



**Review: [Untitled]**

Reviewed Work(s):

*The New Black Middle Class* by Bart Landry

David J. Garrow

*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 498, The Private Security Industry: Issues and Trends. (Jul., 1988), p. 156.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-7162%28198807%29498%3C156%3ATNBMC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>

*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* is currently published by Sage Publications, Inc..

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/sage.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

---

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

social structure. This book is appropriate for a general audience, and a must for people interested in a sensitive analysis of the relationship between social institutions and human behavior.

LESLIE LEBOWITZ

Duke University  
Durham  
North Carolina

LANDRY, BART. *The New Black Middle Class*. Pp. xi, 250. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987. \$22.50.

*The New Black Middle Class* is a discursive report on a 1976 survey of 556 black two-parent families, often employing comparisons to an identical survey of 600 white families. Landry employs occupation-based criteria, rather than education-based or income-oriented ones, for determining the middle class, and hence his subjects include clerical and sales workers while excluding the sometimes better-paid blue-collar trade workers.

If Landry's initial criteria for class raise questions and potential problems, the book itself does little to alleviate those concerns or avoid other shortcomings. The essence of Landry's argument boils down to some four central points. First, "the black middle class . . . is a kind of bellwether of black progress." Second, the black middle class experienced phenomenal growth during the decade of the 1960s, increasing from 13 percent of all black workers in 1960 to 27 percent in 1970. Thereafter, that growth substantially slowed; in 1976, 31 percent of black workers were middle-class, compared to 53 percent of whites, the latter being nine points higher than the 1960 figure of 44 percent.

Third, Landry says, that impressive growth in the 1960s resulted from the simultaneous presence of a strong national economy and the civil rights movement. More precisely, it was federal antidiscrimination statutes, particularly Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, that supplied the crucial momentum for those gains. "It was these new laws

mandating equal employment opportunities that had the most far-reaching consequences for black people as a whole and that directly contributed to the growth of the new black middle class."

Fourth, in a very poorly supported effort to critique the work of William J. Wilson, Landry contends that the slower post-1970 and especially post-1980 growth of the black middle class is explainable more by reference to racial discrimination in employment than by nondiscriminatory economic factors and changes. Indeed, such discrimination affects all classes of black workers and not simply the middle class. "The income gap between black males and white males is *primarily* the result of discrimination," and "occupational discrimination continues to be at least as important as economic change in maintaining a large black underclass." Hence, Landry concludes, "economic equality for blacks, even for the middle class, now seems a long way off."

These assertions are all arguably true, but Landry unfortunately provides no data or analysis that persuades his reader that these are conclusions drawn from his study rather than simply from personal beliefs. In fact, at times, some of Landry's most interesting statistical statements appear to contravene his more general argument, and the contradiction is not explained, as in the following: "Between 1973 and 1982 . . . the black middle class grew by 51.4 percent compared to 28.7 percent for the white middle class," and "during the 1980-1982 recession, the black middle class grew by 3.4 percent and the white middle class by 2.9 percent."

In short, I found *The New Black Middle Class* to be a fundamentally unsatisfying and disappointing volume.

DAVID J. GARROW

City College of New York  
City University Graduate Center  
New York

TRAUTMANN, THOMAS R. *Lewis Henry Morgan and the Invention of Kinship*.