

[bref[HANN, CHRIS & JONATHAN PARRY (eds). *Industrial labor on the margins of capitalism: precarity, class, and the neoliberal subject*. xii, 372 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2018. £100.00 (cloth)

[rp[Chris Hann and Jonathan Parry's edited volume is an intellectually important yet politically depressing book. Based on fourteen case studies spanning industrial settings from Russia to Zambia and from Trinidad to the Philippines, it is introduced by Parry. It also contains Hann's preface and Michael Burawoy's afterword, both less concerned with the book's case studies than with bigger questions in the fields they address. Some of the key questions of *Industrial labor on the margins of capitalism* include the very pertinent: what are the main predicaments of the increasingly precarious industrial labour force in contexts both constitutive of and marginal to contemporary capitalism? The case studies consider the concept of precarity in order to address some of the introduction's main questions while tackling key issues in both political and economic anthropology.

[rp1[Although the chapters are indicative of 'the global trend toward increasing precarity' (p. 14), the book is a worthy reminder that insecurity has dominated labour for most of human history. While reinforcing this point through detailed ethnographies, the collection's case studies also reveal how casual work could not be sustained were it not for its counterpart: the formation of a stable, secure working class. As Parry's introduction emphasizes, these concurrent processes of casualization and de-casualization produce opportunities for managerial control by polarizing the labour force.

[rp1[Class and the production of a neoliberal subjectivity are the two concepts through which the authors address the otherwise fuzzy concept of precarity. Regardless of their adherence to (Makram-Ebeid, chap. 7) or rebuttal of (Sanchez, chap. 9) the main claim that casualization is increasing, all the ethnographies show that proletarian unity does not exist in their fieldsites. The simple class division between the bourgeoisie and the working class is further fragmented by complex divisions within the latter. Beyond the polarization of workers into 'permanent' and 'fixed term', labourers are split along the lines of nationality (Kesküla,

chap. 2), ethnicity (Hoffmann, chap. 14), or even gender within one family (Kofti, chap. 4). Trade unions, when not completely rendered futile (Schober, chap. 8), often serve the interests of, if not permanent workers, then dominant ethnic groups, and are not able (or eager) to mobilize across dividing lines.

While exploring the production of neoliberal subjectivity, the editors and authors also refute any easy definition of neoliberalism. Following Philip Mirowski's maxim (*Never let a serious crisis go to waste*, 2014) that neoliberalism is not about the minimal state but about entrenchment in micro-identities and practices within every form of life, these ethnographic case studies show the complex role neoliberal governance and discourse play on the ground. The simple argument that industrial labour is subject to neoliberal downsizing with the aim of profit-making is, as Parry notes, countered by evidence of its use as a disciplining tool, sometimes at the expense of profit-making rationales. Conversely, some chapters' data reveal a contradiction at the core of neoliberalist discourse. Within this disciplining regime, a worker's success is more likely to depend on kin, friends, caste networks, reciprocity, gift giving, mutual obligation, trust, or hierarchical deference than on the neoliberal mantras of 'individual skills', 'hard work', and 'entrepreneurial spirit'.

Yet an undertaking of this scope is at the same time a product of some of the very contradictions it addresses. Hann's preface traces the book's origin to the research project 'Industry and inequality in Eurasia' led by the two editors together with Catherine Alexander, which involved half of the authors as precarious researchers. Initially framed around Eurasia and labour in the heavy industries, this final version has added contributors, geographies, and industries. This expansion, it could be argued, has obscured the project's initial aims, its comparative framework, and the conversation between and contributions of the project participants. Parry's introduction sets the agenda of the book; so much so that, at times, it reads like a chapter based on his long-term Indian fieldwork that pre-empts the other authors'

findings, and, at others, like a powerful agenda to which all chapters need to bring commensurable, neatly fitting pieces of evidence. This last becomes visible when he ‘kindly’ reproaches some of the authors for straying from the framework (pp. 25-6). Consequently, the effort at knowledge production appears somewhat asymmetrical, and individual chapters by early-career scholars remain subordinate to a powerful master frame. I wonder if a leaner volume or a special section with case studies from the original project would not have given more space and visibility to the researchers’ own theoretical and political insights. *Industrial labor on the margins of capitalism* also opens, as an unintended outcome, questions of the divisions of labour and class in contemporary academia and allows us to reflect on the current regime that demands continuous publications and project proposals.

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