

Negotiating Belonging

Social Inclusion and Finnish Rainbow Parent

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Abstract:

The thesis addresses questions concerning social inclusion and rainbow parenting in contemporary Finland. In particular, the thesis discusses how normativities in levels of culture and structure are maintained, and analyses the restrictions that continue to conceptualise hegemonic notions of family in Finnish society. Key conceptualisation of family as an institution of public interest in this thesis is founded upon the works of Janet Carsten, Kath Weston and Judith Butler. The data comprises of 4 ethnographic interviews with rainbow parents, complemented by discussions and observations with individuals who in everyday life counter questions concerning rainbow family and equality. Data obtained online consists of press releases and statements by activist organisations, media reports and Finnish legislation. Rainbow parents comprise of highly heterogeneous individuals, who negotiate their status as a homosexual or lesbian parent in individualistic ways. The thesis argues that by assigning civic rights according to predefined categories of belonging, such as marriage and gendered parenting, the society fails its claim of universal welfare. In its limited scope the thesis seeks to problematize different ways in which equality, social inclusion and family are conceptualised in the experiences of rainbow parents

Keywords: rainbow parent, Finland, social inclusion, sexual citizenship, normativity,

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Introduction

Initial inspiration for this thesis was sparked by the preliminary parliamentary debate concerning equal marriage law in Finland that took place 20.2.2014. The proposed law intends to overturn existing legislation on registered partnership by replacing it with marriage law that secures equal rights and duties with heterosexual and homosexual married couples (Tahdon 2013). The proposal is founded upon a civil initiative, organised by Tahdon2013-campaign that seeks equal rights for registered couples in Finland. It was passed in the Finnish Parliament in November 2015 by 105/92 votes, and suggests that the law will come into effect in March 2017 (Yle: Eduskunta äänesti sukupuolineutraalin avioliittolain puolesta, 2014).

Whilst following the preliminary debate, I had a naïve realisation that in the Finnish parliamentary discourses, some voices actively undermine equal rights of sexual and gender minorities in spheres of marriage and family in contemporary Finland. During the parliamentary debate, marginalisation of rainbow families in structural and cultural levels came to my consciousness for the first time. Berkowitz (2009) notes that by disrupting the silence of normative kinship in the level of society, rainbow family brings forth family as heterosexually bound category.

The preliminary approach intended for the thesis was to explore whether rainbow families encounter discriminative discourses with public services and to analyse how the state as a power apparatus, approaches families that differ from the heterosexual, legally and biologically connected nuclear family in everyday life. However, as the project developed, I came to understand that isolating experiences that involve only the state and public services from wider perception of social inclusion and equality is not reasonable approach in anthropological study that seeks a holistic analysis over the interconnectedness of different phenomena. During my encounters with the participants and professionals who operate with rainbow families I understood that perception of social inclusion goes beyond the encounters with public services. Therefore I have incorporated notion of heteronormativity in the thesis in order to analyse how predefined conceptualisations of normalcy contribute towards experiences of rainbow parents and the identification processes of parents in relation to the family. In reference, the thesis explores how normativity is produced in institutional levels and how cultural expectations and structural limitations contribute in tactics of parenting within rainbow families. Particular attention is paid to questions of gender and parenting and partnering and parenting as processes governed by the institutional and cultural discourses. The overall research question that guides the thesis follows:

- How is the notion of family conceptualised among rainbow parents and what are the experiences that contribute in the self-identification of rainbow parents as equal or unequal citizens in Finland?

As a student coming from the anthropological discipline with specific focus in peace and conflict research, my academic interest lies broadly in questions of social conflict, structural violence and egalitarianism. In the abovementioned frame, Johan Galtung's theory of positive peace as absence of structural violence is particularly relevant (1969).

'The absence of structural violence is what we have referred to as social justice, which is a positively defined condition (egalitarian distribution of power and resources). Thus, peace conceived this way is not only a matter of control and reduction of the overt use of violence, but of what we have elsewhere referred to as vertical development' (ibid. 183)

For Galtung, the aforementioned concept of positive peace is essential branch of peace research as is the notion of negative peace that connotes the absence of personal violence. According to the approach of Galtung, peace research simultaneously seeks to promote the two equally important domains: social justice and end of physical violence. As already noted, this thesis discusses social justice with reference to rainbow family, equality and boundaries of belonging in contemporary Finland.

Basok et al. (2006) define social justice briefly as 'equitable distribution of fundamental resources and respect for human dignity and diversity, such that no minority group's life interests and struggles are undermined' (ibid. 267). In relation, the authors refer to the concept of citizenship as closely affiliated with political, civil and social rights that span beyond the scope of nation-state to the various bodies of contemporary governance. In essence, Basok et al. argue that the principles governing human rights have emerged as the universal code of citizenship rights, in social environment where governance and citizenship are longer confined to nation-state.

