



# The Liminal Worker: An Ethnography of Work, Unemployment and Precariousness in Contemporary Greece (Urban Anthropology)

By Manos Spyridakis

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The Liminal Worker examines the experience of work, employment, employment insecurity and precariousness in a context of high unemployment and welfare state crisis in modern Greece. A theoretically-informed, anthropological exploration of the notion of work in contemporary western society and its relation to processes of political decision making, this book challenges the mainstream conception of work as an economic or purely productive activity, presenting a comparative analysis of work as a social phenomenon. Drawing on original empirical research, it explores the key themes of the transformation, experience, meaning and narrative of work and its relation to attendant social policies. A unique examination of the complicated experience of work and labour relations within power systems, institutions and organisations, as well as the reactions and survival strategies of ordinary actors facing precariousness in their daily existence, The Liminal Worker elaborates upon the notion of the anthropology of work and investigates the connection between ethnographic data (and its critical analysis) and the formation of policy. As such, it will be of interest to anthropologists, sociologists, policy makers and geographers concerned with questions of work, labour relations and policy formation.

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#### Review

Manos Spyridakis's ethnography unravels the perplexities of globalization as Greek workers in banking, shipbuilding and tobacco industries struggle to make their livings in the unknowable spaces between steady work and under-, partial-, informal and unemployment. It is a must for anyone interested in economics, globalization, politics or people in today's world and required reading for courses on globalization.'Paul Durrenberger, Emeritus, Universities of Iowa and Penn State, USA'The Liminal Worker shows how governments embracing market ideology are blinded to the lives of their citizens. Using extensive field research, it shows how making labour "flexible" makes people's lives fragile, upending their plans, their families and their sense of who they thought they were: conscientious and industrious people seeking to lead decent lives.'James Carrier, Oxford Brookes University, UK

#### About the Author

Manos Spyridakis is Assistant Professor of the Social Anthropology of Labour Relations in the Department of Social and Educational Policy at the University of the Peloponnese, Greece.

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