

## BOOK REVIEW

### How Professors Think: Inside The Curious World of Academic Judgment, *1st Edition* by *Michele Lamont*

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009  
ISBN: 978-0674032668, 336 pp.

REVIEWED BY  
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How Professors Think: the title alone is enough to make students, academics, or anyone interested in higher education in the U.S. pick it up and peruse its pages. Who wouldn't want an inside glimpse into the working of some of the finest minds in our nation's colleges? While Dr. Lamont's deceptively slim volume (only 250 pages leaving out the appendix, references, and notes) does not quite deliver on the promise of all her title entails, what she has achieved here is more subtle and, ultimately, more interesting. Using the method of "opening the black box" of the peer review process as used in the United States, Dr. Lamont paints a fascinating picture of the mindset of academics in several unique disciplines and how they must interact in an interdisciplinary fashion to achieve the stated goal of "rewarding academic excellence."

Dr. Lamont, a Harvard professor of European Studies, Sociology, African, and African-American Studies was granted access to five interdisciplinary peer review panels that award fellowships and grants. By sitting in on the deliberation process in some cases or by conducting post-deliberation interviews in others, she was able to observe how different academics from multiple disciplines (in these cases from the humanities and social sciences) must work together to evaluate and pass judgment of multiple proposals. How the different players struggle to define "excellence" in the work they are reviewing speaks volumes to the reader about how different disciplines define themselves in relation to one another and how they must put aside, or at the very least, modify their outlooks to operate in a true interdisciplinary fashion. Dr. Lamont's quest is not so much whether or not the peer-review system is valid (this has been done by other researchers repeatedly) but to find how academics from different disciplines work together to make the system as fair and honest as they can.

The chapters are broken down very succinctly to include an overview of how these panels operate and are structured, the disciplinary cultures represented (English, History, Philosophy, Sociology, Anthropology, and Economics), the group dynamics of deliberation, the quest to define what excellent means across disciplines, how interdisciplinarity and diversity are impacted by this system, and, finally, implications of the peer-review system both here at home and abroad as her final chapters deal with differences between the European models of peer-review and how it differs from the U.S. system. Within each chapter, Dr. Lamont asks questions of each discipline represented and the answers of her interviewees reveal their take on the problems inherent when you must think outside of your comfort zone.

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The statements of the academics involved are one of the true strengths of the book. Here in candid interviews we see how the disciplines are shaped and how they have changed over the years. Those interested in the future of interdisciplinary study or, in fact, those who wish to bring about a post-discipline higher education system will find much to be hopeful about. While there is still strong disciplinary identification among these participants, there is also much that points to a willingness to adapt and change in the pursuit of the best and brightest proposals across all disciplines. The discussions between the philosophers on one hand and the economists on the other alone show the broad range of commonality in what constitutes academic achievement from extremely diverse perspectives. This makes for fascinating reading and insight into the future of interdisciplinary study.

If there is a weakness in Dr. Lamont's presentation of her work it is a common one that much academic writing has: telling not showing. Dr. Lamont has fascinating interviews and has pulled the salient bits from them that readily present and support her contentions; however she buttresses these quotes by telling us what we are going to read beforehand and explaining them to us afterwards. While this might be necessary if the quotes were out of context or not clear as to their subject, Dr. Lamont has done such a good job of parsing her interviews to get at the heart of the questions that all the extra shoring up of her points seems unnecessary. Other weaknesses of her study (the focus primarily on the humanities and social sciences, the small number of review panels), Dr. Lamont freely admits and calls upon other scholars to take up her research and elaborate on it. Let us hope they do.

This book has an appeal to many of us involved in academic life. For students, the clear crisp writing style is refreshing and its easy reading will make it a popular resource for insight into the workings of fellowship and grant panels. For researchers, there is valuable information on how grants and funds are distributed and how best to secure them. For professors, there is sound methodology and reasoned discourse on the future of higher education. For academics outside the U.S., it is a helpful glimpse at how the American higher educational system works. It also brings reflection on how we operate as academics and as people. Does it tell us "How Professors Think"? Not completely, but it does give us insight into how we all think and that is very valuable indeed.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Transit Migration: The Missing Link between Emigration and Settlement

by *Aspasia Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou*

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008  
ISBN 0-230-55533-0, 177 pp.

