressive and developed than females, and females are less highly less progressive than males. In his book "Descent of Men" he justified his concept about the female's subjection ; he argued that the fully fledged female in most species look like the toddler, and also female evolution progressed slower physically, mentally and morally. (Kevles). Woman is a sort of grown up infant.

In the philosophy field, Aristotle was a famous philosopher at that time whose opinion about women impacted many scholars in many areas. To him women were incomplete men and a mistake. In his "Politics" he saw women dependent to men but as higher than slaves. The slave is wholly lacking the deliberative element; the female has it but lacks authority; the child has it but is incomplete (politics1.13). He considered women as reckless, more sensitive and more tricky (Aristotle). Many embraced his way of thinking and considered it as their holly code.

Through social, religious scientific and legal arguments also by different theories and hypothesis man tried to smash woman and make her under his control in all domains and areas in life.

### **3-BlackWomen during and after Slavery:**

Slavery was a part of the American system in which many blacks suffered from discrimination also from maltreatment . They were considered as goods to refresh up the country's economy. Blacks from both sexes lived under harsh conditions, but we can say that black women suffered a little more than black men did.

Black women have long been negatively portrayed in the American society, usually viewed as an inferior race. African women arrived in the colonies after being kidnapped from their families and homelands .

I was playing by the sea coast, when a white man offered me sugar plums, and told me to go with him, I went with him first into a boat, and then to a ship. Everything seemed strange to me, and I asked him to let me go back, but he would not hear me; and when I went to look for the place where he found me, I could see nothing of land. I began to cry. There I was for a long time with great many more of my own color; till the ship came to... (Harrison 15)

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African women have experienced plentiful hardships since their compulsory migration from their homelands to the new continent. They were subjected many abuses such as the mental, corporal, and the sexual abuse. They were recognized as commodities or brutes with no will, working from sunrise to sunset in several plantations such as the cotton and sugar cane plantations. White society believed that black women were fungal creatures, therefore, prohibited them from their basic rights and prevented them from their humanity as well . Enslaved women beside their work in plantations and farms they were a sexual tool for the master's pleasure, as nanny that devoted herself to her master's children, and were as a procreation instrument for more slaves . As a slave, she was denied from learning how to read or write. Her body was a gainful tool in many areas whether in economy or personal use, while her identity was wiped and recognized as savage. As Alton B. Pollard argues that, she and all enslaved Africans peoples were redefined economically as property and cargo; socially as beasts of burden semi animals, childlike and unintelligent; and politically as non-citizens and three-fifth human. (Harrison 54).

After years of suffering, slaves raised up against humiliation and gender discrimination as Americans. Besides men, women were involved also in the abolition movement such as Harriet Tubman, Maria W. Stewart who were the main leaders of the black women's rights movement, and many other unknown black women made influential inputs to the abolition of slavery. However, the efforts of black women had been largely neglected. They use the writing method as a technique to support the movement and to narrate their experiences in slavery such as Harriet Jacobs's narrative «Incidents in the life of a slave girl". The book draw Harriet's life in slavery, she discussed the struggles and the different kinds of abuse that black females faced. Even after the thirteenth amendment that ended slavery, the brutalities of white people continued gender discrimination and racism spread to a large degree in the society. Unlike white women, black faced discrimination because of their race(Africans) and sex(black women). A white woman has only one handicap to overcome a great one true her sex; a colored woman faces two her sex and her race. (C. Terrell). They were discriminated from fundamental rights like right to vote, being citizens, and liberty . They also faced difficulties to find jobs and to learn.

African American women lived under harsh conditions from their arrival to America. They were subjected to various tortures whether by flogging or sexual violation; even after the abolition of slavery they faced many difficulties from society and from the legal system.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, American women throughout the ages suffered greatly from oppression and were recognized as inferior to men by many arguments, theories and laws. They lived under white men's mercy and brutality. Also African women suffered a lot in what is called "new land" from humiliation, gender, and race discrimination. However, they stood up to fix their status as citizens and as women.

### **Introduction:**

This chapter began with feminism and its major three waves. The second part talks about the civil rights movement and women's role in the movement. At the end, I deal with the women's civil rights movement.

