

«*Like a stamp on the forehead*»

Life trajectories after leaving residential care in the Canton Zurich, Switzerland 1950-1990

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Entering residential care

Object-like, foreign-controlled, very little/no information

*«they chose to»
«they did»
«they told me to»*

*«All of a sudden we had a
legal guardian, it was said that
we should pack our things and
then he took us and we were
standing at the entrance of
that residential care home.»*

*«locked up»
«admitted»
«conveyed»*

In residential care

Feelings of powerlessness

«And now I know I did nothing wrong. I was just a bit different, [...] I didn't meet the social norm. At any rate, my mother, who gave birth to me out of wedlock, certainly didn't. And we were simply locked away.»

Feelings of defenslessness, of being unprotected

«lone figher»

Biographical trajectories

Representatives of “the state”: all-knowing, untransparent counterpart

«I absolutely cannot stand authorities, someone who wants to tell me anything, Ämter, plice, everything that has anything to do with that, I am having a huge problem with that.»

«What makes me sick are the public authorities. [...] I feel like at that time again, like in prison. They say that I have to work there and there and they tell me about their operational plan. And if I don't go they sanction you.»

*«Like a stamp on the forehead»
«They knew where I came from»*

Biographical trajectories

Werner & Smith 1998: «Not all development is determined by what happens early in life.» Nevertheless:

- Comparison with ideas of «normality»
- Acknowledgment seeking
- Dependencies (opinions and assessments) from those with certain discursive and legitimising powers, e.g. lawyers, doctors, researchers
- «fighting one's way through life»
- Ambivalent role of science and research between empowerment and disempowerment

«In twenty years from now there's gonna be another researcher, I'm gonna tell him then: All this money making with us. You couldn't be more dishonest than that.»

Initiatives for reappraisal

State, authorities

- Feelings of personal humiliation, oppression, surveillance
- Feeling moved back to the past immediately
- Experiences of limitation of autonomy and capacity to act, being administered inhumanly

Reappraisal

- Providing evidence: Danger of restigmatisation
- Devaluation of biographical experience by addressing biographical topics in a «objectivating» manner, e.g. the necessity to prove to be a victim
- Losing the subject on the level of research and policy
- Documents from case files prove the status of being a «victim» («Opfereigenschaft»)
- May lead to powerful side effects, new dependencies



Martin Lengwiler, Thomas Gabriel, Gisela Hauss (Hg.)

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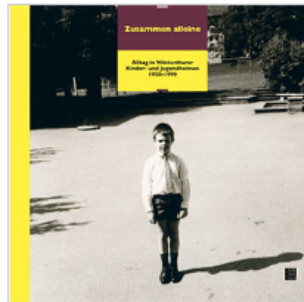
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Zusammen alleine

Alltag in Winterthurer Kinder- und Jugendheimen 1950–1990

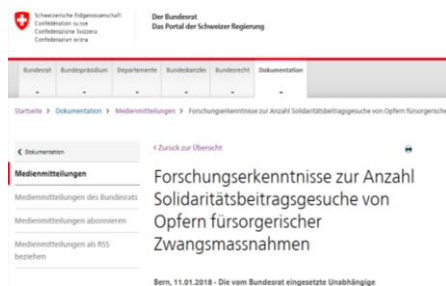
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