

Formation of Parental Educational Decisions before and after the Reform of the Education System in Baden-Württemberg

In the German education system there are intentional risk factors that lead to considerable educational inequalities in the structured school system and which, moreover, are increasingly becoming empirically comprehensible. One of these risk factors, which has attracted much attention in empirical educational research in recent years, is the transition from primary school to secondary school. The connection between state-specific, parental educational decisions and educational inequalities in the transition from primary to lower secondary education is therefore considered to be a well-documented finding for the German education system (Maaz et al. 2010). However, it is precisely the context conditions of school transitions that have increasingly changed in recent years as a result of systemic reform processes and offer an opportunity to put existing findings to the test and question them critically. The two studies presented in this article (Wiedenhorn 2011, Semmelroch from 2016) therefore examine parental educational decisions before and after systemic changes in the course of reform processes using the education system of Baden-Württemberg as an example.

Keywords: Educational inequality, transition primary school secondary level, institutional framework conditions, parental educational decision

Introduction

There is hardly any place in the education system where educational inequality in the (structured) school system becomes as evident as it is in the transition from primary school to lower secondary level, because the distribution between different types of school has direct and indirect effects on the later completion of education and the socio-economic position within society (cf. Dietze 2011). The educational decision at the transition from primary school to lower secondary level has therefore already been identified in numerous scientific publications as a decisive and difficult to revise course for the future educational career of adolescents (cf. Maaz et al. 2010), which seems to be primarily due to the conception of the German education system with its early distribution of pupils after completion of primary level based on performance assessments, coupled with a multi-unit school system at secondary level (Neugebauer 2010). In order to reduce educational inequalities, the political trend within the respective education systems of the majority of German federal states is therefore increasingly towards free school choice, supplemented by the expansion of school types with several courses of education, as has been the case in Baden-Württemberg since the 2012/13 school year with the non-binding transitional regulation, the implementation of the community school and the newly formed secondary schools. The German school structure is thus developing more and more away from the classic tripartite structure towards a two-pillar model in which the remaining school types are either combined to form community schools beyond the retained

grammar schools or, with similar objectives but fundamentally differently structured concepts, more or less together teach children with different levels of learning and achievement. Nevertheless, due to the conceptual and hierarchical differences between the respective school forms, fundamental differences remain which, analogous to previous findings, can also be reflected in the status-dependent assessment factors in the choice of parents' school under changed context conditions. For although the German school structure has changed conceptually and in some federal states there is only one other school form besides the grammar schools, the respective possible school-leaving qualifications remain classically segmented and traditionally subdivided into the secondary school certification (Hauptschulabschluss), the secondary modern school certification (Mittlere Reife) and the gymnasiale university entrance qualification (Abitur).

Initial situation

Attendance at different types of schools continues to depend to a large extent on the different social backgrounds of pupils (cf. Dumont et al. 2014). Depending on the structure of the education system in the respective federal state, the differences in performance and the pupils' work and social behavior at the end of primary school are either distributed directly and bindingly to different types of schools according to their school performance, or performance-related assessments and recommendations are made by the primary school teachers on which the parents can base their decisions. It is undisputed, however, that differences in performance do not arise independently of social and ethnic-cultural differences between pupils and their parents, and thus lead to disparities in the participation of different educational pathways, even independently of the formal transition system. In addition, primary school teachers advise in uncertain performance constellations against the background of family support options (Wiedenhorn 2011). Children from socially disadvantaged families are therefore less likely to be found in higher education than children from socially privileged families. Even with comparable school performance, the educational decisions of families differ considerably depending on their position in the social status structure. Educational decisions are influenced by an interplay between the institutional framework of the school system, the child's academic performance and the parent's educational aspirations (ibid., p. 319).

