



The Moving Frontier

The Changing Geography
of Production in
Labour-Intensive
Industries

Edited by

Lois Labrianidis

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The globalization and liberalization of markets which have taken place over the past 25 years, combined with developments in information and communication technologies, has led to a considerable shift in the spatial organization of production. This was manifested in a process of decentralization of economic activity (particularly in labour-intensive, price-competitive industries) away from advanced market economies towards less developed and post-socialist regimes. Based on two theoretical approaches: the Global Commodity Chain and the Global Production Network, this book investigates the multitude of processes, as well as diverse consequences of global integration upon industries, regions, enterprises and employees. In doing so, it draws from the experience of Western and Eastern and South-eastern Europe. These European cases are complemented with evidence from Kenya and Thailand, as well as the US, China, India and Mexico. The book explores multiple causes of decentralization, arguing beyond the pursuit of cheap and adaptable labour. It goes on to argue that the effects of delocalization within Europe, unlike those in the rest of the developed world, are less negative than usually portrayed. It concludes by putting forward recommendations for best future practice of successful adjustment strategies and examines how these might be adopted elsewhere in the world.

This book illuminates central questions about the delocalization challenge in five EU countries whose collective experience is rarely examined: the UK, Greece, Poland, Estonia, and Bulgaria. Along with its detailed empirical findings for four industries (clothing, footwear, electronics and software) inside and outside of Europe, the book has a refreshing policy message: delocalization, within Europe at least, need not be a 'race to the bottom' in terms of its employment or social effects, and it can be managed. This is a valuable contribution to our thinking about this topic.

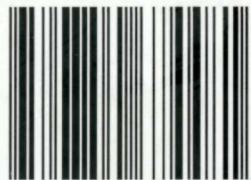
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