

Gerlach, Jennifer Marie (2024): Positionierungen im Kontext von Inklusion. Eine diskursanalytische Interviewstudie zu Eltern von Kindern mit zugeschriebenem Förderbedarf. [engl.: Positioning in the context of inclusion. A discourse-analytical interview study on parents of children with ascribed special needs]. Erziehungswissenschaftliche Studien, Band 19, Universitätsverlag: Göttingen.

## **Short outline of the study**

### **Introduction**

#### **1 Commentary on research on parents of children with special educational needs in the context of school**

- 1.1 Attitude research towards inclusion
- 1.2 Research on school choice
- 1.3 Research on cooperation between parents and schools
- 1.4 Research on experiences and satisfaction with and perspectives on school
- 1.5 Conclusion

#### **2 Theoretical-methodological and methodological modeling of an empirical analysis of subjectification as positioning in discursive practices**

- 2.1 Subjectification as a relational and unfinished event
- 2.2 Theoretical foundations of an analysis of discursive practices
- 2.3 Interviews as a discursive practice
- 2.4 Subjectification as an analysis of positioning in discursive practices
- 2.5 Methodological details

#### **3 'Heterogeneous' positioning of parents of children with 'needs of support' on questions about their child's schooling**

- 3.1 Reflection on the conditions of expression: information letter and interview impulse
- 3.2 Positions on the negative positions of primary schools regarding the schooling of one's own child
- 3.3 Positioning on choosing a secondary school
- 3.4 Positioning on demands for learning and school success for one's own child in the context of inclusive schooling

#### **4 Discussion of results and reflection on the research perspective**

- 4.1 Summary presentation of the theoretical-methodological and methodological decisions
- 4.2 Discussion of the empirical results
- 4.3 Synthesis: The critical potential of the focus on 'heterogeneous' positioning on questions of schooling one's own child

### **Literature**

**Summary:**

The interview study takes as its educational political starting point the assumption of a changed position of parents of children with ascribed special educational needs within the German education system. This changed position is attributed to the introduction of the so-called parental choice, which was a response to the demands of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the majority of the federal states of Germany. According to this right to choose, parents of children with identified special needs can now decide for themselves whether their child should attend an inclusive school or a special school. In the present study, the introduction of this parental choice is understood as activating parents to position themselves with regard to questions about their child's schooling. Considering this background, this study examines the positioning of parents of children with special educational needs on the subject of school choice and in the context of inclusive schooling.

While there has been an intensification of scientific interest in parents of children with special educational needs since the introduction of inclusive schools, the present study critically differentiates itself from research approaches in which such parents are primarily viewed as users of the school system. In this research, the parents are mostly conceptualized as autonomous subjects, i.e., for example, as active intentional decision makers in the context of school choice. In contrast, the present study adopts a power analysis perspective with which school choice can be seen not as an individual, criteria-driven decision, but rather as a situated choice. The aim is to describe the involvement of parents in subjectivizing conditions in which certain ways of thinking and saying things about schooling of students with “needs of support” are brought about, updated and shifted. With this definition of the subject matter, the dissertation locates itself in qualitative, social scientific parenting research, which is aligned with performativity theory.

By reflecting on the problematic reification effects of academic writing about certain groups of people to which the researcher does not belong, the aim of the present study is to heterogenize writing about parents of children with so-called special needs and to make their involvement in powerful relationships visible – and in this way abstract from essentializing descriptions. The

theoretical, methodological and methodological adjustments of the study follow this aim. For the empirical analyses, a practice-theoretical-poststructuralist perspective is developed, following Daniel Wrana, with which subjectivation can be understood as positioning in discursive practices. The interviews conducted are conceptualized as a discursive practice. In contrast to an understanding of interviews as a methodically controlled process of recording certain subjects' interpretations of themselves and the world, this perspective brings into focus the performative production of meanings and subject positions (in a joint manner, i.e. taking place between the interviewer and the interviewee).

In the empirical part of the study, 'heterogeneous' positionings of parents of children with 'special needs' are examined on three topics: Positions on negative positions of primary schools regarding the schooling of their own child with 'special needs'. Positioning on choosing a secondary school and positioning on claim to learning and school success in the context of inclusive schooling. The empirical results of the study enable a more precise understanding of what it means to take a position with respect to the issues examined as parents of children with special needs. It describes which constructions of the child's schooling are produced and how, which social constellations the parents are integrated into, and what the scope of the positioning is. The individual parts of the empirical chapter each make a specific empirical contribution to the positioning of parents in the context of inclusion; they can be read as a (always expandable) collage.

Finally, the critical potential of the chosen approach to 'heterogeneous' positioning is an opportunity to write about parents of children with an ascribed 'special need' without automatically considering the parents fundamentally structurally disadvantaged but at the same time, without being blind to power relations.