REVIEWED BY  
ÖSTEN WAHLBECK\*

This book deals with a key feature of contemporary migration movements. Migration is frequently not a straightforward process where people simply move from one country to another. Instead, many migrants are in transit for a considerable length of time, sometimes several years. In Europe, different measures have been introduced to regulate migration into the countries of the European Union. Rather than preventing people from migrating, many restrictive policies have left a large number of people in precarious situations either inside or outside of the borders of the “Fortress Europe”. This book strives to describe the phenomenon of contemporary transit migration in Europe from different perspectives. It describes how transit migration is a much more complex issue than only a question of restricted mobility. Thus, the book deals with topical and important questions and it will be valuable for anybody who has an interest in contemporary migration patterns in Europe, and for researchers of global migration developments.

Transit migration is not easy to identify, although it is a very common aspect of migration processes. In the book, transit migration is understood as a situation between emigration and settlement that is characterized by indefinite migrant stay, legal or illegal, and a situation that may or may not develop into further migration. The duration of stay in a country is something we can only know retrospectively. Regardless of the intentions of migrants, their journey might be halted or travel plans might change over time. What was planned to be the final destination might turn out to be only one step in much larger journey, or a short stopover might develop into permanent settlement. The book presents some of the earlier attempts to theorize transit migration, but argues that it is not possible to clearly distinguish between transit migration and non-transit migration, since one type of migration easily develops into another type. Thus, the author argues that transit migration has to be connected to the broader migration process. Consequently, the author argues, transit migration is not a migrant category, it is “a phase that cuts across various migrant categories: irregular migrants, asylum seekers, refugees granted asylum, regularized migrants, students, trafficked persons may all find themselves in the condition of transit at some point” (p. 5). According to the author, “irregular migration” and transit migration are not synonyms, although the two often overlap. Thus, the phenomenon of transit migration is not very easy to study and the book uses a number of different perspectives and case studies to describe this particular migration phase.

To describe transit migration the book uses three examples from the fringes of Europe: Greece, the North African countries, and Eastern Europe. Through these different case studies we get a good insight into the dynamics and processes behind contemporary transit migration in Europe. The arguments are based on extensive

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background research of the three areas as well as fieldwork in Greece during the period 2001-2003. The larger political context is also described in a separate chapter outlining European Union asylum and migration policy. The structural and political context is in the book combined with a discussion of the actual migration developments in the regions as well as with the experiences of the migrants themselves. Especially in the case of Greece, the author provides personal narratives of people experiencing transit migration. The interviews with Kurdish asylum seekers living in Greece give a good insight into the experiences and intentions of transit migrants. The description of the situation in North Africa is partly based on the author's own experience of living in the region and working with the UNHCR. Thus, the book uses both a top-down and a bottom-up perspective to discuss the issues under study. It is very valuable that the book does not only provide a theoretical discussion of transit migration, instead the analysis is related to the real experiences of people in transit. This gives the book a valuable depth.

Some readers might wish to find more detailed information and data of the different cases and regions in question. However, the strength of the book is perhaps not in the description of actual migration patterns in the three regions, but in the balanced and insightful description of transit migration as a general phenomenon. The descriptions of the three regions provide examples, which illustrate more general developments. Transit migration is clearly difficult to delimit, but this book has done a very good job in describing this increasingly important aspect of contemporary migration patterns. The detailed notes, references and an index also give the book an added value.

In conclusion, the book provides a very good introduction to the phenomena of transit migration. A particular strength of the book is the combination of a top-down and a bottom-up perspective. The book describes how transit migration is created and sustained by political decisions and opportunity structures, as well as how the intentions of migrants influence the developments. The outcome depends as much on the social and political structures as it is by social networks and other individual factors. Contrary to popular belief, few migrants heading for Europe have specific plans before leaving their homeland. As the book describes, it is while in transit that the migration plans take shape. Clearly, the author's extensive practical and theoretical knowledge of the phenomenon has contributed to a balanced book on a difficult subject. The complexity and urgency of transit migration is very well described in this valuable book.

## BOOK REVIEW

# The Archaeology of Xenitia: Greek Immigration and Material Culture

Ed. by *Kostis Kourelis*

Athens: Gennadius Library, 2008  
ISBN 978-960-86960-6-8, 104 pp.

REVIEWED BY  
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KARPATHAKIS\*

This is one of the first works in the emerging field of the material culture of immigration, and more specifically the archaeology of immigration; to my knowledge, this is in fact, the first of its kind on Greek immigrants. The volume is comprised by seven chapters all of which are empirically based, and this is its incredible strength, as it allows the reader to look at precisely the nuances of material cultures as they are created by immigrants in the host and home societies. It is a significant volume for both Greek immigrant studies and ethnic studies and the archaeology of immigration.