Social justice and structural framework of civic rights are discussed in this thesis with reference to normative social structure that sustains boundaries of belonging among homosexual and lesbian parents. As an empirical starting point, the thesis addresses rainbow parent as an active subject who negotiates existing cultural and structural norms in individualized manner in relation to one's sexual identity and family life.

Berkowitz (2009) reviews existing scholarly work of rainbow families in recent literature of kinship and identity. For Berkowitz, analysis of gay and lesbian parenting enables the conceptualisation of identity work in practice. Rather than addressing identity as static and bound category of identification, the author highlights a viewpoint by which identities are always in intersection, and where existing social and cultural norms and institutions are actively negotiated in relation to individual's changing life situations. The findings of this study will demonstrate that the levels in which a parent identifies as 'marginal' or 'equal' can correspond to one's judicial status as a parent and relationship status. For example, in cases where the social parent is not in a romantic relationship with the legal parent, the social parent identifies more as 'marginal' than in the cases where social parent is romantically involved and cohabits with the legal parent of the child. Hence, rather than identifying with predefined categories of belonging, identities of rainbow parents are fluid and change according to the individual's changing life situations.

For Berkowitz, feminist approach of family studies has provided that scholarly work is increasingly concerned to analyse how relations of power are evident in the 'everyday worlds' (ibid. 118) of individuals and networks. Her recent work of family studies that explore rainbow parenting conceptualise various experiences of doing family in micro-level of people's reality. The author refers to the process of developing a symbolic reality to describe how individuals who fall outside normative expectations construct and negotiate their identities in everyday interaction in individualised manners.

In this thesis Berkowitz' analysis of symbolic reality is a useful tool to describe some of the challenges that relate to doing family among Finnish rainbow families. Underlying frustration that derives from the lack of institutional support and the absence of predefined models for doing family are common themes in the rhetoric of rainbow parents interviewed for the thesis. By challenging the normative expectation of what family looks like, doing rainbow family is a process that illuminates naturalised boundaries of kinship in contemporary society.

As argued by Berkowitz, heteronormativity operates as a form of social control that produces and sustains existing power structure by defining categories of belonging and acceptability. Queer theory asks how categories of identification are created and how heteronormative social structure is maintained. Underlying Berkowitz' narrative is a Foucauldian conceptualisation of governance, whereby behaviour is regulated through discourses, both institutional and cultural that produce docile bodies, who act according to the dominant discourse(s) of doing family (ibid.).

While this thesis does not refer to queer theory as such, it borrows from the Foucauldian approach by asking how governance, as a predefined socio-cultural expectation of parenting and doing family is influential to the everyday experience of a rainbow parent. Furthermore the thesis discusses how rainbow parents negotiate the binary of homo- and heterosexual categories argued by Berkowitz as exceptionally actual in reference to kinship and family. Gender, as a category of identification, is addressed in reference to the discourse of gendered parenting roles of mother and father.

The thesis applies theories from anthropological kin studies, as conceptualised by contemporary authors such as Ladislav Holy, Janet Carsten and Kath Weston to bring forth contemporary conceptualisations of kinship in anthropological discipline. The proposition put forth in this thesis is of Finnish rainbow family as a dynamic and heterogenous category. This is further mirrored to the discourse on normativity –and heteronormativity through works of Diane Richardson and Suraya Monro, Brandon Robinson and alike to analyse some of the complexities that emerge when doing family departs from the external expectation of what family looks like. To conceptualise how notions such as gendered parenting and partnering and parenting demonstrate the boundaries of idealised family, works by authors such as Yvette Taylor and Judith Butler are brought under analysis.

In the following chapter, the thesis attempts to contextualise the research field and present the reader with methodological analysis to demonstrate the anthropological processes that laid the foundation of the master's thesis.

1. Ethnographic Research Method in Study of Finnish Rainbow Family

This chapter conceptualises the research field and establishes methodological processes of Master's thesis transparent to the reader. The following pages demonstrate how key concepts of ethnographic research were applied in the field among Finnish Rainbow Families and how the research evolved throughout the fieldwork period. To begin with, the research field in question is mapped, followed by an analysis of ethnographic methods as they are utilised to conceptualise the research data. Moreover the chapter analyses how ethnographic processes have contributed to the overall research outline and shaped the questions that the thesis seeks answers to.

