

Coping With Minority Status: Responses to Exclusion and Inclusion, Fabrizio Butera and John M. Levine, Editors, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

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http://www.amazon.com/Coping-Minority-Status-Responses-Exclusion/dp/0521854997/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1282418309&sr=8-1

This edited book by Fabrizio Butera and John M. Levine invites readers to contemplate the paradoxes and complexities of coping with minority status. As someone whose academic focus is in critical-historical perspectives on dominant-minority group relations, I was pleasantly surprised by the empirical insights and findings found in the text.

Providing an array of social-psychological approaches, both theoretical and methodological, to the study of coping with minority status, Fabrizio and Levine give us a wealth of nuanced findings which provide a fresh departure, and help to correct, the oft-times abstract and homogeneous conceptualizations and narratives of dominant-minority relations. The book is divided into three parts: 1) Coping with Exclusion: Being Excluded for who you are; 2) Coping with Exclusion for what you think and do; and 3) Coping with Inclusion. I found the last part to be very informative of how minority group members cope once successful with becoming included in the dominant group. Little research has been conducted in this area of inquiry.

This last aspect is what I find to be most appealing about the book. Until recently, there has been so little research in the area that this groundbreaking work speaks volumes about the need for further investigation. The reader will learn some surprising and important information about minority coping strategies in various everyday situations. In the end, the articles here remind us of how much we take for granted about the complexities of minority group coping strategies at the level of everyday interactions with members of the dominant group.

There are a couple of shortcomings with the text. First, it would have been useful to articulate the policy implications of some of the findings. Second, a section devoted to further research would have been very helpful for researchers interested in conducting future research on the topic. The findings in the text leave so much fertile ground for further work and it detracts from the overall appeal of the text as “ground-breaking” to not, at least, provide some road maps to the future.

However, these are small criticisms in light of the contribution that Butera and Levine have given us in this collection of fine research articles. It should take its place as a go-to source on the subject, both in its findings and as a bibliographical reference. I recommend the book for courses in Social Psychology which examine

dominant–minority group dynamics, various courses in sociology and social work focusing on minority groups and social inequalities, as well as education and business courses that deal with interpersonal relations between dominant and minority groups in educational and business settings.