

Professionalization by academization among teachers, nurses and social workers

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A significant feature of our modern knowledge-based society is the gradual academicisation and professionalization of a growing numbers of occupations. This academicisation has lead to the establishment of profession-based university disciplines, with professors and doctoral education, in order to develop and reinforce a scientific base for professional practice and education. A crucial element in this process has been that professional practitioners are expected to seek admission to these doctoral programs, and thereby choose a career as a researcher. As a consequence, these researchers will have a key function in the development of the relations between research and professional practice, and will be an important prerequisite for science-based professional practice. The aim with this project is to describe, analyse and compare some common and central aspects of professionalization by academisation within three profession-research-complexes (teaching, nursing and social work), namely (1) the recruitment of researchers via PhD-education, (2) the socialisation from professional practitioner to researcher and member of faculty and research community, and their trajectories and further research activities. The theoretical frame of reference for this project contains elements and concepts from theory of professions, theory of science and sociology of science. The project combines different research methods. In this paper the results are presented from a survey aimed at everyone who has an academic degree as a teacher, nurse or social worker and who has written a doctoral dissertation in pedagogics/education/didactics, nursing or social work at a Swedish university or university college between 1990 and 2012, over 1000 persons. In the results different degree of freedom when it comes to choice of subject matter, research methods and theories are discussed. Also the differences in trajectories in relation to the professional field, where for instance nurses with a PhD has a stronger link to professional practice than social workers.