Minority Studies: A Brief Sociological Text

By:
Ruth Dunn

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Minority Studies[1]

1.1.1 Introduction to Minority Studies: A Brief Sociological Text

My name is Ruth Dunn and I have been teaching Sociology at Houston Community College (HCC) and the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) since 1998; both schools are in Houston, Texas, USA. My experiences in the classroom and online led me to develop a huge amount of course material above and beyond the ubiquitous, over-priced textbooks. This little volume, Minority Studies: A Brief Sociological Text, is based on the course material that I developed for Minority Studies Sociology courses at HCC (SOCI 2319/2320), and a Minorities in America Sociology course at UHCL (SOCI 4535).

HCC[2] is a non-residential community college with six individual colleges located across seventeen campuses. We are one of the most diverse community colleges in the nation and we have the largest contingent of international students of any community college in the country. As of the fall semester 2009, we had an enrollment of over 60,000 students. Our size and diversity offers faculty a wide variety of experience on which to draw: it is a joy for a Sociologist to find so many different sociocultural perspectives that can then be used for those "teachable moments" that we crave.

> **Example 1.1**
> In one class in 2009 I had four students from Nepal. During a discussion of race and ethnicity they questioned the racism in America and asked how and why it existed. These young men ranged in skin color from "white" to very dark, but they truly thought of each other as the same color; a fact that the American-born students simply could not grasp. This led to a spirited discussion of perception of difference and extrapolation of the theory that perception is reality.

I believe that most good college professors bring much more to the classroom than can be found in standard textbooks, and by offering our own style, knowledge, examples, and experience and drawing on the style, knowledge, and experience of the students, serious learning happens. This very brief, bare-bones, free textbook touches on the basics of minority studies leaving the bulk of the material to be fleshed-out by each individual instructor—something that most of us do anyway.

Since statistical data in most textbooks are more-or-less out of date by the time a textbook is published, I have used very few statistics; professors can supply links to the US Census Bureau, the CIA World Factbook, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, and multiple other sources for their students to use. I have provided a fairly comprehensive list of websites for that purpose.

This textbook is divided into eleven different sections or modules: Introduction, Part I: Dominant and Minority Groups—there is a subsection of Part I that covers minorities by group (African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Sexual Orientation, and Women) in more detail than the main text, Part II:

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[1]This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m33858/1.7/>.
[2]http://www.hccs.edu/portal/site/hccs

Race and Ethnicity, Part III: Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation, Part IV: Aging, Part V: Disability, Part VI: The Consequences of Bigotry: Hate Kills!, The Three Sociological Paradigms/Perspectives: Conflict, Structural Functionalism, and Symbolic Interactionism, Reading Lists, Websites of Interest to Students of Sociology; and References. Each part of this textbook is arranged the same way so that it is easy for students and faculty alike to follow: Text, Course Objectives, Study Guide, Key Terms and Concepts, Lecture Outline, Assignments, and Reading Lists. Woven throughout the course material are a variety of links to various pertinent websites. There are also suggestions for books and social science journals in the Assignments section of each unit and because students should be reading and writing, I have compiled and included an extensive, but by no means complete, reading list for each unit.

I have designed this brief textbook for use in a Sociology survey course for Minority Studies; thus, it looks at minorities from a very broad but shallow Sociological perspective and includes discussion of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, aging, and disability. The last section is devoted to expulsion and genocide.

I would like to thank my family, friends, colleagues, professors, and students from whom I have learned and continue to learn so much. It is my hope that this small textbook will be used either as a stand-alone text or as a supplement to a more detailed text. However it is used, I wish well you who do use it.