1.1.Contextualising the Research

Laura Huttunen (2008) points out that the knowledge produced in ethnographic texts is inevitably related to time when it is obtained and place(s) where the research is taking place. While contemporary field is concerned with socio-political relations that are necessarily no longer fixed to physical localities, ethnographic field is nevertheless embedded in the time-space nexus. As such, a good analysis of ethnographic data requires its contextualisation to the wider circumstances that contribute to the nature of ethnographic data. In the following section, the thesis will establish how the research fits in the wider discourse that deals with Finnish rainbow family in recent literature.

In Finland, both academic and advocacy literature that addresses the question of rainbow family has grown during the recent years. Master's dissertations have been conducted in the field of law and parenting (Nadja Hopponen 2014, Hanna Kaisa Heikkilä 2013) in the field of adoption services (Mirja Korkala 2014), and homosexual parenting (Juha Jämsä 2005). Anna Moring's doctoral dissertation from 2013 analyses the discourses concerning rainbow family in contemporary society. Furthermore, there is an increasing amount of literature to guide professionals operating with rainbow parents. The growing analysis of rainbow families in level of academic and professional suggests that increasingly, rainbow parents are included in discourses that recognise their existence in a society. (Juha Jämsä 2008, Paula Kuosmanen and Juha Jämsä 2007).

The organisations who work with rainbow families that were contacted for the purpose of the study were conscious that especially among university students, experiences of rainbow

parents in different services are explored more in the current climate. Simultaneously, questions concerning the inequality of rainbow families gain wider attention, as demonstrated for example in the cumulative advocacy work by organisations working for child welfare (MLL: sateenkaariperheiden lasten oikeuturvasta huolehdittava, 2014), family welfare (monimuotiset perheet: poliittiset tavoitteet, 2015) and human rights (ihmisoikeusliitto: hallitus hylkää sateenkaariperheet, 2014).

According to Statistic Finland, rainbow family is a category where at least one of the parents identifies is within sexual or gender minority. This thesis looks at the Finnish rainbow family with reference to families where parents' identify as lesbian or homosexual. Statistics Finland estimates that approximately 5-15 per cent of the Finnish population self-identify with a gay, lesbian or bisexual identity. According to the statistics, in 2013, 4500 individuals within these identities lived in a registered partnership. 68 % per cent of the partnerships are registered between women and according to the Statistics Finland, registering of female partnerships peaked simultaneous to the legislative change that enabled internal adoption of children between registered partners. (Tilastokeskus: Sateenkaariperheet tuovat väriä tilasoihin 2013).

Juha Jämsä (2008) points that despite rainbow family as relative new category of identification, the number of rainbow families is rapidly growing. In the absence of census data, Jämsä estimates that thousands of children live in rainbow families in present day Finland. Traditionally single parent- and blended families have been the most common form of rainbow family, whereby the children of the family are conceived in the biological parent's prior the heterosexual relationship. Increasingly however, nuclear families with two mothers and multi-parent arrangements are contributing to the formation of Finnish rainbow families. The family registration centre of Finland only recognises families where the two parents have registered their partnership and as a result a spectrum of families is excluded from the statistics. Jämsä argues that the discourse of family in Finland assumes nuclear family as a standard and all other family forms such as single- and multi-parent- as well as blended families are structurally and culturally posited as secondary.

In her doctoral dissertation, Anna Moring (2013) points out that increasing pressure to recognise the status of Finnish rainbow families brings attention to the heteronormative assumptions that continue to influence family legislation in contemporary Finland. Jämsä (2008) argues that whilst rainbow family is a dynamic category open for various arrangements, lack of cultural model and judicial insecurity are common characteristics of a spectrum of rainbow families, since the normative expectation assumes heterosexuality as the basis of family life.

Moring (2013) discusses the potential ambiguities that concern with normative society and Finnish rainbow family as assuming two levels. One emerges from the necessity to challenge and renegotiate the existing structural conceptualisations of family by the rainbow families. The other relates to the everyday life of family members who, in differing levels contradict the normative assumption in level of cultural and as a consequence redefine their kin relations in individualised ways. Continuous renegotiation of kinship is an element of stability within rainbow families, according to Moring. The ambiguity between structural expectation and domestic reality may emerge when everyday life of a rainbow family does not correspond to the legislative, hegemonic assumption of doing family. The author notes that legislation is influential tool in so far that it materialises societal conceptualisations that concern parenting and kinship.

According to Moring, Finnish rainbow family in public rhetoric seeks societal recognition by adapting to the hegemony of heterosexual nuclear family. For example, in relation to social order and legislation, the author argues that in Finland, the call for equal marriage is a demand that is presented as “normative enough” to gain structural acknowledgement.