Theoretical Framework

In recent years, the theoretical approach of Raymond Boudon (1974), which explains the relationship between social status characteristics and educational success or participation through his concept of *primary and secondary effects* of origin, has established itself as an explanation for the connection between origin-specific distinctions in pupils' school performance

1 and status-specific school choice behavior during the transition from primary
2 school to secondary school

3 Primary effects of origin are thus understood to be influences of social
4 origin on the competence development of pupils, which are reflected in their
5 school performance, achievements and grades and thus also result in
6 attendance at different types of schools. Boudon (1974) attributes the
7 emergence of primary effects of origin to class specific socialisation in the
8 parental home, which provides different possibilities of parental support on the
9 basis of one's own social congestion and the associated different resources of
10 economic, cultural and social capital. Especially the family educational
11 background, but also genetic factors, cognitively stimulating domestic learning
12 environments as well as ethnically determined, different linguistic and cultural
13 socialization can be effective in terms of the primary effect of origin on school
14 performance.

15 *Secondary effects* of origin, on the other hand, result from status- or class-
16 specific, parental educational aspirations and educational decisions, also
17 independent of the school performance of the child. Parental educational
18 decisions are thus shaped by the subjective evaluation of the costs and benefits
19 of different educational pathways and educational returns, which are oriented
20 towards one's own internalised social status and primarily focus on status
21 maintenance. The choice of different school types is thus made analogous to
22 one's own position in the social status structure. Boudon's approach follows the
23 theoretical paradigm of rational choice approaches that assume that social
24 actors behave rationally within the social system by moving (Hirschele 2015).
25 The choice of different school types or educational pathways is thus made on
26 the basis of (purposeful) rational investment decisions, in which the different
27 cost factors (investment costs, transaction costs and opportunity costs) are
28 subjectively compared with the possible returns (return on education,
29 maintenance of status or avoidance of status decline).

30 More recent theoretical approaches, based on Boudon's basic model, go
31 beyond the basic concept of secondary effects of origin and consider the
32 distinction between status-dependent assessments of pupils and status-
33 dependent educational decisions of parents. This differentiation thus makes it
34 possible to take greater account of effects of origin that are attributable to the
35 relationship between status differences and objective school performance and
36 those that arise independently of pupils' school performance and are
37 attributable to other factors. This essentially results in a differentiation into
38 secondary origin effects of the performance assessment, secondary origin
39 effects of the school run recommendation and secondary origin effects of the
40 transition behavior (cf. Maaz and Nagy 2009)

41 Although Boudon sees the reasons for the greater influence on educational
42 success and ultimately on the genesis of educational inequalities in the
43 secondary origin effect in his basic conception, and for the greater influence on
44 educational success and ultimately on the genesis of educational inequalities,
45 current research findings show that educational inequalities in the transition
46 from primary school to secondary school types arise and can be explained by
47 an interplay of primary and secondary origin effects (cf. Dumont et al. 2014).

The significance of primary and secondary origin effects has been worked out in numerous studies, whereby the weighting and distribution of both origin effects on educational success and ultimately on the genesis of educational inequalities in various international studies varies considerably.¹

For the German education system, too, the results on the relative significance of primary and secondary effects of origin vary according to the conception and composition of the effects of origin (Wiedenhorn 2011). Overall, however, it is also emphasized here that primary and secondary origin effects do not operate independently of each other and influence each other, as is expressed in particular by the interplay between educational aspirations, social status and school performance, which influence each other. (cf. Dumont 2014)

Especially in the different conception of the origin effect and the inconsistent findings of the numerous, above all quantitative, studies that have emerged in the context of school transitions, it becomes clear that there is still a need for further research which, in addition to quantitative data, above all enables qualitative data for further differentiations and operationalisations of primary and secondary origin effects. The two studies presented here consider above all systemic conditions before and after the reform processes in the education system, which can be assumed to be particularly noticeable in the expanded conceptual framework of secondary origin effects.

Changing framework conditions in the education system of Baden-Württemberg

In recent years, a number of reforms have been implemented in Baden-Württemberg's education system, sometimes aimed at reducing inequalities in the transition from primary to secondary schools, and more generally in the education system, and strengthening the rights of families. Thus, for the 2010/11 school year, the Werkrealschule was implemented in a new concept which, in addition to the existing school types, Haupt- und Realschule and Gymnasium, was intended to make it possible for children to attain secondary school leaving certificate with a continuous educational plan up to the 10th grade or to acquire the Hauptschulabschluss after the 9th grade. One year later, in the school year 2011/12, the previously binding transitional regulation for the transition from primary school to secondary school was abolished and replaced by a non-binding educational recommendation with free choice of school by the parents. The community schools, which accept children of all educational recommendations, were implemented in the 2012/13 school year and have now grown to 306 schools in Baden-Württemberg (as of 2018/19). In