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Chapter 2

Part I—Dominant and Minority Groups

2.1 Dominant and Minority Groups[1]

2.1.1 Part I—Dominant and Minority Groups

2.1.2 Dominant Group Defined

Minority Studies is a course that deals with the differential and negative treatment of groups (and of individuals as members of groups) who suffer from less wealth, power, (economic, political, social, coercive), and status and less access to wealth, power, and status than other groups in American society. There are racial/ethnic, sex/gender, age, religious, and disabled minorities as well as economic and educational minorities. Furthermore, minority group status may and often does encompass more than one category. Minorities are defined by the dominant group in society and are contrasted to the dominant group in both subtle and obvious ways. A dominant group is positively privileged (Weber) unstigmatized (Rosenblum and Travis)[2] and generally favored by the institutions of society (Marger)[3] particularly the social, economic, political, and educational systems. Classical Sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), recognizes several interlinked relational patterns that lead to stratification; whereas Marxists reduce all inequality to economics (the differences in access to and use of wealth—all of one's financial assets—between the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat), Weber expands stratification into three related yet distinct components: Class, Status, and Party. "We may speak of a 'class' when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as, (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets".[4]

In other words one's class situation is based solely on economics—one's wealth or access to wealth, or, as Weber writes "'property' and 'lack of property' are therefore, the basic categories of all class situation, "[5] however, class **does not** constitute a community or in Marxian terms a "Class for Self." Weber argues that one's economic position in society does not necessarily or even usually lead to class-consciousness. Status, however, and status groups **are** often class conscious. Status is related to social esteem, the honor in which one is held by others "we wish to designate as 'status situation' every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor . . .Property as such is

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[1] This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m33866/1.10/>.

[2] Rosenblum Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race Sex and Gender Social Class and Sexual Orientation: Second Edition.* Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2000.

[3] Marger Martin. *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives: Fourth Edition.* Wadsworth: Belmont CA: 1996.

[4] *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology.* Edited and translated by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills. Oxford U.P., New York. 1946/1958. p. 151

[5] *Ibid.* p. 152.

not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity."[6]

In other words, status and class quite often, but not always, go hand-in-hand. Weber argues that when there is a stable economy there is greater stratification based on status or social honor, but when there is economic **in**stability, the primary mode of stratification is based on class or wealth. Class and status are two components of stratification, but for Weber, **all** stratification is based on dimensions of power—the ability to influence over resistance. Class, status, and party, then are three separate dimensions of "structures struggling for domination"[7].

Moreover, dominant group members have greater access to wealth, power, and status partly because dominant group membership automatically confers privilege. A minority group (and there is some controversy about whether we should even be using the term) is a group that is negatively privileged (Weber), stigmatized (Rosenblum and Travis),[8] and generally less favored by the institutions of society (Marger).[9] A dominant group is an ascribed, (unearned and socially defined), master status which is defined only in relationship to the minority groups in a society. Rosenblum and Travis have argued that

> *what one notices in the world depends in large part on the statuses one occupies . . . thus we are likely to be fairly unaware of the statuses we occupy that privilege us . . . [and] provide advantage and are acutely aware of those . . . that yield negative judgments and unfair treatment . . . one of the privileges of being white [in America is] being able to be oblivious to those privileges . . .majority status is unmarked or unstigmatized and grants a sense of entitlement . . .the unmarked category . . . tells us what a society takes for granted [such as being white and male in America.]*[10]

2.1.3 Minority Group Defined

A minority group, which is defined by the dominant group, is also an ascribed master status. It is a category of people whose physical appearance or cultural characteristics are defined as being different from the traits of the dominant group and that result in their being set apart for different and unequal treatment. This definition of a minority group takes into account both race and ethnicity and can, indeed, subsume sex/gender, age, religion, disability, and SES! According to Dworkin and Dworkin there are four qualities of minority groups: "1) identifiability 2) differential power 3) differential and pejorative treatment 4) group awareness."[11] Rosenblum and Travis have written that "minority status is highly visible marked stigmatized and unprivileged or differentially (unequally) privileged, "what Erving Goffman called tribal stigma.[12] A minority group is not necessarily a minority because they are a smaller population than the dominant group. In fact, the South African system of apartheid (a system of de jure discrimination) was a major indicator that a minority group is socially and not numerically defined, (90% of the population of South Africa is black but until the very early 1990s they were the minority group and the 10% of the population who are white were the dominant group). The social differences between dominant and minority groups is called stratification, which, in sociological terms is the study of inequality. Stratification is a word that comes to us from geology and describes the layering or strata of rocks; therefore, stratification concerns the ways in which society is layered and how that layering effects the life chances of groups and the individuals within those groups. People in all societies experience some level of stratification—there is no society in the world

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[6]*Ibid.* p. 187.

