

Institutionen för pedagogik, kommunikation och lärande

Extremisten i klassrummet
Perspektiv på skolans förväntade ansvar att
förhindra framtida terrorism

av

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

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Abstract

Title: The extremist in the classroom. Perspectives on the expected responsibility of the school to prevent future terrorism

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In this thesis the development of strategies and action plans for prevention of violent extremism (PVE) in the Swedish educational system is analysed. Sweden had its first national action plan for PVE-work adopted in 2011. Following this, various measures have been taken in order to increase the capacity of the educational system to play an active role in preventing violent extremism. In the action plan it is claimed that the point of departure for PVE-work in the educational system should be the democratic mission of the educational system, which should be combined with targeted efforts focusing risk groups in general and radicalized individuals in particular.

The thesis consists of four studies that shed light on issues that concern a) the relation between PVE-work and the democratic mission of schools, b) how professionals developing PVE-work interpret the rationale of PVE-work, and c) how, in this process, new roles and responsibilities for teachers are formulated and legitimized.

The first article analyses how PVE-programmes, compiled through the efforts of the European Union, are structured, what purposes they are expected to fulfill, and what consequences they imply for the roles and responsibilities of teachers. The second article investigates how a central policy document for Swedish PVE-work is compatible with current legislation and other frameworks regulating the Swedish educational system. The third article reports an interview study with professionals in various organizations, who are responsible for developing and implementing new PVE-strategies. The fourth article is an analysis of 127 local action plans formulated by Swedish municipalities in order to prevent violent extremism in the local community.

At a general level, the results show how two different discursive orders (the discourses of PVE and of the traditional democratic mission, respectively) are in partial conflict in contemporary society. Traditionally a core element of the democratic mission of education has been to secure that students are entitled to openly voice their opinions in class, even if they are intolerant or extremist. This discursive arena, of central importance for the reproduction of democratic values in society, now risks being converted into a space where teachers are expected to monitor the opinions of students, in particular so called vulnerable students. Intolerant or extremist views and arguments are coded as risk signals that may have to be reported to the police, even though no criminal offense has been committed, rather than as views that should be critically scrutinized and debated in open discussions in classrooms.