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Everyday learning of parenthood by people with physical disability

Ethnographic research

This dissertation discusses the issue of everyday learning of parenthood by physically disabled adult parents and is based on theoretic deliberations and empirical analysis carried out with the participation of 17 physically disabled parents (9 women, 8 men). The study aims at learning and understanding the phenomena of everyday learning of parenthood by 17 parents with physical disabilities. Moreover, it attempts to answer the question of what everyday learning of parenthood by 17 physically disabled parents is like.

The dissertation consists of four chapters.

The first chapter presents issues related to everyday life on the basis of educational and sociological sciences as well as cultural anthropology. Moreover, it covers the aspects relating to the definition of everyday life and its structures discussed by researchers of the above-mentioned sciences. What is more, the chapter examines the sociological concepts of everyday life proposed by Erving Goffman (1963), Alfred Schütz (1990) and Harold Garfinkel (2000), which constitute a theoretical framework for this dissertation. Chapter One also presents the reports from Polish research on social sciences concerning everyday life of elderly people, everyday life from educational perspective and everyday life of the disabled and their families.

The second chapter is devoted to the aspects of parenthood and family. It presents the definitions of the term “family” as well as the function and types of families described in subject literature. It covers the concept of family as an environment where everyday learning occurs. Chapter Two also presents the definitions of parenthood and the issues related to disabled people taking up the roles of parents. The chapter ends with an analysis of the selected Polish and foreign empirical reports concerning parenthood in the case of the disabled.

The third chapter covers methodological principles and the organization of own research. It takes up the issues relating to the epistemological program of qualitative research, research method (ethnography), technique of data collection (ethnographic interview), ethics in research and credibility of research. Moreover, this chapter describes research steps, nonprobability sampling, screening process and research area. Chapter Three also presents the assumptions of a data analysis made with the techniques of coding and categorization according to Gibbs (2011) as well as the assumptions of a narrative analysis.

The fourth chapter discusses the results of ethnographic research concerning everyday learning of parenthood by 17 parents with physical disability (9 women, 8 men). The chapter describes the process of the analysis of verbal data with the use of coding and categorization techniques according to Gibbs (2011), which constitutes the answer to the specified research questions. Moreover, the chapter presents individual experiences of everyday learning of parenthood by 17 physically disabled parents with the use of narrative analysis in accordance with Gibbs (2011). The fourth chapter correlates research outcomes with subject literature. It ends with an ethnographic essay.

The dissertation includes references and appendices. The appendix contains informed consent given to the participants and transcriptions of the conducted interviews.

Key words: parenthood, everyday life, learning, physically disabled person