[7]*Ibid.* p. 185.

[8]Rosenblum Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race Sex and Gender Social Class and Sexual Orientation: Second Edition.* Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2000.

[9]Marger Martin. *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives: Fourth Edition.* Wadsworth: Belmont CA: 1996.

[10]Rosenblum Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race Sex and Gender Social Class and Sexual Orientation: Second Edition.* Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2000.

[11]From Oettinger.

[12]Rosenblum Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race Sex and Gender Social Class and Sexual Orientation: Second Edition.* Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2000.

that is completely egalitarian; even in the most equal societies, men usually have authority over women and the older have authority over the younger.

2.1.4 Stratification

In general, all societies are stratified along one or more lines comprised of race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age, religion, disability, and SES or socioeconomic status, which is a combination of one's income, education, and occupation. Stratification is the unequal ways in which the goods of society are distributed. Sociologist Craig Oettinger defines stratification as "who gets what and how much they get over time." My definition is:" the unequal distribution of and unequal access to the goods of society: wealth power and status." According to Abercrombie et. al., "social differences become social stratification when people are ranked hierarchically along some dimension of inequality whether this be income wealth power prestige age ethnicity or some other characteristic."[13] Gerhard Lenski argues that stratification is based on distributive systems of who gets what and why? (p. viii) and that "social stratification [is equated with] the distributive process in human societies—the process by which scarce resources are distributed" (p. xxvi). [14] According to Marger[15], there are four major conditions necessary for ethnic stratification to occur: contact. ethnocentrism, competition, and differential power.

> **Example 2.1**
> An example of contact involves the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America who crossed the Bering Strait during the last great ice age approximately 35,000 years ago. It took these migrants another 12,000 to 15,000 years to populate both continents. Although exact population data is unknown it is believed that the indigenous population was about 75 million in the late 15th century, with somewhere between 1 million and 18 million residing in territories North of the Rio Grande. The Europeans who sailed to the Americas were in search of trade goods and treasure to enrich themselves individually and to bring greater wealth to their nation-states and monarchs. Thus, they arrived as conquerors. The Americas were rich in natural resources that had long since begun to be depleted in Europe and so, the "explorers" set about to establish mercantilistic colonies and to subdue the native populations. The Europeans with their superior weapons, horses, and statecraft overwhelmed the Indians within a few years in South America. Subjugation took longer in North America due to the widely divergent lifestyles of the North American Indians. In South America, the people were an agrarian population largely tied to large urban centers and a highly centralized form of government wherein authority was vested in a small, extremely wealthy, and extremely powerful ruling class. Conquest of people with a form of government and social organization not unlike the city-states and nation-states of Europe was much less problematic overall than the conquest of widely divergent, unorganized, tribal groups of hunter-gatherers who widely scattered across a large geographic area. As Marger[16] makes clear, the Native Americans are the only minority group in the United States whose subjugation and subsequent minority group status was brought about solely through armed conflict and the use of coercive power.
>
> Even after the North American tribes gained the use of horses and guns, they were, ultimately, no match for the superior forces of the United States military and armed mercenaries who hunted to near extinction the primary source of protein—the American bison or buffalo—and who also closed off through various (unkept) treaties many of the hunting and gathering grounds. The ideology called "Manifest Destiny" pushed white traders, treasure hunters, thrill seekers, and settlers further and further across North America until they had encroached on every part of the land, "we heard

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[13]*The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*. Nicholas Abercrombie Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner. Penguin: London: 1994: pp. 413-414.

[14]*Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*. Gerhard Lenski. UNC Press. Chapel Hill. 1984. Italics in original.