In contrast, the author points that for example judicial recognition of more than two parents per child is left outside the public debate as a condition that is not attainable in the existing normative reality. Moring notes that the state can nevertheless partly recognise those arrangements that are not consolidated fully. For example, the judicial appointment of guardian is an arrangement that structurally recognises adult-child relationship in cases where legal parenting is unavailable option for families. Moring notes that the judicial status of rainbow families is ‘unclear, situational and complex in legislative terms’ (ibid. 193). The central question put forth by the author is whether rainbow families should seek recognition within the existing normative structural framework. This question is further problematized in parts 3 and 4 of this thesis.

Moring (2013) notes that public perspective that does not exclude homosexuality and kinship as mutually contradicting categories is fairly young in Finland. Consequently the category of rainbow family is not predefined in, but continues to be negotiated according to individual circumstances and arrangements. The author argues that in the rhetoric of Finnish rainbow family, normative assumptions of heterosexual nuclear family are simultaneously reproduced and challenged. Texts that concern rainbow families criticise heteronormative structures, which complicate family making processes. Simultaneously they exclude a discussion of different factors which may interfere with

the family making processes such as medical infertility or financial inequality to access the private fertility clinics. For Moring the silence concerning medical infertility is the norm and lesbian and gay identities are assumed as childless where wish for reproduction is presented as the exception.

At the time of writing this thesis there is no written ethnographic study that deals with rainbow families in contemporary Finland. The thesis seeks to further the discussion concerning subjective perspectives of rainbow parenting in Finland as experienced by the participants of the study to complement the existing work that deal with family legislation and public discourses dealing with rainbow families.

The thesis will present four key participants: Maija is a biological mother of a 6 month old baby living in a domestic partnership with her female spouse. Saara is a biological mother of three sons aged 9, 11, 14, who has publicly identified as a lesbian parents after her divorce from heterosexual marriage. Kristiina is a social parent and unofficially shares the custody of her 14 year old daughter with her ex-spouse. Pete is living in a multi parent family with his current male spouse, ex-wife and their biologically connected 11 year old daughter. Maija and Saara were contacted through Pirkanmaan SETA's Rainbow Family group, Kristiina was contacted through personal acquaintance and Pete was contacted through the Finnish Rainbow Family Association.

Moreover than the ethnographic interviews, the thesis relies on data retrieved from desktop research and interaction with representatives of associations who work with rainbow families. The data retrieved online includes an overview of family welfare services provided by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, (hereafter Kela). As documented by the institution, its role involves development, implementation and communication concerning the welfare of citizenry. The organisation claims its commitment to cooperation, renewal and expertise in the sector of welfare. As documented in Kela's website

‘Kela's mission is to secure the income and promote the health of the entire nation and to support the capacity of individual citizens to care for themselves’ (Kela: Operations).

Rainbow Family Association was included in the study as a civil society actor that claims itself as a nationwide trustee of children and parents in rainbow families (Sateenkaariperheet: Yhdistyksen esittely). As a member organisation of SETA, the human rights organisation for LGBT- groups in Finland, Rainbow Family Association cooperates with other civil society actors and promotes equal rights of children who live in non-normative family arrangements, such as Monimuotoiset

perheet, a network of ten associations whose focus groups depart from the normative assumption (Monimuotoiset perheet: Verkosto). Moreover, child welfare organisations that lobby for the recognition of multiple family forms were included in to an extent that they have published statements relevant to the research question. The thesis also brings attention media reports that are considered relevant to demonstrate elements of public discourse that deal with public conceptualisations of rainbow family.

1.2 Ethnographic practice

For Anna Rastas, (2010) ethnographic field relates to group, culture or institution that the ethnographer seeks to analyse as inclusively as possible. Huttunen (2010) discusses contemporary ethnographic field in a more abstract way and sees it as a sphere that actualizes through social relations – and interactions.

The ethnographic field explored in this thesis comprises of rainbow families in contemporary Finland. Rather than focusing on fixed locality, the thesis seeks to interpret how rainbow parents whose family arrangements are not legitimized by marriage or registered partnership negotiate their social identities in relation to the legal and cultural realities that influence their everyday experiences of doing family.

As an analytical starting point, the thesis addresses rainbow family as a unit where structures of belonging are not defined primarily by substance (blood) and conduct (law) (i.e. Carsten 2003). Neither is the organization of kin relations explainable by the notions of love and solidarity alone (i.e. Weston 1991). Rather, the thesis argues that kin-relations in rainbow families under study actualize in the negotiation between parent's social identity and the narratives concerning with the best interest of the child.

In relation to rainbow families, Moring (2013) brings forth the complexity of the rhetoric that concerns the best interest of the child. According to the author the signifiers for child's best interest in legislative terms in contemporary Finland are open for interpretation. Stable development, welfare and continuous relationships, opportunity for affection and care, education, safety and respect are among characteristics that concern the legislation of child's best interest. The author points out that the discourse on child's best interest is open to wider debates concerning children's- and human rights.

