

Gendering the New generation of Chinese Workers in Vocational Schools

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Abstract

An expansion of labour market and an increasingly accessible higher education system appear to offer Chinese youth abundant employment opportunities. The neoliberal labour market values of human resources lead this young generation of Chinese workers, despite their gender and class circumstances, to feel that they have more freedom and more agency in making more choices in education and labour market. Under this background, this paper looks into the persistent gendered divisions in educational field of young students in vocational track. Based on my ethnographic data in vocational schools, this paper explores how the young women and men negotiate with the gender relations and gender structure within and outside vocational schools. It further examines how the egalitarian but essentialized gender discourses, and the increasingly gendered employment shape the educational and occupational choices, learning experiences, and future aspirations of the new generation of Chinese workers.