

## Contemporary reconfiguration of the clinic of autism. The tension between forms of expertise: an analysis of enunciation.

This research project draws on the conceptual and methodological framework of analysis of enunciation. It aims at a better understanding of the changes in the clinic of autism, which will help re-think communication between professionals and parents. We have identified three enunciative realms where the process of redefinition of autism and of its care can be observed. The first is the realm of legitimacy of expertise, which is constituted by confrontations between professionals in the field of psychiatry and “new professionals”; the second is the realm of legitimacy of experience, which is constituted by confrontations between activist parents and some high functioning people with autism; finally, the third is the realm of epistemic legitimacy between expertise and experience, which is constituted by confrontations between parents – activists and non-activists alike – and their children on one side, the professionals on the other side. Thus, this project aims at exploring the ways in which these tensions reconfigure the clinic of autism in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, under the angle of the following research questions:

1. How are the socially available discursive resources (i.e. the biomedical discourse, the diversity discourse) mobilized by different categories of laymen (parents, activists, people with autism) in order to challenge or defend the validity of professionals’ expertise?
2. Why is the confrontation between experience and expertise structured in a three-protagonist system (professionals, parents, persons with autism) in the USA, in Canada and partly in France while in Switzerland there are only two protagonists (professionals and parents)?
3. What are the consequences of these conflicts on strategies of care for autism in the French-speaking part of Switzerland?

In order to address these issues, we will use an innovative methodology which is inspired by the sociological discourse analysis and ethnomethodology, namely

the analysis of enunciation. The latter will be applied not only to the study of “virtual” enunciative supports (blogs, websites, forums from all of the stakeholders, as well as traditional media) but also “real” enunciative supports (institutions and associations). As far as “real” enunciative supports are concerned, complementary methodologies will be used for data collection, namely non-participant in-site observations of child/autism health services, video recording of clinical interviews and short restitution interviews with professionals and families following immediately their clinical encounters. Data collection will be completed by focus groups with families and professionals as well as direct observations of various public manifestations such as conferences and public seminars, whether they are organized by either of the protagonists of autism.

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### Research team

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