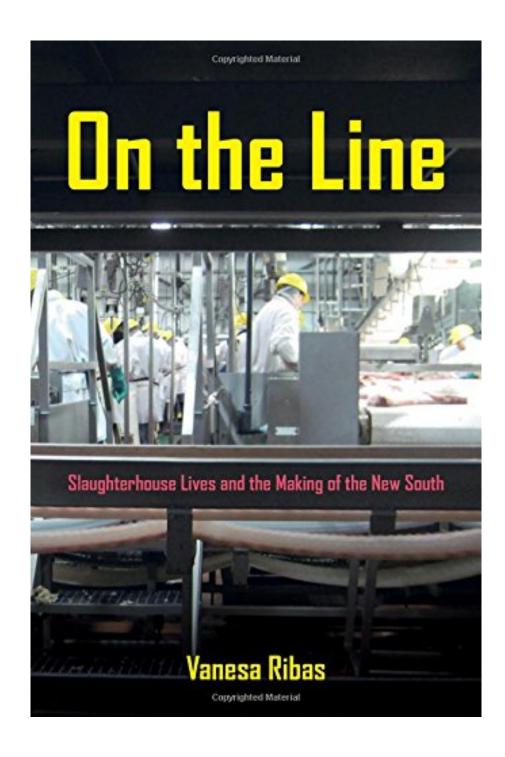


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"Ribas's gift for analysis and observation transforms this fascinating ethnography into a lens for understanding immigrant incorporation on the ground and in the encounters among immigrant meatpacking workers, disenfranchised minority coworkers, and powerful bosses. The rich detail, vivid prose, and insightful analysis intersect to produce absorbing reading and one of the best ethnographies of immigration I have read. This compelling book will transform our thinking about how intergroup relations shape immigrant incorporation."—Cecilia Menjivar, author of Enduring Violence: Ladina Women's Lives in Guatemala

"On the Line returns immigration scholarship to a focus on the intersection between migration and work—a curiously neglected theme given that ours is a time when America's working-class is increasingly of immigrant origin. Based on eighteen months of fieldwork conducted under the terrible but all-too-common conditions found in a meat processing plant, this fascinating, beautifully written, and entirely original book deserves wide attention from students and scholars of migration alike."—Roger Waldinger, author of Still the Promised City? New Immigrants and African-Americans in Post-Industrial New York

"With ethnographic verve, Ribas puts labor process in the immigrant integration story, offering a rich, nuanced portrait of life on the line in the new multiracial Southern working class."—Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, author of Paradise Transplanted: Migration and the Making of California Gardens

About the Author

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"How does one put into words the rage that workers feel when supervisors threaten to replace them with workers who will not go to the bathroom in the course of a fourteen-hour day of hard labor, even if it means wetting themselves on the line?"—From the Preface

In this gutsy, eye-opening examination of the lives of workers in the New South, Vanesa Ribas, working alongside mostly Latino/a and native-born African American laborers for sixteen months, takes us inside the contemporary American slaughterhouse. Ribas, a native Spanish speaker, occupies an insider/outsider status there, enabling her to capture vividly the oppressive exploitation experienced by her fellow workers. She showcases the particular vulnerabilities faced by immigrant workers—a constant looming threat of deportation, reluctance to seek medical attention, and family separation—as she also illuminates how workers find connection and moments of pleasure during their grueling shifts. Bringing to the fore the words, ideas, and struggles of the workers themselves, On The Line underlines how deep racial tensions permeate the factory, as an overwhelmingly minority workforce is subject to white dominance. Compulsively readable, this extraordinary ethnography makes a powerful case for greater labor protection, especially for our nation's most vulnerable workers.

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