¹ Combet, B. (2013): Zum Einfluss von primären und sekundären Effekten der sozialen Herkunft beim zweiten schulischen Übergang in der Schweiz (On the Influence of Primary and Secondary Effects of Social Origin on Secondary School Transitions in Switzerland) is recommended for an overview of the Significance of primary and secondary origin effects on school transitions and the Genesis of educational inequalities in international research. A comparison of different decomposition and operationalization methods. Swiss Journal of Education 35 (2013) 3, pp. 447-471

1 this type of school, children are taught at three levels differentiated by their
 2 individual learning outcomes, whereby the basic level can lead to a lower
 3 secondary school leaving certificate, the intermediate level to a secondary
 4 school leaving certificate and the extended level to the Abitur. With the
 5 exception of a few individual schools (in Constance and Tübingen), however,
 6 virtually no other community school in Baden-Württemberg offers an upper
 7 secondary school leaving certificate. The overwhelming majority of pupils who
 8 leave the secondary school with intermediate school leaving certificate and
 9 would like to acquire the Abitur must therefore switch to a vocational grammar
 10 school.

11 Also in the school year 2012/13, 44 grammar schools offered the Abitur
 12 after nine, instead of eight, years as part of a school experiment, even though
 13 this was not implemented as part of a comprehensive reform. Since the school
 14 year 2015/16, the new concept of secondary schools has made it possible to
 15 obtain both the Hauptschulabschluss after 9 school years and the
 16 Realschulabschluss after 10 school years. Classes 5 and 6, which are
 17 designated as orientation levels, are taught together in order to determine at the
 18 end of the sixth grade at which level the children are taught in the subsequent
 19 level(s). In levels 7 to 9 children can be taught separately at two different
 20 levels. The basic level prepares the children for the Hauptschule, the
 21 intermediate level for the Realschulabschluss. The children can be taught either
 22 in different groups within the class or separately in different classes according
 23 to performance-related characteristics. At the end of the 7th and 8th level it is
 24 decided at which level a child continues to learn. Class level 10 is exclusively
 25 at the intermediate level and prepares the child for the Realschulabschluss.

26 In contrast to some other federal states, the newly conceived school forms
 27 in Baden-Württemberg were largely implemented in addition while retaining
 28 the original school forms. Only the secondary modern school was
 29 fundamentally reformed under public sponsorship. Nevertheless, in addition to
 30 the newly introduced community schools, secondary schools in Baden-
 31 Württemberg also include secondary schools, secondary schools and grammar
 32 schools. There is thus the obvious assumption that the reform of a formerly
 33 tripartite school system to a de facto four-member school system increases the
 34 complexity of decision-making not only on the part of free parental educational
 35 decisions, but also on the part of primary school teachers in terms of the
 36 requirements of school guidance services. Effects could be reflected in both
 37 inequality-enhancing and leveling effects.

38 39 40 **Research questions and methodology**

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42 The findings on primary and secondary effects of origin on the genesis of
 43 educational inequalities during the transition to secondary schools described in
 44 the basic problem have so far been able to prove quantitative studies (e.g.
 45 Neugebauer 2010). On the other hand, comparatively few empirical studies
 46 (e.g. Harazd 2007, Kleine 2009, Grassau 2013) exist which go beyond existing
 47 assumptions and focus on different objectives, subjective perspectives,
 48 evaluations and assessments in the context of the implicit motives for action of

parents, pupils and teachers. Current research work in the context of educational transitions is aimed in particular at quantifying primary and secondary effects of origin. Recent research work has focused in particular on the relative importance of primary and secondary effects of origin in educational decisions. These research findings take up the dissertations of the authors in the context of actor-specific educational decisions under changed systemic conditions in the following research question:

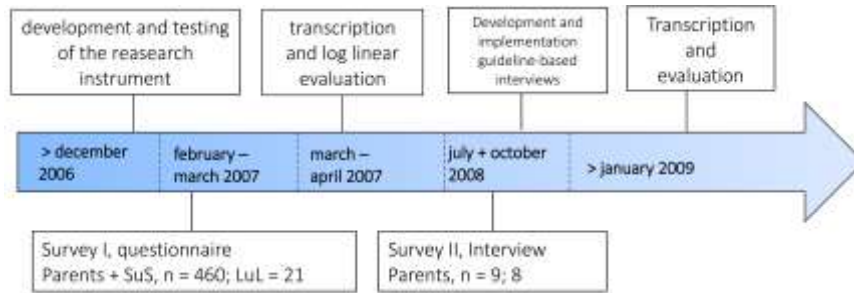
- 1) How are parental educational decisions formed before and after the reform of the education system in Baden-Württemberg?
- 2) How do parents justify their choice of school, e.g. in the case of alternative educational concepts that appear formally to be of equal importance?
- 3) Which arguments underlie parental school decisions and which types can be identified?

The research questions aim in particular at a substantive level of subjective assessment and evaluation criteria which, within the framework of primarily secondary effects of origin, may possibly lead to additional differentiations for the further operationalization and conception of effects of origin. The two studies were conducted independently of each other and will be compared in a joint project by re-analysing the existing data (Wiedenhorn 2011) with the new findings (Semmelroch starting in 2016). The similar research design of the two studies enables a comparative comparison of parental educational decisions before and after the systemic changes in the education system. On the basis of the two dissertation projects, the contribution is intended to provide initial clues for answering and discussing the questions raised.

Wiedenhorn-study, Research design (methodology)

The study presented here was conducted as part of a dissertation starting in 2006/07 over two school years and published in 2011 under the title "Die Bildungsentscheidung aus Schüler-, Eltern- und Lehrersicht". The research design is longitudinal and carried out at primary and secondary levels in Baden-Württemberg and analysed from the perspective of the three participants. At the beginning, a quota sample was drawn in the school districts of Stuttgart and Ravensburg. In the first part of the study, questionnaires were handed out to pupils, parents and teachers at 18 primary schools in order to collect their assessment of the educational decision. In the second section, nine families were selected from the non-participants. Before receiving the educational recommendation, a guideline-based survey was conducted to find out their assessments of the school selection process. The data analysis took place according to individual, family, school or social aspects on the basis of the structuring content analysis according to Mayring (2015). After deriving an inductive-deductive category system, the statements made by the participants were related back to family decision-making and teacher assessment.

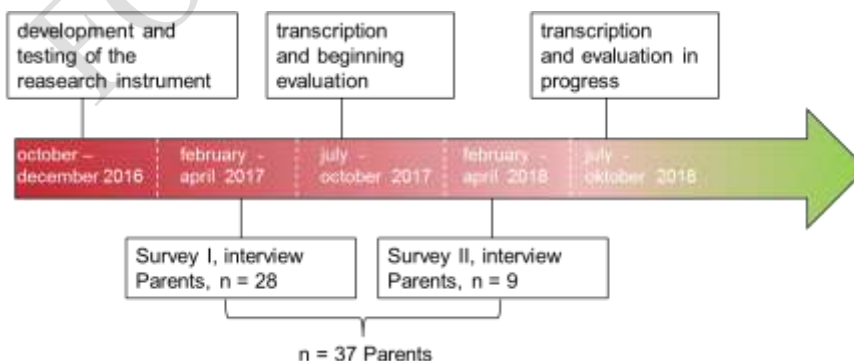
Figure 1. Research process Wiedenhorn study



Semmelroch-study: Research design (methodology)

The second study is also based on a dissertation project which, starting in October 2016, was carried out on two waves of interviews with parents of 5th grade pupils* from all types of schools in Baden-Württemberg in the district of Marktdorf/ Ravensburg, after the transition to lower secondary school had been completed. The participating parents (n = 37) were recruited directly at the schools for which they had decided to participate voluntarily in the study as part of the educational decision for the transition from primary school to lower secondary level. The study design is primarily of a qualitative nature and, by means of guideline-based interviews, is intended to capture the subjective view of parents and legal guardians of the reasons relevant to their decisions in the process of school selection in the newly reformed education system of Baden-Württemberg. In particular, the changed framework conditions of free school choice with simultaneous implementation of new or modification of existing school forms are at the centre of research interest. Taking the sociodemographic data into account, the parents were questioned about the formation of their educational decision, taking into account individual, family, structural and social aspects. The interviews were conducted for two survey periods, between February and April 2017 and 2018 respectively.

