We live in the age of international migration, now characterized by ongoing virulent restrictionism and racialized nativism. Hard work, hyper-employment, and labor exploitation are fundamental to migrants’ entry experiences and their ongoing existence in the United States. In recent years, however, attention to the labor process has nearly dropped out of focus from new studies of international migration. There are significant exceptions, of course, and the new book by Carolyn Pinedo-Turnovsky joins a small body of research focused on the job culture of immigrant workers. *Day Labors* documents day laborers in New York City, most of whom are Latino immigrant men. These are men who wait on street corners to be picked up for informal jobs, typically requiring hard physical labor, irregular conditions, and occupational safety hazards. Pinedo-Turnovsky conducted an ethnographic study of four street corners in Brooklyn where these men created community while waiting for prospective employers. Although some were Polish, Russian, and African American, the majority of men were of diverse Latin American origins. These men are the focus of the study. From 2001 to 2004, the author spent time with them at the street corners, and interviewed some, and over the course of her study, she got to know some of their friends and family members in New York City (although many had family back in their countries of origin). The book also includes many methodological reflections as a young Latina female researcher in this milieu.

The study focuses less on the work the men do than the emotional, discursive identity work the men do to reconcile their occupational fates in the United States with their sense of self. Pinedo-Turnovsky’s insight is that there are two spheres of work—the work to earn a wage, and the emotional and identity work necessary to reconcile degrading and dangerous work with their sense of self. Race, gender, and nationality figure importantly in this work, which is about salvaging a sense of dignity in informal sector work. A key chapter in the book focuses on the production of “daily masculinity.” Standing around waiting to be hired by strangers, the men experience extreme lack of power and vulnerability. They work hard to “look like good workers,” which means the men who are younger and stockier enjoy clear advantages. Men also covet carrying tools, which conveyed they were skilled, experienced, and ready to work. Since many of these men are in the United States without family, they also take on the domestic chores women once did for them. A vast literature on prior experiences of migrant men in nineteenth century Chinese bachelor societies and in the U.S.–Mexico Bracero Program (1942-1964) could illuminate some of the historical continuities here.

Collective organizing is an important topic not addressed in this book. In the 1990s, major labor organizing campaigns around the country targeted industries with
concentrations of immigrant workers. Many Latino immigrant workers joined, simultaneously fueling and re-energizing a declining American labor movement and winning improved working conditions and wages with new union contracts. These were particularly strong in the service industries, with janitors, hotel and restaurant employees, and homecare workers winning significant victories. But gains were also made among day laborers, leading to the formation of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON), which began in Los Angeles and grew to include a national network of over 50 member organizations throughout the United States. By 2006, there were over 60 regulated day labor hiring sites in the United States, an outgrowth of creative organizing and advocacy for Latino immigrant workers concentrated in this informal labor sector. These regulated hiring sites were in existence in NYC during this study, yet the author discovers that many of the men said they did not fully trust the process. They preferred to go it alone. It would be interesting to know more about how day laborers in either group, organized or informalized, fare in terms of job quality and earnings, and also how their experiences of masculinities might diverge.

Pinedo-Turnovsky should be commended for her ethnographic fieldwork on the street corners with the day laborers, but I found myself wanting to know more about what actually happens once they are hired. What happens when they step into the truck cab of a complete stranger? What are their experiences with the employers? How do they figure out who is a trustworthy employer who will keep his word, and who is not to be trusted? What do they do when injured—continue to work or seek medical attention, and if the latter, where do they go and how do they cope with lost wages? What do they do when they are stiffed for payment after working a full day, or worse, after working longer doing backbreaking work? And fundamentally, how do these experiences shape the production of their daily masculinities? Just as gender is a relational process, so is the work of day laborers, and the day laborers’ interactions with the men who hire them is central to structuring their experiences and outcomes. Pinedo-Turnovsky has written a carefully observed ethnography of a new kind of street corner society. Going forward, we will need to bring back the employer and contractor to enhance our understandings of how work and masculinities are shaped by new configurations of the twenty-first century economy.

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Jones, Angela.

**Reviewed by:** Kenneth R. Hanson, *University of Oregon*
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In *Camming: Money, Power, and Pleasure in the Sex Work Industry*, Angela Jones draws on five years of research on the camming industry to develop an