

Hate Crimes: New Social Movements and the Politics of Violence (Social Problems and Social Issues (Walter Paperback))

Kendal Broad, Valerie Jenness



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Violence directed at victimized groups because of their real or imagined characteristics is as old as humankind. Why, then, have "hate crimes" only recently become recognized as a serious social problem, especially in the United States? This book addresses a timely set of questions about the politics and dynamics of intergroup violence manifested as discrimination. It explores such issues as why injuries against some groups of people—Jews, people of color, gays and lesbians, and, on occasion, women and those with disabilities—have increasingly captured notice, while similar acts of bias-motivated violence continue to go unnoticed.

The authors offer empirically grounded, theoretically informed answers to the question: How is social change on this order possible? Their analysis of the dynamics draws upon three established traditions: the social constructionist approach; new social movements theory; and the new institutionalist approach to understanding change as a process of innovation and diffusion of cultural forms. In this case, new social movements have converged of late to sustain public discussions that put into question issues of "rights" and "harm" as they relate to a variety of minority constituencies.

The authors couple their general discussion with close attention to many particular anti-violence projects. They thereby develop a compelling theoretical argument about the social processes through which new social problems emerge, social policy is developed and diffused, and new cultural forms are institutionalized.

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