

Lucas develops some intriguing sub-arguments. He critiques Gary Becker's "foundational analytic effort to estimate discrimination effects," insisting that social scientists still implicitly rely on this half-century-old framework. This is possible, though even "analytic economists have long since moved beyond his approach" (p. 155) and political scientists never did start with Becker. Lucas also develops a detailed critique of the psychometric logic of SATs and other standardized tests (rather mystifyingly, in a chapter on "critical legal perspectives and the critique of the dominant legal view"), without explaining why a flawed testing regime is central to either social science or legal decisions. He uses GSS data to show that if only a small fraction of whites (men) hold prejudiced attitudes, blacks (women) are likely to encounter prejudiced people who have power over them. The insight is important, although no amount of statistical wizardry (and Lucas has methodological skills that I can only dream of) will convince me of the validity of an analysis that relies on cell sizes of two or four in some cases (see Chapter Two, and Appendix A).

Although the book is much too wordy and in places self-indulgent, Lucas comes across as a vivid, earnest, smart, iconoclastic thinker. *Theorizing Discrimination* makes one think. But in the end, too much of its energy is aimed at destroying an image of social science that most sociologists, and political scientists for that matter, would not recognize as their own discipline.

Assets, Livelihoods, and Social Policy, edited by **Caroline Moser** and **Anis A. Dani**. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2008. 337pp. \$30.00 paper. ISBN: 9780821369951.

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Assets, Livelihoods, and Social Policy is an edited collection of papers presented at the World Bank conference on "New Frontiers of Social Policy" convened in Arusha, Tanzania in late 2005. The book is part of a series sharing the conference name and linked to the World Bank's Social Development Strategy,

the goal of which is to empower people by making institutions more inclusive, responsive and accountable. The chapters in this volume are aimed at addressing employment, conceived broadly as livelihoods herein, by linking assets to livelihoods. Not including the two-chapter introductory section, this book is organized into eleven chapters—each representing a separate case study—across four substantive sections focusing on migration, housing, livelihoods in weak states, and economic empowerment.

In the first of two introductory chapters, Anis Dani and Caroline Moser define assets as "the resource endowments and capabilities that people have to sustain their livelihoods and to enhance their welfare" (p.5). This definition, squarely situated in terms of the development literature on capital assets, includes human, social, physical, political, psychological, natural and financial capital. If the reader is hoping for something more focused on assets defined as net worth (as in Conley 1999; and Keister 2005), then this book is not for you. This is an important caveat, as after first reading the title I expected a volume examining assets in terms of net worth beyond the OECD nations that are generally studied (e.g., those using the recently released Luxembourg Wealth Study data). Rather, this is an excellent book targeted to scholars interested in the politics of international development, as well as development strategies aimed at improving the economic well-being of individuals in developing nations.

Having assembled disparate chapters on varying cases by a diverse authorship, the editors do a fabulous job of weaving a common thread throughout the volume. Namely, the editors and authors all share the perspective that institutions and institutional constraints are immensely important to the overall well-being of citizens in developing nations. Further, and most importantly, the core argument is that institutions can be constructed and reorganized, often in simple ways, to the structural advantage of the citizenry. In short, as Moser points out in the second introductory chapter, "assets create agency" (p. 57). This, as she notes, dovetails with the work of Sherraden (1991) that, along with the scholarship of Oliver and Shapiro (1995), has informed the Ford Found-

dition's Asset Building and Community Development Program, and aligns specifically with the portion of the program managed by the Economic Development unit which targets its grants toward international development. Thus, the case studies in this volume bring substance to prior theoretical work and Ford's funding initiative.

However, substantial variation exists in terms of how clearly the individual chapters in this collection speak to the central theme. For example, whereas the importance of institutions in generating and facilitating asset accumulation and improving livelihoods is clearly delineated and the argument convincing in John Anarfi and Sara Jagare's chapter on West African Migrants, as well as in David Satterthwaite's chapter on Federations of the Urban Poor, other chapters are less clear. One that comes to mind is Dennis Rodgers' representation of the case of Youth Gangs as Ontological Assets, the link made in an attempt to broaden the conceptualization of assets I found unconvincing. Fortunately, this variation in thematic resonance is lessened in part thanks to Dani and Moser's cynosural overview chapter.

The greatest weakness of *Assets, Livelihoods, and Social Policy* is the absence of a concluding chapter: the editors fail to impose continuity and coherence to the volume. A simple solution exists, however, as most of the content of the first introductory chapter would better serve as the concluding chapter. For example, Dani and Moser provide several summary tables that neatly organize the chapters around the volume's assets and livelihood theme (i.e., Table 1.1 lists each chapter's case, assets discussed and the sphere of interest; Table 1.2 outlines the key agents influencing the outcomes for each section; and Table 1.3 provides detailed policy implications deriving from the case studies). While I understand the intent to provide this information at the front of the volume, I feel that it would better serve as a final wrap up rather than as an introduction to the extremely varied case studies.

Organizational issues aside, there is much to praise in this volume. The introductory chapters thoughtfully inform the volume and the individual case studies are well-written and sprinkled with interesting insights. In its entirety, *Assets, Livelihoods, and Social*

Policy goes beyond merely being of interest to scholars of the politics of developing nations. Thanks to the institutional grounding of the project, it is also a valuable read for political sociologists, institutional theorists and those engaged in macro-level comparative research on developing nations.

THEORY AND METHODS

The Bachelor's Ball: The Crisis of Peasant Society in Béarn, by **Pierre Bourdieu**, translated by **Richard Nice**. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2008. 205pp. \$25.00 paper. ISBN: 9780226067505.

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In 1959 and 1960, after completing fieldwork and publishing on Kabyle peasant communities in Algeria, Pierre Bourdieu turned his sociological eye to his home community Béarn, a relatively isolated, farming region in southwestern France near the Pyrenees. There he observed and describes a Christmas Ball:

In the middle of the brightly lit dance-floor, a dozen couples are dancing to the latest tunes. They are mainly 'students'—pupils at the high schools and colleges of the neighbouring towns. . . Standing at the edge of the dancing area, forming a dark mass, a group of older men look on in silence. All aged about thirty, they wear berets and unfashionably cut dark suits. As if drawn in by the temptation to join the dance, they move forward, narrowing the space left for the dancers. There they all are, all the bachelors.

From this ethnographic observation of bachelor peasants who do not dance Bourdieu helps us understand how their awkward participation is part and parcel of a broader transformation of traditional French peasant society. Increasingly inserted into the dominant urban world these wallflowers, the heirs and leaders on whose shoulders rest