

## Book Review

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*Getting Respect: Responding to Stigma and Discrimination in the United States, Brazil, and Israel.*

Michele Lamont, Graziella Moraes Silva, Jessica S Welburn, et al. Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press, 2016. pp. 384, \$39.95, £32.95 (Hardcover). ISBN: 9780691167077

Colloquially, getting respect is often seen as a two-way street; essentially, if you want respect, you have to offer it. But ‘respect’ is built off of sticky and hard to capture concepts, such as dignity and recognition. In addition, the relationship between receiver and giver is often a taken-for-granted understanding. This in itself sets up *Getting Respect* on a platform all on its own. While most literature examining ethnoracial relations focuses on prejudice and discrimination, *Getting Respect* is positioned at a slightly different, yet, much needed alternative vantage point. The text takes on a complex sociological undertaking when examining the *subjectivity* of stigma and discrimination, while offering an understanding of how individuals manage, both situationally and in respect to the ‘self’ (i.e. Goffman), those experiences and relations.

Seamlessly weaving the narratives of African Americans, Black Brazilians, and Israeli subgroups, *Getting Respect* narrows in on the ethnoracial particularities and tensions of each group while offering a parallel understanding of the commonality among the stigmatized experience and the grace in which each maneuvers these tensions. In some sense, regardless of the distinct groups under examination, the ability to portray each group, side by side, in equal light, while emphasizing the relativity in weight, is a feat both effortlessly and ardently portrayed in by Lamont et al. The work highlights many unforeseen aspects of stigma – misrecognition and dignity are focal points – and how those stigmatized experiences may erode, bit by bit, the hope these groups struggle to keep in the face of constant disrespect. These micro-interactions are telling from the macro-reality (i.e. discrimination), insomuch that Lamont et al. remind social science of the necessity to examine not just ethnorelations but social relations at the interaction level, as a basis for broader and structural framing. It is important to note that the understandings of ethnoracial examination/research, which is often emphasized by focuses on prejudice and discrimination, are based on a body of academic literature arduously and exhaustingly developed, yet Lamont et al. provide significant and overwhelming evidence of the necessity to expand these understandings into stigma and recognition research, to develop academic language in this field to include these concepts, along with the personal cost of its collective experience. *Getting Respect* captures not only the nuances of stigma and discrimination but also the overwhelming pervasiveness of those everyday accounts and patterns by those who live it. By putting these experiences in narrative and thematic form, while offering context and a referencing frame (i.e. African

Americans, Black Brazilians, Arab Palestinians, Ethiopian Jews, and Mizrahim Jews), Lamont et al. offer a repertoire to perceive and understand the weight of otherwise ‘benign’ (i.e. stigma) ethnoracial relations. Furthermore, the micro–macro links highlighted in the text may aid further research in understanding the importance of social interactions beyond the ethnoracial perspective into the broader scopes of deviance, stigma, prejudice, and discrimination in general.

The text is a remarkable undertaking in the contentions of racial identity, and the analysis mirrors the social consensus of ideologies among each culture under investigation: socioeconomic material wealth with African Africans, racial democracy (of the myth of) among Black Brazilians, or identity politics among Israeli subgroups. Despite the overwhelming nature of this task, the research accomplishes much but misses an opportunity to specifically associate and justify how these separate ideologies may be collectively linked within a broader paradigm. In this respect, a collective theoretical undertaking, which may explain the commonality of misrecognition and/or disrespect experienced (universally) by each group, would have more fully connected the very large dots under investigation.

Essentially, *Getting Respect* contextualizes the very human need to be recognized and treated with dignity. Bryant H. McGill summarizes this thought perfectly by stating, ‘One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say’ (Lloyd et al., 2016). In this light, by researching and telling the narratives of the individuals interviewed, Lamont et al. may have inadvertently offered the participants, as well as the associated groups, the very thing each was denied in some regard: respect.

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## Reference

- Lloyd MH, Kolodziej NJ and Brashears KM (2016) Classroom discourse: An essential component in building a classroom community. *School Community Journal* 26(2): 291–304.