

**The Reality of being Minority in America**

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Diversity and inclusion of all ethnic groups in America has played a significant role in this country's modern development. As a result of diversity, marketing and innovation have helped grow America economically and modernly (Horowitz et al., 2020). Despite this, throughout American History, it is apparent that many ethnic groups have struggled to make it in this country. Through discussions in class and visits to museums all over New York City, the struggles of each ethnic group from the past to the present have become more evident. This paper aims to shed light on each ethnic group discussed throughout this semester. In addition, a discussion regarding America being a "Melting Pot" will be analyzed and compared to other alternative terms. Furthermore, an analysis of similarities in each ethnic group's struggle will be included in this paper.

For years, the United States of America has been acknowledged as a "Melting Pot" compared to any other nation. A *Melting pot* can be defined as a diverse country where multiple cultures and ethnicities have come together to form a unionized Nation (Hirschman, 1983). Despite the rapid increase in immigration, culture, and diversity, this term has been proven incorrect. The term melting pot describes how every element in the pot can blend and merge to create a new form of culture that has never been seen before (Rice, 2021). By using the term Melting Pot, every individual must come to terms with the same values, beliefs, and core practices (Rice, 2021). In present-day America, we cannot use this phrase because we as a country have not fully blended. Every American is a different individual with different core values and beliefs. However, one term that may be used to describe America as a diverse nation is Salad Bowl. A salad bowl country can be described as a heterogeneous society where people can coexist while accepting unique characteristics from their culture and the culture of those around them (Salad Bowl-ECSP, 2019). America can be termed as a salad bowl because each

individual with different ethnicities, cultures, and beliefs is used to make the salad bowl colorful and different. Much like the United States of America, every ingredient makes up the structure of the salad bowl. Without immigrants from different walks of life in America, it would not be able to be viewed as the Salad Bowl it is today.

Native Americans are described as Indigenous people split into many prominent tribes (Paul, 2023). These Indigenous groups are believed to be the first to cohabitate on American soil. Due to the migration of Spanish Colonies, indigenous groups slowly began to lose the place they once called home. Many events in American History greatly influenced why Native Americans were stripped away from their rightful land. One of the main factors that played into Native Americans being stripped of what was rightfully theirs was the **Doctrine of Discovery**. The Doctrine of Discovery can be traced back to 1493 (Joseph, 2023). Spanish Colonizers used this Doctrine as an excuse for a religious, political, and legal justification for the colonization of land that was not theirs in 1493 (Joseph, 2023). It was encouraged since many believed it was to promote Christian domination. Because of this new decree, many Native Americans were deprived of land that they once called home (Doctrine of Discovery, 2012). In addition to the Doctrine of Discovery, another major event in US History that affected Native Americans was the **Trail of Tears**. The Trail of Tears is described as an event in the 1830s. During this event, many Native Americans were forcibly relocated from the lands they had established their tribes (Pauls, 1998). It is believed that about 100,000 Indigenous people were affected during this time (Pauls, 1998). In addition, it is believed that about 15,000 people died during their journey heading toward the West (Pauls, 1998). In present-day America, the trail these people used to migrate to the West is believed to be about 5,045 miles, stretching across portions of nine states

(Pauls, 1998). Much like many other minority groups, Native Americans had been affected negatively during the modernization of this country.

Despite Latino/Hispanic Americans not receiving the same coverage as Native Americans, both ethnic groups went through similar situations in America. Like Native Americans, Hispanic Americans also lost their homes due to invasion. In 1846, Mexico went to war with the United States of America due to the conflict that had progressively worsened (The Long History of Anti-Latino Discrimination in America, 2018). In 1848, the war ended but resulted in Mexico losing more than one-third of its territory (Insert citations). On February 2nd, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed. In this treaty, both parties had agreed to Mexico losing what is now known as Texas (The Long History of Anti-Latino Discrimination in America, 2018). In addition, this war also resulted in the loss of what is now known as California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico (The Long History of Anti-Latino Discrimination in America, 2018).

Much like African Americans, Latino/Mexican Americans received similar treatment during segregation. In the 1870s, Latino Americans were required to attend separate schools from white Americans. Furthermore, Mexican Americans were not granted any form of citizenship and struggled with racism, just like African Americans did during this period (Malloryk, 2021). In the eyes of America, Hispanic people were viewed as lesser than compared to White Americans.