Figure 2. Research process Semmelroch study



In order to avoid monocausal effects in the transition of individual primary schools, parents of a total of 21 different primary schools were interviewed

about their subjective reasons, experiences and assessments. The interview guideline was structured thematically into four superordinate blocks, which can be presented with the following focal points:

1. The subjective justification of the respective school's (form) choice, taking into account specific school concepts within the framework of the systemic changes.
2. Parental (educational) aspirations, subjective cost and benefit expectations with regard to the newly reformed school types, taking into account performance-related and non-performance-related characteristics.
3. The subjective perception and evaluation of the transition situation from primary school to secondary school forms, including subjective assessment of the performance-related, school-based counselling and evaluation process.
4. Out-of-school, performance-independent influences on the formation of parental educational decisions, taking into account the social capital of parents and children.

The evaluation of the interviews is carried out by content analysis (Kuckartz 2016) according to an inductive-deductive category system. In addition to the content structuring qualitative content analysis, which should contribute to the identification of decision relevant topics, factors and mutual influences, in a further step a type forming qualitative content analysis would be conceivable to identify multidimensional patterns, which can contribute to a better understanding of the complex facts of parental educational decisions. In the course of the interview study, the sociodemographic data of the interviewed parents were collected. The factors that can thus be determined and possibly influence the choice of school can thus be taken into account as possible effect strengths in the course of the thematic analysis as well as in the course of a typifying content-analytical evaluation (cf. *ibid.*). The sociodemographic data can be used, among other things, to provide information on the level and composition of economic, cultural and social capital, from which a multidimensional stratum index can be formed taking into account income, educational status and occupational status. Other factors such as the number of siblings, ethnic origin, family language use, cultural equipment and practices, as well as the frequency and intensity of specific social contacts in the school environment of the children of the parents surveyed, on the other hand, allow further scope for interpretation which enriches the qualitative data and which often cannot be captured by the qualitative data alone. The evaluation of the interviews has not yet been completed at the time of publication of this article and should only be seen as a first descriptive summary of the case, which should lead us to expect further results.

Research Results

Results of the Wiedenhorn Study (Before the Education Reform)

The following findings are based on the data of the two studies presented. The Wiedenhorn study "Die Bildungsentscheidung aus Schüler-, Eltern- und Lehrersicht" was published in 2011 and is based on quantitative and qualitative data.

- 1) How are parental educational decisions formed before and after the reform of the education system in Baden-Württemberg?

For the pupils, parents and teachers surveyed in writing, the school transition was not a special event in 62% of the cases. The participating pupils and parents came to the same conclusion. Only one fifth of those affected attributed a critical salary to the transfer. An important indicator for assessing the choice of school form was the question as to whether the parents agreed with the primary school teacher's opinion on the choice of school. In the survey, more than 80% of the families agreed with the expected educational recommendation and consequently a high congruence with the school recommendation can be expected for the upcoming decision-making process.

- 2) How do parents justify their choice of school, for example in the case of alternative educational concepts that appear formally to be of equal importance?

From the written survey (before the education reform), over half of the interviewees can deduce an expected course with a high level of satisfaction on both the elite and the children's side. For pupils with an intermediate and higher achievement level, the transition to a grade-oriented school system is an obstacle, but with parental support they are able to overcome it without further problems. The decisive factor is the achievement rate achieved. On the parents' side, such an interpretation is of course supported by the high degree of agreement with the primary school teacher's assessment of the expected type of school. While parents weigh school and personal competences against each other in order to justify their interrelations in the educational decision-making process, primary school teachers almost exclusively refer in their decision to the school performance of the children (Wiedenhorn 2011, p. 301).

- 3) Which arguments underlie parental school decisions and which types can be identified?

