

“Seeing Others” How Recognition Works and How it Heals a Divided World

Abstract

Growing inequality and the decline of the American dream are marked by a mental health crisis across all social classes in the United States. Professor Michèle Lamont considers what alternative hopes are taking shape based on interviews with 80 Gen Zs and 185 agents of change who are producing new narratives in entertainment, comedy, advocacy, art, impact investing, and other fields of activity. They are offering alternatives to neoliberal scripts of self by producing narratives that emphasize inclusion, authenticity, and sustainability. They contribute to social movements that aim to extend recognition to the largest numbers, even in a context where political backlashes are multiplying. These transformations point to how to broaden cultural citizenship, not only in the United States but in other societies.