



Breaks in the Chain: What Immigrant Workers Can Teach America about Democracy

Paul Apostolidis

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In *Breaks in the Chain*, Paul Apostolidis investigates the personal life stories of a group of Mexican immigrant meatpackers who are at once typical and extraordinary. After crossing the border clandestinely and navigating the treacherous world of the undocumented, they waged a campaign to democratize their union and their workplace in the most hazardous industry in the United States.

Breaks in the Chain shows how immigrant workers-individually and sometimes collectively-both reinforce and contest a tacit but lethal form of biopolitics that differentiates the life chances of racial groups. Examining their personal narratives, Apostolidis recasts our understanding of the ways immigrants construct and transform social power.

Apostolidis uses empirical inquiry to spark new reflections in critical theory as he analyzes how immigrant workers' local practices confront structural power within and beyond America's borders. Linking stories of immigration to stories about working on the meat production line-the chain-he reveals the surprising power of activism by immigrant workers and their allies and demonstrates how it can-and should-promote social and political democracy in America.

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