

# BOUNDLESS WORK -

## Emotional Labour and Emotional Exhaustion in Interactive Service Work

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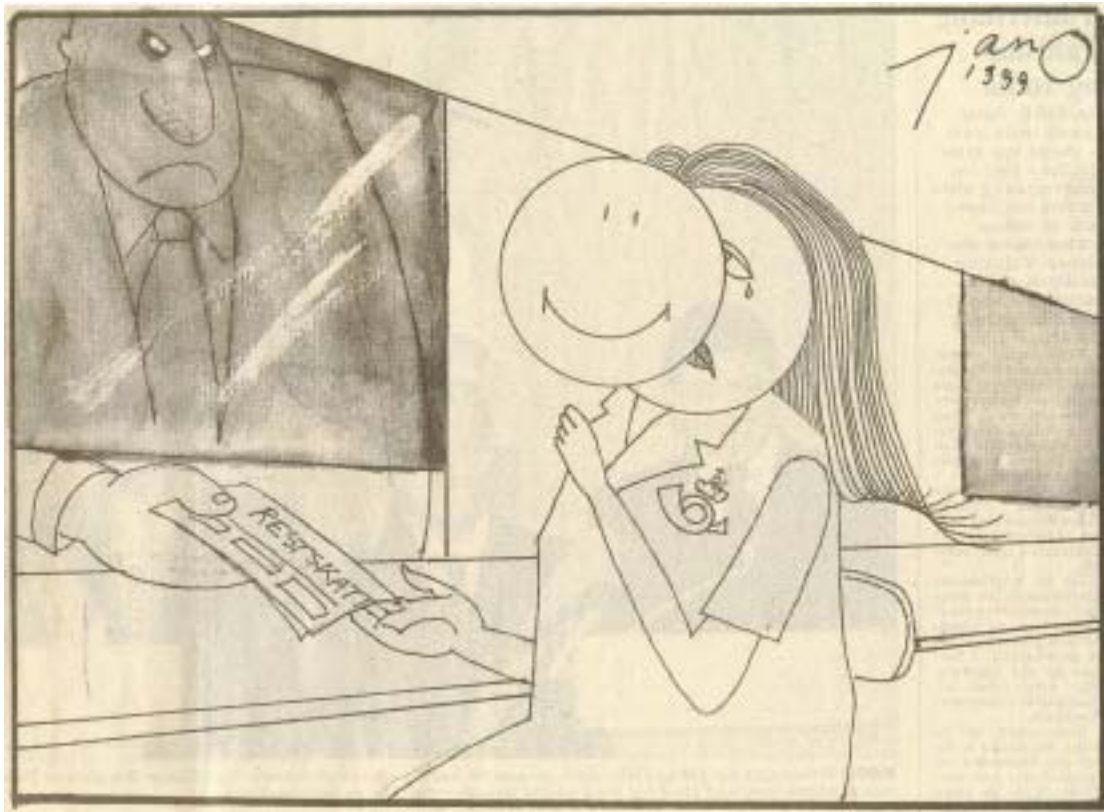


Illustration for the article entitled ‘Smilets Organisering’ that I wrote with my colleagues Tone Opdahl Mo and Carla Dahl-Jørgensen in reply to the debate in the media on my preliminary findings on emotional exhaustion (in the regional newspaper *Adresseavisen*, February 22, 1999). The illustration is reprinted by kind permission of the artist, Jan O. Henriksen.



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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

After 15 years in applied contract research I found myself in charge of the preliminary Trondheim umbrella group under the 'Health in Working Life' programme at the Norwegian Research Council. I was later encouraged to become a research fellow in this programme (grant no. 109175/330, 1996 - 1998). This intervention study differed in design and methods from most other projects at my workplace. My initial plan was to continue part time as a contract researcher until I realized that, under the circumstances, it was impossible to combine ordinary project work with substantial fieldwork, extensive data collection and doctoral courses. I then applied for a leave of absence from my main position, and the result was greater freedom but less income.

Being part of a multidisciplinary programme has been enlightening but I also had to find a way of coping with the cross pressure between the medical/epidemiological bias of the programme and current sociological discourse(s). The outcome was a transdisciplinary research design, and a broader discussion of perspectives than would otherwise have been the case. My supervisor, Håkon Leiulfstrud at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, encouraged me to find my 'own way'. He invited me to provide some questions for the National Work Orientations Survey. Many thanks to Håkon for his enthusiastic and conversant participation. Before his sabbatical we had regular meetings each fortnight to keep us both on track. I think it is hard to find a more supportive supervisor who has been willing to have evening and weekend supervising 'sessions' with me when I needed it.

My research design was also influenced by discussions with the initial members of the International Advisory Board at IFIM, Joan Acker, Tove Helland Hammer and Aage Bødker Sørensen. One piece of advice was to write a monograph. As an adviser for the umbrella project, Tove has commented on numerous versions of my text – with great speed and detailed comments. Thank you for reminding me to 'stick to my knitting'. Kristen Ringdal was another adviser in the umbrella project and has been my "oracle" when it comes to minor and major statistical matters. He has also provided useful advice on several draft versions. I am grateful for your help.

Thanks are also due my colleagues in the umbrella project, especially Carla Dahl-Jørgensen, Tone Opdahl Mo and Per Øystein Saksvik, who shared the hard work and ups and downs of running a field experiment in

a real-world setting that often did not conform to an ideal textbook setting for a controlled experiment. Carla, ever enthusiastically in charge, was my travel companion for a conference on women, work and health. Some of our bedside discussions in Rio inspired me in the final stage.

I enjoyed the discussions on literature, our own writings and the experiment on memory work in the network on Gender and Working Life at IFIM. Practical assistance from and chats and discussions with my colleagues in the corridor were useful in the final phase, perhaps more than my colleagues are even aware of.

I would also like to express gratitude to the following for reading chapters or draft versions and for their helpful comments, suggestions and encouragement: Joan Acker, David Morgan, Inger Johanne Pettersen, Torlaug Løkensgard Hoel, and Elin Kvande. It has been interesting and instructive to compare comments from researchers from different environments and traditions. Thanks are also due to Bjørg Aase Sørensen, who sent me a literature search on emotional labour so that I could compare with my own searches. Warm thanks to all of you. The responsibility for this work, however, rests upon me alone.

Writing this thesis was an opportunity to expand my repertoire of current theories and methods, and I have enjoyed taking part in doctoral courses to fulfil these aims. I am grateful for the grant from the Research Council. However, three years was not sufficient to cover such an extensive field effort and an ambitious research design employing a wide range of methods. At IFIM I have been among the first to 'do my doctorate' in-house, and I am grateful to IFIM for some supplementary funding in the final phase.

My life would have been dull without the companionship of my husband Øivind, our girls Anja and Tine, Pia and Marte and more recently Eirik and Hedda. As a mother and stepmother I have a rich and complex life where I have (had) ample opportunity to perform emotional work. At times, chats with Øivind have also been useful, especially concerning what is happening in banking today, and he has also managed more of our household in the final year. Without the care and practical assistance of my parents, Gunvor and Erling Forseth, and parents-in-law, Solfrid and Leif Mellbye, the juggling between home and work would have been more painful during this writing process, especially at the final stage when my youngest daughter was ill for three months.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the three companies and all the persons who completed the surveys, took part in interviews and memory work, and let me share their thoughts on their work experience. I hope my work can give them a better understanding of how structural changes are affecting the nature of their work.

In line with current trends in theory of science, I have tried to be a part of my text and prefer to use I instead of we, with the exception of some instances when I refer to the project that I was a part of. My decision to write in English came naturally. I think it is important to communicate with a broad scientific environment, the bulk of the literature on emotional labour was in English and so were most of my doctoral courses. I am grateful to John Anthony for improving my English. Thanks to Stein Karlsen and Inger Rygh, SINTEF, for helping me to insert illustrations in the text, and to our former secretary, Siv Skogstad, for the final touches on figures and layout.

Restructuring is no longer a theoretical issue or something that workers experience 'out there', it is taking place right outside my office door. Having finished the boundless task of writing a dissertation, and experimenting with various measures to keep my own health at work (although not in a controlled design), it is time to face the ambivalence of restructuring.

Trondheim, May 2000.





## SUMMARY

The current transformation of work is affecting people's everyday experience and altering relations between paid work and non-work activities. The nature of paid work is shifting towards symbolic forms of production where emotions are important 'tools' of labour. The thesis examines the relationships between structural changes, and the nature and impact of emotional labour in interactive service work. These are jobs that involve direct interactions between workers and recipients, and usually require some form of emotion management. The employee is expected to display particular emotions and create emotional response or experience in customers or clients. The initial literature on emotional labour underscored how gender is closely related to emotional labour, and how this kind of work carries human costs for employees, including alienation, lack of authenticity, work overload, emotional exhaustion and burnout. This stereotyped view has been criticized in recent literature as it comes in the way of an understanding of the joy derived from performing emotional labour. Instead researchers have investigated the conditions under which employees are prone to onerous outcomes. In particular, emotional exhaustion, that is, the depletion of emotional resources in service interactions, has been widely studied. Hitherto, there has been a disjuncture between research that examines particular workplaces and research that examines structural conditions in the labour market. To communicate across this divide and provide a backdrop for the analyses to come, my point of departure is an analysis of employment patterns in the Nordic countries, the UK and the US, followed by a detailed analysis of Norway. I then address the following questions: Do emotional labour and emotional exhaustion differ across work settings? What is the impact of emotional exhaustion on service employees and their interaction with customers or clients? How is emotional labour experienced in the working lives of customer advisers in restructured positions in banking?

In the first part, after discussing two different perspectives on service work – service management and emotion management – I review recent literature on emotional labour. Based on previous frameworks and empirical literature I present a conceptual framework for studying emotional labour in interactive service work. In the empirical part I draw on a rich source of material, consisting of comparative macro-level data, a representative national survey (Work Orientations), data compiled for this particular study, a survey among retail clerks, bank clerks and care workers for the elderly, interviews and accounts of critical incidents in

customer interactions. The shopping mall, the bank and the care agency are settings where one finds a majority of female frontline workers.

The growth of service work is common to all Western industrialized countries, but my analysis illustrates that the service sector varies across employment regimes due to differences in trajectory, size and composition. The results show that Norwegian service workers do not appear to fit the polarized picture in existing literature as many of them had a considerable degree of skill and job autonomy. Furthermore, the analysis shows that a supervisory or managerial position does not necessarily mean a high degree of autonomy. A specific characteristic of Norway is a strong pattern of gender segregation in the labour market with a large public sector that is heavily populated by female employees, many in part-time positions. This study documents that such patterns of gender segregation are persistent but new trends are appearing. Today, more men do interactive service work, although often in higher level positions. Women are more likely to hold boundary-spanning positions where they spend most of their day in direct contact with customers or clients. One quarter of the Norwegian female service workers held supervisory or managerial positions, mainly at a lower level.

Around 40 per cent of the service workers in a Norwegian nation-wide study reported that they were always or often exhausted after work. The highest proportion of exhausted women was found in public services while the highest proportion of exhausted men worked in manufacturing. Our survey showed that bank clerks had higher levels of emotional exhaustion than the care workers did, even if many of the care workers were involved in intense, 'body-to-body' interaction with their clients. This was explained in part by factors related to restructuring, new skill demands, work overload, lack of organizational commitment, attendance pressure and problems with the interface between home and work. The amount and nature of customer interactions seemed to have a significant impact but not as the 'crucial factor'. Job autonomy and demographic factors, except age, fell short of being significant in the final model. Older workers were more likely to experience emotional exhaustion. The analysis appear to indicate some possible gender patterns in relation to part-time position, negative customer interaction and emotional exhaustion for female workers. This should be scrutinized more carefully in future studies using a sample with more men. These results underscore the importance of emotional exhaustion outside the prototypical care-giving occupations, and the primary role of job and work-setting characteristics and current transformation at work. Emotional exhaustion seemed to be dysfunctional for employees' health and their interaction with customers

or clients. Thus, emotional exhaustion might represent invisible costs to companies at a time when emotions are becoming increasingly important as a competitive edge in the private sector or client satisfaction in the public sector.

The bank study illustrates how traditional teller work has been transformed into competitive sales work. Bank clerks experienced a situation offering opportunity as well as work overload. Three main coping strategies were identified, active coping at work, active coping outside work and passive coping. A follow-up study of critical incidents in customer interactions illustrated emotional aspects of their job and invisible strain. Interactive service workers might be 'invaded' by abusive behaviour and comments from customers. Negative interactions with customers were exceptions to the rule, but had considerable impact. Such incidences were particularly related to female clerks or young clerks due to a lack of positional power.

Currently, there is greater emphasis on involvement, service and empathy on the part of the workers as such aspects have become part of the service 'product'. This may imply more interesting tasks and the opportunity to enhance the experiential quality of the service. At the same time this development manifests itself as blurred lines between public and private, person and 'product', work and life outside. The new bonds between employees and firms might also contribute to new ways of discipline and control, even self-exploitation. Thus, this may be a double-edged sword that contributes to ambivalence in current work experience as well as the workers' response to these situations.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Imagine an old wooden house painted yellow. The house is facing the main square where there is a marketplace in a medium-sized, Norwegian town. When you open the front door you enter a big room dominated by a wooden counter. In the middle of the counter is a 'trapdoor' that enables grown-ups to come and go. To the left there are various shelves with yarn and embroidery threads in all the different colours of the rainbow. Beneath the counter there are rolls of brownish grey paper that crackle when you wrap up the yarn. Further back in the room there is an enormous office desk made of wood, so tall that grown-ups have to stand to do their paperwork. The room is usually full of life due to the activities going on. The customers bring home-made fabrics and yarn to process them or clothes and garments to dye them. In this way clothes acquire a 'new look', or can be remade into something else. Or, perhaps the customers come to buy some of the colourful threads. Regularly, the man from the furniture factory comes to discuss colours for new furniture fabrics. At the back, there is an ironing room where one can sit down to take a short break. Furthermore, there is a hidden, magic world of vapour, heat, dyeing colours, and wooden tubs near the atrium. The dyers themselves, all men, look a bit scary in their dark dye-stained clothes. You can always hear them coming as their clogs say 'clappety-clop'. The dyers are always joking with us - the kids.*

## **Personal Experiences from Different Service Contexts**

I was five years old, living with my parents and sister in the apartment next to the dyery. My grandfather had rented this old building from the municipality and had been running the dyery until he passed away long before I was born. My mother used to work in the shop, but it was my uncle, her younger brother, who was in charge of the business. The shop was part of my playground. Upstairs a hatter had rented rooms. In the atrium backyard where I had my swing, there was an outdoor toilet in the small gateway leading to the narrow street behind the property. Inside the gateway, in the atrium, several activities were going on, a painter had rented some rooms, and the nearby florist used to store his carts and equipment in one of the garages beside the old stables. This was a magic world where something was always happening. In the following I will continue with autobiographical reflections that will lead to initial theoretical reflections on how to conceptualize service work.

Alice-like, I experienced my childhood from different angles, the various ‘zones’ of the house, behind the counter, near the dyery tubs (although not too close), and not least, my swing in the backyard atrium. I loved the atmosphere in and around the dyery. The old interior design, the old-fashioned ‘secretaire’ in the shop where one had to stand to do paperwork, the dyery tubs, the smells, the vapour and the sounds were impressive. There were exciting places where we could play hide and seek. Two of the favourites were the attic and grand hall upstairs (my sister and I used to call it the ‘ballroom’). Another favourite pastime was to hang around the counter. I was thrilled when I was allowed to wrap up goods in brown crackling paper. I enjoyed listening to (and sometimes taking part in) the chatting between the grown-ups – many of the customers were



*My uncle behind the counter in the dyery, 1965. Byarkivet, Trondheim*

‘regulars’. This kind of work was appealing to a little girl, but there were also things that I did not see or understand then. What seemed to be fun to me, could be hard work for the adults. There were times when the adults had to relax in the little room at the back during long working hours. I did not understand why they were exhausted. Neither did I realize that there was a clear division of work based on gender. The grown-ups did not question this fact either because it was taken for granted. The dyers were all men, dressed in dark clothes, sharing a world of heat, vapour and dyes. The counter clerks were female except for the dyery master himself – my uncle. It was seen as natural that the younger brother was educated in the trade and inherited the business and not his two older sisters. Instead they both became housewives while their children were young.

In the 1960s, however, the old building had to give way to a department store and modern architecture and was moved to the ‘folk’ museum in town. Moreover, with increased wealth and the mass production of clothes, this kind of dye-work faded away quite literally, and the dyery had to close down due to a failing market. Thus, I never had the chance to work behind the counter. However, my first memories and experiences from service work were later extended in other ways. My father was a railway worker, and I started earning ‘pocket’ money at an early age. My first ‘job’ was to look after two neighbouring children. At the age of twelve I started as a shop assistant at my ‘childhood’ florist in my spare time. Later I became a waitress and barmaid, a job I held for a period of six years. One semester while studying I worked as a teacher at a lower secondary school. Other summer holidays jobs included home help, secretary or bank assistant. Predominantly, these were service jobs with direct customer or client contact, and with a substantial number of female workers.



*The front entrance to the dyery and the backyard of Munkegt. 24, 1967.  
The old building that housed the dyery was later moved to an outdoor  
museum in Trondheim, Byarkivet, Trondheim kommune.*

When I later became involved in research on service work, I had the advantage of hands-on acquaintance with several types of service work. Through my work experiences I had learnt to cope in various service contexts, and experienced how these services required different emotional displays. At the florist I got used to handling ‘strangers’ in short spells of interaction, but as a teacher and home help I had a more personal relationship with the children and the elderly. My service interactions as a home help took place in the homes of the service recipients, and to some my visit was a social ‘event’. One lady used to serve tea with biscuits and cheese after I had finished my duties. Another lady sent me out to buy a cream gateau and a soft drink called ‘champagne’ and we would then ‘celebrate’ before I left for the day. At the disco I experienced how it was to be a ‘call-on’ worker. Flirting was part of the job, between waitresses and the customers, the waitresses and the musicians, but also among the staff. One middle-aged manager had a standard repertoire of jokes with sexual overtones that he used to crack over and over again. Work was quite hard, standing, walking and serving food, wine and pints of beer in a smoke-filled, noisy and crowded environment until late at night. I remember putting on nail-varnish not only to look good but also to hide the traces of ashes from the ashtrays that we had to empty. However, for a teenager it was mostly fun. Work was party-time, chatting with the ‘regulars’, flirting with the boys, listening to the latest hits and earning money at the same time.

### **Initial Theoretical Reflections**

These memories on service work from a bygone past, lead me to several reflections. Even since my childhood, *fundamental transformations* have taken place as we have moved from a post-industrial to a post-modern



society (Kumar, 1995). The story about the *dyery* seems to date from a different world, with a different division of labour in the labour market and in the family, before the dominance of mass production and 'the throw-away society', with outdoor toilets, and where the weekly bath was taken in a *dyery* tub. It is hard to believe that this was only forty years ago. However, the pace and extent of these changes can be exaggerated. There are still marked continuities in employment relations, such as the persistence of gender segregation (Bradley, 1999) and a tendency to limit work to paid labour.

Although service work can be described by its distinct characteristics, it is *heterogeneous*. Indeed, it has been referred to as a pretty vague ragbag of occupations (Lyon, 1994: 40). For the most part, studies on service work have either focused on the 'service proletariat', that is low-skill, low-paid jobs, or to a lesser extent on the 'service class' (Goldthorpe, 1982), that is persons with university or college degree in high-skill, high-income jobs. Indeed, current literature tends to present a polarized pattern of service work that I will come back to (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996).

Service workers have to perform in front of an 'audience' – the customers or clients. Often, the customer takes part in this performance. A central theme in the works of Goffman is how actors cope with potentially awkward situations through interaction rituals (Goffman, 1967). In service work there is a difference between the public rooms where the customers are served, and rooms that are reserved for the employees, such as stock-rooms, wardrobes, offices and restrooms. Goffman described this as front stage and backstage (Goffman, 1980). In the encounters with the customers, service workers have to present a professional 'mask', behind the

scene they can let the mask fall. Pulling off a performance front stage can be fun, but might also take its toll and carry invisible strain.

My memories as a lower level service worker are both related to the *task-based* and *emotional/relational* aspects of work. The amount and intensity of emotions that were required varied according to the nature of the service interactions and the service context. Emotional job demands, however, are mostly invisible and have not been a primary focus in traditional models of sociology of work (Grint, 1991; Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996; Wood, 1992). The same is true for the sexualized aspects of work, that is, how body, physical appearance and performance are part of the service ‘product’ (Adkins, 1992; 1995; Brantsæter & Widerberg, 1992). During the 1990s, however, such issues have been moved to centre stage in more studies. I will come back to this later.

The *characteristics of the workforce* in service occupations contribute to the shaping of working conditions. For instance, at the disco where I worked, gender, youth and heterosexuality were important in this respect. Workers’ personal characteristics are firmly linked to their ‘suitability’ for certain service occupations and continue to increasing levels of stratification within the service labour force (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996). Traditionally, women have been expected to do more emotion work both at home and at work. Interpersonal skills required in service transactions have often been regarded as the talents of women, a characteristic that all women possess. Women are over-represented in boundary-spanning service occupations that require emotional or bodily ‘standby’. They have to be there when the customer needs them and it is often difficult to draw a demarcation line and have a ‘room of one’s own’. In contrast, many men in service jobs are often found in more sheltered positions without

constant ‘exposure’ to customer or clients.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, men are usually not expected to be as nurturing and caring as women (Hochschild, 1983; Pierce, 1995). Thus, service work is divided into gendered contexts where there tend to be different job demands and expectations for women and men.

Today the service sector employs the majority of the workforce in Western industrialized countries, but service work has not assumed an equally important place in mainstream sociology studies on paid labour. One interpretation is that this reflects the number of male researchers, and how service work has been seen as ‘women’s work’. Although researchers have acknowledged the growing importance of service work, they have to a large extent failed to recast models that were derived from manufacturing (Gadrey, 1994; Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996). Thus, a vital feature of the service labour process, the social interaction between service provider and service receiver, has not been sufficiently captured (Urry, 1990). Indeed, the classical sociological studies by ‘founding fathers’ focused on implicit or explicit emotional themes. Marx discussed how social, historical and material conditions led to feelings of alienation and estrangement under the capitalist mode of production. Durkheim analyzed the collective nature of human feelings and manifestations in the form of rituals. He noted a sense of unease and uncertainty (anomie) among those affected by the new division of labour. Weber specified the nature of western rationalization, the Protestant ethic, the bureaucratic administrative style, as well as the charismatic leader. Simmel wrote about the empowerment of emotion over reason in many aspects of life, and his

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<sup>1</sup> See Solheim (1998) for a discussion of gender and body as symbolic structures of meaning in modern culture, where female bodies stand out as more ‘open’ and with a ‘lack of boundaries’ in relation to men.

‘programme’ was to study patterned interactions and how they occur in different cultural settings over time. Furthermore, he sensed that a society of strangers would produce new social isolation and fragmentation.

Later generations of sociologists also touched on human relations between service providers and recipients and changes in social character. Some landmarks include Whyte’s study from the restaurant industry (Whyte, 1948), Blau’s study on the interaction between bureaucrats and their clients (Blau, 1955), Mill’s study of white-collar work (Mills, 1956), Whyte’s study of *‘Men at Work’* and their routine and largely unemotional lives (Whyte, 1961), and Riesman’s *‘The Lonely Crowd’* (1950) on emotions and type of character. Bell (1976: 488) has been widely cited for his vision of the post-industrial society where he envisaged a new era with *‘games between persons rather than games with fabricated nature’*. These studies called attention to forces that led to increased attention to others on the job. Primarily, these theorists were not concerned with topics such as emotions, gender, well-being or burnout. In fact, several sociological accounts of service work continued to focus on the task-based elements of service work rather than the relational aspects. For example, Braverman’s (1974) groundbreaking work on labour-process theory focused on the speeding up and deskilling of clerical work, leaving workers with tasks requiring little discretion. I will come back to more recent contributions in the debate on the transformation from material to relational aspects at work later. First, I will underscore that some of the sociological literature conveys a somewhat limited conception of the strain involved in this kind of work. Offe (1985: 101), for instance, refers to ‘the optimistic development hypothesis’ which states that due to the transformation from managing tools and material to managing symbols and interactions with people, the *‘strain on the individual worker will be*

*eased*'. This illustrates a somewhat limited sociological repertoire related to service work where strain appears to be synonymous with hard physical work alone.

### **Purpose and Research Focus**

In this thesis I provide a framework for studying the nature and impact of emotional labour in interactive service jobs. The term '*interactive service work*' denotes work that involves direct interactions between workers and recipients (Leidner, 1991: 1), and usually requires some form of '*emotional labour*'. Emotional labour, a term coined by Hochschild (1983: 7), has been defined as '*the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display*' and '*create feeling states in others*'. Hence, this is work where the employee is paid to smile, laugh, be polite, deferential, caring, cool, persuasive or stern. In short, emotion management becomes a tool of labour. Emotion work is important in different ways for men and women (p. 163). Women are often assigned the task of 'being nice' whereas men traditionally have been assigned the role of aggressor with respect to those who break the rules. Even when women and men hold the same position there are different job demands (Pierce, 1995).

Hochschild (1983) highlighted the human costs to employees who had to feign emotion they did not feel. The detrimental effects included alienation, lack of authenticity, work overload, exhaustion and burnout.<sup>2</sup> In recent quantitative studies emotional labour has been implicated as a

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<sup>2</sup> Hochschild did not herself provide a definition of emotional exhaustion and burnout but referred to Maslach and her conceptualization of burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment (see for instance Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

cause of increased emotional exhaustion (Morris & Feldman, 1996). In a broad sense, emotional exhaustion has been identified as a form of job stress related to customer interaction, and considered a key component of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being overextended and drained by one's contact with other people in service interactions (Burke & Greenglass, 1995a; Cherniss, 1980b; Maslach & Jackson, 1984). In some definitions physical exhaustion is also mentioned as a component (Perlman & Hartman, 1982: 293). In contrast to the initial conceptualization, there is growing consensus and empirical support for the view that emotional exhaustion is the core feature of burnout (Dietzel & Courtsey, 1998). This construct has been widely used as an indicator in the psychological burnout literature among human service professionals (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Recently, more attention has been given to work stress as an alternative cause of emotional exhaustion (Koeske & Koeske, 1993). Thus, the construct may be useful outside the prototypical care occupations.

The initial literature on emotional labour has been criticized for having a negative bias because it omits the joy that can be derived from this kind of work (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Wouters, 1989a). Indeed, researchers have argued for a more balanced view, including both joy and strain, and recent research on emotional labour draws attention to *under what types of conditions* emotional labour is likely to have negative impact (Fineman, 1993a). Control at work and job involvement have been mentioned as key factors in this respect (Wharton, 1993). However, few studies have focused on how contextual factors related to the policies of organizations and restructuring have an impact on emotional labour and emotional exhaustion (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Furthermore, the possibility of there being 'costs' and joy at the same time seems to be less

discussed in the literature (Sturdy, 1998; Wouters, 1989a). Thus, the concept of ambivalence, having both of two contrary values or meanings (Bauman, 1991), might transcend the dichotomy of negative or positive effects. Current transformation of work can lead to opportunity and overload at the same time. This situation leads to many dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes, and bearing this in mind I will attempt to answer four main questions in this study:

1. *To what extent and how does service work vary across labour market regimes?*
2. *Do emotional labour and emotional exhaustion differ across work settings?*
3. *What is the impact of emotional exhaustion on service employees and their interaction with customers and clients?*
4. *How is emotional labour experienced in the working lives of customer advisers in restructured positions in banking?*

1. The literature on service work presents a polarized picture and hitherto the bulk of the case studies on emotional labour have been American or British. The Scandinavian countries exemplify an extreme case of a gendered, welfare state service-led trajectory. The term employment regime can be considered shorthand for a set of interlocking processes related to the labour market (sectoral and occupational structure), welfare states, educational systems and collective bargaining institutions. *How does (interactive) service work differ in number and trajectory across employment regimes in different countries? What are the specific characteristics of Norway as a case?*

2. Few studies have compared emotional labour in different types of care work and other types of interactive service work. *Do emotional labour and emotional exhaustion vary across care work and other types of interactive service work? What factors contribute to emotional exhaustion – is it mainly a question of the nature of customer interaction, or other job-related or contextual factors?*
3. Hitherto, only a few studies have addressed the impact of emotional exhaustion, especially on organizational outcomes. As emotions become important as a competitive edge, emotional exhaustion might represent invisible costs to companies. *What is the impact of emotional exhaustion for the employees and their interaction with customers and clients?*
4. The issues raised in the previous three points will be explored in a case study from banking. Increased competition, new technologies and organizational restructuring place new job demands on workers, such as increased work pace, and having to learn and master new skills. Moreover, the politics of downsizing and outsourcing have made jobs less secure. *What do interactive service workers in restructured, insecure positions experience as joy, strain and pressing dilemmas, particularly in their customer interactions?*

I try to address imbalances in the literature by studying interactive service work in a broad context by including structural conditions as well as individual work experiences from particular workplaces. My primary focus is on the nature and impact of emotional labour in light of the current transformation of work. In particular, I will draw attention to two key problems or imbalances in this field. First, although the number of case studies on emotional labour has been growing, there is a need for more



studies beyond those that are dominated by variations in domestic work, especially retail, health care, business services and the clerical work field (Bernhardt, 1998). Second, at a general level, there is an almost total disjuncture between qualitative research that examines individual workplaces, and quantitative research that examines structural conditions in the labour market. My study attempts to fill both these gaps. The material in this study encompasses international labour-force statistics, a national representative study of the Norwegian labour force and data that was compiled especially for this study. My own sample comes from three types of interactive service work; a retail bank, a shopping mall and a care agency for the elderly. These cases were chosen due to their interest from a theoretical point of view, as they differ when it comes to external conditions and the nature of the interaction with customers. This study was part of an intervention project where a primary aim was to measure effects of interventions. Thus, the care agency was also interesting from a practical point of view as two interventions were about to be implemented to increase health at work. To facilitate the presentation, I have tried to illustrate differences between the cases within two important dimensions, intensity of customer interaction and degree of restructuring and automation.

The care agency for the elderly is part of the public welfare sector providing help and well-being, predominantly to frail elderly people. The bank and the shopping mall belong to the private sector where emotional labour is a means to increase sales and profits. All three companies have been subject to restructuring in the wake of globalization, deregulation and new management strategies. Undoubtedly, one could discuss what is a high or low degree of restructuring. As I see it, however, there is a qualitative difference between the bank and the other work settings in this

respect. The bank went through a crisis in the late 1980s with state intervention, and has been through a thorough upheaval, with automation and a substantial number of redundancies during the last decade. Furthermore, more reduction of personnel is expected in the near future. In contrast, there are no such plans in the shopping mall and there is lack of personnel in the care agency.

*Figure 1.1 Nature of customer interaction and degrees of restructuring in the bank, mall and care agency.*

|  |      |  |             |
|--|------|--|-------------|
| Degree of automation,<br>restructuring, downsizing | High | Bank   |             |
|  | Low  | Shopping mall                                      | Care agency |
|  |      | Low  | High        |
|  |      | Intensity of interaction with customers or clients |             |

As illustrated in the figure, these three cases represent interactive service work with varying intensity of customer or client contact (as well as varying duration, but this factor is not included so that the illustration does not become too crowded). In care work of the elderly, many employees are involved in daily and intimate body contact, and form long-term relationships with their clients. In the bank and the shopping mall, customer interactions also take place face-to-face but are more distant, often consisting of short interaction spells between strangers. In all these three work settings women carry out the bulk of the frontline work.

## Overview of the Thesis

A thesis can be compared to a meal and in my case it consists of ten courses. After the starter comes the first course (Chapter 2). I start by presenting two perspectives on service work, ‘service management’ and ‘emotion management’, representing two positions which have had conceptual influence. Chapter 3 contains a review of how the field of emotional labour has developed in the last 15 years. In the next chapter I address gaps in the literature and present a conceptual framework for studying emotional labour and emotional exhaustion in interactive service work. In Chapter 5 I describe how this thesis is part of a larger research programme, ‘Health in Working Life’, funded by the Norwegian Research Council. Chapter 5 also includes a description of the other data sets, the methods used in data collection and a discussion of the material and the design.

In order to provide a framework that can illuminate the subsequent analyses, I begin the empirical section with an analysis of employment patterns across selected countries, and I then take a closer look at Norway. Chapter 7 contains the analysis of the data on emotional exhaustion, collected especially for this dissertation, among a sample of retail clerks, retail bank clerks and public health care workers. In Chapter 8 I discuss the impact of emotional exhaustion on the employees and their interaction with customers or clients. To shed further light on the work experience of interactive service workers in restructured and insecure positions, I present a case study from banking in Chapter 9. The ‘dessert’ has several ingredients. First, I recall my intellectual odyssey and identify strands in current sociological debates on work. Second, I relate my findings to my conceptual framework and consider the implications of this study.



## 2. THE SOCIOLOGY OF SERVICE WORK: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

*'In the case of manufactured products it is normally clear just what the product consists of. In many service industries this is not nearly so straightforward (Urry, 1990: 67).*

### Introduction

As the quotation above illustrates, service work and its dimensions have been difficult to capture through traditional models of work based on production of goods. To discuss the 'vocabulary' of service work I will present two complementary conceptual frameworks; a management perspective and a sociological perspective, 'service management' and 'emotion management'. Both take the relational aspects of service work as their point of departure, and were developed in the early 1980s. My rationale for choosing this point of departure is twofold: 1) The two strands represent two different positions from an ontological point of view crystallized into issues related to management, power and gender. 2) These perspectives have had considerable influence and led to important concepts and conceptual frameworks related to the unique characteristics of interactive service work.

The word 'service' comes from Latin 'servus' which means slave or servant. In English and the Romance languages another connotation of the word has been to serve God, king, state or the public (Robert, 1978; Webster, 1996). In current Norwegian the concept is used to express a paid service delivery containing tangible or intangible elements, or

something which is free of charge, e.g. the way a customer is treated in a service transaction. To provide quality service the service provider has to be competent and provide that little extra so that the recipient feels valued and welcome (Hvinden, 1986). In some ways, service work has been a residual category for work that could not be classified as either ‘primary’ (extractive) or ‘secondary’ (productive) work (Offe, 1985: 104). This is reflected in the way we define service work, for example how service labour produces *non-material* outcomes which *cannot* be stored or transported. The characteristic that clients or customers must be ‘present’ or ‘co-productive’ in most service activities is the only exception to this.

This chapter begins with a discussion of two different ways of conceptualizing service work. I start with some intellectual influences before I outline issues that were important in these perspectives. I then discuss themes that have been examined, before I, to the best of my knowledge, introduce a new way of addressing these perspectives – an analysis of metaphors and symbols in these texts. I conclude by identifying gaps and imbalances in these frameworks.

### **The Service-Management Perspective**

Service management is not a well-delineated concept or discipline but rather a perspective. It is an overall management perspective that draws insights from a wide source of inspiration from business practice and marketing to organizational theory and economics (Grönroos, 1994). This perspective initially emphasized how service work differed from traditional manufacturing and how the nature of work had been transformed from material to relational aspects. Inspired by service marketing, American (Bowen & Schneider, 1988; Lovelock, 1983; Mills &

Margulies, 1980) and Scandinavian (Grönroos, 1984; Normann, 1983) researchers carved out a niche called ‘service management’ in the early 1980s. The primary focus in the early writings was to highlight the unique characteristics of service work, and their implications for design and management of service organizations, in particular how to increase effectiveness (Nesheim, 1989; Normann, 1983).

The service-management theorists described the prototypical service in terms of several dimensions<sup>3</sup> (see for example Bowen, Siehl, & Schneider, 1989; Grönroos, 1990; Normann, 1983; Zemke & Schaaf, 1989), the most cited of which are: (1) Service products are intangible. This means that services consist of acts and processes that one cannot see, touch, hear or taste, they are perishable ‘experiences’ that have to be consumed on the spot. (2) The service employee and customer interact and the service is produced at the ‘*moment of truth*’<sup>4</sup> where the customer meets an employee front stage (Normann, 1983: 18). (3) Production and consumption occur *simultaneously*, so that it is often difficult to draw a line between production and consumption of services. I will now discuss the interrelated features of intangibility, perishability, inseparability and simultaneity in more detail.

Unlike tangible products, services are performances that take place in the field, and people are part of the product. Although services are perform-

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<sup>3</sup> The services versus goods debate has later waned, and it has gradually become evident that services are growing in importance for manufacturing as well (Brown, Fisk, & Bitnes, 1994; Grönroos, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> This notion was coined by the service-management consultant/scholar Richard Normann in the 1970s (Normann, 1983). Jan Carlzon, former C.E.O. of Scandinavian Airline Systems, used this as the title of his book (Carlzon, 1987). The concept has been widely cited in the service-management literature and has also become part of everyday language in services.

ances that are perishable and cannot be stocked, they may include tangible elements. Advocates of the service-management literature made a distinction between the 'core service' and 'peripheral' or 'additional services' (Normann, 1983: 37). When a customer buys a plane ticket, the flight from one place to another represents the core service. Customer satisfaction, however, also depends on the interaction with the front-stage personnel who are providing peripheral services, such as booking and check-in, and the performance of the flight attendants.

The social interaction between service provider and service recipient is crucial in service work (cf. the expression 'moment of truth' that will be discussed later in this chapter). Thus, there is no clear division between the product, the labour process and the employee. Both the behaviour and appearance of the service provider are seen as a part of the service experience (Schneider & Bowen, 1985). Service providers and their characteristics *are* the service. Moreover, the customers become co-producers or partial employees as they serve themselves or co-operate with service personnel (Mills & Morris, 1986; Wikström, 1992). In high-contact services the customer might also come into contact with other customers that might influence their evaluation of the service delivery. As services mostly are consumed on the spot, social interaction is crucial in the creation of value, and calls for new patterns of communication inside and outside the firm (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1988; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990). Trust is a key word when social interaction is a crucial aspect. Managers have to find ways to mobilize frontline personnel as well as find ways to educate customers. In this way the service-management perspective represents business logic based on relational aspects. There was a shift in focus from operations to customer relationships, from short to long-term relationships, and to total customer-per-



ceived quality (Grönroos, 1994; Zeithaml et al., 1990). After the initial focus on the distinctiveness of services, attention was given to differences between different types of services.

Service organizations represent a heterogeneous array of activities (Lovell, 1983; Mills & Margulies, 1980), and managers will often tend towards using either a production-line approach or an ‘empowerment’ approach, depending on the nature of the service transaction (Bowen & Lawler, 1995). These strategies may also be referred to as automation and customization. Computerized programs or techniques of routinization are examples of the former strategy, and can be found in fast food restaurants or movie theatres. The latter strategy, tailoring services to fit the needs of the individual customer, is used when the service is more complex and the transaction requires more flexibility, such as in health care or a real estate agency.

From what has been called the ‘walking-erect phase’ from 1986 and onwards, service management as a perspective is now prospering (Brown et al., 1994). This perspective has had a novel impact on transdisciplinary research (Grönroos, 1994). I have not attempted to review this broad field exhaustively, rather I present some central concepts to elaborate on my analysis.

### ***Critiques of the Service-Management Perspective***

The service-management perspective has yielded important insights and led to new concepts, such as face-to-face interaction, intangibility, perishability, inseparability and simultaneity in production and consumption, but this approach also has some limitations. First, the dichotomy between manufacturing and service work has been contested. As later generations

of service-management researchers acknowledged, the difference between manufacturing and services is not as clear-cut as the initial accounts implied. However, from a pedagogical point of view, I think it was useful to highlight the unique characteristics of service work in the beginning. In the wake of recent transformations of work, new technology has had great influence on competence and service matters in most jobs. Consequently, machines have replaced some service providers, but, on the other hand, several manufacturing firms are adding service elements. In fact, some researchers have begun to refer to ‘service elements’ of a business or ‘services’ instead of the service sector (Grönroos, 1990). Second, the emphasis on prototypical service was questioned almost immediately by some of the writers on service management. Their contribution consisted of taxonomies of different types of service work (Lovelock, 1983; Mills & Margulies, 1980). Third, as I see it, service management tends to become a question of social engineering, and fails to address the political aspects of (service) management, such as inequality, conflict, domination, subordination and manipulation (Thompson & McHugh, 1990). Such features have been called the darker sides of management (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). Fourth, the costs of service production, be they individual, such as overload and lack of well-being, or organizational, such as absenteeism or pollution, have not been properly addressed. Finally, organizations are treated as ‘emotionless’, gender-neutral entities (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). This contrasts with recent works which focus on how work organizations are emotional arenas (Fineman, 1993b), and have gender regimes (Acker, 1994b) that are closely tied to the notion of masculinity in organizations (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Mills & Tancred, 1992). Generally, I think these critiques are to the point and raise important issues. In light of recent theoretical development in organizational theory, I will

elaborate on the final point through my re-analysis of the service-management literature focusing on key metaphors and symbols.

### *On Metaphors and Symbols*<sup>5</sup>

The service-management researchers write from the perspective of an abstract, gender-neutral worker (Mills & Tancred, 1992). However, when re-reading some of the main contributions to the service-management school, I realized that they contained metaphors from various *masculine sports and combat arenas* (Forseth, 1998b). The notion of ‘the moment of truth’ stems from ‘la corrida de toros’ (bullfight) and denotes the ultimate encounter between the bull and the bullfighter (Normann, 1983). This is a life-or-death combat between a male human being and a male animal.<sup>6</sup> In a service context the service encounter is seen as a matter of ‘life or death’, e.g. a sale (or profit). The service provider has to enter into ‘combat’ and try to ‘read’ the needs of the customer. The service provider is often referred to as one of the ‘frontline personnel’ who has to be ‘mobilized’ to provide the firm's competitive edge (Normann, 1983). These are military metaphors. In the army, the first position in the field is that of the frontline soldier. This is often hard, risky work where death in combat is always a possibility. Thus, physically moving away from the frontline is a way of increasing your chances of survival, as well as stepping up the military career ladder. Transferred to a service context, frontline work is physically and psychologically demanding and it carries occupational

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<sup>5</sup> This section has been inspired by a doctoral symposium on Gender, Science and Technology arranged by the Centre for Technology and Science (1997), and a seminar on post-structuralism at the Centre for Women's Studies (1998), both held at the Norwegian University for Science and Technology, Trondheim.

<sup>6</sup> Just recently Spain, for example, has seen its first authorized female bullfighter (Pink, 1997). Female performers, however, are a contested phenomenon in the bullfighting world, and this is still heatedly debated in contemporary Spain.

hazards, both visible and invisible. These might include monotonous, repetitive work, low decision latitude, overload and emotional stress in customer relationships (Forseth, 1995b; 1998a). Furthermore, moving away from the ‘front’ is seen as advancement because you get to communicate with peers backstage (Forseth, 1995a; Goffman, 1980).

My analysis of these metaphors illustrates how this literature is filled with masculine imagery, and how such metaphors constrain and prescribe (Gheradi, 1995; Haste, 1993). As I see it, there is a clear tension or contrast between this imagery and the emphasis on interpersonal skills that is required at the ‘moment of truth’, for example care, empathy, compassion and deference. These, interestingly enough, are ‘stereotypical’ feminine characteristics. Is this a way of making such work more acceptable to male workers? Or, perhaps this just reflects how these male authors use metaphors from sports and combat arenas that seem gender-neutral, but indeed are gendered, through a gendered lens (Morgan, 1994). The gendered nature of service work is not discussed. One might then fail to see that working conditions and opportunity structures (Kanter, 1977; Kvande & Rasmussen, 1990) are related to gender regimes in our societies as well as our work organizations (Acker, 1994b). Thus, language in itself is a powerful device that contributes to a ‘gendered’ construction of reality. This will be illustrated further through the gendered ‘view’ that is presented in the next approach - the emotion-management perspective.

### **The Emotion-Management Perspective**

In retrospect, Hochschild has been called a leader of the constructionist school in the sociology of emotion (Smith-Lovin, 1998). However, in the theoretical framework that she included in the appendix of *The Managed*

*Heart*, she took a more inclusive approach. She defined emotion as ‘bodily cooperation with an image, a thought, a memory – a cooperation of which the individual is aware’ (Hochschild, 1979: 551). Broadly speaking, approaches to emotions can be conceptualized on a continuum ranging from the ‘organismic’ at one end to the ‘social constructionist’ at the other, with ‘interactionist’ approaches in between (Hochschild, 1983; 1990). Organismic theories focus on biological processes, instincts and physical responses. Key figures that Hochschild drew upon included Charles Darwin, William James and the early Sigmund Freud. From the works of John Dewey, Hans Gerth, C. Wright Mills and Erving Goffman, Hochschild discovered an interactional model. The interactional model does not deny biology but social factors become important ‘through codification, management, and expression’ (Hochschild, 1983: 207). In the social constructionist model, on the other hand, biology does not enter into emotion as a causative force, as all the ‘ingredients’ are social (Harré & Parrott, 1996; Hochschild, 1990). In line with the interactional model, Hochschild focused on four elements of emotion that we usually experience at the same time: (a) appraisal of a situation, (b) changes in bodily sensations, (c) the free or inhibited display of expressive gestures, and (d) a cultural label applied to specific constellations of the first three elements (Hochschild, 1990: 119).

A hallmark of Hochschild’s work is how she opened up the field of emotion management by coining the term ‘emotional labour’. She defined this term as ‘the management of feelings’<sup>7</sup> to create a publicly observable facial

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<sup>7</sup> In English there is a distinction between feelings and emotions (Fineman, 1996:292). A feeling is ‘essentially the subjective experience – which is at the heart of most definitions of emotion’. Emotions are ‘personal displays of affected, or “moved” or “agitated” states – such as joy, love, fear and anger’.

and bodily display', or 'the work of trying to feel the right feeling for the job' (Hochschild 1983:7, 1990:118). Emotional labour is exchanged for a wage and therefore has exchange value. Emotion work refers to the same acts performed outside paid work where they have use value (Hochschild, 1983:7). Both these two terms, as well as emotion management, have been used to describe this perspective (Hochschild, 1990). In contrast to prevailing views on actors as '*conscious, cognitive*' or '*unconscious, emotional*', understood as bloodless calculators or blind expressers of uncontrolled emotions, Hochschild introduced a third type: The emotional labourer, described as the '*sentient actor*' who is both conscious and feeling (Hochschild, 1975: 283). Hochschild stated that jobs requiring emotional labour involve 1) Direct face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact with customers; 2) The employees are expected to produce an emotional state in the customer; and 3) The employer has the opportunity to exert some control over the emotional expressions of the workers. Emotional labour operates through 'feeling rules'. These are control mechanisms about what feeling is appropriate for a given social interaction. For instance, managers will usually expect their employees to treat customers in a particular way. Thus, the smile of the flight attendants and '*the emotional style of offering the service becomes a part of the service itself*' (Hochschild, 1983: 5).

