

31.3.2026

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**Title**

Research(er) at home : auto/ethnography of my PhD / Kamila Benová

**Publication year**

2014

**Source/Footnote**

In: European journal of higher education. - 4 (2014) 1, S. 55 - 66

**Inventory number**

36028

**Keywords**

Ausland : Slowakei : Forschung, Hochschullehrer ; Ausland : Slowakei : Studenten, Studium, Lehre ; Promotion : allgemein

**Abstract**

This article deals with the PhD phase of tertiary higher education (in Slovakia), which is here considered as the specific phase of the academic career. It tries to answer the question: what is the PhD, in the context of research, theoretically and methodologically approached as a critical ethnography of higher education. It is focused on the linking epistemological (feminist standpoint) and methodological (autoethnography) background; while the analysis 'tells' the autoethnographic 'PhD story' of the author, the part-time PhD student and the university researcher at the same time, the storyteller and the member of a researched PhD community. The bottom-up perspective aims to the empowerment of the doctoral community, as well as the author herself. The author tries to identify her own situatedness, according to the research and the PhD studies, through recognizing roles and positions, and describe the trajectory of her own academic career. Finally, the article tries to demonstrate, how distant the policy from everyday reality can be. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)