

Social inequality and minorities in the united states

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



Social Inequality and Minorities in the United States Your name Soc 120 - Introduction to Sociology Professor date Social Inequality and Minorities in the United States Before the United States was called the United States there were people that would be considered minorities here. In the late fifteenth century when the Europeans arrived here there were millions of people to be considered a "minority". Being a minority in the United States brings many uphill battles for many different types of people. In the United States being a minority and achieving social inequality is just as easy as not being a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASPs) (Macionis, 2006). A minority is any category of people distinguished by physical or cultural difference that a society sets apart and subordinates (Macionis, 2006). It can be based on race, ethnicity, or both (Macionis, 2006). There are two important characteristics of a minority: The first thing is that they share a distinct identity, which may be based on physical or cultural traits and the second is that Minorities experience subordination (Macionis, 2006). Minorities in the United States typically have a lower income, lower occupational prestige, and limited schooling (Macionis, 2006). Do not think that being a minority is always a disadvantage though, there are some members of minority groups who do much better than others, but even though they do pretty well they cannot escape the classification of being a minority. Native American Suppression The Native American group refers to the hundreds of societies who first settled the Western Hemisphere including but not limited to the Aleuts, Cherokee, Zuni, Sioux, Mohawk, Aztec, and Inca (Macionis, 2006). White Americans had seen the Natives as savages and godless and therefore beneath them. Land was taken by was of "Manifest Destiny" or Gods will to

usurp land and power. The Native Americans numbered in the millions when the first Europeans arrived here, but by the twentieth century they numbered only a quarter million. This population decrease was caused by the unequal rights of Native Americans versus the rights of the WASPs. The WASPs didn't inhabit the United States first, but they did become the dominant group once English settlement began (Macionis, 2006). Even before the WASPs the Native American population was being killed and their land was being taken from them. The Native Americans were being killed off by a process called genocide. Genocide is the systematic killing of all people from a national, ethnic or religious group, or an attempt to do this. In the majority of people's minds these days genocide is a barbaric act that would surely bring war, much like Nazi Germany's starting of World War Two. Many countries went to war against Nazi Germany because of it committing large-scale crimes against humanity, such as the mass-murder and persecution of the Jewish community in what is now known as the Holocaust. Still though, we as a society did this from the very beginnings of this wonderful country we call the United States. In Kosovo, the world community charged into war on the very threat of genocide then termed "ethnic cleansing". This is a far cry from the non-involvement mentality of the 1930's. Native Americans are still around today, but the calm after the storm is here for them and they either stay on the land that has been reserved for them or they venture out into the American society to live. African Americans The next group in United States history to be considered a minority is the African Americans. Although Africans were with Spanish explorers when they came to the New World in the fifteenth century, history marks the beginnings of African Americans in

1619 (Macionis, 2006). This was the year that a Dutch trading ship brought twenty Africans to Jamestown, Virginia. Victims of their own village leadership's greed, they were sold as property by their own people to the white traders. Africans became the slaves of the southern colonies. They would work either out on the plantation picking cotton or doing some other type of hard labor that the Anglo-Saxons did not want to do. There were some African slaves that were allowed to work inside the homes of their masters, these slaves were hated by the ones who worked outside (a form of prejudice against one's own race). Africans were set free in a way by the Thirteenth Amendment of 1865 which outlawed slavery. It was only "in a way" because there were still being persecuted by the whites and they never did really get "equal rights" until after the '60s civil rights movement. The lower wages and incomes of African Americans had driven them into inner-cities and lower cost housing developments. As they gathered in these poor neighborhoods they became their own counterculture, believing society had separated them out from the rest of the more affluent world. Even then they were still unequal in many ways such as income and wealth, education, their treatment in and by the criminal justice system, and their ability to get health care. They were still subject to many stereotypes and much discrimination that still continues to this day. As can be seen here in an excerpt of our text (Macionis, 2006), African Americans still heavily populate the Mid-South states to the South Eastern states on up to the North Eastern states. This population density is generally how it was during slavery and it seems as though they never really branched out from the South. When slaves became free the cost of running the, then lucrative, plantations ran up

and profits went down. Then African American became more equal in the south than they did in the north where white prosperity squeezed the minority out. Asian Americans: The Model Minority The next group of immigrants in United States history that were to be considered a minority bare a special name for their type of minority group. They are the Asian Americans, and their group consists of all Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino Americans. Their special name is " Model Minority". Asian Nation refers to the Model Minority image as " a bright, shining example of hard work and patience whose example other minority groups should follow. However, the practical reality is slightly more complicated than that, " (Asian Nation, 2009). It is most commonly used to label one ethnic minority higher achieving than another ethnic minority (Asian Nation, 2009). This success is typically measured in income, education, and related factors such as low crime rate and high family stability (Asian Nation, 2009). The term is often characterized as myths which amounts to racial stereotyping, and that its use may be a political tool and its implications incite jealousy and fighting among ethnic minorities, an example of leveraging majority power dynamics to provoke ill sentiments between minority groups (Asian Nation, 2009). Asian Americans are considered to be a model group because they do not have the same income or education limitations as the African Americans or the Hispanic Americans; they also have a tendency for lower crime rates in areas that they inhabit. In general, these people are also more entrepreneurial spirited and are slightly more likely than Latinos, three times more likely than African Americans and eight times more likely than Native Americans to own and operate small businesses according to Macionis