The workers can, according to Hochschild, use two strategies: *Surface acting* and *deep acting* (Hochschild, 1983). In surface acting the workers change feeling from the 'outside in'. In deep acting, the workers change feeling from the 'inside out'. In the first case, one alters the surface performance in order to feel different. By smiling and pretending to be cheerful, the service provider actually might cheer up and be friendly. In deep acting, more than surface appearance has to be changed. There are

several types of deep acting, such as taking long deep breaths, talking to oneself, visualizing and so forth. The flight attendants were encouraged to engage in such deep acting in order to provide that little extra for the passengers. For instance, one flight attendant used this technique when she had to deal with drunken passengers. *'He is probably drinking too much because he is afraid of flying. He is like a little child when he is yelling at me'* (Hochschild, 1983: 90). This helped her cope with her anger. Central to Hochschild's theory was that emotional labour jobs were more common in service work, in middle-class work and in women's work. In particular, management of emotion had become an added qualification for female participation in the labour force. As the next paragraph illustrates, female flight attendants represent one *'extreme of occupational demand on feeling'* (p. 16) where women are in the majority.

For each gender a different portion of the 'managed heart' is enlisted for commercial purposes, according to Hochschild (1983). Traditionally women are more likely to be presented with the task of mastering anger and aggression in the service of 'being nice' (I will come back to this in Chapter 3). They are preferred for jobs where they can affirm or enhance the well-being and status of others, by looking nice, by smiling, and by being deferential and polite. Men are often assigned the task of being 'nastier than natural' to those who break rules of various sorts, or being cool, impassive or stern (Cockburn, 1991). Here Hochschild points to how different contexts 'produce' different expectations for male and female employees. In her study, Hochschild illustrated her initial framework through the study of flight attendants and, rather sketchily, bill collectors. Hochschild also described how, but often less noticed, the general subordination of women leaves every individual women with a weaker *'status shield'* against the displaced feelings of others (Hochschild, 1983:

163). Thus, even if women and men held the same position, women were said to be more subject to verbal abuse from customers. How can the individual service provider cope when emotions turn into ‘commercialized feelings’ that have to be managed?

Workers may, according to Hochschild (1983: 187), take three different stances with respect to their work, each with a degree of risk. In the first, the worker identifies wholeheartedly with the job, and therefore risks stress and burnout. In the second, the worker clearly distinguishes between herself and the job and is less likely to suffer burnout. She may, however, blame herself for making this distinction where she becomes *‘just an actor, not sincere’*. In the third stance, the worker draws a line between herself and her act and does not blame herself for this. On the contrary, she sees the job as positively requiring the capacity to act but there is a danger of estrangement and cynicism about being illusion makers. Although this estrangement might be a useful defence against stress, it is also an important (and invisible) occupational hazard. The first stance is potentially the most harmful, but in all three the lack of control over working conditions aggravates the situation. This illustrates how Hochschild was also influenced by the Marxist notion of alienation. The crux of the matter was that an emotional labourer might be estranged or alienated from personal feelings, just like physical labourers could become alienated from their work because they did not control the work product or the work process.<sup>8</sup> When the act of expressing organizationally desired emotions during service transactions becomes important as a competitive edge, the emotions and the smile of the employees might turn

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<sup>8</sup> Thus, emotional exhaustion in service work can be interpreted as a new turn of the earlier debate on alienation in manufacturing work (also see Engelstad, 1990; Sivesind, 1998 for a discussion on alienation in different work contexts).



into ‘commercialized feelings’ – a commodity that has to be controlled. There have always been public service jobs, but what was new was that they were ‘*socially engineered and thoroughly organized from the top*’ (Hochschild, 1983: 8). With the growth in the service economy and increased competition, emotion management had gained more importance.

### ***Critiques of the Emotion-Management Perspective***

The emotion-management approach has been subject to criticism, and briefly I will review some major points here. *The Managed Heart* was a profoundly explorative book with vivid accounts of how the life of emotional labourers was shaped by their social environment. However, the book has been criticized because there was no fit between theoretical framework and the data generated to deal with it (Smith-Lovin, 1998). Bearing this in mind, Smith-Lovin claimed that Hochschild failed to illustrate how emotional labour was related to social structure. Moreover, participant observation methods could not generate evidence on the following propositions (Smith-Lovin, 1998): 1) Emotional labour jobs are more common in service work, in middle-class work and in women’s work. 2) Emotional management as labour alienates workers from their true feelings by destroying the emotions’ signal value about the self’s relationship to the social environment. Interestingly, Hochschild’s work is often cited to establish these relationships. The negative picture, that is the degree of alienation resulting from wearing a company-prescribed mask, has been said to be somewhat overstated (Fineman, 1993a; Wouters, 1989a; 1989b). She has also been criticized for relying on the notion that there is a true self beyond the one that has been commercialized (Wouters, 1989b). Others have criticized the lack of a broad historical context (Newton, Handy, & Fineman, 1995), for instance, the ten-

dency to understate the extent of ‘informalization’ during the last hundred years or so (Wouters, 1992). These changes are sometimes referred to as the ‘permissive society’ where models of emotional exchange have become ‘*more varied, more escapable and more open for idiosyncratic nuances, thus less rigid and coercive*’ (Wouters, 1989b: 105). Finally, Hochschild has also been accused of treating social actors as passively shaped or manipulated by ‘feeling rules’ and structures, leaving little sense of individual agency (Lupton, 1998) and showing how flight attendants produce enactments of their ‘essential’ femininity (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

All in all, these critiques illustrate how Hochschild’s work resonates fundamental debates in sociology. It is beyond the scope of this presentation to do full justice to this but I will offer some brief comments from my own position. It is true that Hochschild did not test her theories in a quantitative manner but rather illustrated her conceptual model with accounts from her case studies. Thus, her work opened up for quantitative studies of emotional labour and for comparative studies across different types of service work. I also agree with the critique that Hochschild emphasized the costs for employees and thereby under-communicated the joy and the ambivalence involved in this kind of work. The lack of historical context illustrates the importance of time in a sociological analysis, as well as space or local context (a point that I will come back to in the next chapters). The debate on true self is complex. As Duncombe and Marsden (1998) suggest, too little research has been carried out on how individuals actually feel when they perform emotion work. Do they in fact see it as burdensome and alienating, or joyful and rewarding? Following their lead, perhaps there is a need to distinguish more clearly between real underlying feelings (‘authentic selves’) and an individual’s

*sense* of authenticity in relation to the core self and identity he or she has developed through earlier experiences. Thus, some individuals might derive their sense of authenticity from ‘core selves’ that others would claim to be inauthentic. Last, I understand the attack against Hochschild’s alleged lack of individual agency and an essentialist view on gender because she focused heavily on ‘feeling rules’ and the gendered nature of emotional labour. Thus, there was less explicit focus on variation and change. It might then appear that gender is something stable – an essentialist view not only related to biological gender but to social gender, so to speak. I do not think that this is the only interpretation. In fact, I think she provided some interesting examples of how gender is constructed in social interaction – one does gender and emotional labour at the same time. This will become clear in some of the examples in the recent literature on emotional labour in the next chapter (Adkins, 1995; Pierce, 1995). For more discussions on ‘doing gender’ in theory and ‘practice’ see, for instance, Duncombe and Marsden (1998) and Kvande (1999).

### ***On Metaphors and Symbols***

The title of Hochschild’s book, ‘*The Managed Heart*’ is a thought-provoking metaphor. The meaning of this metaphor is depicted by the vivid drawing on the cover: Big hearts are being consumed by a machine that turns them into tiny hearts, just like an assembly-line. This exemplifies how Hochschild straddles the biology-society divide (Williams, 1998). The heart is the essential part of an organism, distributing energy (i.e. pumping blood) to the various parts. The juxtaposition of something organic and a technological device, a machine, symbolizes how something organic and human is transformed and exploited at the workplace. These hearts, or rather the commercialized feelings, have become assets

at the service assembly-line level. Just like other production assets they have become subject to management control.

The concept of emotional labour was important because it drew attention to invisible job demands and interpersonal qualifications that had not been regarded as skills. Lower level, frontline work has usually been regarded as unskilled because it does not require formal credentials. However, in service work, interpersonal skills are an important factor in customers' perceptions of service quality. Such job demands and strains, however, are invisible. By using theatrical metaphors, such as surface and deep acting, Hochschild alluded to the skill and performance that is required in emotional labour. Other key terms such as 'feeling rules' and 'status shield', illustrated how power and social structure are linked to the performance of emotional labour, and that performance of emotional labour can be more arduous for subordinate groups. Employees have to cope with rules on appropriate feelings, as well as rules on grooming and dress to fit the 'image' of the company. Thus, this kind of work includes both an emotional and sexual dimension in addition to 'traditional' mental and physical aspects. Through her choice of metaphor, Hochschild helped us to find a new perspective on work and gendered modes of production. Moreover, she profoundly influenced the development of the sociology of emotions.

## **Conclusion**

Traditional models of (manufacturing) work have failed to capture relational, emotional and sexual dimensions in service work. Therefore, such aspects have remained hidden and not been acknowledged as either qualifications or strain. In recent years researchers have turned their attention

to the distinct characteristics of service work, and the central theme has been the relational nature of this kind of work. In this chapter I have argued that the service-management and emotion-management perspectives have brought more clarity to the debate by providing conceptual frameworks for defining and distinguishing central dimensions of interactive service work. As the two schools of thought highlight different aspects and contribute different images of actors and organizations, it is useful to contrast them. Nonetheless, neither of the two approaches has been regarded as belonging to the mainstream in academic writing. For the service-management perspective this is in part due to its applied use in service marketing and consultancy. For the emotion-management perspective this is in part due to the absence of emotion and alienation in the literature on work and organizations (Fineman, 1993a; Forseth, 1996). Furthermore, the sociology of emotion has only emerged as a distinct field in recent decades (cf. Chapter 3).

Central to the understanding of the service-management perspective is that service organizations differ in many important respects from manufacturing businesses, requiring a distinct, relational approach to managing and marketing. Initial research into services focused on four generic differences - intangibility, perishability of output, inseparability between 'producer' and 'product', and simultaneity of production and consumption. These characteristics are still cited, but have been criticized as over-generalizations. Furthermore, they do not apply to all services. The heterogeneity of services means that it is important to classify services into different categories. Moreover, researchers have proposed that we should speak of service elements or services, as manufacturing industries are adding more and more service elements. In line with other more mainstream management theories, issues of gender, emotion and the

political aspects of management, such as domination and subordination, have not been a central concern of service management. However, as I showed in my re-analysis of this literature, gender is implicitly written into the text by the use of masculine metaphors from combat and sports arenas. Clearly, the gender neutral (or gender-blind) position of the writers is not questioned or explicitly discussed. In a foreshadowing of the quantitative, empirical literature in the next chapter, gender is nothing but a ‘variable’. Thus, the service-management perspective and its logic can also be found in recent studies of emotional labour (see for instance (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

By contrast, gender, emotion and power are at the heart of the emotion-management perspective. This is a critical sociological perspective that introduced new ways of assessing ‘invisible’ emotional and gendered aspects of interactive service work and their cost for the employees, such as alienation and emotional exhaustion. Overall, Hochschild’s work has not escaped critical voices. She has been accused of overstating the negative consequences of emotional labour, underestimating recent processes of informalization, relying too heavily on the notion of a ‘true’ self, leaving too little room for individual agency and portraying a social essentialist version of gender. I think that several of these critics have raised important issues that are worth taking into consideration. I do not ignore these critiques, but I have tried to illustrate how alternative interpretations are possible. For instance, when discussing gender, both structures and individual agency are important, as gender is constructed on several levels (cf. Chapter 3). In my opinion, disregarding some of her ‘theoretical weaknesses’ or other limitations related to her lack of a broader context, Hochschild gave us important concepts that have made us think about service work in new ways. She also provided interesting

perspectives, in particular, invisible job demands, invisible strain and possible consequences for employees, have been brought to the forefront. Furthermore, she illustrated how emotion and gender were closely intertwined in such work. Thus, she contributed to the modern sociology of emotions and what is today a growing body of research.

Initially, the emotion-management perspective inspired numerous qualitative studies but recently we have seen the emergence of more quantitative studies. Emotion management and emotional labour have become an important issue in the developing field of the sociology of emotions. In the next chapter I will elaborate on this by discussing recent research on emotional labour as this underpins the analyses to come.





### 3. EMOTIONS AT WORK

*'Given the increasing demand for regulated emotional expression and the potential consequences of emotional labour, it is crucial that researchers continue to develop theories and measures that capture the complexities of emotion management as part of the work role' (Morris & Feldman, 1996: 1006).*

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is twofold, to discuss the literature on emotional labour after Hochschild's initial contribution and to establish my own position for this study. Hochschild's central concepts define the developing sociology of emotion for many non-specialists and are featured in most sociological research on emotions (Smith-Lovin, 1998).<sup>9</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, recent contributions draw a line between '*emotions as naturalistic or inherent*' and emotions as '*socially constructed*'.<sup>10</sup> Today, few sociologists would deny the biological underpinnings of emotions; the key question concerns how important it is (Kemper, 1990). To illustrate how the sociology of emotion has become crucial to our understanding of social life, I will briefly mention some watershed volumes before I return to my primary aim.

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<sup>9</sup> According to Smith-Lovin (1998) this was a question of timing but also the author's decision to put the theoretical work that underlies the study into four appendices. This made the book accessible to a wide audience outside the intellectual community.

<sup>10</sup> Psychologists have basically had the study of emotions to themselves, but in recent years there has been growing interest in this in the fields of anthropology and sociology. The proponents of the emotions as inherent, physiological, psycho-biological and psycho-revolutionary approaches, tend to take an essentialist view, seeing emotions as universal and inherent in all humans as equivalent to physical responses (Lupton, 1998).

In the sociology of emotions, 1975 has been described as a ‘watershed year’ that led to a ‘developmental take off’ in the 1980s (Kemper, 1990). Landmark texts include Hochschild’s work *The Managed Heart*, from an interactionist perspective, Denzin’s (1984) *On Understanding Emotions*, from a phenomenological perspective, Collins’s structural theories and models of ritual interaction (Collins, 1981), Kemper’s social relational theory of emotions (Kemper, 1981) and Lutz’ (1988) *Unnatural Emotions*, from a cultural perspective. Several edited collections have also been published in the last decade or so, including Franks and McCarthy’s (1989) *The Sociology of Emotions*, Kemper’s (1990) *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, Fineman’s (1993a; 1996) *Emotions in Organizations*, Harré and Parrot’s (1996) *The Emotions – Social, Cultural and Biological Dimensions*, James and Gabe’s (1996) *Health and the Sociology of Emotions*, Macdonald and Sirianni’s (1996) *Working in the Service Society* (on emotional labour in service work), Oatley and Jenkins’ (1996) *Understanding Emotions*, Bendelow and Williams’ (1998) *Emotions in Social Life*, and Lupton’s (1998) *The Emotional Self* (informed by a poststructuralist interest in discourse).<sup>11</sup>

The paragraph above illustrates that the sociology of emotions is a developing field<sup>12</sup>, and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into a comprehensive discussion of all the different approaches. The concept of emotion has been described as ‘*ephemeral, slippery, difficult to pin down*’ and it has been said that ‘*there is evidence of a major confusion in the academic study of the emotions*’ (Lupton, 1998: 5). I agree with those

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<sup>11</sup> For brief introductions to the sociology of emotions in Norwegian publications see Cato Wadel (1996) and Dag Album (1993).

who claim that emotions ought to be regarded as multi-dimensional complexes rather than things. They arise within relationships but they have a corporeal, embodied aspect as well as a socio-cultural one (Burkitt, 1997). Following Hochschild and her interactionist model, my primary interest lies in how emotions at work, in particular the concept of emotional labour, have been refined and used in different contexts. Thus, in this chapter I concentrate on three key issues in the legacy of Hochschild: (a) Emotional labour as a hidden dimension of work, (b) How gender is written into the performance of emotional labour and (c) The ‘costs’ of emotional labour for employees such as estrangement and emotional exhaustion. I use this division as an ordering framework in this chapter. I now prefer to use the term emotional labour rather than emotion management that I used for stylistic reasons in Chapter 2. In many contexts the two terms can be used interchangeably (see for instance (Hochschild, 1990)). In the rest of the chapter I will discuss how Hochschild’s conceptual framework has been refined and used in different contexts. First, I focus on the type of occupations that have been studied as emotional labour and recent re-conceptualization of the initial framework. Second, I elaborate on gender and emotional labour. Third, I discuss the uniform negative view on emotional labour in initial research and how this view has been contested in recent works. I conclude by identifying some gaps in existing frameworks and literature on emotional labour.

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<sup>12</sup> There is now a discussion group, Emonet, on emotions and organizations (for further details see *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 21, special issue on Emotions in Organizations, 2000).

## Reconceptualizing Emotional Labour and its Relevance in Different Occupations

Emotional labour, generally defined as the act of expressing organizationally desired emotions during service transactions, was initially conceptualized as a dichotomy (Hochschild, 1983), either jobs require or they do not require emotional labour (see appendices for Hochschild's sketch of occupations that are high in emotional labour). Hochschild's analysis inspired several studies, and emotional labour has been conceived as an important dimension in many occupations, especially occupations that traditionally were labelled 'women's work' (see footnote 15). Case studies have dominated, and some researchers have criticized some of them for repeating the same insight that Hochschild had – that people do emotion management (Smith-Lovin, 1998). The last decade, however, has witnessed a growth in survey studies.<sup>13</sup>

Generally, frontline work in lower level service occupations dominates in both qualitative and quantitative studies<sup>14</sup>, but recently some professional occupations including lawyers, real estate agents and nurses have also

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<sup>13</sup> There is a large body of literature on emotional exhaustion, especially in medicine and psychology, but with less or no focus on the concept of emotional labour.

<sup>14</sup> Some of the occupations include flight attendants (Hochschild, 1983; Wouters, 1989a), secretaries/clerical work (Pringle, 1988; Solbrække, 1999), fast-food workers and insurance sales agents (Leidner, 1991; 1993), retail clerks and supermarket cashiers (Rafaeli, 1989; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Soares, 1996a; Soares, 1996b; 1997a; 1997b; 1997c; 1998; 1998b; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988), sales work (Biggart, 1996; Lopez, 1996), waiters (Adelmann, 1989; Paules, 1996), amusement park workers and hotel staff (Adkins, 1992; Van-Maanen & Kunda, 1989), bank clerks and hospital workers (Erickson, 1991; Wharton, 1993), bank tellers (Seifert, Messing, & Dumais, 1997), bill collectors, military recruits and nurses (Morris, 1995; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Sutton, 1991), nursing and auxiliary nursing (Lee-Treweek, 1996; 1997; Smith, 1992; Turnipseed & Moore, 1997), paid and unpaid carework (James, 1989; 1992), domestic workers (Glenn, 1996; Macdonald, 1996; Rollins, 1996), legal work (Pierce, 1995; 1996a; 1996b), real estate (Wharton, 1996b), hair stylists (Gimlin, 1996), and heterogeneous samples of interactive service workers (Abiala, 1999).

been studied. I will now turn to how research after Hochschild's study on managed hearts has refined and developed the concept of emotional labour (cf. Chapter 9). I will start with a few Norwegian contributions in this field. In Norway the topic of emotional labour has so far been under-researched. One pioneer in this field is Bjørg Aase Sørensen at the Work Research. Together with her colleagues she has contributed important concepts and empirical data on emotional labour and its consequences in Norway in relation to transformation of work and gender aspects.<sup>15</sup>

*'Modern servanthood'* was coined as a term to capture changes and work experiences of many service employees in the private and public sectors in the 1990s such as police work, banking, retail trade, restaurants and clerical work (Grimsmo, Sørensen, & Løkke, 1992: 48). As a result of restructuring several jobs were routinized, strain and stress were related to management of emotions and to be the 'face' of the firm to the public, and increased insecurity in relation to what the future had in store. The employees were expected to sell new products with commitment and a smile, yet at the same time they experienced increased management control of the individual in the wake of restructuring. The outcome seemed to be loss of identity at work, new types of conflicts and challenges for collective coping (Sørensen & Grimsmo, 1996). The concept of emotional labour has been useful as a first step towards exploring the gendered division of labour and its consequences, such as the increase of fatigue and psychosocial symptoms in otherwise healthy female workers (Sørensen, 1999). Sørensen has also examined how the lines between work and workers become blurred in many knowledge-based service jobs. Thus, the individual becomes more visible but also more vulnerable.

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<sup>15</sup> In the 1980s several interesting concepts, such as the concept of the rationality of responsibility (Sørensen, 1982), and the concept of rationality of caring (Wærness, 1992) had impact on the way women and their lives were portrayed.

There is a risk of being trapped in the ‘honey-trap’ – it is sweet and gives energy but too much is fatal (Sørensen, 1993). In other words, the job offers exciting possibilities for self-affirmation and growth but there is a danger of becoming a workaholic and a ‘burnoutee’ (Sørensen, 1999; Sørensen, Rapmund, Fuglerud, Hilsen, & Grimsmo, 1998b).

In my own previous work I have been influenced by Hochschild’s conceptual framework. In a study of work environments among several types of high contact service workers, I documented that contrary to established assumptions, the working environment was arduous (Forseth, 1994; 1995b). I highlighted hidden emotional job demands as well as different kinds of coping repertoire. Emotional and relational aspects were especially underestimated as sources of stress. My study also indicated how managers’ belief systems had an influence on what was regarded as key dimensions in the working environment. Moreover, this research also illustrated how gender was closely related to emotional labour (Forseth, 1994; 1995a). For instance, the amount of stress and strain was ‘veiled’ because many women in lower level service occupations coped by working part time. Generally, the reason for this choice had been put down to their role as mothers and housewives and was not particularly seen in relation to a stressful working situation (for a further discussion see (Feldberg & Glenn, 1979; Kaul, 1996)). My informants reported that they often felt exhausted after work, like a ‘dishcloth’. At the same time their job had several positive aspects including the interaction with customers, clients or colleagues. This double-edged nature was captured in the notion of ‘joyful exhaustion’ (Forseth, 1995a; 1995b). Several complained that they experienced greater emotional stress in the wake of recent restructuring not only due to the restructuring itself but because the

introduction of new business concepts meant there was less time to spend on invisible emotional demands (Forseth, 1994; 1995a; 1995b).

In a recent study among female clerical workers, Solbrække (1999) explored the relationship between gender and competence in clerical work. One point of departure was how stereotypical female-related forms of production, such as intuition and emotions, increasingly play a decisive role in service- and customer-oriented production.<sup>16</sup> Thus, there is a shift from technical-economic skills to the embodiment of cultural codes. The important question is to what extent emotions and empathy can be valued in the paid labour market. Solbrække illustrated another important feature of the 'new' working life. Female clerks were expected to actively contribute to greater customer-orientation. At the same time they were subordinated to other people's time rhythms and task structures. Thus, the possibility of personal autonomy was in fact limited. Tensions between tailoring services in a personal manner versus yesterday's standardized procedures were identified among customer service personnel and switchboard operators. Such double-edged situations can manifest themselves as '*unwieldy inner states*' (p. 151) that can lead to chronic muscle aches and pains, and burnout in the long run.

Abroad, several researchers took Hochschild's work further and illustrated how organizations attempt to shape their 'image' by monitoring and controlling the emotions expressed by employees. Research has centred on norm and display rules for expressing emotions (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; 1989), the relationships between felt and expressed emotions

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<sup>16</sup> For a previous Norwegian study on the topic of invisible job demands see also Lie and Rasmussen (1983).

(Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989; 1990), variance in emotional displays (Sutton, 1991), the invisible nature of emotional labour and the relationship between it and the notion of women's work (James, 1989; 1992; Soares, 1996b; 1997c). For instance, the job as supermarket cashier is called non-qualified work, and qualifications are often related to stereotyped feminine characteristics.<sup>17</sup> This kind of work is characterized by rigid control of time, body, behaviour and emotions (Soares, 1996b; 1997c). Employees rarely question whether display rules are necessary, nor do they ask who reaps the benefits (Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Thus, emotional expressions become 'objectified' as part of an organizational system that seems inevitable and immutable.

### ***Dimensions of Emotional Labour***

Recent research has questioned the initial dichotomous framework of emotional labour, and discussed both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Some researchers (Morris, 1995; Morris & Feldman, 1996) have argued for a framework consisting of more specific dimensions, such as *frequency, intensity, variety and emotional dissonance*. Frequency of emotional display has been the most examined dimension of emotional labour. Indeed, the frequency of interaction between service providers and service recipients has been used as the key dimension to delineate between the amount of emotional labour in jobs. However, this dimension does not capture the complexity of emotional labour when it comes to level of planning, control or skill needed (Morris & Feldman, 1996). The intensity of emotional labour concerns the level of effort required to display appropriate emotions. Rapid encounters between strangers require less emotional effort and are often scripted or routinized. Checkout clerks

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<sup>17</sup> For a further discussion see Pringle's discussion of secretary work (Pringle, 1988).



in shops or fast-food workers are examples of such service transactions (Rafaeli, 1989). The variety of emotional display is a third dimension of emotional labour (Morris & Feldman, 1996). The greater the variety required, the greater the emotional labour involved. Service providers who have to alter the emotional expressions to fit situational context have to use more effort to plan and monitor their behaviour. In a study of bill collectors, Sutton (1991) illustrated how collectors were socialized and rewarded for conveying urgency (high arousal with a hint of irritation). Moreover, bill collectors were encouraged to adjust their expressed emotions in response to variations in debtor demeanour. Therefore, collectors sometimes experienced emotional dissonance. Emotional dissonance may be seen as the discrepancy between genuinely felt emotions and emotions that have to be displayed (Middleton 1989 cited in Morris & Feldman, 1996). Thus, workers might experience emotional dissonance when their job's display rules clash with their 'real' feelings. This factor has earlier been described as a consequence of performing emotional labour (Adelmann, 1989; Hochschild, 1983). Adelmann (1989), for instance, found that waiters who felt little emotional dissonance were more satisfied than those who had to express phoney smiles. However, Morris & Feldman (1996) claimed that this should be treated as the fourth dimension of the emotional labour construct. Emotional dissonance has been found to induce job tension leading, in turn, to emotional exhaustion (Abraham, 1999).

In short, customer or client interactions that are more direct (face-to-face), frequent, or of longer duration, or client problems that are chronic (versus acute) are considered to be more arduous for employees (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Moreover, intense or emotionally charged interactions, and a greater number of interactions will likely be more

demanding (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Emotional labourers who deal with more neutral or routine client or customer issues or have little face-to-face contact with people should experience less strain and stress. Consequently, it is important to make distinctions between qualitative and quantitative dimensions of emotional labour as well as the service context where it is performed (Forseth, 1999b; Forseth, 1999c).

One way of illuminating service contexts has been presented by Gutek (1995a; 1995b). Service interactions can be categorized into three distinct interaction types: *relationships*, *pseudo-relationships* and *encounters*. A *service relationship* is a particularistic interaction where the actors get to know each other and anticipate future interaction, and where the service can be customized, i.e. tailored to the specific needs of a particular customer. Service relationships are labour intensive, but the range and scope of services can be broad. In a *service encounter*, each provider is functionally equivalent, the scope of services is often narrow and there are standard and uniform procedures. This is a one-time interaction between strangers, where there is no expectation of future interaction. Encounters can be compared to mass production in service. In encounters, the service provider could perhaps be replaced by a medium such as automatic cash dispensers. Gutek and colleagues (1999) also refer to a hybrid type of interaction as a *pseudo-relationship*. Pseudo-relationships are repeated interactions between a customer and provider organization. They are not 'real' relationships because they take place between strangers. According to Gutek, service encounters are likely to carry more stress and strain than service relationships because they are more monotonous and leave less room for autonomy and offer few possibilities of development and advancement.

Gutek did not make a distinction between emotional labour performed for commercial purposes and emotional labour performed for the well-being of others. However, the construct of emotional labour has also been useful in studies of care work. Nurses were expected to be emotionally caring and display emotional styles similar to those of flight attendants (Smith, 1992). Irrespective of how nurses felt about themselves, the patients, their condition and circumstance, they had to work emotionally on themselves in order to appear to care. Nurses also worked emotionally for each other, and not only for the patients and the relatives. This illustrates that emotional labour can be a hidden part of all kinds of work (Wadel, 1984; 1996). Emotional labour in care work has been found to be just as hard as physical and technical labour, but it has been less recognized and valued (James, 1989; 1992). James suggested that the more common form of emotional labour is where its centrality and value are not recognized. She pointed out that low-paid, low-status women are often employed to manage the emotions of others, thereby facilitating the labour of others. In contrast, male professionals in medicine, the law and the church are examples of 'emotion managers' (Hearn, 1987, quoted in (James, 1989)), i.e. groups that set the parameters while others, usually female semi-professionals, do the work (see also Kvande, 1998). Thus, emotional labour seems to be subject to the professional division of labour. In fact, in a study of a hospice for the terminally ill, there was almost an inverse law of status and skill in emotional labour (James, 1992). Much of the emotional labour lay with the auxiliary care workers and not the younger nurses or the doctors' labour.<sup>18</sup> The invisibility of emotional labour, its association with family care, and the fact that it was poorly

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<sup>18</sup> See (Lindgren, 1992) on the division of labour between doctors, nurses and auxiliary nurses.

paid, contributed to its ambivalent status (James, 1992). The inverse relationship between emotional labour and status and autonomy was echoed in a study of nursing auxiliary work (Lee-Treweek, 1997). The author concluded that doctors had the least emotional labour demands, whereas auxiliary care workers had the most. Indeed, the auxiliary care workers used emotional labour as a means to empowerment in a subordinate position (Lee-Treweek, 1996). In addition to nurturing, their emotion work often involved negative emotional behaviour towards the residents, such as control and coercion. These were described as the hidden side of care. This illustrates that emotional labour is a covert resource, just like money, or knowledge or physical labour that is important in getting the job done (Hochschild, 1993).

In her recent works Hochschild (1993: ix) has expanded the notion of emotional labour to include *'knowing about and assessing as well as managing emotions, others people's as well as one's own'*. She illustrated her statement with the work of managers, advertising agents and personnel managers. However, there is a fundamental distinction between professional service employees, such as managers, doctors and lawyers, and low-end interactive service work. Guidelines for emotional labour among managers and professionals are self-supervised or generated collegially. On the other hand, frontline workers often are given detailed instructions on how to behave, speak and dress. Consequently, this category of workers has been labelled the *'emotional proletariat'* (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996: 3). This brings me to the next topic, how emotional labour differs for different social categories. My main focus will be on gender and emotional labour.

## Gender and Emotional Labour

Emotional labour is shaped by social institutions, social systems and power relations, and there is a social ordering of emotions that is related to position in the social structure and membership of social groups (Hochschild, 1983). Collins (1990) focused on the power involved in social interactions, and how order-givers derive 'emotional energy' due to their dominance. On the other hand, order-takers frequently experience loss of energy as their interests are being neglected or ignored. Thus, power, position and control are central dimensions in the study of emotions. In her study of fast-food workers at McDonald's and insurance agents, Leidner (1993; 1996) focused on routinization of interactive service work, especially how the service labour process was managed and routinized. Window crew, often young people, ethnic workers and women, were subject to several forms of control: A large number of supervisors performed direct control. Technical control was built into the computerized cash registers. Bureaucratic control was manifest in detailed sets of regulations on how to behave and what to say. In addition, these workers were subject to a fourth type of control: direct supervision by customers. Customers observed their work, made demands and could register complaints. This is what Fuller and Smith (1991) have labelled management by customers. This is a form of control that is constant yet elusive. Like the anonymous surveillance of the Panopticon (Foucault, 1979), workers never knew when anonymous mystery shoppers would do business with them (Fuller & Smith, 1991). Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) pointed out that management also used organizational culture as a controlling device. Compliance with feeling rules from management to be polite and service-minded, even under severe provocation, is likely to be grudging and insincere – to smile because one is told to (Alvesson &

Willmott, 1996: 108). These examples illustrate that the social characteristics of high contact service workers such as age, gender and ethnic background are part of the ‘product’ (see Chapter 2). Thus, management intervention into areas such as employee’s dress, speech and behaviour becomes legitimate. The result is that even the body becomes part of the service commodity. In the study of emotions, gender has been treated as a particularly significant differentiation (Kemper, 1990). Estimates of the American workforce in the early 1980s showed that about half of all working women held jobs with a substantial amount of emotional labour, whereas about a quarter of all working men were in emotional labour jobs (Hochschild, 1983).<sup>19</sup> Even if women and men hold the same position, women have been found to face different emotional job demands and to be easier targets for verbal abuse from customers due to their lack of ‘status shield’. With this concept, Hochschild alluded to how positional power and status traditionally have been related to men rather than women. As a result, women in subordinate positions are considered to occupy a more vulnerable position than men.

In a study on the tourist industry, Adkins (1992; 1995) found that women at tourist workplaces (an amusement park and a hotel) were obliged to carry out what she called sexual labour as a routine part of their job. The women were not exchanging sexual intercourse with men for money, but had to respond to sexual innuendoes and men’s advances by smiling, looking flattered and playing the game. Furthermore, the women had to comply with more detailed rules on dress than men did. For example, in the case of female bar staff, the bar manager consistently harassed them

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<sup>19</sup> These figures are probably higher today. Furthermore, in today’s service-oriented production, emotional labour is an element outside the prototypical service occupations.

while requiring them to wear their uniforms ‘*off their shoulder*’ (Adkins, 1995: 132). Being sexually attractive was a qualification for women workers at the amusement park that was systematically prioritized above all other requirements. Failure to be a sexual commodity led to dismissal, and meant that the work they did and the skills they had went largely unnoticed. This illustrated how emotional labour was a site for the reproduction of sex and gender, and gender differences. Soares (1998) echoed these results in his study of supermarket cashiers in Brazil and Canada. Supermarket cashiers faced a long list of detailed instructions regarding appearance, corporal hygiene, uniforms and shoe-wear. Female cashiers especially had to follow detailed instructions on make-up and they were even offered courses on this. Their whole persona and their appearance were treated as a commodity.

In a study called *Gender Trials*, Pierce (1995; 1996a) explored the gendered nature of legal work. Studying two American law firms, Pierce identified internal patterns of stratification. Focusing on litigation units, Pierce found a clear gender division in the patterns of emotional labour. At the top, male litigators performed male-stereotyped emotional labour of aggression, humiliation, intimidation, strategic flattering, and so forth (Pierce, 1996b). These were the ‘Rambo litigators’. In contrast, the female paralegals were expected to be ‘selfless mothers’, supporting, caring, deferential, and to support and maintain stability to those above them. In order to test the hypothesis of female-linked mothering spilling over to the workplace, Pierce examined the anomalies in such firms, by looking at female lawyers and male paralegals. The situation for the female lawyers was characterized by a double bind: If they did not conform to the emotional labour of lawyers by being aggressive and manipulative, they were not good lawyers. If they did, they were not good

women (not 'ladylike'). In response to this, some (16%) adopted the male model, some (26%) tried to act according to a relational model of lawyering, and the rest (58%) split their roles. This splitting meant that some were aggressive at work and caring at home, others were aggressive in court and caring towards their subordinates (Reinharz, 1997). The male paralegals were tokens, that is, in a minority position (Kanter, 1977), in a female semi-profession in a male-dominated organization. Pierce found that these males were at the top of a gender hierarchy among paralegals. First, they were often mistaken for attorneys. Second, attorneys assumed that they were law-school bound. Third, they were not expected to 'play mom'. Thus, their job was more visible and the emotional job demands were different than those of the female paralegals. Pierce also noted that heterosexual men tended to resist nurturing and care-giving job demands because they found 'feminine' emotional labour demeaning. In response they either re-framed the nature of the job to emphasize traditional masculine qualities or distanced themselves by providing service by rote (Pierce, 1995; 1996b). In studying each gender within different jobs such as litigator and paralegal and different jobs within each gender, Pierce uncovered the complexities and contradictions of 'doing emotion and gender'.

Some of these results echoed my own findings in a previous study on service work (Forseth, 1994; 1995a; 1995b). For example, female check-in personnel in a transportation company were considered to be more patient than their male counterparts. Moreover, male customers could behave more rudely towards female counter clerks than male counter clerks. If a difficult situation should arise at the counter, it was often enough to call upon a 'backstage male' to calm down the customers. Moving away from the counter was regarded as job advancement because



one could communicate with one's 'peers' and be more sheltered from unpleasant customers. Such gendered attributions have been pointed out elsewhere (Korvajärvi, 1998; Rantalaiho & Heiskanen, 1997) and are prevalent in interactive service jobs. This gives me the opportunity to discuss the notion of interactive service work as women's work.

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As these accounts imply, the notion of women's work has several meanings (Hall, 1995). First, a structural explanation points to how labour markets are segregated so that women and men are found in different sectors and occupations. Second, it is often assumed that women are particularly suited for interactive service jobs due to 'natural abilities' women require in the domestic sphere, such as caring, nursing, preparing and serving food and so on (Abbott & Wallace, 1997). Third, recent literature on gender has focused more and more on a third meaning, i.e. how organizations actively define jobs in gendered ways.<sup>20</sup> By '*gendered ways*', a term coined by (Acker, 1990: 146), we mean how 'advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotions, and meaning and identity are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female'. Thus, gender as an analytical tool refers to 'patterned, socially produced, distinctions between female and male, feminine and masculine' (Acker, 1992a: 250). Following Harding (1986) and Acker (1992a) gendering occurs at least on four interacting levels: Symbolic, structural, interactional and individual. Gender has also been described as 'daily accomplishment', an action occurring between people in a par-

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<sup>20</sup> Gender has been studied from several perspectives. Sandra Harding's (Harding, 1991) classification of feminist epistemologies is enlightening in this respect: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint, and feminist post-modernism. In Scandinavia, a 'local variant' has been gender as a variable, 'women-only' studies and gender as a perspective or process (Taksdal & Widerberg, 1992 and Kvande, 1995).

ticular setting. Thus, it is important to look for sites where people ‘do gender’ (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The studies that were cited above showed that emotional labour is such a site. On the one hand gender is solid and fixed and deeply embedded and embodied (Bourdieu, 1990; Holter, 1992). Gender can be seen as a socially defined system of durable and transferable dispositions (cf. the concept of habitus). On the other hand, gender is fluid, flexible and open to challenge (Barrett & Phillips, 1992; Berg, 1997; Moi, 1998; Prieur, 1994; Simonsen, 1996). In quantitative studies on emotional labour, gender is still treated as a stable demographic characteristic. In contrast, qualitative studies focus on how gender is socially constructed. Thus, within the literature on emotional labour there are different perspectives on gender, and this reflects different meanings of gender as in this study.

Gender as patterns of difference usually implies subordination of women, either concretely or symbolically (Acker, 1992a; Haavind, 1994). This was at the heart of Hochschild’s initial framework, but she also mentioned social class and ethnic background. In truth, together with age these aspects interact with gender to define who should do what type of service work. The interplay between gender and class was more fully described in Hochschild’s *The Second Shift* (Hochschild & Machung, 1989) an empirical study of how working parents organize life outside work. Whereas gender has been brought to the forefront in several studies on emotional labour, this is not the case for ethnic background and class (Glenn, 1996; Rollins, 1996). In studying emotional labour, Soares (1997c; 1998) underscored that our models of work have been biased and based on ‘*le travail des hommes, blancs, d’age moyen, dans le secteur formel de production des biens*’ (men’s work, whites, middle-aged, in the

manufacturing industries) (p. 70). Emotional labour, however, is related to age, gender, ethnicity, class and job setting.

### **The Consequences of Emotional Labour**

The initial literature on emotional labour underscored the negative consequences for employees. This view has later been criticized for being overstated and getting in the way of an understanding of the joy this work may bring. Instead, the focus is on the conditions under which emotional labour is likely to have dysfunctional effects. In line with the current *Zeitgeist*, and using a concept that Hochschild briefly mentioned, I would make an appeal for exploring the ambivalence in this kind of work. I will now discuss some key studies that illustrate this development.

### ***The Human Costs of Emotional Labour***

Emotional labour is said to involve faking feelings through ‘surface acting’ or ‘deep acting’. Such behaviour might undermine personal well-being because the employees have to portray feelings they do not have, or lead to self-alienation or inauthenticity because agents lose a sense of their authentic self. Thus, contact overload might be a problem in front-line work whose symptoms include becoming detached and unemphatic. In line with the initial study of ‘managed hearts’ (Hochschild, 1983), the bulk of the initial research on emotional labour has focused on the potential negative consequences of this kind of work (see also Mills, 1956). For instance, in a study of a high-tech company ‘High Technology’ and Disneyland, Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) found that what Hochschild labelled emotional dissonance was found among many employees. Burnout at ‘Hightech’ was a result of too much dedication and enthusiasm. ‘Phoniness’ and emotional dumbness were observed in

ride operators when they were overacting their onstage performance at Disneyland. Leidner (1993) also commented on the possibility of inauthenticity and alienation in her book on the fast-food industry and insurance sales agents.

I mentioned above a Norwegian study on sickness absence where the researchers identified a relationship between changes in work-roles in both private and public services and higher levels of sickness absenteeism (Grimsmo et al., 1992). Constant mobilization of emotions as part of the work-role in times of thorough restructuring appeared to have negative health consequences: In the initial phase workers became tired and weary. The next phase was characterized by several stress symptoms. If the vicious circle was not broken, burnout was often the outcome.

In a thesis on self, society and (in)authenticity in a post-modern world, Erickson (1991) hypothesized that emotional labour would lead to increased feelings of inauthenticity. Focusing on female hospital and bank employees, she discovered that performing emotional labour increased the likelihood of employees feeling inauthentic. Inauthenticity had a direct negative effect on individual well-being, but no statistically significant effect on marital well-being. However, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argued that service employees comply with feeling rules (or display rules in their terminology) not only through deep acting or surface acting, but also through genuine emotion. Thus, genuine experience and expression of expected emotions can be viewed as a third means of accomplishing emotional labour, and potential negative consequences are less likely.

### *Joy and Strain*

In recent research the uniformly negative view on emotional labour has been contested (Fineman, 1993a; 1996; Wouters, 1989a; 1992). For example, reporting from a case study at McDonald's, Leidner (1991; 1993; 1996) encouraged analysts to be critical towards the negative bias and look for positive and neutral responses to routinization or scripting of emotions. She found that frontline workers reacted to the stringent controls at work in different ways. Some workers expressed their dislike openly, while others seemed to be neutral rather than hostile. The third group embraced the routinization with enthusiasm. For these workers, scripts and feeling rules helped them specify the job demands. Moreover, they could be used as tools to disengage from work or avoid personal contact with the customers. In the case of insurance sales, agents displayed little resistance to routinization because it gave them more control over the prospects.

Wharton (1993) acknowledged the insight that emerged from qualitative studies, but she claimed that since all studies of emotional labour had been case studies, it had been impossible to control for other features of these jobs that might moderate negative outcomes. Indeed, Adelman (1989) had found mixed support for Hochschild's alienation hypothesis in a national survey and in her own survey of waiters. In the first study, workers in jobs requiring high amounts of emotional labour differed from those in low emotional labour on seven of twelve outcomes. They reported lower job satisfaction, job performance, self-esteem and happiness, more depressive symptoms, poorer health, and greater anomie (a sense of uprootedness or having boundary markers disappear). After adjusting for the effects of moderating factors, such as job complexity, con-

trol and income, differences remained significant except for job satisfaction. Gender did not interact with emotional labour in relation to outcomes. In the second study, data revealed little relation between the amount of emotional labour and psychological outcomes. Negative associations between emotional labour and job commitment and health disappeared after accounting for other job characteristics. Moreover, Adelman (1989) contended that waiters and waitresses who used primarily felt smiles were happier, healthier, less anxious and reported better job performance than those who used phoney smiles, but experienced more anomie. Adelman cautioned that her sample could be biased as several of the table servers were students holding temporary, part-time jobs.

In an analysis based on the same data as Erickson, Wharton (1993; 1996a) used emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction as outcomes. Wharton's investigation revealed that emotional exhaustion was associated with the level of job autonomy and job involvement. Workers with high degrees of job autonomy and high degrees of job involvement were less likely to become emotionally exhausted. However, employees with long job tenure and who worked long hours were also more prone to emotional exhaustion than other employees. Wharton only made a distinction between jobs with or without emotional labour and did not study dimensions related to customer interaction. Performing emotional labour was positively associated with job satisfaction, contrary to Hochschild's initial work. This result was echoed in a recent study on emotional labour. In a heterogeneous sample of Swedish service workers in the private sector, many employees reported that they had learned to handle people better and that they had acquired a greater understanding of people (Abiala, 1999). However, almost half of the sample reported that they were sometimes so tired of people that they wanted to be alone after

work. The author called this a negative consequence and a sign of social strain. Moreover, two other case studies from real estate and a hair stylist salon underscored that emotional labour is double-edged, and carries costs and rewards for the employees. In residential real estate, female workers liked the excitement and unpredictability of their day-to-day experience, and the opportunity to interact with different kinds of people and to make them feel good (Wharton, 1996b). However, this kind of emotional labour also put strain on the workers, especially the ‘dirty work’ of feigning enthusiasm, manipulating clients or being cordial to rude or demanding clients. In the hair salon, the beauticians' emotional labour allowed them to see themselves as their clients' social equals but undermined their claims to professional identities (Gimlin, 1996). In a study of supermarket cashiers in Brazil and Canada, Soares (1997a; 1998b) concluded that the customers were a source of communication, of social interaction, of pleasure, of personal challenge and a variety, which broke the monotony of work. However, customers were also a source of suffering and violence at work.

### ***Joyful Exhaustion?***

Emotional labour can be a double-edged sword but this aspect has been less discussed in the literature (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Sturdy, 1998; Wouters, 1991). However, in my previous research I found that the work experience of interactive service workers could be expressed as ‘joyful exhaustion’ (Forseth, 1995a; 1995b). Interactive service work was fulfilling in several ways, especially the interaction with customers, but many felt drained and exhausted after work.

Emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction have been among the most frequently investigated consequences of emotional labour in variable-

oriented studies. In a review article on emotional labour, Morris and Feldman (1996) emphasized the need to focus on organizational outcomes of emotional labour. According to their review, few researches have focused on the relationships between emotional labour and organizational output. One exception, Sutton and Rafaeli (1988), found a complex relationship between the behaviour of clerks in convenience stores and organizational sales: They found a weak, but significant, negative relationship between emotional labour and sales. A subsequent qualitative study suggested that sales is an indicator of a store's pace, or the amount of time pressure on clerks and customers. Pace seemed to lead to displayed emotions, with norms in busy settings supporting positive displays. A review article on emotional exhaustion and burnout (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993) provided a conceptual framework for capturing individual and organizational outcomes. Empirical evidence on contextual aspects is especially still lacking. Cordes and Dougherty called for more studies on the consequences of emotional labour, especially at two or more points in time to counterbalance the number of cross-sectional studies.

According to existing theoretical frameworks, emotional exhaustion has dysfunctional effects for individuals and organizations (Cherniss, 1980b; 1995; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach et al., 1996). Hitherto, there are only a few studies on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and health complaints. However, the scant empirical evidence indicates a positive relationship (Adelmann, 1989; Saxton et al., 1991). In a recent review of the impact of psychological, organizational and social factors on health, the authors highlight the relationship between emotional labour and health outcomes as one important topic for future research (Sørensen et al., 1998b).



Emotional exhaustion has also been related to sub-par service performance. In the burnout inventory, depersonalization is the second step in the burnout syndrome (Maslach et al., 1996). It refers to how emotionally exhausted service providers display negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about the clients. The symptoms include becoming robotic and detached and treating customers or clients in a callous and dehumanizing way. While it is widely recognized that burnout is related to a decline in job performance, there is little empirical data to support this. Only a few studies highlight the organizational impact of emotional exhaustion, especially on job performance (Adelmann, 1989; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Wright & Bonett, 1997). In a recent study Wright and Bonett (1997) established a relationship between emotional exhaustion and work performance. Unlike some other studies, work performance was not self-reported, but measured by a panel of experts from the organization in question. Emotional exhaustion predicted subsequent work performance while controlling for age, gender and prior performance. However, this relationship was only found in the longitudinal design, that is, over time. Saxton et al. (1991) identified a positive relationship between emotional exhaustion, intention to leave and actual job change in a longitudinal study. On the one hand, intention to quit might be a 'healthy' response because the employee seeks a better job with more interesting tasks and possibilities for growth. On the other hand, this might be a sign of poor working conditions characterized by stress and strain.

## **Conclusion**

Emotional labour is a rather new but growing field of interest. During the last decade, conceptual frameworks have been refined and initial hypotheses somewhat modified. Central to the literature on emotional labour is

that relational and emotional dimensions in work are important dimensions that have been absent in traditional models of work. Recent literature has also focused on the sexual dimension of this type of work. These new conceptual frameworks have enabled us to look at job demands, qualifications at work and strain in new way. The empirical literature has shown that emotional labour is important in different types of work. Up to now, there has been a bias towards case studies, especially among lower level service work. More recently, some professional service occupations have been included and survey research has been conducted among various samples of service workers.

Emotional labour is a multifaceted concept, and several researchers claim that it is not only a question of a generalized phenomenon that is either present or absent in jobs. Rather, emotional labour can be divided into different dimensions, such as frequency, intensity, variety and emotional dissonance in the interaction with customers or clients. Thus, the initial frameworks have been refined.

Emotional labour is shaped by structural conditions, and recent literature has continued to illustrate how performance of emotional labour is different for social categories. It is not only a question of emotional job demands but also a question of bodily and sometimes ‘sexual’ disciplining. Consequently, power is at the heart of the performance of emotional labour. Gender has especially been an important analytical category in the study of emotions. Emotional labour is performed in a gendered context, and women are often faced with the task of being nice and caring. Men, on the other hand, are often expected to be persuasive and aggressive. Even when men and women hold the same positions, research illustrates that they are met with ‘gendered’ expectations.

The initial literature on emotional labour focused on dysfunctional outcomes, such as alienation, lack of authenticity, emotional dissonance, work overload, exhaustion and burnout. This view has been claimed to be overstated as the ‘game’ between server and served might in fact be mutually rewarding. Furthermore, emotional labour may also encompass genuinely felt emotions in addition to faking emotions in surface or deep acting. Thus, the possibility of mixed outcomes or ambivalence may be useful as a heuristic tool. In recent studies the focus has been redirected to the conditions under which emotional labour is likely to have negative impact on employees. Key moderating factors that have been studied include the nature of customer interactions, control at work and job involvement. However, the focus has mainly remained ‘closed’, focusing on individual job settings and omitting contextual factors. Although the empirical evidence is steadily growing in this field, there is still little on the transformation of work and organizational change. Based on the literature so far, there are some patterns but also mixed findings, especially when it comes to the importance of customer interaction and demographic characteristics. In some cases this is due to different ways of conceptualizing and operationalizing major variables. As I see it, too little attention has been devoted to how emotional labour varies across different kinds of service jobs and how this is related to changes in the economy and how managers and organizations respond to these. This is a limitation in a time of fundamental transformation at the societal and company level that has a bearing on the nature of work. I will come back to this in the next chapter where I address these imbalances.



## **4. EMOTIONS AS CORPORATE ASSETS IN A CHANGING WORKING LIFE – TOWARD A CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH AGENDA**

*‘...the question of how variables associated with the organization itself and its policies may be related to burnout has received comparatively little attention’ (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993: 631).*

### **Introduction**

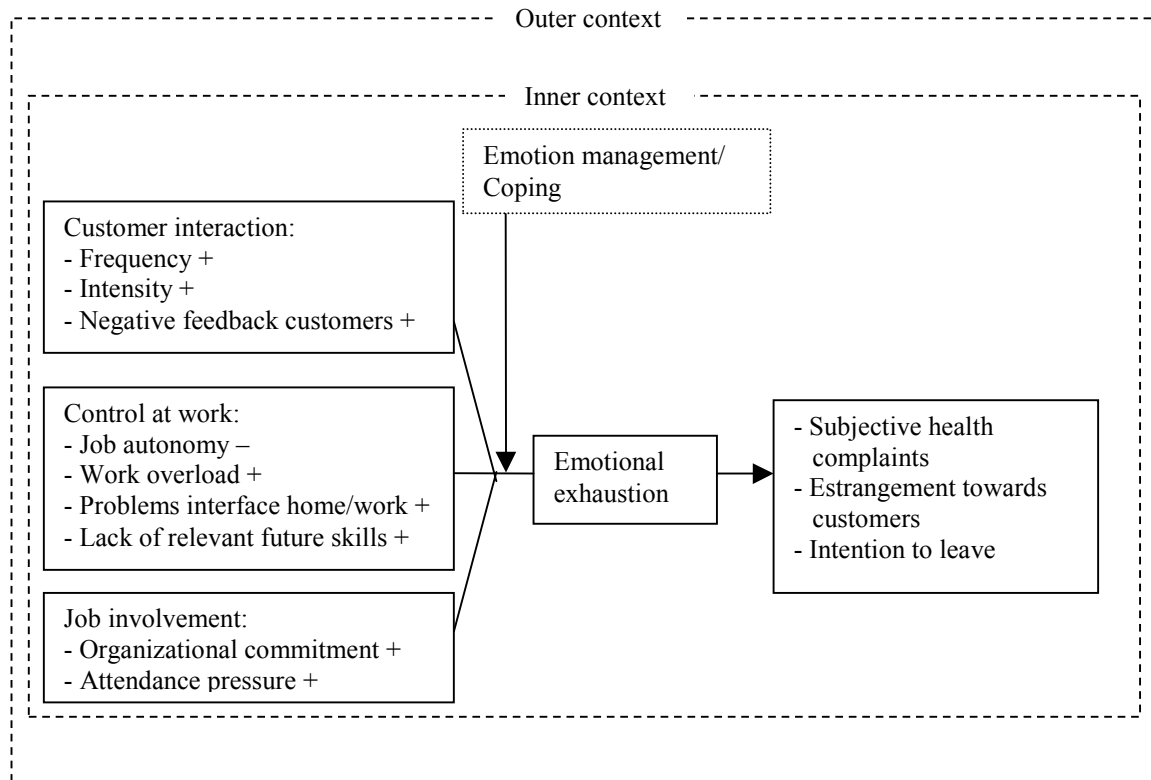
In this chapter I will develop a conceptual framework that serves as a heuristic tool. Furthermore, I will formulate a set of hypotheses based on my review of the emotional labour literature and other literature on change in work and job demands. As discussed in the previous chapters, emotional labour is important in today’s service-oriented production. Macro-level changes related to globalization, increased competition and new technology are changing service work and the emotional component of it. With a greater focus on competition, rapid changes and technology and products that can be easily copied, emotional labour becomes important in the production of profit or client satisfaction in the public sector. In this way emotions might become corporate assets. Based on my research questions I have used the following theoretical heuristic model.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Following arguments thus far, I have specified a conceptual framework in Figure 4.1. This illustrates key dimensions that have been analyzed in quantitative and qualitative analyses of emotional labour and emotional exhaustion. In contrast to previous frameworks, however, I have included

several factors on structural conditions and transformation of work. This framework will serve as the point of departure for the analyses to come.

Broadly speaking, context refers to the outer and inner environment of an organization, a localization in time and space. *Outer context* includes the economic, social, political and sectoral environment in which a firm is located. *Inner context* refers to features of a structural, cultural and political environment inside the firm (for a more detailed discussion of this see for instance (Pettigrew, 1995)). In other words, outer context refers to the environment of the firm, whereas inner context refers to characteristics of the firm. Such a contextual approach pinpoints how social phenomena are interconnected between levels and different aspects of time, past, present and future. Thus context is more than a single set of variables, and this is why I have illustrated the inner and outer contexts with dotted lines as a backdrop ‘surrounding’ the individually based conceptual framework in Figure 4.1.



*Figure 4.1 Emotional labour and emotional exhaustion in interactive service work in a context – conceptual framework.*

Changes in outer context related to increased competition, new technology and restructuring place new demands on workers, such as increased work pace and having to learn and master new skills. Furthermore, the policies of restructuring and downsizing have made several jobs less secure (Bradley, 1999; Sennett, 1998). As a phenomenon, emotional exhaustion is a recent ‘construction’, and has been linked to ‘new’ service occupations, especially human services. In earlier times, the clergy had to cope with difficult social interactions but they did not burn out (Asplund, 1987). One reason why current service workers become burnt out might be that the world has become more complex and obscure (pp.170-178). Employees who experience that the social interactions with customers become ‘empty’ or feel they are part of a ‘play’ called transformation of work, where they have little say (see Chapter 9), are more prone to burn-

out. Previous literature indicates that job insecurity is associated with emotional exhaustion and burnout (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995). In a recent study of burnout after the recession in Finland, Hakanen (1998) found that reorganizations reflecting the macro-economic depression had created insecurity among employees and increased the risk of burnout. Elevated levels of job burnout were twice as common in companies that had implemented restructuring and downsizing (Santamäki-Vurori, 1998). However, such contextual aspects have so far been omitted from studies of emotional labour and emotional exhaustion.

### *Contextual Differences between the Cases*

As described in Chapter 1, there are differences in institutional conditions for the bank, the shopping mall and the care agency, such as the nature of emotional labour, the customer interaction and the degree of current restructuring and automation. The retail and bank employees perform emotional labour as a means to gain profit, whereas the care workers perform emotional labour for the well-being of their recipients, mainly elderly citizens. In the bank and the shopping mall, customer interaction takes place face-to-face but is more distant, often consisting of short spells of interaction between strangers. In care work of the elderly, the employees are involved in daily and intimate body-to-body interaction and form long-term relationships with their clients. All these companies had been facing restructuring, but the bank had also been through a process of automation and downsizing. If the quantitative or the qualitative nature of customer interaction has the greatest impact on emotional exhaustion, as the literature suggests, the care workers in the sample are likely to have the highest mean scores. If control at work is more decisive, it is possible that, due to the demand for new skills, restructuring and insecurity, bank clerks will have high scores on emotional exhaustion



and the processes that lead to emotional exhaustion will differ in the various work settings (captured via interaction terms in the quantitative analysis).

*Hypothesis 1: The care workers are likely to report higher levels of emotional exhaustion than the bank and retail clerks.*

In the theoretical frameworks and empirical literature, I have identified three main factors, *customer relationships, job involvement and control at work*, that have been widely associated with emotional exhaustion (see Chapter 3).<sup>21</sup> I chose these factors because they are closely related to theoretical frameworks of emotional labour and they are prominent in a growing body of literature. I have presented these as three main groups of predictors of emotional exhaustion. In each box I first present a conventional way of operationalizing these concepts before I add more indicators that I have found useful because they are linked to current changes in context. I want to investigate if traditional moderators of emotional exhaustion, such as job autonomy, are still important, or if other dimensions are more useful. In this way outer and inner context also ‘enters’ the analysis as specific variables, but context is still more than these variables alone.

### ***Customer Interactions***

In the literature on emotional exhaustion and burnout, interpersonal relations and caseloads have been divided into quantitative and qualitative dimensions (for a recent review see Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). High-

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<sup>21</sup> Based on the theoretical frameworks I consider these to be key factors. However, recent literature also includes other variables, such as social support, but this is not my focus here.

contact personnel who spend most of their day interacting with customers or clients should experience more strain and stress (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Intense and emotionally charged interactions are likely to be more demanding than 'routine' interactions (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). I would like to add another element to this framework, the physical or *body-to-body* dimension of service transactions.<sup>22</sup> Most analysts find face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions to be a distinct feature of service work. A body-to-body interaction might make the service transaction quite different from both face-to-face and voice-to-voice interactions. When the emotional labourer has to cope with physical aspects and the bodily functions of the service recipient, as is the case, for example, in the care of elderly patients, emotional labour is a necessary element to increase the well-being of the service recipient. The service provider might have to 'intrude' into intimate zones related to washing and use of the toilet. Thus, emotional labour becomes an end in itself and not a means to an end (profit). As noted in the previous chapter, this kind of work is not only about facilitation and nurturing but also might include control and coercion as well. Related to this is the asymmetrical power relationship between provider and recipient. If the clients are dissatisfied, they cannot vote with their feet and go looking for similar service elsewhere (in particular in countries such as Norway, where healthcare institutions are predominantly public).

*Hypothesis 2: Employees who*

- *spend most of their day in direct interaction with customers or clients,*  
*or*

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<sup>22</sup> Here I am not thinking of intimate, sexual interactions as in the work of prostitutes.

- *engage in intense, demanding customer interactions will be more prone to emotional exhaustion.*

### ***Control at Work***

Control at work, a key factor that Hochschild alluded to, is expected to mediate the effects of emotional labour on well-being. This claim has a long tradition. In labour process theory, as well as theories of healthy work (Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Thompson & McHugh, 1990; Thorsrud & Emery, 1969) job autonomy or control at work have been regarded as the core of well-being and control of one's life. Thus, workers who perform emotional labour under relatively autonomous conditions should experience less negative effects than workers who are more closely monitored in their jobs. *Job autonomy* has been defined as the degree to which an employee has freedom, independence and discretion in carrying out the tasks of the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Thorsrud & Emery, 1969). Thus, position and education might also be proxies for job autonomy.

Previous studies on emotional labour have suggested that emotional labour is less onerous for workers who have greater job autonomy (Adelmann, 1989; Erickson, 1991; Wharton, 1993). However, in light of the recent transformation of work, there might be other dimensions than job autonomy that reflect whether or not an emotional labourer has control at work. In firms where there is a scarcity of resources and a threat of cutbacks, there might be a gap between tasks and allotted resources that results in (quantitative) *work overload*. Work overload refers to the individual's perception of not being able to complete the tasks in the allotted time. Empirical investigations have focused on quantitative overload with consistent results: overload is associated with higher levels of emotional

exhaustion (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). According to this review by Cordes and Dougherty, future studies should also focus on the effect on qualitative overload, that is the lack of basic skills or talents necessary to complete a task effectively, on burnout levels. New demands and interesting tasks might also 'seduce' employees to put in extra effort. In fact, some researchers have observed that work seems to be becoming some sort of surrogate home, a place for personal development, fun and companionship (Hochschild, 1997b; Kanter, 1989). These are the positive aspects. The bleak side of this picture is that work might become a 'greedy institution' with never-ending tasks (Coser, 1974; Sørhaug, 1996; Kvande, 1999; Rasmussen, 1999). The nature of much emotional labour means that the work is never done because there is always something that should or could have been done. With the growth of new technologies and new types of work, where relational aspects are crucial and results matter more than presence, the boundaries between home and work are becoming blurred (Sørhaug, 1996). In spite of this, employees are often treated as 'gender-neutral identities' without obligations outside work (Acker, 1990). For example, in studies of emotional labour, the *interface between home and work* has to a large extent been neglected. However, it has been mentioned that difficulty in managing the boundary between home and work is a contributor to emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 1996). Finally, in times of insecurity and restructuring, feelings of control of work are also likely to be affected by the extent to which current *skills* will be of value in the future.

*Hypothesis 3: Control at work will be negatively associated with emotional exhaustion.*

### ***Involvement at Work***

The effects of emotional labour are also assumed to depend upon a worker's job involvement (Wharton, 1993). Job involvement refers to the extent of absorption, *commitment* and willingness to put in extra effort. Workers who are strongly involved in their jobs are expected to suffer more negative consequences than those who have lower levels of job involvement. This follows from Hochschild's finding that flight attendants who distanced themselves from their jobs were less prone to estrangement and other detrimental consequences. In her study from a bank and a hospital Wharton (Wharton, 1993) found that job involvement increased emotional exhaustion among workers performing emotional labour (although this effect was not statistically significant), while it lowered emotional exhaustion among other banking and hospital workers. Job involvement is also a question of 'being valued' by one's peers, one's superiors and the greater society. Thus the experience of respect and rewards, both perceived and actual, is important.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, job involvement might also be a result of insecure working conditions and pressure at work. For example, there might be pressure to attend the job in order to demonstrate endurance and willingness to be on the 'winning' team in firms under restructuring. Thus, the concept of *attendance pressure* (Edgren, 1986), that is, the pressure to go to work when you are not feeling well (but not being terribly ill), might be a useful indicator of pressure at work.

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<sup>23</sup> Income could have been used as an indicator, but this is not my prime focus. In addition to anticipating the coming statistical analyses, many had skipped this particular question.

*Hypothesis 4: Job involvement is positively associated with emotional exhaustion.*

### ***Demographic Characteristics***

A crucial point in Hochschild's (1983) theoretical framework was that women are more likely to be found in jobs that require a high degree of emotional labour, and that this task will put a heavier toll on them than men due to their overall lower social status. In the empirical literature this is a contested area. Several quantitative studies on emotional labour have not found that women are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion or anomie (Adelmann, 1989; Erickson, 1991; Wharton, 1993). On the other hand, in some studies of burnout and emotional exhaustion, there is a consistent finding of slightly higher emotional exhaustion rates for women (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach et al., 1996). However, qualitative studies have shown that emotional labour is performed in gendered or segregated contexts and that there are different emotional expectations for men and women, even within the same occupations (Forseth, 1995a; Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996; Pierce, 1995). Hence, gendered aspects and gendering processes (see Chapter 3) might be just as important as gender as a variable. Younger individuals have been said to report higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach et al., 1996; Wharton, 1993). On the other hand, demographic characteristics and emotional exhaustion comprise a contested area with mixed results and recent literature has pointed to the lesser role played by such factors (Burke & Greenglass, 1995b; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993).

### ***The Impact of Emotional Exhaustion***

Theoretical frameworks on emotional exhaustion have to some extent been based on the perception that it has dysfunctional consequences for

well-being of human-service providers, their job performance and the well-being of the service recipients (Maslach et al., 1996; 1997). Recent research points to the need for further examination of the impact of emotional labour on organizational outcomes, especially job performance (Wright & Bonett, 1997).

*Hypothesis 5: Emotional exhaustion is associated with subjective health complaints, subpar interaction with customers or clients and intention to leave one's job.*

Most of the previous dimensions come together in the case study from the bank and illustrate the complex nature of emotional labour and processes behind emotional exhaustion. Thoits (1990) claimed that emotion management is similar to coping as individuals try to change a problematic situation that induces unwanted emotions or try to change the problematic emotions themselves. Thus, in the analysis in Chapter 9 I also briefly discuss emotional management/coping (represented by a dotted line in the figure to indicate that it is not a variable in the quantitative analysis).

### **Concluding Remarks**

A more contextualized discussion of emotional labour is needed. I have highlighted important dimensions that I want to investigate in the following chapters. This conceptual framework is not only a forerunner of the quantitative analyses to come but also a heuristic model for all the analyses in the rest of the thesis. Chapter 6 is an investigation of employment regimes in selected Western countries and Norway that serves as a backdrop for the analysis. The prevalence of emotional

exhaustion across different types of service work and under which conditions it is likely to occur will be analyzed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 contains the analysis of the impact of emotional exhaustion. Most of the dimensions in this framework come together in the case study of the work experience of the bank employees (Chapter 9). In this chapter I illustrate how a complex set of factors influences the nature of emotional labour and, although briefly, discuss how employees manage or cope with the current work situation. All in all, this illustrates how the job setting itself and its environment should be a central area of study instead of merely focusing on the individual workers. As there is an interplay between theory and methods, I have proposed a multi-method study on emotional labour. Indeed, the use of a single method might not have been sensitive enough with respect to the various aspects mentioned above.



## 5. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

*‘..., the practice of research is a messy and untidy business which rarely conforms to the models set down in methodology textbooks’ (Brannen, 1992: 3).*

### **Introduction**

My theoretical framework addressed gaps and imbalances in the literature on emotional labour that has mainly consisted of narrow case studies among lower level service workers or surveys replicating a limited set of variables. To help the reader navigate among a diversity of methodologies and data on different levels, I start with a reader’s guide to this chapter. First, I provide a brief overview of the research design and all the different data sets. Second, I discuss the material, the research setting and sample demographics of the material that was particularly gathered for the ‘Health in Working Life Study’. Third, I return to all the different data sets and describe them in more detail, including the procedures for gathering the data. Fourth, I describe my techniques of analysis. I conclude with a discussion of strengths and weaknesses of this research design and the material.

### **Research Design**

This dissertation was part of a larger research programme, ‘Health in Working Life’, 1995-1999, funded by the Norwegian Research Council’s Division of Medicine and Health. This was intended as a multidisciplinary programme, but the ‘demand structure’ from the programme committee had an explicit medical and epidemiological bias expressed in

notions such as ‘exposure factors and effects’, and an emphasis on ‘observable phenomena’ and ‘measuring of hard facts’. It was set up as an experimental, longitudinal design with control groups and surveys with international scales. After a long process, including ‘refusal’ of all initial proposals and extensive collaboration between Norwegian research institutes<sup>24</sup>, two umbrella projects were funded in Trondheim and Bergen. The Trondheim umbrella project came to consist of SINTEF IFIM and The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)<sup>25</sup>. IFIM’s part of this project was a three-step field experiment consisting of a pre-survey, interventions and a post-survey. In line with the initial proposal, we included qualitative methods to learn more about the field and the intervention process.<sup>26</sup> Three different interventions were carried out as part of the ‘Trondheim umbrella project’: 1) A three-step strategy to improve the working environment, 2) Extended spells of self-reported sickness absenteeism (from 1-3 days, 4 times a year, to 1-5 days, 4 times a year), and 3) Small group discussions to bring about changes in the perceived causes of stress at work (for further details see Dahl-Jørgensen, Forseth, Mo, & Saksvik, 2000). The care agency had already decided to implement the first two interventions in parts of the organization. The third intervention was carried out in the shopping mall. No intervention was specified for the bank because it was recruited to the project at a later stage. Moreover, several ‘natural interventions’ were already in the

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<sup>24</sup> I had been part of a multidisciplinary umbrella project, consisting of four research institutes in Oslo and Trondheim, that was funded to write a research proposal for an intervention programme in interactive service work.

<sup>25</sup> The research group was multidisciplinary and comprised the following disciplines: Anthropology, physiology, psychology and sociology.

<sup>26</sup> A qualitative entry like this has also been the trademark of the action-oriented research at the Institute of Social Research in Industry (later, SINTEF Industrial Management IFIM). For further details regarding this tradition see Kaul (1996) and Nilssen (1998).

process of being implemented, such as physical and organizational restructuring, change of managers and implementation of teamwork.

My research is heavily influenced by the initial intervention study, such as the use of international scales or inventories.<sup>27</sup> However, my thesis also developed in its own direction due to the influence of recent sociological discourses (see Chapter 10). The outcome was a complex research design and a broad range of methodologies. An overview of the different data sets is presented in Table 5.1.

Data set 1 was compiled together with my colleagues as part of the intervention study. In the course of the study I expanded my research design with data sets 2 and 3. Furthermore, I supplemented the Health in Working Life Study with comparative macro data and a national sample. There were three main reasons for this: 1) To elaborate on existing conceptual frameworks, 2) to elaborate on changes in context and the nature of performing emotional labour, and 3) to shed light on interesting findings in the analyses.

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<sup>27</sup> In sociology the reliance on such instruments is not as widespread as in medicine and psychology. In the preparatory phase we expanded our ‘repertoire’ by searching in the literature for suitable scales and ‘exchanged’ scales with the other ‘umbrella project’ in Bergen.

*Table 5.1 A summary of the different data sets in the study.*

| Data set   | Type of data  | Sample   | Number                              | Research question (Chapter) |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Health in Working Life (HWL) Survey 1996        | International scales, tailored questions              | A shopping mall, Retail bank, Two districts in a municipal care agency for the elderly   | 180<br>149<br>356<br>268<br>N = 953 | 2, 3<br><br>(Chs. 7, 8) 9)  |
|  | Open-ended questions                                  | Here: Bank employees (Customer advisers incl. 'tellers' <sup>28</sup> )                  | N = 82 – 100<br>44 women<br>23 men  | 4<br>(Ch. 9)                |
| 2. Memory work                                     | Written memories                                      | Customer advisers in banking   | 8                                   | 4<br>(Ch. 9)                |
| 3. Interviews/discussions<br>Seminars and meetings | Semi-structured Discussions                           | Bank managers<br>Managers, union representatives, human resource personnel and employees | 4<br><br>(200)                      | 4 (2, 3)<br><br>(Ch. 9)     |
| 4. Work Orientation Study (WOS) 1997               | National survey, Part of international survey program | Representative sample of the Norwegian population  | 2199                                | 1<br>(Ch. 6)                |
| 5. Labour Force Statistics, OECD 1976-1996         | Employment patterns                                   | Scandinavian countries, UK, USA  |                                     | 1<br>(Ch. 6)                |

I will now go into detail on the initial data from the Health in Working Life Study.

### **The Health in Working Life Sample**

The initial sample in the 'Trondheim umbrella' intervention study came from three different organizations in Trondheim. This was a purposive sample<sup>29</sup> that was interesting from a theoretical point of view because it represented different organizational contexts with a varying degree of frequency and intensity of customer or client interactions (see Figure 1.1). The shopping mall and the bank belong to the private sector and a market

<sup>28</sup> See 'Analyses' in this Chapter and Chapter 9 for further details.

<sup>29</sup> Purposive sampling is the sampling of individuals/units based on specific questions/ purposes of the research in lieu of random sampling and on the basis of information available about these individuals/units (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

setting where emotional labour is a means to profit. The care agency, on the other hand, is in the public sector and is part of the welfare state services, where emotional labour can be seen as a means to well-being and an end in itself. In contrast to the others, banking had been through fundamental restructuring, automation and several rounds of downsizing. All the work sites could be described as gendered contexts as the majority of the frontline workers were women. As many as 99% of the sample had direct contact with customers and clients as part of their job. However, there are important differences between the daily and intimate body contact in the service relationships in care work and the more distant interactions in banking and retail work. The next section introduces the particular work sites and some details of the occupations that were included in the study.

### *Sample Size and Participants*

To have large enough samples for the field experiment, the research group presented a minimum figure of 100 employees to the companies.<sup>30</sup> At the bank and the care agency, management in collaboration with members of our research group then decided what part of the organization would form meaningful categories, taking into account type of service production and place on the organizational chart. We had the largest sample in the care agency because we needed enough people for two intervention groups and a control group. In the bank, the private market division was chosen in order to have individuals rather than companies as customers. Because the mall consisted of chain stores and independent stores, it was up to the individual manager to volunteer. The manager of

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<sup>30</sup> The sample size was determined by the expected effect size of the planned interventions, the desired significance ( $\alpha = .05$ ) and power levels (.80) (Lipsey 1990).

the centre warmly recommended participation but he did not have the formal authority over the ‘tenants’. In the recruitment of individual employees there was an element of self-sampling as they could refuse to answer the questionnaire. It is therefore possible that we ended up with the most dedicated employees. We were not able to reach employees who were on long-term absence, sickness absence or maternity leave. From a theoretical and methodological point of view the ideal would have been to have homogeneous groups but service work often consists of heterogeneous groups (see Chapters 1 and 2).

The total response rate was 75% (N = 953), varying from 82% (the bank and care district 2) to 72% (the shopping mall) and 70% (care district 1). The lowest rate was found in the care district where employees had been assigned to a control group. It is likely that less attention was paid to the project due to the absence of an intervention. There was no significant difference between respondents and non-respondents when it came to gender composition or working day or night. Non-respondents, however, worked fewer hours – on average 67% versus 77% for the respondents. Given that the workers in the elder care organization and the shopping mall worked part time in high turnover occupations, the response rates are very good for such an extensive questionnaire (Fowler, 1993, Baruch 1999). I will now provide details on the different research settings.

### *The Shopping Mall*

The shopping mall has become a new kind of public place in our consumer culture, offering meeting-places, entertainment, and ‘all-you-need’ in consumer goods and services under one roof (Falk & Campbell, 1997). The shopping mall with ‘shops-in-the-shop’, that is independent shops or shops belonging to national or international chains, is a recent develop-

ment. Working conditions and the work experience of retail clerks in shopping malls have been under-researched in Norway.

The sample from the shopping mall consisted of employees from 33 different units of various sizes, mostly shops, a few cafeterias and one hairdresser's. A total of 180 respondents took part, mostly retail clerks and 27 shop managers, most of them taking shifts 'on stage'. During the project period, several changes took place in the shopping mall which influenced the working conditions of the employees (Dahl-Jørgensen et al., 2000). Opening hours, formerly from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., were expanded by two hours during peak seasons. Some units moved to other locations within the mall, and some units moved out. This was clearly a setting in flux with many 'extras' (call-on workers) and high turnover, especially among younger employees.

### *The Bank*

Dramatic changes in the banking business in the last decade have had great impact on strategies, services and working conditions. New business strategies and market alliances have developed in order to strengthen the competitive edge in an increasingly global economy. From being a traditional hierarchy providing 'traditional bank services', with employees who had joined the bank as career employees for life, banking has entered a new era with fierce competition. This development has resulted in new job demands and called for more skilled and competitive employees.

The bank sample consisted of 149 employees from a central unit and 12 branches providing retail bank services. The bank also had other branches from more remote areas that were not included in the study. The employees were predominantly customer advisers ('kundebehandlere' previously

called tellers, and ‘kunde-konsulenter’) and 20 managers. In recent years this bank had been through a thorough upheaval involving new strategic alliances, restructuring and redundancies.

### *The Care Agency for the Elderly*

The care sector is a sector where needs are growing and there is a shortage of qualified personnel. During recent decades the ‘business language’ from the private sector has invaded this sector which experienced a great deal of restructuring (Forseth, 1989; Holter, Karlsen, Salomon, Larsen, & Sørhaug, 1998; Kvande, 1998; Rasmussen, 1998).

The sample from a municipal care agency comprised two districts and 624 persons<sup>31</sup>. Each district consisted of decentralized units that included nursing homes and home-based services, as well as a few residential complexes for mentally retarded people. A total of 30 different units were included in the study. The sample represents several occupations, primarily nurses, auxiliary nurses, home helps, assistants, and some physiotherapists, ergonomists, cooks, caretakers and administrative personnel. In their interaction with clients several of these employees have to touch bodies and perform functions such as feeding, washing, and coping with bodily functions and smells. In recent decades there has been an effort to integrate home-based and institutionalized care. For the most part, the clients do not have alternative choices to these public services because private care for the elderly has not been widespread in Norway.

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<sup>31</sup> In the course of more than ten years I have conducted several projects in this sector/ organization that have provided me with detailed knowledge of the organization, working conditions and working environment (Forseth, 1989; 1994; 1995b).



### *Sample Demographics*

The majority (93%) of the sample was ethnic Norwegian, and major groups in the sample were shop clerks, bank clerks (customer advisers), nurses, nurses aids and home helps. In Table 5.2 I provide some key figures on the different work-sites. A total of 83% of the sample consisted of female service workers. The bank had the lowest number of women (66%). The age ranged between 17 and 67. Mean age ranged between 34 (SD = 11.96) in the mall and 43 (SD = 8.32) in the bank. Mean number of years at school was 13 (SD = 2.81). Bank clerks had the longest organization tenure (Mean = 10, SD = 9.56), shop clerks had the shortest (Mean = 6.0, SD = 5.78). Job tenure showed even greater variation, with the bank at the top with an average of 20 years (SD = 8.11) and the mall at the other end of the scale with 9 years (SD = 8.10). Full-time work was widespread in the bank (Mean = 93, SD = 15.69), while a majority of the care workers and retail clerks worked part time: Mean figures of the percentage of full time workers ranged from 71 (SD = 29.62) in Care I to 75 (SD = 27.66) in the mall. Mean numbers of registered overtime were low, varying from three hours per week in the bank (SD = 4.99) to six hours per week in the mall (SD = 8.74).<sup>32</sup> Compared to the others, there were relatively fewer employees in management positions in the bank (Mean = 13). The average figure was 20%.

Compared to the national sample of service workers in the Work Orientations Study, the Health in Working Life sample is slightly younger. The mean level of education seems to be somewhat higher in the national sample. However, as pointed out later in this chapter, this sample was biased towards persons with higher education. It was also underscored

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<sup>32</sup> See Chapter 9 for a discussion of invisible and unregistered hours of overtime.

that respondents have a propensity to overestimate the level of education in contrast to income or hierarchical position. Moreover, our survey has a larger proportion of female service workers but fewer persons in managerial positions. This comparison indicates that the two samples are similar when it comes to average age and years of education but they deviate on number of females and managers.

*Table 5.2 Means and standard deviations for the Health in Working Life sample, 1996. Selected figures from the Work Orientations Study, 1997, are included for comparison.*

|                 | <b>Age</b><br>Mean (S.D.)<br>N | <b>Years of<br/>education</b><br>Mean (S.D.)<br>N | <b>Job tenure</b><br>Mean (S.D.)<br>N | <b>Organization<br/>tenure</b><br>Mean (S.D.)<br>N | <b>% of full time</b><br>Mean (S.D.)<br>N | <b>Overtime</b><br>Mean (S.D.)<br>N | <b>%<br/>females</b><br>N | <b>%<br/>managers</b><br>N |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Care 1          | 42.5 (10.63)<br>347            | 12.7 (3.11)<br>337                                | 12.7 (8.42)<br>347                    | 8.3 (5.86)<br>334                                  | 70.5 (29.62)<br>350                       | 5.4 (9.54)<br>237                   | 87                        | 22                         |
| Care 2          | 42.7 (10.34)<br>253            | 12.8 (3.03)<br>257                                | 13.0 (8.54)<br>252                    | 6.4 (5.71)<br>235                                  | 71.9 (28.08)<br>268                       | 4.8 (7.91)<br>190                   | 84                        | 19                         |
| Mall            | 33.5 (11.96)<br>171            | 12.2 (2.24)<br>170                                | 9.3 (8.10)<br>172                     | 6.0 (5.78)<br>147                                  | 74.89 (27.66)<br>162                      | 5.6 (8.74)<br>116                   | 87                        | 24                         |
| Bank            | 43.4 (8.32)<br>148             | 12.3 (2.14)<br>141                                | 20.2 (8.11)<br>145                    | 9.8 (9.56)<br>127                                  | 92.7 (15.69)<br>149                       | 3.2 (4.99)<br>117                   | 66                        | 13                         |
| Total           | 41.0 (11.08)<br>919            | 12.6 (2.81)<br>905                                | 13.35 (8.95)<br>916                   | 7.58 (6.62)<br>843                                 | 75.2 (28.10)<br>929                       | 4.83 (8.30)<br>660                  | 83                        | 20                         |
| WOS-<br>service | 39.3 (12.17)<br>1114           | 14 (3.05) <sup>33</sup><br>1093                   |                                       |  |   |                                     | 61                        | 29                         |

<sup>33</sup> The questions were worded slightly differently. The HWL respondents were asked about total years of schooling, whereas the WOS respondents were asked about years of schooling after primary school such as nine years of junior high school or seven years of elementary school ('folkeskole').

## Data Sets

### *The Health in Working Life Survey (HWL)*

The pre-survey<sup>34</sup> contained questions about work experience, changes at work, occupational health, lifestyle, sickness absenteeism and turnover intentions, mostly international scales and some tailor-made questions. The large number of scales was due to the different needs of a heterogeneous research group. These scales were chosen because they were theoretically related to the research questions, but not all of them were equally suited (see the final part of this chapter). A description of measures is provided in the empirical part of the thesis and the appendices. Means, standard deviations and correlations for key variables are provided in Chapters 7 and 8. To give the employees an opportunity to voice their work experience we included five open-ended questions in the survey about enjoying work, stress and strain, why the job was arduous, what measures could make work less arduous and how they coped.

Furthermore, we had gathered register data from the companies own (wage) register on each employee that were used in the administration of the surveys before and after the interventions.<sup>35</sup> These included gender, company, department, occupation, percentage of full-time positions and shiftwork (working day or night).

### *Interviews with key informants and discussions*

I chose to focus on the bank in my case study for several reasons: 1) The finance sector has been described as the quintessential global industry, 2)

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<sup>34</sup> There were several phases in the intervention study, pre-survey and interviews, intervention, observations and post-survey and interviews.

<sup>35</sup> We received permission from the Data Inspectorate to establish this register.

Banking has been through an upheaval including downsizing and redundancies, 3) Current restructuring of work in banking highlights critical questions related to service work such as the importance of individual capital versus automation, 4) Bank employees had more elevated scores on emotional exhaustion in the first survey.<sup>36</sup> To obtain more knowledge of how macro changes (outer context) had become manifest in the bank I interviewed a sample of bank managers. They were chosen because they had substantial knowledge about current changes and this sample of customer advisers.

My knowledge of banking and current changes also came from repeated 'encounters'. I had given 'lectures' at several in-house seminars and been in charge of group sessions just before and during this study in which I had discussed restructuring and human-resource issues with managers, union representatives and human-resource personnel. Later on, I presented preliminary findings at two seminars, one for managers, union representatives and human-resource personnel and one for customer advisers. These experiences provided me with an opportunity to discuss preliminary findings, gather data and generate ideas for further analysis.

### *Memory work*

This was an 'experiment' that I carried out late in the research process in order to capture the nature of emotional labour that I was not able to obtain through the surveys and interviews. *Memory work* is a term initially coined by a German sociologist (Haug, 1987) but recently used in Norway by Widerberg (1995). It is a way of exploring human expe-

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<sup>36</sup> There was no room for analyzing the care agency and the shopping mall as I have done in the bank.

rience and capturing its social construction. Instead of relying on ready-made concepts from the researcher, it is the informant who contributes with the initial data (memories) from his or her daily life. These are discussed and analyzed collectively by the writers and the researcher to uncover their social nature. The purpose of the method is not to discover how things really were, but to enable us to see things in new ways (Widerberg, 1999). Memory work has been fruitful in bringing critical incidents, unresolved dilemmas and contradictions that arouse emotions to light (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, & Benton, 1992; Haug, 1987; Widerberg, 1995).

#### *Comparative Labour Force Statistics (OECD)*

The time series of the evolution of the labour force comes from labour force statistics 1976-1996 (Table 7, pp. 42-45) and historical statistics 1960-1995 (Tables 2.9- 2.13, pp. 42-44) published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 1997b, 1997a).<sup>37</sup>

#### *The Work Orientations Survey (WOS)*

The WOS is a nation-wide survey that was carried out as part of a comparative survey on Work Orientations under the direction of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). Half of the questions came from Norwegian researchers, and through my supervisor, I was able to include two questions regarding customer interactions (questions 55 and 56, see Tables 6.5 and 6.6 in Chapter 6) (Lund & Skjåk, 1998). The response rate was 63% (N = 2199). Educated persons and people in the paid workforce are somewhat over-represented in the sample as are females, especially women between 25-44 years of age. For my purposes,

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<sup>37</sup> For biases and limitations in these data see the footnotes in the OECD publications.

focusing on general patterns among service employees, the uneven distribution of respondents is less disturbing.

## **Procedures**

### *The Health in Working Life Survey*

Our questionnaire was pilot tested among employees in two retail shops and a residence for mentally disturbed people not taking part in the main project. As a result of the pilot survey we made some minor adjustments. Before the distribution of the survey, a series of meetings were held with managers and employees, and a personal letter was sent to each employee, stating the purpose of the study and explaining the design and interventions in detail. However, the survey was long (18 pages) and evoked mixed reactions, varying from enthusiasm to hostility towards "strange" questions.

To encourage completion of the survey a colleague and I arranged 60 meetings at local units during the spring and summer of 1996.<sup>38</sup> These face-to-face interactions with the participants also provided 'local' information. In units where the employees were frustrated, insecure or hostile for whatever reason, this situation was easily turned towards the project. Most unit managers did a good job ensuring an acceptable response rate. In addition, the research groups sent several reminders, including new questionnaires, and made numerous calls, especially to units that were lagging behind. On average, the immediate impression was that the bank clerks were more used to forms and figures and expressed less resistance

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<sup>38</sup> In the bank it was easy to gather all participants together in two after-work meetings. In the care organization and the shopping mall, this was simply not possible due to part-time work and shift-work.

than some of the retail clerks and the care workers. This was later reflected in the response rates as well as the quality of the completed questionnaires.

### *Interviews*

In autumn 1999 I interviewed one male and three female managers, all in their early and middle forties. One was the bank executive for retail banking, the other three were either middle or senior-level managers. Each interview lasted about two hours. Informants were asked about recent changes in the market and how these had influenced the bank's strategies, working conditions of frontline personnel, job demands and health at work. As guidelines I had a simple list of topics, but the interviews were more like a conversation based on the informants' insights, experiences and local meanings. The bank managers also provided me with several written documents, such as internal climate investigations, customer-satisfaction studies and internal bulletins.

### *Memory work*

As the research site for the memory work, in collaboration with management I chose a busy branch in the bank. I paid the employees an initial visit explaining this part of the study and asking for their collaboration. I handed out an ambiguous quote from the open-ended questions (see the initial quote in Chapter 9) and asked the employees to specify a critical incident from customer interactions to elaborate on the quote.<sup>39</sup> The eight memories are presented word by word in Chapter 9 or appendix 2.

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<sup>39</sup> I chose to give them a specific 'stimulus' as the method was new to them, and I could not afford to cover a range of different topics as this was late in my own writing process.



### *The Work Orientations Study (WOS)*

The sample was a random sample of residents in Norway aged 18-79 in September 1997. Gender, age, marital status and regional variables are registered data. The Norwegian Polling Institute (Norsk Gallup) collected the data as a mail survey from October to December 1997. One reminder by card and two additional questionnaire rounds were carried out. The Norwegian Social Science Computer Service (NDS) has 'adapted' data and provided anonymous data. Neither Norsk Gallup nor NSD is responsible for the analyses of these data or for the interpretations in this study.

### **Analyses**

In the following empirical chapters I have used a range of analyses to shed light on my conceptual framework. I will now go through the different types of analysis.

#### *Statistical analyses*

Standard statistical tests from the SPSS package (Norusis, 1993) were used for all quantitative analyses. I deployed cross tabulations to present data on current employment patterns in Norway (Chapter 6). As strength indicators on chi-squares, I used Cramer's V (nominal data) and Kendall's tau-b (ordinal data). One-way analysis of variance was chosen in Chapter 7 to map differences in emotional exhaustion. The strength was measured by the Eta coefficient. When squared, Eta can be interpreted as the proportion of the total variability of the dependent variable that can be accounted for by knowing the values of the independent variable. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to report associations between independent variables and dependent variables before linear, multivariate regression analyses were performed in Chapters 7 and

8.<sup>40</sup> To study the impact of different groups of variables, hierarchical regression analyses were chosen.

### *Open-ended questions*

In this study I only used the open-ended answers from the bank employees. The sample varied from 82 to 100 employees who had completed answers to the five open-ended questions. The majority wrote several sentences or small anecdotes that provided useful information, but also raised new questions. In my analysis of these data I was influenced by a grounded-theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I first read through the transcripts of the informants' answers to the open-ended questions focusing on what surprised me. The second time I highlighted important topics, while the third time through I asked questions on the texts and tried to highlight 'what this was all about'. The fourth time I tried to relate sub-categories to broader categories, and the fifth time I tried to map out core constructs that were important in relation to my research questions. One of the results of this analysis was that the concept of ambivalence, having both of two contrary values, emerged as an important issue for further exploration.

### *Interviews*

I had written down what the informants said almost word for word during the interviews. I read through these documents several times looking for narratives and plots (Charniawska, 1999; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) that could tell me more about what was going on in the outer and inner con-

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<sup>40</sup> In addition to the analyses that are presented here, I have performed analyses for various sub-samples such as the major occupational groups, the companies and random splitting in two groups – all with the same main results. As for gender, see interaction terms in Chapter 7.

text. This material has also been useful when interpreting my other data sets.

### *Memory work*<sup>41</sup>

In line with feminist concerns, the subjects are brought into the research process as active participants (Acker, Barry, & Essesweld, 1996) in memory work. Some employees sent their accounts via e-mail while others sent hand-written ones. Around half of them had signed their names. I typed them all (to make them anonymous) and read through them once. Then I made an abbreviated list with respect to how to interpret such memories (see appendices).<sup>42</sup> All memories were distributed, discussed and interpreted together with the writers in a group session held during working hours.<sup>43</sup> I asked different persons to make some initial comments on each memory to start off the discussion. I made an effort to let the conversation run freely, occasionally asking follow-up questions. Although some had found this method strange in the beginning, they seemed to enjoy the discussion afterwards. During the session the atmosphere was relaxed and the participants were enthusiastic and talkative. Some of the stories were complex and the same history could give rise to different constructions of reality. This illustrates how memory work is a joint action where there is an interplay between input from the writer, the collective and the researcher. Due to time constraints it was impossible to follow up all the suggested items on the list that I had distributed. I tape-

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<sup>41</sup> I provide more detail on this analysis as I suspect this is less familiar than the other methods.

