

Helsingin yliopisto - Helsingfors universitet - University of Helsinki

Tiedekunta-Fakultet-Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Laitos-Institution-Department Department of Social Studies	
Tekijä-Författare-Author Kortelainen, Tina Helena Katrin			
Työn nimi-Arbetets titel-Title "IN EVERYONE'S BEST INTEREST?" Kinship Discourses Surrounding Adoption in Finland:			
Oppiaine-Läroämne-Subject Sociology: Social and Cultural Anthropology			
Työn laji-Arbetets art-Level Master's thesis	Aika-Datum-Month and year 2010-01-18	Sivumäärä-Sidantal- Number of pages 90	
<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>This thesis examines some of the ideals and values associated with family in the context of adoption in Finland, and takes a look at how normative conceptions such as these come into being. The discussion is based on material collected through ethnographic fieldwork including public information sessions held for people interested in adoption and interviews with staff members at adoption agencies.</p> <p>The analysis has been divided into two parts. Firstly, I explore the regulations that govern the adoption process in Finland and ask where it is that decision-making power lies. The adoption system is presented as an example of Foucault's view that modern society does not have one centre of power from which it is steered but control rather happens through infinite smaller and larger channels and processes. Some central decision-makers that dominate the power dynamics at work can nevertheless be identified and are discussed here. Secondly, this thesis asks how adoption, family and kinship are talked about in Finland and the discourses surrounding adoption thereby remain the central object of study. The discussion identifies the dictum "the best interest of the child" as the central logic governing discourse on adoption and looks at how this brings about a discourse of "warning" and a discourse of "risk" and permeates a discourse of "understanding". The way in which the slogan is furthermore used as an instrument of concealment is also discussed, and the saddening reality of the hierarchy in adoptive children, which is rationalised through a discourse governed by terms of supply and demand and market forces, comes into focus.</p> <p>Most importantly, this thesis wishes to explore the political significance of the power dynamics and the complex set of discourses characterising the adoption process in Finland. Contrary to an overarching discourse of "equality" that claims everyone is treated equally in Finland, the adoption process is marked by an inequality that "labels" applicants as "suitable" or "unsuitable" as adoptive parents. Those considered "unsuitable" are openly discriminated against on the basis of their age, health or sexual orientation, while the system proclaims not only the right to discriminate, but the importance of doing so. By asking the question whether adoption in Finland is "in everyone's best interest", this thesis wishes to deconstruct and criticise underlying discourses of power.</p>			
<p>Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords</p> <p>adoption kinship power discourse inequality</p>			
Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information			