



Labor, Economy, and Society

Jeffrey J. Sallaz

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Work is, and always will be, a central institution of society. What makes a capitalist society unique is that it treats the human capacity to engage in labor as a basic commodity. This can be a source of dynamism, as when innovative firms raise wages to attract the best and brightest. But it can also be a source of misery, as when one's skills are suddenly rendered obsolete by forces beyond one's control.

Jeffrey J. Sallaz asks us to rethink our basic assumptions about work. Drawing on cutting-edge theories within economic sociology and through the use of contemporary examples, he conceptualizes labor as embedded exchange. This draws attention to issues that all too frequently are overlooked in our public discourse and private imaginations: how various forms of work are classified and valued; how markets for labor operate in practice; and how people can challenge the central fiction that their work is simply a commodity to be bought and sold.

This readable and engaging book is suitable for both graduate and advanced undergraduate students. It will be of interest to economic sociologists, scholars of labor, and all of those who find themselves working for a living.

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