

Hassan's Stigmatised Identity Management in Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' (2003)



BOULKROUNE Assam¹, SADOUNE Farida²

Laboratory of English Language, Literature, Translation and Knowledge Production –KMU- Ouargla

¹Abbes Laghrour University (Algeria), bouldkroune.assam@univ-khenchela.dz

²Kasdi Merbah University (Algeria), sadoune.farida@univ-ouargla.dz

Summary:

The present research examines the representation of stigma in Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' (2003) through the guiding lens of Erving Goffman's stigma theory. It focuses on the character of Hassan as a typical example of a stigmatized individual whose Hazara ethnicity subjects him to systemic discrimination within Pashtun-dominated Afghan society. Drawing on Goffman's distinction between Virtual Social Identity (VSI) and Actual Social Identity (ASI), the analysis demonstrates that Hassan's moral integrity, loyalty, and compassion are consistently negated by a socially imposed, demeaning virtual identity that marks him as inferior from birth. The paper further explores the manifestations of tribal stigma and the mechanisms through which stigma is reproduced, legitimized, and internalized, particularly through racial labeling, social exclusion, and institutionalized violence. Besides, it explores Hassan's strategies of stigma management, particularly covering and acceptance, whereas highlighting the unfeasibility of passing within the Afghan rigid ethnic hierarchy. By combining the literary analysis with the sociological theory, this study shows that stigma operates as an individual experience and as a collective and historical process rooted in power relations. Finally this paper argues that The Kite Runner exposes the devastating cost of ethnic stigmatization and criticizes a social system that acknowledges Hassan's virtues but denies his humanity on basis of his origin and ethnicity.

Keywords: Hassan, tribal stigma, social identity, covering

Corresponding Author: BOULKROUNE Assam, e-mail: bouldkroune.assam@univ-khenchela.dz

INTRODUCTION

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) is the work that received huge acclaim and prestigious appraisal among the other novels. Came out in 2003, *The Kite Runner* represents the launching of a literary career for Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan-American author and physician. It is established against the turmoil of a shifting Afghanistan from the collapse of the Monarchy to the rising leadership of Taliban over the Afghan territory. The novel tracks Amir, a privileged boy from the capital Kabul, and his intricate bond with Hassan, the illegitimate son of Amir's father from his servant, Sanaubar.

Within its pages hold glimpses of the history of Afghanistan, a beautiful country with stunning nature and a safe people before it was destroyed by wars, and memories of children running happily after their kites. The novel follows the footsteps of Amir's journey from a fortunate childhood in Kabul to a life of exile in the United States, and finally to a precarious return to his homeland. At its essence, *The Kite Runner* explores three intertwined themes: the betrayal of a loyal friend, the lingering guilt that haunts the betrayer for years and the arduous, frightening path towards repentance. The story centers on the close bond between Amir and his childhood friend Hassan, revealing the devastating impact of secrets and the relentless pursuit of redemption, all within a poignant portrayal of a degrading Afghanistan. *The Kite Runner* turns into a contemporary classic due to Hosseini's remarkable style and passionate storytelling. This raises readers' awareness about issues of devotion, conscience, and the enduring scars of backstabbing.

This study argues that Erving Goffman's concept of the 'stigmatized individual' is manifested in the unstable character of Hassan. His miserable flaw stems from his inability to escape the labeled 'tribal stigma' of his Hazaras ethnicity. Being a member of this inferior ethnic minority, results in an unbridged gap between Hassan's actual social identity and the demeaning virtual social identity dictated by Afghan local community.

2. Erving Goffman's Stigma Theory

The word 'stigma' is dating back to the time of ancient Greece when it used to refer to something like a sign or a bodily sign generally cauterized on slaves' bodies using an iron stamp to prove their ownership (Goffman, 1963, p. 1). These marks connote an appalling sense of humiliation and dehumanization of these stigmatized slaves. They serve as public indicators of their devalued status and aims to exclude them from conventional society. Thus, the concept of stigma originates from the ancient practices of marking individuals as shameful, highlighting its long-standing presence in human societies.