<sup>42</sup> For elementary units of narrative structure see also Coffey and Atkinson (1996).

<sup>43</sup> The session took place in a tiny kitchen 'backstage' that was literally crowded with people, pizza and lemonade. In-between we were interrupted by inquiries from the substitutes who had been hired to serve the customers. The atmosphere was cheerful and excited.

recorded the discussion with each participant's consent. At their own request, their central manager was a participant observer. Afterwards, I went through the memories again relating the collective discussion to my conceptual framework and the literature. The interpretation of the memories in the current text is my interpretation of the initial memories and the collective discussion afterwards. Later on, I attended an in-house Saturday seminar for all the customer advisers in the sample. I asked all the 25 participants to write down their own memory before my presentation. A quick browse through these memories showed that the larger group elaborated on the topics from the initial group and contributed with more extreme cases of verbal and physical abuse at the counter.

### **An Evaluation of the Material and the Research Design**

The Health in Working Life Study was a purposive sample, and there is always a danger of sample selection bias that threatens validity of response whenever one is studying a non-random subset of a population (Berk, 1983). This holds for surveys as well as other forms of data. Thus, I cannot statistically generalize my results to all banks, shopping malls and elderly care agencies. However, I had the advantage of comparing some results from this sample with the national Work Orientations Study (Table 5.2).

As discussed previously in this chapter, we may have had the most dedicated employees. This was an intervention project that took place in specific organizations, and two of the interventions were carried out by the organizations themselves. Consequently it was difficult to have a random sample. Indeed, the focus was on the organizations and the measuring of possible effects. Thus, for ethical and practical reasons all employees

were enlisted in our sample. This meant that especially in the care agency and the shopping mall part-time employees working few hours were included, although some call-on workers were later dismissed from the analysis if they did not have a fixed value on the variable percentage for a full-time position in our register data (see Chapter 7).

Non-response of the variables in the analyses varied somewhat but did not follow a fixed pattern. Missing values are problematic as they reduce the sample and might lead to misleading results. However, dismissing all questionnaires that were not fully completed would leave us with a small sample. Mean substitution of the total sample is one way of overcoming missing values. In general this strategy is not recommended because it affects the estimated variance or standard deviation of the variable in question (Ringdal, 1987; SPSS, 1998). We followed an alternative strategy in the international scales. Missing values were substituted by the mean value for that individual's answer on items on a scale, given that they had answered at least fifty per cent of the items.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, in my correlation and regression analyses I have preferred listwise treatment of data where a case is eliminated if it has a missing value for any of the variables on the list. This is the most common practice, but can influence the number of respondents considerably. On the other hand, pairwise treatment of missing data augments the sample but may create new problems when different cases are used to estimate different coefficients. To safeguard against biased results I have performed several analyses on sub-groups of the sample, such as women and men, hierarchical position, individual companies and a random selection of cases into two groups.

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<sup>44</sup> This was also done to be able to compare findings with the other large-scale intervention project that was launched by the Norwegian Research Council at the same time (where this was 'standard procedure').

The main results appear to be rather stable (see Chapter 7 on further details on gender).

Response bias might be a problem in surveys, especially social desirability or response set (Sudman & Bradburn, 1991). Social desirability is related to the propensity of respondents to appear to be ‘good people’ with accepted behaviour in the eyes of the interviewer or researcher. It is difficult to eliminate such response biases completely. We could not change the wording of the international scales but we tried to choose familiar words in the tailor-made questions, placed ‘threatening’ questions at the end and included open-ended questions. The response set is the tendency of some respondents to answer all or a series of questions in the same way, regardless of the differences in context of the individual questions (‘JA-effekten’). To counter the response set in the survey we tried to take some precautions. We included more than one question or scale to tap the same theoretical phenomenon, and some of the scales were reversed. Moreover, we included an instrument that was designed to measure the need for achievement and affiliation (Steers & Braunstein, 1981) that has earlier been used to test for the presence of single source bias.<sup>45</sup> Correlation between these two scales and other variables was low or moderate.

We relied heavily on previously used questions or scales in the quantitative analyses. Such scales are considered to be more reliable and valid than single questions because they help eliminate random error in a single response and because they can capture a theoretical construct better than single questions (Sudman & Bradburn, 1991). Established scales have

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<sup>45</sup> Personal communication, Professor Tove Helland Hammer, Cornell University, USA.

usually been proved to be psychometrically sound and fruitful in comparing different samples. I used factor analyses on established instruments to see if I got the same clusters of items as expected.<sup>46</sup> There were no violations in the scales that were used in the final models of my analyses (for an exception see Chapter 7). Furthermore, to check the internal consistence between items in a scale I used the reliability coefficient, Chronbach's alpha. It varies between 0 and 1 and is based on the mean correlation between the variables. As a rule of thumb, I dismissed scales that did not achieve a value of .70 (for a discussion of norms see Baruch, 1999). Our experience suggested that there is a danger of blind faith in such validated scales. In fact, some of the scales, developed abroad, did not show acceptable levels of reliability and validity, and I suspect that they were not well suited to current female service workers in a Norwegian context. Thus, there might be problems in transferring such scales in time and space from one cultural context to another.

Although I have identified the association between variables in the correlation and regression analyses, there is no proof of causality. However, most of these relationships have been identified in previous research, including longitudinal studies.<sup>47</sup> There is always the possibility that there is an interplay between independent variables<sup>48</sup> or that a third variable has an influence on some of the relationships. Hardiness, personality or

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<sup>46</sup> These factor analyses are available on request but not included in the text.

<sup>47</sup> An examination of analyses and plots of residuals in the regression analyses do not convey serious violations.

<sup>48</sup> Multicollinearity refers to a situation in which there is a high correlation between independent variables (Fox, 1991). As reported in the correlation matrix in Chapter 7, this does not seem to be the case. The same conclusion is reached when examining measures of collinearity, such as the variance inflation factor (VIF).

coping strategies could be such factors even if previous results are equivocal.

I strengthened the validity of my study by combining a wide range of methods and data sets and through discussions with participants and other stakeholders. This requires some words about validity in a constructionist frame. For instance, in an interview investigation validity has to be built in as a quality control throughout the whole process: Thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, validating and reporting (Kvale, 1996). Thus, the processes of analysis, evaluation and interpretation are neither terminal nor mechanical but more like a dance (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In this chapter I have tried to give examples from my 'dance' by elaborating on procedures and analyses of the different data sets. In particular, I have tried to be specific about the interactive nature of my most 'uncommon' method, memory work.

Mixing methods has both strengths and constraints (for a discussion see Brannen, 1992; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The main strength of my research is the sensitivity to contextual factors and variations through my use of various methods. By using quantitative data I have been able to map structural patterns across countries and in large samples, both on a national level and across different types of interactive service work. The national survey also served as an external validation of some findings in our own survey. The use of standardized instruments facilitated comparisons of findings across studies. The survey material also enabled me to study patterns of emotional exhaustion across different types of service work, how these patterns were related to the independent variables and the impact of emotional exhaustion on incumbents of frontline positions and their interaction with customers or clients. As numbers are important



in our societies it is often easier to get your message across if it is accompanied by numbers as ‘analytical prose’ (Enderud, 1986). However, a quantitative approach transforms informants to variables and numbers and does not always illustrate the nature and procedural aspects of a phenomenon very well. I used the interviews and the memory work to explore social processes and relations that are located in time and space. This also enabled me to let the informants contribute with their ‘voice’. Another advantage was the opportunity to focus on deviant or extreme cases, in this case the bank. Such cases can open the door to new insights because they help us to see what is otherwise blurred (McCracken, 1988). The ‘experiment’ with memory work brought emotional and relational aspects to light and brought new insights into some of the ambivalence embedded in this type of work and issues that were taken for granted by the actors. The purpose of the method is not to find out how things ‘really’ are or were, but to open up for new ways of seeing things, a more complex way of studying actors in their natural context.

By acknowledging the limitations of a single tradition there is room for additional understanding. However, combining different paradigms and methods is demanding and time-consuming (Grønmo, 1990). The researcher has to juggle several perspectives, methods and analyses at the same time. Like gestalt-figures, one is only able to see one at a time although they contain more than one image (Asplund, 1991: 42-43). One of the drawbacks of my range of coverage is that there is a danger of losing sight of the particular case studies. The bank emerged clearly enough but the mall and the care agencies disappeared somewhat near the end, although it would have been interesting to compare them in greater detail. However, I gave priority to using different methods instead of relying on case studies alone.

Research can be a messy and untidy business as the initial quote in this chapter indicates, and it requires hard work and inspiration. As documented above, there is an element of social construction no matter what kind of technique the researcher is using.<sup>49</sup> I have striven to be reflexive and critical towards my own work (Alvesson & Skjoldberg, 1994), and comment on issues that are sometimes not reported, for instance estimation of missing data or own intellectual exposure and scholarly apprenticeship (see Chapter 10). My rationale for using all these methods was to address some gaps and imbalances that I found in the literature on emotional labour. By challenging a common pattern in this field of either relying on narrow case studies *or* rather decontextualized surveys, I have tried to break new ground to capture more of the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon under study.

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<sup>49</sup> For an interesting discussion on how ‘numbers need a narrative too’ on interpretation and quantitative data see (Seippel, 1999).

## 6. CHANGING PATTERNS OF EMPLOYMENT: THE CASE OF NORWAY

*‘Workers in service occupations are asked to inhabit jobs in ways that were formerly limited to managers and professionals alone’*  
(Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996: 4).

### Introduction

Following my conceptual framework (Chapter 4), the first step in my empirical analysis is to localize Norway in a broader perspective. I start with a brief comparison of employment structures in the Nordic countries, the United Kingdom and the United States. In the rest of the chapter I analyze patterns of employment in Norway to provide a background and validation for the analyses to follow. In particular I explore patterns of gender segregation in Norway by focusing on occupational segregation, hierarchical segregation, and patterns of interaction with customers or clients (as a proxy for emotional labour, cf. Chapters 1 and 2). Finally, as a bridge to the next chapter, I examine patterns of skills and patterns of exhaustion across different types of work.

Hochschild claimed that emotional labour was more common in service jobs, in middle-class jobs and in women’s work (Hochschild, 1983). However, to my knowledge, few if any studies have tried to elaborate on this beyond participant observation studies that were used by Hochschild and many of her followers, or quantitative analyses of a narrow set of occupations (see Chapter 3). Service jobs, however, comprise a heterogeneous category (cf. the notion of ‘ragbag’ in Chapter 2). The quote

above illustrates how the transformation of work is resulting in new demands on service workers who constitute the mainstay of the current workforce. The proportion of professional service jobs and ‘marginalized’ jobs varies across countries due to different employment regimes. This notion can be seen as shorthand for a set of interlocking processes related to labour market (sectoral and occupational structure), welfare states, educational systems and collective bargaining institutions (Esping-Andersen, 1993). For instance, the United States is characterized by a large low-end consumer service labour market, primarily consisting of women, minorities and youth in low paid, exploitative jobs. Many of these work part time and have a low level of unionization (Jacobs, 1993). In Norway, as in the other Nordic countries, the size and the organization of the welfare state is a distinct feature of the labour market. We may also observe an extraordinary concentration of a female labour force within the public sector (Hansen, 1997). The great influx of Norwegian women into the paid labour market took place in the 1970s and 1980s at a time when the welfare state was expanding.

As labour markets vary across countries, the structural conditions for lower level service workers performing emotional labour could differ. However, the bulk of previous research on emotional labour is Anglo-American, and such structural differences have not been particularly addressed in this literature.

### **A Brief Comparison of Employment Patterns in Six Countries**

Table 6.1 contains a comparison between employment regimes in six different countries, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the United States and the United Kingdom. All these countries share the same

general pattern of a substantial growth in the service sector from 1960 to 1995. If we compare the six nation states, however, there are differences in trajectory and the size of the service sector.

In 1960 the countries had different starting points. For instance, all the Scandinavian countries had a higher percentage of their paid labour force in agriculture than the United States and the United Kingdom. Even at that time the service sector encompassed more than half of the American workforce. During the whole period from 1960 until today, the United States has had the largest service sector. In 1995, almost three-quarters of the American labour force was found in this sector.

*Table 6.1 Employment patterns in selected countries. Percentage of civilian employment (OECD, 1997a; 1997b).*

|                       | 60     | 68   | 74   | 80   | 85   | 90   | 95     |
|-----------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| <b>Norway</b>         |        |      |      |      |      |      |        |
| Agriculture           | 21.6   | 15.4 | 10.6 | 8.5  | 7.4  | 6.5  | 5.2    |
| Industry              | 35.6   | 36.6 | 34.3 | 29.7 | 27.2 | 24.8 | 23.4   |
| Service               | 42.9   | 48.0 | 55.1 | 61.9 | 65.4 | 68.8 | 71.5   |
| (Government)          | ( -    | 15.4 | 19.0 | 23.2 | 25.2 | 27.6 | 30.6 ) |
| <b>Sweden</b>         |        |      |      |      |      |      |        |
| Agriculture           | 15.7   | 9.1  | 6.7  | 5.6  | 4.8  | 3.4  | 3.1    |
| Industry              | 40.3   | 41.1 | 37.0 | 32.2 | 29.8 | 28.9 | 25.9   |
| Service               | 44.0   | 49.8 | 56.4 | 62.2 | 65.3 | 67.3 | 71.0   |
| (Government)          | ( 12.8 | 18.4 | 24.8 | 30.4 | 32.7 | 31.6 | 31.3 ) |
| <b>Finland</b>        |        |      |      |      |      |      |        |
| Agriculture           | 35.2   | 25.6 | 16.3 | 13.5 | 11.5 | 8.4  | 7.7    |
| Industry              | 32.6   | 33.3 | 36.1 | 34.6 | 32.0 | 31.0 | 27.7   |
| Service               | 32.2   | 41.1 | 47.6 | 51.8 | 56.5 | 60.6 | 64.6   |
| (Government)          | ( 7.7  | 11.0 | 13.8 | 17.8 | 20.1 | 21.9 | 25.2 ) |
| <b>Denmark</b>        |        |      |      |      |      |      |        |
| Agriculture           | 18.2   | 12.7 | 9.6  | 7.1  | 6.7  | 5.6  | 4.4    |
| Industry              | 36.9   | 37.4 | 32.3 | 30.4 | 28.1 | 27.4 | 27.4   |
| Service               | 44.8   | 49.9 | 58.0 | 62.4 | 65.2 | 66.9 | 68.1   |
| (Government)          | ( -    | 15.2 | 22.2 | 28.3 | 29.7 | 30.4 | 30.7 ) |
| <b>United States</b>  |        |      |      |      |      |      |        |
| Agriculture           | 8.5    | 5.1  | 4.2  | 3.6  | 3.1  | 2.9  | 2.9    |
| Industry              | 35.3   | 35.4 | 32.5 | 30.5 | 28.0 | 26.2 | 24.0   |
| Service               | 56.2   | 59.4 | 63.4 | 65.9 | 68.8 | 70.9 | 73.1   |
| (Government)          | ( 14.8 | 17.1 | 16.2 | 15.4 | 14.6 | 14.5 | 14.0)  |
| <b>United Kingdom</b> |        |      |      |      |      |      |        |
| Agriculture           | 4.7    | 3.5  | 2.8  | 2.6  | 2.3  | 2.2  | 2.1    |
| Industry              | 47.7   | 45.2 | 42.0 | 37.6 | 34.8 | 32.5 | 27.4   |
| Service               | 47.6   | 51.3 | 55.1 | 59.7 | 63.0 | 66.0 | 70.5   |
| (Government)          | ( 16.4 | 17.5 | 19.6 | 21.1 | 21.5 | 19.4 | 14.4 ) |

Labour-force statistics 1976-1996 (Table 7, pp. 42-45) and historical statistics 1960-1995 (Tables 2.9-2.13, pp. 42-44).

On the other end of the scale, in Finland, 65% of the civilian workforce was employed in the service sector. There were small differences between Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, where the service population exceeded 70% in 1995. The figure for Denmark was slightly lower, 68%. Such moderate differences might also be due to different ways of measuring service employment in individual countries or even blurring lines between manufacturing and services.

Another difference was the size of government employment as a percentage of total employment. In the United Kingdom and the United States, government employment accounted for 14% of the workforce. Together with Sweden and Denmark, Norway had a substantial public sector. In these countries government employment accounted for almost one-third of the workforce in 1995. The influx of female workers came at the same time as the welfare state expanded. This contributed to a reinforcement of gender segregation in the labour market. The Nordic countries represent an extreme case of a gendered, welfare state, service-led trajectory (Esping-Andersen, 1993). Female workers are a permanent feature of the workforce but the labour markets in these countries are highly segregated both horizontally and vertically. Women and men are employed in different activities and occupations, and men hold 85-90 per cent of higher level management positions (Alvesson & Billing, 1997). Permanent part-time positions are widespread among women in lower level service work and welfare occupations. Several of these jobs are secure, but dead-end, when it comes to pay and possibilities of promotion. Thus, Norwegian service workers, especially in public employment, have so far been less exposed to market forces and insecurity than service workers in, for instance, the United States and the United Kingdom (Bradley, 1999). However, there are signs of changes as part of the public sector, such as

the postal services and telecommunications, has recently been undergoing restructuring and faced redundancies (Forseth, 1998c; Mikkelsen, 1998; Røvik, 1998).<sup>50</sup>

The table above gives the impression that paid work equals service work today. On the one hand, it is true that we live and work in a service society. On the other hand, categories based on established activities might cover a heterogeneous sample of occupations. For example, many employees in the manufacturing sector work in service occupations, such as clerical work, cleaning, customer service or telemarketing. Furthermore, many manufacturing firms are adding more and more service elements, while a service firm such as McDonald's has turned the manufacturing assembly line into a service assembly line. Thus, there are important distinctions within categories that are not taken into account when activities are the focus. A closer examination of occupations and job demands would probably modify the picture of almost all work as service work. Consequently, it is important to look for ways of delineating between different kinds of service work.

### **Horizontal and Vertical Gender Segregation in Norway**

Division along gender lines is one aspect of the sex segregation of work (Reskin & Roos, 1990; 1993). Although there have been historical changes, gender divisions appear to be persistent in the Nordic labour markets and elsewhere (OECD 1997). Together with Sweden, Norway is often described as a paradoxical case: It has one of the most gender-segregated labour markets in the world and yet is known as a country where

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<sup>50</sup> The rationalization of the public sector, including privatization of public services, has been launched as one of the Norwegian Labour party's main goals this year.



gender equality has come a long way (Ellingsæter, 1995; Sundin, 1998; Wright, 1997). I will start with a general overview of segregation of labour between industries (horizontal segregation) before I go on to vertical segregation.

Norway belongs to the group of OECD countries with the highest proportion of women in the paid workforce in the 1980s and the 1990s. In 1995, 74% of women compared to 85% of men between the ages of 15 and 64 were in the labour force (OECD, 1997).

A further breakdown by activities showed that in 1995, 87% of all employed women in Norway worked in the service sector, while the figure for men was 58% (OECD 1997). Table 6.2 shows the distribution of women and men into different activities according to the Work Orientations sample of the Norwegian workforce.

*Table 6.2 Division of labour by activities for women and men. Work Orientations Study 1997. Percentage.*

| <b>Industry</b>                    | <b>Women</b>      | <b>Men</b> | <b>Total (N)</b>  | <b>% of all women</b> | <b>% of all men</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Agriculture, fishing <sup>51</sup> | 30                | 70         | 100 (79)          | 3                     | 7                   |
| Industry                           | 20                | 80         | 100 (362)         | 9                     | 36                  |
| Trade, financing, insurance        | 57                | 43         | 100 (187)         | 14                    | 10                  |
| Personal services                  | 63                | 37         | 100 (120)         | 10                    | 6                   |
| Transportation, communication      | 23                | 77         | 100 (104)         | 3                     | 10                  |
| Public administration              | 65                | 35         | 100 (113)         | 9                     | 5                   |
| Education, research                | 65                | 35         | 100 (144)         | 12                    | 6                   |
| Public services                    | 75                | 25         | 100 (307)         | 29                    | 9                   |
| Other <sup>52</sup> , service      | 55                | 45         | 100 (139)         | 10                    | 8                   |
| Other, non-services                | 32                | 68         | 100 (38)          | 2                     | 3                   |
| <b>Total (N)</b>                   | <b>49</b>         | <b>51</b>  | <b>100 (1593)</b> | <b>101 (786)</b>      | <b>100 (807)</b>    |
| Pearson chi-square                 | 294.19 (p < .001) |            |                   |                       |                     |
| d.f.                               | 9                 |            |                   |                       |                     |
| Cramer's V                         | .43               |            |                   |                       |                     |

Table 6.2 documents that there are significant differences between men and women with reference to activities (Cramer's V = .43, p < .001).

<sup>51</sup> Includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting.

<sup>52</sup>By checking the category 'other' with an occupational classification variable in the data set, I found that most of them were service employees. They spanned a variety of occupations such as sales clerk, care worker, secretary, taxi driver, plumber and so forth. I was able to categorise according to sector but not activities. With 139 service employees added to the service sample, 88% of all women and 56% of all men work in the services sector. These figures are virtually identical with the presented OECD data. Consequently, the Work Orientations study sample seems to be representative as far as gender composition is concerned.

Almost nine out of ten women were employed in the service sector, compared to six out of ten men. The Work Orientations Study data corresponds with the above-mentioned OECD data (see Table 6.1. and comments). The most typical occupational categories for women were public services (employs 29% of all women) and trade, financing and insurance (employs 14% of all women). The picture was somewhat different for men. The manufacturing industry employed 36% of all men and then there was a gap to the ‘runner-ups’, trade, financing and insurance and transportation and communication (both sectors employed 10% of all men). Thus, the phrase service work as ‘women’s work’ (Hall, 1995) is valid if we focus on the number of female workers. On the other hand, more than half of the male workforce has also entered the service sector, and it is my assumption that most of them would object to doing women’s work. This is an example of how stereotypical gender images can be true and false at the same time. Nevertheless, these findings show that service work is segregated along gender lines, and that the public sector is predominantly a ‘female sector’ when it comes to the number of employees.

Gendered patterning of hierarchies, or vertical segregation, is another aspect of the division of labour. Although women dominate in numbers in service occupations, men dominate when it comes to managerial positions. In spite of this, we often somewhat misleadingly talk of feminized or ‘women-dominated’ sectors or occupations (for a recent discussion see Kvande, 1999).

*Table 6.3. Hierarchical positions in service work among women and men. Work Orientations Study 1997. Percentage.*

| <b>Position</b>        | <b>Women</b>      | <b>Men</b> | <b>Total (N)</b> | <b>% of all women</b> | <b>% of all men</b> |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Non-managerial         | 72                | 28         | 100 (708)        | 76                    | 47                  |
| Lower-level management | 51                | 49         | 100 (185)        | 14                    | 21                  |
| Middle management      | 41                | 59         | 100 (118)        | 7                     | 16                  |
| Senior management      | 24                | 76         | 100 (88)         | 3                     | 16                  |
| Total (N)              | 61                | 39         | 100 (1099)       | 100 (671)             | 100 (428)           |
| Person chi-square      | 112.30 (p < .001) |            |                  |                       |                     |
| d.f.                   | 3                 |            |                  |                       |                     |
| Kendall's tau-b*       | -.30 (p < .001)   |            |                  |                       |                     |

Table 6.3 shows that there are significant differences between gender and position in service work, although the association is not very strong (tau-b = -.30, p < .001).<sup>53</sup> Around a quarter of all women compared to half of the men held supervisory or managerial posts in the service sector. Men dominated in senior-level and middle-management positions. Female managers were more common in lower-level management positions. However, non-managerial does not necessarily equal subordinate as Table 6.4 indicates.

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<sup>53</sup> This is according to their own placement in the 1997 survey.

*Table 6.4 Hierarchical position and job autonomy in the service sector. Work Orientations Study 1997. Percentage.*

| Position                | Job autonomy<br>(‘Possibility of working according to own ideas’) |                    |                |                   | Total (N)  |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|
|                         | Not at all  | To a little extent | To some extent | To a large extent |            |
| Non-managerial          | 9   | 22                 | 47             | 22                | 100 (702)  |
| Lower-level management  | 3   | 11                 | 48             | 38                | 100 (185)  |
| Middle management       | 1   | 7                  | 46             | 47                | 101 (116)  |
| Senior management       | -   | 2                  | 20             | 78                | 100 (86)   |
| Total (N)               | 7   | 17                 | 45             | 32                | 101 (1089) |
| Pearson chi-square d.f. | 152.89 (p < .001)<br>9  |                    |                |                   |            |
| Kendall’s tau-b         | .31 (p < .001)  |                    |                |                   |            |

The table documents that job autonomy (i.e. the possibility of working according to own ideas) increased with hierarchical position but that it was not a very strong relationships (tau-b = .31, p < .001). Indeed, among non-managerial employees, 47% reported 'to some extent' and 22% reported 'to a great extent' on job autonomy. Among senior-level managers, almost 80% reported 'to a great extent'. On the other hand, a substantial proportion of lower-level and middle-level managers was organizationally governed, with a limited decision latitude ('to some extent'). These results indicate that job autonomy was quite widespread among employees in the service sector, even for workers in non-managerial positions. Thus it is important to focus on the content of work in addition to the hierarchical level.

These findings also indicate that categories such as 'non-managerial', 'female worker' or 'male worker' are not uniform. Among both women and men there are categories of people with good jobs and possibilities for promotion. Nevertheless, the majority of women are still found in lower-level service work. These were the kind of occupations that were

available to most of the women who entered the paid workforce during the 1970s. Moreover, it is often assumed that women are particularly suited for jobs requiring interpersonal skills due to the ‘natural abilities’ women acquire in the domestic sphere, such as caring, nursing, preparing and serving food. In fact, women often see themselves as particularly fit for this kind of work due to the way that they have been socialized (Acker, 1994b). Recent literature on gender relations has increasingly focused on a third meaning of ‘women’s work, i. e. how organisations actively define jobs in gendered ways. Many women belong to the ‘emotional proletariat’ (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996) – frontline service workers and para-professionals engaged in emotional labour in interactive service jobs.

### **Interaction with Customers or Clients**

Women are over-represented in jobs that require emotional labour in customer interactions. I had included two questions in the Work Orientations Study that may provide further details of this pattern of gender segregation in the Norwegian workforce. The first indicator is the amount of the working day spent on direct contact with customers or clients.

*Table 6.5 Amount of working day spent on direct customer or client interactions for women and men in the service sector. Work Orientations Study 1997. Percentage.*

| <b>Customer/client interactions</b> | <b>Women</b>     | <b>Men</b> | <b>Total (N)</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|
| 0%                                  | 9                | 8          | 9                |
| 1-24%                               | 20               | 37         | 27               |
| 25-49%                              | 11               | 19         | 15               |
| 50-74%                              | 14               | 16         | 14               |
| 75-100%                             | 46               | 20         | 36               |
| Total (N)                           | 100 (668)        | 100 (430)  | 101 (1098)       |
| Pearson chi-square                  | 89.61 (p < .001) |            |                  |
| d.f.                                | 4                |            |                  |
| Kendall's tau-b                     | .20 (p < .001)   |            |                  |

Female service workers in Norway appeared to spend a larger percentage of their working day in direct contact with customers or clients than men. The association is significant but not particularly strong (tau-b = .20, p < .001). In part, these differences in interaction pattern may be due to the fact that many men in service occupations have backstage or senior-level positions where they have more infrequent interactions with customers or clients. Women, on the contrary, often occupy boundary-spanning jobs, where there are no clear divisions between service product, the labour process and the particular employee (see Chapter 2). A recent survey in the European Union showed the same results - female occupations were more open towards the 'exterior', such as customers, patients, pupils or clients (EU, 1998).<sup>54</sup> Two-thirds of all women and around half of all men in Europe were involved in customer or client interactions. There are several explanations for the lower figures for Europe. First, I focused on service employees whereas the European figures included all workers. Second, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, there are different patterns of

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<sup>54</sup> The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions carried out the second European Survey on working conditions among 15 800 workers throughout the EU.

employment regimes. For example, countries with a higher number of people in agriculture and manufacturing are likely to have less customer contact.

It has been pointed out that within the service sector we find a trend towards short-time encounters between strangers. This is captured in Gutek's typology of service relationships and service encounters (Gutek, 1995a; 1999). The former involves long-term relationships between service provider and customer or client, whereas the latter involves short spells of interactions between strangers (see Chapter 3). My second question in the Work Orientations Study concerned average time per day spent on one customer or client, as illustrated in Table 6.6.

*Table 6.6 Average time spent per day on one customer or client in the service sector and gender. Work Orientations Study 1997. Percentage.*

| <b>Average time per customer or client</b> | <b>Women</b>   | <b>Men</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--|----------------|------------|--------------|
| 0 minutes                                  | 9              | 9          | 9            |
| Up to 10 minutes                           | 37             | 39         | 38           |
| 11-30 minutes                              | 22             | 27         | 24           |
| 31-60 minutes                              | 10             | 9          | 10           |
| 61+ minutes                                | 21             | 15         | 19           |
| Total (N)                                  | 99 (645)       | 99 (425)   | 100 (1070)   |
| Pearson chi-square                         | 7.74 (p = .10) |            |              |
| d.f.                                       | 4              |            |              |
| Kendall's tau-b                            | .04 (p = .12)  |            |              |

First, the table shows that short-time interactions (up to 10 minutes) were widespread as this applied to almost 40% of the sample. These could be both service relationships and service encounters. Interacting with customers as a sales clerk in a grocery store is quite different from providing care to the elderly. However, such detailed, contextual differences were not captured in the current survey. Second, there was no significant difference between women and men and average time spent on one cus-



tomers or clients ( $\tau\text{-}b = .04, p = .12$ ). However, this was a crude way of measuring customer and client interactions.<sup>55</sup> More insight into the qualitative nature of these different customer or client interactions would be valuable.

### Patterns of Skill and Exhaustion

Service work has been said to encompass a minority of highly skilled jobs and a majority of low-skill, marginalized jobs (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996). There are various ways of defining skills, but traditional definitions mostly rely on formal skills. The next table presents the current pattern of skills among the Norwegian service workforce.<sup>56</sup>

*Table 6.7 Levels of skill for women and men in service work.<sup>57</sup> Work Orientations Study 1997. Percentage.*

| Skill                      | Women                     | Men | Total (N)  | % of all women | % of all men |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----|------------|----------------|--------------|
| Expert                     | 36                        | 64  | 100 (188)  | 10             | 28           |
| Skilled                    | 62                        | 38  | 100 (523)  | 49             | 46           |
| Non-skilled                | 71                        | 29  | 100 (382)  | 41             | 26           |
| Total                      | 61                        | 39  | 100 (1093) | 100 (663)      | 100 (430)    |
| Pearson chi-square<br>d.f. | 66.01 ( $p < .001$ )<br>2 |     |            |                |              |
| Kendall's tau-b            | .21 ( $p < .001$ )        |     |            |                |              |

<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, there was no room for more detailed questions regarding interactions with customers or clients than the amount of the day and average time spent on one customer or clients in the Work Orientations Study.

<sup>56</sup> I am using Wright's (Wright, 1997) Skill-2 variable, p. 82, a compromise of two extreme ways of operationalizing skill dimensions; Skill-1 (restrictive non-skilled and expansive expert criteria) and skill-3 (expansive non-skilled and restrictive expert criteria).

<sup>57</sup> There was a slight over-representation of well educated employees in the Work Orientations Study.

The table shows that around half of the service workers were classified as skilled, almost one third were non-skilled and less than one fifth comprised experts. This does not fit the established pattern that is found in current (Anglo-American) literature of a polarized sector with a small number of highly skilled jobs at the top and a large number of low-skilled jobs at the bottom (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996). This result points out the importance of being cautious when generalizing from one national context to another. Another interesting finding in the table is the emergence of a gender pattern ( $\tau\text{-}b = .21, p < .001$ ). Men tended to dominate among both experts and skilled workers, whereas almost three-quarters of the non-skilled workers were females. One possible explanation could be that interpersonal skills that are often regarded as important skills in service work are regarded as personal qualities, and therefore not included in this traditional ways of measuring skills. It is also worth noting that when we split the sample into two categories, women and men, there was almost no difference in the category 'skilled'. Almost half of all women and half of all men were classified as skilled.

The optimistic development hypothesis referred to in Chapter 2 predicted that with the growth of service work, the strain on the individual worker would be eased (Offe, 1985). The next table focuses on patterns of skill and patterns of exhaustion in service work.

*Table 6.8 Patterns of skill and exhaustion from service work. Work Orientations Study 1997. Percentage.*

| Skill                      | Exhausted after work |           |                  | Total      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------|------------------|------------|
|                            | Always/<br>Often     | Sometimes | Seldom/<br>Never |            |
| Expert                     | 32                   | 56        | 12               | 100 (187)  |
| Skilled                    | 42                   | 49        | 8                | 99 (516)   |
| Non-skilled                | 46                   | 42        | 12               | 100 (382)  |
| Total                      | 42                   | 48        | 10               | 100 (1085) |
| Pearson chi-square<br>d.f. | 15.16 (p < .01)<br>4 |           |                  |            |
| Kendall's tau-b            | -.06 (p < .05)       |           |                  |            |

Table 6.8 shows that around 40% of the service workers were often or always exhausted at the end of the working day. There is also another significant but weak pattern, where the level of exhaustion decreases with the level of skill (tau-b = -.06, p < .05). Non-skilled workers are most often exhausted, experts are least often exhausted and the skilled workers come in-between. Being exhausted after work is a general measure and we do not know if it was interpreted as physical exhaustion or emotional exhaustion or probably both. In the final table I compare exhaustion across different types of work.

*Table 6.9 Exhausted after work by gender and activities. Work Orientations Study 1997. Percentage.*

| Activities                  | Women                 |                |                  | Men                   |                |                  | Total         |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
|                             | Exhausted after work  |                |                  | Exhausted after work  |                |                  |               |
|                             | Always/<br>Often      | Some-<br>times | Seldom/<br>Never | Always/<br>Often      | Some-<br>times | Seldom/<br>Never |               |
| Agriculture/ fishing        | 3                     | 4              | 5                | 8                     | 8              | 5                | 6             |
| Manufacturing               | 9                     | 10             | 12               | 43                    | 40             | 35               | 25            |
| Trade/financing             | 14                    | 16             | 20               | 9                     | 14             | 8                | 13            |
| Personal services           | 9                     | 12             | 19               | 6                     | 5              | 9                | 9             |
| Transport/<br>Communication | 4                     | 2              | 9                | 13                    | 10             | 11               | 7             |
| Public<br>administration    | 10                    | 12             | 5                | 6                     | 5              | 7                | 8             |
| Teaching/ research          | 14                    | 12             | 17               | 8                     | 6              | 8                | 10            |
| Public services             | 37                    | 33             | 14               | 8                     | 11             | 17               | 22            |
| Total                       | 100<br>(329)          | 100<br>(305)   | 100<br>(59)      | 100<br>(250)          | 100<br>(374)   | 100<br>(88)      | 100<br>(1405) |
| Pearson chi-square<br>d.f.  | 25.35 (p < .05)<br>14 |                |                  | 15.76 (p = .33)<br>14 |                |                  |               |
| Cramer's V                  | .14                   |                |                  | .11                   |                |                  |               |

This table is rather complex, but I would like to draw attention to some interesting patterns. There are weak, but significant differences between activities and exhaustion after work for women (Cramer's V = .14,  $p < .05$ ). There is a non-significant relationship between activities and exhaustion after work for men (Cramer's V = .11,  $p = .33$ ). The highest proportion of exhausted women was found in the public services while the highest proportion of exhausted men was found in manufacturing. As illustrated earlier in this chapter, this also reflects patterns of gender segregation that have channelled women and men into different kinds of work. However, activities are heterogeneous categories. For example, the public services include the police, military, health services and churches. Thus, I will come back to possible gender differences in the next chapter where I focus on three types of interactive service work.

## **Discussion: Differences in Employment Regimes**

This chapter has addressed several established assumptions about service work. Although the rise of the service sector is a common phenomenon across Western industrialized countries, there are also substantial differences in 'employment' regimes. Going back to the 1960s, each country had a different starting point with respect to employment patterns. Combined with differences in growth of public welfare and the influx of women into the paid labour force, to mention two factors, different trajectories can be observed. For instance, the Nordic countries 'deviate' when it comes to the size of the public sector and its population of female employees. Moreover, several of the women hold part-time positions. So far, with recent exceptions in the postal and telecommunications services, the public sector in Norway has offered relatively permanent and secure positions, and part-time workers have enjoyed the same formal rights as full-time workers. During the 1990s public employees with temporary contracts have proved to be especially vulnerable in terms of employment in all the Nordic countries.

Current literature, mostly American, presents a polarized picture of service work with a small minority of high-skill jobs at the top and a majority of low-skill jobs in the bottom (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996). This pattern was not found in Norway as far as skill and job autonomy were concerned. As many as half of the service workers in the sample, both women and men, were classified as skilled. Job autonomy seemed to be rather widespread, even in non-managerial positions in the service sector. Admittedly, this is a simple way of operationalizing job autonomy and more complex measures might give other results (see also Chapter 7 for a deeper discussion on job autonomy). Thus, non-managerial does not

necessarily equal being subordinate nor do managerial positions always equal high autonomy. At the same time, a subsequent proportion of low-level and middle-level managers reported that their job autonomy was somewhat restricted.

These results illustrate the existence of different ‘service regimes’ and indicate that Norwegian service workers and their working conditions deviate somewhat from the picture that is presented in the North American literature. Thus far, many service workers have had secure positions with the same formal rights as other workers even if they hold part-time positions. In the United States for instance, lower level service work is more marginalized and offers comparatively lower wages and poorer working conditions in the private sector (Dahl & Birkelund, 1999). Such structural differences are important to bear in mind when we transfer theoretical concepts and empirical results from one country to another.

In the same way it is easy to generalize from patterns of gender segregation within a country. One example of this is the notion of service work as women’s work. As I have discussed in the theoretical discussion, this is true in many ways. On the other hand, my results show that 58% of the men in the Norwegian workforce also worked in service occupations in 1997. Norway has been described as a paradoxical case with gender equality in several spheres of life, but its labour market is among the most horizontally gender segregated in the Western world. The gendered division of labour is culturally and historically determined. As long as women and men perform particular tasks and ‘cluster’ in particular occupations, as the main pattern in Norway suggests, tasks and occupations will have a gendered connotation (Søndergaard, 1994). The influx of women into the paid labour market in recent decades in Norway has been closely linked

to the growth in service work. The structural patterns that have been analyzed in this chapter indicate that the labour market is an arena for the creation of gender differences. In particular, this chapter has showed that women dominate in numbers in the service sector whereas men dominate in management positions. A quarter of the women in service work held management positions too, mainly at lower and middle levels. On average, women spent a larger proportion of their day in direct contact with customers or clients than men did. Consequently, if direct contact with customers or clients is used as a proxy for emotional labour, emotional labour appears to be especially widespread in female service jobs. This is an example of the gendering of occupations and organizations. Public services and trade, finance and insurance are examples of such gendered contexts (cf. Chapter 7). Even when women and men hold the same positions, the employees have been found to be subject to different gendered expectations (Pierce, 1995; Rantalaiho & Heiskanen, 1997). Female service workers are often expected to be both physically and emotionally 'ready' for 'invasion' from others. Workers are caught in boundary-spanning positions, where it is often difficult to draw boundaries between person and 'product', employee and customer. Moreover, they do not have the possibility of regulating their workload, i.e. the stream of customers, and they are expected to have interactive competence and display emotions yet follow the company's coordination and standardization requirements. These are some aspects of what I call the 'boundless' nature of this kind of job (see Chapters 9 and 10 for a discussion of other dimensions of boundlessness). Such types of strain, however, are often less visible than physical strain (Abrahamsen, 1986; Forseth, 1994; Karasek & Theorell, 1990) and less acknowledged and legitimated (Newton et al., 1995)

## Concluding Remarks

Work is a meaningful and important activity for both women and men (Ellingsæter, 1995), and a main mechanism for integrating people into society. However, differences in jobs and working conditions contribute to inequality when it comes to power, participation, pay, possibility of growth and development, occupational hazards and well-being. A little less than half of the service workers reported that they were always or often exhausted after work. Exhaustion after work does not have to be a bad thing. A sense of exhaustion might be a sign of having done a good day's work and a source of pride. There were significant differences between activities and exhaustion for women but not for men. The highest proportion of exhausted women worked in the public services, followed by trade and finance, and I will come back to these categories in the next chapter. In general, non-skilled workers were more often exhausted than skilled workers and experts. From other studies we know that those who are formally classified as non-skilled service workers are usually characterized by low autonomy, low job variation, high health risk exposure, subordination, low wages and fringe benefits, and low educational credentials (Kolberg & Kolstad, 1993). In the next chapter I will pursue these topics further, by focusing on emotional exhaustion across different types of interactive service work.



## 7. EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION IN INTERACTIVE SERVICE JOBS

*'Save – save – save. Negative signals from 'above' and dissatisfied users – we become 'dustbins' with little control over work' (female auxiliary nurse, aged 45).*

### Introduction

In Chapter 6 I documented that a little less than half of the Norwegian service workers reported that they were always or often exhausted after work. In this chapter I will elaborate on the impact of emotional labour in different work settings by using emotional exhaustion as an indicator. The purpose of this chapter is twofold: First, I investigate patterns of emotional exhaustion across three types of interactive service work, a care agency, a shopping mall and a bank. Second, I investigate the association between several demographic, job and contextual characteristics and emotional exhaustion. I have formulated a set of main hypotheses that serve as point of departure: (i) The care agency is expected to have higher mean scores on emotional exhaustion due to the nature of the employees' interactions with clients (including body-to-body interactions and chronic conditions of many clients). The shopping mall is expected to have the lowest mean scores because the sales clerks are involved in more routine and distant interaction with strangers, and the bank is expected to fall in-between due to recent restructuring and downsizing. Furthermore, (ii) interactive service workers who are involved in intense interaction with clients and spend most of their day in direct contact with customers

or clients: (iii) experience less control at work, (iv) experience high degrees of job involvement and are more prone to emotional exhaustion.<sup>58</sup>

The quote above from an auxiliary nurse in the sample illustrates how she feels caught in the middle, as a ‘dustbin’, becoming responsible for forces beyond her control. In the scientific literature, as well as the popular media, a lot of attention has been devoted to negative impacts of human service jobs, especially in the helping professions (Cherniss, 1995; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Paine, 1982; Roness, 1995). Besides, more attention has been focused on types of interactive work other than helping professionals that are susceptible to emotional exhaustion or burnout, such as customer advisers and bank tellers (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Matthews, 1990; Saxton et al., 1991; Singh, Goolsby, & Rhoads, 1994). In the current analysis a heterogeneous sample of service workers from a care agency for elderly is compared with sales clerks and bank clerks.

## Measures

- *Emotional exhaustion* © (Maslach et al., 1996)<sup>59</sup> was assessed by a nine-item scale (Chronbach's alpha = .92) that taps respondents' feelings of being ‘used up’ at the end of the workday. Response anchors go from (0) ‘Never’ to (6) ‘Every day’.

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<sup>58</sup> In addition, demographic factors were included as controls. As I pointed out in Chapter 4, there are mixed results in this area, and I have not specified detailed hypotheses for the control variables.

<sup>59</sup> This scale was translated by our research group and reproduced by special permission of the Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., Palo Alto, CA 94303 from the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson 1986. Research Edition Translation instruments may not appear in full in any form (including dissertation). Due to copyright restrictions, these questions have been removed from the questionnaire in the appendix. However, a listing of items on emotional exhaustion has appeared in some publications in Norwegian (Falkum, 2000) and in English (Wharton, 1993).

- *Percentage of day spent interacting with customers or clients*<sup>60</sup> was measured by five categories ranging from 0% to 100%.<sup>61</sup> Respondents were asked to check one of the five options.
- *Dummy variables for the bank and the care agency*<sup>62</sup> served as proxies for ‘service relationships’ in care work and ‘service encounters’ in sales work and banking (Guttek, 1995a) and captured differences between the contexts.
- *Customer relationships* (Karasek, 1985) measured the nature of the customer interaction, and included the following items: ‘I often get feedback from my customers or clients about the service I deliver’, and ‘I often get to know the customer or client personally in my job’. All items were rated on a four-point scale from (1) ‘Strongly disagree’ to (4) ‘Strongly agree’. As a revised scale only gained a Chronbach’s alpha of .63, I decided to rely on the following single item capturing *negative feedback from customers or clients*:<sup>63</sup> How often do you get negative feedback or complaints from customers or clients? It was rated on a seven-point scale ranging from (1) ‘Never’ to (7) ‘Every day’.
- *Job autonomy* was measured by a single question: ‘Do you have the possibility to work according to your own ideas’. It was measured by a

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<sup>60</sup> The term customer or client is used in a broad sense to include various kinds of service recipient.

<sup>61</sup> An alternative way of tapping intensity was to ask the informants how many customers or clients they interacted with during an average working day. Too many skipped this question for it to be useful in the analyses.

<sup>62</sup> The shopping mall serves as a reference category.

<sup>63</sup> The Job Content Instrument (Karasek, 1985) was translated by our research group as part of the intervention project. Two of the items had very low correlation with the others, and lowered the alpha level. Thus, they were omitted in the revised scale. Several requests to the originator have resulted in updated information and validity check on all other scales except this particular one.

three-point scale rated from (1) 'Too a little extent', (2) 'Too some extent', and (3) 'Too a large extent'.

- *Work overload* was initially based on the Role Overload Scale developed by Beehr, Walsh and Taber (1976) in (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981). However, one of three items had to be excluded because it lowered the alpha level, and the revised scale obtained moderate reliability values. Instead I used a sub-scale from the translated version of Cooper's job stress instrument (Cooper, 1981) to measure work overload because it covers essentially the same dimension: 'Workload', 'Time pressure and deadlines', and 'The strain my work puts on my private life'. Questions were rated on a six-point scale ranging from zero to five. The Chronbach's alpha for this scale was .75.
- *Interface between home and work* was assessed by a single item 'I think about job-related tasks and problems when I am off duty', and was coded from (1) 'Never' to (5) 'Daily'.
- *Organizational commitment*<sup>64</sup> (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) was measured by a nine-item scale tapping belief in and acceptance of values and goals for the organization, the desire to maintain membership in the organization, and a willingness to exert extra effort on behalf of the organization.<sup>65</sup> The items were scored on a scale ranging from (1) 'Strongly disagree' to (7) 'Strongly agree', and the scale achieved a Chronbach's alpha of .89.