### **1- Feminism:**

Feminism is a simple word but with different definitions. What is feminism? The answer can be found in many narratives and dictionaries.

Feminism is a way of looking at the world, which women occupy from the perspective of women. It focuses on the patriarchy that can be described as a system of male supremacy that oppresses women in social, political and economic institutions.( Susan Osborne)

It is the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. (Oxford dictionary)

Therefore, feminism is a set of movements and ideologies intended to protect and provide rights for women, whether political, social or economic and create equal opportunities for women in many fields. In other words, it is the belief that men and women should be equal in terms of rights and opportunities. (Stanford Encyclopedia).

For many centuries, women had been oppressed, ignored and considered as second-class citizens that are banned from their rights. With the age of enlightenment, women started to find a voice to stand up to fight for themselves, for what they believed in and their rights as members of society. This tendency was due to the World War I and II. While most of men were in wars, women were left back home to take care of the house. During these times, women stepped out for the first time taking on jobs that were only for men. Also the abolition movement was the main source that through it many female activists sought to enforce the concept of liberty and equality to their situations. From here, the desire of liberty and equality was raised. Women started to move for their rights; they realized that they must first gain political acceptance through the "right to vote" and to confess that they are part of the American society.

### **2-Feminism Waves:**

Feminism movement had three major waves that defined the movement and to show women's path to liberty. Each wave had its successes and failures.

What is a wave?

A wave was a metaphor that described the idea that women activism in United States was unified around one set of opinions and views that is called feminism. In other words, a wave was a tendency to distinguish between different eras and generations of feminism.(Nicholson)

#### **2-1 First Wave of Feminism:**

The first historically and official path of the first American feminism wave started with the Seneca Falls convention held in New York 1848, where two feminists activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott hosted the first women's rights meeting. In other terms, women's suffrage movement from 1848 to 1920, was a period which focused on ensuring women's right to vote as members of the society and giving them equal rights under the slogan: " we all have the right to be treated equally."(" Gender, sexuality, and identity").

The first wave of feminism was characterized by the ultimate hegemony and dominance of the white women. The white's hegemony lead up to the omission of women from different races, especially the black women that were one of the most notable races in America. White women called for equality between white men and white women, and refused equality between races. Women of black race were prevented from participating in the movement or to be present in women's meetings, even in states that comprised a great numbers of blacks such as the southern states. ("The first -wave feminism").

The first wave encompassed a great number of women that belonged to conservative or moderate streams. Among their difference they gathered to secure the passing of the right to vote. The first wave of feminism ended with the passage of the nineteenth amendment, which read: " *the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any states on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.*"("Women' rights to vote"). Granting women the right to vote was the major triumph of the movement.

### **2 -2 Second Wave of Feminism:**

Second wave of feminism was a section of the feminism movement, and the second start of women. That commenced in the 1960s, and lasted until 1970s. It can be defined as a response about women's rank after the second world war. This wave concentrated on society order where the power was in the hands of men in every areas and fields in America. In addition, it gave attention to various affairs as the discrimination, vehemence, sexual rape, and inequalities in women's life. The second wave activists gave a wide berth to improve women's portrait in media and community. The permissiveness of the abortion and the birth control program were the central desires of the wave . (Anand).

Solidarity and cohesion were the fundamental merits that characterized the second wave for single aim to secure their rights. It also viewed the evolution of two sorts of feminism the radical feminism that viewed that the society was under men' hegemony where they persecuted and ignored women . This type required the omission of the system. While socialists feminism concentrated on the liaison between the patriarchy and capitalism, and they concurred that through working in the limitation of different roots in several fields such as economy and culture that oppressed women they would obtain liberation. (Anand).

The second wave of feminism had achieved several accomplishments and remarkable events in women liberation history such as: ending the men's hegemony, women became more active in community and in many fields. They won the rights to education, as they succeeded in changing public opinion about the function and the role of both women and men, and the cancellation of the unfair laws based on sex. ("Second- wave feminism.")

With all these achievements women of color faced some injustices and were discriminated because at that period white women were controlling the movement. They wrote feminism notion established around their expertise and their concerns. Many black, Latina, Asian and Native Americans women were prevented and denied from the movement. This caused many divisions and the establishment of several organizations to fight for their requirements and from here the third wave began. ( Anand).