Moring notes that the cultural ideals concerning one shared home and parenting as a gendered process cannot simultaneously actualise in rainbow families. Hence the rainbow parents' conceptualisation of child's best interest inevitably in conflicts the normative assumption.

Through the fieldwork process the prioritisation of stable adult-child relationship through changing life situations guides the discourse where, rather than emphasising rights of a parent to the child, child's right to consistent relationship with her/ his parent is underlined. In the cases where legislation fails to secure child's equal right to the social parent, the state is perceived to disregard the best interest of children who live in rainbow families. Experience of inequality emerges when the structural definition of child's best interest contradicts with the reality of rainbow families.

Ulf Hannertz (2003) describes changing nature of ethnographic fieldwork. While traditionally anthropological discipline was concerned with the ethnographer situated in the location of research over course of long time periods, contemporary ethnographer is increasingly operating in a multi-local environment where research field is no longer situated in one fixed locality. Also, institutional changes regarding for example an increasing number of anthropologists and limited resources available to carry out fieldwork contribute to evolving methods of anthropological data collection. In addition to ethnographic interviews and participant observation, ethnographic data may be complemented by email-correspondence, observations from popular culture, media and official documents, as noted to Hannertz.

This thesis acknowledges research locality implicitly as the normative socio-political and cultural environment in which families operate in their everyday lives. The data collected concerning structurally acknowledged kinship comprises of Finnish legal definitions of family (www.kela.fi, www.tilastokesus.fi, www.finlex.fi). Structural definitions and conditions of Finnish family are analysed jointly with data retrieved from websites and press releases by network and associations that deal with questions of rainbow family (www.monimuotoisetperheet.fi, www.sateenkaariperheet.fi, www.mll.fi). The websites, press releases and articles were included to demonstrate how different conceptualisations of family employ the rhetoric of best interest of the child in support of legislation inclusive of different family arrangements.

Liisa Malkki (2007) refers to anthropology as an interdisciplinary practice, where commitment to ethnographic research methods constitutes the core of disciplinary strength. Furthermore Jeffrey Sluka and Antonio Robben (2012) describe fieldwork process as a central element of cultural and

social anthropology. For the authors, participant observation constitutes the core of fieldwork as it provides an opportunity to analyse the phenomenon under study beyond clinical, predefined criteria by the researcher, rather focusing analysis on how meanings are constituted in everyday interactions within the research field. In short, ethnographic research can be defined as a 'process of recoding and interpreting another people's way of life' (ibid. 7). Commitment to ethnographic fieldwork as a method provides the most comprehensive qualitative data concerning social relations, and - structures is a central element of anthropological work.

Charlotte Aull Davies (2001) describes ethnographic process as unique particularly since the research depends on the social interaction between the researcher and participants in the ethnographic field. The author argues that social identities of informants contribute to the research and therefore data obtained in interactions with participants must be understood not as general knowledge concerning the research field but rather 'as indicative of its characteristics' (ibid. 78). Malkki (2007) furthermore argues that ethnographer's personhood contributes to the data of ethnographic process since social interaction is a definitive characteristic of ethnographic fieldwork. Ability to improvise and sensitivity to the environment are important characteristics of a fieldworker who collects data. For the author, anthropologist in the field is always engaged in social relations that guide the research process. Rather than 'discovering' reality, research data is produced in doing, and hence ethnographic knowledge is in its multiplicity 'active construction by the researcher' (ibid. 180).

Social interaction with the participants contributed in the nature of the thesis in so far that the conversations held brought forth relevancies that were initially excluded from the study plan. Letting the participants freely express their experiences was influential in broadening the research question. For example, after the theme of grandparents' acceptance was recurring in the conversations with participants let me believe that the question of inter-generational conflict was significant in the experience of rainbow parents and contributed to the identification of rainbow family. Subsequently an approach that considers natal family's influence in the identification process of rainbow parents was incorporated in the thesis.

As emphasized by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997), in the core of ethnographic fieldwork is participant observation that is distinctive to anthropological discipline. The authors refer to participant observation for its capacity to produce naturalised knowledge, whereby research data does not result from preset research criteria of the researcher. Instead an anthropological

knowledge is produced through direct observation and engagement with the participants, which can be further complemented by materials obtained from other sources. Aull Davies further points out that ethnographer can to differing degrees assume the role of observer or participant in different stages of the research. For Aull Davies (2001), participation has been applied as a measure of quality in fieldwork, since participation normally assumes that the researcher has accepted within the field. On the other hand, the capacity to observe the research field provides the researcher with reflexive distance to critically evaluate the research field and researchers subjective positioning within it.

