



The paradoxical promotion of an active femininity

Construction of attitudes toward employment among single mothers on welfare

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Abstract: Based on an ethnographic study and on quantitative data, this paper deals with the social construction of welfare enlisted single mothers' attitudes toward employment. On the one hand these recipients have a hard time accessing job-seeking program, while their caseworkers try to get them to adhere to an "active femininity". Some of the recipients' attitudes toward employment is therefore disconsidered, as they are assigned to a familialist treatment while being aware that they don't meet the active femininity's expectations. Nevertheless, other recipients, who often hold higher school degrees, access job-seeking programs. It allows them to maintain a hopeful attitude toward employment and to selectively make the active femininity their own.

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