

Our America: Reshaping the history

Minho Kim

Alliance University

The United States of America is a nation recognized to be built on the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice for all. Moreover, the country is known for its commitment to democracy, human rights, economic prosperity. Perhaps these ideas lead millions of people to migrate to the country for hopes and opportunities. However, the unrevealed history of the country is riddled with incidents of slavery, discrimination, and segregation. In recent times, there has been a growing awareness about these incidents through the works of scholars, activists, and movements. This essay discusses how learning about things such as the 1619 Project, slavery itself, Jim Crow laws, Doctrine of Discovery, model minority, Immigration Act, immigration, and the Civil Rights Movement has reshaped my thinking about the United States of America.

The 1619 Project initiative that seeks to reframe the history of the United States by placing the year 1619, when the first slaves were brought to the country, at the center of the narrative (Hannah-Jones, 2019). This project has reshaped my thinking about the United States by highlighting the central role that slavery played in the country's development (Hannah-Jones, 2019). It has made me realize that the legacy of slavery still lingers in the form of institutional racism, economic inequality, and social injustice. Moreover, the 1619 Project has shown me that the standard narrative of American history has been shaped by the dominant culture and has often overlooked the contributions of marginalized groups such as African Americans (Hannah-Jones, 2019). The book emphasized the importance of acknowledging the contributions of Black Americans to the country's development. Learning about the achievements of Black Americans in fields such as art, music, literature, and politics has made me appreciate the richness and diversity of American culture. It has also made me realize that Black Americans have played a crucial role in shaping the country's development, and that their struggles and achievements deserve to be recognized and celebrated.

Learning about slavery history in the United States revealed the extent of the brutality and dehumanization that enslaved Africans had to endure. Slavery was not just an economic system but a social and cultural institution that shaped the way white Americans viewed black people. Slavery was a stain on the country's history, and it has left a lasting impact on the lives of black Americans. Visiting the African Burial Ground was a memorable experience that redirected my generalization of how slavery was like through the history of United States. When I was looking at the skeletal structures of the slaves, I learned that the stress from heavy lifting objects can stress a body and change the bone shape and structure. For example, thickened ridge can form on a bone when muscles are heavily stressed, as with constant lifting, bony attachments begin to grow. It was disturbing to learn how much stress and pain these individuals went through their lives and this tragic history continued on for over 200 years.

During the lecture, I learned about the significance of The Jim Crow Laws. The Jim Crow laws were a series of state and local laws in the United States that enforced racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans from the late 1800s to the mid-1960s. Learning about these laws has reshaped my thinking about the United States by revealing the extent of the legal and social barriers that black Americans faced in their struggle for equality. It has also made me appreciate the courage and resilience of the Civil Rights Movement in challenging these laws and paving the way for progress.

Doctrine of Discovery the Doctrine of Discovery was a legal concept that originated in Europe in the 15th century and was later used to justify the colonization of the Americas by Europeans (Charles et al., 2019). This concept established a religious, political, and legal justification for colonization and seizure of land not inhabited by Christians (Charles et al., 2019). Learning about this concept during the lecture has reformed my view of the history of

United States by revealing the colonialist mindset that underpinned the country's founding. It has made me question the legitimacy of the United States as a nation and the moral basis of its territorial expansion.

The model minority myth is a stereotype that portrays Asian Americans as a group of high-achieving, law-abiding citizens who have overcome discrimination and assimilated into American society (Hong, 2023). By focusing on select “success” indicators such as income, education, and low crime rates while ignoring deeper socioeconomic factors, this concept gives describes Asian Americans seemingly positive stereotypes. Learning about this myth has reshaped my thinking about the United States by revealing the insidious nature of racial stereotypes and their impact on minority communities. It has made me realize the importance of acknowledging the diversity and complexity of racial identities and experiences.

According to the recording of Dr. Hong, Jane, the Immigration Act of 1965 abolished the national-origin quotas that had restricted immigration to the United States since the 1920s and opened the doors to immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and other regions. Learning about this act made me realize the role that immigration has played in shaping the country's cultural and demographic diversity. It has also made me appreciate the contributions that immigrants have made to the country's economy, society, and culture. In Dr. Hong's webpage she states that “Asian Americans are currently the fastest growing racial group in the country, with more immigrants coming to the United States from Asia than from anywhere else in the world. They are also one of the fastest growing populations within U.S. evangelicalism. Today Asian Americans lead the National Association of Evangelicals, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and Evangelicals (now, Christians) for Social Action, among other flagship organizations. Yet little is known about them and their history in the United States.” (Hong, 2023). This is an example of

how the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 laid the groundwork for multiculturalism and diversification. Furthermore, Dr. Hong addresses the importance of “More inclusive History”. It is essential to recognize and acknowledge the contributions and experiences of historically marginalized groups that often have been ignored or left out of mainstream historical narratives. It is crucial to recognize that fact that history has been written primarily from a limited perspective.

Learning about immigration has reshaped my thinking about the United States by revealing the complex and often contradictory attitudes that the country has had towards immigrants throughout its history. On one hand, the United States has been a epitome of hope and opportunity for people fleeing poverty, persecution, and war. On the other hand, it has also been a site of exclusion, and discrimination. In his book, Takaki illustrates the Master Narrative, which leaves out the foundational contribution of ethnic minorities and creates illusion that they are not true Americans. However, throughout the book, Takaki demonstrates many accomplishments and contributions of ethnic minorities in American History Learning about these dark chapters in the history of immigration has made me realize that the story of the United States is not just one of progress and triumph, but also of struggle and resistance. It has also made me appreciate the resilience and contributions of immigrant communities who have helped shape the country in countless ways.

Learning about the 1619 Project, slavery, Jim Crow laws, Doctrine of Discovery, model minority, Immigration Act, immigration, and the Civil Rights Movement has reshaped my thinking about the United States of America. It has made me realize the extent of the country's past injustices and their enduring impact on the lives of marginalized communities. It has also made me appreciate the courage and resilience of those who have fought for justice and equality

throughout history. By acknowledging and confronting the country's past, we can work towards creating a more just and equitable society. As individuals, we can continue to educate ourselves and engage in conversations and actions that promote justice, equality, and respect for all. The journey towards a better America begins with a deeper understanding of its history and a commitment to a more equitable future.

## References

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