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Re-Socialisation Through Work And Education: The Ambivalent Promise Of Youth Offenders Institutions

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Abstract

We will discuss first results from the project “Fragile Transitions – The integration of young men with prison experience into work and training”, a qualitative longitudinal study with 30 male adolescents that is being conducted at the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony, Germany, funded by the foundation Deutsche Jugendmarke. The study focuses on learning and working experiences in the biographies of young men in prison. On the one hand, imprisonment, for marginalised young men, is one more point in the discontinuity that already characterises their biographies. On the other hand, it promises a future integration through education, work and training, thus referring to the classical concept of the male breadwinner. Looking at the meaning of work from a subject-oriented perspective, the question for working abilities goes beyond the concrete occupation and job and points to adolescents’ ability and need to develop personal autonomy. From a perspective of desistance, the crucial question is: How do various institutions of control and help support the young men in this process?