



Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class (Morality and Society Series)

By Michèle Lamont

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Drawing on remarkably frank, in-depth interviews with 160 successful men in the United States and France, Michèle Lamont provides a rare and revealing collective portrait of the upper-middle class—the managers, professionals, entrepreneurs, and experts at the center of power in society. Her book is a subtle, textured description of how these men define the values and attitudes they consider essential in separating themselves—and their class—from everyone else.

Money, Morals, and Manners is an ambitious and sophisticated attempt to illuminate the nature of social class in modern society. For all those who downplay the importance of unequal social groups, it will be a revelation.

"A powerful, cogent study that will provide an elevated basis for debates in the sociology of culture for years to come."—David Gartman, *American Journal of Sociology*

"A major accomplishment! Combining cultural analysis and comparative approach with a splendid literary style, this book significantly broadens the understanding of stratification and inequality. . . . This book will provoke debate, inspire research, and serve as a model for many years to come."—R. Granfield, *Choice*

"This is an exceptionally fine piece of work, a splendid example of the sociologist's craft."—Lewis Coser, Boston College

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Drawing on remarkably frank, in-depth interviews with 160 successful men in the United States and France, Michele Lamont provides a rare and revealing collective portrait of the upper-middle class - the managers, professionals, entrepreneurs, and experts at the center of power in society. Her book is a subtle, textured description of how these men define the values and attitudes they consider essential in separating themselves - and their class - from everyone else. For Lamont, the boundaries of class are not marked by economics alone. She goes beyond crude categories of status and simple measures of taste, wealth, and possessions to reveal the role of moral and cultural distinctions in setting the boundaries between the upper-middle class and those above and below. Central to her analysis - and to the identity of the men she interviewed - is the idea of a virtuous or worthy person: members of the upper-middle class constantly define themselves and others by making distinctions along this moral dimension. There are important differences, however, within the upper-middle class and between national cultures. Living in a cosmopolitan city like New York or Paris is different than living in a more provincial center like Indianapolis or Clermont-Ferrand; those working in the profit sector hold very different values than do those working for nonprofit organizations; and American men place more emphasis on financial success than do their French counterparts, who value personal integrity and cultural refinement more. Unprecedented in its comparative reach, *Money, Morals, and Manners* is an ambitious and sophisticated attempt to illuminate the nature of social class in modern society. For all those who downplay the importance of unequal social groups, it will be a revelation.

About the Author

Michèle Lamont is the Robert I. Goldman Professor of European Studies and professor of sociology and African and Africa American Studies at Harvard University.

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