

<b>Title</b>	<b>The Politics of Stereotype</b>
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Brief Introduction	<p>Page ix  <b>Series Foreword</b>  Both those who advocate affirmative action and those opposed to affirmative action agree on the importance of "fairness" in the allocation of resources to people. What they disagree on is the definition and measurement of fairness when applied to complex individuals in a complicated society. This condition has led to confusion in the use of the term <i>affirmative action</i> and ambiguity in the definition of <i>fairness criteria</i>. Political groups and other special interests have taken advantage of this confusion to manipulate others to favor their own special interests for reasons having less to do with fairness and more to do with self-interest.</p> <p>Moises F. Salinas provides in this book the factual information about affirmative action that every psychologist (and others as well) need for their own self-defense as they enter into arguments about what is and what is not fair. The purpose of this book is first to explore how the issue of affirmative action became so confusing by reviewing the historical development of the term. Second, this book will propose a positive course of action based on psychological data about the role of diversity and individual differences in society. This book will enable the reader toward informed debate of a complicated but extremely important social issue in our multicultural society.</p> <p>The intent of legislation to support affirmative action has always attempted to support the fair treatment of all people in our society. The absence of a level playing field and the existence of privilege among those with the most power has in this case, as in the role of government generally, required the regulation of public behavior to increase the likelihood of fairness. This, in turn, has restrained those who are most powerful and most advantaged in ways that they have found objectionable. Legislating fairness is never easy and is always inadequate, but inevitably necessary. There are four types of affirmative action programs addressed in this book: (1) recruiting qualified women and minorities; (2) eliminating programs, policies, or obstacles that prevent women and minorities from mistreatment; (3) providing "soft" preferential treatment to some groups; and (4) providing "hard" preferential treatment to other individuals. Each program has its own strengths and weaknesses. The five "myths" surrounding affirmative action are particularly interesting. Each myth is matched with hard data that challenges that myth's validity. The psychological research on affirmative action has generally supported attempts to create fairness while at the same time documenting the inadequacies of some programs more than others. The politics of stereotypes provides still another valuable perspective to the reader about those attempting to use this ambiguous issue for their own interests.</p> <p>In the final chapter, Salinas frames a proposal for a "learner-centered" paradigm that might be more adequate than other educational programs in providing fairness and addressing the problems of affirmative action. There is no simple solution to this complex problem and Salinas does not minimize the difficulty of creating a fair society. However, in his positive program, Salinas does provide valuable ideas to start us going in the right direction.</p> <p>This book fits with the other books in the "Contributions to Psychology" series in describing how psychology serves society. The many books in this series define the cutting edge of psychology as it is applied to social issues. Each book has focused on a specific issue of importance, providing building blocks to those who deliver psychological services in our society. It is with great pride that we welcome this most recent contribution to the series.</p> <p>Paul Pedersen  Department of Psychology  University of Hawaii  Series Adviser</p>