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<sup>64</sup> To many employees today, job commitment is just as important as organizational commitment. I regret that we did not include such a scale (see for instance (Morrow, 1993) for a discussion on the theory and measurement of work commitment).

<sup>65</sup> For a discussion on how theoretical aspects related to organizational commitment and its components: effort, affective and continuance commitment see Kalleberg & Marsden, 1995; Morrow, 1993.

- *Attendance pressure* (Edgren, 1986) denotes a person's proclivity to go to work in circumstances when he or she is feeling neither well nor ill. I have used a sub-scale to measure being irreplaceable at work (Saksvik, 1996). The items were 'I have important assignments at work', 'There is so much that has to be done on the job', 'There is no one else who can perform the work I do' and 'It is impossible to get a substitute' (Chronbach's Alpha = .68). The four items were rated on a scale from (1) 'Completely true', (2) 'Partly true', and (3) 'Not true'. Using the reversed scale, high scores mean high degrees of attendance pressure.
- *Relevant future skills*: In five years my skills will still be valuable (Karasek 1986). This was rated on a four-point scale from (1) 'Strongly disagree' to (4) 'Strongly agree'.
- *Hierarchical position* was measured by the response to the following question: 'Do you hold a managerial position, that is, do you manage or supervise other people? This was coded as (1) 'Yes', (0) 'No'.
- *Demographic characteristics* included *age* (coded in years), *female*, (1) 'Female', (0) 'Male'<sup>66</sup>, *education* (coded in years), *job tenure*<sup>67</sup>, and *percentage of full time position*<sup>68</sup>. The last variable was available from register data. In the regression analysis call-on workers were omitted if they did not have a fixed figure for this variable.

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<sup>66</sup> I decided not to include 'number of children' or 'household cycle' (age of children) in the analysis as I only found very low and non-significant relationships between these variables and the general measure 'exhausted after work' in the national Work Orientations Study from 1997.

<sup>67</sup> The original model included *Job tenure* and *Total number of hours worked* (paid and unpaid extra hours). These were later excluded as many respondents had skipped these questions.

<sup>68</sup> As many women have permanent part-time positions in Norway, 'stillingsandel' is a common variable (literally it means the percentage of full-time employment). We had register data on 'stillingsandel' that were used in their wage system and thus were more reliable than self-reported hours (see chapter on methodology and previous footnote).

## **Results: Emotional Exhaustion across Different Types of Service Work**

Emotional exhaustion is a specific stress-related reaction. It refers to a state of depleted energy caused by excessive emotional demands made on people interacting with customers or clients (Maslach et al., 1996; Singh et al., 1994). A physical component is also included in some definitions (Perlman & Hartman, 1982). Table 7.1 shows the prevalence of emotional exhaustion in the three different job settings, the care agency, the shopping mall and the bank.<sup>69</sup> Care workers were over-represented in the sample as we needed sufficient numbers in order to evaluate the effects of two interventions in two care districts in the care agency (cf. Chapter 5). The two care districts were collapsed into a single category as there was no significant difference between the mean values,<sup>70</sup> and they were part of the same organization. Comparing the care agency, the shopping mall and the bank, we found differences within each job setting, as the standard deviation was rather high.

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<sup>69</sup> There are no numbers for the prevalence of burnout in the total Norwegian population. Studies of particular groups such as healthcare personnel and teachers indicate that every third person 'burns out' in the course of his or her working life. Compared to some decades ago, more people in the 30s and 40s appear to burn out. The total demands at work and at home contribute to exhaustion according to Norwegian researchers in psychology and psychiatry (Matthiesen, 2000; Richardsen, 1999; Roness, 1998). See also *Aftenposten*, April 12, 1999.

<sup>70</sup> Care1 (Mean = 15.00, SD = 11.82), Care2 (Mean = 15.95, SD = 10.85)( $p = .33$ ).

*Table 7.1 Descriptive statistics for emotional exhaustion in three job settings.*

|                        | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>S.D.</b> | <b>95 % confidence interval</b> |
|------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Care agency            | 570      | 15.40       | 11.41       | 14.46 - 16.34                   |
| Mall                   | 170      | 13.65       | 11.13       | 11.96 - 15.33                   |
| Bank                   | 142      | 18.76       | 12.07       | 16.76 - 20.77                   |
| Total                  | 882      | 15.61       | 11.56       | 14.84 - 16.37                   |
| Eta <sup>2</sup> = .02 | p < .05  |             |             |                                 |

In spite of this, the result of a one-way analysis of variance showed that there were significant differences between the three different job settings ( $F = 7.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ), especially between the bank and the mall. In terms of values on the Eta coefficient, however, this relationship was not as clear as one might have expected (Eta<sup>2</sup> = .02). Contrary to the predicted proposition, hypothesis 1, the bank, not the care agency, had the highest mean scores on emotional exhaustion, followed by the care agency and the shopping mall.<sup>71</sup>

### **Factors Associated with Emotional Exhaustion**

Before undertaking a hierarchical regression analysis, the zero-order correlations between emotional exhaustion and the independent variables were examined (Table 7.2). The strength of the associations varied, but two-thirds were significant.

Among the demographic control variables, 'female', 'years of education', 'percentage of full-time position' were significantly correlated with the dependent variables. The first two of these were slightly correlated

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<sup>71</sup> Using the established cut-off points from the Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual (Maslach et al., 1996), 40 % of the total sample had high or medium levels of emotional exhaustion. The figure for the bank was 50% (Forseth, 1999a).

whereas 'percentage of full-time position' correlated moderately ( $r = .18$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Most of the job-related factors correlated significantly with emotional exhaustion. The strongest relationships were found between work overload ( $r = .53$ ,  $p < .001$ ), organizational commitment ( $r = -.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the interface between home and work ( $r = .29$ ,  $p < .001$ ), attendance pressure ( $r = .27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and negative feedback from customers or clients ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The other independent variables had more moderate correlation except for 'age', 'hierarchical position', 'job autonomy', and a dummy variable for the care agency, which fell short of being significant. In order to measure the impact of these variables on emotional exhaustion a multivariate analysis was performed.



Table 7.2 Means, standard deviations and correlation matrix (N = 674).

|                                | Mean  | S.D.  | 1       | 2       | 3       | 4       | 5       | 6       | 7       | 8       | 9       | 10      | 11     | 12     | 13     | 14     | 15   | 16   |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|------|
| 1 Emotional exhaustion         | 16.02 | 11.63 | 1.00    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 2 Age                          | 40.24 | 10.31 | .04     | 1.00    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 3 Female                       | .81   | .40   | -.08*   | .03     | 1.00    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 4 Education                    | 12.75 | 2.74  | .10**   | -.25*** | -.11**  | 1.00    |         |         |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 5 % of full time               | 76.27 | 28.22 | .18***  | .23***  | -.26*** | .04     | 1.00    |         |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 6 Manager                      | .21   | .41   | .04     | .04     | -.07*   | .30***  | .27***  | 1.00    |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 7 Customer interaction (%)     | 3.96  | 1.20  | .07*    | -.23*** | .14***  | -.01    | -.12**  | -.22*** | 1.00    |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 8 Bank                         | .18   | .38   | .11**   | .16***  | -.22*** | -.10**  | .28***  | -.09**  | -.11**  | 1.00    |         |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 9 Care                         | .64   | .48   | -.04    | .13***  | .11**   | .18***  | -.22*** | .03     | -.06    | -.62*** | 1.00    |         |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 10 Negative feedback customers | 2.92  | 1.52  | .20***  | -.18*** | -.09**  | -.02    | .02     | -.04    | .19***  | .11**   | -.24*** | 1.00    |        |        |        |        |      |      |
| 11 Job autonomy                | 2.05  | .62   | -.04    | -.06    | -.06    | .16***  | .16***  | .28***  | -.15*** | -.16*** | .11**   | -.07*   | 1.00   |        |        |        |      |      |
| 12 Work overload               | 9.83  | 3.62  | .53***  | -.05    | -.01    | .13**   | .17***  | .12**   | -.02    | .11**   | -.04    | .13**   | .03    | 1.00   |        |        |      |      |
| 13 Home/work                   | 2.80  | 1.18  | .29***  | .03     | -.07*   | .17***  | .30***  | .30***  | -.10**  | .13**   | -.14*** | .11**   | .15*** | .33*** | 1.00   |        |      |      |
| 14 Future skills               | 3.03  | .62   | -.08*   | -.08*   | .04     | .12**   | .01     | .10**   | .05     | -.16*** | .17***  | -.08*   | .20*** | .04    | -.01   | 1.00   |      |      |
| 15 Commitment                  | 43.82 | 8.99  | -.30*** | .10**   | .05     | -.13*** | -.01    | .12**   | -.02    | -.08*   | .07*    | -.17*** | .19*** | -.10** | .01    | .19*** | 1.00 |      |
| 16 Attendance pressure         | 6.85  | 1.96  | .27***  | -.00    | .00     | .17***  | .21***  | .25***  | -.12**  | .03     | -.00    | -.07*   | .18*** | .35*** | .34*** | .06    | .06  | 1.00 |

\*\*\*p < .001 \*\*p < .01 \*p < .05

The effects of the independent variables that were specified in the theoretical discussion were examined by hierarchical regression analysis (Table 7. 3).<sup>72</sup> First, the impact of the control variables, 'age', 'female', 'education', 'percentage of full-time' (employment) and 'hierarchical position', was analyzed before I added variables that were related to the interaction with customers or clients. These variables included quantitative measures such as proportion of the day spent on customers or clients, and qualitative aspects: Dummy variables for the bank and the care agency (the shopping mall was used as a category of reference) and 'negative feedback from customers or clients'. The third model included other job-related and contextual factors: 'Job autonomy', 'work overload', 'problems with interface between home and work', 'relevant future skills', 'organizational commitment' and 'attendance pressure'. The final model contained four interaction terms that were considered as particularly interesting from a theoretical point of view<sup>73</sup>. The first interaction term, 'work overload, problems with the interface between home and work and attendance pressure' ( $r = .33, p < .001$  and  $r = .35, p < .001$  correspondingly) was included to investigate a more global measure of total amount of stress and strain. The second interaction term, 'female and percentage of full time' ( $r = -.26, p < .001$ ), was included to examine the effect of gender and gendered contexts on females mostly in part-time positions (see methods). The purpose of the third, 'female and negative feedback from customers or clients' ( $r = -.09, p < .01$ ), was to elaborate on possible differences in work experience for women and men (see Chapter 3). The fourth interaction term, 'bank and relevant future skills' ( $r = -.16, p <$

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<sup>72</sup> The researcher defines the inclusion of each variable (in contrast to a stepwise procedure).

<sup>73</sup> I also tried several other operationalizations and combinations of measures but most of these were left out because they fell short of being significant.

.001), was meant to tap the effect of restructuring in banking, particularly the weight put on the changed nature of work and the mismatch of 'suitable' skills among bank tellers (see Chapter 9). All the results are presented in Table 7.3 with the exception of the final model. Due to space limitations only the interaction effects from model four are presented.

In model one of the regression analysis only 'years of education' and 'percentage of full-time position' were significant predictors of emotional exhaustion. 'Age' and 'gender (female)' had no significant effect on emotional exhaustion. The demographic factors only accounted for four per cent of the variance ( $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F = 6.16$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

*Table 7.3 Multivariate regression analysis of emotional exhaustion in interactive service work (N = 674).*

| Predictor                                  | B <sup>74</sup> | SE B | Beta      | t            |
|--|-----------------|------|-----------|--------------|
| Age  | .03             | .05  | .03       | .62          |
| Female                                     | -.64            | 1.16 | -.02      | -.55         |
| Education                                  | .45             | .18  | .11*      | 2.57         |
| % of full time                             | .07             | .02  | .18***    | 4.26         |
| Manager                                    | -1.09           | 1.19 | -.04      | -.92         |
| Age  | .05             | .05  | .05       | 1.09         |
| Female                                     | -.06            | 1.16 | -.00      | -.05         |
| Education                                  | .42             | .18  | .10*      | 2.38         |
| % of full time                             | .07             | .02  | .16***    | 3.79         |
| Manager                                    | .14             | 1.20 | .01       | .11          |
| Customer interaction (%)                   | .86             | .39  | .09*      | 2.20         |
| Bank                                       | 3.80            | 1.59 | .13*      | 2.40         |
| Care                                       | 2.58            | 1.28 | .11       | 2.02         |
| Negative feedback from customers           | 1.54            | .30  | .20***    | 5.16         |
| Age  | .11             | .04  | .10**     | 2.69         |
| Female                                     | -1.59           | .96  | -.05      | -1.67        |
| Education                                  | -.01            | .15  | -.00      | -.05         |
| % of full time                             | .02             | .02  | .05       | 1.26         |
| Manager                                    | -.55            | 1.03 | -.02      | -.54         |
| Customer interaction (%)                   | 1.21            | .32  | .13***    | 3.77         |
| Bank                                       | .98             | 1.31 | .03       | .75          |
| Care                                       | 1.95            | 1.06 | .08       | 1.85         |
| Negative feedback from customers           | .78             | .25  | .10**     | 3.10         |
| Job autonomy                               | -.22            | .63  | -.01      | -.35         |
| Work overload                              | 1.36            | .11  | .42***    | 12.42        |
| Interface home/work                        | 1.01            | .35  | .10**     | 2.94         |
| Relevant future skills                     | -1.03           | .60  | -.06      | -1.72        |
| Organizational Commitment                  | -.30            | .04  | -.24***   | -7.24        |
| Attendance pressure                        | .71             | .20  | .12**     | 3.49         |
| Overload x Home/work x Attendance pressure | .02             | .01  | .29**     | 3.18         |
| Female x hours                             | -.03            | .04  | -.10      | -.77         |
| Female x Negative feed-back from customers | .60             | .60  | .09       | 1.05         |
| Bank x future skills                       | -3.75           | 1.65 | -.36*     | -2.28        |
| R <sup>2</sup> adjusted                    | Model 1         | .04  | d.f. = 5  | F = 6.16***  |
|  | Model 2         | .09  | d.f. = 9  | F = 8.03***  |
|  | Model 3         | .39  | d.f. = 15 | F = 29.84*** |
|  | Model 4         | .40  | d.f. = 19 | F = 24.87*** |

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

<sup>74</sup> B is the unstandardized coefficient, and beta is the standardized coefficient.

In the second model, I examined the impact of factors related to the interaction with customers or clients and the different work settings. All four variables had a significant impact on emotional exhaustion. These included percentage of day interacting with customers or clients, the dummy variables for the bank and the care agency and negative feedback from customers or clients. However, in the customer interaction per se, both quantitative and qualitative aspects had a modest impact, and increased the explained variance to 9% ( $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F = 8.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In the third model all the new variables, with the exception of job autonomy and future skills, were significantly associated with emotional exhaustion. Work overload turned out to be the main ‘protagonist’, followed by organizational commitment, attendance pressure and the interface between home and work. This regression equation had high explanatory power as the explained variance increased to 39% ( $R^2 = .39$ ,  $F = 29.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The final model contained four additional interaction terms.<sup>75</sup> The first was a three-way multiplicative interaction term consisting of work overload, attendance pressure and the interface between home and work. It had a significant impact on the dependent variable. The second, the relationship between female and part-time position, was not significant but the analysis may seem to indicate that female part-timers were more prone to emotional exhaustion. The third, the relationship between female and negative feedback from customers or clients, also fell short of being significant. The result, however, may be seen to illustrate that those women who receive negative feedback from customers are more likely to

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<sup>75</sup> I had also tested out a range of other possible interaction terms from the model.

be emotionally exhausted. The final interaction term, the extent to which skills will be of value in the future in the bank, also had a significant impact. In this final model, age was the only significant demographic variable, and it turned out that older workers were more prone to emotional exhaustion than younger workers (beta = .09,  $p < .05$  – not included in the presented table). This was also the case for the dummy variable for the bank (beta = .39,  $p < .05$ ) and the care agency (beta = .09,  $p < .05$  – not included in the present table). No significant relationships were found between female, education, percentage of full-time position, hierarchical position, negative feedback from customers, job autonomy, problems with the interface between home and work, lack of relevant future skills, attendance pressure and the dependent variable when the interaction terms were added. The interaction terms only added slightly to the explanatory power, and the explained variance increased from 38 to 40 per cent ( $R^2 = .40$ ,  $F = 24.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Taken together, according to the relative strength in the analyses, the dummy variable for the bank, future skills in banking, work overload, attendance pressure, interface between home and work, organizational commitment, customer interaction, both qualitative and quantitative dimensions, and age were significantly associated with emotional exhaustion. Thus, job-related and contextual factors linked to control at work and job involvement underscored the primary role of job and work setting characteristics. The nature of customer interaction per se turned out to have a more moderate effect and the demographic factors appeared to play a lesser role.

## Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to explore the prevalence of emotional exhaustion across different types of interactive service work, and examine the impact of demographic, job-related and contextual factors on emotional exhaustion. Methodological aspects are also relevant for the other empirical chapters, consequently, they have been discussed in Chapter 5 on methodology.<sup>76</sup> However, I will include some comments on the emotional exhaustion scale. The Maslach Burnout Inventory has been the most widely used scale for measuring burnout, and today, emotional exhaustion is regarded as the core feature of burnout (cf. Chapter 1). Two out of nine items focus on the relationship to service recipients. The other questions deal with feelings of being depleted of energy at work, and could equally apply to non-emotional labour. In practice, it is also difficult to apply these items exclusively to emotional exhaustion while omitting physical exhaustion altogether. Physical exhaustion has been mentioned as a component in some definitions of burnout (Freudenberger, 1974; Perlman & Hartman, 1982).

This research offers insights heretofore unavailable in emotional-labour research. I would particularly like to mention the evidence on (1) emotional exhaustion in care work and other types of interactive service work, and (2) the importance of job-related factors other than customer interaction, especially contextual factors related to work overload, insecurity

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<sup>76</sup> As a control check I ran a regression analysis using pairwise treatment of missing data which increased my sample by 148 respondents. The results were identical except that the dummy variable for the care agency became significant ( $\beta = .08, p < .05$ ). This implies that care workers were prone to emotional exhaustion in combination with the other predictors in model 3.

related to restructuring and mismatch of skills, attendance pressure and problems with the interface between home and work.

### *The Relevance of Emotional Exhaustion*

The comparison of emotional exhaustion means across various types of interactive service work underscored the relevance of emotional exhaustion outside the prototypical helping occupations as the bank had the highest scores. On the one hand, this result is in line with Hochschild's initial framework (Hochschild, 1983), while on the other hand, this result is in contrast to 'established truths' claiming that human service professions are particularly prone to emotional exhaustion and burnout (Cherniss, 1980a; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; 1996; Paine, 1982).

Recently, however, researchers have suggested that people-oriented jobs other than human-service professions are likely to lead to moderate or even high levels of emotional exhaustion (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Matthews, 1990; Saxton et al., 1991; Singh et al., 1994).

The care agency did not have the highest scores on emotional exhaustion even if the jobs involve intense and demanding service relationships with clients (cf. the initial quotation in Chapter 8 and Roness, 1995; Stjernø, 1983) for a discussion on burnout among helping professions in Norway). Many care workers described a workday with heavy lifting, too many tasks, violent clients, cutbacks and under-staffing in the open-ended questions. Thus, the results do not imply that care workers have less arduous days than, for instance, bank clerks do. However, there are important contextual differences, and I have only quantified some of these aspects (Dahl-Jørgensen, Damman, & Mauseth, 1999). For instance, the care workers have to walk around and do not have as many repetitive tasks as the frontline bank clerks do. Moreover, the care workers perform



their job ‘body-to-body’ where feelings and bodily functions are an integral part of the job. Thus, there is likely to be more focus on emotional aspects and bodily dysfunction among server and service recipient, as well as among colleagues. Moreover, there appears to be an altruistic dimension in care work that was mentioned by many of the care workers. Being able to contribute to the well-being of people in need of care seems to be a major source of joy. This makes the job worth while even if it is *‘poorly paid and working conditions are tough’*, to quote one care worker. This suggests that there is a difference between emotional labour executed for the well-being of clients and emotional labour undertaken for commercial purposes and profit. The bank employees had also experienced an upheaval that involved new job demands, job insecurity, restructuring and downsizing (see Chapter 9). To keep abreast of the new developments in banking, lower level bank clerks had been told to improve their skills and be prepared for new tasks. Organizational changes or not, care workers knew that their basic skills would be valued in the future.<sup>77</sup> With rapid changes in information technology and the introduction of new finance products, bank clerks with low levels of formal qualifications are vulnerable because they lack the right skills. Restructuring in the care agency and the mall involved changes in organization, personnel, technology and opening hours. However, there had been no threat of redundancies, and in the care sector there was even a lack of personnel. Indeed, the bank clerks scored significantly higher on various indicators, such as increased job stress and job insecurity.

As predicted, the mall had the lowest levels of emotional exhaustion. Most likely the majority of the shop clerks engage in service encounters,

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<sup>77</sup> This is confirmed in the Health in Working Life survey.

that is, short spells of routine interaction between strangers (Gutek, Cherry, & Bhappu, 1998). Such rapid encounters might be like a service assembly line that would increase workers' alienation and reduce their work autonomy. Gutek (1995a) claimed that short spells of routine interaction between strangers (service encounters) are more monotonous and more stressful than relationship-style jobs. Recent quantitative studies, however, have found that routine interactions that require little emotional intensity are less emotionally draining (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Morris, 1995). This illustrates the importance of specifying quantitative and qualitative dimensions of customer interaction. Moreover, these results indicate the importance of factors related to control at work, especially work overload, pressure and job insecurity, in addition to the interaction with customers or clients, in explaining patterns of emotional exhaustion.

### ***The Impact of Contextual Factors***

How do these results relate to recent literature in this field? The mean figures of emotional exhaustion in the current study were both higher and lower than figures from similar international studies. The mean for the total sample was 15.61 compared to 14.82 in an American study of banking and hospital work (Wharton, 1993), and 20.99 in a sample of various helping professions (Maslach et al., 1996). The results from a Norwegian study in a hospital setting gave the following results for nurses (24.97) and physicians (18.66) (Richardsen, Burke, & Leiter, 1992). In our study the bank had the highest mean scores on emotional exhaustion (18.76) followed by the care organization (15.40) and the mall (13.65). In a comparative study in selected occupational fields, Matthews (1990: 233) obtained higher values on emotional exhaustion: Banking (23.72), health services (25.88) and social services (30.32). In a study

among customer advisers in boundary-spanning roles in a single marketing firm, Singh et al. (1994) compared their sample with previous studies and found that the customer advisers were in the top panel of emotional exhaustion. On average, their sample had a higher level of emotional exhaustion than the police, medical residents and welfare, social and mental health workers did. However, the customer advisers' level of emotional exhaustion was lower than that of lawyers and child- and infant-care workers. Such comparisons can be useful, but previous studies do not constitute definitive answers, and there might be several contextual differences (see discussion in Chapter 6). Some of these studies have been based on relatively narrow samples, sometimes of single occupations, and I have observed response rates as low 34% (Mazur & Lynch, 1989) and 28% (Richardsen et al., 1992). Nonetheless, these results call for more attention to 'explanatory' factors in the different job settings.

Bearing in mind existing, conceptual frameworks and empirical literature, I had focused on three broad categories as antecedents of emotional exhaustion (in addition to control variables): *Customer interaction, control at work and job involvement*. I had also included new dimensions that were related to current changes within each category. Several of these variables have not been common in previous analyses of emotional exhaustion, such as attendance pressure and factors related to restructuring and future skills. The analysis shows that these dimensions have been useful in explaining the pattern of emotional exhaustion.

My results confirmed that the interaction with customer or clients, both qualitative and quantitative dimensions, seemed to have a significant impact. Initial studies on emotional labour conceptualized it as a dichotomy in line with Hochschild's (1983) preliminary sketch (appendices).

Adelman (1989) for instance, compared jobs with high and low degrees of emotional labour in a national study, and found that workers in jobs requiring high degrees of emotional labour reported lower job performance, lower self-esteem and happiness, more symptoms of depression and poorer health. Recent studies have called for more attention being paid to quantitative and qualitative distinctions of emotional labour, such as frequency, duration, and intensity of emotional labour (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Wharton, 1993). The most commonly investigated quantitative dimensions have been number of clients and amount of the working day spent on clients. The association between number of clients and emotional exhaustion has earlier been confirmed by Maslach and Jackson (1984) cited in Maslach et al., 1996. My results showed that employees who spent more of their day on customers had a propensity to become ‘drained’ by their work.<sup>78</sup> This result is consistent with previous findings that people who spent all or most of their working time in direct contact with patients scored high on emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 1996). Recent studies have identified no significant relationship between frequency of contact with clients and burnout (Dietzel & Courtsey, 1998). Koeske and Koeske (1989) claim that it might be too simple to compare simple measures of quantitative and qualitative aspects of customer interaction and burnout. In their study they found that heavy caseload was associated with high levels of emotional exhaustion under certain conditions. Such mediating or moderating factors ought to be taken into consideration.

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<sup>78</sup> The questionnaire also contained a question on the average number of customer or client interactions per day. It was not included in the analysis because many respondents had skipped this question.

Qualitative differences in customer interaction were captured in several ways in the current study. The Customer Relationship scale (Karasek, 1985) was included to assess the nature of the customer interaction (see measures). Unfortunately, it was too unreliable to be useful in this study. Instead, I had to rely on dummy variables for the different work sites and a single question assessing customer feedback. The association between the bank and the dependent variable was only significant in the second and the fourth model. Bank employees seemed more likely to be emotionally exhausted. Furthermore, the results showed that workers who frequently received negative feedback from customers were prone to emotional exhaustion. Thus, this could be interpreted as a reiteration of previous empirical investigations (Dietzel & Courtsey, 1998; Maslach & Jackson, 1984; 1996). However, in their investigation of community mental-health workers, Sculz, Greenley and Brown (1995), did not find an association between client severity and emotional exhaustion/burnout. Such differences might be due to the fact that the various studies focus on different dimensions or dimensions that are closely related to human professions (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Examples of this are the type of client problem, whether it is chronic or acute and the probability of success. Such factors might be less useful outside the prototypical helping occupations.

In addition to customer interaction, control at work has been regarded as a crucial factor in studies on emotional labour and emotional exhaustion, as well as in labour process theory and theories on healthy work (Braverman, 1974; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Thorsrud & Emery, 1969). Job autonomy has been a widely used operationalization, but I also included several other indicators. My findings were equivocal. Contrary to the hypothesis, job autonomy was

not significantly related to emotional exhaustion, and I spent some time elaborating on this result.<sup>79</sup> This was surprising given the emphasis on job autonomy in the theoretical framework and recent empirical findings (Wharton, 1993). Another way to examine control at work is to look at education or formal position in the hierarchy. Education was only significant in the first and the second model of the analysis. Position in the hierarchy fell short of being significant in all four models. One explanation of my results might be that the role of the manager differed across work sites. Qualitative data from the shopping mall showed that several of the managers came from the ‘floor’ and spent a considerable part of their workday behind the counter themselves. Moreover, service workers both at top and bottom levels are increasingly asked to ‘inhabit the job’ (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996). In Chapter 6 I found that job autonomy<sup>80</sup> appeared to be quite widespread even in non-managerial positions. Another interpretation is that working life has become tougher at all levels so that job autonomy, education and position are not sufficient as moderators of emotional exhaustion.

The crucial role of work overload was in line with the postulated relationship and former investigations (Burke & Greenglass, 1995a; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach et al., 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Mazur & Lynch, 1989; Paine, 1982). Workers who experienced work overload were more likely to have elevated scores on emotional exhaustion. I also included a variable on the interface between home and work to counter the position of perceiving workers as ‘genderless entities without obliga-

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<sup>79</sup> As the next step, I included mismatches between job demands and autonomy. I even tried all possible combinations of these two variables in the dummies. The outcome was meagre.

tions outside work' (Acker, 1990). Problems with the interface between home and work turned out to be associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion. This illustrates that it might be difficult to leave the job behind – emotional labour turns into mental labour in one's spare time. Difficulty in managing the boundary between work and family has been identified as a contributor to emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 1996). These results illustrate that in order to understand current work experience and feelings of control, we have to focus on current changes, insecurity, time pressure, caseload and relate work to non-work activities. The relationship between job insecurity and emotional exhaustion has been pointed out earlier (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Mazur & Lynch, 1989). My findings also echo results from the United Kingdom implying that bad features of jobs were not related to traditional problems such as colleagues, management or monotony, but problems arising from restructuring (Bradley, 1999). These factors included stress, pressure, work overload, understaffing and uncertainty about the future. Recently, the association between economic changes, restructuring and emotional exhaustion/burnout has been confirmed in Finnish studies (Hakanen et al., 1998; Santamäki-Vuori, 1997). Elevated levels of job burnout were twice as common in companies that had been through periods of restructuring and downsizing.

My results indicate that involvement at work might be a double-edged factor: Employees who were committed to the organization, that is, identified strongly with their organization, had lower scores on emotional exhaustion. This result is contrary to previous claims that low degrees of

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<sup>80</sup> Job autonomy was operationalized in the same way in the two studies: The possibility of working according to own ideas.

involvement are associated with high degrees of emotional exhaustion, or that emotional exhaustion leads to diminished organizational commitment (Hochschild, 1983; Maslach et al., 1996; Wharton, 1993). Several authors have claimed that work in the modern world is becoming more stimulating and stressing, seductive and greedy, providing opportunity as well as overload (Hochschild, 1997a; Kanter, 1989; Sørhaug, 1996). It has been common to relate 'obsession' or 'seduction' towards paid work to managers and professionals, but recent studies have found similar patterns among 'factory hands' (Hochschild, 1997a). Thus, job involvement can be a double-edged sword contributing to joy but also exhaustion. On the one hand, organisational commitment, that is, the extent to which employees identify strongly with their work organization, appears to be a buffer against emotional exhaustion. An alternative interpretation might be that organizational commitment is lowered for those who experience emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 1996; Richardsen et al., 1992). Both are plausible explanations. In fact, as organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct, it might be an idea to check out the impact of the different dimensions, such as affective, continuance and effort dimensions (see measures). As services become customized, individual responsibility increases (cf. Chapter 9) and if the employee knows that it is difficult to get hold of a substitute when a colleague falls ill, there might be a pressure to attend. Moreover, in organizations that are facing restructuring and downsizing, it is important for employees to demonstrate that they have the 'guts' and stamina to be on the 'winning team' (Saksvik, 1996). Thus, in current working life both men and women are increasingly 'invaded' by the double-edged nature of job demands. In contrast to Marx' prototypical alienated industrial worker, interactive service workers may be prone to emotional exhaustion not only because they are exhausted but also because they 'burn' for their jobs. There was



a significant association between the interaction term ‘relevant future skills’ in the bank and emotional exhaustion. A plausible interpretation is that this was related to a mismatch in skills and job demands, and restructuring involving job insecurity, increased pressure and work overload.<sup>81</sup> Except for work overload, aspects related to the organization itself and its market position and restructuring have been scant or absent in previous literature on emotional labour and emotional exhaustion (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1996).

With the exception of age, demographic factors had no impact in the final regression analysis. Factors such as self-esteem and personality type have been regarded as determinants of emotional exhaustion (Mazur & Lynch, 1989), but no such relationship was identified in the current study.<sup>82</sup> In the first and second model, education and hours worked (i.e. percentage of full time) were also significant predictors. Full-time workers with higher education were more prone to emotional exhaustion. Older workers were also more likely to be emotionally exhausted than younger workers. It has been noted earlier that young workers are burnout-prone. However, there is mixed evidence concerning this pattern (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). There was no significant association between gender and emotional exhaustion. Interpreted cautiously, my results seem to indicate that female part-time workers and female workers who received negative feedback from customers or clients were more burnout-prone.

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<sup>81</sup> Combining the statement ‘In 5 years my skills will still be valuable’ with the dummy variables for the work sites fell short of statistical significance for the care agency but not for the bank.

<sup>82</sup> To control for the effect of personality characteristics, we used a scale for Type A behaviour such as time pressure, irritability and a propensity to invest effort in work beyond expected demands. Hardiness (showing enthusiasm, being open to challenges and experiencing control), however, has been found to be a buffer against burnout, Duquette et al. 1994 quoted in Matthiesen, 2000.

This might mean that the mechanisms that contribute to emotional exhaustion are different for women and men. However, I did not have sufficient numbers of men in the sample to test this properly but it should be subject to further enquiry in future studies. Women have been said to have a weaker 'status shield' against displaced feelings of others (Hochschild, 1983). Thus, emotional labour can put a heavier toll on women. Women have also been said to perform more emotional work both at home and at work. Recent studies show mixed evidence on the association between gender and emotional exhaustion (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach et al., 1996; Morris & Feldman, 1996). The non-significant effects of other individual demographic variables on emotional exhaustion are consistent with recent studies among human-service professionals (Burke & Greenglass, 1995a; 1995b). On the other hand, current gender segregation of occupations and organizations (Acker, 1990; Reskin, 1993; Reskin & Roos, 1990) means that women are found in high contact, frontline positions. This is confirmed in the sample as more than 80 per cent were females. Another sign of gendering processes is that part-time work was widespread particularly in the care agency and the shopping mall. The percentage of full-time position only had a significant impact in the two first models but was also included as an interaction term (see above). In a recent study among bank clerks and hospital workers, Wharton (Wharton, 1993; 1996a) observed higher rates of emotional exhaustion among workers who worked long hours but no significant association with education. I measured regular hours but it is unclear whether Wharton measured regular hours or total hours (including overtime). Undoubtedly, it could be interesting to compare the effect of the two ways of measuring hours worked. However, a problem with the self-reported number of hours is that some people overestimate whereas others tend to underestimate. This question is also related to

another discussion of what work really is in a time when we are not longer on duty or off duty but where work is becoming a state of mind (see Chapter 9). In the Norwegian context, many lower level service workers work part time, for example care workers and retail clerks. These workers have fewer hours to accomplish their tasks at work, but probably have more responsibility at home. Thus, working part time might still result in high workloads if one adds the demands of home and work. In a study of medical doctors, nurses and auxiliary nurses, Abrahamsen (1998) found that working hours per se had no effect on patterns of exhaustion after work. On the contrary, there was a significant association between the amount of overtime and exhaustion for doctors, while shift work, in particularly working nights, was significantly related to exhaustion for the nurses and the auxiliaries. In a Durkheimian sense, current workers are facing increased expectations both at home and at work as the nature and standards of everyday life have changed. Thus, being a part-time worker does not necessarily have to be a buffer against emotional exhaustion. These results underscore that we are dealing with complex matters and how work experiences have to be interpreted in light of structural changes. For instance, home and work are not separate spheres of life, and employees are not 'gender-neutral, abstract entities' without a life outside work (Acker, 1990; 1992a; Glazer, 1993).

### **Concluding Remarks**

This analysis from the bank, the shopping mall and the care agency for elderly has underscored the relevance of emotional exhaustion outside the prototypical helping occupations, and the primary role of job and work setting characteristics. In contrast to previous literature, which underscored the crucial role the interaction with customers or clients often has

per se, this study has also highlighted factors associated with the organization itself and current transformation of work in explaining patterns of emotional exhaustion. To put it bluntly, those who had high scores on emotional exhaustion were relatively older and had one or more of the following characteristics: They were involved in direct contact with customers or clients most of their day, they experienced negative feedback from customers or clients, they reported work overload, had difficulty with the boundaries between home and work, were not highly committed to the organization, and experienced attendance pressure or, in the case of the bank, experienced mismatch in skills in relation to future job demands. Interpreted cautiously, the analysis has also indentified interesting associations between female workers, part-time work and emotional exhaustion, female workers, negative feedback from customers and emotional exhaustion. This should be scrutinized more carefully in future studies using a sample with more men (see Chapter 9).

My primary focus in this chapter was not on the rewards of emotional labour. Thus, I did not include income or other perceived rewards, such as 'being valued', that might be valuable. Emotional exhaustion is one indicator of the impact of emotional labour. The next step could have been to investigate other indicators such as job stress or job satisfaction. However, I have chosen another track, as there are several studies on job stress and job satisfaction, but fewer studies on the impact of emotional exhaustion. In the next chapter I will investigate how emotional exhaustion can effect service employees themselves and their interaction with customers or clients.

## 8. THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

*'I'm at the verge of being burnt out at my workplace. This is a result of the behaviour of the client. Every day I face psychological strain such as threats of being bitten, pulled by the hair, kicked, hit, killed, crushed and gotten at. Spitting takes place every day, and there's also some physical contact from time to time' (male auxiliary nurse, aged 31).<sup>83</sup>*

### Introduction

Why bother if employees become emotionally exhausted by their work? Is it unambiguously negative or might it be a sign of having done a good day's work? To shed light on these questions I will investigate the impact of emotional exhaustion in this chapter. In the previous chapter I focused on patterns of emotional exhaustion across different job settings. My analysis documented differences in prevalence between different types of interactive service work, and found that emotional exhaustion had relevance outside prototypical helping occupations. Emotional exhaustion was not only associated with the nature of customer or client interaction as the quotation above illustrates, but also with restructuring and mismatch in skills, work overload, attendance pressure, problems with the interface between home and work, and lack of organizational commitment. As previously reported in the literature, demographic factors, with the exception of age, had less impact. Interpreted cautiously, gender

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<sup>83</sup> The informant had moderate scores on the emotional exhaustion scale, and high scores on the depersonalization scale in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (see methods).

appeared to have some impact on emotional exhaustion in relation to part-time work and negative customer interaction.

One of the main reasons why organizations require emotional labour is the expectations that regulated emotional expressions will increase sales (Morris & Feldman, 1996), or I would add, will increase the quality of the service. Indeed, many claim that emotions and experiences are becoming increasingly important as the service economy is superseded by the 'experience economy' or the 'entertainment economy' (Jensen, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Thus, emotional exhaustion is more than an individual problem. It is not just a trivial matter that people are feeling cranky or 'having a bad day' – emotional exhaustion and burnout cost money (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Initial theorizing and empirical evidence on emotional exhaustion stressed the dysfunctional effect on individuals and companies alike. Bearing in mind previous theoretical discussions, I proposed a fifth hypothesis in Chapter 4: Emotional exhaustion is positively associated with health complaints, poor job performance and intention to leave one's job.

## Measures

- *Subjective health complaints* were measured by 'A scoring system for subjective health complaints' (SHC) (Eriksen, Ihlebæk, & Ursin, 1999) where respondents are asked about the frequency of a set of somatic and psychological complaints experienced during the last 30 days, ranging from (0) 'No complaints' to (3) 'Severe complaints'. The inventory covers psychological problems (8 items), muscle pain

(6 items), cold/influenza (2 items), allergies (3 items), and gastrointestinal problems (7 items). A sum score for all the complaints was computed which gained a Chronbach's alpha of .83.

- *Estrangement towards customers or clients* was measured by the *depersonalization* scale in the Maslach Burnout inventory ©.<sup>84</sup> This is regarded as the second phase in the burnout process (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; 1996). The scale consists of 5 items (Chronbach's alpha = .81) tapping negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients. It is rated from (0) 'Never' to (6) 'Every day'.
- *Intention to leave* was measured by a single-item scale from the Job Content Instrument (Karasek, 1985). The scale was scored according to (1) 'Very unlikely', (2) 'Somewhat likely' and (3) 'Very likely'.
- *Emotional exhaustion* (Maslach et al., 1996) was assessed by a nine-item scale (Chronbach's alpha = .92) that measures respondents' feelings of being 'used up' at the end of the workday. Response anchors go from (0) 'Never' to (6) 'Every day' (see footnote to depersonalization).
- In addition, I have included the following independent variables: *age*, *female* (1) 'Female', (0) 'Male', *education* (coded in years), *income*<sup>85</sup>, *number of hours worked* (register data of percentage of full-time position), *hierarchical position* (1) 'Yes', (0) 'No'. The three different work settings were the bank, the mall and the care agency.

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<sup>84</sup> This scale was translated by our research group and reproduced by special permission of the Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.. Due to copyright restrictions, users are not allowed to report the exact wording for the items. For further details see Measures in Chapter 7.

<sup>85</sup> In the final analyses I decided to omit income as around 100 persons had not answered this question. Moreover, it did not have a significant impact in any of the analyses.

## Results: Emotional Exhaustion as Invisible Costs

Before the regression analysis, the correlations between emotional exhaustion and the dependent variables were examined separately and reported in Table 8.1. As my primary focus is the impact of emotional exhaustion, I do not include the control variable in the table below for ease of illustration.<sup>86</sup>

*Table 8.1 Means, standard deviations and correlation matrix of variables in the analysis (N = 801).*

|                              | Mean  | S.D.  | Emotional exhaustion | Subjective health complaints | Depersonalization | Turnover intention |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Emotional exhaustion         | 15.71 | 11.66 | 1.00                 | .32***                       | .51***            | .15***             |
| Subjective health complaints | 9.38  | 7.83  |                      | 1.00                         | .09*              | .07                |
| Depersonalization            | 6.41  | 6.74  |                      |                              | 1.00              | .07                |
| Turnover intention           | 1.56  | .71   |                      |                              |                   | 1.00               |

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

There were weak correlations between the dependent variables, and a significant association was only found between subjective health and depersonalization ( $r = .09$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Emotional exhaustion correlated most strongly with depersonalization ( $r = .51$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but also with subjective health complaints ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and to a lesser degree with turnover intentions ( $r = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In order to examine the effects of emotional exhaustion I performed hierarchical regression analyses. Model one consisted of the control variables, whereas emotional exhaustion was included in model two. Model three

<sup>86</sup> The relationship between the control variables and emotional exhaustion was also shown in the correlation matrix in Chapter 7.



contained interaction terms that were added to capture contextual differences. This procedure was chosen in order to compare the impact of demographic variables, emotional exhaustion and contextual factors. I will present each dependent variable at a time. I decided to only report the interaction terms in step three because the results for the other variables do not deviate dramatically from step two.

Table 8. 2 presents the analysis of subjective health complaints. In model one of the regression analysis none of the predictors had a significant effect on subjective health complaints, and the equation was not statistically significant. In contrast, in model two the dummy variable for the bank (beta value =  $-.12$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and emotional exhaustion (beta value =  $.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ) had significant impact on subjective health complaints. On average, bank clerks were less likely to report health complaints. Moreover, employees who were emotionally exhausted suffered from other health complaints. The second model explained 11 per cent of the variance in subjective health complaints. In the third model there was a significant association between the interaction term 'bank and percentage of full-time employment' (beta value =  $-.52$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and subjective health complaints. This result indicates that part-time workers were more prone to health complaints than full-time workers in the bank. The other interaction term, female and percentage of full-time employment, fell short of being significant. Thus, there was no significant pattern between women in part-time positions and subjective health complaints. The explained variance, however, did not change ( $R^2 = .11$ ).

*Table 8.2 Multivariate regression analysis for variables predicting subjective health complaints (N = 768). Coefficients for model one, model two and the interaction terms for model three are presented.*

| Predictor                       | B <sup>87</sup> | SE B | Beta      | t            |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|------|-----------|--------------|
| Age                             | .01             | .03  | .01       | .15          |
| Female                          | 1.23            | .77  | .06       | 1.60         |
| Education                       | -.08            | .12  | -.03      | -.65         |
| % full time                     | .01             | .01  | .03       | .74          |
| Manager                         | -1.36           | .76  | -.07      | -1.80        |
| Bank                            | -1.79           | 1.05 | -.09      | -1.71        |
| Care                            | -.98            | .83  | -.06      | -1.17        |
| Age                             | .00             | .03  | .01       | .14          |
| Female                          | 1.26            | .73  | .06       | 1.71         |
| Education                       | -.18            | .11  | -.07      | -1.64        |
| % full time                     | -.01            | .01  | -.03      | -.62         |
| Manager                         | -1.20           | .72  | -.06      | -1.68        |
| Bank                            | -2.43           | .99  | -.12*     | -2.45        |
| Care                            | -1.23           | .79  | -.08      | -1.56        |
| Emotional exhaustion            | .22             | .02  | .33***    | 9.39         |
| Female x % full time            | -.00            | .03  | -.00      | -.02         |
| Bank x % full time              | -.11            | .04  | -.52*     | -2.58        |
| R <sup>2</sup> adjusted Model 1 | .01             |      | d.f. = 7  | F = 1.62     |
| Model 2                         | .11             |      | d.f. = 8  | F = 12.60*** |
| Model 3                         | .11             |      | d.f. = 10 | F = 10.80*** |

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

In the next table I focus on estrangement in the interaction with customers or clients, captured in the term ‘depersonalization’ that indicates dehumanized and ‘cold-hearted’ attitudes and treatment.

<sup>87</sup> See footnote to Table 7.3.

*Table 8.3 Multivariate regression analysis for variables predicting depersonalization in customer interactions (N = 731). Coefficients for model one, model two and the interaction terms for model three are presented.*

| Predictor                       | B <sup>88</sup> | SE B | Beta      | t            |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|------|-----------|--------------|
| Age                             | .01             | .03  | .01       | .27          |
| Female                          | -.42            | .67  | -.02      | -.62         |
| Education                       | .21             | .10  | .09*      | 2.04         |
| % of full time                  | .01             | .01  | .04       | 1.02         |
| Manager                         | -.24            | .67  | -.01      | -1.36        |
| Bank                            | 1.60            | .91  | .09       | 1.76         |
| Care                            | -1.38           | .73  | -.10      | -1.89        |
| Age                             | .00             | .02  | .01       | .15          |
| Female                          | -.43            | .58  | -.03      | -.74         |
| Education                       | .06             | .09  | .02       | .64          |
| % of full time                  | -.01            | .01  | -.04      | -1.11        |
| Manager                         | -.11            | .58  | -.01      | -.19         |
| Bank                            | .70             | .79  | .04       | .88          |
| Care                            | -1.70           | .63  | -.12**    | -2.69        |
| Emotional exhaustion            | .29             | .02  | .51***    | 15.58        |
| Female x % full time            | -.03            | .03  | -.19      | -1.39        |
| Bank x % full time              | .01             | .04  | .07       | .36          |
| R <sup>2</sup> adjusted Model 1 | .03             |      | d.f. = 7  | F = 4.27***  |
| Model 2                         | .27             |      | d.f. = 8  | F = 35.31*** |
| Model 3                         | .27             |      | d.f. = 10 | F = 28.46*** |

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

All the control variables except years of education fell short of being significant in the first regression model. The model explained 3% of the variance in the dependent variable. In model two, this picture was changed. Emotional exhaustion had a strong impact on depersonalization (beta value = .51, p < .001). Moreover, there was a negative association between the dummy variable for the care agency and the level of estrangement. Care workers seemed less likely to report callous and

<sup>88</sup> See footnote to Table 7.3.

dehumanized treatment of their clients. The other variables did not have a significant impact on the dependent variable in this model. Together, the predictors in model two explained 27 per cent of the variance. None of the interaction terms were significant in the final model, and thus, the explained variance remained the same.

