



A World of Work: Imagined Manuals for Real Jobs

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Ever wondered what it would be like to be a street magician in Paris? A fish farmer in Norway? A costume designer in Bollywood? This playful and accessible look at different types of work around the world delivers a wealth of information and advice about a wide array of jobs and professions. The value of this book is twofold: For young people or middle-aged people who are undecided about their career paths and feel constrained in their choices, *A World of Work* offers an expansive vision. For ethnographers, this book offers an excellent example of using the practical details of everyday life to shed light on larger structural issues.

Each chapter in this collection of ethnographic fiction could be considered a job manual. Yet not any typical job manual—to do justice to the ways details about jobs are conveyed in culturally specific ways, the authors adopt a range of voices and perspectives. One chapter is written as though it was a letter from an older sister counseling her brother on how to be a doctor in Malawi. Another is framed as a eulogy for a well-loved village magistrate in Papua New Guinea who may have been killed by sorcery.

Beneath the novelty of the examples are some serious messages that Ilana Gershon highlights in her introduction. These ethnographies reveal the connection between work and culture, the impact of societal values on the conditions of employment. Readers will be surprised at how much they can learn about an entire culture by being given the chance to understand just one occupation.

Contributors: Lovleen Bains, Mumbai; Chiwoza Bandawe, University of Malawi; Joshua A. Bell, Smithsonian Institution; Michelle Bigenho, Colgate University; Warren Chamberlain, Vita Needle Company, Massachusetts; Melissa Demian, Australian National University; Ilana Gershon, Indiana University; Kathryn Graber, Indiana University; Graham M. Jones, MIT; Amanda Kemble, The George Washington University; Briel Kobak, The George Washington University; Corinna Kruse, Linköping University, Sweden; Joel Kuipers, The George Washington University; Carrie Lane, California State University, Fullerton; Jean Lave, University of California, Berkeley; John Law, Open University; Heather Levi, Temple University; Marianne Elisabeth Lien, University of Oslo; Caitrin Lynch, Olin College; Loïc Marquet, Paris; Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Indiana University; Chris Swift, Leeds Teaching Hospitals; Claire Wendland, University of Wisconsin–Madison; Clare Wilkinson, University of Pennsylvania; Helena Wulff, Stockholm University

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