


CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIES OF LEISURE,
TOURISM AND MOBILITY

A Hospitable World?

Organising work and workers in hotels
and tourist resorts



Edited by
David Jordhus-Lier and
Anders Underthun

ROUTLEDGE



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tourist resorts

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A Hospitable World?

The hospitality and tourism sector is a large and rapidly expanding industry worldwide, and can rightfully be described as a vehicle of globalisation. Hotels are among the cornerstones of the industry often drawing workers from the most vulnerable segments of multicultural labour markets, accommodating and entertaining tourists and business travellers from around the world.

This book explores the organisation of work, worker identities and worker strategies in hotel workplaces, as they are located in heterogeneous labour markets being changed by processes of globalisation. It uses an explicitly geographical approach to understand how different groups of workers experience and respond to challenges in the hospitality industry, and is based on recent theoretical debates and empirical research on hotel workplaces in cities as different as Oslo, Goa, London, Las Vegas and Toronto. A multi-scalar analysis is taken where concrete worker bodies and their physical, emotional and embodied labour are seen in relation to, among other aspects: the regulation of national and regional labour markets, city governments with global city ambitions, and global corporate actors and labour migration patterns. The book sheds light on the hotel workplace as a hierarchical and fragmented social space as well as addressing questions on worker mobility, the fragmentation of work, scales of organisation and how workers can help shape the regulation of their industry.

This timely volume brings together contributions from international academics and is valuable reading for all those interested in hospitality, tourism, human geography and globalisation.

David Jordhus-Lier is Associate Professor in Human Geography, University of Oslo and Senior Researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research. He holds a PhD in Human Geography from the University of Manchester, and his specialisation is within labour geography and urban social movements. He was the project manager of the 'Industrial relations under global stress' project, funded by the Research Council of Norway, which has generated parts of the material for this book. Jordhus-Lier has published a series of articles focusing on geographies of labour, neoliberalism and social movements.

Anders Underthun is Senior Researcher at the Work Research Institute in Oslo. He holds a PhD in Human Geography from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim. His interests include the politics of regional economic development, industrial relations in the hospitality and aviation industries, and the impact of Temporary Work Agencies on the politics of work.

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Professor at the Department of Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

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Anders Underthun is Senior Researcher at the Work Research Institute in Oslo. He holds a PhD in Human Geography from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim. His interests include the politics of regional economic development, industrial relations in the hospitality and aviation industries, and the impact of Temporary Work Agencies on the politics of work.

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overall interest in mobilities, notably labour and capital mobility. In her current research on hotel work and workers, she explores the connections between labour mobility, the socio-spatial formations and divisions of labour at different geographical scales, the meaning and use of emotional and aesthetic bodies to the delivery of service.

Preface

This book is the result of a desire within and beyond the human geography discipline to understand the political opportunities of hotel workers. This determination led a group of Oslo-based geographers to apply for funding to explore these dynamics in their own locality in 2009. Immediately, a particular question begged asking in the Norwegian context: why did the much-heralded Nordic model of industrial relations seem to fail workers in hospitality, an industry where labour migrants and low-paid women were over-represented? The project that was born out of these initial considerations has brought the Norwegian researchers in contact with scholars, activists and industry experts on hotel work from around the world. While we knew that research interest in hotel workers had preceded our own project, long-term funding allowed us to actively meet with academics doing complementary research on different locations. These exchanges inspired us to look beyond our own project when deciding on an appropriate format of publication and dissemination. The book you are about to read is the product of several independent research efforts which, thanks to a series of face-to-face and virtual meetings throughout the last few years, have become a truly collective analytical effort. This is first and foremost to the credit of the authors, whose participation in this book by far has exceeded the expectations of a regular research anthology. The editors wish to extend their deepest gratitude for this generosity from the author collective.

There are many others who deserve special thanks for helping to realise this publication. None of this would have been possible without generous funding by the Research Council of Norway, and their Welfare, Working Life and Migration (VAM) programme. From 2009 to 2012, the project entitled 'Industrial relations under global stress: fragmentation and the potential for representation of workers in the Norwegian hospitality sector' gave a team of researchers the chance to combine qualitative and quantitative research on hotel workplaces in the Oslo region. Research directors Arild H. Steen at the Work Research Institute (AFI) and Marit Haug at the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research were supportive of this project even before it received funding. Sylvi B. Endresen and Hege M. Knutsen were, in addition to writing a contribution, instrumental in facilitating the involvement of students in this research. Ulrikke B. Wethal, Julia Loge, Hege Hellvik, Sindre Thon Bråten, Nina Skranefjell and

Synne Dokka willingly shared the knowledge generated by their master projects. They also contributed through actively participating in the data collection, together with Ana Roman, Bård Vestøl Birkedal, Kristin Hafstad and Christer Vinje Gimse. Guri Tyldum at Fafo helped us with the quantitative design and analysis.

The empirical scope of this publication also relied on the goodwill of several 'people in the field'. These include Ethel Buckley, Rhonda Donaghey and Gerry McCormack from SIPTU in Dublin, Marc Hollin, David Sanders and Paul Clifford from UNITE HERE in Toronto and Ken Liu from the Culinary Workers Union in Las Vegas. In Oslo, the now-defunct Local 246 of *Fellesforbundet* backed our project from the beginning, with Jorid Tveita, Birgit Tandberg, Randi Stenseth and Jørn Børre Grady deserving a special mention. Other helpful people in Oslo include Clas Delp, Atle Høie, Eli Ljungren, Birgitte Reiersen, Even Hagelien and Claus Jervell.

Jane Wills, Bent Sofus Tranøy, Neil M. Coe and Magnus Marsdal enthusiastically participated in the launch seminar, where we discussed the initial focus and design issues. A special session on 'Fragmented workplaces, worker mobility and union strategies: experiences from the hospitality sector and beyond' at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers in New York represented a first step in planning a book publication, where Suzanne Mills, James DeFilippis, Siobhán McPhee, Luis L. M. Aguiar, Tod Rutherford and Bryony Enright joined us in stimulating debates on the topic in question. All the attendees of our June 2012 closing conference in Oslo should be mentioned, as this was where the decision to produce this book was taken. All the chapter authors, as well as Kevin Curran and Jørn Børre Grady, took a whole day to discuss the book's agenda. The journey from idea to printed publication was made easier by the active support of Routledge, and in particular C. Michael Hall, Andrew Mould, Emma Travis and Philippa Mullins, as well as a number of referees from within and beyond the author collective. Last but not least, our editorial assistant Per Øveraas spent much time and energy on editing, formatting and coordinating all chapter drafts and revisions, as well as handling correspondence between editors, authors and publishers.

We hope you as a reader will enjoy the end product. The book is aimed at inspiring new efforts to see beyond each case study and to encourage constructive engagements between scholars and worker representatives in the future.

David Jordhus-Lier and Anders Underthun
Oslo, 12 March 2014