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Introduction

In its ideal definition, culture may be defined as the manner in which people live, which include key aspects such as the attitudes, beliefs, economical position, and values (Rogers-Dulan & Blacher, 2015). Within the field of Sociology, culture is usually considered as the bridge that fills the gap existing between the past and the future. Thus, at the backdrop of increasing globalization, culture is usually deemed as the ultimate guide towards the future. Notably, even though the culture of the United States can largely be termed as being that of Western origin, a significant proportion of Sociologists usually consider the nation as being a melting point of diverse cultures from across the globe including the African culture, Hispanics/Latinos culture, and the Native American culture. This can be attributed to a myriad of issues key among them being the large-scale immigration experienced during the 19th century (Jones, 2014). The following literature aims to critically analyze some of the cultural aspects that are widely associated with minorities families, with particular interest paid to the acculturation of African-Americans into the mainstream American culture.

Traits Associated with Minorities

Price, Bush, and Price (2017) define minorities as a group of individuals that are differentiated from other people within the society as a result of their cultural and physical characteristics. Within the United States, Hispanics, African-Americans, and Asian Americans constitute the largest proportion of minorities respectively. Price and colleagues (2017) further go ahead to state that there are three basic traits that usually distinguish minorities from the dominant group, i.e., whites including cultural and physical traits, unfair treatment, and

solidarity. In regards to cultural and physical characteristics, members of minority groups are bound to share cultural and physical traits that may differentiate them from those coming from the dominant group. Essentially, attributes such as skin complexion and language are usually used by dominant groups in describing members of minority groups.

Other than cultural attributes, the other crucial trait commonly associated with members of minority groups pertains to unfair treatment. For instance, members of the African-American group have in the recent past been subjected to police brutality thereby resulting in extrajudicial killings throughout America. Besides, the also has the largest percentage of incarcerated individuals within the American reform system (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 2013). Consequently, one outcome that has emanated from the unfair treatment relates to the strong sense of solidarity. Consequently, the strong sense of solidarity has resulted in most of the African-American families engaging in intramarriage (marriage among individuals coming from the same racial and ethnic groups) to ensure that their cultural distinctiveness as minorities is maintained (Hines & Boyd-Franklin, 2015).

The other trait commonly associated with minority groups is subordination whereby minorities are usually subordinate to the majority group, in this case their white counterparts. One of the main areas in which minorities are likely to be subordinate to the majority is that involving power distribution as well as societal privileges. For instance, due to white privilege, whites are more predisposed to get lenient sentences in cases that would otherwise attract harsher sentences and jail terms for their minority counterparts (Jones, 2014). This can largely be attributed to the relatively low economic position and power that minorities have within a societal stratification system. Consequently, within the African-American context, the issue of

subordination results in a patriarchal system whereby men tend to compensate by wielding the primary power in certain roles such as moral authority, property control, and leadership.

African-American Adaptation into American Society

Though tremendous efforts have been achieved towards promoting inclusion and integration within the American society in the past two decades, institutional racism continues to be a major barrier in the adaptation of African-Americans into the mainstream American society (Jones, 2014). Usually, this may come in the form of racism whereby members of the minority groups face discrimination in accessibility to basic services such as employment, healthcare, and housing thereby resulting in different forms of disparities. For example, a recent report by Medicaid revealed that African-Americans constituted the significant proportion of persons without medical insurance in the nation (Hines & Boyd-Franklin, 2015). Subsequently, institutionalized racism can be deemed as a major factor that impedes African-Americans to fully adapt into the American society.

One aspect, however, that has played a major role in facilitating the acculturation of African-Americans into the mainstream American system is education. Over the past five decades, more African-Americans have attained college degrees thereby playing an integral role in ensuring that achieve better employment prospects as well as eliminating poverty within their families. Consequently, with more African-Americans achieving strong educational and economical background, members of this community have started identifying with the ideals of the American dream that include prosperity for everyone regardless of their socio-economic position. Hence, this has played a contributory role in ensuring that African-Americans fully adapt to the mainstream American society.

Conclusion

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In summary, one key trait of minorities relates to their skin complexion. Skin complexion as a physical attribute or rather trait may act as a major barrier for minorities be it in their educational achievement or upward social mobility. Apart from that, minorities are also bound to face unfair treatment when compared to their majority counterparts. Unfair treatment is usually evident in the accessibility of essential services and amenities such as health and housing facilities, which goes a long way in promoting health and other forms of disparities.

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