

Ett liv i olika världar

Unga kvinnors berättelser om svåra livshändelser

Anneli Nielsen

Akademisk avhandling

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Rektor vid Umeå universitet för
avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt försvar i
Hörsal G, Humanisthuset,
fredagen den 27 mars, klockan 10.00.
Avhandlingen kommer att försvaras på svenska.

Fakultetsopponent: Docent, Carolina Överlien,
Institutionen för socialt arbete, Stockholms universitet.



Institutionen för tillämpad utbildningsvetenskap
Genusforskarskolan

Umeå universitet/Umeå University

Umeå 2015

Organization
Umeå University
Department of Applied
Educational Science

Document type
Doctoral thesis

Date of publication
27 march 2015

Author
Anneli Nielsen

Title
Living in different worlds. Young women's stories about difficult life events.

Abstract

Drawing upon data from a qualitative interview study on the life stories of young women, the aim of this study is to analyze young women's experiences of difficult life events. The young women were recruited to the study through leaders of a youth detention home and of a girl group activity. Methodologically, the thesis is based in the general field of narrative research and more specifically in the field of feminist life story research. I employed a holistic and thematic content analysis inspired by hermeneutic interpretation and the main focus has been on *what* was told in the stories. The thesis is written in a context of feminist epistemology and from a critical perspective. It includes, among other things, an assumption that there is a social, cultural and historically created imbalance of power between different groups in society.

The young women's stories about family gathered around experiences of parents' separation, family violence, parental substance abuse and the separation from parents. Their stories of school life gathered mainly around experiences of bullying, school difficulties and of being different and othered. In contemplation of life as a series of life events, the young women's stories highlight the importance of difficult life events and the impact they have had on their ability to live their lives. The results portray the importance of considering life as a series of moving events, instant and recurring, and of understanding the consequences of social structures on how life and its conditions change and are linked across borders, between different worlds and different times. In a consideration of the life events as variable, instantaneous and sometimes recurring and changing, every life event has to be viewed as new and important to pay attention to, both as an event in itself and also how this event spreads to other moments and contexts than the time and world in which it occurred. In the assumption of life as moving and of life events as essential elements in a changeable life course, available positions and spaces of agency are made visible in the young women's stories. The cultural frameworks of *the good family*, *the real schoolgirl* and *an authentic I* represent structuring principles for how the events are possible to understand and talk about for the young women. They can be considered as *ideal images* that both increase and limit their opportunities to make difficult life events and their own actions in relation to them understandable. In this thesis, it becomes visible that, in order to understand young women's experiences of difficult life events, we need to place experiences in a context where the different circumstances, such as social positions and local structures, are made visible, analyzed and reflected upon.

Keywords

Young women, life story, difficult life events, cultural frameworks, social worlds, otherness, belonging, agency, space of agency, social positions, school difficulties

Language
Svenska

ISBN
978-91-7601-221-5

ISSN
1650-8858

Number of pages
246