



The Functions of Discrimination and Prejudice

Jack Levin, William C. Levin

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The Functions of Discrimination and Prejudice, Second Edition attempts to provide a concise and readable introduction to the study of antiminority discrimination and prejudice. A glance at the Contents of the book will disclose that it represents the perspective of more than a single discipline or school of thought, encompassing theories from sociology, political science, economics, and psychology -- from functionalism as well as the conflict point of view.

If this book has some overall message to communicate, it is that majority-minority relations cannot be understood apart from the consequences of discrimination and prejudice. It is therefore necessary to examine *any* of the groups and individuals in a society that gain from the maintenance of the status quo, whether they be persons of power for whom discrimination serves economic or political ends, working-class persons whose sense of self-worth finds protection in the presence of prejudice, or certain elements of minorities whose special advantages would quickly disappear under the impact of full equality of opportunity.

As a major revision, the second edition of this book has provided us with a welcome opportunity to expand and clarify discussions, to update examples, and to correct mistakes. But our most important changes are reflected in the new title. Whereas the first edition focused almost exclusively on the functions of prejudice, we now place great emphasis on the consequences of institutionalized discrimination and on its relationship to prejudice. In this edition, we have also broadened our conception of minority groups, so that it includes the experiences not only of racial and ethnic groups but of women and the elderly as well.

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--JACK LEVIN and WILLIAM C. LEVIN

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