"In most interviews, the family level played a subordinate role in deriving a decision motive. As the basis for the primary social effect of origin, it was only indirectly introduced by parents and pupils, but played a leading role as a reference standard for the primary school teachers involved. In the case of an ambiguous grade picture, the teachers went back to the family level by including the family support options as a criterion relevant to their decision in

the context of the educational recommendation. On the basis of the interviews, it was possible for the parents to form a type." (Wiedenhorn 2011, p. 302)

The evaluation of the interviews focused on the levels of argumentation that parents had included in their individual decision-making process. On the basis of eight selected interviews, a type was formed based on a critical designative, critical initiatives, mutual-conform or critical-downward justification of the educational decision (Wiedenhorn 2011, p. 298f.).

(Preliminary) Descriptive Findings of the Semmelroch Study (After the Education Reform)

Since the dissertation was not yet completed at the time of publication of this article, the following description of the preliminary results is based on the case summaries and preliminary, deductive categorical allocations of relevant passages of the interviews, which resulted from the initiating text work.

- 1) How are parental educational decisions formed before and after the reform of the education system in Baden-Württemberg?

The elimination of the mandatory transition recommendation for the transition from primary school to lower secondary level means that the transition decision is ultimately transferred to the responsibility of the parents, which parents sometimes perceive as a burden. The vast majority of parents therefore continue to rely on the teachers' assessment and recommendations, even if these are only of an advisory nature. In most cases, both the recommendation and the parental assessment are based on the school grades, whereby the primary effects of origin can be basically identified for the own investigation, even though this is not statistically usable due to the small number of cases in the qualitative data ($n = 37$). The quantitative data from the State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg, which were analysed in the course of the intended dissertation project, also provide evidence of the coupling of primary school recommendations and parental educational decisions. Almost 78% of the parents follow the primary school recommendation in their educational decision for the school year 2018/19.

Nevertheless, compared to the last school year with a binding recommendation for transition (2010/11), the proportion of parents who, in analogy to the primary school recommendation, chose a school (88%) fell by 10% points. In particular, there is the big difference that in the parental educational decisions, which deviate from the primary school recommendation, a higher school type than the recommended one was chosen (17.85%), which suggests the assumption that primary future effects can be deliberately cancelled out by the free parental choice of school. However, since the Baden-Württemberg Statistical Office does not collect socio-demographic data, this assumption remains speculative for the time being.

In the course of the interviews, parents often express concern as to whether decisions are made correctly by themselves or by other parents, which is reflected in the desire of the majority of parents surveyed to return to the binding transitional recommendation. In addition, implicit assumptions and

1 insinuations regarding the quality of individual school types are derived from
 2 this, which sometimes influence the choice of school. In the qualitative data,
 3 too, great importance is still attached to the school performance of the child,
 4 i.e. the school grades, in the decision making process and is frequently
 5 evaluated as an indicator for the transition decision. Deviations from the
 6 transition recommendation were small in the interviewed parents, if at all in a
 7 deviation to a lower school type than the recommended one. The avoidance of
 8 stress factors and the well-being of the child are put before the own decisions.
 9 However, it is not possible to assume that the choice of school has a secondary
 10 effect on the origin of the child, since the (higher) socio-economic status of
 11 these parents, analogous to the theoretical model, would have led one to expect
 12 different educational decisions.

- 13
 14 2) How do parents justify their choice of school, e.g. in the case of
 15 alternative educational concepts that appear formally to be of equal
 16 importance?
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18 Parents who have based their school choice on the traditional school types
 19 (Haupt-, Werkrealschule, Realschule and Gymnasium) often justify their
 20 school choice by a lack of confidence in the newly conceived community
 21 school, although at the time of the survey it had already been implemented in
 22 Baden-Württemberg for five years. The most frequent form of support here is
 23 aimed at open teaching methods, work and social forms, and less at the
 24 heterogeneous student body itself. In addition, there is a great distrust among
 25 parents of the school and personnel possibilities in the implementation of
 26 differentiated teaching and learning offers, which are intended to meet the
 27 demands of a highly heterogeneous student body. Those parents who opt for
 28 the newly conceived secondary schools, which are also aimed at a
 29 heterogeneous clientele of pupils, see the advantage of this traditional school
 30 form in clearer structures, which in the view of the parents school pupils with
 31 different levels of competence together, but in doing so clearly separate the
 32 different levels of competence from each other and prepare them specifically
 33 for different degrees. Parents whose children have received a recommendation
 34 for grammar schools
 35

