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### **“Work beyond boundaries and chances for participation”**

Paid work is undergoing a process of transformation, with atypical employment, cooperation networks, flexible working hours and new forms of work organisation changing the face of working life. Are these developments, which are commonly subsumed under the heading of the “dissolving boundaries of work”, indicators that work is finally being freed from rigid, restrictive corsets or do they, much rather, contribute to stripping work of useful protection? Do they help to improve or do they limit employees’ opportunities for participation? It is these questions that the research project “Work beyond boundaries and chances for participation” deals with.

The contribution aims to answer the question of how the opportunities for participation of various groups of employees develop in the course of the boundary-breaking changes in work.

Work beyond boundaries or the breaking boundaries of work is intended to mean that the previous demarcations and patterns of paid work are dissolving, or at least losing significance. This affects such diverse dimensions as working hours, the separation of paid work from caring work and from private life, work organisation and the establishment as spatial and social entity or the internationalisation of companies. Terminologically, participation relates both to “individual” involvement of workers and “representative” forms of interest representation.

The object of investigation is service-sector work and, in particular, two expanding branches with marked tendencies to the breaking of the boundaries of work: Software development, multimedia and IT-enabled services on the one hand and social services on the other, areas that differ widely in relation to the content and the object of work, gender dimension, organisation and company structures and therefore provide interesting opportunities for comparison.

The contribution combines the question of participation opportunities and interest-group representation with that of the breaking of the boundaries of work and compares forward-looking but comparatively little-researched fields of work with the most widely differing employment profile according to qualifications and gender.

