



# It's not IT: work and the machinery of markets

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- Techno utopias and the 'information age'
- I/T as tool rather than driver
- Re-asserting the causal significance of institutions and political economy in shaping work systems



# Skill formation: the role and limits of institutional influences

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- Knowledge, the 'new economy' and public policy assumptions
- A different picture
  - The pattern of job growth
  - The shift away from formal and technical knowledge
  - A labour market/labour process mismatch?



## The extent of institutional specificity

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- UK firms: a strategic orientation towards flexibility, control and work intensification
- Training and the low skills equilibrium
- Beyond path dependency: a shift towards social competencies and soft skills?
  - Employer skill strategies



## Political economy and the transformation of work and employment

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- Critical research: the focus on constraint and continuity
- Moving on: a focus on organisational restructuring
  - The pursuit of shareholder value within deregulated and globalising markets
  - The emergence of extended hierarchies as forms of inter and intra firm coordination



# Implications and impacts

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- The dominance of systemic rationalization
- Disrupting the high-performance work and employment 'bargain'
- Disconnected capitalism? Breaking the links in the design chain
- Squaring the circle? The free worker



# Public policy issues

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- (Re) balancing the objectives of micro-economic policy
- Dilemmas of education and training
- Beyond employability: shaping the demand for, as well supply of skills
- Is there a limit to 'good work?'