

Institutionen för pedagogik, kommunikation och lärande

Värsta bästa skolan

Om unga i förorten och
segregationen i skolan

av

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

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Abstract

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This thesis addresses education and schooling for youth in a disadvantaged neighbourhood in Gothenburg, Sweden. Over the last two decades or so we have seen an increasing difference in students' performance and background between schools in Sweden. Schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the metropolitan areas are affected the worst, and in some of these schools about half of the students lack upper secondary qualifications. This thesis builds upon data from one of these schools called Björkskolan.

The overall aim of this study is to investigate what it means to be a student at Björkskolan and what significance the school and education has for the students. The following questions are examined: How do schooling and education acquire meaning for the students? How do the students describe their own opportunities and limitations in relation to school and education, and what are the different student positions that emerge in everyday school life? How do teachers and students view the learning that occurs at the school and the conditions in which it takes place?

The study is based on ethnographic fieldwork that took place over a one-year period with students in 8th and 9th grade. Besides fieldnotes, interviews with students, teachers and school staff form the basis for the analysis. Theoretically, the thesis primarily draws from urban theory on territorial stigmatization and postcolonial influenced theories on difference and othering.

In summary, the results show how the students negotiate representations of their school and their neighbourhood, and how they create alternative representations that question the dominant perceptions. The teachers and school staff are, just like the students, affected by the structural conditions in the segregated city, and this has implications for teaching as well as other aspects of daily life and work in Björkskolan. Furthermore, the study demonstrates how the students position themselves as learning subjects in different ways, and that anti-school culture explanations for poor school results can neither be attributed to the girls or the boys. On the contrary, the students show a positive attitude towards education and identify strongly with the school.