[15]Martin Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives: 4th Edition*, Wadsworth, Belmont, 1997. Chapter 5 "Foundations of the American Ethnic Hierarchy: Anglo-Americans and Native Americans, pp. 146-169.

[16]Ibid.

that creeks of [white people] were flowing into the [Black] Hills and becoming rivers"(*Black Elk*[17] *Speaks*, John Neihardt, Bison Books, U of Nebraska Press, [1932] 1995), p.82).

2.1.5 Ethnocentrism

The ethnocentrism of the Europeans led to an ideology, based primarily on the low-technology hunter-gatherer lifestyle and animistic religion of the Native Americans, that the Native Americans were, as Marger[18] states, inferior, savage humans. This ideology eventually led to "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" philosophy which began with such events as the "Trail of Tears" in the early 1800s and culminated in the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890. The "butchering" at Wounded Knee as Black Elk[19] describes it, marked the last battle between Native Americans and the military forces of the United States. However, there were still skirmishes between farmers and ranchers and Native Americans as late as the 1920s. In fact, the term "Redskin" comes from a bounty set aside by the United States government for any Indian found outside a reservation without papers. The policy was for Indians "dead or alive" and the bloody, red, skins of the Indians brought as much bounty as a body.

2.1.6 Competition

Competition for land and natural resources and conflict over ownership of land exacerbated the conditions imposed by armed conflict and ethnocentrism. Economic competition always ends in conflict whether armed or peacefully resolved, and when the competing group is a minority—and a despised minority at that—the competition often becomes bloody concluding with the complete subjugation or annihilation of the minority group.

2.1.7 Differential Power

Differential power is always a concomitant of stratification of any kind, as stated previously, the greater force of arms and the increasing white population linked to the susceptibility of the American Indians to disease, the collapse of their social structure, the loss of their hunting and gathering grounds created a state of affairs in which the indigenous peoples were virtually doomed. As Black Elk[20] says:

> and now when I look about me upon my people in despair, I feel like crying and I wish and wish my vision could have been given to a man more worthy. I wonder why it came to me, a pitiful old man who can do nothing. Men and women and children I have cured of sickness with the power [my] vision gave me; but my nation I could not help. If a man or woman or child dies, it does not matter long, for the nation lives on. It was the nation that was dying, and the vision was for the nation . . . the nation's hoop [social structure/social solidarity/integrity as a people] is broken and scattered. There is no center any longer, and the sacred tree [the tree of life that nourishes the nation] is dead. (Black Elk Speaks, p. 180 and 270; italics added for emphasis)

2.1.8 Master Status

Oftentimes scarce but valued resources (wealth, power, and status) are distributed based on Master Status which includes race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age, religion, disability, and SES (socioeconomic status which is inclusive of the combined effects of income occupation and education). Master Status is a ranking that combines several factors to assess peoples' positions in the stratification hierarchy (levels of social acceptance

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[17]*Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux, As Told through John G. Neihardt.* John G. Neihardt. Bison Books, U. of Nebraska Press, [1932] 1995.

[18]Marger, *op. cit.*

[19]*Black Elk, op. cit.*

[20]*Black Elk, op. cit.*

by the dominant group). Of all the statuses a person occupies it is the one that largely defines who that person is and what his or her goals and opportunities are. All people have Master Status.

For example, I occupy several statuses in society: white, married, female, middle-aged, upper middle class, professor of Sociology and my Master Status, (as is true with most people), is the way in which I define myself to myrself and to others.

Master Status includes those elements of ourselves that we are born with, (ascribed statuses), as well as those we accomplish or attain through our own efforts (achieved statuses). Ascribed statuses include those aspects of ourselves that we are born with and that we do not generally change such as our race/ethnicity, sex, eye color and shape, hair texture, and basic physical appearance (phenotype). Achieved statuses on the other hand are those aspects of ourselves that require us to do something to accomplish such as our adult income, education, and occupation (SES).[21]

One's Master Status or the Master Status one chooses to present is often situationally dependent.

