

## **Gender relations and rurality: construction of spatial identities and implications for planning**

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When gendered relations are analysed at local level, negotiations about the gendering of everyday practices become visible. The focus for this presentation is on analysing the (informal) strategies in such negotiations and how people act and react in relation to them. Two parallel processes can be observed. Women and men either adapt to the mainstream gender contract of the region, and adhere to it regardless of changes in society's demands, or challenge existing norms, practices and representations in their public and/or private lives, according to changes in local conditions. The local context is thus active in reproducing and maintaining, as well as transforming, gender relations.

Transformation of the labour market is involving new trends and expectations, including a growing mismatch between local job opportunities and the qualifications afforded by the education programmes sought after by young people, and fluid gender relations associated with place-specific, as well as general, assumptions about masculinity and femininity. As will be discussed, a reflexive understanding of the self affects people's expectations and frames for action in relation to others and young men and women alike are aware of the challenge to deconstruct hegemonic notions of gender.