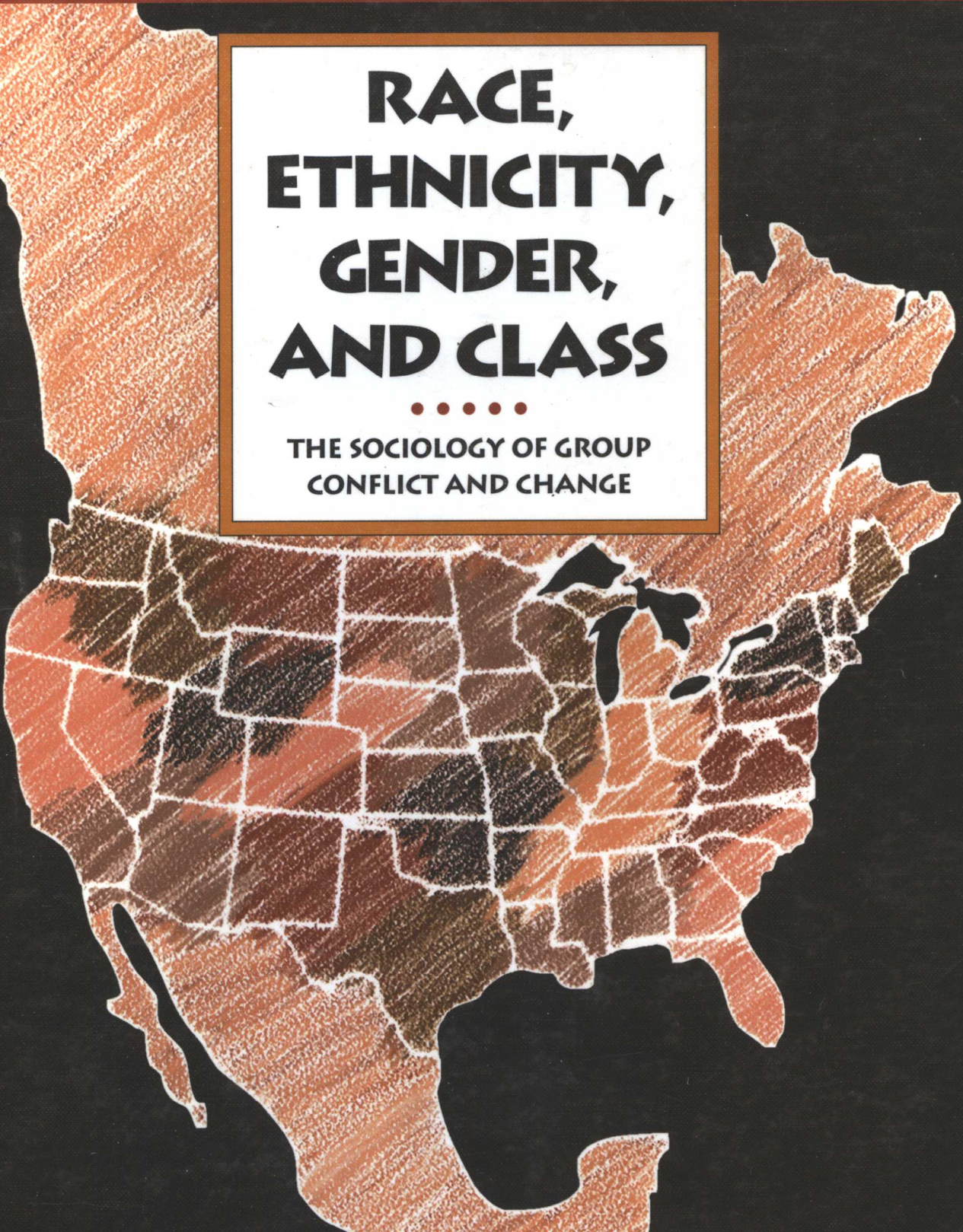


JOSEPH F. HEALEY

RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND CLASS



**THE SOCIOLOGY OF GROUP
CONFLICT AND CHANGE**



Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class

The Sociology of Group Conflict and Change

Joseph F. Healey

*Department of Sociology
Christopher Newport University*



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About the Author

Joseph F. Healey is Professor of Sociology at Christopher Newport University in Virginia. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Virginia. He has written a statistics textbook and articles on minority groups, the sociology of sport, social movements, and violence.

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*History, despite its wrenching pain,
Cannot be unlived, but if faced
With courage, need not be lived again.*

MAYA ANGELOU

From "On the Pulse of Morning"

Read at the 1993 Presidential Inauguration

 f all the challenges confronting the United States today, those relating to minority groups may be the most urgent and the most daunting. Discrimination and racial inequality are part of our national heritage and—along with equality, freedom, and justice—prejudice and racism are among our oldest values. Minority group issues penetrate every aspect of society, and virtually every item on the national agenda—welfare and health care reform, crime and punishment, safety in the streets, the future of the family institution, even defense spending and foreign policy—has some connection with dominant-minority relations.

