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ILRReview

Volume 57 | Number 4 Article 89

July 2004

Worked Over: The Corporate Sabotage of an American Community

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ments instead of expanding formal care at such hours.

My only other significant reservation about the book is that the data are not current. There are two reasons for concern here. The first is that egalitarian sentiments among young American women and men continue to gain ground, as Tom Fricke has reported (in *Balancing Acts,* edited by Eileen Appelbaum [Washington, D.C.: EPI 2000]), a trend that could make child care issues less pressing for many women. Second, there are signs (if only anecdotal ones, so far) that the 24/7 economy itself is becoming less labor-intensive and perhaps even less pervasive. To the extent that many services, such as airline reservation bookings, are becoming Internet-based or automated through sophisticated telephone answering systems, employment at nonstandard hours might be decreasing. It also seems that many retailers have tried but then abandoned 24/7 hours because so few customers shop in the late evening and very early morning. Most people prefer sleep over shopping during such hours, and that preference is not apt to change any time soon.

These caveats notwithstanding, Presser has provided us with an extraordinary, well-written, important piece of research that greatly reduces our ignorance about shiftwork. The book deserves a wide audience among academics and policy-makers.

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Worked Over: The Corporate Sabotage of an American Community. By Dimitra Doukas. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003. 224 pp. ISBN 0-8014-4092-0, $39.95 (cloth); 0-8014-8861-3, $18.95 (paper).

Dimitra Doukas's *Worked Over* is a good example of the innovative work from the emerging field called New Working-Class Studies. New Working-Class Studies has academic roots in both humanities and social sciences, is self-consciously interdisciplinary, and is centered on the examination of working-class life and culture.

Doukas is a cultural anthropologist by training, yet her work in this book brings together ethnographic and historical methods to investigate working-class behavior and values in the economically ravaged Mohawk Valley of New York. The author's goal is to examine the roots of the class divides in the region and to understand how working-class values have historically resisted, and continue to resist, "corporate capitalist cultural production"—their displacement, that is, by values more congenial to the reigning economic system. Unlike other academic scholars, Doukas does not see the working class as passive actors bewildered by "natural" economic forces and simply holding on to anachronistic values. Rather, she argues that working-class communities have actively resisted so-called "mainstream American values" of individualism, consumption, and social and economic Darwinism and, in fact, have challenged corporate capitalism's ideological values.

The book begins by viewing the Mohawk Valley as, in a sense, a geographic stronghold for a social class. Valley residents disassociate themselves from nearby communities by rejecting values based on consumption and hierarchy. According to Doukas, the border itself "is a symbol of the cultural transformation" and resistance that has occurred over time in the Valley. That resistance is buttressed by the "social capital" and "sweat equity" associated with place that allow people to remain in the Valley despite economic loss and uncertainty and, therefore, reproduce its values and culture. It is this reproduction that is the "driving force of the Valley's grassroots politics."

In the following chapter, the author begins to explore the grassroots politics of the Valley by studying the opposition of some community members to economic development activities and benefit increases for public employees. Many residents vehemently objected to arranging abatements for corporations, shifting the tax burden, and granting wage benefits to public employees when community members were already economically strapped. While some would portray such politics as reactionary, the author, by listening carefully, finds that it is, rather, a "politics of resentment" springing from ideas about fairness, equality, community, and what constitutes real work. Further, it is rooted in the social memory of community values of economic equality, neighborliness, and the dignity of hard work. Here class conflict is described simply as a conflict between older community and newer individualistic values of work and place.

The author then turns to a historical analysis of the political economy of the region and finds that similar community responses to economic transformation have occurred over the past 150 years. The evolution of capitalism required

cultural transformations in which society assimilated individualism, consumption, and social Darwinism, values that differed radically from those of earlier periods of American history and other eras of industrial development. As Doukas puts it, "The consolidation of corporate capitalism produced a decades-long cultural war of titanic proportions, played on local battlefields across the United States." The book provides a wealth of local history supportive of that generalization, even if it offers little new theoretical insight.

In her concluding chapter, aptly titled "Wealth vs. Commonwealth," the author considers the current political context. Whereas others see hopelessness and apathy within many working-class communities, Doukas finds the roots of democratic values and strength in the working-class resistance to corporate enculturation. In many ways, these values also transcend the typical political analysis. Rejecting both reactionary and socialist politics, working-class culture "envisions universal autonomy, universal social and political adulthood, without slaves or masters—the original American dream." That is, the working class mistrusts not only those across the class divide, but also those who seemingly advance their interests in the name of the working class.

In her study of the Mohawk Valley, Doukas provides a powerful example of the type of synergy championed by new working-class studies. *Worked Over* uses ethnography, history, and geography to study working-class life and culture. This book adds force to the claim by geographers Don Mitchell and Andrew Herod that conflict shapes not only the landscape, but also community values.

Working-class community struggles of the kind examined in *Worked Over* warrant close attention in current political and economic debates. Analysts and (especially in an election year) politicians will ignore such phenomena only at their peril.

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Labor Economics

The Decline in Employment of People with Disabilities: A Policy Puzzle. Edited by David C. Stapleton and Richard V. Burkhauser. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2003. 448 pp. ISBN 0-88099-260-3, $45.00 (cloth); 0-88099-259-X, $22.00 (paper).

Coinciding with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 and the 1991 ("Bush Senior") recession was the onset of a precipitous decline in the employment rate of American adults with disabilities, which dropped 28% among men and 14% among women between 1989 and 2000. These trends galvanized a vigorous debate among economists, disability professionals, legal scholars, and policy-makers attempting to identify their cause. The fruits of that debate are collected and distilled in *The Decline in Employment of People with Disabilities,* edited by David Stapleton and Richard Burkhauser. This carefully edited and enjoyably contentious volume presents, and occasionally debunks, the major arguments advanced to explain the declining employment of the working-age disabled in the 1990s.

Five hypotheses are presented here, often by their leading exponents: (1) mismeasurement of the disabled population led to spurious trends in disabled employment; (2) changing job characteristics, such as rising cognitive or physical skill demands or declining provision of health insurance, reduced job options for the disabled; (3) the underlying health of the adult population abruptly deteriorated; (4) the Americans with Disabilities Act raised the cost of hiring disabled workers, thereby pricing them out of the market; and (5) screening for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits was liberalized as the value of SSDI benefits was rising, leading the working-age disabled to withdraw from the labor force.

Though the contributors to this volume disagree on much, the book's logical organization and the excellent opening and closing chapters by Stapleton and Burkhauser highlight the common ground. Working from numerous data sources, all the researchers concur that aggregate employment of the working-age disabled declined. However, as the chapter by H. Stephen Kaye highlights, employment rose among the subpopulation of disabled who reported that they were "able to work." How this fact should be understood is at the heart of one major debate in the volume. Two chapters, one by David Stapleton, Nanette Goodman, and Andrew Houtenville, the other by Steven Hill, Gina Livermore, and Andrew Houtenville, evaluate and ultimately reject the hypotheses that