Example 2.2
For instance, my Master Status as a professor of Sociology generally becomes evident only when performing the role of professor of Sociology. My Master Status as a white female, although always evident, is largely ignored unless whiteness or femaleness becomes a particular situational issue.

A social status (any status) is a social position which must be filled. However, any qualified person can fill any social position.

Those of you who are reading this are probably college students—a status which must be filled because it is necessary for people in our culture to be formally educated. Some of you are probably parents—another status that must be filled because it is critical for any culture to add to its population and socialize its young. Some of you are employees who have jobs and go to work everyday—also a necessary status in society because the economy must be supported and maintained and there are basic social services necessary for the smooth operation of an industrialized society.

Each status in society has certain obligations, expectations, duties, rights, and functions that go with them. College students are obligated to pay for their education, expected to do the reading and write the papers that have been assigned, required to come to class and complete the coursework satisfactorily in order to earn a passing grade, study hard, be treated with dignity and respect, and graduate. However, as we all know, some people fail to adequately fill their status.

2.1.9 Social Roles

A social role is the way we fill the various statuses we occupy. You have probably heard someone say that someone else is just taking up space, meaning that they are not doing their job or fulfilling the obligations, expectations, duties, rights, and functions that go with a specific status. They are not playing the role. We have all seen people in school plays who were wrong for a particular part, or who couldn't remember their lines or their position on the stage, or who was simply bad at acting. That person (status=actor) is not playing satisfactorily the part (role=part). All of the various aspects of our Master Status, (the primary social positions we occupy), and sometimes the way we play our social roles, can and do effect our ranking on the stratification hierarchy.

2.1.10 Stratification Redux

Because every society has some level of stratification—even in the least complex hunter-gatherer cultures, men have authority over women and the old have authority over the young—our position in our society is based on our Master Statuses. The stratification hierarchy is the layers or levels of any social structure—it is

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[21]Whereas whiteness is the societal norm and therefore without negative connotations people of color (racial and ethnic minorities) do not enjoy the same high level of socioeconomic and normative privilege from their Master Status as do whites. In America, whiteness is the unstigmatized or unmarked category. In other words being white in America is being able to be oblivious to racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination and to be oblivious to the harm that institutional racism still inflicts.

the way people classify or categorize themselves and others. The American stratification hierarchy is evident
to all even though we tend to be relatively oblivious to it.

Example 2.3

For example, the majority of Americans think of themselves as middle class whether they make
$25,000 per year or $250,000. Clearly, a vast difference in definitions of middle class is required in
order for people with such disparate incomes to include themselves in this largest layer or social
category. Even President George H. Bush, who comes from a very wealthy family and is worth
several millions of dollars, spoke of himself as middle class during his abortive run for a second term
in 1992. The media often referred to former President and Mrs. Bill Clinton as middle class even
though they were worth nearly three million dollars in 2000. President George W. Bush and his
wife Laura also referred to themselves as middle class and yet they are also worth several million
dollars.

Our ability to enjoy such resources as personal autonomy—control of our own lives, health, physical comfort,
creature comforts, education, employment opportunities in a high paying and satisfying job, the respect of
others, and a long life span are all related to our position in the stratification hierarchy. How we live, where
we live, the things with which we surround ourselves, the kind of food we eat, the style and quality of the
clothes we wear and the other forms of body adornment we use, the music we listen to, the way we dance,
our patterns of speech, virtually everything about us—is determined in greater or lesser extent by our social
class, our position on the stratification hierarchy. The way we treat others and the way we classify others is
also largely based on our perceptions of where they are located on the stratification hierarchy.

