Nya fritidspedagoger – i spänningsfältet mellan tradition och nya styrformer

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Akademisk avhandling

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Rektor vid Umeå universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt förvar i Hörsal N 320, Naturvetarhuset, fredagen den 1 mars, kl. 10:00. Avhandlingen kommer att förvaras på svenska.

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The aim of this study is to increase the knowledge and understanding of how leisure-time pedagogues’ professional identity is changed as a consequence of altered governance and resulting new tasks. More specifically the study is oriented towards understanding how external demands for quality accounts, assessments and documentation in leisure-time centers and schools, affect leisure-time pedagogues’ practice of their profession and professional identity, and how the leisure-time pedagogues relate to these demands. The empirical data are generated through interviews with 23 leisure-time pedagogues, 8 school leaders, document analyses, and a survey among 105 leisure-time pedagogues. The analysis draws on profession theories perspective and concepts like knowledge base, jurisdiction and discretion to understand what is central in the leisure-time pedagogues’ profession and in what direction the profession is developing: de-professionalization, professionalization or re-configuration. Bourdieu’s sociological theories with concepts of field, capital and habitus are also used for understanding of the leisure-time pedagogues´ positions, actions, and explicit relations to other professional groups. The results indicate dilemmas that the leisure-time pedagogues face related to far-going decentralisation, introduction of new public management, reduced resources, and closer links between leisure-time centres and schools. Working with traditional methods creates problems and it becomes hard to balance the work between leisure-time centre and school. The thesis shows that leisure-time pedagogues constantly conduct independent individual assessments that are mainly hidden. This has not been pointed out before but is linked to the leisure-time pedagogues´ professional identity. Assessment as an accounting task has on the other hand been added in connection with the transfer to the educational sector and altered forms of governance. Leisure-time pedagogues are both ambivalent and critical to these demands for transparency and accountability. Even though the leisure-time pedagogues are subjected to increased control and expected to work more with assessments in different forms, and are forced to reduce their professional work in leisure-time centres, we cannot entirely talk about de-professionalization. Also features of professionalization and signs of reconfiguration of the profession are visible. The thesis illustrates that the profession of leisure-time pedagogue is being reshaped and that the leisure-time pedagogues’ professional identity can be understood in different ways. The thesis also illustrates how a core of traditional knowledge base stands out as central for most of the professionals in the various professional identities that are found. The differences that are found are related to the local governance of schools’ organisation; to what extent the leisure-time pedagogues’ work is placed in the compulsory school day; and how strong the leisure-time pedagogues’ collective base is in the school unit.

**Keywords**
Leisure-time pedagogue, teacher in leisure-time centre, after-school activities, professional identity, informal assessment, accountability, new forms of governance.