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## **Analysis Of The Issues Of Race, Class And Gender in The Book The Contexts Reader By Douglas Hartmann**

For my essay I will be discussing the intersectionality that have a combination of the Intersection Theory aka RACE + CLASS + GENDER, all of the following passages include two or more of the theory. I will be discussing Poverty and Welfare, Sunday Football, Race as Class, Hip Hop Culture and America's Most Taboo Word, Media Monsters and Policies & Pitfalls all in our book The Contexts Reader by Douglas Hartmann and Christopher Uggen.

In passage number 22 Poverty and Welfare in the Contexts book, I learned that race and class have a lot to do with our poverty and unemployment issues, it is stated that "Most Americans will experience poverty during their lifetime but it has little to do with individual motivation or attitude". As a country we tend to pride ourselves with low poverty rates and unemployment rates but if most of us experience poverty and job loss in our lifetime, then why are the numbers so low?

In the passage written by Mark R. Rank, he says, "The United States has fewer unemployment rates than European countries but the result of that is because of the extreme mass incarceration rates". We cannot believe that the unemployment rates are true because after a year of receiving unemployment welfare people are no longer counted as unemployed so the number is falsified. When we see a low unemployment rate it doesn't count for over the years, just within the last 12 months; it does not include the who haven't found a job in over a year whether it's due to a disability or an injury but there are many other reasons. The rating number can also be incorrect because if we include ex-cons who have recently been released it is increasingly hard to get a job with a record and they can go without finding a job for over a year, also in the book it states that 3 million Americans were working part-time jobs due to the shortage of full-time jobs. As the American race we must change our policies and not be cheap by creating jobs in our own country and not sending our companies overseas where we pay people way less than minimum wage, if we started requiring that everything be made in our country it would open up more jobs and actually make the unemployment and poverty rates go down. As a country there is a lot we can do to provide for ourselves, if we follow the footsteps of some European countries and provide social and insurance programs so our country doesn't fall into poverty we might not have to file unemployment and have it associated with poverty because we will already have a plan.

In passage number 15 Sunday Football written by Douglas Hartmann, it talks about sport being a thing for males only and a way for them to feel masculine. Gender is a big piece in this passage because it talks about the differences in the genders and sports, "women are increasingly visible throughout the sporting world, more men than women play sports, watch sports and care about sports" yet how are women supposed to be able to connect with sports when advertising is shown for men, when some female athlete players are sexualized not because they are good players but because to a guy a girl who looks good in a soccer uniform is all that matters. Women cannot understand the masculinity that men associate sports with because at a young age sports were always meant for the boys, they grew up thinking that if they didn't like sports or preferred anything other than sports then they weren't "manly" enough. Many of the professional athletes didn't go into sports playing it because they wanted

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to instead it was “based upon connection with other boys and men. The most important thing was just being out there with the rest of the guys” at a young age the boys were structured into thinking that if they didn’t enjoy sports they couldn’t hang out with the other boys. Part of playing sports was also the physical part, “studies confirm that soccer moms and dads already know boys’ athletics tend to be more physicals and put more emphasis on winning, being tough with injuries and pain”. I truly do believe this is true, my brother plays soccer and during games my dad focuses more on him and the team winning the game rather than them actually enjoying the sport itself. My brother’s coach also tells them to play like boys and to be rough so they can win the game and get better, that losing is not an option although I disagree because I think that failure always come with a lesson on how to improve. Sports is also something that is done with a father figure or a male presence, in the book Hartmann described a talk he had with Michael Messner and he said, “more than a few single mothers bring their boys to the teams I coach out of concern that their sons are insufficiently tough or lack a male influence” this again brings gender into the conversation, a male must be present in a boy’s life to teach them sports and how to be manly, again that is false. Class is also discussed as Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan is described as the powerful, hard-working, cowboy American man. He is seen as a powerful person for playing sports, being in the Hall of Fame also leaves him in the elite class of superiors because he is mainly due to his sportsmanship.

In passage number 35 Race as Class written by Herbert J. Gans, he discusses how race and class influence one another to create status. He quotes, “Whites are on top of the socioeconomic order ... while various shades of non-whites are below them in the socioeconomic position”. Race has always been around along with racism, back then racial discrimination was more prudent than how it is now but we would be lying to say that as a country we have gotten over the skin color of others. Darker skin colored people were stereotyped to be poor, uneducated and in the lower class, this stuck around because after slavery ended blacks became farm workers and sharecroppers as mentioned in the book page 128. Race has been associated with class since slavery started, the whites deemed themselves the top of the class pyramid and anyone else was below them, but black people were at the bottom and have stayed there since. Granted we have had a black president and we have Oprah but just because we have a few black people in the spotlight, it is not anywhere near the numbers we have to the white actors and all the other 44 presidents.

In passage number 17 Hip Hop Culture and America’s Most Taboo Word written by Geoff Harkness, it discusses the controversial topic on who can say the n-word and who can’t. This has been talked about a lot, black people are saying anyone who is not black can’t use the the n-word, but other people like Mexicans and other races are saying that they should be allowed to say it because they have discriminated against. The n-word to black people is now something they use to refer to someone else but in a derogatory way but in a close friend way when greeting someone. Michael Eric Dyson a black scholar, has also said, “I don’t mind the use of it as long as it’s used with verve, imagination, and love” Contexts but I disagree because if we give the power to people to use a word that once was so powerful and so unpleasant for “imagination” it could end up backfiring. The n-word is also associated with class because people in the low class end up saying it more because everybody says it, they are not reprimanded for the use of it. People in the middle class and high class don’t use the word as much due to the fact that they are held to higher standards and have fear of the consequences of their actions.

In passage 14 Media Monsters written by Joshua Gamson and Pearl Latteier, it includes gender

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and race. Media is defined as anything that can connect you to the outside world, while it helps connect people it also can be gender specific. In the media, there are always commercials and ads playing and they can sometimes advertise to only women or only men. For women they have announcements about shows like America's Next Top Model or for guys it could be ESPN, this is because "different audiences are attracted to different content and format types". The chapter also targets race as media became bigger and bigger and more people could watch there started to be some gay and Latino and African American shows and radios for example in text it mentions that in 2003 NBC -Bravo produced Queer Eye for Straight Men, this was a big step in producing certain media that appeals to the people who like it.

In the next final passage Policies and Politics for an Aging America written by the Macarthur Foundation it discusses the age distribution, in the Contexts reader the statistics say that "our population will shift to one that is older, by 2020 there will be more Americans by the age of 65 than 15". Class is also something that correlates with policies and the older generation, people of high class who have a well thought out retirement savings don't really need to worry about Social Security running out, but those who are in the middle or even low class who are thinking about running on social security might need to find a new way to save extra money for retirement because as older people rely on it money will soon run out. As a human race we need to focus on making sure that the elder people can be supported by their families and expand our resources not just to older men and women but to the children as referenced in the book, if we can teach young adults how to save money better then we can try to prevent our generation from not having money or someone to help support us. Although in 2003 when the Social Security was active it was very different than how the world is now, properties are becoming more and more expensive, to pay for a house we must have a minimum of half a million to be able to afford decent housing in California which is way more expensive than what they had to pay in 2003. If we can implement more jobs that pay better and better housing situations we can continue living the American dream.