### **2 -3 Third Wave of Feminism:**

The 1990s, was the year of the emergence of the third section of the feminism movement. The third wave was born and shaped in an era where the media such as the

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television and radio were the dominant power and had a massive impact on the culture and economy side. Third wave feminists announced and defined it as a notion for all women's kinds and races. That what Barbara Smith said that third wave feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of color, working class, poor, disabled, lesbians, old or white, economically privileged and heterosexual women... (Davies 220-21). For Jennifer Baum Gardner & Amy Richards, for instance the third wave is women who were the reason of the arouse of the women's liberation movement of seventies. While Leslie Heywood defines the third wave as a form of inclusiveness. "*Feminism respect not only differences between women based on race, ethnicity, religion and economic standing but also makes allowance for different identities within a single person...*" (Heywood xx)

Third wave worked on enhancing the concepts and some points that the second wave dealt with like equality between women and men, also focused on the social division between the members of society. The third wave sought to modify and reform opinions and judgments especially the ideas spread by the media about women, beauty standers, and sexuality problem. The key success of this wave was because of the rights and protection that had been obtained by the first and the second waves. ("The third wave of feminism").

Third wave gave aid and supported several groups and people that aimed to solve issues like racism, gender, and the liberation as a major case. Also paid attention to work spaces problems and the unfair regulations and laws against females in jobs such as the unjust maternity leave policy. Third wavers tried to modulate the dialect and the style that were used to depict women in the media. This wave aspired to make females stronger and independents. ("Third wave feminism").

Pop culture and media took a great place in the wave and were significant figures in the raising of women's voice especially the young girls. RIOT GRRRL a musical band that through music they spread messages about women's and their desires, also movies and television shows impacted the third wave and influenced girls and that led to the creation of a new powerful generation. (Anand).

Third wave was criticized because of the absence of a single cause and the various cases that were brought into the wave. The first fought for the right for women to vote, second for the right for women's evenness in public practices and limiting the sex discrimination, while the third wave lacked a stiff objective because it permitted women to define feminism

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by using their own identities, willingness, and expertise. Also dealt with many cases and it was seen as a supplementation to the second wave. ("Third-wave feminism").

Feminism was an achievement tool for women. Feminism have three distinct stages, the first stage succeeded in gaining the right to vote, the second stage achieved in ending discrimination, male hegemony and the right of education. While the third stage dealt with several problems like gender, equality and succeeded in giving more liberty to women, and the invention of new feminism.

### **3-Role of Women in the Civil Rights Movement:**

Even after the revocation of slavery and the emancipation proclamation, black community specially women sustained a lot from differentiation, aggrievedness, ignominy and not recognizing them as American citizens. They lived under an enormous compression and this led to an explosion, as they rose up in form of marches and declamations to request their rights. They founded a movement to obtain their civil rights. ("Life after slavery for African Americans").

#### **3-1 Definition of the Civil Rights Movement:**

The civil rights movement is a movement that contained several efforts and endeavors that strived to guaranteed the African Americans rights in many domains like politic, and economy or in society as Americans citizens. In other words, an arranged effort by black Americans was to end racial discernment and acquired equal rights. It started in the late 1940s, and ended in the late 1960s; it was mostly nonviolent. It emerged as a response to the unfulfilled promises of emancipation, against racial segregation in diverse domains and fields in society, claiming for equality, and other civil rights. Montgomery bus boycott, Brown vs. the board of education and many other affairs, were the essential causes of the up growth of the movement. ("Civil right movement").

After many years of contesting they succeeded in obtaining the civil rights act, ending the segregation, Jim crow law and freedom in many domains. Women were a fraction of the civil rights movement; they stood alongside men in this movement to obtain their rights and liberty as members of society. Marable Maning in his introduction to the autobiography of Medgar Evers, claim that women were the basis of the movement's success, and women are far more likely than males to protrude as the pivotal leaders in most working class and poor neighborhoods. Women activists are far more widespread than males in the masoning of civic

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strength. Also" *we know beyond dispute that women were frequently the dominant force in the movement.*" (Payne).

