

**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:

Dr Henrietta Huzzell,
University of Karlstad
henrietta.huzzell@kau.se

2 Service Work in the Hospitality and Care Industries:

Dr Mary Gatta & Prof Eileen Appelbaum, Rutgers University
gatta@rci.rutgers.edu

3 Identity and the Workplace:

Dr Abigail Marks, Herriot-Watt University, Professor Janette Webb, University of Edinburgh, Dr Jerry Hallier, University of Stirling
a.marks@hw.ac.uk;

4 Work Relations & Restructuring in the Voluntary Sector:

Dr Ian Cunningham, Strathclyde University, Dr Donna Baines, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada
ian.cunningham@strath.ac.uk;

5 Retail Work:

Professor Irena Grugulis, University of Bradford, Dr Ödül Bozkurt, University of Lancaster
I.Grugulis@bradford.ac.uk;

Stream 5: Retail Work

Retail work is ubiquitous. From small family-owned businesses to the world's largest private corporation, a vast range of employers are retailers. In both the UK and the US, about 12 per cent of the working population are employed in the sector (Burt and Sparks 2003) .

Retail work is highly variable. In some instances it involves attractive, middle-class dominated 'style' labour markets where workers enjoy heavy discounts on the latest fashions (Warhurst and Nickson 2001; Nickson et al. 2001), while in most others it takes the form of poorly paid shift work demanded by mass merchandisers like Wal-Mart (Ehrenreich 2001; Bair and Bernstein 2006). In such distinctly different contexts, retail work can be designed to be skilled (Gamble 2006) or unskilled (Kirsch et al. 2000), knowledge-intensive or Taylorized, a potential career or a stop gap job.

Since, as with other aspects of the service sector, the worker is part of the product being sold, then emotional and aesthetic labour, retail work is gendered and racialized (Hochschild 1983; Bolton 2005; McGauran 2000). Different groups and types of workers find highly divergent rewards in the segmented labour markets of retailing.

Finally, retail work is increasingly located at the intersection of the global and the local. As retailers rapidly transnationalize and join the ranks of the world's largest transnational corporations, retail work in distant locations is increasingly, if often invisibly, connected. Comparative and multi-site studies promise to reveal much about the changing nature of employment in a rapidly globalizing sector.

Work Matters, the International Labour Process Conference

The International Labour Process Conference is focussed on work and employment relations in the context of the broader political economy, with an emphasis on employee perspectives and theory-led empirical research. For the Retail Work stream, paper topics could include – but are not limited to—the following:

- transformation of retail work
- gender and retail work
- retail work and work-life balance
- technology and retail work
- transnational corporations and retail work
- retail work and migrant labour

All queries to
ilpc2009@ilpc.org.uk

ilpc.org.uk

Abstracts Submitted by
30 October 2008