In the final regression analyses turnover intention served as the dependent variable. These analyses deviated somewhat from the previous ones as indicated in Table 8.4.

*Table 8.4 Multivariate regression analysis for variables predicting turnover intentions (N = 766). Coefficients for model one, model two and the interaction terms for model three are presented.*

| Predictor                       | B <sup>89</sup> | SE B | Beta      | t            |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|------|-----------|--------------|
| Age                             | -.02            | .00  | -.35***   | -8.84        |
| Female                          | .02             | .07  | .01       | .25          |
| Education                       | .03             | .01  | .11**     | 2.77         |
| % of full time                  | -.00            | .00  | -.05      | -1.27        |
| Manager                         | -.00            | .06  | -.00      | -.05         |
| Bank                            | .22             | .09  | .12*      | 2.51         |
| Care                            | .11             | .07  | .07       | 1.57         |
| Age                             | -.02            | .00  | -.35***   | -8.97        |
| Female                          | .02             | .06  | .01       | .27          |
| Education                       | .02             | .01  | .09*      | 2.37         |
| % of full time                  | -.00            | .00  | -.07      | -1.93        |
| Manager                         | .00             | .06  | .00       | .03          |
| Bank                            | .19             | .09  | .10*      | 2.22         |
| Care                            | .10             | .07  | .07       | 1.41         |
| Emotional exhaustion            | .01             | .00  | .15***    | 4.42         |
| Female x % full time            | -.00            | .00  | -.14      | -.95         |
| Bank x % full time              | -.00            | .00  | -.13      | -.68         |
| R <sup>2</sup> adjusted Model 1 | .15             |      | d.f. = 7  | F = 19.68*** |
| Model 2                         | .18             |      | d.f. = 8  | F = 20.08*** |
| Model 3                         | .18             |      | d.f. = 10 | F = 16.19*** |

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

Several control variables such as age, education and the dummy variable for the bank predicted turnover intention significantly in model one.

Young employees, highly educated persons and bank employees were likely to apply for new jobs. The explained variance was 15 per cent in model one. In model two, age was still the strongest predictor (beta value =  $-.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) together with emotional exhaustion (beta value =  $.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the dummy variable for the bank (beta value =  $.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and years of education (beta value =  $.09$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Together the predictors in

<sup>89</sup> See footnote to Table 7.3.

model two explained 18 per cent of the variance in turnover intentions. There were no changes in the third model except that the dummy variable for the bank was no longer significant when the interaction terms 'bank' and 'percentage of full' time were included. The explained variance was unchanged.

In the two first equations, the explanatory power in model one was rather low, but it varied considerably after model two. It was moderate for subjective health complaints ( $R^2 = .11$ ) and turnover intention ( $R^2 = .18$ ), and high for estrangement in relation to customers or clients ( $R^2 = .27$ ). There was no increment in explained variance from the second model to the final model. This means that the interaction terms did not yield additional explanatory power. Finally, these results illustrate that there are other factors that have an impact on the dependent variables.

## **Discussion**

The primary aim of this chapter was to examine the impact of emotional exhaustion on factors related to the service workers themselves, and their interaction with customers or clients. The outcome variables were based on previous conceptualizations and research findings. I have discussed possible limitations related to this material and the analysis in Chapter 5 and in the final chapter which also relate to other chapters.

### ***Subjective Health Complaints***

The finding that emotional exhaustion was related to subjective health complaints is consistent with previous literature. In Chapter 3 I cited several foreign and Norwegian studies that had documented a relationship between emotional labour and dysfunctional health effects such as

fatigue, exhaustion, depressive symptoms, physical health complaints, sickness absenteeism and alienation (Abiala, 1999; Adelman, 1989; Forseth, 1994; 1995b; Grimsmo & Sørensen, 1991; Grimsmo et al., 1992; Hochschild, 1983). Overall, however, the impact of emotional exhaustion on health outcomes has been more widely analyzed in medical and psychological studies. I will mention some examples from this literature. Freudenberger (1974) was among the first to underscore the relationship between burnout and psychosomatic complaints. Deterioration of mental health and physical problems, for example, fatigue, insomnia, headaches and gastrointestinal disturbances, have been reported in several studies (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). In a longitudinal study on teachers, the scholars found that emotional exhaustion had a significant correlation with absenteeism and psychosomatic symptoms but not with self-reported physical health (Burke & Greenglass, 1995a). In contrast to that study, the self-reported health scale used in the current study contained subscales of both physical and psychosomatic symptoms (see measures). These results have been corroborated in Norwegian studies on burnout in 'helping professions' and other care workers practising care for the elderly, in particular auxiliary nurses (Roness, 1995; Skogstad, Matthiesen, & Hellesøy, 1990). The association between emotional exhaustion and psychic complaints, as well as somatic complaints, has been confirmed in other recent Norwegian studies, predominantly of helping professions (Matthiesen, 2000).

Burnout has been described as a process of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. My results show that there was a moderate relationship between emotional exhaustion and subjective health complaints. Thus, emotional exhaustion can be seen as an 'invisible cost' that can manifest itself as health problems at a later

stage. There is another interesting point that merits comment. When asked about their health situation in general, the majority of the employees in the Health in Working Life survey reported that their health was very good (25%) or good (73%). In spite of this, the same employees reported several subjective health complaints. This situation has earlier been found in other studies (Sørensen, Dahl-Jørgensen, & Skogstad, 1998a; Sørensen et al., 1998b). This indicates that we come to regard ailments and pains as part of ordinary life.

My analysis indicates another minor substantial point in relation to the bank. On average, bank employees seemed to be less likely to report subjective health complaints than the rest of the sample. Including the interaction terms 'bank' and 'percentage of full time', the results showed that full-time workers seemed to have less subjective health complaints than the few part time workers (amounts to 7% of the employees in the bank, see Chapter 5). One explanation may be that employees who suffer from health problems have chosen to work part time in the bank.

There appears to be an unequivocal view on the association between emotional exhaustion and health effects in the literature. In a recent review of the importance of psychological, organizational and social factors on health, the authors underscored the relationship between emotional labour and health outcomes as one important topic for future research (Sørensen et al., 1998b). Organizations are putting more and more pressure on workers to maintain a positive 'face' for the public. In a recent study, demands to express positive emotions on the job were positively related to physical health symptoms, in particular among people reporting lower identification with the organization and lower job involvement (Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). It is also important to focus



on the total situation of the emotional labourer. For instance, in a study among women with chronic muscle pains, Lilleaas (1995; 1996) found that many of her informants lived their lives in a situation of ‘continuous alert’. As many as 76% of the women said that they never or seldom had time to rest – their days were filled with assignments at work, at home and in relation to other relatives. They had a low degree of sensitivity in listening to bodily signals. If we want to understand women’s health, research has to be redefined and based on an expanded definition of women’s work beyond paid employment (Messias et al., 1997). This will help us to reflect on the multiple contexts and dimensions of women’s work, as well as on the diversity among women. We also need to know more about the processes and mechanisms behind patterns of ill health, and one further line of enquiry would be to focus on different coping strategies as I will briefly do in Chapter 9.

### *Estrangement towards Customers or Clients*

As this study is concerned with personnel in boundary-spanning positions, the quality of the interaction with customers or clients is vital for their job performance. As I was particularly interested in the relational aspects of the job and possible estrangement in relation to customers or clients, I decided to rely on depersonalization, the second stage in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al., 1996). In this analysis, however, I used depersonalization, traditionally considered as the second phase in the burnout syndrome, as a dependent variable and regressed the effect of emotional exhaustion. This might be a somewhat unorthodox treatment of this scale. To date there has in fact been little information available regarding the impact of burnout on service recipients. My analysis illustrated that employees who experienced high levels of exhaustion were likely to experience a kind of estrangement in relation to

their service recipients, resulting in callous and indifferent treatment. The care workers, however, seemed to have a lower propensity for such estrangement as illustrated with the negative association between the dummy variable for the care agency and the dependent variable. Perhaps one explanation could be that many of them are involved in close body-to-body interaction with their clients and get to know their clients better than in the more distant customer interactions in the bank and the shopping mall.

Previous assumptions focused on how industrialization had led to a depersonalization of labour, and the expansion of services was seen as an opportunity to reverse this trend (Offe, 1985). The direct contact with customers and clients was expected to have 'humanizing' effects on service labour. As my results indicate, this optimistic expectation may have some bearing, but may at the same time contribute to depersonalization.

Hitherto, empirical evidence on the association between emotional exhaustion and job performance has been especially exiguous (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Wright & Bonett, 1997). My findings echo studies that have investigated the effects on job performance using global measures of self-reported job performance (Adelmann, 1989) or additive scales based on dimensions such as quantity, ability, potential, customer relationships and time management (Singh et al., 1994). Another way of measuring job performance is to use a panel of experts. In a longitudinal study among professional staff in a public sector, the human services department, the researchers concluded that emotional exhaustion accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in subsequent performance above and beyond what was accounted for by the control variables (Wright &

Bonett, 1997). However, this result did not attain significance until stage two in the study. Overall, these studies appear to offer compelling evidence of the detrimental effect of emotional exhaustion on job performance.

### ***Intention to Leave***

The result, which showed that emotional exhaustion was a significant determinant of intentions to quit the job, is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Jackson, 1984). For instance, in a study of nurses, social service workers and mental health workers, Maslach (1981) found that people experiencing burnout were dissatisfied with the possibilities of personal growth and development on the job. My findings are also in line with studies outside the helping professions, such as telephone reservation agents working for an air carrier (Saxton et al., 1991) and customer advisers in telemarketing positions (Singh et al., 1994). So far I have discussed turnover as if it were a uniformly defined concept. But turnover can be voluntary or involuntary, anticipated or actual, and the way it is measured can affect its results. Indeed, the desire to quit does not have to be a negative factor but might mean that individuals are seeking new challenges and heading for better positions. The decision to apply for a new job will also be influenced by contextual aspects. As mentioned above, the care sector had several vacancies, thus it was rather easy to get a new position. In banking, life-long positions used to be common, but this situation has changed. The number of employees has been reduced in the last decade due to restructuring and downsizing and there are further plans for reduction in personnel. Perhaps the result above, that bank clerks are more prone to quit their job, is one indicator of how the industry has entered the world of global competition. As illustrated above, turnover intention was

also related to age and education. Young employees and educated employees were more likely to apply for new jobs.

Hitherto, there is little empirical evidence in some of these areas, especially factors associated with the organization itself, its policies and contexts, but some tentative conclusions may be drawn (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). In a time when the emotions expressed by employees are considered a vital part of the service product and a company's competitive edge, we need to take the focus away from a limited range of economic measures as emotional exhaustion may be regarded as invisible costs. Learning more about emotional exhaustion might also be a valuable way of increasing our knowledge on the impact of recent changes in working life. Indeed, more people seem to burn out at an earlier age. This has been related to an increased workload at home and at work, higher expectations and a 'boundless' working life. In several jobs it is difficult to leave the job behind. In jobs where there has been a speed-up, many workers constantly feel that they are not doing enough and are unable to provide high quality service (cf. Chapter 9). In discussions on emotional exhaustion, especially in the popular media, there is a strong emphasis on the individual. The individual has to learn to become more 'stress-fit' and to manage own boundaries in a time when stress has become a natural fact of life (Newton et al., 1995: 60). However, overload and burnout are too important to be reduced to a personal problem alone. Interpreted cautiously, I have shown that emotional exhaustion can represent a hidden cost for the companies.

## Concluding Remarks

Employees who were emotionally exhausted had more subjective health complaints, more intentions to quit and reported subpar performance and a propensity to treat customers in a callous and impersonal way. Moreover, the analysis also identified differences between the job settings when it came to subjective health complaints in the bank and estrangement towards clients in the care agency. The strongest explanatory power was established for estrangement towards customers or clients. Compared to the previous chapter the explained variance was lower, but so was the number of predictors. All in all, consistent with conceptual frameworks (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach et al., 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 1997), emotional exhaustion had a significant impact on the dependent variables.

The primary aim was to study the impact of emotional exhaustion on the service workers and their interaction with customers or clients. Emotional exhaustion, and to some extent age, turned out to be major ‘protagonists’. However, the emphasis on dependent variables somewhat overshadowed the explanatory factors. Indeed, there are several other factors that may contribute to explaining the observed patterns, but this was beyond the scope of this chapter. In the future, supplementary independent variables should be included. Specifically, the above results suggest that it is important to focus on contextual differences. In addition to focusing on particular types of work, other interaction terms should be explored further to reveal differences between the work sites.

Concurring with several other studies, my study relied on self-reported levels of performance in relation to service recipients. One next step

could be to relate emotional exhaustion to archival data on performance and productivity. A word of caution though, as Gummesson (1992) notes, measuring output in services is not simple. The search for hard facts might just as well be a fight against quixotic windmills.

A cross-sectional design has been used in my analyses. The reported implications of emotional exhaustion would most likely have been even stronger in a longitudinal design with a considerable length of time. Actually, my study was part of a longitudinal field-research project. For the time being I preferred to explore qualitative data instead of undertaking time-lagged analyses. Indeed, over half of the employees in the bank moved to other (internal) positions during the project period and there was also personnel turnover in the other two job settings, the care agency and the shopping mall. Numbers might be a useful starting point as analytical prose (Enderud, 1986) because they convey patterns and associations, but figures only tell part of the story. A great deal of current survey research on emotional exhaustion has recently been criticized because it *'appears rather sterile, endlessly recycling the same concepts and measures'* (Ashforth & Lee, 1997: 705). I have taken part in this recycling but also contributed some new concepts especially related to distinctions between service work and customer interactions and current transformation at work (see also Chapters 4 and 7). Last but not least, I agree with those who claim that qualitative methods can enrich the interpretation of survey data. This will enable us to learn more about the processes, mechanisms, context and experience of emotional labour and emotional exhaustion to which I turn in the next chapter.

## 9. THE AMBIVALENCE OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR IN BANKING

*'In my opinion it's (counter work) the most straining and stressing job in the bank. ... this stressful job that is really varied and great fun. However, I guess I'm burnt out' (Female customer adviser, aged 44).<sup>90</sup>*

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to disclose some of the processes and mechanisms behind the pattern of emotional exhaustion that were observed in this study. Banking is particularly interesting from a theoretical and empirical point of view. The finance sector has been described as the quintessential global industry (McDowell, 1997). Across the globe banking has been going through a major upheaval, involving restructuring and redundancies (Acker, 1994b; O'Reilly, 1992). Thus, current restructuring of work in banking highlights critical questions related to the transformation of service work, such as the importance of individual capital versus automation.

In the current study, banking had the highest rates of emotional exhaustion in the sample, and the quotation above by a female bank clerk conveys the ambivalence of counter work in banking. The analysis in the previous chapter illustrated that work overload, demands for new skills in the bank, lack of organizational commitment, attendance pressure, cus-

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<sup>90</sup> Her own experience is confirmed by high scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, the first and second stage in the burnout syndrome.

customer interaction (both quantitative and qualitative dimensions), problems with the interface between home and work and age were associated with emotional exhaustion. Education, working hours ('stillingsandel') and position had no significant impact whereas age had a moderate effect in the final model. Interpreted cautiously, gender appeared to have some impact on emotional exhaustion in relation to part-time work and negative customer interaction for female workers.

Throughout this thesis I have touched on the nature of current work (cf. Chapters 1 and 4). Several researchers have referred to the paradoxical nature of the post-industrial workplace captured in terms such as opportunity and overload (Kanter, 1989), greedy and seductive, stimulating and stressing (Hochschild, 1996; Kvande, 1999; Sørhaug, 1994) and joyful exhaustion (Forseth, 1995a; 1995b). I shall draw attention to one implication of this development. Formerly, workers could become alienated and physically exhausted. Today, many workers burn out due to overload and dedication. Focusing upon ambivalence can be helpful in capturing the paradoxical nature of current working life. Ambivalence is 'the possibility of assigning an object or an event to more than one category' (Bauman, 1991:1). Baumann refers to it as a symptom of language-specific disorder, and talks about the acute discomfort we feel when we are unable to read a situation properly and to choose between alternative actions. It is particularly due to the anxiety that accompanies ambivalence that we experience it as a disorder. Current working life appears to be characterized by flux and transition, and established categories and functions are being de-stabilised (Barrett & Phillips, 1992; Casey, 1995; Lash & Friedman, 1996). The logic of the world is 'that of a hybrid, never pure, always compromising, not 'either-or', but 'both-and' (Denzin, 1991: 151). A situation characterized by opportunity and overload at the



same time opens up for dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes. In many instances, individual employees become responsible and have to find a way of coping with a boundless work situation. As a result individual bodies become carriers of the new job demands.

I have organized this chapter into four sections. First I illustrate some vital changes in outer and inner context in banking. Second I explore how emotional labour is experienced in the working lives of customer advisers in banking. Third I address pressing dilemmas in customer interactions. Fourth I analyze how bank clerks cope with their current work situation. In the analysis I use several sources of data: In-depth interviews with managers, informal discussions, internal documents (see method), the Health in Working Life Survey (in particular the open-ended questions) and employees' accounts of critical incidents ('memory work') from one branch office.

### ***'Old Times and New Times': Changes in Outer Context***

The banking industry has gone through fundamental changes in recent decades. Computerization, the development of automatic teller machines, direct deposit of wages, and the bank giro system for paying bills began to change the nature of bank work in the 1970s (Acker, 1994b). The deregulation of the industry, starting in the late 1970s and coming to a completion in 1985, lifted controls that had restricted foreign transactions, limited the size of loans, and regulated interest rates. This paved the way for increased competition, new services, and increased demands for flexibility and competence (O'Reilly, 1992). The expansion of the early 1980s was followed by a downturn period in the 1990s, which culminated in the bank crisis where the government had to step in to avoid closures

and liquidation, and then to a new era of mergers and fierce competition. During the last decade Norwegian banks have been through a period of thorough restructuring, automation and mergers.

Banking, in terms of the number of employees, has become a female domain in several western countries, but in terms of power and control, it is male dominated (Acker, 1994b; McDowell, 1997). Women in banks have not historically had the same opportunities as men due to a variety of reasons, ranging from deliberate exclusion to the broken and often short-term nature of many women's work patterns (Crompton, 1989). Today, more women have moved into managerial positions at junior management levels, especially in the lowest grade (Savage, 1992). In Norway 36 000 persons were employed in financial service work in 1998, and 19 000 were females, and according to official statistics, 14 000 of whom worked full time.<sup>91</sup>

One of the informants in this study talked about 'old times' and 'new times' to capture this transformation in the finance sector: Banks used to be 'inward-looking' institutions and customer-orientation was low. Banking had attracted many 'security-seeking' employees, to quote one of the informants. Soundness and punctiliousness were encouraged among the bank clerks, who worked according to detailed instructions. Banks were traditional, bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations, and the employees were trust-worthy, steady 'administrators' of finance (Røvik, 1998). The bulk of the bank clerks had low formal qualifications, and could count on a having a job there for the rest of their lives (Olberg,

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<sup>91</sup> Financial service work includes banking and other financial services, excluding insurance and pension funds. Arbeidskraftundersøkelsene (Labour Force Studies, AKU), personal communication from Tor Petter Bø, Statistics Norway.

1995). As one slogan read, no career was as 'safe as the bank'. However, this situation has changed dramatically and banks have been through turbulent times during the last decade (Holter et al., 1998).

Banks have entered the world of global competition with mergers, strategic alliances across regions and countries, internal restructuring and downsizing in the 'new times'. To keep their competitive edge, finance institutions are pursuing a double strategy, a 'production-line' approach and an 'empowerment approach' (Folgerø, 1998). The first has also been linked to another trend of global standardization with an emphasis on effectiveness, calculability, predictability and control (Ritzer, 1993; Brunsson & Jacobsson, 1998). One example of this is that face-to-face interaction between service provider and service recipient is being replaced by a service encounter with a machine. In banking, ATMs (automatic teller machines), and telephone and Internet banking are examples of this new global standardization. However, to avoid becoming virtual banks, new products, local anchorage and building relationships with customers have become new catchwords to 'lure' customers back into the physical bank. When the nature of customer service interaction requires more flexibility and spontaneity from workers, management will tend to adopt an empowerment approach (Bowen & Lawler, 1992; 1995). Managers will seek individuals whose personal characteristics make them likely to act in the way management wants, not through scripted patterns or instruction but through information. Thus, job enrichment, enhanced autonomy and participation in decision making have become important. But, at the same time downsizing and automation are continuing. These paradoxical trends may induce personal ambivalence and stress on the individual level. In the next section I will focus on how these transformations were reflected in this particular bank.

### ***The ‘Old’ and the ‘New Bank’: Changes in an Inner Context***

Due to changes in the outer context, this particular bank went through an upheaval, as did other Norwegian banks, including state intervention of capital, rationalization, restructuring and redundancies in the late eighties and early nineties. This upheaval influenced structural and cultural aspects of the organization as well as the nature and content of the services provided. The number of employees has been dramatically reduced in recent years and the bank has entered into new strategic alliances through mergers and collaboration with other banks on a national and international scale. In the wake of this development, new service products such as insurance and stock funds have been introduced. Moreover, the advent of new technology has changed both how the work is done, and who performs the tasks. In short, the bank has been through a process of ‘modernization’ to meet the challenges of the new era.

The remnants of the ‘old bank’ had to be merged with the ‘new bank’ into one unit even though the two parts are funded by different strategies and values, structures and cultures. A ‘new’ and an ‘old’ culture had to be merged. Where the old culture was built around demand and interest margins<sup>92</sup>, sales and customer base are key elements in the new culture.

*‘Banking’ used to be oriented towards what was rational for the internal bank life, not the customers. For instance, customers had to go to a different desk for different products and services’  
(Female bank manager).<sup>93</sup>*

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<sup>92</sup> The difference between interests from loans and deposits.

<sup>93</sup> Age is not included for reasons of anonymity.

The old, inward 'banker' attitudes are remnants of a bygone past, as this informant expressed it, and the focus has to be redirected towards the customers and the market: In the new era the bank is pursuing a double strategy, what one informant called a 'strategy of paradoxes' based on new technology, automation and local anchorage, upskilling and empowerment. An important issue has been to reduce the number of employees as well as to 'modernize' and 'update' frontline workers and encourage new kinds of skills and personal qualities (for a further discussion from a British context see Halford and Savage (1995)). These include new job demands, higher skill levels, more complex tasks, various emotional demands, sales work, increased work pace, and an adaptive kind of personality with high tolerance for new challenges, change and insecurity. It was also a question of how to bridge the gap between the experienced middle-aged bank clerks and the sales-oriented young 'whippersnappers' with no techno-fear. These developments provide possibilities for the adapting person yet increase the likelihood of ambivalence, stress and strain.

In recent decades there have been considerable changes in the gender composition of this bank. Thirty to forty years ago, venerable men held the (then) high-status position as bank tellers. Today the majority of frontline workers in the bank are female<sup>94</sup>, and the status has dropped. Most of their male colleagues have moved away from the frontline to back-office positions as senior consultants or middle managers. Women have also increasingly moved into middle management positions, and a few have entered senior management. In this sample, 22% of the women

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<sup>94</sup> In the total sample from the bank female workers constituted 84% of the 'tellers' (N = 79) and 65% of the 'consultants' (N = 54).

versus 35% of the men held supervisory or management positions in the private-market division of the bank. There are few female bank managers at the top, currently two out of ten, a number that does not exceed Kanter's (1977: 207) 'token' position. In any situation where the proportion of significant people is skewed, the minority stands out. Women who are few in number among male peers might become symbols and stand-ins for all women. Or, they gain the advantage of being 'different' and thus highly visible. In a British banking study, one women manager wore a red suit on purpose at a dinner to accentuate this 'difference' with positive effect and stand out from the men in their 'grey and dark' suits (Witz, Halford, & Savage, 1996).

Over the last ten years the number of transactions has increased steadily, yet there are fewer people to do the work in this bank. The nature of the transactions, however, has changed. The number of electronic transactions (telephone and banking via the Internet) has increased at the cost of 'traditional' face-to-face transactions with cashiers. This development is expected to continue. The 'modernization process' of this bank is embedded with 'both-and' situations and paradoxes. One informant described how in recent years the bank had given the impression that customers were not wanted at the counter. Instead customers have been encouraged to use ATMs (automatic teller machines), giro mail service or telephone and Internet banking. To avoid merely becoming a virtual bank, greater focus is now given to personal banking, for instance, how to get in touch (not necessarily face-to-face) with the 80% of the customers who never cross the threshold of the bank. The strategy is to keep a net of local branches and build relationships with the individual customer. This calls for skilled employees who can call-on customers and create 'surplus value'. Within this strategy the emotions expressed by the employees may

become a decisive part of the bank's competitive edge. As the bank service itself can be found at the neighbouring branch, the relation between the customer and the individual service provider or the branch office, and giving 'that little bit extra', are gaining importance. It is said that in the new experience economy even banks will increasingly have to be entertaining to thrive (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Wolf, 1999).

Although it is acknowledged that bank clerks have been facing new job demands and have reported work overload and time pressure, senior management has underscored that there are further plans for reduction in the number of employees. This is one example of what many employees spelled out as a paradox. Moreover, even if many employees reported overload and time pressure, there were low figures for overtime.<sup>95</sup> However, one explanation seems to be that this kind of extra work is 'invisible work'. It is not registered formally but may consist of skipping lunch, coming early and leaving late, and reading documents or other 'mental work' at home (see later quotes).

This bank has had a reputation for taking care of the employees through continuing-education programs, in-house training, welfare measures, social events and other activities.<sup>96</sup> Employees also receive gifts for Christmas and other special occasions. These included bonuses, sweaters, outdoor jackets and training outfits with the company logo. In one way

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<sup>95</sup> Mean amount of registered overtime per week was only 3 hours (SD = 5.0) and the maximum was 40 hours. There was no significant difference between female and male employees and hierarchical position (ANOVA) (see sample demographics in Chapter 5 for a comparison between the samples).

<sup>96</sup> Today employees are rewarded (e.g. crystal glasses with the company logo) if they use a logbook and accumulate enough points for physical activities (a minimum of half an hour of sweat) or cultural events.

this is a positive way of strengthening a common culture and saving money for the employees. However, it also illustrates the blurring demarcation of work and non-work time when the bodies of the employees become living advertising ‘boards’.

Many of the informants described the finance sector and their workplace as a site of flux and change. One informant went as far as to label our survey data from 1996 as ‘*antiquarian*’. However, finance institutions have a long history and are not transformed ‘over night’. There are still continuities with the past. For example, the organizational chart is still a reflection of a traditional gendered, hierarchical organization. I will now take a closer look at the transformed role as bank teller.

### **From ‘Cash Teller’ to Competitive Seller**

Today, most tellers in this bank are experienced and have both long job and organization tenure. The formal skills of the frontline personnel have increased as the employees have been encouraged to obtain more educational credentials to be able to cope with future challenges. Around 10 % of the tellers in the bank were taking courses in addition to their regular job to acquire formal credentials.<sup>97</sup> The bank covers all expenses for books, fees and seminars. Regular internal investigations have shown that middle-aged women who are taking courses, have especially improved their job satisfaction considerably. Some underscored that this was a way of coping with new demands at work. Others said explicitly that they felt insecure due to transformation of work and demands for new skills. One

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<sup>97</sup> At the former ‘Bank Academy’, which is now a part of the Norwegian School for Management (BI).



bank clerk in her fifties wrote that she felt 'forced' by management to acquire more formal credentials. With a full-time job and other responsibilities outside work, she felt it was *'pretty tough, considering my age'*.

Previously, tellers were mainly responsible for cashier work and they could ask people from the back-office to undertake a lot of the 'paper-work' related to each customer. Today, teller work is more than routine cashier work and may include the following tasks: Cash balance, ordering money and foreign currency, handling bank giros and bills, accounts and transfers, bank and credit cards, telephone giro, giro mail service, standing orders, Internet banking, simple loans, some insurance and stock funds. In order to carry out these tasks the tellers need detailed knowledge of the various products and have to master several information technology systems. With several information systems on-line they have become responsible for more routine registration of data, called 'paper-work' in the 'old days'. Moreover, there has been a great increase in sales of new products and employees have sales targets. Each employee was expected to sell a minimum of 40 new products, such as telephone giro and Internet banking each month.<sup>98</sup> Customer consultants also had targets with respect to calls to and number of visits from customers and insurance offers. Registration of targeted sales is an incentive to change the behaviour at the counter toward active selling. These points were input in internal competitions between employees, branches and departments.

The tellers' new role as customer-oriented, competitive sellers of a range of finance products called for different skills and more formal qualifications. In the near future, the job as customer adviser in frontline positions

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<sup>98</sup> This target was expected to increase to 100 products.

will require 20 credits of formal qualifications (equals a subsidiary subject at the university level). As a symbol of the change from routine work to more skilled work, tellers have been given a new title: customer advisers. This was also done to bridge the gap between teller work and advisory work. At the branch office that I visited this distinction had not fully disappeared as the consultants had to take their turn at the counter. There were conflicting views among the employees regarding which position carried the most stress and strain. Each appeared to think that the 'others' were in a more favourable situation. Working as a customer consultant used to carry more prestige and status than teller work and reflected internal career ladders. The bank clerks that I spoke to said that they detested the word 'teller' due to connotations of low status and routine work. The new role as competitive seller is demanding and requires accuracy, high speed, flexibility, service orientation and high degrees of emotional labour. Taken together, these job demands are likely to create cross pressure and stress.

### **Mixed Feelings at the Counter - the Experience of the Bank Employees**

Service interactions can be divided into *service encounters* (transactions between strangers), *service relationships* (where the provider and recipient expect future interaction), or *pseudo-relationships* (where the customer has a relationship with the organization instead of an individual employee) (Gutek 1995a). What kind of relationships did the bank employees have to the customers? In response to the question '*Do you often get to know the customer?*', 67% of the sample (N = 149) replied '*agree*' and 12% '*strongly agree*'. Correspondingly, 57% '*agreed*' and 11% '*strongly agreed*' that they 'often got feedback from customers'.

More than one third of the interactions with customers took up to ten minutes on average, and more than 60% took less than half an hour. Other data from the interviews and the open-ended questions in the survey indicated that customer interactions are developing along two parallel tracks. A growing number of transactions are service encounters, either interactions with ‘strangers’ who come to draw *‘their hundred kroner’* or transactions between customers and a medium such as automatic teller machines, telephones and computers/the Internet. At the same time, many regular customers are involved in service relationships or at least pseudo-relationships. Thus, the amount and intensity of emotional labour vary according to the type of customer interaction. I will come back to this in more detail later. Consequently, our initial assumptions about the dominance of service encounters in banking have to be somewhat modified.

In the next section I will provide examples of how the bank clerks experience their current work situation. In the open-ended questions (see chapter on methodology) we asked the informants to spell out the joy they found in their work, their stress and strain, why their work was strenuous, what could be done to remedy this situation and how they coped themselves. In the next section I will first focus on the joy found at work and continue with stress and strain.

### ***The Joy of Emotional Labour***

The frontline employees underscored the emotional and relational aspects of their work as factors of joy, and a strong ‘people-orientation’. Providing quality service and help to the individual customer seemed to be pivotal. When the clerk was able to provide *‘that little bit extra’* that brings out a smile, a *‘thank you’* or similar feedback from the customers, the clerk felt that he or she was doing a good job. The customers are

different, have their particular needs, and the bank clerk had to tailor services accordingly. Customer satisfaction and being able to use one's expertise in banking were important for the satisfaction of the service provider. Another source of satisfaction is collaboration and teamwork with colleagues. The bank is an arena for developing friendships or even closer relationships, and solidarity and loyalty among colleagues were emphasized. These views are summed up in the following:

*'The joy I feel at work comes from the people I meet both in front of and behind the counter. If I'm able to provide help and good advice to the customers, I'm satisfied' (female customer adviser, aged 44).*

Today the local branch offices in the sample have from five to eleven employees. The units are organized in three geographical teams. Deposits and loans are calculated for the teams, whereas sales is calculated for each branch office. Moreover, there are three teams for personnel/organization, credit/control and sales/market so that the branch managers can specialize on one of these. This way of organizing gives the individual manager more time to 'coach' employees on sales and, at the same time, has contributed to more collaboration between units. Consequently, this requires more communication and interaction. What Kanter calls the post-entrepreneurial corporation, with its emphasis on teamwork, cooperation, and commitment, brings people closer together (Kanter, 1989). But the nature of this kind of organizing creates more work. One needs more time for information, meetings, co-ordination and discussions in order to 'sell ideas'. In light of current changes, it is also important to learn and master new challenges, skills and technological systems. The old repertoire of tasks, skills and detailed instructions is no longer sufficient in manoeuvring in the new competitive era with increased customer

and sales orientation. This situation is perceived of as a double-edged sword as the next quote illustrates.

*'We are the 'face' of the bank to the public. In many ways we are privileged in having varied work, and we have warm feet.'<sup>99</sup> We get to do a lot of things, 'play on all chords'. Learning new things can be painful - at the same time challenging and fun' (female customer consultant, aged 45).*

This quote alludes to how the individual bank clerks come to 'embody' the bank vis-à-vis the customers, and how the new situation opens up for stress and strain, growth and development. To sum up, banking business has many positive aspects as these accounts imply. Employees have the possibility of growth and development and being able to take part in an exciting development. New finance products and new technologies may offer stimulating challenges, so do the people both in front and behind the counters. The joy in the job is closely related to being seen and feeling valued by others, be the customers, colleagues or management. Compared to many others, their employer is willing to pay for post-qualifying education for those who are willing to study in addition to their job. However, the individual employee faces tough demands and this situation might carry a 'price tag' such as emotional exhaustion (cf. Chapter 7). Consequently I will elaborate in more detail on the strain and stress in this kind of work in order to go beyond the observed patterns of emotional exhaustion in the study.

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<sup>99</sup> The informant was probably alluding to their indoor climate that keeps them 'warm in their hands, their nose and their feet' and the concept of modern servanthood (Grimsmo et al., 1992: 48).

### *The Strain of Emotional Labour*

Emotional labour at the counter in banking is an exposed position physically, mentally and emotionally. Although there is a physical counter between service provider and service recipient, this demarcation line is no buffer. Bank clerks described their stress and strain in the following words: Work overload, increased job stress, time pressure, lack of staff resources, insufficiency, half-done work, inability to provide quality service in customer interactions, problems of keeping up to date with developments in the market and new products, loss of control, interruptions, commotion, restructuring, anxiousness, insecurity, fear, too many changes at the same time, pressure to sell new products, sedentary work and repetitive movements. One explained how recent changes have affected their job as emotional labourers:

*'The work force, read expenditures, has been cut down at the same time that the workload has increased. We are loyal to management, and continue to 'the edge'- work - work - smile- work. The reactions from the customers are mostly negative. 'It is accepted to 'harass' bank employees' (female customer adviser, aged 41).*

There has been a speed-up in the bank in the wake of recent restructuring. The bank clerks are loyal employees and try to cope as best they can, increasing their effort. However, forces beyond their control, such as globalization, new technology and restructuring, contribute to a development where they are approaching *'the edge'*, as this informant expressed it. One interpretation might be that they are increasing their effort but this is still not sufficient. One 'reward' is negative feedback from customers who dislike the current changes. Consequently, employees are exhausted

behind their smiling faces as both my quantitative and qualitative data indicate. Even if the customers are seen as a major source of joy, they might also contribute to ‘customer stress’ and ‘service fatigue’. Some bank clerks spelled out how they personally were blamed for things beyond their control, such as long waiting time and lack of open counters. As a result of the speed-up that they experienced, bank clerks felt that they were delivering poor quality service because they were unable to keep their promises and deadlines for their customers. A fear of making mistakes when tasks were performed under high pressure and speed was also reported:

*‘I’m not able to do my job well enough, the service towards the customers becomes poorer, so that I’m afraid of forgetting something or making mistakes. It easily turns into a lot of extra work’ (female customer consultant, aged 35).*

The demands from the technical and administrative systems seem endless (Lysgaard, 1961) as they have ‘too many tasks heaped upon them’, as one informant expressed it.

*‘You can’t sell new products and loans, default work, follow up customers, do teller work, as well as cope with complaints and inquires via telephone, letters and face-to-face all at the same time. You’re only one person and can only do one thing at a time. It’s embarrassing when customers reveal how poorly things are functioning. If I confront management with such matters, I’m told that I’m not coping well - poor stress feedback’ (female customer consultant, aged 43).*

This last quote illustrates a work situation characterized by variability, ambiguity and work overload. It is also interesting for another reason as it illustrates how structural aspects and organization of work might be reduced to a question of individual suitability. The implicit message seems to be that there is something wrong with the individual employee and not the organization of work. The new job demands require a person who is able to work at high speed on multiple tasks and succeed in highly competitive circumstances in a state of flux. This is also an illustration of how the demands on the individual workers have changed from the industrial era to the global economy of today. According to Martin (1999: 5) this is the distinction between *'the disciplined person'* and *'the adapting person'*. In the former era a premium was placed on discipline and control because of the requirements of the industrial setting. The ideal employee was *'passive, stable, consistent, acquiescent. The stress was placed on stability and solidity'*. (cf. the first part of this chapter). Since the 1970s, according to Martin, a new ideal has emerged that is compatible with internationalization of labour and markets, growth of the service economy and recent waves of downsizing. The current imperative is to be a worker who can succeed in extremely competitive circumstances, *'...flying from one thing to another, while pushing the limits of everything and doing it with an intense level of energy focused totally on the future'* (Martin, 1999: 5). In the case of the bank employees, they were expected to master technological systems, keep the offices neat and update themselves on a range of finance 'products'. Moreover, according to an internal document, they were expected to 'be nice, smiling, in a good mood, service-minded, accommodating, positive, provide 'that little bit extra', credible, independent, effective, show empathy, take initiative, solve problems, tolerate stress, and to be market-oriented, flexible, readily adaptive, willing to develop and goal and result-oriented.'



It is quite a change to move from being '*punctilious and administering finances*' to being competitive sales agents. To encourage customer advisers to change behaviour and sell new products, sales targets and a registration system have been introduced. The individual employee had to register every product that could score points, such as telephone banking and Internet banking. These scores were summed up for best-seller and best-selling-unit competitions. Top sellers got prizes, gifts and trips as rewards. Some employees mentioned that they disliked their new role where they have to sell a range of products to customers. After getting used to the system, however, employees said they '*derive pleasure out of selling*'. '*It's fun if you don't let the sales targets scare you*', as one of them expressed it. Furthermore, it was underscored that it was important that such incentives did not lead to '*sales at any cost*', '*forcing products on customers*'. Another complaint from the employees was the discord, fear and insecurity due to previous and forthcoming restructuring and downsizing. The informants seemed puzzled by the following paradox: They experience overload, time pressure, emotional exhaustion and poor service quality and yet, they are in for more downsizing. This just did not make sense to them. This is one example of how there appears to be two different world-views at the top and the bottom of the organization.

The new situation makes it more difficult for employees to manage their own boundaries. The concept of '*boundless work*' captures the employees' experience of the major sources of strain and stress. This concept carries several meanings that will be illustrated in the rest of this chapter. One meaning relates to the lack of physical and mental buffers between service providers and service receivers. Another meaning concerns the fact that there is no end to things to be learned. A third meaning deals with how employees have to face and adapt to new relations at work, a

fourth relates to boundless emotional responsibilities, and a fifth meaning focuses on time and how emotional labour turns into mental labour outside 'regular' working hours, or how work invades lunch breaks, expanding as invisible, unregistered and unpaid overtime. These aspects illustrate how boundaries between public and private, person and product, work and life outside are being blurred.

How do the employees react to these changes? Some stated that they constantly had a guilty conscience because they were not able to provide as high-quality service as they wanted to, some said they were mentally tired, and many said they were feeling stressed by their work.

*'One gets frustrated for not getting everything done. This gives me muscle aches and headaches' (female customer adviser, aged 33).*

*'You get frustrated and weary from all the work that should've been done and that you don't have time to do. Dissatisfied customers might not have a reason for being dissatisfied but you don't manage to make them understand this' (female customer adviser, aged 33).*

All the work that should have been done had especially become a constant nuisance and stress-provoking factor. Such a work situation tends to spill over to life outside work. Some said that time was a main problem as they felt *'they did not manage to get everything done at work or at home'*. When boundaries break down, the world may appear to be chaotic. Some complained about technical systems and information technology that were not functioning well enough. Others mentioned physical conditions

such as heavy lifting (collected coins), physical layout of machines and sitting in the same position doing small repetitive movements.

*'Sitting all day long at the cashier desk without a break, the whole body gets stiff and the spirit of the customers sink. I am not 20 years old any longer' (female customer consultant, aged 38).*

Many reported stiff muscles, stomach aches, and pain in the head, shoulder, neck and back that had accumulated over time. Furthermore, when an employee is absent or calls in sick, there is no back-up system of substitutes. As a result there is increased pressure on the other colleagues. It was also mentioned that in some instances that debt-collection customers had confronted employees with 'death threats'. In addition, bank tellers hold vulnerable positions as they face the possibility of robbery. In a Canadian study among bank tellers, the average teller had been the victim of 3.7 robberies and six had witnessed a robbery (these numbers were not exceptional for Montréal) (Seifert et al., 1997).

Bearing all this in mind, performing emotional labour in banking seems to be seductive and stressful at the same time. This is summed up in the following:

*'I've already applied for other jobs than counter work. In my opinion it's the most straining and stressing job in the bank. I spend a lot of time outdoors, have close relationships with good friends and family, and this gives me strength for this stressful job that's really varied and great fun. However, I guess I'm burnt out' (female customer adviser, aged 44).*

This quote is rich in details and sums up the discussion above on joy and strain at work. Counter work is described as both '*varied and great fun*', and yet '*the most strainfull and stressing work in the bank*'. The work is interesting and stimulating and offers growth possibilities. Here is a clear parallel to Kanter's (1989) description of opportunity and overload.

Moreover, counter work is characterized by ambivalence, and evokes mixed feelings. Job intensification seems to have a lot to do with emotional exhaustion. In the bank there appears to be an old-fashioned speed-up, as though the assembly line were running faster and faster. While appearing to be a greedy organization, the bank is also seductive.

However, hard fun comes at a cost in the long run. This female bank employee has come to the end of her tether. She is feeling burnt out at the age of 45 although her coping strategies have been to spend time outdoors and have close relationships with friends and family. Now she is trying to get away from the counter, and has applied for other types of work (in the bank it seemed).

To shed light on the last quote and the ambivalent nature of their work, I undertook an 'experiment' to capture more emotional aspects of counter work in banking.

### **Critical Incidents in Customer Interactions**

I undertook a follow-up study in a busy branch office using memory work (Haug, 1987; Widerberg, 1995). This particular branch office had four cash desks and three consultants behind partition walls. They had to do cashiering work during breaks and absences. Often only three cashier desks were open. The branch manager had a separate office where it was possible to close the door. There was also a small restroom with a refrig-

erator and cooking facilities where employees had their lunch and could withdraw for a break or a meeting. On the walls there were news and information boards and lists showing how the branch office was doing on sales ratings.

I asked eight of the employees present during my visit to specify a memory or critical incident from everyday life in dealing with customers in the bank. I asked them to use the quote above describing counter work as *'strainfull and stressing, ...yet varied and great fun'*, as their point of departure. All the memories were very informative, and contributed to a more complex understanding of the nature of interactive service work, especially the emotional labour involved. Over half of the stories contained discomfort, unease or a negative experience. One of the advantages of this method has been its capacity to highlight unresolved issues or contradictions (see methods). I have chosen to present three of these episodes in the text word by word but the other accounts are included in the appendix.<sup>100</sup> I chose these three because they explore emotional aspects of counter work, in particular patience, anger, cross pressure, ambivalence and lack of 'status shield' (Hochschild, 1983: 163). These memories can be interpreted in many ways.<sup>101</sup> I use the collective discussion as my point of departure and elaborate on it with my interpretation.

At the narrative level, the first memory is a story about how a customer adviser copes with a customer who does not 'fit' the new bank concept and the new technology:

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<sup>100</sup> One aspect of this method is that each memory is anonymous. Nevertheless, half of these writers signed their full names.

*An elderly lady came to the counter in order to make a withdrawal. Usually she paid her bills through the giro mail service. She also brought an account book she wanted to update. This combination is somewhat bothersome, the giros in the giro mailing system are charged by the national payment centre for banks and consequently there are several transactions that have to be registered each time, the face value of the giro, postage and charges at the end of each month. I tried to explain this to her, why not even drop the whole account book? She got a monthly bank statement anyway. She didn't want that, she preferred to keep an eye on the transactions, as she said. She even kept separate accounts at home. The queue was growing behind her. The bank account was not correct as it was, and I realized pretty soon that this would take time. While I was examining what was wrong, the customer became impatient, she seemed to believe, and expressed something about the account being emptied before I was finished. I asked her if I could borrow the book for a while and update it before her next visit, but no way. The customer was clearly not in the mood for co-operation - she wanted it her way. Finally, she said that actually she did not have time for this as she had a person waiting for her outside.*

The 'plot' in this memory was widely recognized by this group of writers. As the informants expressed it, it was a question of communication, or rather, lack of communication. The actors were situated on different planets, as one expressed it. The old lady expected the kind of tailored service she used to get in the 'old days' - a manual updating of her bank

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<sup>101</sup> The writers of these stories seemed to enjoy listening to how others interpreted 'their' stories. It was evident that different people read different plots into these memories, although they shared some too.

book. However, today this is ‘old technology’ and the job of keeping accounts has been transferred to the customer. Due to the nature of the different kinds of transactions, this task is cumbersome and time-consuming. The customer became irritated and insinuated that her account was being ‘robbed’. The service provider faced a dilemma: How to provide high quality, tailored service to the old lady without showing impatience while the queue was growing. There was no particular recipe for how to solve such a situation of cross pressure. The individual service provider had to rely on her instincts and tacit knowledge (such as experiences from previous situations of this kind) in order to avoid breaking interaction rules (Goffman, 1967) and try to keep the customer satisfied.

