

# 30<sup>th</sup> International Labour Process Conference 2012



Department of Sociology, Stockholm University, 27-29<sup>th</sup> March 2012

## Call for papers to special stream:

### *'Putting Labour in its Place-The Global Commodity Chain, the Global Value Chain, the Global Production Network and Labour Process Analysis'*

Now open at: [www.ilpc.org.uk](http://www.ilpc.org.uk). Deadline for submissions 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011

It is now almost two decades since the publication of Gereffi and Korzeniewicz's (1994) path-breaking work on the Global Commodity Chain (GCC). This innovative framework attempted to describe the functionally integrated but geographically dispersed systems of production increasingly evident in the 'globalised' era. Accordingly, transnational productive activity was conceptualised as constituting either a Producer Driven Commodity Chain (PDCC) or a Buyer Driven Commodity Chain (BDCC). A signal advantage of the chain metaphor was that it permitted the abstract idea of globalisation to be realised concretely in terms of the relations surrounding tangible commodities.

A subtle but significant shift occurred as academic debates shifted to Global Value Chains (GVCs) and issues of 'governance' assumed greater importance. If economic globalisation was generating geographical dispersion and differentiation between places, then GVCs considered the chains' integrative mechanisms (Gibbon et al, 2008). GVC governance centred on actor strategies, usually large firms, and the prevailing arrangements – in-house, market-based or outsourced associated with the imperatives of coordination and quality standards. Gereffi et al (2005) downscaled the concept of governance from a characteristic of entire chains to the mode of coordination at a particular link in a chain.

In response, Global Production Network (GPN) theorists critiqued GVC's restricted framework and its chain metaphor which, to them, mistakenly assumed an invariable vertical and linear sequencing (Coe et al, 2008). Global production was better conceptualised as complex network structures, in

which intricate linkages formed multi-dimensional, multi-layered 'lattices' of economic activity. One notable advantage of the GPN was its ability to understand firm-centred production networks within the concrete socio-political contexts in which they were embedded. Thus, the global was enmeshed with diverse political, institutional and regulatory influences of the national, regional or local, factors ordinarily abstracted out of GCC and GVC analysis.

Yet, labour, either as value creator or as agency (collective or otherwise) is frustratingly absent from GCC/GVC approaches (Cumbers et al, 2008). We are thus seeking abstracts from researchers who have been utilising GCC, GVC or GPN approaches and are striving to fuse the insights derived from these frameworks with labour either as abstract labour or agency. Theoretical papers exploring the problematic of integrating GCC/GVC/GPN and labour process analysis are welcome, as are abstracts from those reporting empirical findings, albeit informed by these conceptual concerns. Although studies at the transnational scale are self-evidently important, those focused on the intra-national, regional or local scales are also encouraged.

We welcome contributions from scholars working in diverse disciplines and fields of study, including human and economic geography, development studies, comparative political economy, gender studies, as well as more established labour process territory of the sociology of work and industrial/employment relations. The aim is to encourage a critical engagement between those who acknowledge the salience of core labour theory and others for whom participation at the ILPC may be a new experience.

## Stream Organisers:

**Phil Taylor**, University of Strathclyde, [Philip.taylor@strath.ac.uk](mailto:Philip.taylor@strath.ac.uk)

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To read more about the general conference, this and other special streams, and to submit abstracts (350-500 words in length), please visit the ILPC-website: [www.ilpc.org.uk](http://www.ilpc.org.uk). Abstracts are externally refereed and papers must not have been previously published or presented elsewhere. Decisions on acceptance will be made in December 2011. Please follow the online instructions.

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