

Governmentality, Power, and Resistance: Social Work with Migrants in Berlin

An Abstract of the Thesis By

Madeline Taylor

Social work is a profession that, despite its humanitarian aims, is deeply implicated in state regimes. This thesis explores the following questions: in what ways does Foucault's notion of governmentality expose the inherent tensions of social work? How is social work wielded as a governmental power mechanism? How do social workers find pockets of resistance under the inescapable presence of power relations? Using qualitative research methods, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 social workers working in Berlin's accommodation centers for migrants, government agencies, and daytime services for migrants. Through the lens of Foucault's governmentality, I first define the place migration holds in state agendas. I then argue that social work is caught in a dilemma: social workers enact state power and find pockets of resistance.