

Carla Freeman  
*High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy*

“At the intersection of political economy and cultural studies...”

**Methodology-**

Obvious materialist bias- a large part of research is devoted to appearance and presentation of each worker (23)

The Caribbean is “modern” (23)

Third World countries have been taken advantage of by industrialized nations (27)

Global production and consumption are interconnected (29)

Self-perpetuating systems (hidden assumption)

Compared to Rappaport’s rituals regulating the system, here fashion, shopping and a sense of “betterness” than blue collar workers and an urge for class distinction are the driving forces

**Procedure-**

Although Freeman calls these her “methodologies” the following are how she conducted her research,

Open-ended interviews (12)

Semistructured interview surveys (12)

Participant observation (12)

Comparative observations (15)

Many of these conversations took place outside of the work environment since time spent at work in the two companies central to Freeman’s study (Multitext and Data Air) is monitored very closely. Surprising to Freeman the management of both Data Air and Multitext were “entirely agreeable to [her] research” (13). The companies seemed to see this study as an opportunity to “improve working conditions and communication” (13) as one manager specifically stated.

Freeman says her research took on basically three phases (12). Phase one was to “investigate the general shape of the industry” (12) since no existing research was available to her on the type of companies she was investigating. This first step included discovering recruitment strategies, training practices, and working conditions. Phase two was participant observation, including forty open-ended interviews with workers. This stage was likely one of the best and most encompassing aspects of Freeman’s research. After overcoming some skeptical views held by workers about what she was “really” doing, Freeman was able to begin forming personal relationships. Freeman developed these relationships outside of “work” which lends perspective on the real life of Barbadians, women specifically. Phase three was conducted in the third year of Freeman’s work, and included surveying another forty-four women.

Also, Freeman’s longevity in her work contributed much to her research (16). Working constantly for several years and observing on the “production floor” (16) allowed Freeman a very unique experience of the informatics business.

**Theoretical Framework-**

Freeman’s work hinges on her concept of “pink collar” workers (3). The idea of a “pink collar” worker is based on the development of a new class of work, “Informatics.”

Informatics is basically the shipping out (from first world countries) of meticulous labor tasks of entering data into computer systems and programs. This movement to offshore manufacturing in countries like Barbados, with a large work pool, typically women, to draw from creates a new class. Somewhere between “skilled mental information based” white-collar work and blue-collar manual labor (5), emerges informatics and the “pink collar” worker.

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