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Phone Clones: Authenticity Work in the Transnational Service Economy. By Kiran Mirchandani. Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 2012. Pp. xiv+174. $69.95 (cloth); $23.95 (paper).

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Phone Clones is a qualitative study of call-center workers in India. Kiran Mirchandani conducted interviews with about 80 workers over a seven-year span (2002–9) and across several Indian cities. The book covers many of the same themes as do other recent ones on India's call-center industry, such as those by Aneesh Aneesh, Shehzad Nadeem, and Reena Patel. These themes include workers' consumerist lifestyles, the difficulties of night work (especially for women), and the industry's high salaries. Many of these other researchers have argued that India's call-center industry represents a mixed bag; it provides high-paying jobs for college graduates, but the work itself is deskilled and routinized. But *Phone Clones* portrays call centers as uniformly negative. As it argues: "Transnational call centers are sites of colonial domination, patriarchal reification, identity construction, worker resistance, management control, and racist expression—occurring simultaneously" (p. 23). In my reading, this laundry list of claims can be boiled down to two that form the book's central argument: (1) Indian call-center work is synonymous with "phone cloning," while (2) the lived experience of such work is unpleasant and demeaning.

The first claim resonates with popular depictions of Indian call centers, in which the Jayeshes from Bangalore are indoctrinated to think and act like Jasons from Baltimore. The problem with this claim, however, is that it has not been true for some time. As the author notes in the opening chapter, "Since around 2005 . . . attempts [to phone-clone workers] have been replaced by the open acknowledgment that customer service work is done by Indians" (p. 6). Nadeem's recent work in India, as well as my own research on outsourcing in southeast Asia, confirm this finding: the vast majority of firms do not require workers to adopt Western personas or to deceive clients as to their identities. Training programs might dedicate a day or two to issues of culture and accents, but otherwise focus on the specific skills required by client firms. Given this fact, one could argue that it is passé to study the outsourcing industry in India through the lens of phone cloning.

This issue raises a general problematic: What do you do when, halfway through your research, the very phenomenon that you are documenting disappears? Ideally, you seize the opportunity and treat the disappearance as a puzzle to be explained. In the present case, this change would entail expanding the research program to learn more about how the outsourcing industry works, how it established organizational policy, and what exactly goes on inside of call centers. This book, however, glosses over the puzzle. Mirchandani notes at the outset that phone cloning ended seven years

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ago, but then asserts repeatedly that it still is common practice today: "Workers are required to adopt a Western accent, use an alias, and become familiar with Western popular culture" (p. 24), "call-center workers in India are trained to take on Western personae" (p. 94), and so on. This lack of curiosity about the puzzle is itself puzzling. Given that this project was seven years in the making, it seems as if opportunities for research extensions were surely possible. However, the author states: "I often resisted the impulse to interview managers or request entry into organizations where I could conduct participant observation" (p. 29). Why these other research strategies were treated as dangerous temptations to be resisted is not clear.

Nor do the interview data provide strong support for the book's other main claim, that employees experience call-center work as demeaning and oppressive. For instance, a doodle of a fish drawn by a new call-center hire in the margins of her notebook during a training session is reproduced on page 39. The author argues that the fish doodle provides evidence that training programs "reify the hierarchies between workers and customers," though I could not grasp the logic establishing this link. At other points, the data seem to contradict the book's thesis. For example, the following quotes from workers are presented as evidence that call centers debase traditional Indian culture: "Everyone is treated equally in call centers." "Generally these call centers are very professional . . . because they have to meet the U.S. clients' requirements." "There are various circumstances you have . . . like caste, creed, color, religion. But in this company, I've seen that it's not there. They don't have any such politics" (pp. 84–85).

Rather than engage with the fascinating data it uncovers, the book too often puts forward generalizations. Call-center work is described as "mind-boggling," "staggering," "ironic," and "paradoxical" (all terms that I feel should be banned from the sociological lexicon). And rather than document variation in employees' experiences, the book states that things happen "uniformly," "always," "often," and "continually." This usage is problematic in that the text contains no numbers documenting how frequently certain events were observed or what portion of interviewees reported feeling a certain way. Hopefully future research on the global outsourcing field can address these issues with greater nuance and curiosity.

The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life. By Elijah Anderson. New York: W. W. Norton, 2011. Pp. xvii+318. $17.95 (paper).

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Elijah Anderson is well known for several outstanding ethnographic studies of life in the inner city. His new study, *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race*

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