These issues will not be resolved easily or quickly. Feelings are intense, and controversy, acrimony, and bitter debate seem at least as common as dispassionate analysis and calm reason. As a society, we have little hope of resolving these dilemmas unless we confront them openly and honestly: They will not disappear and they will not resolve themselves.

This textbook contributes to the ongoing discussion by seeking to help students increase their fund of information, improve their understanding of the issues, and clarify their thinking regarding matters of race and ethnicity. I have written the book for undergraduate students, sociology majors and nonmajors alike. It makes minimal assumptions about knowledge of history or sociological concepts and the material is presented in a way that students will find accessible and coherent.

For example, *a unified set of themes and concepts is used throughout the text*. The analysis is consistent and continuous, even while examining multiple perspectives and a variety of points of view. The bulk of the conceptual framework is introduced in the first six chapters.

These concepts and analytical themes are then used in a series of case studies of minority groups in contemporary America. In the final chapter, main points and themes are then summarized and reviewed, the analysis is brought to a conclusion, and some speculations are made regarding the future.

The analysis is in the tradition of conflict theory, but this text does not aspire to be a comprehensive statement of that tradition. Other perspectives are introduced and applied, but no attempt is made to give equal attention to all current sociological paradigms. The text does not try to explain everything, nor does it attempt to include all possible analytical points of view. Rather, the goals are to present the sociology of minority group relations in a way that students will find understandable as well as intellectually challenging; to deal with the issues and tell the stories behind the issues in a textbook that is both highly readable and a demonstration of the power and importance of thinking sociologically.

While the text maintains a unified analytical perspective, students are also exposed to the many other perspectives on minority group issues that exist in the discipline of sociology and in the society at large. For example, *clashing points of view are presented in the Current Debates sections at the end of almost every chapter*. The debates focus on an issue taken from the chapter but present the views of a variety of scholars and other individuals. Without detracting from the continuity of the main analysis, these debates reinforce the idea that no one has all the answers (or, for that matter, all the questions). The debates can be used to stimulate discussion, bring additional perspectives to the classroom, or suggest topics for further research.

This text also explores the diversity of experiences within each minority group. Too often, minority groups (and the dominant group, for that matter) are seen by nonmembers as single, undifferentiated entities. *The text stresses the variety of experiences within each group and, in particular, explores differences in the experiences of minority group males and females*. The analysis explores the ways in which gender differences crosscut ethnic and racial differences and stresses that these sources of inequality and injustice are independent of each other. Solving one set of problems (e.g., prejudice and racial discrimination) will not automatically or directly solve the other (e.g., sexism and gender inequalities).

Finally, *this text stresses the ways in which American minority groups are inseparable from American society*. The relative success of this society is due no less to the contributions of minority groups than to those of the dominant group. The nature of the minority group experience has changed as the larger society has changed, and to understand America's

minority groups is to understand some elemental truths about America. To raise the issue of race and ethnicity is to ask what it means, and what it has meant, to be an American.

All textbooks, even those with a single author's name on the title page, are profoundly collaborative efforts. This book has been shaped by a quarter century of teaching minority relations and by the thoughts and reactions of hundreds of students. My approach to this subject has grown from years of "field testing" ideas, concepts, theory, and research and constant monitoring of what seemed to help the students make sense of the world they live in. I acknowledge and thank my students for their myriad contributions.

When I was a student, I had the great good fortune of learning from faculty members who were both accomplished scholars and exceptionally dedicated teachers. Each of them contributed to my interest in and commitment to sociology, but two stand out in my memory as mentors and intellectual role models: Professors Edwin H. Rhyne and Charles S. Green. Dr. Rhyne encouraged me as a young scholar and quite literally introduced me to the world of ideas and the life of the mind. At a later time in my career, Charles Green showed me what it means to be a professional scholar, a sociologist, and a teacher. Their influence on my life was profound and I thank them deeply.

I am no less indebted to my colleagues Dr. Robert Durel and Lea Pellett of Christopher Newport University. They have been unflagging in their support of this project and I thank them for the academic, logistical, and intellectual assistance. I also thank Dr. Richard Summer-ville and the entire administration of Christopher Newport University for its support and encouragement. I would be very remiss if I did not also thank Kathy Sylvia for her help during her all-too-brief tenure as departmental secretary and the staff of the John Smith Library, especially Mary Daniels and Cathy Doyle of the Reference Department and Maureen Humphrey of the Inter-Library Loan Department.

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