In *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* (2025), 'stigma' is defined as: "Negative feelings that people have about particular circumstances or characteristics that somebody may have. For example: the social stigma of alcoholism". The first comprehensive connotative definition was provided by the Canadian-American

sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) in his seminal work: '*Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*', where he defined stigma as "bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier" (p. 1). It is "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" and that it turns down the bearer "from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963, p. 3). These revolutionary ideas place Goffman among the distinguished contributors to the scientific study of the social construction of stigmatization and its interactions within the same community. Goffman's stigma theory has had an intense effect on sociological research and interdisciplinary fields and it continues to provide new interpretations of stigma.

'*Stigmatization*' and '*labeling*' are used interchangeably by most people. Howard Becker was considered as the founding father of the 'labeling theory' in his 1963 book, "*Outsiders*". For him, social labeling comes first before the process of stigmatization when a dominant group gives a negative identity to someone alleged as deviant. The term 'outsiders' is used to "refer to those people who are judged by others to be deviant and thus to stand outside the circle of 'normal' members of the group" (Becker, 1963, p. 15). Becker explores how stigmatized labels can affect their social interactions and self-identity. Over time, the meaning of stigma has evolved, and now often referring to the disgrace associated with certain attributes rather than the physical marks themselves.

This concept of *Labeling* is later elaborated and enriched by Bruce G. Link and Jo C. Phelan (2001) in their distinguished article; '*Conceptualizing Stigma*'. Link and Phelan (2001) argue that a comprehensive definition was brought by scholars who relies on Goffman's (1963) observation that can be seen as a relationship between an "attribute and a stereotype" to provide a definition of stigma as "a mark (attribute) that links a person to undesirable characteristics (stereotypes)" (p. 365).

3. Stigma Manifestations

Goffman (1963) identifies three forms a person may be labeled with stigma:

- a- They may have a **character flaw** (character defects) related basically to some unnatural passions and desires, dishonesty, betrayal, political diverging beliefs and attitudes, mental disorder, ex-conviction ... that can mark a person as stigmatized in relation to some particular audience of *normals*.
- b- **An apparent physical deformity** (an abomination of the body) that may hamper the person from taking care of himself properly. This deficiency in motor-physical skills is the result of diseases or malformations due to inheritance or road accidents, like polio and amputees, Aids and Cancer or muscular atrophy and other illnesses and deformities (scars) leading to the patient's feeling of dissatisfaction stemmed from the image of the *normals* looking at him with a view full of belittlement, pity and deprecation.
- c- **Being a part of an undesirable ethnic group** based on social classification, race, religion and language where the higher social groups will label and stigmatize the lower working class of being inferior and deprive their basic human rights (p. 4).

The creation of this "otherness" can be the result of a variety of features and attributes, including physical incapacities related to diseases, mental illnesses, or any deviance from what is unanimously granted as 'normal' within a given social context. The presence of such a characteristic generates a process of social prejudices and discrimination, leading to the stigmatization of the person.

4. Virtual vs Actual Social Identity

In his attempt to describe how individuals are perceived and treated in society, Goffman provides the concept of Virtual and Actual Social Identity (ASI). VSI refers to the assumptions, expectations, and stereotypes that others project onto an individual based on their social categories. It is the identity that society assigns to a person based on visible or detectable characteristics, such as gender, race, behavior, or disability, or on social classifications. It is often generated by cultural norms and biases. ASI is the whole set of traits and attributes a person possesses (their true character, backgrounds and abilities). ASI embraces the attributes and characteristics the individual actually possesses. It is composed of both visible and invisible traits that can or can't go in alignment with the Virtual identity already imposed by the others. In case the stigmatizing attribute manifests on the surface, the alignment between the two identities will be disintegrated creating a "spoiled identity" and eventual discrimination.

The creation of a gap between VSI and ASI is caused by individual's 'spoiled identity' resulting in social rejection and personal alienation. This sort of prejudice can be seen in different forms, including bias, disavowal and maltreatment in various social, economic, and political fields. Goffman (1963) claims that stigma occurs when there is a contradiction between virtual and actual social identity. For example:

- If a person is considered as 'less competent' due to a physical disability (virtual identity), but is in fact extremely capable (actual identity), they are likely to face stigma.
- The individuals must then fill this gap, often through strategies like passing, covering, or disclosure, depending on whether they want to challenge or cover the divergence (p. 5).