Many women played important roles in the civil rights movement, as the heads of the movement and its sundry organizations. They enlisted as activists, teachers, writers, spiritual instructors, care takers, and politicians. They also engaged in organizations that gave a share to the movement. They were members of the NAACP "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People". As a track to assist in the movement, also they implicated with the Black Panthers. ("African-American women in the civil rights movement").

Black women were the essential ingredient of the movement; they played a pivotal and critical role in stimulating the civil rights movement. They were often precluded from different women's institutions and movements that called for women's rights that drove them to set up their own groups to support and fought for the rights of African American women. Black women were the planners to terminate racial discrimination, deprivation and racial division. Also white women participated and played a serious role in the movement as rulers and members of the civil rights movement.

Many African American women dedicated themselves and time to the movement such as Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell that spoke out and grappled for the rights of black women. Also as schemers like Septima Clark the creator of the educational program to teach and instruct the black people how to write and read in order to acquire rights, and her theory "citizen education" became the spine of the movement. Ella Baker also took a part by creating student nonviolent coordinating committee "SNCC" that sought to raise against racial division. Old black women lend a hand by taking care of the members of organizations and participants at their homes providing them food and bed. Other women choose to form groups and assemblies to enhance and reinforce chances and evenness for black women. A lot of women aided in the success of the movement but they were ignored and unknown as Barbara Reynolds said that they were hundreds of unnamed women who participated in the movement.

Women played a serious and remarkable role in the civil right movement and the movement could not have happened without their participation. They were the basic organizers. They developed sturdy legal pretexts, and built strong organizations. African American women served in many forms and professions to make an end to the arbitrary laws

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and racial discrimination. Their efforts helped in the pass of the civil rights act and the voting rights acts for colored citizens.( Dastagir).

### **4- Women's Civil Rights Movement:**

Prior the civil rights movement, American women of every race and class did not have the entire rights as citizens such as right to vote, to have equal position and chances as men. It took many years to achieve those rights, but to obtain rights as citizens, and as humans they arranged a movement called " the civil rights movement". ( Livenstein).

Women's civil rights movement or Women Liberation Movement, stood out in the overdue of 1960s, and continued throughout the 1970s, derived from the civil rights movement. It was a uniformity of women and feminism movement and was recognized and determined as portion of the second wave of feminism. This movement searched for equal rights and personal deliverance and freedom to women. Forked from the radical feminism, it comprised all kinds of American women from diverse lineages, cultures, and backgrounds. that agreed that liberty and licenses in several like in economics fields were needful for women's headways. This type of feminism touched on every scope including politics, labor, family and sexuality.(Burkett).

The movement came as a feedback and a reply of the hardness and hitches that women faced .Women even after the nineteenth amendment continued to face snags in social life. Because at that time the exemplary view about women in the United States was typically to marry, have children in other words become housewives. Women who want to work were repulsed and rejected because of their sex. Also African American women were part of the movement because of the laws and procedures foisted on them by the legal system as the Jim crow laws, arbitrary segregation on public and even the private one. Racism limited their livelihood and deprived them from exercising their rights. The movement proposed a series of modifications in politics, society and economy to end discrimination.("civil rights: how has the fight for women's rights passed?").

Members of the movement focused on changing the perceptions of women's place in different areas of life whether in society or family. They rejected the ranking structure of the authority system , and sexism was the important goal. They believed that the ethic and the civic atmosphere in America needed to change. They raised different issues like: the of the embodiment of women, women's chances in labor, and to reform women role in family as

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similar to men. The movement combined young and old, upper and lower classes, conservative and radical women and was not directed or led by a single figure or group. As one feminist wrote: "*the members were from different backgrounds, race, religions, and groups but united under one single purpose women*". Members of the movement used several methods to strive for equality such as: pushing the congress to change law, publishing in journal, magazines and television articles about rape and domestic violence, stories of triumphant women revolted against sexism, and covered activists efforts across America.

