

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Work Matters: 28<sup>th</sup> Annual International Labour Process Conference Rutgers University, March 15-17, 2010

#### **SPECIAL INTEREST STREAM: Worker Power and the Labor Process, Past and Present**

Many of the first labor process theorists took for granted that worker power derived from strategic location in the process of production. Industrial workers, particularly skilled craftsmen, were assumed to possess unusual power by virtue of their role in goods manufacturing, and hence viewed as the critical players in any movement to transform the prevailing distribution of income, effort, or status. By the same token, non-manufacturing workers were assumed to be less strategically-placed and consequently lacking in essential sources of leverage and power. This stream is concerned to explore the extent to which any of these assumptions and conclusions have merit, either in the past or in the present.

Papers looking at the strategic positioning of workers, past and present, are welcome; as are those that look at the effects of this positioning, if any, on the power and aspirations of workers. The organizers particularly seek papers that explore the strategic positioning of service and information workers in the so-called “new economy” and the implications of their circumstances for the nature of labor movements, the forms of power they can exert in their changed situation, and the goals they most commonly pursue when exercising their power.

Key questions to be considered include:

To what degree has the power of workers been dependent on their strategic location in the process of production?

How has the rise of the service economy affected the strategic position of workers and their ability to secure political and economic reform?

How do new technologies, commodity chains and new distribution processes alter theories of strategic location and worker power?

Are there strategic positions at the point of consumption or in the work processes of those involved in emotional, caring, intimate, and aesthetic labor that offer alternative or new sources of worker power?

How would labor process theory, particularly the theories of worker power, militancy, and collective organization, change if non-manufacturing workers were seen as the prototypic

worker and if the point of consumption were taken to be as important as the point of production?

**Stream Organizers:**

Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble, Rutgers University, [cobble@rutgers.edu](mailto:cobble@rutgers.edu)

Professor Peter Winn, Tufts University

**The Conference:**

The Annual International Labour Process Conference is a leading conference on work and employment. It brings together academics and policy makers from the sociology of work and employment, labour studies, business and management, human resource management, industrial relations, organization studies and a range of other disciplines. Selections of conference papers are published in edited books, with twenty now published. It is intended that a selection of papers from the women's work stream will be published in a journal special edition. Abstracts for the stream should be between 350-500 words and can be either theoretical and/or empirical. Abstract contents should enable the referees to determine what issue, development or problem is being investigated, how it is investigated, what the findings are and what contribution is being made to understanding in the field.

**ILPC 2008 Conference Organizers:**

Prof. Eileen Appelbaum

Prof. Adrienne Eaton

Dean David Finegold

Dr. Mary Gatta

For questions about the conference please contact: [ilpc2010@ilpc.org.uk](mailto:ilpc2010@ilpc.org.uk)

Please submit to [www.ilpc.org.uk](http://www.ilpc.org.uk) by October 31, 2009