

Abstract

The bachelor thesis “Identity of deserving and its construction by social benefit recipients” explores the ways the benefit recipients reach deservingness. While public discourse presents users of social benefits as inactive people, who abuse state social support, benefit recipients themselves perceive their position in a different way. Deservingness plays the role of a powerful instrument in the relation institution-claimant, by means of that the officers distinguish between deserving and undeserving recipients and against that they have to demonstrate themselves. The claimants try to reach the identity of deserving by means of many strategies, which on the one hand reflect public discourse of state social support, on the other hand potential failure during this identity negotiation and consequently alternative ways of presentation of deservingness. The research was empirically oriented, qualitative interviews used for analysis were inspired by principles of collaborative dialogue [Anderson 2009], which enables to depict that identity negotiation in the context of situatedness [Goffman 1999] of informants. On the one hand, they answer the general notions of ideal claimant through activity, job searching or good financial management [e.g. Howe 1990], on the other hand, due to the failure of the presentation of deservingness in this way they prove it by means of new forms, e.g. the principles of life-style or personal dignity. But even this strategy capturing escaping Gypsiness [Abu Ghosh 2008] is not successful in payment of benefits. Compared to it, submissive behaviour and deep shortage seem to be successful in practice and consequently meet the officers’ requirements of deservingness.