

## Book Reviews

*Getting Respect: Responding to Stigma and Discrimination in the United States, Brazil, and Israel.* By Michèle Lamont, Graziella Moraes Silva, Jessica S. Wellburn, Joshua Guetzkow, Nissim Mizrahi, Hanna Herzog, and Elisa Reis. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2017. Pp. xix+377. \$39.95.

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In *Getting Respect*, Michèle Lamont and her coauthors provide richly detailed and vivid narratives of how marginalized groups experience and respond to ethnoracial exclusion in the United States, Brazil, and Israel. While much of the literature on racism focuses on legal and policy measures, the additional focus on stigmatization in this book is particularly helpful in putting a spotlight on hard-to-prove assaults on individual worth that flow from stigmatization. The authors thus describe their work as “a phenomenology of experiences of ethnoracial exclusion” (p. 7). The authors look at three dimensions of these experiences—historical context, groupness, and cultural repertoires—and how these, in turn, influence individual experiences and responses to discrimination and stigmatization.

Each of these dimensions consists of several components, which can themselves be contradictory and the effect of which might be to lessen the strength of any particular dimension as an explanatory variable. The dimensions also interact to influence the overall experience, how people respond to it, and what they think the ideal responses should be. These ideational (my term) responses in turn influence what kind of strategies the interviewees think should be adopted in countering ethnoracial exclusion.

Thus, the strong sense of groupness among African-Americans is mediated by relationships with other groups. However, groupness as a dimension also sits in tension with the cultural repertoire of the American dream. While Civil Rights legislation emboldens minorities to confront perpetrators of discrimination and stigmatization, about half of the African-American respondents believe in the American dream. This cultural repertoire makes African-Americans less isolated than the group closest to them in terms of segregation and groupness—Arab Palestinians.

Because of their historical experiences and strong groupness, African-Americans and Arab Palestinians exhibit a strong faith in collective mobilization. Conversely, higher levels of national identification on the part of Brazilian and Mizrahim lead to a preference for redistributive over identity-based policies. In Brazil, this is because racial injustice is viewed as a matter of class in-

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justice. In Israel, the Mizrahim almost totally deny any group-based discrimination or stigmatization. Ethiopians still hold on to the belief that they are Israeli citizens and thus eschew collective mobilization.

However, despite similarly high levels of groupness among African-Americans and Arab Palestinians, the latter do not support affirmative action policies. In their support for affirmative action, Brazilians depart from the Mizrahim and the Ethiopians. So why is there support for a group-based policy among Brazilians who generally support redistributive policies, and why is there a lack of that support for Arab Palestinians, who otherwise exhibit strong group identity?

The findings shared here seem to suggest that affirmative action will have resonance in those countries with a strong history of racial exclusion. The history of slavery and racial oppression in Brazil places it alongside the United States, even though Brazilians of course favor an economic approach to affirmative action. No such history of slavery or colonization exists in Israel.

While the authors claim that “this book dialogues with the comparative literature on race and ethnicity” (p. 32), the rest of the book hardly takes that topic up. This leaves us with a lacuna—whether there is enough of a common basis to compare the cases and whether the term “ethnoracial exclusion” means roughly the same thing across the different countries. As George Fredrickson puts it, “The very act of comparison requires categories that are comparable and some presuppositions about what is constant and predictable in human motivation or behavior. Without such assumptions one could write parallel histories not comparative ones” (*The Comparative Imagination: On the History of Racism, Nationalism, and Social Movements* [University of California Press, 2000, p. 26]).

The term ethnoracial conflates concepts that are not the same even though they are always interlinked. In some countries race-based discrimination (i.e., phenotype based) is more salient, and in others, ethnicity is more prevalent. Until the 1960s, white Afrikaners and English South Africans saw race and ethnicity as interchangeable. In the 1960s, ethnic identities among whites were minimized to create a common racial identity. The opposite was done among blacks: ethnic differences were created to maintain white racial supremacy. And so, as Werner Sollors observes, “In societies that cherish racial distinctions, ethnicity and race will interact in complex ways” (*Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader* [New York University Press, 1996, pp. xxxiv–xxxv]).

The authors might have found more resonant responses between South Africa, the United States, and Brazil because of the history of antiblack racism in those countries. Bringing in South Africa might have introduced another dimension to the study—the importance of political power. The authors’ phenomenological approach could help answer South Africans’ similar questions about discrimination and stigmatization in the postapartheid era. Anecdotal reports of phenomenological experiences of racism suggest that the patterns the authors have identified may be emerging there as well.

The choice of Israel, instead of a country such as South Africa, is thus methodologically intriguing. Also, the fact that Israel is virtually in a state of war

between Jews and Arabs makes it hard to see how Arab populations could be comparable to people in more peaceful circumstances with guaranteed rights in the United States and Brazil.

Both the contextual differences and the sequential organization of the chapters leave the reader feeling like an “inept juggler” (Fredrickson, p. 12). The reader must juggle an enormous number of dates involving six cases with very complex and different histories across three countries. *Getting Respect* is an important contribution to comparative sociology, but future researchers should pay more attention to comparability and clarity.

*Race and the Politics of Deception: The Making of an American City.* By Christopher Mele. New York: New York University Press, 2017. Pp. xiv + 181. \$89.00 (cloth); \$27.00 (paper).

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Christopher Mele’s *Race and the Politics of Deception* provides an interesting and highly readable political and economic history of Chester, Pennsylvania, a small industrial city located in the southeastern corner of the state, between Philadelphia and Wilmington. Emblematic of many declining rust-belt cities, Chester’s population peaked in 1950 at 64,000 residents; today, only 34,000 people live in Chester, 75% of them African-Americans. Deindustrialization has taken a heavy toll.

The book’s main narrative is that racial ideology and rhetoric have been “intentionally manipulated to foster spatial changes in the city and the region” (p. xiii). How did Chester become Pennsylvania’s poorest city in the state’s most affluent county (Delaware)? How did inner-city Chester become an enclave for leisure and tourism, with redeveloped riverfront properties, a casino, and a new stadium for a major league soccer team (the Philadelphia Union) surrounded by black poverty and urban decay? To answer these questions and more, Mele starts the analyses and discussion in the early 20th century of city building and proceeds systematically, decade by decade, to the current post-2000 period of urban redevelopment, growing spatial inequality, and new forms of racial and income segregation. He provides powerful vignettes at critical historical points in Chester’s economic ascendancy and subsequent decline that effectively illustrate how racial politics promotes certain kinds of local and regional economic development, usually at the expense of poor blacks.

Mele weaves an engaging, coherent, and persuasive story of racial politics from beginning to end. The book uncovers perverse path-dependent patterns of racial segregation that originated in a much earlier historical period, but that are both persistent and difficult to change. This is about pulling off the scab of slavery—over and over again—in the aftermath of emancipation, the Great Migration, and the 1960s Civil Rights movement. It’s about struggling black communities buffeted by deindustrialization and redevelopment in an