David Mills and Richard Ratcliffe refer to ethnographer practicing field research as equipped with 'a license to explore the curious, the messy, and the unexpected' (2010, 147). The authors note that contemporary ethnography is increasingly concerned with notions of multi-locality, whereby attention to various sites and curiosity to different perspectives allows the ethnographer most efficiently to seize different relevancies of the research field. Mills and Ratcliffe point to the importance of 'understanding and following the networks and connections that shape the social' (ibid. 154) in ethnographic research. As ethnographic research field develops from single- to multi-sited direction, anthropological participants are fewer in number and provide more insight to the research question than in single-located fieldwork, where the researcher deals with greater number of informants situated in the specific locality of research field. As a consequence, the authors argue, contemporary ethnographic knowledge is increasingly 'co-constructed' (ibid.) with the participants of the research.

Another defining element of ethnographic fieldwork is collection of empiric data that is analysed in order to formulate a holistic understanding of the field. According to Huttunen (2010), data obtained in ethnographic interviews may provide the researcher with central element in conceptualising rich material that contributes to the ethnographic analysis. Huttunen points that ethnographic research question is not a static inquiry but rather a fluid header that can alter throughout the research process. A documented diary where various observations from the ethnographic field are collected is hence a valuable reference in the process of data analysis. Robert Emerson et al. (2011) furthermore discuss the process of documenting observations during ethnographic fieldwork. As the ethnographer seeks to make sense of the ethnographic field in all its complexity, authors (i.e. Huttunen 2010, Emerson et al. 2011) highlight the importance of documenting observations even if they initially appear as indifferent in terms of the research question.

Documentation of observations that did not at the outset seem relevant became essential as the ethnographic process for the thesis proceeded. For example, accounts regarding a participant's approach to different movements among homosexual identities in Finland seemed irrelevant when the assumed focus of the research was to map out public services' influence in experiences of lesbian and homosexual parenting. However, the observation turned out as an important remark after the recognition that questions of normativity and sexual citizenship are significant conceptual categories to include in an analysis of kinship, homosexuality and equality in contemporary Finland.

Ethnographer collects plentiful data in the field from which she can later extract patterns and regularities for analysis. As such to communicate to the people involved that they are participating in ethnographic research is of central moral and ethical importance (Emerson et al. 2011). In reference, all participants of the study as well as the NGOs that I was in contact with were communicated clearly about the purpose of the study. The names of the participants have been changed in order to protect participants' privacy. Furthermore the data collected from online sources are publicly available information that does not interfere with questions of individual privacy. The data from the field was collected by mixed methods both by note taking and by audio recording. Three interviews were recorded and later transcribed to texts while the jottings during participant observation and interviews were expanded in writing **right** following the meetings.

1.3 Collection of Data and Improvisation in the Field

I approached the ethnographic process as a master's student, a heterosexual unmarried woman, with no children. Many of the topics touched upon in discussions were related to the experience of parenting and partnering in Finnish society. While it is speculative, I can imagine that the nuances of conversations might have been different had I been able to reflect upon my own experiences of parenting in contemporary Finland. Similarly my relationship status and sexual identity might be influential in terms of guiding the conversations and how the social interactions developed. As I embarked the field with no prior experience of doing rainbow family, I started the ethnographic research with the somewhat exotic stranger.

In the start of the process I contacted the Finnish Rainbow Family Association (hereafter FRFA), who were able to forward an announcement calling for participants in the association's Facebook page and add the announcement in the monthly newsletter that the association sends to its

members via email. I first came to know about the association when I initially started to familiarise myself with Finnish rainbow families in public services through a publication commissioned by the ministry of employment in 2007 named *Finnish Rainbow Services in Social Welfare and Health Care Services and Schools*. FRFA, which was established in 1996 is the leading association that operates as a national interest group as well as an organisation that provides activities, information and peer support to Finnish rainbow families. From the website of the association I learned about a training events directed at professionals in public services who work with rainbow families and events aimed at rainbow parents and individuals planning to start a family. The events were organised also in Tampere with cooperation of Pirkanmaan SETA and I was able to attend the events therein and approach the organisers, speakers and participants during and after the events.

I was also able to get the announcement for interviewees to Pirkanmaa Seta's local Facebook group's page that brings together rainbow families in Pirkanmaa region. I posted the announcement to my own Facebook page and advertised the project among friends and acquaintances. Altogether I received eight replies that expressed interest to the project out of which I was in able to interview four people during the winter 2014-2015. In terms of ethnographic process, the most challenging part of the fieldwork period was the ability to follow the potential participants after their initial expression of interest and schedule the meetings that would suit the participants. Whilst several potential participants initially signaled interest to take part in the study, the process of agreeing on a meeting with potential participants proved itself more challenging. I also received responses from civil society organizations that they deal with excessive amount of requests to forward calls for participation from junior scholars hence the level in which they were able to assist to access the field proved more limited than I had expected.