(2006). As can be seen below in an excerpt of our text (Macionis, 2006), Asian Americans are the lowest in numbers of all minority groups yet that have spread themselves out the most of all of them. Hispanics and Latinos

The next group to be considered a minority in the United States is the Hispanic Americans. This group of people is the largest of the minority groups and is the center of attention at the current moment in U. S. society. There have even been talks of building a wall, much like the Berlin or The Great Wall of China, between the states that touch Mexico and Mexico to keep the rate of illegal immigration down. In 2000 the Hispanic population was 12. 5 percent of the U. S. population (Macionis, 2006). By 2007 that number had risen to 15. 1 percent (US Census Bureau, 2009). The three main groups of Hispanic Americans (in order of larger numbers to smaller) are the Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and then the Cubans. As can be seen here in an excerpt of our text (Macionis, 2006), Hispanic Americans generally inhabit the South Western to the far North Western United States, there are few in the Northern to North Eastern states, but many have populated in the Southern state of Florida. Border States such as California have a much higher percentage of Hispanic and Latinos; California as high as 36. 2 percent (US Census Bureau, 2009). Social Inequality: Where is it found today? Where can we find examples of social inequality? Many say that we can find them wherever there are more than one race or ethnicity that inhabits an area or frequents an area. One area that we can find this social inequality that we are speaking of is in High Schools across the United States. According to Mickelson and Southworth, (2007), racial stratification in the organization of public education manifests at two levels: between

schools and within them. First-generation segregation, or the provision of separate schools for students from different racial backgrounds, was the target of litigation and policy reform since the early years of the 20th century (Mickelson, & Southworth, 2007). Second-generation segregation typically takes the form of differentiated curricula for students from various racial and class backgrounds that attend the same school but learn in different tracks. Both elementary school programs for students deemed gifted or learning disabled and secondary schools' tracking of core academic subjects are racially-correlated (Mickelson, & Southworth, 2007). So what these two generations of segregation really mean is that, segregation has evolved to another level where the minorities are still being penalized for the same things, background, family upbringing, education of the elders in the family, and income level. Through their research Mickelson, R. & Southworth, S. (2007), state " We find that school racial composition has significant effects on the track placement of different race-gender cohorts, and that schools' racial compositions interact with students' ascriptive characteristics in these processes. Net of prior achievement, track placements are influenced by individual and family characteristics, as well as school racial composition. Attending a racially imbalanced school affects students' chances of enrolling in college-prep tracks. Racially balanced high schools offer all students the greatest equality of access to college prep tracks. " So their research basically says that if you are a minority and move to an area that is racially unbalanced your children will not be given the same educational courtesies as their peers strictly because of their race. Most believe that educational tracks in high school levels should be chosen by judging what the student

can achieve and what they are capable of. It has been theorized that social inequalities could contribute to the number of assaults on wives (Stratus, 1994). The theory never materialized through their testing, but they did discover some other interesting facts. The findings are consistent with the feminist theory that holds that the prevalence of wife assault is a function of the male dominant nature of the society. The findings are also consistent with the social disorganization and control theories of deviance, which hold that crime and other deviant behavior are more likely to occur in a society in which the disruption of traditional social patterns weakens the attachment of individuals to the moral standards of society (Stratus, 1994). Are their findings results of social inequality? It is hard to say with limited knowledge, but that is what it looks like. Conclusion It would be nice to see the final days of social inequality between the groups of Americans in this country. Though social statuses are easily formed by the way people think and behave around each other, all of this can be ignored or changed to a different type of designation by the people of the United States wanting it to change. Just like racial discrimination is at a slow decline, we can get social inequalities to do the same. It all starts in the homes of Americans, the parents must teach their children not to hate and judge due to physical appearance or race, ethnicity, and creed. References Macionis, J. J. (2006). Society: The basics (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. Mickelson, R. & Southworth, S. (2007). The interactive effects of race, gender and school composition on college track placement. *Social Forces*, p. 497, Retrieved May 4, 2009, from <http://find.galegroup.com/ips/start.do?prodId=IPS> Asian Nation. (2009). The model minority image, Asian Nation web site, Retrieved

May 9, 2009 from <http://www.asian-nation.org/model-minority.shtml> US Census Bureau (2000). State and country quick-facts from the US census bureau, Retrieved May 9, 2009 from the US census bureau website at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html> Stratus, M. (1994). State-to-state differences in social inequality and social bonds in relation to assaults on wives in the United States, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, p. 7-18, Retrieved May 4, 2009, from <http://find.galegroup.com/ips/start.do?prodId=IPS>