

Li, Tania Murray. 2014. *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*. Durham: Duke University Press. 240 pp. Pb.: \$23.95. ISBN: 9780822357056.

In *Land's End*, Tania Murray Li utilises twenty years of research among Lauje highlanders in Indonesia in order to show the conditions and everyday reality of capitalist relations in Indonesian highlands by focusing on the transition from subsistence farming to agricultural commodity production. By capitalist relations, Li has in mind the Marxist understanding of capitalism, defined by the existence of property owners, who generate profit under competitive conditions and a class of people, forced to sell their labour-power to capitalists in order to survive (p. 8). However, Li also points to the existing limits of Marxist analysis in the understanding of global dispossession. While Marx and others primarily focused on the violent character of primitive accumulation, Li shows that capitalist relations in the Indonesian highlands did not emerge as an exclusively external force, imposed on the highlanders. Rather, it was (also) the highlanders themselves who initiated the process of land privatisation, which led to the end of the previous mode of collectively owned land. Drawing on Foucault's understanding of power, Li rejects the power/freedom dichotomy by affirming the productive quality of power that presupposes a subject 'as an agent whose desires don't stand outside a conjuncture but are formed within it, and are formative in turn' (p. 19). Li is critical of normative stances of social movements that neglect such mundane ways of capitalist dispossession, arguing that 'So long as social movements don't recognize the insidious ways in which capitalist relations take hold even in unlikely places, they can't be effective in promoting alternatives that will actually work' (p. 4). The book, then, is critical of both "top-down" approaches of developmental policies that aim at market integration as a solution to poverty, as well as of "bottom-up" approaches that fail to understand the contradictions, ambivalences and indigenous imaginaries of land ownership.

Methodologically, the author develops what she calls 'an analytic of conjuncture' in order to 'tease apart the set of elements that gave the lives of Lauje highlanders in 1990-2009 their particular form, and to explore how each element set the conditions of possibility for others, in changing configurations' (p. 16). An analytic of conjuncture refers to a network of contingencies and combinations of various elements that make up capitalist relations in Indonesian highlands. Material qualities of the milieu, crops, subjectivities, social norms, institutions and spirits form a conjuncture that goes beyond economic reductionism, showing instead how different elements form 'the terrain, circuits, understandings, and practices within which capitalist relations emerged and left Kasar stranded on a tiny, barren plot of land' (p. 16). With this methodology, Li seeks to counter the liberal understanding of human subjectivity by speaking of 'socially determinate' subjects, rather than the figure of 'the individual' (p. 18). Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Raymond Williams, and Michel Foucault, Li argues for the historical situatedness of human subjectivity and agency in place of universality, attributed to the notion of the individual.

In *Chapter 1*, the author looks at the relational character of identities among highlanders and coastal folk as well as the 'spatial elements of these relations, and the

entanglement of topography with identities, practices, and powers' (p. 30). The relations between highlanders and coastal folk were formed through the material marginalisation of highlanders as well as through representations of backwardness that in turn formed a desire for 'modern village life' (p. 57) among the highlanders.

In *Chapter 2*, the author explores the meaning of work and property among the highlanders, who consider them to be neither entirely individual nor entirely communal. Instead, the author suggests that 'For Lauje highlanders, the tensions between autonomy and dependence, working for oneself and caring for others, formed the texture of everyday life' (p. 58).

In *Chapter 3*, Li examines the process of enclosure by focusing on 'three highland conjunctures' and forms of exclusion: enclosure amongst neighbors and kin, enclosure across the social boundary and enclosure shaped by 'government-backed 'development' projects' (p. 90). Here, the author again stresses that enclosure does not arise merely through violent forms of dispossession, but also through the formation of desire among highlanders and their hope that enclosure of land might also mean prosperity for them.

Chapter 5 looks at the very core of capitalist relations from the perspective of highlanders who tried holding on to the land they had. Focusing on 'mechanisms identified by Lenin – technical efficiency, scale, credit, labor' (p. 148), Li contrasts the systemic form of dispossession with highlanders' understanding of their difficulties in maintaining land and reproducing their farms, showing how compulsions overshadowed choice in the making of capitalist relations in the Indonesian highlands. This chapter concludes by addressing questions of social inequality and collective action. Li offers a necessary critique of developmental ideology that fails to understand the workings of capitalist relations and the production of social inequality. Highlanders' poverty does not arise out of a lack of market relations, but rather is the direct result of capitalist relations that tend to concentrate wealth and create enclosures, thereby excluding the majority of the population from accessing social wealth. As the author says, 'Development planners have little to offer people who become landless in contexts where there aren't enough jobs that provide a living wage' (p. 177).

In conclusion, the author poses a fundamental question: what would progressive politics beyond employment, wage, and economic growth look like? This is a fundamental question that addresses the burning question of (re)distribution in the era of global dispossession, marked by a crisis of wage employment. Li argues that the future of progressive politics is inextricably linked to a politics of distribution, going beyond the ideologies of work-based social citizenship and/or market entrepreneurship as alternatives to poverty.

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