Emerson et al. (2011) refer to 'jotting' as a method where one documents key terminology, bits of talk, impressions, feelings and alike observations from interactions that facilitate 'reconstruction' of social scenes in the field diary. In my experience jotting of notes was most useful when combined with audio recording, providing the opportunity to pay attention to the subtleties in conversations and other observations that could not be detected from the audio materials alone. As pointed by the authors, jotting can potentially distract the researcher from the social interaction. In my case, having the backup of recorder pay more attention to the actual interaction with the participants and not be distracted by documenting the responses.

Malkki (2007), Huttunen (2010) and Rastas (2010) are among those who point out that ability to improvise is an important characteristic of an ethnographer seeking to conceptualize 'systems of relationships' (Malkki 2007) that constitute the ethnographic field. Themes that are not initially included in the research design may turn out to be relevant for the ethnographic field and data obtained may steer the researcher in new thematic directions as the process proceeds. As the research process develops, ethnographer should be able to include multiplicity of relevant observations under academic scrutiny. Authors (ibid.) note that sensitivity to the empirical data can direct research towards new theoretical conceptualizations to make sense of the research field.

In initial phases of the thesis process, I was particularly interested to analyse the experiences of rainbow families in encounters with public services. My goal was to specifically analyse how legislative framework, combined with the actualised discursive power in state sector services contribute to the realisation of social identity and equality, and what conditions influence rainbow parent's experiences of social inclusion or exclusion in the public domain. The theoretical framework I was equipped at this point derived from anthropological conceptualisations of kinship (i.e. Carsten 2003, Holy 2007) with particular focus in gay and lesbian kinship (i.e. Weston 1991). I looked for theoretical frame among authors who employ the notion of governmentality as a theoretical tool to conceptualize the way power relations actualize between public institutions and individuals (i.e. Cooper 2006, Sharma et al. 2007). I familiarised myself with ethnographic texts that deal with questions of equality, state and homosexual parenting (i.e. Dempsey 2004, Logan 2007) and social policy (i.e. Ellingsæter et. al. 2006) to grasp the interconnectedness of Nordic welfare state, normativity and gay/lesbian experiences of doing family. I was particularly influenced by the realisation that in the contemporary West, civic rights associated with parenting are repeatedly preconditioned by legitimised partnering, particularly through institutions of marriage and registered partnership.

With the aforementioned theoretical framework I scheduled the first interview and attended the aforesaid events by FRFA for participant observation. During the first half of the process I was particularly determined to maintain a research approach that would concentrate on the interconnectedness of institutions and individuals to analyse how experiences in public services contribute in social inclusion or –exclusion of rainbow parents. As the process proceeded I realised that in order to conceptualise how notions such as citizenship, belonging and equality are experienced among heterogeneous rainbow families, it is useful to engage with literature in the experience of doing family from cultural- and critical theory. Introduction with literature dealing

with heteronormativity (i.e. Robinson 2012, Hopkins 2013) and sexual citizenship (i.e. Richardson 2004) were instructive in interpreting observations that initially seemed to belong outside the scope of this study. Judith Butler's (2002) work was particularly influential for the consequent thesis that problematizes the public/private dichotomy when discussing the boundaries of contemporary kinship. The added theoretical lens enabled me to expand conceptualisations of doing family in circumstances that I had initially disregarded as irrelevant. Gaining wider understanding of the underlying theoretical discourses was a moment of realisation and liberation in the ethnographic process. Enlarging scope of the study beyond the focus on structural framework enabled me to grasp the complexities that relate to rainbow parenting in Finland more in depth and draw interconnections between different experiences and observations. As the ethnographic process proceeded, the research question broadened to include wider questions of identity formation and societal belonging beyond the attention to direct interconnectedness of institution and individual in Finland.

1.4 Interpreting Data and Thick Description

Clifford Geertz' (1973) conceptualisations on ethnographic research process –and interpretation of research data are undeniable in anthropological discipline. Relevant for this thesis is his definition on 'thick description': Rather than describing observations as they appear, anthropological analysis should seek to comprehensively evaluate pieces of data as 'symbolic actions' in relation to one another to provide a systematic 'appraisal' (ibid. 16) of the phenomenon under study. The evaluation is subsequently analysed in relation to theoretical framework, through which it is conceptualised by in ethnographic texts. As argued by Geertz in relation to ethnographic text:

'The aim is to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics' (ibid. 27).

For Geertz, ethnographic text, as a practice of cultural analysis is always interpretive and as such contestable conceptualisation, whereby the means of thick description, an ethnographer can propose a 'diagnosis' of the phenomena analysed.

