

Barn som medforskare

– en metod med potential för delaktighet

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Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i etnologi, som med tillstånd från humanistiska fakultetsnämnden kommer att offentligen försvaras fredagen den 6 september kl. 13.00 i sal Vasa B, Institutionen för kulturvetenskaper, Vera Sandbergs Allé 8, Göteborg.



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Children's co-research

- a method with potentials for inclusion

The aim of the thesis is that from a critical perspective of power examine what happens when children are involved as co-researchers. It is based on a study in which children had the opportunity to explore issues of food and eating as they deemed relevant. 14 children aged eleven from two schools in the Gothenburg area participated. The meetings were held during school hours and were designed as food research clubs, where the children planned their research, conducted fieldwork and analysed the research results. At the end of the process they presented their research to others, both children and adults.

The co-research is examined from different perspectives: How does co-research work as a method in this study? What happens to the involved children's competences when they are involved as co-researchers? How is knowledge produced, and what kind of knowledge is produced, when children are involved in research? How can the knowledge of children as co-researchers be used and what does the future of children's involvement in research look like? The research process and its conditions are accounted for. The methods are in focus, so is the knowledge production. Children's competences, their research roles and subject positions are also analyzed from the concepts empowerment and governmentality.

To involve children in research as co-researchers is furthermore a question of their role in society as a whole and an expression of their citizenship. Children are frequently viewed as less important than adults, and their influence on public matters is often low. The ambition of this thesis is to challenge this perception, and provide alternatives to the way children and their rights are understood. The method is in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; participation in research can be viewed as a civil right of children.

This study confirms that children can conduct co-research, and that their contribution to the academic field is valuable. It also shows that their participation in research may increase their influence on matters that concern them, as well as it can amplify their roles in public life. At the same time the co-research can be regarded as a non-tailored process, with both complications and potentials. The study resulted in a methodological model for children's participation based on dialogue and supportive ambitions.

Keywords: Children, co-research, participation, governmentality, empowerment, methods, children's rights, food research, research clubs, citizenship, responsibility, adult, research roles, subject position, health.

214 pages. Language: Swedish with an English summary.

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