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Minority is a term often misused to refer to racial or ethnic groups. When talking about a population group it is best to be specific and name the group as they would identify themselves. Whether a group is a numerical minority depends on the context. In Ghana Black people are not a minority; in Sweden they are. In the United States this term has been used to minimize the importance of population groups, aggregating diverse populations without being specific about the ways in which they may be similar and distinct from other groups. What so-called minority groups often have in common is that they are marginalized with respect to political and social power in a particular context. Here are some reasons *NOT* to use this term except when you actually refer to numerical minorities.

- In logic the “minor premise” is the lesser or secondary one.
- In sports we designate as “minor” leagues those which are deemed not as good as the “majors.” To call a player a “minor leaguer” is to diminish that player's status.
- In playing cards the “minor” suit is the one which has lesser scoring possibility.
- In music the word is more neutral; even there a “minor” note which is simply a half tone between whole tones might carry for some meaning of being half and therefore not complete.
- When we name periods of life, we reserve the term “minor” to apply to those who have not attained a legal age, who are assumed not to be as responsible as persons over the designated age. Minors are legally treated as children. Consider the history of ways in which society stripped Black people of their adulthood, particularly referring to Black men as “boys.”
- In numbers the “minority” is less than half, the smaller number, and in a society where bigness is valued, that which is smaller is often de-valued.

All groups that are referred to as minorities have not suffered oppression in the same way.

- Not all “minorities” have been enslaved and lynched as have Black people.
- Not all “minorities” have had land and rights stolen from them as have Native Americans
- Not all “minorities” have been born as citizens, as have Puerto Ricans, migrated to the mainland and then been treated as foreigners.
- Not all “minorities” have been the object of fluctuating immigration and border rules as have Chinese and Mexican people.
- Not all “minorities” have been put behind fences and restricted to “internment camps” as Japanese Americans were during World War II.

The groups commonly referred to as “minorities” in the US represent a majority in the world. The majority of people in the world are not “white,” which is a term with a history of its own, as various population groups have acquired the status of “whiteness” in the United States.

(Credit is due Horace Sheldon, of Community Change, Inc. for most of these observations.)