

## Reconfiguring 'post-socialist' regions: Trans-border networks and regional competition in the Slovak and Ukrainian clothing industry

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The global garment industry is currently being reshaped in dramatic ways through processes of on-going liberalisation, further rounds of production relocation and increasing competitive pressures. These processes are having profound consequences for the international geography of production and trade. Indeed, there has been much speculation about the full-scale relocation of garment production from Europe to very low-cost production sites in China, India and elsewhere in Asia. In this paper we interrogate the inter-regional shifts in regional sourcing, assessing the ways in which trans-border sourcing, subcontracting, and FDI are being integrated into strategies to sustain regional production in the light of timing and quality demands from European buyers. In particular, we highlight the ways in which firms in the Slovak Republic have been responding to the pressures induced by liberalisation and the emergence of partial, yet increasing, levels of cross-border production relocation to Ukraine. We also highlight, however, the product specificity of these changes and the ways in which they are located in and embedded within already existing production networks, forms of cross-border contracting and central European trade regimes. In other words, we highlight some of the range of forces that shape the continuation of garment production for export to EU markets in central Europe, which partially challenge the 'spectre of Chinese competition'.