

Abstract

This thesis presents the main results of a five-month ethnographic research project in a global factory in the Czech Republic. It is focused on three topics. Due to a number of ethical dilemmas that accompanied the research, the first part examines ethics in anthropology, both the instruments of the institutionalization of professional ethics and “ethics in practice”. As a strategy for dealing with ethical dilemmas the thesis aims at a reflexive approach, as proposed by Guillemin and Gillam (2004) not only to ensure rigor in research methodology, but also as a form of “morally adequate research work“. The second research focus is the production line. The line makes sense – that is, produces stuff - only when people and machines interconnect. Symmetrical analysis juxtaposes humans and machines and explores the dynamics of agency as it shifts the borders between people and machines and the characteristics that each takes from the other. The last part of the thesis presents the factory as an actor in the labor market. Through the analysis of economic and organizational factors as well as workers’ stories and interpretations and regional authorities’ accounts, the final part tries to explain the perception of the factory as a stable and relatively solid employer.

Keywords: global factory, ethics, automatization, anthropomorphization, manual labor, labor market, symmetrical analysis.