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ADOLESCENT TRANSITION – THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO TRAINING AND VOCATION

My dissertation will deal with the situation of disadvantaged adolescents in the North Rhine-Westphalian transitioning system and its current structure. Research guiding this dissertation is based on the following idea: I intend to explain according to scientific discourse, current research and my own work in parts of this topic and in line with scientific theory certain deficits, and describe alternative courses of action and structure for players in the transitioning system. Furthermore, there will be focus on the question as to if and how measure settings of the transitioning system can help today or in the future to support adolescents in training and vocation with (re-) establishing their identity, motivation, self-efficacy and their feelings of autonomy.

Educational expansion and the increasing inclusion of children and adolescents of all milieus failed to reduce the social inequality of education opportunities. Therefore, Vester talks about an “education inflation” (Vester 2004). On the one hand do adolescents achieve higher educational attainments on the other hand, however, they are merely competing for training- and vocation openings on a higher educational level. Adolescents lacking graduation find themselves on the very bottom of this hierarchy. Aside from academic categories bureaucratic-professional distinctions also come into play: From a statistical as well as from an institutional perspective they are the ones not provided for, the ones disadvantaged by the market who almost naturally are attested with lacking vocational perspectives. Often those adolescents lacking secondary virtues (discipline, punctuality, manners, etc) as well as those unemployed who have so called placement hindrances, which can range from trivial (no drivers licence) to severe (drug addiction), fall into this category. Another differential criterion would be the readiness for vocational training. All of these categories label young adults as lacking employability.

Often the bad initial chances of disadvantaged adolescents concerning their transition from school to vocation can be traced back to their respective biographical insecurities. Another central question in this context involves which reflexive personal and institutional mechanisms are necessary to counteract future disruption of the curriculum vitae and disadvantages within the relevant target group more efficiently.

This dissertation is meant to state structures, mechanisms and effects of the transitioning system and point out behavioural patterns and interactions of the players involved. In order to accomplish this I intend to use my work within a scientific project examining the transitional system of the city of Bielefeld, thus supplementing scientific-theoretical argumentation with empirical research. This enables me to tie in with previous works concerning the Bielefeld case study in this relatively new field and both deepen and intensify this thematic constellation. In order to classify the case study – in the sense of institutional mapping – it is necessary to describe basic conditions and characteristics of the German employment market as well as other specifics of the German respectively North Rhine-Westphalian school- and vocational trainings-system.

Even with regard to demographic changes it is unlikely that the chances of adolescents will improve in the foreseeable future, because there will be further shortage of training opportunities. Especially disadvantaged adolescents are, therefore, at a higher risk of unemployment and poverty. In 2008 the federal government had conceptualized the “qualification initiative” which was meant to cut the number of adolescents without a graduation in half and should have ensured that education always leads to graduation. However, due to deregulatory mechanisms within the training- and

employment-market the success of this initiative does not appear realistic. Instead a worsening of the situation seems far more likely which will impair the development, especially of disadvantaged adolescents, even more. "This shows that adolescence is no longer a refuge, a protected space and moratorium" (Mierendorff/Olk 2002, 136) and that individualization and pluralisation of circumstances privatize a with gained qualifications connected risk. Often this kind of tension leads to short-lived, hedonistic behaviour patterns. (cf. *ibid.*).

Furthermore, working on one's identity has changed. There are less venerated or institutionalized career brackets (cf. Fuchs-Brüninghoff 2010, 116). The post-modern individual has increasingly more possibilities, yet it is indisputable that some have more options than others. This confirms Hillebrand's (2010) in connection to Luhmann proclaimed transformation from inclusive to exclusive individuality. The recent Shell study shows that education and social participation are still too strongly connected to social background and family situations. So it would seem that the transitioning system would provide especially disadvantaged adolescents with opportunities for development, learning and education under consideration of the capability approach.

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