5. Stigma Management Strategies

One of the common ways to conceal stigma is *passing*. Some individuals, whose stigmatic attributes are not immediately evident, may attempt to live as if they are not stigmatized, passing as 'normal' individuals. It means simply to cover up deviants from others. Therefore, the individual who tries to look as not having differing attitudes fits in with everyone else. But, this can bring its own challenges, particularly, the ongoing fear over being 'found out' and the psychological dilemma of living a disturbed life.

Another prominent technique highlighted by Goffman is *covering*. It involves reducing the impact of a visible stigma to make it less interfering or disruptive in

social connections, demonstrating a strategy of dealing with the visibility and implications of a known stigmatizing attribute. It can involve restraining the significance of the stigma, using for example, humor to distract attention, or highlighting other positive features of one's identity. *Covering* manages to make others feel more contented and to mitigate the possibility of negative responses.

Sometimes when forms of concealment do not work, letting people know that one has a deviant stigma is done. The process of **disclosing** may have a series of interpersonal and social advantages and at the same time drawbacks. The disclosure of a concealing stigmatized identity may lead as well to social rejection and isolation, discrimination and self-alienation. Goffman (1963) confirms that disclosure is the final stigma-saving technique:

A final possibility must now be considered, one that allows the individual to forego all the others. He can voluntarily disclose himself, thereby radically transforming his situation from that of an individual with information to manage to that of an individual with uneasy social situations to manage, from that of a discreditable person to that of a discredited one. Once a secretly stigmatized person has given information about himself it becomes possible, of course, for him to engage in any of the adaptive actions previously cited as being available to the known-to-be stigmatized, this accounting in part for his policy of self-disclosure (p. 100).

According to John E. Pachankis (2007), a lot of people argue that individuals with a hidden stigma may not face the difficulties encountered by individuals with a visible stigma. However, contemporary studies have revealed that individuals with a concealable stigma also confront significant stressors and psychological hurdles (p. 328).

6. Hassan, a Concealable Stigmatized Identity

The narrator of the story, Amir, in *The Kite Runner* informs us that his close friend Hassan is the illegitimate son of Baba. Hassan attempts to construct a personal image of a loyal friend defending Amir relentlessly. They used to pass all their childhood together. Both Hassan and his father Ali are Hazaras, an ethnic minority sect settling basically the central region of Afghanistan. They are characterized by holding more Asiatic (Mongol) characteristics than the Pashtun majority who seem like Arabs. Also, in order to distinguish themselves, most Hazaras followed Shi'a Islam. Systemic oppression was faced by Hazaras especially during the early 19th century when Amir Abdu Rahman Khan was the ruler. They settled the central region of Hazarajat as their traditional homeland. Hazaras as a minority ethnic group comprising 10% to 20% of the overall population is classified by the majority Pashtuns as the poorest and lowest social group (Akhtar). Its members are totally dehumanized and oppressed despite their contribution in the construction of the Afghan community.

6.1. Tribal Stigma of Ethnicity

Hassan's primary stigma is a '*tribal stigma*' of ethnicity as defined by Goffman. It passes through a whole range of lineages and contaminates the different members of a family (Goffman, 1963, p. 4). He is discredited from birth because he belongs to the Hazaras ethnicity which marked him as an '*other*' in Afghan society. Hassan right from the beginning is playing the role of a 'servant', with an inferior status in his community. Being a Hazara means that Hassan bears an undesired differentness from the image of what the rest of the Afghans expected to see, (in Goffman's terms, these Afghan Pashtuns are the *normals*) (Goffman, 1963, p. 5).

As a result of this classification, Hassan will face total discrimination and a systemic policy to dehumanize him. During the confrontation in the Alley (Chapter 5), Assef launches his racist ideology that forms the basis for the establishment of tribal stigma:

His blue eyes flicked to Hassan. 'Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood'. He made a sweeping grandiose gesture with his hands (Hosseini, 2004, p. 38).

This is the most direct articulation of stigma. Assef frames Hazaras as *subhuman* (Flat-Nose), pollutants, and a threat to ethnic purity, justifying their removal or subjugation. This mirrors real-world genocidal rhetoric.