The second memory:

*An ordinary day at our branch, the room is pretty crowded. A businessman happens to be my next customer. He asks for an ordinary currency cheque. I get what I need and then I enquire about the relevant information when he suddenly gets a phone call on his cellular phone, becomes preoccupied with the call, replies with single words, and I find the situation ‘far out’. Either he can continue his call or complete his errand. My irritation and frustration are growing, the queue is increasing behind him, I take the courage and ask him if he could please end his call. He then removes the phone and points to my desk, saying: ‘You do your job!’ I felt like jumping up and slamming him straight in the face, but this is not proper behaviour. Imagine though, he did not respect my job nor me at all. I pulled myself together to complete the transaction but it took a long time before I even looked in his direction.*

*Post scriptum: Now we have a sign on the front door saying 'Please turn off cellular phones before entering' but still several customers pay no respect to this sign.*

The second memory illustrates changes in banking, asymmetrical power relations and the existence of feeling rules (Hochschild, 1983). Some decades ago, banks were like a kind of sanctuary where customers entered with respect and met venerable black-coated men at the counter. Today, women have outnumbered men at the counter, and the ethos of 'the customer is always right' reigns supreme. Moreover, the status of the bank clerks has in many ways been lowered. In this particular moment of truth, the customer, a businessman, asked for a service yet interrupted the interaction when he received a call on his cellular phone. Purposively or not, he prevented the bank clerk from performing the job by not providing the necessary information to complete the transaction. Thus, the customer adviser could not serve another customer while she was waiting. The statement *'I take the courage and ask him if he could please end his call'* illustrates the servant-like aspect of the job (cf. the connotation of service to servitude (Shamir, 1980)). There is an asymmetrical power relationship between the actors. This is confirmed in the response: *'You do your job!'*

This is also an illustration of the lack of 'status shields' (Hochschild, 1983: 163) in this kind of job. People in subordinated positions have weaker status shields against the displaced feelings of others, and might become 'dust bins' for dissatisfied customers who are having a bad day. The lack of status shields is related to subordinate position. In this case it was a matter of both status and gender. By having the customer adviser wait while he went on with his business on the cellular phone, and even making a rude comment in the process, the business-man clearly demon-



strated a lack of respect for the job and the person behind the counter. To be impolite towards a ‘mere’ counter clerk seemed to be acceptable. Infuriated, the customer adviser had to suppress her anger in order to maintain high-level, quality service. According to established feeling rules in the bank, customers are to be treated in a polite manner and with respect, no matter who they are or, as in this case, what they say. Such incidents take place front stage before an audience – the queue.

In the discussion afterwards the informants said that for some customers, especially old and lonely people, the bank counter served as a social arena where they could come for a chat while doing their errand. Moreover, customers tended to be more rude and nasty towards female clerks or young clerks. This is an example of how female bank clerks are doing both gender and emotion at work (see also Pierce, 1995). I will come back to this in the section on coping strategies.

All informants were ethnic Norwegians and did not mention ethnic background. At a follow-up presentation to all customer advisers, other female clerks wrote down stories where male customers had used obscene language, threatened them and almost attacked them (throwing pencils, leaning over the counter) if they did not have it *‘their way’*, for example being served after closing hours.

The third memory seems to be more analytical and ambivalent than the previous accounts. It underscores how emotional labour varies in transactions with old and new customers (cf. the distinction between service encounters between strangers and repeated service relationships (Gutek, 1995a)):

*Old and new customers come and go each day. As times goes by you get to know some of them quite well. You have to learn how to cope with easy and difficult customers. Cracking a joke is okay with some of them but better avoided in other cases. You have to sell the bank and work at high speed. In addition, a lot of work is necessary in many cases. This becomes a dilemma: Whether to work rapidly and serve those standing in line or sell the bank as the number one priority. We do need satisfied customers. I go for a fifty-fifty division. We have sales' targets over our heads and the requirements are high. At the same time downsizing is continuing, and has impact on us in counter positions. Training is minimal and we do not belong to a priority group. I feel that the work I am performing contributes to the closing down of my own workplace, we are completely 'overruled'. If it had not been for all the nice customers, I would not have held out in this job.*

This is an illustration of how an employee experience strain and stress and how her<sup>102</sup> subsequent coping is linked to both real and perceived power in the workplace. The memory seems to reveal a nostalgic longing for the past where things were easier and better than the current work experience. Recent changes in the nature of work have created a dilemma: To serve or sell. The individual employee faces a cross pressure between serving the queue as quickly as possible and being a competitive seller of new products. In the latter case it might be necessary to spend more time on the individual customer. However, this will contribute to giving the individual seller a 'star'. The individual customer adviser has

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<sup>102</sup> I use she for stylistic reasons but in this particular case I do not know the gender of the subject.

to solve this dilemma: On the one hand, customer satisfaction among customers in line is important. On the other hand, each customer adviser and each unit gain points based on the number of new products they are able to sell. This situation draws attention to processes of individuation and differentiation, on the one hand, and coordination and standardization requirements on the other. The individual service provider has to balance the two and simultaneously normalize 'the case' and individualize the norm (Offe, 1985: 106).

In the final part of this memory, we can see a change of mood. As a counter clerk, this person does not feel valued, nor does she feel she has much to say in the current restructuring climate. Indeed, the employee feels that the work she is currently doing is going to make her superfluous in the long run. Beneath this story there seems to be sadness and fear of the changing nature of work. The current work situation is embedded with ambivalence and cross pressure. The customers are emphasized as the major source of joy which makes this kind of work worth while. The writer acknowledges that with the advent of new technology the days of traditional teller work are vanishing.

The customer advisers expressed mixed feelings on this memory. Some claimed that this was an example of poor communication, especially between lower and higher echelons in the bank. Others said the general message in this vignette was to the point and a good illustration of cross pressure in daily work. Clearly, there are divergent views in the material. As expressed in the previous pages, some thought that the current development is exciting and offers new possibilities. Others said they felt like '*pawns*' in a game where they had little say. This memory writer spelled

out the ambivalence(s) at work as well as a fear of the future and a lack of influence that were also found in the open-ended questions.

After having read and discussed all the memories they had produced, the employees concluded that the number of people standing in line was a major concern of theirs that was mentioned in several of the stories. Furthermore, nasty and rude customers were an exception and not the rule. Interestingly, the negative episodes were few, but had great impact. These were the episodes they brought with them back home, they were *'incorporated'* and they could *'feel it in their whole body'* for a very long time (cf. Lilleaas (1995) for a discussion of the body as a social product). Interestingly, critical incidents of an unpleasant nature had often far more impact than all the other positive transactions. After coming to this conclusion, the employees started looking for ways to 'debrief' themselves after such episodes. This was easier when they collectively had experienced the social nature of the phenomenon.

### **Individualization of Work and Coping Strategies**

As these accounts illustrated, the transformation of work has brought new dilemmas centre stage that have to be solved by the individual employee. In several ways each worker has become more accountable. To shed further light on how employees act under these circumstances, I will include an analysis of the open-ended question in the survey on how employees coped with stress and strain at work.<sup>103</sup> Coping can be defined as '...the efforts made by an individual when the demands of a given situation tax adaptive resources, and coping strategies are actions taken in a specific

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<sup>103</sup> There is a vast amount of literature on coping in psychology and sociology but it is beyond the scope of this chapter to cover this literature extensively.

situation to reduce stress.’ (Long & Kahn, 1993: 298). The coming discussion is predominantly based on answers from 41 women and 16 men, that is, 43% of all the customer advisers (N = 133, non-respondents included). An analysis of these data indicates that individual coping strategies were widespread. Employees seldom mentioned that they actively discussed strain and workload with colleagues and immediate superiors in order to try to find new ways of organizing work. Overall, three different coping strategies were identified.

1. **Active coping at work** consisted of strategies such as *‘trying to work more effectively’, ‘making priorities’, ‘focusing on one topic at a time’, ‘taking micro-pauses’ and ‘using good humour’, ‘keeping updated at work’, ‘thinking positively’, and ‘co-operating with colleagues’.*

Several respondents underscored that they worked as much as they could as fast as possible. Another strategy was to come early and to leave later than the scheduled working time. One underscored that *‘I am so satisfied and thus I get the motivation and joy to do a little extra on busy days’* (female customer adviser, aged 49).

2. **Active coping outside work** encompassed *‘relaxing at home’, ‘spending time outdoors’, ‘physical exercise’, and ‘cultivating interpersonal relations’.* However, some employees reported that they had to take documents home because they could not find time to read at work. Several underscored the importance of physical training: *‘I do all sorts of physical activities because I want to keep fit. This makes it easier to cope with stress at work and avoid strain injuries’* (male customer consultant, aged 32).

3. **Passive coping** included *'not listening to bodily symptoms', 'gritting one's teeth', 'staying put', 'having pills for headaches/migraines available on hand'*. One even said that lunch break had almost become a foreign word. *'We feel the pressure from management and customers, often we don't have time for a break even if we are exhausted.'* Another claimed that it was best to shut up in order to stay put: *'I have stopped calling attention to deficiencies. Management wants 'nodding puppets'. I have become one to keep my job'* (female customer consultant, aged 43).

Several informants only mentioned one of these coping strategies while some mentioned more than one. A little more than half of the employees fell into the first category. Around 15% described strategies related to active coping outside work. A little less than one third resorted to passive coping strategies.

Today, in contrast to fifty years ago, men in frontline positions in banking are in the minority and can be regarded as anomalies or tokens. In particular this was the case for the 'bank tellers', now customer advisers ('kundebehandler'). In this position less than one out of five were men in this sample. In comparison, around one third of the advisers ('kundekonsulenter') were men. When work is segregated at the workplace, jobs easily acquire a gender connotation, in this case a female connotation.

Men in frontline positions mostly mentioned measures related to active coping at work or active coping outside work. Indeed, they hardly mentioned aspects that were related to passive coping. To cope with stress and avoid strain injuries the men underscored the importance of regular, physical activities and gave several examples. This confirms earlier find-

ings that men, in response to work-related problems, engage in nonwork activities, such as sports and exercise (Long & Kahn, 1993: 302). Women, on the other hand, tend to talk through their problems and ask others for advice. Furthermore, it appears from the men's answers that they were managing to set boundaries to avoid being invaded by work such as '*not promising too much with too short a deadline*', '*not taking work with them home*', '*not letting work spill over into family life*'. Some also said that they were '*doing fine*' and did not have to resort to specific measures to cope with their work. Another interesting observation was that men, in contrast to their female colleagues, seldom mentioned impolite customers or harassment from customers in their answers. Characteristic emotional tasks are stereotypically female. Women may be more attuned to carrying them out, and for men, doing this kind of work might imply status loss or feminization. Another possible interpretation is that male workers do not let impolite manners and rude behaviour from customers bother them. A third interpretation is that female frontline workers are easier targets for anger and aggression from customers. During the memory work session it was mentioned that men at the counter were particularly valued and popular. Indeed, it was observed that these men received positive feedback and attention from customers: '*Is NN absent today?*' '*I really would like to deal with NN, please*'. This might indicate that customers treat male and female employees differently. Memory two illustrated condescending treatment of a female employee. In one of the other memories (cf. appendices), the female employee was called an '*old biddy*' '*...who shouldn't be allowed to be a cashier*'. Other female advisers reported that they had been called names such as '*middle-aged biddy*', '*fucking shit*', '*bitch*', '*idiot*' and '*fucking amateur*'.<sup>104</sup> Young

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<sup>104</sup> One cringes at putting down words like this, and the negative connotations might be

frontline workers had experienced situations where they were treated in a condescending manner and were addressed as '*my darling*' and '*little girl*'. The counter seems to serve as a '*wailing wall*' for some customers, and a few of them seemed to take this quite far. The material contained several gendered, pejorative idioms that had been used in interaction with female frontline workers.

I did not have the opportunity to make employees elaborate on their answers or anecdotes. All in all, I do not claim that all men or all female employees (or customers for that matter) *are* like this or behave in a stereotypical way all the time. In fact, scrutinizing the answers from the female employees at the frontline I found all three coping strategies. Indeed, few or no gender differences have earlier been found on problem-solving forms of coping when occupations, education and job level is equivalent (Long & Kahn, 1993). A further line of inquiry would be to elaborate on these findings. Does the emotional labour expected vary by the gender of the person performing the job? For instance, in a study of emotional labour in law firms, female workers were expected to perform different forms of emotional labour than their male colleagues (Pierce, 1995). Furthermore, heterosexual men in such positions reframed the nature of the job to emphasize traditional masculine qualities, and distanced themselves by providing service by rote. Women seem to face quantitatively more and qualitatively different sources of work stress than men (Long & Kahn, 1993). Research on this topic is important if we want to understand the effect of employment on women's well-being.

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even stronger in different social contexts. However, these were the exact words the customers used.



Active coping at work might contribute to fundamental changes if the action is transferred from the individual to the collective level. However, very few of the employees in our sample mentioned that they discussed organization of work with co-workers or management. Interestingly, most of the employees called for organizational measures to remedy what they saw as an arduous situation. Among the most common responses was ‘more personnel’. This seems to be wishful thinking as there are further plans for rationalization and reductions in personnel. Active coping outside work does not remedy the cause of a stressful work situation, but might make the individual employee more able to cope with stress. In the long run, passive coping strategies will probably lead to ill health, possibly emotional and physical exhaustion. In a study among nurses, those who resorted to passive coping strategies, such as ‘gritting their teeth’ had high levels of emotional exhaustion (Ceslowitz, 1989 quoted in Matthiesen, 2000). As mentioned in Chapter 8, a study of women with chronic muscle pains documented that many of the women had lived a life in ‘continuous alert’, not listening to their bodily symptoms (Lilleaas, 1995; 1999: 327; 1996). Informal discussions with the company’s health service revealed that there had been several cases of young women, with and without small children, suffering from burnout. A common denominator was a strong work orientation and commitment to their jobs. To go on full time sick leave was not seen as a satisfactory remedy as this meant they would have to cope with more domestic chores, and would lose the joy they derived from doing the job and being with their colleagues.

### **Concluding Remarks**

I have illustrated how the work experience of emotional labourers in the bank is shaped by political, economic, technological, organizational and

cultural changes in outer and inner contexts. These structures are '*crystallized into social experience*' (Denzin, 1991: 24). These crystallized structures assume taken-for-granted meanings, yet carry opportunities and constrain the actors involved, employers as well as employees. The nature of work has changed and brought new challenges for individual and organizational behaviour in banking. Indeed, with the growth of Internet banking there is a new approach to financing. The customers can manage their money interactively by phone, the Internet, and in the future, via an interactive television channel and mobile phones. Ambivalence seems to be a concept that is useful in trying to make sense of recent changes. Some workers expressed that they felt they are taking part in an exciting development, others felt that they had become 'pawns' in a game they did not control. To keep market shares this bank has been through a 'modernization process' moving from demand to sales. From administering money, bank tellers have been 'transformed' into customer advisers and competitive sellers of a range of financial services. The job offers possibilities for learning new skills and for personal growth. It is also more demanding and insecure, and carries more stress and strain favouring an '*adapting person*' in pursuit of new challenges instead of a '*disciplined person*' as was suitable in past times (Martin, 1999: 5).

The customer advisers have to cope with both 'strangers' in service encounters and 'regulars' in long-term relationships. In these moments of truth, the employee has to rely on interaction rituals regarding how to treat customers. Each customer is different, and the individual service provider has to rely on tacit knowledge and intuition to achieve what they called '*a high-quality interaction*'. The service providers often face cross pressure: To serve or sell? They have been used to serving the queue as quickly as possible. Today, they are also expected to tailor services and

sell as many new products as possible. If they focus too heavily on one, the other will suffer. This dilemma has to be solved by the individual employee who is left with the thought: Did I do enough? My follow-up study of critical incidents in customer interactions sheds light on such dilemmas and emotional aspects of their job that are invisible. According to the employees in this branch, unpleasant interactions with customers or clients were an exception rather than the rule but had disproportional impact. The memories also revealed the emotional labour involved in adhering to 'feeling rules', preventing the employees from displaying negative feelings towards unpleasant customers. These memories illustrated how the counter is not a sufficient buffer against being 'invaded'. It appeared that the men in 'token' positions at the counter were actively managing boundaries to avoid being invaded by work, and resorted to active coping strategies at work or outside work. The lack of 'status shields' (Hochschild, 1983: 163) was especially mentioned by young employees and female employees, which meant that they became 'shock-absorbers', and subject to abusive behaviour and comments from disgruntled customers.

As these accounts imply, bank employees face a complex and boundless work situation where there is an interplay of many factors: Variability of tasks, new things to learn, new relations at work, ambiguity, insecurity, time pressure, job stress and speed up. Several employees reported that they worked as hard as they could but that this was still not enough. For many the results were overload symptoms, and aches and pains in the body. An interesting question that should be explored further, is how unions address such issues.

There is little point in generalizing these findings to every bank clerk in Norway today. However, in the wake of newspaper coverage of my preliminary findings, I was invited to one of the largest banks in Norway.<sup>105</sup> The audience identified with my ‘story’. My results also echo earlier findings from Swedish banking (Acker, 1994b), and recent studies of banking in the UK (Bradley, 1999) and Canada (Seifert et al., 1997). As I have illustrated, the bank has become a ‘greedy and seductive’ institution not only for those at the higher echelons but at the frontline as well. Work has become boundless in several respects. The distinctions between work and non-work, work and leisure time, private and public, task and worker are being blurred. The metaphor of the frontline has taken on additional connotations. Customer advisers are in for several ‘battles’ where they have to manage their own boundaries. In this way banking highlights important aspects related to current change processes, in particular, how they manifest themselves in particular work settings and contribute to ambivalent work situations and ambivalent responses on the part of the employees.

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<sup>105</sup> My findings on emotional exhaustion were considered as ‘hot news’ and hit the front pages of several major dailies in Norway.

## 10. EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND CURRENT TRANSFORMATION OF (INTERACTIVE) SERVICE WORK

*What do smiles cost?*<sup>106</sup>

### **Introduction**

The aim of this concluding chapter is to draw together the main findings and relate them to my frame of reference that was outlined in Chapter 4. Second, I will consider implications of this study. Coming full circle I return to where I started with autobiography and reflections from different service contexts. However, this time I focus on intellectual exposure and scholarly apprenticeship.

### **My Intellectual Odyssey**

In hindsight, it should be clear that I find myself in a junction between traditional sociology of work, organizational theory, gender studies and the developing sociology of emotions. When I started to research service work several years ago, one thing struck me: the overriding bias towards manufacturing industries in the sociology of work. This focus yielded important knowledge, especially on male factory workers, to put it bluntly. Service work, however, has been and still is understudied. To be sure there were some classical sociological accounts of service work as mentioned in Chapter 2, but it was my encounter with the Scandinavian

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<sup>106</sup> This metaphor arose out of former discussions with journalist Åse Dragland, SINTEF. I have later used this notion in several publications (Forseth, 1995b; 1999a), and it has been widely cited in the media, where this metaphor began to live a life of its own.

and American literature on Service Management that further directed my attention to the distinct nature of service work. From a feminist stance, however, I found it unsatisfactory that this strand of literature did not question issues such as gender and power resources.

My entry to the sociology of emotions was through the pioneering works of the American sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983). Together with many others, I was ‘seduced’ by her vivid illustration of emotional labour among flight attendants. Emotional labour, the management of feeling to create a publicly observable bodily and facial display and to create feeling states in others, was described as an important yet hidden aspect of several service jobs. Hochschild wrote from an interactionist frame of reference and she also used the distinct nature of service work as her point of departure. The centrepiece of her research was the emphasis on how gender and class were inextricably written into the performance of emotional labour, and how this kind of work had human costs for incumbents of lower level service positions because emotions were controlled by management and feeling rules. The dysfunctional effects included alienation, estrangement, inauthenticity, emotional exhaustion and burn-out.

This perspective was a source of inspiration in some of my former projects on the working environment and our initial discussions in the Health in Working Life programme. Following Hochschild's lead, our first research proposal was a case study of frontline work. However, this deviated from the epidemiological/medical demand structure of this ‘multi-disciplinary’ intervention programme (cf. Chapter 5). The ‘entrance ticket’ was an experimental, longitudinal design with surveys pre and post interventions, and it was up to the research teams to choose the most

relevant international scales to measure effects. This influence is manifest in my own work. For instance, the use of international scales, such as the burnout inventory, made me transcend traditional borders between disciplines, and include references to literature in the fields of management and psychology. Nevertheless, in the course of my doctoral work I found myself in a situation of cross pressure between the medical bias of the research programme and recent sociological discourses. I had to struggle to find my own sociological way. One outcome was the decision to expand my data sets, first with macro data and later memory work in order to explore more contextual aspects.

The growing emotional labour literature was 'biased' with mostly American and some British contributions. At one point in time I found myself asking critical questions: Is performance of emotional labour necessarily the same in the United States as in Norway? Are we in fact translating ideal types and findings framed in other labour market regimes and at another time? How has recent transformation of work influenced the job of 'boundary spanners'? Clearly, these questions revealed a need for a more contextual discussion of emotional labour in relation to transformation of work, employment regimes, different types of emotional labour and gender aspects beyond the Health in Working Life survey. When my supervisor invited me to include some questions in the national part of the Work Orientations Study, I was given the opportunity to address one of the imbalances related to structural conditions and employment regimes. Furthermore, inspired by recent sociological discourses it was clear that in order to understand the nature of service work I had to move beyond conventional views on gender as something we are (a 'variable' as in the Service-Management perspective and our survey) towards gender as daily accomplishment in particular settings. Conse-

quently, I directed my attention on gendering of work and carried out a re-analysis of key metaphors and symbols from the service-management and the emotion-management perspectives. Echoing the *Zeitgeist*, during later analysis of open-ended survey questions, the double-edged nature of current work experience emerged as an important issue for further exploration. At the time, I was inspired by the works of Bourdieu and how he mixed qualitative and quantitative analyses. Another source of inspiration was the concept of ambivalence (Bauman, 1991; Merton, 1976). This was also a device for overcoming stereotypical assumptions on ‘costs or rewards’ in interactive service work. Furthermore, the concept of *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1977: 164-171), when the natural and social world appears as self-evident, prompted me to go beyond interviews, observation and surveys to capture emotion and ambivalence at work. Fortunately, I had ‘picked up’ memory work in theory and practice (Haug, 1987; Widerberg, 1995) and decided to carry out a small-scale ‘experiment’ of critical incidents in customer interactions late in my research process.

All along, my rationale has been to explore emotional labour in interactive service work and its consequences in light of current transformation of work. During this intellectual and emotional ‘*Bildung*’ journey, I behaved like a female ‘*Askeladden*’ in the Norwegian fairytales, picking up bits and pieces of theories and methods on the way that could later serve my purpose and provide new insight. Some might accuse me of being a pure eclectic in a negative sense. I do not see it that way. On the contrary I was not comfortable with being reduced to a ‘narrow label’ or a single perspective.<sup>107</sup> Rather, I have been ‘flirting’ with various perspec-

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<sup>107</sup> I think that this is also a result of my position as a contract researcher. For 15 years I have worked with a broader range of topics and perspectives than I would have done if I were in a situation where I could simply follow my own inclinations.



tives that could shed light on my topic, asking critical questions and playing on many methodological ‘chords’ in order to highlight the multi-faceted nature of a social phenomenon and current transformation of work.

### **The Transformation of Service Work – Change or Continuity?**

At present there is considerable disagreement among sociologists with respect to the nature and extent of current changes in work, including service work. Following Bradley (1999) and Lyon's lead (1988), prevailing sociological debates around work can be grouped into three broad strands. The post-modernist and post-industrial visions, regardless their differences, are of fundamental and revolutionary changes in working relations and practices, resulting in improved working conditions.<sup>108</sup> Bell (1976) has been widely cited for his account of post-industrialism as a leisure society with an upgrading of jobs as manual labour gradually becomes redundant. Giddens (Giddens, 1994: 179) reworks the idea that new forms of production might allow for more autonomy and self-esteem within work. Flexibility, in such accounts, is viewed positively. Post-modernist organizations and jobs are described as ‘highly de-differentiated, demarcated and multi-skilled’ (Clegg, 1990: 181). Lash and Urry (1994: 7) underscore how economic change may contribute to freeing individuals from the rigidity of the Fordist labour process. As a result, workers are seen and upskilled and empowered, and there is promise of democratization of work.

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<sup>108</sup> I find this collapsing of post-modernist and post-industrial positions into one category a bit strange given their differences. The justification, I presume, is the optimistic and revolutionary views on future work in both strands.

The Marxist position, often associated with the labour-process perspective derived from the work of Harry Braverman (1974), presents the opposite picture. In this view the continuities of capitalist organizations are as characteristic as changes, and changes are piecemeal and evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Instead of upskilling and empowerment, capitalist development brings polarization of skills, task degradation and intensification. The pursuit of profit has led to a drive for flexibility, seen as equivalent to intensification. Wage labourers experience greater powerlessness and deterioration of working conditions. This is partly seen as a result of globalization, new technology and restructuring, and diminished trade-union influence. Moreover, new management techniques offer possibilities of increased surveillance of the individual worker.

The third is an intermediate position, endorsed in a great deal of empirical research (Bradley, 1996; 1999). This strand of literature emphasizes continuity *and* change in an outer and inner context, but suggests that change is piecemeal and incremental rather than dramatic upheavals as suggested in the post-modern scenario. However, the Bravermanian view of increased control and deskilling is also rejected as too negative.

All in all, my findings, summarized in the next section, confirm, invalidate and complement prevalent assumptions of emotional labour and interactive service work, and illuminate the third perspective of continuity and change.

## **The Main Findings Related to the Research Questions**

### ***Service Work across Labour Market Regimes***

Chapter 6 documented that the growth of service work is a common feature across a number of highly developed Western market economies. Nonetheless, the service sector varies across employment regimes due to differences in trajectory, size and composition. Norway, along with the Nordic countries, deviates due to its large public sector, heavily populated by women, with many in permanent, part-time positions. Finland, however, deviates somewhat from this pattern with a higher percentage of women in full-time positions and a smaller public sector. The analysis of data from the Work Orientations Study indicates that many Norwegian service workers have a considerable degree of job autonomy and skills. This result does not fit the polarized picture of service work that is presented in current foreign literature. Furthermore, Norway has been an extreme case of gender segregation in the labour market where women cluster in public services and men in manufacturing, to put it bluntly. However, my analysis showed that 9 out of 10 women and 6 out of 10 men in the paid-labour force were service workers. When men and women work in the same organization, women are more likely to be found in boundary-spanning positions where they spend most of their workday in direct contact with customers or clients. There was an inverse relationship between gender and position but one quarter of the female service workers held supervisory or management positions, although mainly at lower levels.

### ***Emotional Labour and Emotional Exhaustion across Work Settings***

My analysis in Chapters 6 and 7 illustrated that a little less than half of the representative sample, as well as the Health in Working Life sample,

appeared to be exhausted by their work.<sup>109</sup> There was a weak but significant association between activities and patterns of exhaustion for women but not for men. The highest proportion of exhausted women was found in public services while the highest proportion of exhausted men worked in manufacturing.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that care workers were more likely to report higher levels of emotional exhaustion than bank and retail clerks. Surprisingly, the bank clerks had higher mean scores followed by the care workers, while retail clerks seemed to be less 'drained' by their work. My results indicate that emotional exhaustion as a social phenomenon is highly relevant in interactive service work other than prototypical helping professions.

Hypothesis 2 stated that workers who spent most of their day interacting with customers or clients, or who engaged in intense and demanding customer interactions, would be more prone to emotional exhaustion. This was confirmed but such quantitative and qualitative dimensions related to customers did not have the strongest impact, although this has been a key factor in previous literature. Thus, it is important to move beyond a contained view on emotional labour.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that control at work would be negatively associated with emotional exhaustion. This was confirmed for work overload and problems with the interface between home and work. Job autonomy, education and hierarchical position did not serve as moderators of emo-

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<sup>109</sup> In the Work Orientations Study 1997, answering a global measure of exhaustion, a little less than half of the service workers reported that they were always or often exhausted after work.

tional exhaustion in the final model. The result for job autonomy is especially interesting as it contradicts previous research.

Hypothesis 4 stated that job involvement was positively associated with emotional exhaustion. Contrary to this and previous claims, a high level of organizational commitment was associated with low levels of emotional exhaustion. An alternative interpretation might be that emotional exhaustion leads to diminished organizational commitment. However, workers who experienced high levels of attendance pressure were more exhausted by their work. Finally, bank clerks who experienced that their skills would be obsolete in the near future were more prone to emotional exhaustion. No significant relationship was identified between women and men and emotional exhaustion but this does not necessarily mean that gender is irrelevant. Interpreted cautiously, however, the analysis of interaction terms related to gender seems to indicate that female part-time workers and female workers who received negative feedback from customers or clients were more prone to emotional exhaustion (cf. the bank case). Older workers reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion than younger workers did, which is inconsistent with previous literature. However, the lack of relationships between other demographic variables and emotional exhaustion corroborates recent research. Moreover, these results indicate that contextual factors related to the organization itself and current transformation of service work are important if we are to expand our knowledge on burnout and ill health.

### ***The Impact of Emotional Exhaustion on Service Workers and their Interaction with Customers or Clients***

Consistent with previous conceptual frameworks and empirical literature, hypotheses 5 predicted that emotional exhaustion was associated with

subjective health complaints, intention to leave one's job and subpar interaction with customers or clients (operationalized as callous and impersonal treatment). Chapter 8 confirmed these relationships, and indicated that there are individual, organizational and societal reasons for being concerned with emotional exhaustion.

### ***The Work Experience of Customer Advisers in Banking***

Chapter 9 illustrated how a particular bank in the wake of current restructuring, is following a dual strategy of automation and personal banking, of rapid service encounters and long-term relationships (see Chapters 3 and 4). Traditional teller work is being transformed into competitive sales work. This restructured work offered exciting possibilities but also stress and strain. It was ambivalent and boundless and characterized by upskilling, multiple skills, new relations, speed-ups, work overload, intensification, powerlessness, and a blurring demarcation line between work and non-work activities. I identified three different coping strategies: Active coping at work, active coping outside work and passive coping. From a health perspective the third pattern is likely to have detrimental effects in the long run. The interaction with customers or clients was perceived as a double-edged sword. For many it encompassed the joy of their work but could also carry invisible strain. Negative interactions with customers in the 'moment of truth' were said to be an exception to the rule but had considerable impact as they could 'feel them in their whole body'. Due to a lack of positional power, younger and female customer advisers were said to be more prone to abuse and condescending treatment from customers.

Building on the work of other researchers (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Cordes et al., 1997; Hochschild, 1983; Maslach et al., 1996; Morris &

Feldman, 1996; Wharton, 1993), I specified a conceptual framework in Chapter 4. In contrast to the previous frameworks I included factors related to outer and inner context and current transformation of work. My model has been useful as a heuristic tool in the analyses. As illustrated above, my findings confirm, invalidate and complement prevalent assumptions on emotional labour and interactive service work. My findings also illustrate the patterns of continuity and change in the transformation of work (cf. the third position above). At the same time my analyses illustrate that emotional labour is multifaceted and more complex than the previous framework indicates. There is a need to go beyond established stereotypes and refine theoretical frameworks, and I will mention some important implications in the next section.

### **Theoretical Implications**

In this section I will conclude by focusing on the theoretical implications of my findings. These principally follow the chronology of the chapters and do not represent a list of priorities. The first refers to the importance of outer context. The size and the composition of the service sector vary from country to country due to different employment regimes, that is, a set of interlocking processes related to labour markets, welfare states and educational systems. Thus, performing emotional labour in the US is not necessarily the same as performing emotional labour in Norway due to different structural and cultural conditions. Accordingly, empirical findings on interactive service jobs cannot be transferred uncritically without taking differences in context and time into consideration.

The second concerns stereotypical views on gender. My analysis illustrated that patterns of gender segregation in the Norwegian labour

market are persistent but dented. When women entered into the paid-labour force they were channelled into jobs involving caring, servicing, communication and dealing with people. Such jobs acquired a gendered connotation as ‘suitable for women’, and the skills and qualification became ‘naturalized’ as something all women possessed. As discussed above, many of these jobs were labelled as unskilled and were assigned lower social value and often organized as part-time work. This illustrates how our understanding of gender is a result of an interplay on several levels: Structural, interactional, individual and symbolic (Acker, 1992a; Harding, 1986). Today, more men do interactive service work although often in higher level positions and in different work settings. Consequently, the notion of service work as women’s work still has some bearing, but it is not that clear cut any longer. Several sociological accounts, even feminist studies, tend to ‘recirculate’ stereotypical views on gender. We need to study patterns of gender segregation and at the same time gender fragmentation and divisions among women and among men.

The third point is linked to the dichotomy between service work and manufacturing work. My initial perspectives highlighted the distinct characteristics of service work. However, the ‘new’ and symbolic nature of this kind of work can be overstated. Current service employees are still involved in ‘games against fabricated nature’ such as machines and information technology (although this has not been my primary focus). Thus, there is a lot of physical labour within the service sector: standing, walking, sitting in uncomfortable chairs, watching screens and operating machines. Emotional labour, however, can also be regarded as the glue that is important in all kinds of work in order to keep ‘production’ running smoothly and to maintain pleasant work relations. Perhaps it



would be useful to draw a distinction between emotional labour and emotional work.<sup>110</sup> The former refers to emotions in the provision of services and forced behaviour, the latter to handling emotion in the workplace, one's own and that of others, but which can be more creative and used as a form of resistance to being told how to behave emotionally (Lee-Treweek, 1996).

The fourth point deals with the importance of studying context and dimensions of emotional labour rather than a generalized phenomenon that is present in some occupations. Recent research has focused on frequency, duration and intensity of customer interaction and emotional dissonance. This study, however, has also emphasized the distinction between different types of service work. In the quantitative analyses I tried to capture such differences between work sites as direct effects via dummy variables, or interaction terms where the context conditions the effect of independent variables, such as value of current skills in banking in the future. As I have demonstrated, there were significant but rather small differences on mean scores of emotional exhaustion between the cases. Thus, it is more likely that these findings are valid for this kind of service work in general. I have also discussed other interesting distinctions, such as service encounters versus service relationships, that seemed to be a useful delineation between emotional labour in the bank and the shopping mall versus the care agency. A recent publication has suggested detailed ways of operationalizing these concepts in quantitative studies as well (Gutek et al., 1999). However, as my results illustrate this delineation was more complex as the bank clerks seemed to be involved in both

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<sup>110</sup> For a further discussion of this see (Lee-Treweek, 1996; Putnam & Mumby, 1993) who distinguish between the concepts of work feelings or emotional work and emotional labour.

service encounters and service relationships. Another important delineation in this study was the difference between emotional labour for commercial purposes and profit versus emotional labour in a welfare context. In the former case, the customers can vote with their feet if they are not satisfied. In the latter case, citizens may have a right to service but there might not be any alternative services. Thus the client has to rely on a voice option to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction. I introduced the notion of body-to-body interaction in addition to face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction. We do not capture a caring relationship by only using words from the business sector, and this notion should be explored further, especially at a time where market logic and business language appear to be invading all sectors, blurring the division between private and public services (cf. new managerialism in the public sector Exworthy & Halford, 1999). This development makes it even more interesting to contrast private and public cases.

Gender and power resources are at the heart of the fifth point. As previously pointed out, gender is more than something we are, a 'variable', but constantly constructed in daily accomplishments. Consequently, lack of association between gender and emotional exhaustion does not mean that gender is irrelevant. On the service frontline, gender is part of the product that is sold (together with age, class, ethnicity and sexuality). Work organizations are gendered and women are more likely to hold lower level positions. Thus, men by virtue of their positional status and power are more able to impose their understanding of emotionality on others. Thus, emotional labourers often face (emotional) job demands and expectations that are based on stereotypical views on gender. Such job demands, however, are often invisible and taken for granted, and thus it can be difficult to communicate feelings of strain and stress related to

customers, clients or colleagues to management. In my quantitative as well as my qualitative analyses I have provided some illustrations of differences in job demands, work experiences and coping strategies. For instance, in the quantitative analysis I did not have sufficient numbers of men in the sample to test an interesting finding related to female workers and negative feedback from customers or clients. In the bank case I was able to provide more details on how interactive service jobs seem to differ for women and men. In particular female workers reported instances when they had been subject to abuse and very rude comments and behaviour from customers. These topics, however, should be pursued further in future enquiries.

My sixth point deals with the effects of emotional labour. My analysis confirms that emotional labour can have detrimental effect on employees. Far from reducing strain, the transformation of work seems to bring new types of strain. Conventional perspectives, however, take a contained view of organizational actors. They are disconnected from life outside work and the historical context. In a Durkheimian sense, recent developments have led to a new situation with increased demands at work and at home. Many organizations are becoming more 'greedy', demanding more effort and time from employees. When workers become important for the company, and the job becomes important for the employee, there is a danger of becoming involved in work, heart and soul. Indeed, involvement might bring joy but at the same time carry a 'price tag' - emotional exhaustion and ill health. Another bleak side of this development might be poor service quality and difficulty recruiting qualified personnel in the long run. I will also return to another aspect of the division of labour in society. Most female employees have become integrated in the paid workforce yet still bear the brunt of responsibility at home. Nevertheless,

conventional variable-oriented analyses (most social-psychological analyses of burnout fall into this category) have a propensity for ignoring the interplay between work, life outside work and life-course (except possibly including the number of children or marital status).

Bearing what was mentioned above in mind, my seventh point focuses on the conditions under which detrimental consequences are likely to occur. Surprisingly, my analysis indicates that emotional labour was not more onerous in jobs with low job autonomy. This might be due to the way this variable was operationalized as a single-item scale. However, neither education nor hierarchical position was significant. Another explanation might be that job autonomy today is related to a high degree of fragmentation. We have been used to regarding control at work as desiderata of 'good work' but my analysis seems to indicate that this is too simple in light of current transformation of work. At least control of work is more than job autonomy. The importance of work overload, attendance pressure, problems with the interface between home and work and a feeling of not possessing the right kind of skills in banking seem to strengthen this view. This also underscores the fact that aspects related to current transformation and restructuring of work are important in understanding the prevalence of emotional exhaustion. Indeed, my analysis indicates that such factors have more impact than qualitative and quantitative aspects of the customer interaction per se. As illustrated in the bank case, the stereotyping of emotional labour tends to overstate its negativity and hampers an understanding of the joy derived from its 'play and drama'. In the future, there should be more focus on rewards, actual and perceived, in these kinds of jobs as well.

The eighth point deals with the concept of ambivalence in the work situation and the social actors' responses to their work experience. Ambivalence is a way of transcending descriptions that are context-specific or ideal-type. It is an analytical tool that can help to capture more current work experiences – their contradictions, dynamics and change. The ambivalent nature of emotional labour has not been sufficiently discussed in the literature on emotional labour and emotional exhaustion. We live in an era where trust and risk, opportunity and danger – polar, paradoxical features of modernity – permeate all aspects of day-to-day life (Giddens, 1990). Due to changes in context, several jobs have become more interactive and require multiple skills, continuous learning, and self-regulation. As a result empowerment and exploitation, including self-exploitation, are possible.

The ninth point is closely related to the previous point. In the wake of the transformation of work, many workers have to manage their own boundaries in a situation where there are no standards for what is 'good enough', and only human endurance sets the limit. In my analyses, the category of 'boundless work' offered a way of understanding the ambivalence in current emotional labour. Boundless work is a multifaceted concept that encompasses both physical and symbolic dimensions. In my analysis I have focused on the lack of a distinction between the employee and the service product, the lack of a buffer between service provider and receiver, and the lack of a 'status shield' for people in subordinate positions. I also teased out other dimensions such as 'body work' (wearing clothes with the company logo off duty), no end to new things to learn, new relations and emotional responsibilities at work, and work extending to home and family time (including mental work). These final dimensions appeared in the bank case and might not apply equally well to all employ-

ees and all types of interactive service work. Furthermore, the question of buffers or status shields will be different for employees in subordinate positions than persons higher up in the hierarchy. However, it is important not to carry the concept of boundlessness too far. For example, employers will not accept boundless acts of service recoveries where employees do exceptional things to satisfy a customer, as they may clash with the interests of the company. These results also shed light on another development in working life – the current imperative is to be a worker who can succeed in extremely competitive circumstances, rapidly shifting focus and pushing limits with an intense level of energy. How unions take up such issues could be a future line of enquiry.

Theoretical aspects are closely related to methodological issues, and briefly I will mention some implications for methodology. Thus far, the field of emotional labour in interactive service jobs has been dominated by a narrow scope of methods. Case studies have contributed with useful insights regarding important dimensions and mechanisms of emotional labour. As mentioned above, most of the studies on emotional labour have been Anglo-American. However, importing concepts or findings from other studies without taking outer and inner context into consideration has its shortcomings, as illustrated in this study. Survey research on emotional labour and emotional exhaustion has contributed knowledge on dimensions and consequences of emotional labour, and on the conditions under which they are likely to occur. A limitation of such studies is that they tend to recycle the same set of decontextualized variables, to put it bluntly. Within this strand of literature, international scales, many of them with a social psychological bias, are flourishing. These may be interesting as they enable comparison, but my analyses illustrate that such scales can be more or less fruitful when transferred to another cultural context.

In the current study, the question of qualitative or quantitative methods per se was not the crux of the matter. As I see it both types are socially constructed and need a narrative.<sup>111</sup> My study illustrates that to assess the double-edged nature of current work we need to supplement the standard methodological repertoire. Current problems with stress and strain are not necessarily captured in the standard occupational health repertoire that has been developed in close relation with medicine. In accordance with the positivistic ideal, the emphasis has been on ‘hard facts’ and ‘observable phenomena’ that could be quantified and measured. Even if sociological and psychological variables have been included gradually, the positivistic bias still has a lingering influence. My study has pointed to invisible, incorporated, inarticulated, taken for granted and not legitimated stress and strain. One accumulated outcome of the stress and strain might be emotional exhaustion, burnout, aches and pains. Memory work has proved to be one gateway to capturing emotional and ambivalent aspects at work and stress and strain that are invisible or taken for granted. The prevailing view seems to be that the individual must take responsibility and become more ‘stress-fit’ and ‘manage own boundaries’. Furthermore, I have pointed to structural change processes and how these are ‘played out’ in particular work sites. However, these firms do not exist in an empty space or are without boundaries to their environment. I have illustrated the importance of including such aspects with the concept of outer and inner context. Put very simply, the stressed subject has to be *‘historicized, politicized, collectivized and gendered. ... and needs to be seen in the context of a wider discourse’* (Newton et al., 1995: 136). Thus, emotional labour and emotional exhaustion have to be related to a wider debate on structural change processes and transformation of

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<sup>111</sup> For example, see (Seippel, 1999) for an interesting discussion.

work on the one hand, and emotion, gender, subjectivity and power in organizations on the other.

I use the title boundless work to draw attention to how interactive service work and the increased emphasis on involvement, service and empathy on the part of the workers revive questions related to the materiality of work versus symbolic and discursive aspects. For the individual worker this may imply more interesting tasks and a possibility to enhance the experiential factor of the service. At the same time this development manifests itself in blurring the lines between public and private, person and product, work and life outside. Consequently, the individual employee has to reconfigure how to manage boundaries in a situation where work may become a greedy institution that invades the lifeworld. The new bonds between employees and firms might also contribute to new ways of discipline and control, even self-exploitation. Thus, this can be a double-edged sword that contributes to ambivalence in current work experience as well as employees' responses to these situations.



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## Appendix 1: Occupations Requiring Emotional Labour

*Table 1. Occupations calling for high and low emotional labour. Classification based on Hochschild (1983), appendix C and Adelman (1989), Table 2.3.*

| <b>Professional, technical and kindred workers</b> |   |
|--|---|
| High emotional labour                              | Low emotional labour  |
| Lawyers and judges                                 | Accountant  |
| Librarians   | Architects  |
| Personnel and labour relations                     | Computer specialist   |
| Registered nurse                                   | Engineers   |
| Therapists   | Farm management advisors  |
| Dental hygienist                                   | Foresters and conservationists  |
| Clergymen and religious workers                    | Home management advisers  |
| Social and recreation workers                      | Mathematical specialists  |
| College and university teachers                    | Life and physical scientist   |
| Teachers, except college and university            | Operations and system researchers & analysts  |
| Vocational and educational counselors              | Dietitians  |
| Public relations and publicity writers             | Archivists and curators   |
| Radio and television announcers                    | Clinical laboratory, health record, radiologic & health technologists & technicians |
| Physicians, dentists, and related personnel        | Social scientists   |
|  | Engineering and science technicians   |
|  | Technicians, except health, engineering, & science                                  |
|  | Writers, artists, and entertainers except public relations and announcers           |
|  | Research workers, not specified   |

| <b>Clerical and kindred workers</b> |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| High emotional labour               | Low emotional labour                  |
| Bank tellers                        | Billing clerk                         |
| Cashiers                            | Bookkeeper                            |
| Clerical Supervisors                | Clerical assistants, social welfare   |
| Bill collector                      | Dispatchers and starters, vehicles    |
| Counter clerks excluding food       | Estimators and investigators          |
| Enumerators and interviewers        | Expeditors and production controllers |
| Insurance adjustors and examiners   | File clerks                           |
| Library attendants                  | Mail carriers, postal                 |
| Postal clerks                       | Messengers and office boys            |
| Receptionists                       | Meter readers, utilities              |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Secretaries         | Office machine operators                   |
| Stenographers       | Payroll and timekeeping clerk              |
| Teachers aides      | Proofreaders                               |
| Telegraph operators | Real estate appraisers                     |
| Ticket agents       | Shipping and receiving clerks              |
|                     | Telegraph messengers                       |
|                     | Typists                                    |
|                     | Weighers                                   |
|                     | Miscellaneous, not specified clerical work |

| <b>Service workers, except household</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| High emotional labour                      | Low emotional labour                           |
| Bartenders                                 | Cleaning service workers                       |
| Food counter and fountain workers          | Busboys  |
| Waiters                                    | Dishwashers                                    |
| Health service personnel <sup>a</sup>      | Food service workers, except private household |
| Personal service workers <sup>b</sup>      | Private service apprentices                    |
| Child care workers                         | Crossing guards and bridge tenders             |
| Elevator operator                          | Firemen, fire protection                       |
| Hairdressers and cosmetologists            | Guards or watchmen                             |
| Housekeepers (excluding private household) |  |
| School monitors                            |  |
| Ushers, recreation and amusement           |  |
| Welfare and service aids                   |  |
| Marshals and constables                    |  |
| Policemen and detectives                   |  |
| Sheriffs and bailiffs                      |  |

<sup>a</sup> Includes dental assistants, health aides, except nurses, health trainees, lay midwives, nurses aides, orderlies and attendants, practical nurses.

