

# The citizen and the marketplace

## Pedagogical discourse for public libraries

Bosse Jonsson

### Akademisk avhandling

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### Abstract

The public libraries in Sweden were founded about 100 years ago. Because societal conditions have changed considerably since then it is interesting to examine the extent to which views about public libraries have changed among the libraries' main actors. The aim of the study is to illuminate how decision makers of public libraries, i.e. senior librarians and politicians responsible for the public libraries apprehend ideas about the function of public libraries.

The procedure is inspired by critical discourse analysis and discourse psychology. The purpose is to illuminate how the discourse that is expressed by the decision makers in their life world is reflected in discourses of society. A pedagogical discourse is discerned where the decision makers ascribe themselves a *self-image* as *passive inflators*. The *attitude* is that their task is to arrange a setting in a way that makes it possible for visitors of the public library to find what they were expecting at the library. *The hope* is that visitors shall be inspired by the arrangement of the setting to make themselves participating citizens in the democratic society. The discourses in society that are found in the past and present are considered as the conditions of possibilities of the pedagogical discourse. The most important conditions are the ideal of self-education (självbildning), criticism of the concept of education (bildning), the basic assumptions of free market economy and the liberal idea of democracy. These conditions of possibilities share an individualised view of man.

The function of the pedagogical discourse is that it subjectivates its interpreters, i.e. the decision makers. It is also an expression of how people are governed in the contemporary welfare state. The visitors shall learn to learn how to be a responsible citizen by their own means. The function of society is restricted to make this possible.

**Key words:** public libraries, pedagogy, adult education, popular adult education, discourse, pedagogical discourse, governmentality

Department of Behavioural Sciences  
Linköpings universitet, SE-581 83 Linköping, Sweden

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