

Immigration, Citizenship, and the Enduring Legacy of Racial Scripts in America

Delving into the Profound Impact of Racial Narratives on Immigration Policies and Citizenship Experiences

Original Article

The power of racial scripts: What the history of Mexican immigration to the United States teaches us about relational notions of race

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Abstract This article examines Mexican immigration to the United States after the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act to better understand the construction of racial categories. Unlike traditional studies of Mexican immigrants in the United States, this article focuses on how discourses about other racialized groups, principally Indians, African Americans, and Asians, were crucial in informing people what “Mexican” meant at this time. The post-1924 Immigration Act period is significant in cementing negative cultural constructions of Mexicans that last into the present day and thus is a key place to look to understand these racial constructions. The article draws on immigration hearings, debates, correspondence, and newspaper articles on Mexican immigration/denaturalization, how immigration discourse was central in giving people what “Mexican” meant at this time.

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Keywords: Mexican immigration; Chicana/o history; ethnic studies; 1924 Immigration Act; racial formation

Introduction

During the 1920s, both proponents and opponents of Mexican immigration regularly compared Mexicans to other racialized groups in order to portray Mexicans as more or less desirable, respectively. These racial comparisons

In the tapestry of American history, immigration has played a pivotal role, intertwining with the nation's evolving understanding of citizenship. However, this intertwined history has been profoundly shaped by the enduring presence of racial scripts – deeply ingrained narratives that influence how we perceive and treat immigrants, shaping their citizenship experiences.



How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts (American Crossroads Book 38) by Natalia Molina

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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The Concept of Racial Scripts

Racial scripts are cognitive frameworks that assign specific traits and expectations to individuals based on their race. These scripts are often rooted in stereotypes and biases, and they can have a profound impact on how immigrants are perceived and treated by society.

For example, in the American context, racial scripts have historically portrayed immigrants of color as inferior, untrustworthy, and prone to criminality. These scripts have been used to justify discriminatory policies

and practices that have restricted immigration from certain countries and made it more difficult for immigrants of color to become citizens.

The Impact of Racial Scripts on Immigration Policy

Racial scripts have had a significant impact on the development of immigration policy in the United States. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was passed in response to fears that Chinese immigrants were taking jobs from white Americans. The Immigration Act of 1924 established quotas that limited the number of immigrants who could enter the United States from certain countries, and it also excluded immigrants from Asia altogether.

Even today, racial scripts continue to influence immigration policy. For example, the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy resulted in the separation of thousands of migrant children from their parents at the bFree Download. This policy was based on the assumption that these immigrants were criminals who posed a threat to American society.

The Impact of Racial Scripts on Citizenship Experiences

Racial scripts also have a profound impact on the citizenship experiences of immigrants. Immigrants of color often face discrimination and marginalization in American society. They may be denied access to jobs, housing, and education. They may also be subject to racial profiling and other forms of harassment.

These experiences can make it difficult for immigrants of color to fully participate in American society and to feel like they belong. They may also discourage them from seeking citizenship, as they may feel that they are not welcome in the United States.

Challenging Racial Scripts

The challenge of racial scripts is a complex one. It requires us to confront our own biases and to challenge the narratives that we have been taught about immigrants. It also requires us to create a more inclusive society that welcomes immigrants of all races and backgrounds.

There are many things that we can do to challenge racial scripts. We can educate ourselves about the history of immigration in the United States and the role that racial scripts have played in shaping that history. We can also speak out against discrimination and hate speech. We can support organizations that are working to promote immigrant rights. And we can welcome immigrants into our communities and treat them with respect.

The impact of racial scripts on immigration and citizenship in America is a complex and challenging issue. However, it is an issue that we must confront if we want to create a more just and equitable society. By challenging racial scripts and creating a more inclusive society, we can make the United States a true home for all immigrants.



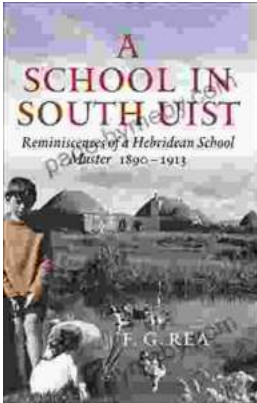
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