Race and ethnicity are seen as an important source of identity in contemporary societies, it is even more important than the issue of class, and this is perhaps partly due to the possibility of seeing the apparent differences between races, such as skin color and physical traits, as an example. Although this is not always the case, ethnic minorities like the Hazaras have often suffered, due to their inferior racial lineage, from their most basic rights and have always lived in a state of apprehension, disappointment, and fear as a result of the fact that they originally carry the color of their affiliation on their faces; and because they belong to those known in some countries as 'visible minorities'. These minorities have been described with the worst qualities and classified as sub-humans as a result of the slavery, ostracism, and marginalization practiced against them throughout history in America, Africa, and other countries. Louis Wirth (1945) defines a minority as "a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are distinguished from others in the society in which they live by different and unequal treatment, and who consequently consider themselves the subject of collective discrimination" (p. 347). The status of being within a minority entails exclusion from all participation in social life. Scholars consider the term *minorities* 'ambiguous' even though the United Nations used it to defend the rights of these minorities in its declaration issued by the General Assembly in 1992, or in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples issued in 2007.

Some dominant cultures practice a policy of exclusion against others, and this is due to several reasons, the most important of which are these minorities' neutrality towards their authority and their rejection of their laws, on the one hand, and their efforts to establish their distinct identity and gain recognition, on the other.

Coming back to the novel, when Hassan's close friend Amir reflects on his relationship with Hassan, he admits that the source of stigma is not merely personal but deeply embodied, historical, and systemic discrimination. It is socially imposed and granted without question, turning Hassan's status as an outcast into a social norm:

I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It said the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had 'quelled them with unspeakable violence'. The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their lands, burned their homes, and sold their women (Hosseini, 2003, pp. 8-9).

Hence, it is likely to be a social or public stigma. This form of stigma occurs in everyday social interactions. It refers to the negative attitudes and beliefs held by the public towards stigmatized groups, reflecting the broader societal context in which stigma operates (Corrigan & Rao, 2012, p. 464).

The aforementioned passages demonstrate that Hassan's stigma is an immutable, ethnic-based '*tribal stigma*' that systematically dehumanizes him, assigns him to a permanent underclass, and makes him a target for violence and injustice, a persecution that is rationalized and even internalized by the society around him. This ethnic stigma is manifested in the events of the story through physical and verbal abuse under the framework of brutality and hostility. Hassan's cruel rape by Assef is the prominent incarnation of engraved systemic violence directed towards the members of the ignored Hazaras. Assef and his friends targeted Hassan because he was a Hazara, a group they considered to have no human rights. Another violent bloody scene is performed during Amir's throwing Hassan with a couple of pomegranates waiting for any deliberate response from him:

I don't know how many times I hit him. All I know is that when I finally stopped, exhausted and panting, Hassan was smeared in red like he'd been shot by a firing squad. I fell to my knees, tired, spent, frustrated (Hosseini, 1963, p. 81).

6.2. Hassan's Virtual vs Actual Social Identity

Goffman (1963) makes difference between discredited individuals with stigma being overt or known like a person in wheelchair or being extremely tall or short and discreditable individuals whose stigma is not immediately apparent like a woman who has had multiple incest relations or a person who has done time in

prison (p. 4). The core of Hassan's struggle in *The Kite Runner* lies in the profound and painful gap between his Virtual Social Identity (VSI) (how society perceives and labels him) and his Actual Social Identity (ASI) (who he truly is as a person). Hassan is seen as Poor, Illiterate, Cowardly, Subhuman Servant.

The Virtual Social Identity (VSI) is the identity imposed on Hassan by Pashtun-dominated Afghan society based solely on his Hazara ethnicity and class. It is a dehumanizing stereotype. He is not an individual but a representative of a stigmatized group, comparable to an animal in his loyalty:

"If you asked, I would," he [Hassan] finally said, looking right at me. I dropped my eyes. To this day, I find it hard to gaze directly at people like Hassan, people who mean every word they say ... If I was going to toy with him and challenge his loyalty, then he'd toy with me, test my integrity (Hosseini, 2003, p. 48).

