

Det tekniska spelet

Förhandlingar om arbete, teknik och kön i relation till införande av nya informationssystem

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

För avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arbetsvetenskap, som med vederbörligt tillstånd av utbildningsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid Göteborgs universitet framläggs till offentlig granskning.

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Abstract

- Title: The technical game. Negotiation of work, technology and gender in relation to the introduction of new information systems
- Language: Swedish with an English summary
- Keywords: Gender, femininities, masculinities, new technology, nurses, negotiation, gender division of labor, symbolic gender, gender identity, mirroring process, life story, work identity, everyday practices, ICT
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This thesis aims to study how information systems are received and interpreted by the employees of two organizations: the Hospital and Electricity company. I am interested in how work tasks and professional identities at these workplaces are coded by class and gender, and whether - and if so how - these encodings or constructions affect how employees perceive the information systems and the changes brought about by the new information system. Furthermore, the aim is to explain how the organizational context affects the way in which a new information system is received and interpreted, and how this is affected by the construction of masculinities and femininities. 35 life story interviews were conducted at the two workplaces. The interviews were focused on the effects, on the everyday- and working life of employees, brought about by the introduction of new information systems: the electronic journal Melior at the Hospital and the business system SAP at the Electricity Company. Another focus dealt with if – and if so, how, -the new technology had impact on the relationship with other occupational groups and professionals at the workplace.

As its starting point, the dissertation adopts a theoretical patchwork based on Hardings' three processes: *genders symbolism*, *gender structure* and *individual gender*. The concepts *femininities* and *masculinities* are used to discuss and analyze constructions of identities at work. The process of division of labor and concepts of *professional closures* are used to analyze negotiations within and between different groups. A theoretical concept, *mirroring processes*, is used to show how different parts of an individual's life are linked together and how structures in different part of life reproduce and strengthen each other.

The thesis argues that various organizational circumstances have an impact on how employees receive and interpret the new technology. From the perspective of class and gender, it becomes evident how technology is not simply ascribed different roles at different workplaces. These roles are also assigned a symbolic value that is largely based on gender. It is also clear that the role assigned to technology depends on the division of labor and may, in turn, influence the current division of labor at the workplace through negotiations concerning the new technology. It becomes clear that gender- and class structures are produced and reproduced through negotiations and the employees' handling of the new information systems. The thesis argues that the interviewees' construction of professional identities influence their understanding of changes in their own work when new information systems have been introduced. The dissertation also argues that the way femininities and masculinities are constructed within professional identities affect how employees view their work and the new technology.