Many women activists played a part in this movement to make it successful like Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, that captivated the media heed through their writings and publications. Also they played an remarkable function in depicting the movement on media. Many other women were the key figure of the movement like Betty Friedan. She was a well known person in the women's rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Through her book "The Feminine Mystique" she gave a chance to numerous women to attract the public consciousness, and to fetch many women into the movement. The book was one of the objects that facilitated in the growth of the movement. Betty was one of the initiator of the national association for the repeal of abortion 1969. She raised consciousness about sex segregation. Gloria Steinem was an a forthright spokeswoman of women rights of women's rights. She helped in the formation of New York and MS magazines. She was the author of many books, essays, and articles for example: "After Black Power, Women's Liberation" where she expressed her feminist opinion and beliefs . Also under Steinem's realization the New York magazine tackled important topics such as violence against women like the domestic violence and many other topics about women. (" The 1970s -70s American feminist movement").

After a long journey of resistance and fighting, women succeeded in obtaining some great achievements that changed their life such as the end of discrimination and differentiation in society on the basis of the sex , the increase of the female students chances in many fields like the participation in sports competitions, the number of females in universities became greater , and the permission of abortion and birth control.

The women's civil right movement was one of the most significant movements that shaped American women's history, and was a tool to attain equality and rights as members of society. The success of this movement was because of sacrifice of women and their hard working for a long period.

### **Conclusion:**

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After decades of women's oppression, they woke up to make an end to these arbitrary and male dominated society. Starting by the emergence of different movements such as feminism that was categorized by three main waves each wave had its successes and failures. Then the civil rights movement represented a huge step toward liberation for the African American community and principally for women that had a remarkable role in the movement's success. And without forgetting that the liberation movement opened a new direction to many freedoms and rights; it was a gate to a new epoch to women.

## **Introduction:**

For a happy life full of equality and rights as citizens, American women of all races have founded what is known as the women's rights movement in order to claim about their rights and their status in society. Although the movement was for women and their necessities; however, the movement was split into the white women's rights movement and black women's rights movement. Each movement was different from the other in several ways and each one had its own characteristics. But they united on one desire which was liberation. This chapter is dedicated to define the white and the black women's rights movement.

### **1- White Women Rights Movement:**

Women's tendency to freedom and equal rights with men has been present within every American female. But they did not have the braveness to demand this, however with the independence revolution American women started to wake up from their slumber and claiming their rights in the constitution.

The white American women in early America lived under significant legal constrictions. Their status was that of "perpetual dependents" and were men's umbra. Their tasks were rooted in the home as wives and mothers. All women since antiquity have been subjected to men's greed, and he stated that society instead of releasing and protecting their liberties and joy, tended to bring the anguish and ill-being to women. In fact, white women experienced harsh living conditions where all public fields were closed to them. (Paine).

Women of the upper and middle class started to question their legal position after the independence from Great Britain in the new republic. Abigail Adams was one of the first advocated for the women's rights in America. She wrote a revolutionary statement to her husband John Adams that was one of the figures in the American revolution. When he was helping in blueprinting the declaration of independence she said in her letter: "*I desire you would remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands...*" But her letter was ignored. And the declaration of independence specified men and eliminated women.(Mountjoy23)

Women had been ignored and they were arranged as second rank members in community with a little rights. They started making their way to fulfill a complete equality

and rights by contributing in movements such as the abolition movement that was a turning point in their paths by gaining leadership, managing, and talking skills. Also they contributed in founding organizations, and organizing meetings with women that had the same outlooks about women's rights. Like the Seneca falls meeting that was organized by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who were the reason of the first official start of the movement by organizing the first assembly in women's rights history.

The Seneca Falls convention in 1848 was the introductory rally for women's rights in the United States. The convention's intent was the voting and equal rights for women. The members of the convention created what is called "The Declaration Of Sentiments" that was a retort against the declaration of independence that excluded women from legal system. *" we hold these truths to be self evident; that all men and women are created equal."* (Stanton)

### **1-1THE DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS:**

It was a document submitted and brought out on July 9th, 1848 Seneca falls convention where 300 people attended and one hundred attendees put their signatures 68 women and 32 men to the declaration which called for equal rights for women and men. The document was similar and identical to the declaration of independence in the way the declaration of sentiments broached women's rights in the same way the declaration of independence indicated the men's rights. It argued that women were maltreated by the legal system and by the discriminatory society and thoughts and insisted that women must be first rank citizens and benefited with the same rights as men. Stanton mentioned a list of facts or grievances to show to which extent women were maltreated and gave grounds to the changes that the document called for. This list noted how laws repulsed rights, and opportunities to women. This list included :

