

ICS Seminar Series

INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

‘The Assembly Line of Life’: The Shrinking of the Production and Reproduction Spheres in the Case of Foxconn Factories in the Czech Republic

Dr Rutvica Andrijasevic

Abstract

In this talk, I will suggest that in order to examine the connections within the global production systems there is a need to consider jointly both spatial and temporal dimensions. Starting from the case of Foxconn factories in the Czech Republic, I will argue that economic globalisation highlights a paradigm shift in the forms of work and daily life, whereby the space-time compression reshapes simultaneously the production and the reproduction processes. Data discussed is based on the original ethnographic fieldwork conducted with workers, trade unions and managers in two Foxconn sites in the Czech Republic that produce for major international electronics brands. Foxconn relies, for half of its workforce, on EU migrant workers engaged through the Temporary Work Agencies (TWA) directly in their countries of origin (particularly Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria). In the context of the mobility of the migrant workers and the needs of the just-in-time production, organisation of reproduction becomes crucial. TWAs place migrant workers in the dormitories so as to have a wide availability of the workforce in situ that can be drawn upon when needed, on an extremely short notice. The emphasis we place on the time as well as space points to the necessity to examine the links between production and reproduction in as much as the space-time compression absorbs both spheres. In this regard, the case of Foxconn in the Czech Republic indicates the extent to which the global assembly line of production has increasingly become the assembly line of life.

Biography

Dr Rutvica Andrijasevic works at the School of Management, University of Leicester, UK. Rutvica has published widely on issues such as the impact of migration on labour relations and labour markets, with particular emphasis on gender and sexuality, on the relationship between migration, subjectivity and changes in citizenship in Europe, and on informal recruitment practices such as those in human trafficking. She is the author of *Agency, migration and citizenship in sex trafficking* (Palgrave, 2010) and a member of the *Feminist Review* editorial collective.

Date

Thursday 20 November

Time

11.30am – 1pm

Venue

EA.G.38 Parramatta
(South) Campus