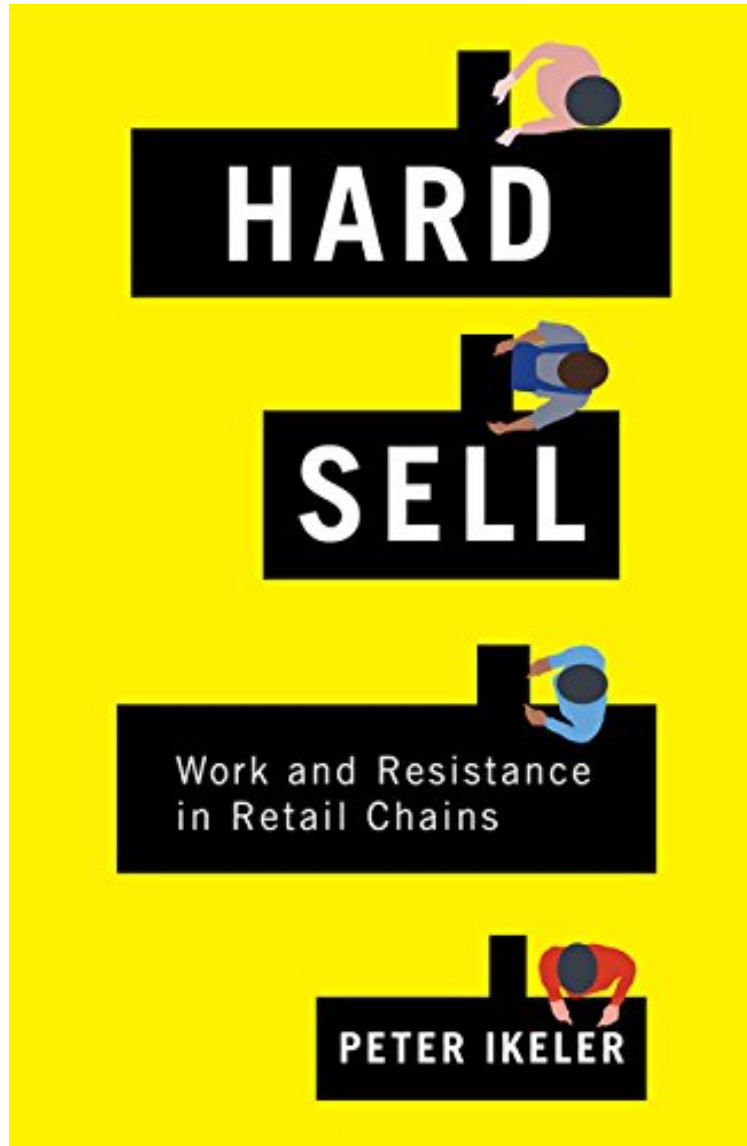


(Free read ebook) Hard Sell: Work and Resistance in Retail Chains

Hard Sell: Work and Resistance in Retail Chains

Peter Ikeler

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Peter Ikeler : Hard Sell: Work and Resistance in Retail Chains before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hard Sell: Work and Resistance in Retail Chains:

Along with fast-food workers, retail workers are capturing the attention of the public and the media with the Fight for \$15. Like fast-food workers, retail workers are underpaid, and fewer than 5 percent of them belong to unions. In Hard Sell, Peter Ikeler traces the low-wage, largely nonunion character of U.S. retail through the history and ultimate failure

of twentieth-century retail unionism. He asks pivotal questions about twenty-first-century capitalism: Does the nature of retail work make collective action unlikely? Can working conditions improve in the absence of a union? Is worker consciousness changing in ways that might encourage or further inhibit organizing? Ikeler conducted interviews at New York City locations of two iconic department stores—Macy's and Target. Much of the book's narrative unfolds from the perspectives of these workers in America's most unequal city. When he speaks to workers, Ikeler finds that the Macy's organization displays an adversarial relationship between workers and managers and that Target is infused with a "teamwork" message that enfolds both parties. Macy's workers identify more with their jobs and are more opposed to management, yet Target workers show greater solidarity. Both groups, however, are largely unhappy with the pay and precariousness of their jobs. Combined with workplace-generated feelings of unity and resistance, these grievances provide promising inroads to organizing that could help take the struggle against inequality beyond symbolic action to real economic power.

"I can't think of another recent book that looks at the actual work of retail selling with as much depth and detail as this one. Peter Ikeler returns to the workplace as a key site to search for the emergence (or not) of an oppositional class consciousness among workers. The focus on the retail sector is both theoretically valuable and practically relevant, as the news media report the increasing number of symbolic strikes and protests at Walmart and in the fast food industry. *Hard Sell* is not only timely in its subject but also offers original and concise analytic concepts that significantly advance our understanding in the field."—Chris Rhomberg, Fordham University, author of *The Broken Table*

"Offering insight into the world of low-wage retail labor in America, Peter Ikeler's book about the work experiences of New York City department store workers adds the concept of 'contingent control' to further our understanding of the social construction of job insecurity and precarity. *Hard Sell* demonstrates how retail employers' moves toward employing an increasingly stopgap workforce with limited job identity present significant challenges for traditional forms of labor organizing—and yet, at the same time, may open up new and unexpected possibilities for fostering renewed worker militancy and oppositional forms of working-class consciousness at the start of the twenty-first century."—Stuart Tannock, University College London, coauthor of *Youth Rising?*

"*Hard Sell* provides an important contribution to understanding the constraints that chain store workers face when seeking to improve their wages and working conditions. Peter Ikeler's research among retail workers is top notch, comprehensive, and professional."—Immanuel Ness, Brooklyn College, author of *Guest Workers and Resistance to U.S. Corporate Despotism*

About the Author Peter Ikeler is Assistant Professor of Sociology at SUNY College at Old Westbury.