The first chapter, by Susan Buck Sutton is on the “post-antiquity” rural ruins on the Cycladic island of Kea, the Argolid region of Peloponnesos and the Nemea Valley just south of Corinth. She examines the ruins left, strewn about in the countryside as populations moved in and out of the region, following work and labor flows which were structured by global economic forces, even as early as the mid-19th century. As Prof. Sutton points out, this dynamic is barely noticed in the dominant narrative through which Greek Americans are discussed and their experiences in the host society explained. The archaeology of the ruins left behind by migrants and emigrants enables us to look at another facet of immigration within the context of capitalism going global.

The second chapter, by Timothy E. Gregory and Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory, looks at the material cultural exchanges of Kytherian immigrants to Australia, between the host and the home societies. The researchers discuss the differences in housing architectures preferred by earlier (more assimilated and acculturated) and more recent Kytherian immigrants to Australia. Furthermore, within the “wog” homes, i.e., the more recent immigrants, one sees material objects and decorations brought from the home society, while at the same time, housing built in Kythera by these same immigrants hold within them cultural artifacts from Australia. It is through these otherwise small details and choices that one understands that immigrants are truly of two worlds as they bring elements of one into the other.

Chapter three, by Phillip Duke, is on the Ludlow Massacre of 1914. Basing his chapter on the Colorado Coalfield Wars Archaeological Project, Duke argues that although the Colorado coalfield wars are a classic example of class conflict, it is also possible to locally contextualize this struggle and examine the ethnic traditions of the strikers; specifically he argues that the then current history of Crete’s and Greece’s struggles of emancipation from the Ottoman control “provided Louis Tikas and the other Greek miners with an example of how to overcome oppression, this time not Turkish in origin, but rather American.”

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The fourth chapter, by Kostis Kourelis, is on the history of the St. George Orthodox Cathedral of Philadelphia. The architecture of Greek Orthodox churches in the U.S. and of St. George as well in particular, is evidence to the fact that the religion is outside the architectural, (and perhaps by extension other cultural) guidelines of the Church in Greece and/or Constantinople. The wide variety of architectural types of the Greek Orthodox churches in the U.S. bespeaks to the fact that it is in the midst of a religiously pluralistic society, and it is the religion of an immigrant/ethnic group with specific, although complex assimilation trajectories. St. George, originally an Episcopal church, St. Andrews, was purchased and renovated by the Greek Orthodox. The renovated church maintained its classical face, Ionic columns, something out of the norm for churches in Greece. The immigrant and ethnic community, as seen here, combine elements of diverse and divergent traditions, secular and religious, in their institutions.

The fifth chapter is by Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan, which examines the relationship between the American School of Classical Studies (ASCS) at Athens and the Greek Omogeneia in the 1940s. The article examines these relationships through the processes by which the film *Triumph over Time*, produced by ASCS and in cooperation with Archaeologist Oscar Broneer, numismatist Margaret Thompson and the Greek American movie mogul Spyros Skouras, was introduced to the omogeneia. This is a historical article looking at some of the contributions of ASCS to Greece during WWII beyond the realm of academic and university life, contributions and activities which are informed by a deep respect and love for the Greece of today.

Eleni Gage, in the next chapter, writes of her experiences in rebuilding her paternal grandmother's house in Lia, Epirus. An Ottoman coin minted in 1856, an unexploded hand grenade, a gun, agrarian objects, tin plates and broken coffee cups, the lock from the exoporta, all of these and other unearthed objects tell her the history of the house and its inhabitants. It had been an international house, as the author says, connected to global processes since its construction. It is through the process of rebuilding her grandmother's house that the author also creates her own history and relationships in the village.

The final paper is written by Jack L. Davis, and is a commentary on the field of the archaeology of xenitia (immigration) and the diverse chapters in the volume. He presents us with a brief history of the role that ASCS, the University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition and the Argolid Exploration Project played in the development of "post antique" archaeology. This is a relatively recent area of exploration in Greece and its roots go back to the decade of the 1970s.

I have one problem with this volume: I wanted more! I wanted more papers, more topics, more of everything. All of the papers are thorough and well written, each giving us important information about immigrant experiences through the material culture immigrants construct. Much has been written on the non-material culture of immigration, this, the material part, is still a new approach to the area and long overdue. This volume is a must reading for all interested in issues of Greek immigration but also in the more general areas of ethnic studies and immigration.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Janitors, Street Vendors, and Activists: The Lives of Mexican Immigrants in Silicon Valley by *Christian Zolniski*

Berkeley, CA, USA:  
University of California Press, 2006  
ISBN 0520246438, 249 pp.