The virtual identity is a collective social construct. Hassan is a constant target, seen as 'less than human' before he can even prove himself. The Actual Social Identity (ASI) is Hassan's authentic character, revealed through his actions, words, and inherent qualities. It is the direct opposite of the virtual identity. Hassan is depicted as being loyal, brave, spiritually pure, smart and compassionate. He is also considered as a talented kite runner and a gifted storyteller. Hence, Hassan when compared to the other characters is the noblest one. These positive traits cannot bridge the gap between his ASI and his virtual one. It remains a tragic breach that comes from the tension between the two sides. Unfortunately, the Afghan society acknowledges only the image of Hassan as being a Hazara servant, a member of an inferior race without any sense of human dignity and self-esteem. Amir's entire suffering of guilt is rooted in his inability to recognize and acknowledge Hassan's actual identity over the virtual one society had first imposed.

6.3. Management of Stigma: Covering and Acceptance

In his serious situation as a discredited stigmatized individual, Hassan is forced to deal with this dilemma. From the techniques highlighted above, he resorts to 'covering' as he is downplaying his stigma trait by accepting and performing his assigned role as servant flawlessly. Goffman's concept of 'covering' is vividly illustrated when Hassan strives to become the perfect servant, the distinguished kite runner and the loyal friend: "For you, a thousand times over!" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 59). Also, he is eager to engage with Pashtun culture through storytelling since he learns how to read and write under the guidance of Amir. By doing so, Hassan gains the weapon of literacy which is associated with Pashtuns and the educated elite:

But despite his illiteracy, or maybe because of it, Hassan was drawn to the mystery of words, seduced by a secret world forbidden to him. I read him poems and stories, sometimes riddles - though I stopped reading those when I saw he was far better at solving them than I was

(Hosseini, 2003, p. 24).

He cannot change his ethnicity (inevitable fate), thus, he tries to strengthen the role society has forced upon him. A good example to be considered is when Hassan accepts the stain on his name (being a thief stealing Baba's watch), to protect his so-called best friend, Amir. This is the ultimate act of *covering* since Hassan takes the blame for theft instead of challenging his virtual social identity (VSI) imposed by the Afghan community. By *covering*, he approves the lie, telling Baba "yes"; he has stolen the watch and money leading eventually to Ali's and Hassan's departure from home. In connection with stealing, Baba argues that "there is only one sin, only one. And that is theft ... when you tell a lie; you steal someone's right to the truth" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 197).

In his pursuit of social recognition of being '*normal*', Hassan may resort to the first form of concealment techniques that is *passing*, but this is impossible. Passing as a native Pashtun does not work in a society that is basically structured on ethnic superiority of the dominant Pashtuns. Hassan cannot pass to this world and be one of its members due to the fact that he comes from a Hazaras background. Accordingly, he performs the role of the obedient servant as a sole solution to place himself within the Afghan society.

7. Hassan's Social Identification within a Pashtun Community

It is highly crucial to recognize how Hassan as a stigmatized individual is being identified within an Afghan Pashtun society. Richard Jenkins (2004) argues that: "All human identities are by definition, social identities. Identifying ourselves or others is a matter of meaning, and meaning always involves interaction: agreement and disagreement, convention and innovation, communication and negotiation" (p. 4).

The process of social identification is established by similarities and differences. Georg Simmel (1950, as cited in Jenkins, 2004) considers this idea as the dynamic principles of identification:

The practical significance of men for one another . . . is determined by both similarities and differences among them. Similarity as fact or tendency is no less important than difference. In the most varied forms, both are the great principles of all internal and external development. In fact, the cultural history of mankind can be conceived as the history of the struggles and conciliatory attempts between the two (p. 5).

Hassan search for any similarities to identify himself among the Pashtuns is faced by the fact that he is just a Hazara servant. These differences result in a state of social and racial inequality. Harriet Bradley (2016) believes that there are four manifestations of inequality: class, gender, race, and ethnicity. In practice, these manifestations interact with each other in a dynamic way, forming a vision that conflicts with that of Marxists who consider class to be the center, while feminists see gender as the axis, or those anti-racists who believe in the paramount

importance of race/ethnicity (p. 23). Hassan is the visible character who faces the terrible consequences of structural inequality through the whole novel. His physical space is a stark manifestation of class inequality within the Afghan society. Being born into a servant class forces the father, Ali and his son Hassan to live in a 'different universe'. This social inferiority is basically stemmed from his Hazara identity:

In the eighteen years that I lived in that house, I stepped into Hassan and Ali's quarters only a handful of times. When the sun dropped low behind the hills and we were done playing for the day, Hassan and I parted ways. I went past the rosebushes to Baba's mansion, Hassan to the mud shack where he had been born, where he'd lived his entire life (Hosseini, 2003, p. 5).

