This is an ethnographic study of children, childhood and work in Sweden. The study was conducted in two communities, and it explores how childhood is constructed in contemporary Sweden. The study uses a child perspective and focuses on the children's definitions of work. It investigates how children understand the different activities in which they take part in everyday life and which activities they understand as work and why. Furthermore, it investigates children's incentives for engaging in various forms of work. The study shows that work is a multifaceted concept. The children broaden our traditional definition of work, using two concurrent definitions. One definition equates work with formal, paid, gainful employment – a job. The other definition is more inclusive, accommodating paid, unpaid, formal and informal work. Moreover, in the latter definition, children also include educational activities such as school and spare time activities that involve learning. Thus, various forms of identity work are also included in the concept of work. The study illustrates children's contribution to the social construction of childhood and underlines the role work plays in this construction.
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