<sup>b</sup> Includes airline stewardesses, recreation and amusement attendants, personal service attendants not elsewhere classified, baggage porters and bellhops, barbers, boarding and lodging housekeepers, bootblacks.

| <b>Various groups</b>                 |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| High emotional labour                 | Low emotional labour                     |
| Managers and administrators: All jobs |  |
| Private household workers: All jobs   |  |
|                                       | Operative, including transport: All jobs |
|                                       | Labourers, including farm: All jobs      |
|                                       | Farm and farm managers: All jobs         |

## **Appendix 2: Memory Work: Analysis of Dilemmas in Customer Interaction. Memories that Were not Included in the Text and Suggested Tools for Interpretation**

### ***EPISODE 4***

Det er tre kasser og bare to er betjent. Det er lang kø og mye å gjøre. Så kommer en kunde som begynner å stille spørsmål. Dette er spennende. Erfaring og kursgang gjør at jeg kan svare kunden korrekt og iveren melder seg hos meg. Etterhvert tilbyr jeg denne kunden et produkt som vedkommende ikke har nevnt eller etterspurt. Kunden blir ivrig. Så høres en røst i køen: ”Er det ikke flere som betjener kassene?” Da kommer jeg tilbake til den stressende hverdagen. Det var moro så lenge det varte, tenkte jeg.

\*

Dette viser hvor spennende det kan være å ekspedere kunden og dekke kundens behov, og gi informasjon. Samtidig skal køen tas unna for å slippe stressende kunder som skal ta ut sine ’hundrelapper’.

### ***EPISODE 5***

Ettersom jeg jobber som konsulent og sitter i kassen bare av og til, kan jeg ikke huske en bestemt episode som stresset meg. For meg er det ok å sitte i kassen. Kø gjør meg ingenting, muligens fordi jeg vet at dette er bare midlertidig. Jeg er av den oppfatning at så lenge jeg gjør en god jobb, kan ikke kundene forlange mer. Det som stresser meg når jeg sitter i kassen, er at jeg har min egen jobb i tillegg. Jeg har stor forståelse for at de som sitter og jobber i kø hele dagen har behov for pauser. Dette forstår ikke mine kunder. De stiller krav til meg ut fra egne behov. Når jeg har

gjort en avtale om å ha en sak ferdig til bestemt tid, og må sitte i kasse og ser at tiden renner ut, da blir jeg stresset.

Jeg husker forresten en episode. Den gjorde meg ikke stresset, men lei meg. Vi var to stykker som satt i kassen, ingen var bak, og køa var lang og jeg fikk inn en telefonsamtale fra en av mine kunder som jeg bare var nødt til å besvare der og da. Resultatet var at en av kundene som sto i kø, kom frem og brukt kjeft. Jeg tror at dersom dette skulle være en daglig hendelse, ville det bli en stressfaktor.

### ***EPISODE 6***

Kan ikke komme på noen spesiell episode, fordi det har vært så mange. Men dilemmaet for oss som sitter i kassen er at man skal selge prioriterte produkter til aktuelle kunder (les: som har behov for våre produkter) på en offensiv og effektiv måte, og samtidig få unna køen. Dette skal gjøres slik at det oppfattes som en positiv episode for kunden du har foran deg og samtidig ikke skape irritasjon for kunden som står i kø og venter.

### ***EPISODE 7***

For en god tid tilbake hadde jeg en ubehagelig situasjon i kassen min... Jeg fikk bråk med en kunde for at jeg ikke spurte om legitimasjon, og det skjer ikke hver dag... To personer kom for å overføre penger fra en konto hvor det var skrevet at begge måtte være tilstede ved uttak. Jeg hadde legitimasjon til kontohaver, og tok det som en selvfølge at hun hadde med seg riktig person. Da jeg hadde fullført 'transen', ba vedkommende om å få prate med sjefen min. De var meget misfornøyd med situasjonen. Men, det endte med at de var godt fornøyd da de forlot banken.



## ***EPISODE 8***

Jeg sitter i kassen mens kassereren har lunsjpause. Neste kunde er orientalsk kvinne som snakker meget bra norsk. Skal ta ut penger på annen persons konto med fullmakt. Fullmaktsgivers og den orientalske kvinnen har meget like navnetrekk - og jeg bemerker det, det vil si at de skriver svært likt. Kunden blir fornærmet, men sier ikke mer. Etterpå kommer telefon fra fullmaktsgiver - som er kundens svigermor. Fullmaktsgiver bruker en meget grov munn - uttaler blant annet at slike gamle kjerringer som meg ikke skulle ha lov til å sitte i kasse. Meget ubehagelig situasjon, som det også i dag vel et år etterpå er vanskelig å takle - selv om fullmaktsgiver ved senere anledninger flere ganger har bedt om unnskyldning. Uttak med fullmakt er den situasjonen som er vanskelig å takle i kassesammenheng. Der er det en del svindel og kasserer er derfor spesielt påpasselig.

### **Memory Work – Suggested Tools for Interpretation**

My condensed version of course material by professor Karin Widerberg and dosent dr. Joke Esseweld, to 'Memory Work – a Qualitative Method', the Sociology Department, University of Oslo, September 1994. We used the extended version when we tried out memory work in the network on Gender and Working Life at IFIM.

The following summary served as point of departure for the discussion on memory work in the bank.

#### **A. The plot**

- What is going on?
- Which persons are being mentioned?

- What things are being mentioned?
- What is the relationship between persons and things?
- What thoughts are mentioned?

### **B. Interpretation**

- What is going on?
- Why are the persons doing what they do (explanations in the text)?
- What are the reasons for persons being mentioned as they are?
- What is the relationship between the author and the other persons?
- Why are certain things mentioned in the text while others are omitted?
- What kinds of feelings are being expressed?
- How do these feelings express themselves?
- Which topics are expressed/implied?
- Which topics are absent?

### **C. The text as a whole**

- Clear/ambiguous
- Antagonism/harmony
- Which adjectives are being used?
- Is there a change of mood or direction in the text?

### **Appendix 3: Questionnaire from the Health in Working Life Study, 1996.**



**KONFIDENSIELT**

Kodenr:

Dato:

**SPØRRESKJEMA OM ARBEIDS-  
OG HELSEFORHOLD I  
OMSORGS- OG  
SERVICEYRKER**



**Institutt for industriell miljøforskning**



**Ikke skriv navn på spørreskjemaet!**

Trondheim, februar 1996

## **ARBEIDS- OG HELSEFORHOLD I OMSORGS- OG SERVICE-YRKER**

Dette spørreskjemaet er en del av en større undersøkelse om omsorgs- og serviceyrker. Undersøkelsen, som er finansiert av Norges forskningsråd, gjennomføres av arbeidslivsforskere ved SINTEF IFIM (Institutt for industriell miljøforskning) i samarbeid med Institutt for organisasjons- og arbeidslivsfag, NTNU.

Hensikten med prosjektet er å kartlegge arbeids- og helsesituasjonen i omsorgs- og serviceyrker med direkte bruker-/kundekontakt, og vurdere effekten av de tiltak som blir iverksatt i prosjektperioden.

På de neste sidene finner du en rekke spørsmål, påstander og utsagn som vi ber deg om å besvare. Det er ingen riktige eller gale svar, men les spørsmålene nøye og velg det alternativ som passer best for deg. For å kunne foreta sammenligninger med tidligere studier, har vi tatt med flere spørsmål som har vært benyttet i internasjonale undersøkelser. Vi håper at du besvarer spørsmålene etter beste evne, selv om ikke alle spørsmål passer like godt for din situasjon. Dersom denne undersøkelsen skal komme til nytte, er det viktig at alle spørsmål blir besvart.

Spørreskjemaet er konfidensielt, og undersøkelsen er godkjent av Datatilsynet. Resultater vil bli presentert på en måte som gjør det umulig å identifisere den enkelte svargiver/virksomhet. Alle som arbeider med prosjektet er bundet av taushetsplikt.

### *Utfylling av skjemaet:*

- For de spørsmålene der det er ruter foran svaralternativene, ber vi deg om å krysse av det svaret du synes passer best for deg.
- For de spørsmålene der det er et tall som representerer de ulike svaralternativene, ber vi deg om å sette en ring rundt det svaret som passer best for deg.
- Dersom ikke annet er oppgitt, skal du bare avgi ett svar til hvert spørsmål.

Eventuelle spørsmål kan rettes til undertegnede på telefon 73 59 25 59. Vi vil også forsøke å være tilgjengelig på arbeidsplassen til et avtalt tidspunkt når skjemaet skal fylles ut.

*Takk for at du vil hjelpe oss!*

Carla Dahl-Jørgensen

Ulla Forseth

Tone Opdahl Mo





1. **Kjønn:**  
 1  Mann            2  Kvinne
2. **Fødselsår:** . . . . .
3. **Sivilstand:**  
 1  Ugift                    3  Samboer                    5  Skilt  
 2  Gift                    4  Enke/enkemann            6  Separert
4. **Har du barn som bor hjemme?**  
 1  Ja                    2  Nei, gå til spørsmål 6.
5. **Dersom du har barn som bor hjemme, kan du oppgi antall barn i hver aldersgruppe?**  
 1 Antall .... under 7 år            2 Antall .... 7-12 år  
 3 Antall .... 13-18 år            4 Antall .... Over 18 år
6. **Utdanning. Hvor mange års skolegang/studier har du til sammen?**  
 (tell antall år fra og med første skoleår på barneskole/folkeskole) . . . . . år
7. **Hva slags utdanning har du?**  
 1  Ingen utdanning                    4  Videregående skole  
 2  Barneskolenivå (1-6 år)            5  Universitet/høgskole 1-4 år  
 3  Ungdomsskolenivå (7-9 år)            6  Universitet/høgskole mer enn 4 år
8. **Har du gjennomført utdanning eller opplæring i form av kurs el. lign. der du nå jobber?**  
 1  Ja                    2  Nei
9. **Hvor bra synes du at den utdanning/opplæring du totalt har gjennomført har forberedt deg for ditt arbeid?**  
 1  Jeg er overkvalifisert  
 2  Utdanningen/opplæringen er passende for mitt arbeid  
 3  Utdanningen/opplæringen er ikke tilstrekkelig for mitt arbeid  
 4  Utdanningen og/eller opplæringen er ikke relevant for mitt arbeid
10. **Ansettelsesforhold:**
- a. **Hva slags ansettelsesform har du?**  
 1  Fast ansatt  
 2  Midlertidig/tidsbegrenset ansatt  
 3  Vikar/ekstrahjelp  
 4  Annet, spesifiser . . . . .  
 5  Vet ikke
- b. **Har du skriftlig ansettelseskontrakt?**  
 1  Ja                    2  Nei                    3  Vet ikke
- c. **Må du møte på arbeidet på et fast tidspunkt, har du regulert fleksitid, eller må du ikke møte til noen bestemt tid?**  
 1  Må møte til et fast tidspunkt  
 2  Har fleksitid  
 3  Må ikke møte til bestemt tid
- d. **Er det i din jobb mulighet for å få en ekstra fridag gjennom avspasering av opparbeidet arbeidstid?**  
 1  Ja                    2  Nei

## 11. Yrke og inntekt

- a. Hovedyrke? ..... b. Evt. biyrke? .....
- c. Stillingsbetegnelse: .....
- d. Hvor mange er det som arbeider i din arbeidsgruppe/enhet? .....
- e. Hvor mange år har du vært i dette yrket? ..... år
- f. Hvor lenge har du vært på din nåværende arbeidsplass? ..... år
- g. Hvis dette er under 1 år, oppgi antall måneder .....
- h. Hva er din ordinære inntektsgivende arbeidstid pr uke på denne arbeidsplassen? ..... timer
- i. Stilling: 1  Deltid 2  Heltid j. Stillingsandel: ..... prosent
- k. Ønsker du å endre stillingsandel?  
 1  Ønsker å arbeide færre timer  
 2  Ønsker ingen endring  
 3  Ønsker å arbeide flere timer
- l. Hvor mange timer arbeider du vanligvis ut over ordinær arbeidstid ..... timer/uke
- m. Hvilken arbeidstidsordning har du?  
 1  Dagarbeid (mellom kl 6 og 18)  
 2  Arbeid som starter før vanlig dagtid (kl. 6–18) og slutter i vanlig dagtid  
 3  Arbeid som starter i vanlig dagtid, men som slutter etter vanlig dagtid  
 4  Fast kveldsarbeid (mellom kl. 18 og 22)  
 5  Fast nattarbeid (mellom kl. 22 og 6)  
 6  Turnusordning, spesifiser: .....
- 7  2-skiftsarbeid  
 8  3-skiftsarbeid, helkontinuerlig  
 9  3-skiftsarbeid, døgkontinuerlig  
 10  Annen arbeidstidsordning, spesifiser: .....
- n. Hva slags lønssystem har du?  
 1  Fast måneds-, halvmåneds- eller ukelønn  
 2  Fast timelønn  
 3  Fast lønn/timelønn og bonus/provisjon  
 4  Bare provisjon/bonus  
 5  Annet, spesifiser: .....
- o. Er din lønn regulert ved tariffavtale mellom de ansatte og virksomheten, eller er det helt opp til deg og din arbeidsgiver å avtale hvilken lønn du skal ha?  
 1  Tariffavtale 3  Ingen avtale i det hele tatt  
 2  Personlig avtale med arbeidsgiver 4  Vet ikke
- p. Hva er din samlede ordinære bruttoinntekt pr. måned? ..... kr.

## 12. Stillingskategori:

a. Er din stilling en overordnet stilling? Dvs. arbeider andre mennesker under din ledelse eller veiledning?

- 1  Ja                                      2  Nei, gå til spørsmål 13.

b. Hvis du tilhører ledelsen, hvilken betegnelse passer best for din stilling?

- 1  Arbeidsledelsen      3  Toppledelsen  
2  Mellomledelsen      4  Annet, spesifiser: .....

c. Hvor mange mennesker jobber under din ledelse eller veiledning? .....

13. Om du tenker på arbeidsoppgavene som du utfører på din arbeidsplass, er de av dine arbeidskamerater som utfører omtrent samme slags arbeid (unntatt lederen):

- 1  Bare kvinner                              4  For det meste menn  
2  For det meste kvinner                  5  Bare menn  
3  Både kvinner og menn                  6  Ingen har tilsvarende arbeidsoppgaver

14. Har menn og kvinner i din virksomhet:                      Ja      Nei      Vet ikke      Uaktuelt

- a. Likt betalt for likt arbeid?                                                          
b. Samme muligheter for opprykk?

15. Har din nærmeste overordnede sin daglige arbeidsplass på samme sted som deg?

- 1  Ja                                      2  Nei

16. Er det lett eller vanskelig for dine overordnede å vurdere de ansattes arbeidsinnsats i den type jobb som du har?

- 1  Svært lett                                      3  Forholdsvis vanskelig  
2  Forholdsvis lett                                      4  Svært vanskelig

17. Er det lett eller vanskelig for dine overordnede å vurdere kvaliteten på det arbeidet som blir utført på din arbeidsplass?

- 1  Svært lett                                      3  Forholdsvis vanskelig  
2  Forholdsvis lett                                      4  Svært vanskelig

18. Hvordan er din arbeidsinnsats i forhold til ansatte i samme stilling i samme virksomhet?

- 1  Større                                      2  Lik                                      3  Mindre

19. Hvordan er din arbeidsinnsats i forhold til ansatte i samme stilling som jobber i andre virksomheter?

- 1  Større                                      2  Lik                                      3  Mindre

20. Service

- |  | I svært<br>liten grad    | I liten<br>grad          | I noen<br>grad           | I høy<br>grad            | I svært<br>høy grad      |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Vil du si at dere har et høyt servicenivå?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Synes du at du yter god service på jobben?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Synes du at dine kolleger på avdelingen/enheten vanligvis yter god service?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. I hvilken grad opplever du at det finnes tilstrekkelige ressurser til å gjøre en forsvarlig jobb? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. I hvilken grad gjør du mer enn forventet for kunder/brukere?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

21. Har dere faste rutiner/regler for å håndtere klager/reklamasjoner fra kunder/brukere?

- 1  Ja  
 2  Nei, gå til spørsmål 23  
 3  Vet ikke, gå til spørsmål 23

22. Hvor fornøyd er du eventuelt med disse retningslinjene?

- 1  Ikke fornøyd 3  Fornøyd  
 2  Litt fornøyd 4  Svært fornøyd

|     |  | Aldri                    | Noen ganger<br>i året eller<br>mindre | Månedlig                 | Noen<br>ganger i<br>måneden | Hver<br>uke              | Noen<br>ganger i         | Hver                     |
|-----|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|     |  | 1                        | 2                                     | 3                        | 4                           | 5                        | 6                        | 7                        |
| 23. | <b>Forholdet til kunder/brukere</b>  |                          |                                       |                          |                             |                          |                          |                          |
| a.  | <b>Hvor ofte får dere negativ tilbakemelding fra kunder/brukere (f.eks. klager/reklamasjoner)?</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b.  | <b>Hender det at du føler deg truet av oppførselen til kunder/brukere?</b>                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

24. I hvilken grad er det enighet om hvilke kunder/brukere som bør prioriteres?

- 1  I svært liten grad  
 2  I liten grad  
 3  I noen grad  
 4  I høy grad  
 5  I svært høy grad

*De som ikke arbeider innen omsorgstjenesten går videre til spørsmål 26.*

25. I hvilken grad mener du at avdelingen/enheten er flink til å informere de pårørende?

- 1  I svært liten grad  
 2  I liten grad  
 3  I noen grad  
 4  I høy grad  
 5  I svært høy grad

26. Hvor mye yrkesstolthet føler du i jobben din?

- 1  En hel del 2  Noe 3  Lite 4  Ingen 5  Vet ikke

27. Er du fagorganisert?

- 1  Ja 2  Nei

28. Har du fremmespråklig bakgrunn?

- 1  Ja 2  Nei

29. Her er noen sider ved arbeidet som noen mener er viktige. Vær så snill å fortell hvilke du personlig mener er viktige i en jobb.

| a. |   | Ikke viktig              | Litt viktig              | Viktig                   | Svært viktig             |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1  | Bra betalt  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2  | Hyggelige arbeidskamerater                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3  | Ikke for mye stress                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4  | Trygg arbeidsplass                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5  | Gode avansementsmuligheter                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6  | Et arbeid som respekteres av folk i sin alminnelighet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7  | Bra arbeidstid  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8  | Mulighet til å ta initiativ                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9  | Samfunnsnyttig arbeid                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Lang ferie  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Treffe mennesker                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | Et arbeid som gir følelsen av å utrette noe           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 | Ansvarsfullt  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 | Interessant   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 | Tilpasset mine evner                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| b. |  | Alltid | Nesten alltid | Vanligvis | Av og til | Sjelden | Nesten aldri | Aldri |
|----|--|--------|---------------|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------|-------|
| 1  | Jeg jobber best når mine arbeidsoppgaver er litt vanskelige                        | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 2  | Dersom jeg har et valg, velger jeg å jobbe i en gruppe i stedet for alene          | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 3  | Jeg jobber aktivt for å forbedre mine tidligere prestasjoner på jobben             | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 4  | Jeg er ganske opptatt av andres følelser på jobben                                 | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 5  | Jeg tar moderate sjanser og "står på" for å komme meg fram på jobben               | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 6  | Jeg foretrekker å konsentrere meg om mitt arbeid, og la andre gjøre sitt           | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 7  | Jeg forsøker å unngå ekstra forpliktelser/ansvar på jobben                         | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 8  | Jeg uttrykker åpent min uenighet med andre   | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 9  | Jeg forsøker å gjøre en bedre jobb enn mine kolleger                               | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |
| 10 | Jeg har lett for å prate med de rundt meg om saker som ikke har med jobben å gjøre | 7      | 6             | 5         | 4         | 3       | 2            | 1     |

30. Har de ansatte i samme type stilling eller arbeid som du selv har, noen mulighet til å bli forfremmet til en stilling med bedre lønn eller mer ansvar i virksomheten?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Svært store muligheter | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Svært små muligheter                      |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nokså store muligheter | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Ingen muligheter                          |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Nokså små muligheter   | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Finnes ikke ansatte i samme type stilling |

31. Hvor viktig er hver av momentene nedenfor for å avansere til en jobb med bedre lønn eller mer ansvar innen virksomheten du arbeider i?

|   | Stor betydning           | Noe betydning            | Ingen betydning          | Ikke aktuelt             |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Ansiennitet   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Intern opplæring  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Formell utdanning   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Gode eksamensresultater   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 True med å slutte   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Gjøre en god jobb   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Fagforening eller de ansattes representanter i ansettelsesorganet går inn for dem | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 God relasjon til overordnede  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Annet: .....  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

32. Har du vært arbeidsledig de siste 5 årene?

- 1  Aldri, gå til spørsmål 34      2  1 gang      3  Flere ganger

33. Hvor lenge har du vært arbeidsledig det siste året? ..... uker

34. Har du søkt på en annen jobb i løpet av det siste halvåret?

- 1  Ja      2  Nei

35. Hvor sannsynlig er det at du kommer til å søke ny jobb i nærmeste framtid?

- 1  Svært sannsynlig      2  Noe sannsynlig      3  Lite sannsynlig

36. Hvor sannsynlig er det at du kommer til å videreutdanne deg i nærmeste framtid?

- 1  Svært sannsynlig      2  Noe sannsynlig      3  Lite sannsynlig

37. Er denne jobben slik du forestilte deg den da du søkte?

- 1  I høy grad      2  I noen grad      3  I svært liten grad

38. Av og til blir folk oppsagt fra en jobb de liker. Hvor sannsynlig er det at du i de neste par årene kommer til å miste jobben hos din arbeidsgiver?

- 1  Svært lite sannsynlig      3  Sannsynlig  
2  Lite sannsynlig      4  Svært sannsynlig

|  | Aldri<br>1               | Sjelden<br>2             | Ukentlig<br>3            | Flere ganger<br>pr. uke<br>4 | Daglig<br>5              |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 39. Hvor ofte opplever du at:  |                          |                          |                          |                              |                          |
| a. Din arbeidstid skaper vansker i forhold til ditt ansvar og dine oppgaver i egen familie | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Du tenker på jobbrelaterte oppgaver/problemer når du har fri                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Du bekymrer deg for ditt privatliv/familien når du er på arbeid                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Du har krefter til hjemlige sysler etter endt arbeidsdag                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Du har noen å snakke med på fritiden om ting som opptar deg på jobben                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|     |   |                          |                          |                          |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 40. | I din jobbsituasjon, i hvilken grad...                              | I liten grad             | I noen grad              | I høy grad               |
| a.  | .... kreves det at du gjennomfører arbeidet etter egne ideer?       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b.  | .... har du muligheter til å gjennomføre arbeidet etter egne ideer? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c.  | .... kreves det at du planlegger viktige arbeidsoppgaver?           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d.  | .... har du mulighet til å planlegge viktige arbeidsoppgaver?       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

41. Her kommer en rekke spørsmål om generelle sider ved jobben din og dine kunder/brukere

(sett ring): 😊 *Lykke til!*

|   | Svært uenig | Uenig | Enig | Svært enig |
|---|-------------|-------|------|------------|
| a. Jobben min krever at jeg må lære nye ting  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| b. Mitt arbeid innebærer mange gjentakelser   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| c. Arbeidet mitt fordrer oppfinnsomhet og kreativitet   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| d. Mitt arbeid tillater at jeg tar mange beslutninger på egen hånd  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| e. Jobben min krever spesielle ferdigheter  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| f. Jeg har liten mulighet til å bestemme hvordan jeg vil utføre jobben min  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| g. Jeg utfører en rekke forskjellige arbeidsoppgaver i jobben min   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| h. Jeg har stor mulighet til å påvirke ting som skjer på jobben   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| i. Jobben min gir meg mulighet til å utvikle mine evner   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| j. Det er sannsynlig at mine ideer kan komme i betraktning ved viktige beslutninger på virksomhetsnivå (f.eks. ved ansettelser, omstilling) | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| k. Jobben min krever at jeg må jobbe raskt  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| l. Jeg har en krevende jobb   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| m. Jobben min er fysisk slitsom   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| n. Jeg blir ikke bedt om å gjøre overdrevent mye arbeid   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| o. Jeg har nok tid til å få gjort unna ting   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| p. Jeg må ofte bevege meg eller foreta tunge løft på jobben   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| q. Mitt arbeid medfører raskt og kontinuerlig fysisk aktivitet  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| r. Jeg blir ikke utsatt for motstridende krav fra andre (f.eks. ulike krav fra ledelse og kunder/brukere)                                   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| s. Jobben min krever ofte perioder med intens konsentrasjon om arbeidsoppgaven  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| t. Mine arbeidsoppgaver blir ofte avbrutt før de er ferdige, slik at jeg må gjøre dem ferdig seinere  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| u. Jobben min er svært hektisk  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| v. I lange perioder må jeg arbeide med kroppen i fysisk ubekvemme stillinger  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| w. I lange perioder må jeg arbeide med hode og armer i fysisk ubekvemme stillinger  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| x. Å måtte vente på arbeid fra andre personer eller avdelinger sinker meg ofte på jobben  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| y. Min jobbtrykighet er stor  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| z. Mine muligheter for utvikling og forfremmelse er gode  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| aa. Om 5 år vil mine ferdigheter fremdeles være verdifulle  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| bb. Mine arbeidskolleger er kompetente i jobbene sine   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |

|  | Svært uenig | Uenig | Enig | Svært enig |
|--|-------------|-------|------|------------|
| cc. Jeg får ofte tilbakemelding om hva kunder/brukere synes om den tjenesten jeg yter  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| dd. Min arbeidsgruppe/enhet yter et viktig bidrag til samfunnet  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| ee. Mine arbeidskolleger bryr seg om meg som person  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| ff. Jeg blir ofte kjent med kunden/brukeren i jobben min   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| gg. Jeg blir respektert og belønnet på en tilfredsstillende måte av virksomheten   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| hh. Jeg er utsatt for uvennlighet eller konflikt fra mine kolleger   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| ii. Kundene/brukerne kan påvirke hva slags tjeneste jeg yter   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| jj. Mine ferdigheter og evner er av stor betydning for min arbeidsgruppe/enhet   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| kk. Mine arbeidskolleger er hyggelige  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| ll. Jeg kan påvirke hva kundene/brukerne ønsker  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| mm. Jeg får informasjon/tilbakemelding fra min nærmeste overordnede om hvor godt jeg utfører jobben min  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| nn. Mine arbeidskolleger oppmuntrer hverandre til samarbeid  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| oo. Å tilfredsstille kundene/brukerne er en viktig utfordring i jobben   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| pp. Jeg bidrar med et "helt" eller identifiserbart produkt/tjeneste i jobben, dvs. at jeg lett kan "peke ut" mitt bidrag til det endelige produkt/tjeneste | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| qq. Mine arbeidskolleger yter bistand hvis det trengs  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| rr. Jeg blir utsatt for truende opptreden eller vold fra kunder/brukere  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| ss. Jeg får informasjon/tilbakemelding fra mine kolleger om hvor godt jeg utfører jobben min   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| tt. Kjennskap til tilfredshet hos kunder/brukere gjør at jeg føler meg viktig og verdifull på jobben   | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| uu. Jeg er gjenstand for uønsket oppmerksomhet fra min nærmeste overordnede  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| vv. Jobben min innebærer mange korte møter med nye kunder/brukere  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| ww. Jeg er gjenstand for uønsket oppmerksomhet fra enkelte kolleger  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |
| xx. I min jobb planlegger vi i fellesskap hvordan arbeidet skal utføres  | 1           | 2     | 3    | 4          |

42. **Jeg har betydelig mulighet til å påvirke avgjørelser innen egen avdeling/enhet**  
 1  Svært uenig 2  Uenig 3  Enig 4  Svært enig 8  Jeg arbeider alene

43. **Min nærmeste overordnede bryr seg om de ansattes ve og vel**  
 1  Svært uenig 2  Uenig 3  Enig 4  Svært enig 8  Jeg har ingen overordnet

44. **Ved vår avdeling/enhet tar vi beslutninger på et demokratisk grunnlag**  
 1  Svært uenig 2  Uenig 3  Enig 4  Svært enig 8  Jeg arbeider alene

45. **Min nærmeste overordnede hører på hva jeg har å si**  
 1  Svært uenig 2  Uenig 3  Enig 4  Svært enig 8  Jeg har ingen overordnet

46. **Jeg er utsatt for uvennlighet og konflikt fra min nærmeste overordnede**  
 1  Svært uenig 2  Uenig 3  Enig 4  Svært enig 8  Jeg har ingen overordnet



47. **Min nærmeste overordnede hjelper til når det trengs**  
 1  Svært uenig 2  Uenig 3  Enig 4  Svært enig 8  Jeg har ingen overordnet
48. **Min nærmeste overordnede lykkes i å få ansatte til å samarbeide**  
 1  Svært uenig 2  Uenig 3  Enig 4  Svært enig 8  Jeg har ingen overordnet
49. **Hvor regelmessig er jobben din?**  
 1  Jevn og regelmessig  
 4  Sesongvise variasjoner  
 4  Jevnlige permitteringer  
 4  Både sesongmessige og jevnlig permitteringer  
 9  Annet
50. **Hvor stor del av dine arbeidsoppgaver mener du er forutsigbare?**  
 1  0 % 2  1-24 % 3  25-49 % 4  50-74 % 5  75-100 %
51. **Hvor stor del av arbeidsdagen bruker du på direkte kontakt (inkl. telefonkontakt) med kunder/brukere?**  
 1  0 % 2  1-24 % 3  25-49 % 4  50-74 % 5  75-100 %
52. **Hvor mange kunder/brukere har du kontakt med på en normal dag? .....**
53. **Hvor lang tid bruker du vanligvis på hver kunde/bruker pr dag (inkl. telefonkontakt)?**  
 1  Inntil 10 minutter 4  1-2 timer  
 2  11-30 minutter 5  Mer enn 2 timer  
 3  31-60 minutter 6  Det varierer mye
54. **I det følgende ber vi deg ta stilling til i hvilken grad du opplever tilhørighet til din arbeidsplass (butikk/avdeling/sonegruppe).**
- |  | Svært uenig<br>1         | Uenig<br>2               | Litt uenig<br>3          | Verken enig eller uenig<br>4 | Litt enig<br>5           | Enig<br>6                | Svært enig<br>7          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Jeg er villig til å anstrenge meg mer enn hva som er ventet, hvis det kan medvirke til virksomhetens fremgang | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Jeg forteller ofte vennene mine for en utmerket virksomhet dette er å arbeide for                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Jeg ville godta omtrent hvilken som helst jobb bare for å kunne fortsette å arbeide for denne virksomheten    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Jeg mener denne virksomheten står for de samme verdier som jeg  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Jeg er stolt av å kunne si at jeg arbeider for denne virksomheten   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Jeg mener denne virksomheten inspirerer meg til å yte mitt beste på jobben                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Jeg er glad for at jeg valgte å arbeide for denne virksomheten fremfor mange andre jeg vurderte               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Jeg bryr meg om hva som skjer med denne virksomheten  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Jeg synes den virksomheten jeg jobber for er den beste av alle  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

55. **Jobbtilfredshet**a. **Alt i alt, hvor tilfreds er du med jobben din?**

- 1  Svært misfornøyd  
 2  Misfornøyd  
 3  Fornøyd  
 4  Svært fornøyd

b. **Ville du råde en venn til å ta denne jobben?**

- 1  Jeg ville fraråde det  
 2  Jeg ville være i tvil  
 3  Jeg ville anbefale det på det sterkeste

c. **Med det du vet i dag, ville du da tatt den jobben du har nå?**

- 1  Jeg ville tatt den uten å nøle  
 2  Jeg ville tenkt meg om to ganger  
 3  Jeg ville uten tvil takke nei

56. **Folk kan oppleve sin arbeidssituasjon svært forskjellig. Vi ber deg i det følgende om å ta stilling til hvordan du opplever ditt daglige arbeid.**

|    | Svært uenig<br>1         | Uenig<br>2               | Litt uenig<br>3          | Verken enig eller uenig<br>4 | Litt enig<br>5           | Enig<br>6                | Svært enig<br>7          |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. |                          |                          |                          |                              |                          |                          |                          |
| 1  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. |                          |                          |                          |                              |                          |                          |                          |
| 1  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. |                          |                          |                          |                              |                          |                          |                          |
| 1  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

57. Vi ønsker at du skal sammenlikne din nåværende jobb med det du gjorde for 5 år siden (selv om du hadde den samme jobben). Dersom du ikke hadde noen jobb for 5 år siden, gå til spørsmål 58.

|    |  |                               |                                |                          |                            |                           |
|----|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. | Hadde du den samme jobben for 5 år siden?  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |                          |                            |                           |
|    |  | Økt<br>mye                    | Økt<br>lite                    | Ingen<br>forandring      | Avtatt/<br>minsket<br>litt | Avtatt/<br>minsket<br>mye |
| b. | Jobbtrygghet   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| c. | Grad av ferdigheter du bruker i jobben din   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| d. | Grad av variasjon i dine arbeidsoppgaver   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| e. | Tilbudet av kurs/opplæring   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| f. | Grad av kontroll over arbeidet   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| g. | Din innsats på jobben  | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| h. | Muligheten for forfremmelse  | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| i. | Grad av ansvar i ditt arbeid   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| j. | Grad av stress i jobben  | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| k. | Muligheten for å yte god kunde-/brukerbehandling   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| l. | Muligheten for kontakt/dialog med mine nærmeste overordnede                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| m. | Muligheten for samarbeid med mine kolleger   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| n. | Grad av disponible ressurser   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| o. | Profilering av virksomheten utad   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| p. | Kolleger å dele arbeidet med   | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| q. | Grad av regler/rutiner for kunde-/brukerkontakt  | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| r. | I hvilken grad du blir oppmuntret til å ta hensyn til individuelle behov hos hver kunde/bruker | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>  |

58. Pass på å besvare både i hvilken grad du har opplevd denne situasjonen og hvor ofte.  
Dersom du aldri har opplevd dette, vennligst sett kryss under aldri.  
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**FØLELSESMESSIGE REAKSJONER  
PÅ JOBBEN:**

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|  |
|--|
| <b>FØLELSESMESSIGE REAKSJONER<br/>PÅ JOBBEN:</b> |
|--|

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59. Hvor mye stress opplever du når det gjelder følgende forhold på arbeidsplassen:

|    |  | Ikke stress |   |   |   | Mye stress |   |
|----|--|-------------|---|---|---|------------|---|
|    |  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 1  | Forholdet til mine overordnede   | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 2  | Mitt forhold til kolleger  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 3  | Mitt forhold til underordnede  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 4  | Arbeidsmengde  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 5  | Å gjøre feil   | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 6  | Å føle meg undervurdert  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 7  | Tidspress og tidsfrister   | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 8  | Mulighetene for forfremmelse   | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 9  | Lønnens størrelse  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 10 | Den belastning arbeidet påfører mitt privatliv                         | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 11 | Min ektefelles holdning til mitt arbeid                                | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 12 | Den mengde reising som arbeidet krever                                 | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 13 | Å bli forflyttet   | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 14 | Å ta med arbeid hjem   | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 15 | Å lede mennesker   | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 16 | Bedriftens politikk  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 17 | Mangel på makt og innflytelse  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 18 | Mine og virksomhetens idealer er motstridende                          | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 19 | Mangel på samråd og kommunikasjon i virksomheten                       | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 20 | Uklarhet forbundet med jobben  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 21 | Konflikter mellom min yrkesgruppe og andre yrkesgrupper i virksomheten | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |
| 22 | Ledelsen forstår ikke mine problemer forbundet med arbeidet            | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5          | 6 |

60. Har du vært plaget av følgende helseproblemer de siste 30 døgn?  
(© Institutt for Biologisk og Medisinsk Psykologi, Universitetet i Bergen)

**Eksempel:**

Hvis du føler at du har vært *en del* plaget med forkjølelse/influensa siste måned, og varigheten av plagene var ca. 1 uke, fylles dette ut på følgende måte:

| Alminnelige plager/helseproblemer | 0 = ikke plaget<br>1 = litt plaget<br>2 = en del plaget<br>3 = alvorlig plaget | Antall dager plagene varte (omtrent) |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Forkjølelse/influensa          | 2  | 7                                    |

**NB!** Det er viktig at du fyller ut både hvor plaget du har vært, og omtrent antall dager du har vært plaget siste 30 døgn.

| Alminnelige plager/helseproblemer       | 0 = ikke plaget<br>1 = litt plaget<br>2 = en del plaget<br>3 = alvorlig plaget | Antall dager plagene varte (omtrent) |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Forkjølelse, influensa               |  |                                      |
| 2. Hoste, bronkitt                      |  |                                      |
| 3. Astma                                |  |                                      |
| 4. Hodepine                             |  |                                      |
| 5. Nakkesmerter                         |  |                                      |
| 6. Smerter øverst i ryggen              |  |                                      |
| 7. Smerter i korsryggen                 |  |                                      |
| 8. Smerter i armer                      |  |                                      |
| 9. Smerter i skuldre                    |  |                                      |
| 10. Migrene                             |  |                                      |
| 11. Hjertebank, ekstraslag              |  |                                      |
| 12. Brystmerter                         |  |                                      |
| 13. Pustevansker                        |  |                                      |
| 14. Smerter i føttene ved anstrengelser |  |                                      |
| 15. Sure oppstøt, "halsbrann"           |  |                                      |
| 16. Sug eller svie i magen              |  |                                      |
| 17. Magekatarr, magesår                 |  |                                      |
| 18. Mageknip                            |  |                                      |
| 19. "Luftplager"                        |  |                                      |
| 20. Løs avføring, diarè                 |  |                                      |
| 21. Forstoppelse                        |  |                                      |
| 22. Eksem                               |  |                                      |
| 23. Allergi                             |  |                                      |

| Alminnelige plager/helseproblemer    | 0 = ikke plaget<br>1 = litt plaget<br>2 = en del plaget<br>3 = alvorlig plaget | Antall dager plagene varte (omtrent) |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 24. Hetetokter                       |  |                                      |
| 25. Søvnproblemer                    |  |                                      |
| 26. Tretthet                         |  |                                      |
| 27. Svimmelhet                       |  |                                      |
| 28. Angst                            |  |                                      |
| 29. Nedtrykthet, depresjon           |  |                                      |
| 30. Kjedsomhet                       |  |                                      |
| <i>Spesielt for kvinner/gravide:</i> |  |                                      |
| 31. Premenstruelle spenninger        |  |                                      |
| 32. Menstruasjonssmerter             |  |                                      |
| 33. Kvalme                           |  |                                      |
| 34. Bekkenløsning                    |  |                                      |
| 35. Overgangsalder                   |  |                                      |

61. Hvordan vil du beskrive din egen helse?

1  Meget god    2  God    3  Middels    4  Dårlig    5  Meget dårlig

62. Hvilken betydning tror du at det tiltaket (jf. brev til alle ansatte), som nå skal gjennomføres på din arbeidsplass vil ha for deg?

|                              | Mye bedre                | Litt bedre               | Uforandret               | Litt verre               | Mye verre                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Helsen min vil bli...     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Arbeidsmiljøet vil bli... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

63. Sykmelding

a. Har du vært borte fra arbeidet det siste året på grunn av sykdom?

1  Ja    2  Nei

b. Hvis ja, hvor mange ganger? . . . . . ganger

c. Hvor mange dager var du borte, og hva var årsaken?

|               |               |        |   |
|---------------|---------------|--------|---|
| 1. gang       | Antall dager: | Årsak: | Sykmeldt fra lege?<br>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja    2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |
| 2. gang       | Antall dager: | Årsak: | Sykmeldt fra lege?<br>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja    2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |
| 3. gang       | Antall dager: | Årsak: | Sykmeldt fra lege?<br>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja    2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |
| Flere ganger? | Antall dager: | Årsak: | Sykmeldt fra lege?<br>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja    2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |

d. Har du vært borte fra arbeidet i løpet av de siste 30 dager?

1  Ja      2  Nei

e. Hvis ja, hvor mange ganger? . . . . . ganger

f. Hvor mange dager var du borte, og hva var årsaken?

|               |               |        |   |
|---------------|---------------|--------|---|
| 1. gang       | Antall dager: | Årsak: | Sykmeldt fra lege?<br>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja      2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |
| 2. gang       | Antall dager: | Årsak: | Sykmeldt fra lege?<br>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja      2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |
| 3. gang       | Antall dager: | Årsak: | Sykmeldt fra lege?<br>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja      2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |
| Flere ganger? | Antall dager: | Årsak: | Sykmeldt fra lege?<br>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja      2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nei |

64. Har du sykdommer som medfører betydelig funksjonssvikt?

1  Ja      2  Nei

65. Hvis ja, hvilke?

1  Hjerte/kar

2  Kronisk lungesykdom

3  Kreft

4  Muskel-skjelett plager

5  Annet, spesifiser: . . . . .

66. Angi om utsagnene nedenfor beskriver deg (sett kryss):

|   | Svært riktig             | Nokså riktig             | Litt riktig              | Ikke riktig              |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Driver meg selv hardt og er konkurrerende                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Har vanligvis dårlig tid   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Er sjefete og dominerende  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Har sterkt behov for å utmerke meg i det meste som jeg foretar meg | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Spiser for fort  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Blir irritert når jeg må vente på noe                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

67. Følelser som du har på slutten av en gjennomsnittlig arbeidsdag:

|   | Svært riktig             | Nokså riktig             | Litt riktig              | Ikke riktig              |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Ofte følt at tiden var knapp   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Arbeidet følger meg slik at jeg tenker på det også etter arbeidstid          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Arbeidet tøyser meg ofte til grensen av utholdenhet og kapasitet             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Ofte følt meg usikker, utilpass eller utilfreds med hvor godt jeg klarer meg | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

68. Opplever du at det er problematisk å være borte fra jobben pga egen sykdom, syke barn, legebesøk o.l.?

1  Overhodet ikke      3  I noen grad

2  I liten grad      4  I stor grad      5  Uaktuelt



69. Noen ganger går folk på jobb selv om de kjenner seg dårlig. Det kan være ulike grunner til at de går på jobb. Vi ber deg først tenke igjennom om du noen gang har gått på jobb når du har vært dårlig (f.eks. med litt feber, litt ondt i ryggen, litt hodepine).

|  | Stemmer<br>helt          | Stemmer<br>delvis        | Stemmer<br>ikke          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Jeg går på jobb selv om jeg kjenner meg dårlig fordi....                     |                          |                          |                          |
| a. det er umulig å få tak i en vikar   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. jeg har viktige oppgaver på jobben  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. jeg er oppdratt slik  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. det finnes ingen andre som kan utføre arbeidet jeg gjør                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. jeg vil ikke overbelaste kollegene  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. det er mer "krevende" å være hjemme enn å være på arbeid                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. det er så mye som må gjøres på jobben                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. jeg føler ansvar for jobben   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. hvis noen andre gjør jobben blir det bare rot                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. jeg får dårlig samvittighet hvis jeg blir hjemme                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k. man bør gå på arbeid hvis man ikke er ordentlig syk                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l. jeg er redd for å bli beskyldt for å skulke av kollegene                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m. jeg er redd for å bli beskyldt for å skulke av ledelsen                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| n. man må være glad for å ha en jobb i dag når det er så mye arbeidsledighet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o. hvis jeg ikke står på kan min jobb være truet                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

70. Hvis du på alle påstandene over har svart "stemmer ikke", er det fordi:

- 1  Du aldri er dårlig  
2  Du aldri går på jobb når du er dårlig, men får sykemelding (evt. leverer egenmelding)

71. Besvares av kvinner: Er du gravid?

- 1  Ja  
2  Nei, gå til spørsmål 73.

72. Hvor langt er du kommet i graviditeten?

- 1  Inntil 3 mnd.  
2  3-6 mnd.  
3  Over 6 mnd.

*Besvares av alle:*

73. Hvordan vil du karakterisere din fysiske form?

- 1  Meget god    3  Middels    5  Meget dårlig  
2  God    4  Dårlig

74. Fysisk aktivitet:

- a. Har du i løpet av det siste året drevet regelmessig med fysisk trening (mer enn 30 min. hver gang, og slik at du svetter)?

- 1  Ja, gå til spm. b  
2  Nei, gå til spørsmål 75

- b. Hvis du svarte Ja på spm a.: Hvor ofte trener du?

- 1  Mindre enn 1 gang pr uke    3  2 ganger pr uke    5  Mer enn 3 ganger pr uke  
2  1 gang pr uke    4  3 ganger pr uke

75. **Kaffedrikking: Hvor mange kopper kaffe drikker du i løpet av en dag?**

- 1  Drikker ikke kaffe                      3  3-5 kopper                      5  Mer enn 10 kopper  
2  1-2 kopper                                      4  6-10 kopper

76. **Røyking**

- a. **Røyker du?**            1  Ja            2  Nei  
b. **Hvis ja, oppgi antall sigaretter pr dag: . . . . .**

77. **Alkoholbruk: Hvor mange enheter\* med alkohol drikker du vanligvis i løpet av 14 dager?**  
(angi mengde for to typiske uker i løpet av siste halvår)

. . . . . enheter                      \* 1 enhet = ½ flaske pils *eller* 1 glass rødvis *eller* 1 dram/drink

78. **Helt til slutt har du kanskje lyst til å si noe med egne ord:**

a. **Hva gir deg mest glede i arbeidet?**

.....  
.....  
.....

b. **Hva er mest belastende eller plagsomt?**

.....  
.....  
.....

c. **Hvorfor er dette belastende eller plagsomt?**

.....  
.....  
.....

d. Hvilke tiltak kunne ha gjort arbeidet mindre anstrengende?

.....

.....

.....

e. Hva gjør du for å mestre din arbeidssituasjon?

.....

.....

.....

***Hjertelig takk for at du tok deg tid til å hjelpe oss!***  
*Har du kommentarer til spørsmålene, kan du notere disse nedenfor.*