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## **The Gendered Construction of Technical Self-Confidence: Women's Negotiated Positions in Male-dominated, Technical Work Settings**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Studies show that in order to become a successful, respected and trusted, technical expert it is essential to display technical self-confidence, competitiveness and ambition. However, women in technical work settings often find it difficult to adjust to this work ideal. Rather than promoting themselves they choose to understate their technical competence. This article argues that the display of low technical self-confidence is a strategy used by women in order to become accepted in a work setting permeated by a technical and masculine work ideal. Women who try to conform to the competitive technical work ideal meet with disapproval since they fail to perform in accordance with gender-appropriate behaviour. Women in technical work settings are thus confronted with a double-bind dilemma that they need to develop strategies to cope with. By displaying lack of technical self-confidence they do not challenge the male supremacy and are hence accepted by their colleagues.

### **KEYWORDS**

Work-ideal; Gender-appropriateness; Double-bind dilemma



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