- 36 3) What arguments underlie parental school decisions and what types can be
 37 identified?
 38

39 In addition to the school performance of the children, attributes that are
 40 often far removed from performance are often included as important for the
 41 decision-making process. These attributes are partly based on previous family
 42 experiences, but also on the personality traits and individual characteristics of
 43 the children. In the vast majority of cases, these are preceded by the
 44 performance-related school selection criteria, among other things also without
 45 exception in the case of downward school selection decisions. Thus the
 46 primary school recommendations are understood as orientation assistance
 47 and/or confirmation instance, on which building, the school choice, under
 48 consideration of child-referred characteristics, desires and conceptions, is

usually met in the inner circle of the family. In many cases, school counselling outside performance-related criteria is perceived as inadequate, which, according to parental narratives, is often reflected in passive recommendation behavior on the part of teachers, which focuses more on the mutual coordination of parental and school assessments than on counselling based on the respective child on the different concepts of the school forms of the middle education pathways in the lower secondary level that appear to be of equal formal importance. Parents resort to different strategies to compensate for missing or insufficient information from school counselling. In particular, public information events and open days are used as an opportunity to generate decision-relevant information together with the children. Parents thus take the free educational decision of their parents very seriously and sometimes invest a lot of time and effort in generating relevant information. However, since parental resources (time resources, mobility, cognitive resources) can be very different in terms of the acquisition and processing of such information due to the respective capital resources, this cannot be assessed uncritically and can be attributed to the secondary effects of the school choice decision.

Since the permeability of the German education system is assessed as a consistently positive factor, less the educational or vocational aspirations are described as primarily decision-guiding since there is a consistent assumption that every possible school-leaving qualification can be achieved through different educational pathways. The lines of argumentation accordingly follow other, more situational or conceptual decision factors that are oriented towards the welfare, wishes and characteristics of the child or are based on distrust of the reformed school types - above all the community school. Even though the segmentation of the German education system and the education system in Baden-Württemberg still exists, there is still some evidence of an effect which, contrary to the "explicit between school trackings" prototypical for the German education system (cf. Maaz et al. 2008), which is primarily selected according to performance-related criteria and leads to a particularly strong form of performance-related differentiation between the different school types, an increasing form of "implicit between school tracking" is emerging, in which above all the convictions of the parents contribute to the social differentiation of the student body in school forms that appear formally to be of equal rank..

Perspective

The two works presented allow a comparison of parental educational aspirations under changed systemic conditions. Based on the findings of the Wiedenhorn study, the following fields of knowledge can be identified:

The view of the individual choice with regard to the realized transition to school (type) showed a critical attitude on the part of the actors before the reforms. Families with a change to a lower secondary school did not see themselves involved in the transition. Four types of transition could be derived from the qualitative data, based on the limited decision-making process. Primary school teachers see mothers as the main decision-makers (67.2%), and parents often lack relevant information on the fit of child and school type after

1 school counselling. In uncertain transitional situations, primary school teachers
2 included the potential domestic support systems in their decision-making.

3 The systemic changes in the education system brought about by the reform
4 processes should be reflected in the formation of parental educational
5 decisions. Accordingly, the focus of the Semmelroch study focuses on the
6 influence of free parental choice and the newly implemented and modified
7 school forms in Baden-Württemberg on parental decision-making processes.
8 Preliminary findings, the evaluation of which has not yet been completed, point
9 to an interplay between the increased systemic complexity, uncertainties about
10 one's own or other children's free choice of school, and the desire for clearer,
11 traditional and familiar structures. The vast majority of the parents interviewed
12 argue for a binding, recommendation-bound transitional decision by primary
13 school teachers, for themselves or for other children in uncertain situations.
14 Parents clearly perceive their importance in the choice of secondary schools
15 and also very seriously, which is sometimes reflected in the high cost of
16 information procurement. The associated secondary origin effects of the
17 parental school choice decision should increasingly be put under observation in
18 future empirical studies. The same applies to school counselling in the course
19 of primary school recommendations, some of which are also associated with
20 the secondary origin effect of the school career recommendation.

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