

UNH Professor Discusses New Book on Immigration Feb. 16

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Nina Glick Schiller, associate professor of anthropology at the University of New Hampshire, will speak about her new book on long-distance nationalism, "Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home" Saturday, Feb. 16, at 1 p.m. at Barnes & Noble in Newington.

When Glick Schiller and co-author Georges Eugene Fouron, an associate professor of education at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, started research and interviews for the book, which was recently published by Duke University Press, both scholars promised their mothers one thing: that this would be a book people could and would read.

And in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, it is crucial reading for anyone concerned about the rights of citizens as well as immigrants.

"At a time when our nation is struggling with the meaning of words like nationalism, patriotism and transnationalism, we seek to answer the question 'Why are people around the world so angry at the United States,'" says Glick Schiller. "We look at why immigrants from the third world keep their home ties and what motivates them to fight, kill and die for ancestral homelands."

Schiller describes the book as unique. Combining history, autobiography and ethnography, it is both the first-person story of co-author Fouron, a Haitian immigrant who has achieved the "American dream" while frequently traveling to Haiti to participate in political events, and an exploration of long-distance nationalism in an increasingly globalized world.

"If you are born in Haiti and move to the United States, your blood is always Haitian, you're just living abroad," says Glick Schiller. "This contradicts the U.S. belief that you can't have more than one nationality."

In fact, many immigrants remain intimately tied to their ancestral homeland, even after they become legal citizens of another country.

"One of the reasons people like Georges have to leave their home country is the nature of a global economy," says Glick Schiller. "Because of worldwide economic policies, many countries are no longer able to support their citizens. When I started my research in the 1960s, Haiti was a country of farmers, it could feed all of its people. Now, agriculture has been displaced by U.S.-based products coming in.

"If countries close their doors to immigration, we will have a worldwide crisis on a level that is unimaginable," she adds.

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