

GENDER INEQUALITIES, EMOTIONAL AND AESTHETIC LABOR AND WELL-BEING IN WORK

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In current working life crucial skills consist more and more of different ways of using and presenting the selves and minds of the employees. Gender and sexuality are embedded in the everyday practices of using the skills and performing the selves in work. Both the employers and customers emphasize the ways in which the employees communicate, cooperate, form relationships, present themselves and affect the customers' decisions.

The focus of the study is on the changing work contents and job requirements which are connected to the marketization and commodification of the employees' selves mostly in the service sector. Particular attention is paid to the demands of emotional and aesthetic labor and branding the self in work. The underlying assumption is that the pressures to reshape the employees' selves result in both advantages and disadvantages for well-being and gender divisions in work. Consequently, the overall aim is to address the conditions for disadvantageous and ad-

vantageous patterns of practicing gender and sexuality in the context of emotional and aesthetic labor and branding oneself in work.

Empirically our research sites are branding oneself in and for recruitment, emotional and aesthetic labor in call centre work, small firms in the well-being industry in rural areas, and women in organizations providing knowledge intensive services. The research methods are qualitative both in terms of collecting (interviews and observations) and analyzing (classification, content analysis, discourse analysis) the data.

The research team has chosen to implement the study by mapping the practices of gender in working life more generally through qualitative case studies. By analyzing the practices of recruitment processes, practices of customer service in call centers and in women's small firms the aim is to capture the variety and trends of emotional and aesthetic labor and branding oneself. The case of recruitment

maps out the situation. The cases of call centers deal with the situation in a low paid and increasingly female-dominated branch. The cases of women's small firms will allow the team to explore the consequences of neo-liberal pressures in rural areas, while the knowledge intensive services provide material for the analysis of gender inequalities in the practices of recognition in working life.



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