Like other ethnic groups, African Americans were maltreated and viewed as less than from the beginning of their time on American soil. Throughout American History, there have been events of unfair treatment that many African Americans experienced. A museum that played a considerable role in shedding light on the treatment African Americans received during

slavery was the African Burial Ground. The African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan was created as a dedication to free and enslaved African Americans. Upon visitation, it was evident that Africans in America were treated differently from when they stepped foot on this land to when they took their last breath. The treatment they had received during this time was so extreme that they could not be buried with the people they had spent most of their lives serving. The History of the African Burial Ground is one of the many museums in America that exposes the treatment of Enslaved Africans and the reality and struggles this ethnic group had to bear in the past.

Despite African Americans' unfair treatment, they could still create memories and traditions that helped them through hard times. Furthermore, according to the video *The Black Church*, African Americans could hold on to a shred of hope due to religion—many African American used church to hope for better days. In addition, the Black Church greatly influenced the songs and traditions created during slavery, some of which are still used today. In addition, traditions like Jumping the broom was another form of tradition created during slavery. Since no rings or documents were used to symbolize marriage for African Americans, jumping the broom was used as a symbol for marriage. Traditions like this continue to be passed down through generations.

Moreover, another major event that affected many African Americans for years was Jim Crow Laws. Jim Crow Laws are defined as a collection of laws created in the early 1860s. These laws were set up on a state and local level, which legalized racial segregation (Jim Crow Laws, 2023). Because of these laws, many African Americans across America were denied the right to vote, hold a stable job, or pursue higher education. Consequences for breaking these laws often led to African Americans being arrested, fined, or lynched to set an example for others (Jim

Crow Laws, 2023). During that time, Jim Crow laws significantly separated waiting rooms, water fountains, building entrances, restrooms, and many more public places. In addition to separating public places, these laws also restricted African Americans from living in an area predominately made for white people (Jim Crow Laws, 2023). Laws like this prevented African Americans from many things and isolated them in their sector of life.

Much like African Americans, people of Asian Descent had also struggled with similar situations in America. On May 6th, 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was approved by Congress, making it the first major law that restricted immigration in the United States (Chinese Exclusion Act, 2023). In this act, a 10-year ban was instilled on Chinese workers immigrating to the United States, making it challenging to migrate. Furthermore, this act required non-laborers to obtain a certification from the Chinese government to qualify for migration to the United States (Chinese Exclusion Act, 2023). In addition, people of Chinese Descent who resided in America could not travel to China and return to America. Once they left, they were unable to regain entry. This policy that had been passed played a huge role in American history because it was the first law implemented to prevent those with a specific ethnic background from entering the United States of America. In this period, it was very unsafe to be a person of Chinese Descent living in America due to the treatment they received. In the 1800s, many immigrants from China were forced out of business, beaten, and targeted due to their nationality (The Chinese Experience in the 19th Century American, 2006). Despite leaving their home country due to economic and political problems, they were still faced with hate and criticism, making it difficult for them to survive in America.

As many years began to pass, Asian Americans began to be viewed in a different light than they were seen in the past. In the late 1960s, the term “**model minority**” began increasing in

popularity by a sociologist named William Peterson (SOONLING BLACKBURN, 2019). The term Model Minority can be defined as a specific minority group known for reaching and obtaining high levels of success in American Society. After years of discrimination and unfair treatment, Asian Americans were finally seen in a different light. When the topic of Model Minority and ethnic groups who strived for excellence was discussed, Asian Americans were the minority group of choice. Despite many believing that this myth benefits Asian Americans, it places them in a position that causes harm. One way the term Model Minority is harmful is the way it eradicates the differentially of individuals in this ethnic group (SOONLING BLACKBURN, 2019). Like many other stereotypes in American history, the term Model Minority categorizes everyone in this specific race under this specific ideal. When a person from an ethnic group cannot perform at the ability this standard upholds, it may lead to pressure and imposter syndrome in the individual. Furthermore, another harmful reason this term is viewed negatively is that it puts specific ethnic groups in a position of comparison (SOONLING BLACKBURN, 2019). This comparison has a negative effect because it may form a superiority complex or lead to resentment from other minority groups that this term may harm.

For decades, being a minority has played a significant role for many different ethnic groups in America. Despite these events occurring at different periods, many ethnic groups went through similar situations. Like African Americans, Mexican and Asian Americans struggled with racism, segregation, and discrimination due to their racial background. Similar to Native Americans, Mexicans went through similar situations regarding the loss of territory in America. Despite slight improvement for minorities in America, history and events can never be erased. These events shed light on what the reality of being a minority in America symbolizes.

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