Tajfel. H and Turner. J (1979) as social psychologists, were interested in how people interact and exist. They dedicated their efforts managing to answer two basic questions: why are we so committed to the groups to which we belong? And why does identification with one group always result in conflict with another? In their conclusion, they state that the in-group will discriminate against the out-group to enhance self-esteem and image. The in-group is the group an individual wants to be part of (the favored group) and the out-group is the group a person doesn't like or want to be involved with. In other words, the in-group is the 'US' and the out-group is the 'THEM'. In Tajfel and Turner's study 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict' (1979), they broke down *Social Identity Theory* into three components:

a. Social categorization: an individual decides what group(s) he belongs to. He may belong to a number of groups at one time.

b. Social identification: once the first cognitive process is performed, it is time for the next cognitive process that is social identification. At this stage, the person determines how compatible they are with the group. After establishing personal identity that is shaped by one's convictions, character traits, and life experiences, they have to make sure that they fit in with the main norms dictated by the group to see if they should join. The individuals would align themselves with the chosen groups, values, or roles, forming the basis of their self-identity.

c. Social comparison: In this third cognitive process, individuals compare themselves with the in-group. It is when the 'Us' against 'Them' mentality begins to emerge. That is to say how we compare ourselves and others to outsiders.

Hassan's failure to socially identify himself aggravates his existing alienation and stigmatization and *other* cannot be established because Hassan's individual identity is already disintegrated within his pursuit to be similar to the 'Other' Pashtun. This loss of identity is basically the direct result of the intertwined complex relationship of Hassan and his best friend Amir. Hassan totally declines any existence of selfhood in front of Amir. To be identical to the Pashtun community, Hassan must share the same characteristics of this dominant ethnic group. Despite

all his efforts, Hassan is eventually marginalized and discriminated leading to identity distortion.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Goffman's stigma theory demonstrates how Hassan is not just a victim of personal brutality but is trapped by a systematic social process of stigmatization turning him into a spoiled identity. His attempts at passing failed due to visible Hazara markers and even covering, through blind acceptance of his pre-determined role, cannot prevent him from violence and exploitation. Hassan's tragedy stems from the total contradiction of his 'actual' social identity (ASI) with the pre-established 'virtual' identity (VSI) imposed upon him by a fanatic society, a process that those closest to him, like Amir, are complicit in upholding. Eventually, Hassan's story is a powerful denouncement of systemic discrimination that can acknowledge an individual's virtue and yet still belittle him for his ethnicity and roots. *The Kite Runner* reveals that while tribal stigma can be strengthened to untie connections and destroy lives within the same society, Hosseini is eager for a solid harmonized Afghanistan where there is no room for institutionalized stigmatization.

9. References

Books

- Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. Free Press of Glencoe.
- Bradley, H. (2016). *Fractured identities: changing patterns of inequality* (second edition). Polity Press.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Prentice-Hall.
- Hosseini, K. (2003). *The kite runner*. Riverhead Books.
- Jenkins, R. (2004). *Social identity* (second edition). Routledge.

Articles

- Greene, K. (2006). Self-disclosure in personal relationships. In A. L. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of personal relationships*. (pp. 409-427). Cambridge University Press.
- Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing Stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 363- 385.
- Pachankis, J. E. (2007). The psychological implications of concealing a stigma: A cognitive-affective-behavioral model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(2), 328-345.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations*. (pp. 33-47). Brooks/Cole.
- Wirth, L. (1945). The problem of minority groups. In R. Linton (Ed.), *The science of man in the world crisis*. (pp.347-372). Columbia

University Press.

Internet sources

- Akhtar, Iqbal. (2012, September 13). "Who Are the Hazara of Afghanistan? An Expert on Islam Explains." *FIU News*, Florida International University. Retrieved February 16, 2026, from <https://news.fiu.edu/2021/who-are-the-hazara-of-afghanistan-an-expert-on-islamexplains>
- *Oxford Learners Dictionaries*. (2025, January 1). Stigma. In *Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com*. Retrieved November 8, 2025, from <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/stigma>