

De mest lämpade

– en studie av doktoranders habituering på
det vetenskapliga fältet

Anna Peixoto

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arbetsvetenskap,
som med tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid
Göteborgs universitet framläggs till offentlig granskning

Lördagen den 14 juni, klockan 10.15 i Torgny Segerstedtsalen,
Universitetsbyggnaden, Vasaparken

Fakultetsopponent: Docent Ann Bergman, Karlstad universitet

Abstract

Title: Survival of the fittest – A study of doctoral students' habituation on the scientific field

Language: Swedish with an English summary

Keywords: Doctoral students, Sweden, academia, reform, Bourdieu, habitus, habituation, capital, scientific field, doxa

ISBN: 978-91-981195-7-2

This thesis is about the university as a workplace. Essentially, it addresses postgraduate studies, doctoral students' work conditions, and how these students are schooled to become researchers. The overarching purpose of the thesis is, based on Sweden's 1998 reform of research education, to study the parameters of PhD students' working lives, their schooling as budding researchers in various subject areas, and their ways of handling the formal rules and tacit expectations of academia in relation to their own resources and assets. The theoretical framework for the thesis is Bourdieu's theory of capital and fields. The primary empirical basis is 15 interviews with PhD students in three subject areas, humanities, natural sciences and educational sciences, at the University of Gothenburg.

The analysis shows that the parameters of PhD students' work are characterised both by subject-specific doxa and by the formal rules associated with research education and the doctoral students' form of employment. The subject areas have diverging outlooks and basic assumptions regarding the aims and purpose of research education. The thesis also shows that politically initiated reforms are being interpreted and reshaped in relation to the values sustained by the scientific field itself. This generates a tension between different logics that are not always mutually compatible. The good intentions of the reform, to clarify research education, have thus rather created further grey zones between official edicts and informal demands. The doctoral students who can navigate among them successfully and, at the same time, stage their researcher role in the desired way, are the ones who are invited into the scientific field. It is they who are seen as *the fittest*.