REVIEWED BY  
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*Janitors, Street Vendors, and Activists* offers a political economic analysis of the impacts of global restructuring at the local level. Through an ethnographic account of Mexican immigrants in Silicon Valley, Christian Zolniski demonstrates how the vast movements of capital, labor, and changing technology in the past several decades have radically transformed people's lives both in the workplace and at home. The author illustrates how Mexican immigrants have become integrated into global systems of production through flexible labor regimes including subcontracting, part-time labor, and informal arrangements outside the formal market. Although these arrangements have largely favored Silicon Valley's high-tech corporations, Zolniski shows that the exploitative conditions in which Mexicans work also provide contexts through which immigrants have organized both at work and in their communities to challenge these conditions.

The introduction and first chapter describe the transformation of northern California from a once agricultural area into the booming high-tech microelectronics industrial sites of Silicon Valley. As Zolniski argues, these "developments in the high-tech industry radically transformed the political economy of the region" (29). In particular, this transformation was accompanied by a growing demand for new flexible labor arrangements that favored subcontracting and low-skilled workers. Mexican immigrants responded to the demand for labor, as in previous stages of history, forming an indispensable labor force in Silicon's high tech industry. Yet despite their important contribution to the economic development of the region, Mexican laborers have remained largely employed in low-skilled, low-paid jobs.

Chapter two examines the experiences of immigrants working as custodians at Sonix, one of Silicon Valley's most successful high tech corporations. As Zolniski argues, poor working conditions, low wages, and discrimination in the work place prompted custodians to organize and demand a union. Their efforts to unionize were thwarted by Sonix's shift towards more flexible sub-contracted custodial arrangements. The undocumented status of many immigrant workers also impeded their efforts to organize successfully. Ultimately, under the new labor arrangements working conditions for laborers worsened.

Chapter three presents a glimpse of the informal economy that emerged in San-tech, the residential neighborhood that housed many of Silicon's immigrant workers

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described in the book. The expansion of Santech's informal economy is shown to be a direct outcome of income and labor inequalities as well as the demand for flexibility associated with recent developments in the high tech industries described earlier. Individuals make a living in the informal economy through a variety of activities including street vending (e.g., selling home-made food and popsicles) and providing services (e.g., providing dental care). The stories of three individuals make clear that for some the informal economy provides an alternative to low-wage work, while for others it provides a way to supplement more formalized labor arrangements. In all three cases, informal economic activities are integral to the reproduction of low-income households and families.

Chapter four examines various ways that economic, political, and social forces also influence household and family organization to incorporate more flexibility. Extra-family and extra-household arrangements provide a common way for migrants to pool resources for mutual support and minimize the negative attributes of flexible labor and living conditions under poverty. However, Zolniski does not romanticize these social arrangements. Rather, he demonstrates that they are fraught with conflict and inequality, often to the detriment of women in the household.

Chapter five highlights the roles that Mexican women have played outside the household, as community leaders and organizers. The author features several examples of women's activism aimed to improve the educational and physical well-being of their children and families living in Santech. Balancing their activism with domestic responsibilities and work, and drawing on multiple social networks, Santech's women worked together to combat discrimination and marginalization while fostering a sense of community and belonging. Despite the optimism provided by the women's successful campaigns, we are reminded of the structural limitations that continue to govern the lives of Santech's residents.

*Janitors, Street Vendors, and Activists* makes a significant contribution to the current scholarship on globalization, immigration, labor, and urban studies. A particular strength of the book lies in its expansion of flexibility, beyond discussions of production. Indeed, Zolniski successfully shows how flexibility shapes the strategies of both employers and laborers. Moreover, he demonstrates that flexibility, for the Mexican immigrants he describes, influences their lives not only inside the workplace but also in the household and their communities. Zolniski also demonstrates that Mexican migrants are defying stereotypes that portray them as victims of poverty. Santech's residents are deeply engaged in civic and labor politics, which suggests that inner-city barrios provide spaces of hope and empowerment. Finally, Zolniski challenges us to think more critically about the relation between agency and structure. Indeed, even as the ethnography exposes the reader to human potential for effecting change, Zolniski illustrates that without changing structures of oppression, there are limits to human agency. Beyond these contributions, the book's clear prose and rich ethnography make this book accessible to all individuals interested in immigration studies. I highly recommend it for classroom use.