

health, finding information and treatments, incorporating healthy foods and activities into family life, and scheduling medical appointments. Given research that shows that many women prefer to avoid contentious politics, how commercial social movements are understood as political or apolitical by individual participants themselves and the extent to which they are connected to participation in more contentious forms of political life would be a welcome next development that extends this clearly written and important book.

Scratching Out a Living: Latinos, Race, and Work in the Deep South, by **Angela Stuesse**. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016. 336 pp. \$85.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780520287204.

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Poultry production could be the twentieth-century version of the nineteenth-century "satanic" textile mills described by Karl Marx, where "capitalist production is both an arena of undisputed domination of capital over labor and at the same time the spring of class struggle" (Burawoy 1984). Following its installation in the southeastern United States, poultry processing attracted numerous anthropologists, sociologists, and journalists. It seems that they just couldn't stay away from the disassembly line. A plethora of articles, books, and news reports details the "satanic" (my analogy), exploitative, and abusive nature of the work regime, labor struggles, and ethnic succession over the years. Space limits keep me from providing the very long list of related publications, spanning from the early 1990s to a May 2017 article in the *New Yorker*. With such a rich collection of mostly ethnographic work, I read *Scratching Out a Living: Latinos, Race, and Work in the Deep South* looking for its value-added contribution.

This review necessitates two disclosures. Author Kathleen Stuesse is an anthropologist and stresses that she is an "activist anthropologist" and an "observant participant."

Throughout the book she comments on how her personal journey has been informed by the critiques of the 1980s, which prompted anthropology to turn its gaze on itself and confront its colonial roots. In the book's post-script, she expresses her appreciation for the South and ponders her place in the world (p. 228). For my part, I am a sociologist reviewing for sociologists, and I, too, have written about poultry (Schwartzman 2013).

The goal of *Scratching* is to explain the transformation of rural Mississippi, and in particular the transformation of the social hierarchies of race (p. 21). To this end, Stuesse begins with historical summaries of race relations: President Jackson's 1830s expulsion of the Choctaw from Mississippi, the evolution of civil rights, and the Mississippi economy (Chapters 2 and 3). Here she provides detail on the budding poultry capital of Forest, Mississippi, where much of her ethnographic-activist work was done.

In Chapter Four, she turns to the topic of immigration, describing an early management experiment to bring Hispanic workers to the poultry plants. Using her ethnography, Chapter Five describes the varied community reactions to immigrants, from "they're taking over the town" to "now it's more interesting." Chapter Six describes the horrors of the job: management despotism, harassment, discrimination in firing, bodily injuries, and wage theft, to name a few. These portrayals match those accounts of anthropologists and journalists who preceded her in "poultry mill" studies.

Stuesse's ethnographic-activist advantage is most evident in her descriptions of labor organizing in Mississippi (Chapters 7 and 8). Both the unions and the workers' centers dealt with work-related conditions, such as firings and No-Match letters. Stuesse and workers' center staff attended to the many needs of immigrants in a strange land. The Mississippi Poultry Workers' Center often provided legal, educational, advocacy, and translation services. From testimonies and observation, Stuesse recounts how collective organizing was frustrated by language differences, the diversity of the Latino population, different approaches to unions, and so on. She reflects on the Center's work to organize across those boundaries, particularly to bring

black workers and immigrants together. Here we see the precarious relationship between the unions and the workers' center. She judges that the strategic collaboration was not sustainable, especially as unions sent workers for life-survival help and the center's capacity was overwhelmed (p. 163).

The book is something of a diary, useful for readers seeking a way to bridge activism and ethnography. Stuesse asks, "what can this story tell us about building worker power today?" This is an excellent question that warrants a bit more reflection. The author first went to Mississippi in 2002 to see how she could support a budding coalition of immigrant and civil rights advocates, unions of faith, and others (p. 17). She left in 2005. By 2008, the workers' center had dissolved (p. 246).

Two substantive questions are offered at the beginning of the book: what is the role of neoliberal globalization, and how have immigrants changed the racial hierarchy? Regarding the first, neoliberal globalization is frequently invoked but not operationalized or systematically connected to the narrative. Is it somehow causally related to conditions of work or the labor organizing described in the text? Certainly poultry firms were consolidating, merging, and integrating vertically, but such managerial responses to transaction costs were embraced at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The second substantive topic is the question of the racial hierarchy. Stuesse writes about the Center's extensive efforts to overcome stereotypes held by both Latinos and blacks. Some were successful, and others were not. There were cases when union leaders made a point of learning Spanish, reaching out to Latino stewards, and sharing social events and some labor struggles. However, as has been noted by other authors, Latinos adopted anti-black stereotypes, and some Latinos blamed black superiors for their harsh treatment. She also records the frustration of African Americans who saw numerous services popping up to assist new immigrants (p. 113) or who saw white residents willing to assist immigrants in navigating the home mortgage system. Some immigrants found space in the white

neighborhood—a further marginalization of blacks (p. 100).

