Food and Poverty in Germany

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Qualitative insights

variety of individual coping

Qualitative longitudinal study

Biographic-narrative interviews at home. 106 initial interviews of 3 hours.

4 waves in 4.5 years. All interviewing waves completed.

Actually 453 interviews and 81 „living“ cases.

Coping

Against the odds. Abandonment of quality.

Abandonment of quantity. Surfing the ups and downs.

Enforcing networks. Risky food financing.

Embracing nutrition for sense and structure.

Food bank consumption substituting other needs.
But quantitative?

There are hunger and nutritional poverty — in the midst of our supposedly affluent society.

**Germany**

No mass problem, but…

…existent and spreading.

…in public and scientific awareness.

One reason for that:

No systematic and regular surveys on nutrition in Germany.

**National Consumption Study (NVS)**

Only two surveys:

- 1980s (NVS I)
- 2005-2007 (NVS II)

main problem / critique

- Poorer population strata are largely lacking
- Population groups at higher risk of nutritional poverty were deliberately excluded
- Unemployed households are underrepresented.

Too many people have too less money to spend on food.
Monthly household expenses in GBP

- 0-79 GBP: 0%
- 80-156 GBP: 3%
- 200-299 €: 6%
- 300-399 €: 9%
- 400-499 €: 12%
- 500-599 €: 1%
- 600-699 €: 7%
- 700-799 €: 11%
- 800-899 €: 9%
- >1.000 €: 10%

≈ 800,000 persons probably living in nutritional poverty and partly experiencing hunger.

≈ 5 Mio. people no way to quantify the degree of nutritional poverty in this group.

not to forget: 300,000 people without household.

Spendings on food in GBP

- monthly ALG II in 2012
- nominal amount for food w/o stimulants
- spending on food w/ stimulants
- spending on food (lowest income quintil)

GBP 3.02
GBP 5.90
GBP 3.51

per day: 60%

Germany experiences a food bank „explosion“.
Food bank explosion in Germany

> 100,000 tons of food

900 foodbanks

1,500,000 people

- social welfare
- unemployed
- homeless
- retired persons
- migrants
- „German“ migrants (Aussiedler)

Normann 2003; Selke 2009; Bundesverband Deutsche Tafeln e.V. 2012; graphics: Pfeiffer

There must be hunger and nutritional poverty in Germany.

3 circumstantial evidences

circumstantial evidence 4

Unemployed households' spendings on gastronomic services are way down the average.

Alimentary participation
eating out as example
Household expenditures 2005

107 GBP vs. 29 GBP

Accommodation/service in hotels and restaurants
Food, beverages, tobaccos
Other private consumer spending

On eating out, there is no food choice for unemployed households whatsoever.

Unemployed household with around 1.200 € private consumption

29 GBP

average bill for eating out per person

11.50 GBP

four persons eating out once would need: 46 GBP

The great majority of unemployed households is never ever eating out.

Dine out once a month and leave somebody at home?

Or only every two months with all four?

Or the occasional McDonalds visit with all?

food „choice“?
Not affording dining out at all

average eating out occasions per person per year

per month = 7x

ALG II recipients are systematically excluded from alimentary participation.

3 circumstantial evidences

systematic exclusion from alimentary participation (e.g. eating out)

individual coping strategies instead of societal/governmental ones

=> new research project starts end of 2012

conclusion

Living with ALG II means

risk of nutritional poverty and occational hunger

systematic exclusion from alimentary participation (e.g. eating out)

individual coping strategies instead of societal/governmental ones

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Thank you – looking forward to the discussion!

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