

Abstract

Between Participation and Stigmatization

A Qualitative Study of the Living Worlds, Challenges, and Resilience Strategies of Young Benefit Recipients in Germany

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This M.A. thesis investigates the impacts of institutional practices of Germany's Jobcenter on young adults aged 18-25 receiving benefits in Berlin, focusing on social integration, self-perception, and resilience strategies. Guided by a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five young benefit recipients. The findings reveal significant structural barriers, such as bureaucratic delays and inconsistent caseworker relationships, which contribute to stigmatization and social exclusion. Despite these challenges, participants exhibited resilience through personal coping mechanisms and reliance on informal support networks. The study concludes that while Jobcenter practices often reinforce structural inequalities, young adults' resilience strategies play a critical role in their navigation of the welfare system. This research highlights the need for reforms in welfare support policies to enhance social integration and reduce stigmatization among young benefit recipients.

Keywords: Structural Inequality; Institutional Practices; Jobcenter; Stigmatization; Social Exclusion; Resilience; Bürgergeld