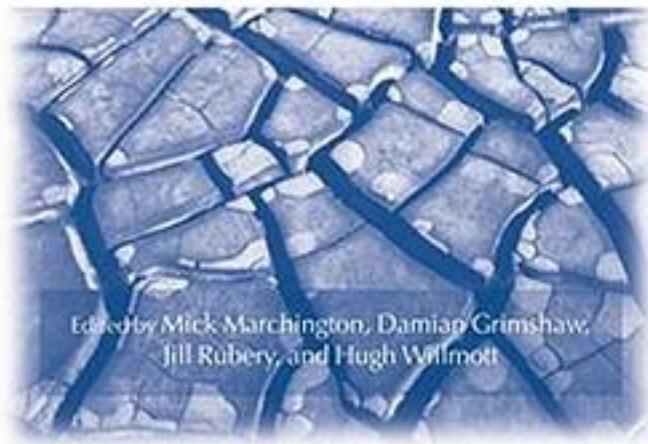


Fragmenting Work



Fragmenting Work

Blurring Organizational Boundaries
and Disordering Hierarchies



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This major new book examines the way in which employment is managed across organizational boundaries. It analyses how public-private partnerships, franchises, agencies and other forms of inter-firm contractual relations impact on work and employment and the experiences of those working in these increasingly significant forms of organization. It draws upon research undertaken in eight separate networks comprising over 50 organizations to explore the fragmenting effects of contemporary changes in the organization of work and employment relationships. It considers the consequences of increased reliance upon inter-organizational mechanisms for producing goods and especially for delivering services. It argues that established analyses continue to rely too heavily upon a model of the single employing organization whereas today the situation is often more complex and confused. Public-private 'partnerships' are one high profile example of this phenomenon but private enterprises are also developing new relations with their clients and customers that impinge upon the nature of the employment relationship. Established hierarchical forms are becoming disordered, with consequences for career patterns, training and skills, pay structures, disciplinary practice, worker voice, and the gendered division of labor. The findings of the study raise questions about the governance of such complex organizational forms, the appropriateness of current institutions for addressing this complexity, and the challenge of harnessing of employee commitment in circumstances where human resource practices are shaped by organizations other than the legal employer. Using an analytical schema of three dimensions (institutional, organizational, employment) and four themes (power, risk, identity, trust), the authors adopt an inter-disciplinary perspective to address these complex and critically important practical, policy and theoretical concerns. Fragmenting Work will be vital reading for all those wishing to understand the contemporary realities of work and employment.

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