

**6-8th April
2009**

**Apex International
Hotel, Edinburgh**



The primary focus of the ILPC conference is work and employment relations in the context of the broader political economy.

While the conference encourages a wide range of issues, perspectives and methodologies, preference is given to papers that promote critical understandings of workplace relations and integrate empirical material with theoretical argument. The 2009 conference will have a number of special streams:

1 Reclaiming Resistance:

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2 Service Work in the Hospitality and Care Industries:

Dr Mary Gatta & Prof Eileen Appelbaum, Rutgers University
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3 Identity and the Workplace:

Dr Abigail Marks, Herriot-Watt University, Professor Janette Webb, University of Edinburgh, Dr Jerry Hallier, University of Stirling
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4 Work Relations & Restructuring in the Voluntary Sector:

Dr Ian Cunningham, Strathclyde University, Dr Donna Baines, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada
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5 Retail Work:

Professor Irena Grugulis, University of Bradford, Dr Ödül Bozkurt, University of Lancaster
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Stream 1: Reclaiming Resistance

Labour process theory (LPT) has often been described as a 'control and resistance' model. Whilst that label undersells the scope and complexity of the approach, it remains true that post-Braverman LPT was strongly associated with emphasising the role of worker resistance as a motive force of workplace change, whilst leaving the connections to wider forms of class struggle looser. The centrality of resistance as category and action came under dual attack in the early 1990s: from HRM theorists proclaiming the end of collectivism and old-style industrial relations and from a dystopian Foucauldian vision of panoptic surveillance and self-disciplining subjects. Ackroyd and Thompson's writings on misbehaviour acted as a corrective to these trends and helped restore a focus on labour as active agency at work. The framework, which sought to map the territories of employee action – work, time, product and identity – stimulated a certain degree of interest in research.

Looking back, it also worked as a corrective within Foucauldian ranks. In the last decade, resistance has gone from denial to articulation in post-structuralist writings (Special Issue of *Management Communication Quarterly* 2005). Emphasis has been placed on irony and cynicism as covert, 'underground forms of resistance' (Fleming and Spicer 2002); re-interpretation of Foucault in terms of a micro-politics of emancipation as individuals adaptation and subvert dominant discourses as they confront and reflect on their own identity projects (Thomas and Davies 2005). This turn is welcome, but has, seemingly led to the reverse problem – everything is now resistance given that it need not be conscious or expressed in action. In the recent period, there has been some re-thinking of these issues at the ILPC, more generally (Collinson and Ackroyd 2005) and amongst some who are more sympathetic to post-structuralism (Spicer and Bohm 2007; Special Issue of *Management Communication Quarterly* 2008). The stream seeks to extend those discussions and ask, where do we draw the lines and how do we produce a credible account and explanation of resistance and related behaviours.

Topics of interest might include:

- Reflections on these developments and debates.
- Empirical studies that try to apply and extend the range of categories, such as conflict, resistance, misbehaviour, consent and dissent.
- Re-theorising and re-mapping resistance and related categories such as (and their relations with LPT)

References

Ackroyd, S. and Thompson, P. (1999) *Organizational Misbehaviour*, London: Sage.
Collinson, D. and Ackroyd, S. (2005) 'Resistance, Misbehaviour and Dissent', in *The Oxford Handbook of Work and Organization*, S. Ackroyd, R. Batt, P. Thompson and P. Tolbert (eds, 2005.), Oxford University Press ~ Special Issue of *Management Communication Quarterly* 'Beyond Power and Resistance' (especially papers by Fleming and Spicer, Contu, Ashcraft, Dick, Gabriel) ~ Thomas, R. and Davies, A. (2005) 'Theorizing the Micro-Politics of Resistance: New Public ~ Management and Managerial Identities in the UK Public Services', *Organization Studies*, 26/5: 683-706. ~ Spicer, A. and Bohm, S. (2007) 'Moving Management: Theorizing Struggles Against the hegemony of Management', *Organization Studies* 28/11: 1667-1689. ~ Fleming, P. and Spicer, A. (2002) 'Working at a Cynical Distance: Implications for Power, Subjectivity and Resistance', *Organization*, 10: 157-179. ~ Special Issue of *Management Communication Quarterly* on Discourse, Resistance and Organization, 19.1, August 2005, Guest Editors Linda Putnam, David Grant, Leanne Cutcher and Grant Michelson.

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Abstracts Submitted by
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