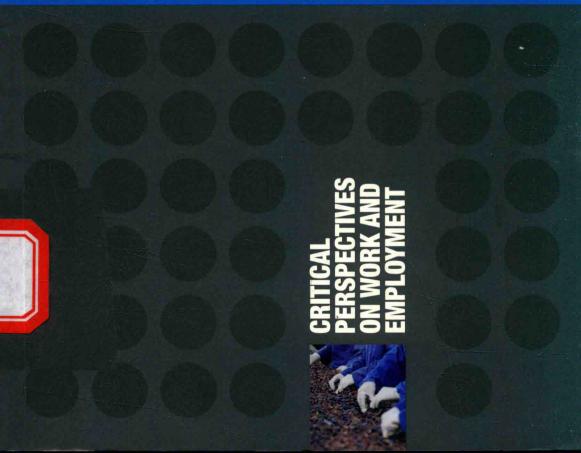


PUTTING LABOUR IN ITS PLACE

Labour Process Analysis and Global Value Chains

EDITED BY KIRSTY NEWSOME, PHIL TAYLOR, JENNIFER BAIR AND AL RAINNIE

Series Editors: Irena Grugulis, Caroline Lloyd, Chris Smith and Chris Warhurst



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Labour Process Analysis and Global Value Chains

Edited by Kirsty Newsome Reader, University of Sheffield, UK

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Finally, our appreciation must be extended to the many, many millions of workers who perform surplus generating labour at various nodes of the global value chains. We hope that we have been able to analyse the conditions of their working lives, revealing the hidden abode of labour. After all, behind the shirts we wear is a chain that may link to a Rana Plaza in Bangladesh and behind our shiny mobile devices might lie a Foxconn suicide in Shenzhen. The editors hope that this volume can contribute, however modestly, to improving our understanding of the world in order to change it.

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Putting Labour in its Place: Labour Process Analysis and Global Value Chains

1

Phil Taylor, Kirsty Newsome, Jennifer Bair and Al Rainnie

The objective of this edited volume in the *Critical Perspectives on Work and Employment* series is to explore the interrelationships – theoretically and empirically – between the labour process and labour process theory (LPT), on the one hand, and global value chains (GVC) and related frameworks, such as global commodity chains (GCC) and global production networks (GPN), on the other. Until relatively recently the extent of convergence between these two bodies of work had been quite undeveloped. In summary, GCC, GVC and GPN theorizing and research, notwithstanding significant distinctions between them (Bair, 2008), neglected or *generally* understated labour as an analytical category (Smith *et al.*, 2002; Cumbers *et al.*, 2008), while conversely LPT *generally* eschewed the significance of these various global frameworks.

It is no longer legitimate to claim the categorical omission of labour in studies of global production networks. This objection remained largely valid in terms of GVC research, which, following Gereffi et al.'s (2005) influential theory of GVC governance, has tended to concentrate on inter-sectoral and firm linkages in ways that minimize the concerns of labour (Gibbon et al., 2008). Yet with the emergence of the 'Manchester school' and the development of an alternative GPN more attention was given to the importance of labour within the matrix of factors that help to explain global geographies of production and exchange (Henderson et al., 2002; Coe et al., 2004). When Henderson et al. (2002: 448) stated that GPNs should acknowledge the 'conditions under which labour power is converted into actual labour through the labour process', they hinted not merely at the general inclusion of