2.1.11 W.I. Thomas and Thomas's Theorem

W. I. Thomas (1863-1947) is justly famous for his work with Florian Znaniecki (1882-1958) concerning
the assimilation processes undergone by Polish peasant immigrants to the United States. Indeed they are
responsible for our concepts of the social types they defined as "the Philistine, the Bohemian, and the creative
man" that informed our social dialogue both in academia and in popular culture in the 1950s, 1960s, and
1970s. However, Thomas is most widely know for what has come to be called Thomas's Theorem which,
which, according to Merton states that:

> *if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences. . . .Once meaning has been
> assigned, their consequent behavior is shaped by [that] meaning. If people believe in witches
> such beliefs have tangible consequences—they may for example kill those persons assumed to
> be witches. This then is the power the human mind has in transmuting raw sense data into a
> categorical apparatus that could make murderers of us all. Once a Vietnamese becomes a "gook,"
> or a Black a "nigger," or a Jew a "kike," that human being has been transmuted through the
> peculiar alchemy of social definition into something wholly other who is now a target of prejudice
> and discrimination, of violence and aggression, and even murder.* [22]

In other words we act on what we think is real regardless of its ontological reality. Our beliefs, our
perceptions, guide our behavior. We treat people based on what we perceive to be their basic (essential)
characteristics often based solely on our perception of their place in the stratification hierarchy. Stereotypes
and discriminatory behavior are almost always based on such perceptions. Our own position in the stratifica-
tion hierarchy is judged just as we judge that of others and based on the same generally superficial qualities.
What are the first things you notice when you meet someone for the first time? Do the things you notice
color your analysis of that person?

It seems to be both a biological as well as social trait that humans place everything in our environment
into categories that help us determine what is safe and not safe. Anything that is different is immediately
suspect and until we have analyzed the difference and determined whether that difference is or is not harmful

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[22]*Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context.* Lewis A. Coser. Harcourt. Fort Worth. 1977. p.
521.

we are apt to separate ourselves from that real or perceived danger. Seminal Social-Psychologist Gordon W. Allport wrote:

> *No one quite knows why related ideas in our minds tend to cohere and form categories. Since the time of Aristotle, various "laws of association" have been proposed to account for this important property of the mind. The clusters formed do not need to correspond to outer reality as found in nature. For example there are no such things as elves but I have a firm category in my mind concerning them. Similarly, I have firm categories concerning groups of mankind although there is no guarantee that my categories correspond to fact.*

> *To be rational, a category must be built primarily around the essential attributes of all objects that can be correctly included within the category. Thus all houses are structures marked by some degree of habitability (past or present). Each house will also have some nonessential attributes. Some are large, some small, some wooden, brick, cheap or expensive, old or new, painted white or gray. These are not the essential or defining attributes of a house.[23]*

2.1.12 Essential Characteristics

Human beings create mental categories based on our current knowledge of our social and physical world. "We may know full well that there is no such thing as a werewolf, but when we hear a wolf howl while we are camping our minds conjure up certain visions of what may be lurking just beyond our campfire."[24] Thus, we also use these categorical ideas to develop concepts of the essential characteristics of groups of people who differ in some way from ourselves; and yet, determining the essential qualities of any group is highly problematic: "[p]robably in no case can it ever be said that a group difference marks off every single member of a group from every single nonmember. . . . There is probably not a single case where every member of a group has all the characteristics ascribed to his group nor is there a single characteristic that is typical of every single member of one group and of no other group."[25]

What are the essential characteristics of women? Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals? Blacks? Hispanics? Asians? American Indians? The disabled? The elderly? Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists? Or of any minority? What can be said that always applies to each and every member of the group without exception? According to Allport, (based on the J-curve theory of distribution), there are some (not necessarily essential) group traits that are exclusive to a particular group but are rare within that group. In statistical parlance, these are called rare-zero differentials. Unfortunately, we tend to generalize these rare-zero differentials and assume that they are widespread essential group characteristics.[26] All women are _____. All men are _____. All Muslims are _____. All Jews are _____. All blacks are _____. What words did you use to fill in the blanks? Were those words categorical rare-zero stereotypes based on your perception of reality? Are you sure? Why?

