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THE AUTHORITARIAN DYNAMIC

What are the root causes of intolerance? This book addresses that question by developing a universal theory of what determines intolerance of difference in general, which includes racism, political intolerance (e.g., restriction of free speech), moral intolerance (e.g., homophobia, supporting censorship and school prayer), and punitiveness. It demonstrates that all of these seemingly disparate attitudes are principally caused by just two factors: individuals' innate psychological predispositions to intolerance ("authoritarianism") interacting with changing conditions of societal threat. The threatening conditions – particularly resonant in the present political climate – that activate authoritarian attitudes include, most critically, great dissension in public opinion and general loss of confidence in political leaders. Using purpose-built experimental manipulations, cross-national survey data, and in-depth personal interviews with extreme authoritarians and libertarians, the book shows that this simple model provides the most complete account of political conflict across the ostensibly distinct domains of race and immigration, civil liberties, morality, crime and punishment, and of when and why those battles will be most heated.

Karen Stenner is Assistant Professor of Politics at Princeton University, where she has been teaching since 1998. She was previously on the faculty at Duke University. Professor Stenner is the coauthor of *Electoral Behaviour: Introduction to Theories, Methods, and Data* (1992) and has coauthored articles in *Political Behavior*, *Political Psychology*, and the *Australian Journal of Political Science*, among others.

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*To Whimsy and Boo, my tiny little comets,
who tore a hole in the sky
and let all the magic of the universe pour through.*

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