This account seems to confirm that the black-white abyss is more intractable than the immigrant-native divide. Both the factory and the community had color lines. Stuesse's ethnography regularly notes the complications of factory organizing and socializing across the Latino-black divide:

"[w]ith few exceptions, immigrants exhibit attitudes and behaviors that attempt to distance themselves from Blackness to preserve their own perceived self-interest vis-à-vis the South's "color line," thus strengthening the boundary between Black and non-Black and cementing the position of Blackness at the bottom of the area's social hierarchies of race" (p. 221).

She calls the race terrain a third contested space. Contested, or just a rearrangement of the black-white divide? This is reminiscent of a much earlier case. Banton (1988) describes the whitening of Chinese contract workers who were brought to Mississippi around 1870. Those who stayed after their contracts expired found a greater welcome in towns where whites were a minority relative to blacks. And as they prospered economically, the Chinese came to count as white. This case demonstrates that context matters in racial assignment.

Putting together the activist-ethnography and the race question leads me to ask if there is a kernel of truth in the reflection of one of her black informants who opined that it appeared as though attention and the fight for equality and justice are only activated when the potential beneficiaries are immigrants. The 2016 unemployment rate in Scott County, for example, was 4.6 percent; for blacks it was 8.04 percent. In 2015, 27.7 percent of Scott County individuals were below the poverty line; but the numbers were 38.0 percent for blacks or African Americans and 34.9 percent for Hispanics or Latinos. Clearly the author intended to focus on immigrants, but the question of over-time shifts in the racial hierarchy also involves attention to the situation of the African American community.

References

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Socio-economics of Personalized Medicine in Asia, by **Shirley Sun**. New York: Routledge, 2016. 198 pp. \$160.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781138933835.

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Shirley Sun's *Socio-economics of Personalized Medicine in Asia* examines "why categories of race and ethnicity have become dominant in interpreting and measuring human genomic diversity" (p. 69). The book uses the growth of personalized, or precision, medicine used in the testing and treatment of cancer in Asia to extend one of the more important strands of science and technology studies literature, embodied in scholarship on genetics, race and ethnicity, and health and medicine. In this way it builds on the work of other scholars such as Troy Duster, Dorothy Roberts, Steven Epstein, Sara Shostak, and Ruha Benjamin. STS scholars concerned with these issues are likely to find this book of interest. Sun studied under Duster at New York University, and Duster's research is Sun's most important reference point.

In chapters that are loosely tied together, but which are united by a common goal to interrogate and problematize the way in which race and ethnicity are used in the production and use of personalized medicine in Asia, Sun takes up a wide-ranging set of issues that include the problems associated with using ethnicity as a proxy for genetic diversity and their contribution to the molecularization of ethnicity in Asia; the complex

relationship between pharmaceutical companies and drugs that are developed based on racialized categories or biomarkers; the tensions between tests and treatments based on ethnic categories and public health policies that are guided by cost-effectiveness; the concerns that medical oncologists hold about using patients' race and ethnicity as proxies in making clinical decisions; and the ethical challenges they confront in managing concerns about cost, understanding, and broader patient anxieties. Each chapter is intended to give—and for the most part succeeds in giving—the reader a window into a different part of the process.

Although there is little discussion of research methods, the book draws on rich interview data from 31 medical oncologists involved in public and private research and clinical settings in Asia. Each chapter is peppered with passages from interviews that offer highly illustrative evidence of the major themes Sun draws out in each chapter. At times the insights provided by informants are quite powerful and insightful. For example, we learn from a Dr. Hsu about some of the incentives that drive pharmaceutical company decisions related to personalized medicine:

In fact, drug companies are the ones that are trying to resist all these [genetic] tests . . . The marketing people don't want these tests, because the more you define the group to be narrower and narrower, fewer people buy the drug . . . Would the drug company purposely as a business strategy try to limit their use to a certain ethnic group? [W]hy would they? They wouldn't. (p. 51)

They wouldn't, that is, unless certain commercial conditions arise that make it sensible for manufacturers to pursue such strategies, Sun goes on to show, illuminating the precise conditions under which violation of this general logic becomes practical. The book's most insightful moments in this regard come in this chapter on pharmaceutical company decisions as well as Chapters Five and Six, which take us inside actual clinics and show us how oncologists view personalized (and racialized) medicine in their work with