- SUFFRAGE : Women lacked the right to vote and were suppressed by the system.
- PROPERTY RIGHTS: Women lacked and had insufficient rights related to holding a property or goods.
- MARRIAGE: Women were induced to promise obedience and docility to their husbands, and legislation gave vigor to the husbands.
- EDUCATION: Women could not obtain an education or even to learn the basics and were precluded from schooling or any educational institution like college.
- EMPLOYMENT: Women were prohibited from work or any occupation outside home especially a highest ranking jobs. ("Declaration of sentiments").

In addition Stanton proposed a series of resolutions, and each resolution addressed each of grievances. One of the resolutions demanded that women be authorized to vote. ("Declaration of sentiments").

Suffrage was the most cardinal portion of women's rights movement and a gate to other rights. The suffrage movement cropped up from the Seneca falls convention as a key fix propounded by Stanton where the suffragists started to look for a modification in the U.S constitution that would redeem women after the pass of the fifteenth amendment that released black men and gave them the right to vote. (" Women's suffrage").

The suffragists started to found and to create organizations and associations as the first demarche to profit the lawful to vote. In 1890, the first organization was formed. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was constructed by Stanton and Anthony as a reply against the fifteenth amendment where( AWSA) and (NWSA) were consolidated to form a solid and well grounded organization .Also Women's Christian Temperance Union worked and shared the same goal, intention as the NAWSA. By the early 20th century a new genesis of well educated up skilled activists came into sight and organized The National Women's Party which was a group of militants pushed for vote but with using an aggressive and hostile methods including protests and clamorous disapprobation against men's hegemony and polity . After a long grappled series the United States congress passed the nineteenth amendment on August 18, 1920 offered women the right to vote in all the American parts. This amendment was the first glory of women's right movement and the starting point for claiming about rights as men , where the white women had attentiveness in education, political potential, rights and work. They wanted to ingress to all the widespread definitions and sorts of freedoms. They concentrated on achieving higher and superior work spot especially in government, ministry and congress and also they wanted to legitimate the birth control program for their futurity as members of labor potency with the help of the feminism movement and many other movements to inflate their posture in society and to outstrip on men.( "Women's suffrage in the United States").

White women through creating movements and organizations they succeeded in getting their rights and achieving their goals as American citizens after long debates and combats.

## **2- The African American Women Movement:**

African American women were sighted as the hindmost category in the American social, political and economic scales without a voice or rights. As the entire black folks at that period." *people of the African descent are not and cannot be citizens of the United States, and cannot sue in any united states court...*" (Taney). With all these complications and obstacles the black women challenged all the quibbles, and started to establish their steps for freedom and equality by indulging in several movements, organizations and clubs.

After decades of despotism, black women were encouraged to go out to search for ability to move, self-esteem, and respect as human beings and as American citizens. They participated on all the scales of the black freedom movements as the fountainhead, advocates, and coordinators. Their first start was in the abolition movement by creating The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and The New York Anti-Slavery Society for the deliverance of the blacks, and after the abolition of slavery they relocated to the suffrage movement where they attended political conventions and discussions at churches to arrange and design plans and policy to gain the right to vote. At first they acceded the white suffrage movement but woefully they were abandoned and humiliated by the white women. They decided to form their own organizations for example: The National Association of Colored Women founded by Josephine Ruffin and Charlotte Grimke that focused on the right of voting and to teach African American women how to behave, manage as citizens and gave them the occasion to education. Also Ida B. Wells created The Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago. It was the foremost club which concentrated notably on suffrage. Even after the pass of the 19th amendment that accredited women the right to vote black women were froze out from that amendment, and worked hard up till the pass of voting rights act 1965 that proffered them the right to vote as citizens. They pursued their exertions to secure and shield their rights and acquired a value and a respectful, legitimate rank in all the ranges. Black women had a share in the feminist movement and set up their own black feminism as retort to fabricate a notion which displayed the blackness, sexual category, and social division, that affected women's entity and existence. Therefore, set up solutions. Also the black feminism had many responsibilities such as: to persuade other black females that feminism is not a white property but a movement for all American women and to stimulate white women to be one hand and fight for all the American women. Black women were a part of the civil rights movement, the liberation movement even the black power movement; they played a salient role, and held directorship roles and superior position in many black nationalism groups like the black party of self defense. They worked in countless groups to spotlight on dilemmas of womanhood,

identity, social division, racialism and sexism that they suffered from. They were not only ignored by white women but also the male of their own race neglected and bypassed them. ("Between two world : black women and the fight for voting rights")

Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Mary Church Terrell and Rosa Parks and many other great women devoted themselves to the black liberty movement and they made great implementations, whether on social or political levels. They were the voice and ambassadors of millions of black women.

African American women are an emblem of struggle and perseverance. Because of their bravery they won their freedom and were recognized as American citizens but after their participation in many movements and creation of many organizations.

### **3- Comparison between White and Black Women's Rights Movement:**

Women's rights movement in America was carved up between two categories of women, the white and the African American each one of those categories created their own movement with their concerns, principles and objectives.

The white women's rights movement was founded by the white women to appeal rights in politics, work and to be part of the legal and economic systems of America. The white women's movement was a racist bigot movement that claimed to fight for women's rights, but in reality the movement was only for their personal concerns and objectives; neglecting all sorts of women and their needs by suppressing their voices and disempowered them from appearing. It was very hypocritical; the members thought that the movement belonged to them and ignored the fact that women are not similar and are divided by various distinctions. Although they founded the movement in order to fight the abusive ideas and laws, they were racists with other women like the African American women as they ignored issues and problems that women of color faced, because of their whiteness. They applied what is called "Color Blind" approach when dealing with cases on non whites. (Hoffman).

The white women searched for the full political might and shared the power with white men, took high work positions, and be a part in the legislation field, imposing themselves in the American society as first class citizens. They also wanted to make whiteness as a standard of beauty and erase black skin and classify it as a symbol of ugliness. They tried with all methods to be the best in all areas of the community and monopolize in all fields. (Hoffman).

The African American women movement came as a reaction to the oppression and the ignorance by the white women movement where they were unwelcomed in its assemblies, councils and organizations. They engaged in many reform efforts and political activism to secure and safeguard their rights. Black women faced multiple forms of despotism like slavery at first and penury after the ending slavery. They had very limited work scopes and they worked as servants or in cultivation. The movement wanted to address the daily worries that black females faced as racism, sex discrimination, and segregation in all the public institutions. They were deprived from education, they even faced discrimination from the black men. "*black women must fight the world because they struggle daily against the racist, sexist, classist power of white men, and against the sexist power of power less black men* ." (Simms)

According to black feminist scholar Barbara Smith, the black feminist movement focused on venereal problems, equality in health auspice, prevention of sexual harassment, and other pertinent issues unlike the white feminists. Black feminists were actively fighting against structural and institutional racism. The black movement wasn't just for black but many black activists incorporate the issues of other women's minorities and even men.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The white movement was different from the black women movement in several areas in terms of demands, methods, and ways of thinking. The question of difference has been central in America since the creation of women's rights movement. Each one of those movement was selfish and each one of them wanted certain objectives, but both movements were dedicated to women's rights.

## **The General Conclusion**

During a long period, women in America were not considered as a part of the country. They were Recognized as subordinate creatures made to men's desires; they suffered a lot from discrimination, harsh treatment.

The black women were kidnapped and forced to serve the whites as slaves with no will or identity. Their status was harder than the white women. They were oppressed by both white men and women. Both white and black women were deprived from their rights as citizens of the United States , and from many life's necessities such as education , health care, and legal representation living under the control of their husbands and masters.

After decades of oppression, women decided to revolt against the patriarchy society, and demand their rights as citizens. They created significant movements such as feminism movement that led to important turning points in women's path toward rights. And they founded many organizations which aimed to raise women's voice. Although black women were invisible, but this did not prevent them from claiming their rights. They participated in various movements like the civil rights movement and liberation movement, and many significant movements.

Although American women were almost searching for the same rights, they did not unite in one movement. Black and white women's movement each one of them sought to its own concerns and objectives. Although they were different, they succeeded in achieving their demands and obtaining freedom and equality in life.

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