Various Sociological, Psychological, and Social-Psychological studies indicate that, based on first impressions of strangers, we think physically attractive people are smart; fat people are sloppy and not very bright; well-dressed people are smarter, richer, and more attractive than people who are less well-dressed; nonwhite males are dangerous and sinister; white people are smarter, richer, more attractive, more honest, and more trustworthy than ethnic or racial minorities (even in the eyes of racial and ethnic minorities). In other words the way we form our initial opinions of the intrinsic human value—the basic human worth—of a stranger is based largely on those external aspects of the person that society has determined are acceptable or not acceptable. We are a class-driven society, but those American core values of equality and independence for

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[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Allport Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice: 25th Anniversary Edition*. Perseus: Reading. 1979. p. 103; italics in original.

[26] The J-curve theory states that the essential attributes of a group—these characteristics that define the group—tend to follow a J-curve type of distribution. Furthermore, a J-curve distribution, by definition, includes only group members—no non-group member can be fitted statistically into the distribution. Allport Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice: 25th Anniversary Edition*. Perseus: Reading. 1979. p. 97.

all also blind us to the class structure, the social structure, the stratification hierarchy, and the prejudice and discrimination that effects so profoundly and with such grave consequences our day-to-day interactions with our fellow human beings.

2.2 Minorities by Group

2.2.1 African Americans[27]

2.2.1.1 African Americans

2.2.1.2 A Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—

Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes 1944

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[27]This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m34078/1.2/>.

2.2.1.3 The Middle Passage and the Triangle Trade

African Americans have lived on the North American continent for more than 350 years. They were our only completely involuntary immigrants. The Middle Passage[28] was the route of the slave ships (called blackbirds) from Africa to the New World. It was the "middle" portion of the Triangular Trade[29] (1500s-early 1800s) which was the movement of ships and goods from North America to the Caribbean to Africa and back. The Triangle Trade[30] as it has also been called exchanged North American products and raw materials for Caribbean products and raw materials, including tobacco and rum, and then exchanged those for African slaves. Many people died[31] during the Middle Passage[32] from starvation, illness, and even murder. There are some reputable modern scholars who believe that as many as 250 million human beings died during the Middle Passage or were enslaved in the New World between 1500 and 1850 where black human beings were auctioned like cattle[33] . (See Slavery in America: Historical Overview [34] by Ronald L. F. Davis, Ph. D., California State University-Northridge[35] ; for a video lecture about the book *Slavery by Another Name* by Doulgas Blackmon, please go to the Gilder Lehrman Center for[36] the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition[37] or click here[38] .)

2.2.1.4 Free Blacks in Early America

However, not all blacks were enslaved in Colonial America. Fort Mose[39] was the first free, all-black settlement in the US. Founded in 1604, it was Located a few miles from St. Augustine, Florida. Nonetheless, most blacks were not so lucky and were enslaved in the millions. In 1805 Toussaint the Liberator[40] , with his revolutionary black soldiers, liberated Haiti[41] and outlawed slavery. Their "inferior" status notwithstanding, African Americans served their country in the Revolutionary War[42] . Crispus Attucks[43] , a runaway slave and merchant seaman, was the first person to die in the Revolutionary War and Agrippa Hull[44] was a free black and Revolutionary War veteran. Some northern religious institutions offered opportunities to African Americans. Absalom Jones[45] was a free black and founder in 1810 of the First Free African Church of Philadelphia which was the first African American church in the United States. Lemuel Haynes[46] was the first African American to be ordained in the United States by the Congregationalist Church in the early 19th century.

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[28] http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1narr4.html
[29] http://www.huntington.org/uploadedFiles/Files/PDFs/LHTHTriangularTrade.pdf
[30] http://www.nmm.ac.uk/freedom/viewTheme.cfm/theme/triangular
[31] http://www.gilderlehrman.org/historynow/03_2005/historian3.php
[32] http://www.recoveredhistories.org/storiesmiddle.php
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[44] http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/images/2agri0042m.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.pbs.org/wgb
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[46] http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/images/2lemu0265b.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.pbs.org/wgb

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