As pointed out by Huttunen (2010) ethnographic research requires an understanding of the existing theoretical literature and empirical reality that guide the researcher to collect and code data, and moreover to produce logical conceptualisations concerning the research field.

Scholar's discuss further Geertz' notion of 'thick description' as central to the ethnographic process (i.e. Huttunen 2010, Rastas 2010, Malkki 2007), whereby the theoretical framework joint with cross-analysis of different data obtained from the field provide the means that best govern the ethnographic research process.

Huttunen (2010) and Rastas (2010) underline that the key to ethnographic analysis is a comprehensive evaluation of different data, bound with recognition of interconnectedness of the materials under analysis. For example, analysis of ethnographic interviews in the light of official documents and institutional structures can provide a richer understanding of the research field than either source alone could provide. Rather than relying on unilateral observation of the research question, the authors discuss ethnography as a process where ethnographer seeks to maximize her understanding of the research field by mapping out it out from various perspectives.

Hence, analysis of ethnographic data is not only concerned in the discursive analysis of transcribed interview texts with the informants. Instead, ethnographic analysis takes into account various processes that shape peoples realities in micro level of analysis. As summed by Huttunen, ethnographer is not only interested in what the participant says, but moreover, analysis should be inclusive of how and why one operates in the sphere of social relations.

This thesis engages in a dialogue between materials collected from official documents and articles and other publications published by civil society organizations. As already noted, the materials are chosen on the basis that they are relevant for establishing the different conceptualisations of family, equality and child's best interest. Written documents are reflected with data obtained in interaction with individuals that I talked to during the participant observation. The data describing structural reality and -perspectives adopted by human rights organisations are discussed in relation to observations from interviews with rainbow parents and online discussion boards that deal with personal experiences of doing rainbow family in contemporary Finland. To structure the research, aforementioned analysis is governed by theoretical approaches concerning contemporary kinship, normativity and sexual citizenship. By cross-analysing the field notes and by being sensitive to the theoretical consideration, the thesis seeks to extract a thick description of the themes that are significant in the ethnographic field in question.

With the materials obtained from official documents and publications by NGOs this thesis seeks to establish the overall structural site in which rainbow families negotiate their everyday lives. For

example the judicial definitions, associated partnership status and gender, materialise in differentiated distribution of benefits, parental leaves and access to reproductive technologies. Denying rainbow parents' access to the rights that are designated for Finnish families potentially contribute to social exclusion among those individuals who find themselves outside the sphere of civic services that communicate belonging and acceptance in the level of society.

Analysis of structural data is complemented with interpretation of data from two events of participant observation organized by the FRFA. One training event was aimed at professionals, who encounter rainbow families in their work and the other training event for gay and lesbian individuals who either have children, or would like to have children. As noted earlier, I interviewed four rainbow parents, of which one was biological father, two biological mothers, and one social mother. None of the participants had legally verified their partnership statuses at the time of interviewing. To collect background knowledge and to better grasp the research field, I followed discussions in chat rooms and discussion boards online, where individuals discuss their various experiences and questions concerning family and sexual identity (www.perheaikaa.fi, www.ranneliike.net/, www.lepakkolaakso.net). As my field research proceeded, I understood that while some structural dimensions influence the everyday experiences of rainbow parents in Finland in collective level, rainbow parents are highly heterogeneous "group", whose different life-experiences contribute decisively to experiences of doing family. Gender, natal home, relationship status, legal status to partner/child and socio-economic situation are among factors that contribute to differing experiences of doing family. The overall aim of the thesis is to analyse how different characteristics of social world contribute to the negotiation of kin-relations and how people's differing circumstances influence in experiences of civic belonging and equality among rainbow parents.

George Marcus (1995) discusses the 'intersection' of anthropological questions with other disciplines. 'Media studies, feminist studies, science and technology, various strands of cultural studies, critical theory, culture, and society groups' (ibid. 97) are among the disciplines that potentially contribute to analysis of contemporary ethnographic field. Rather than focusing on one locality as a starting point, ethnographic research increasingly orientates towards following connections and relationships of various associations and phenomena that shape the ethnographic field in question. Marcus refers to a 'strategically situated ethnography' (ibid. 111) as a research process that adds to the analysis of local subjects a broader conceptualisation of the system, in which the research field is situated in. Such conceptualisation can only be achieved when local

experiences are interconnected to wider set of approaches that influence ethnographic field, according to Marcus. Björn Thomassen (2013) makes similar arguments about ethnographic method that analyses how meanings are made in micro-level of social interaction. For Thomassen, reflexivity of the text and inclusion of interdisciplinary knowledge are inherent elements that produce epistemologically generalizable data in ethnographic research. Furthermore, Sluka and Robben (2012) point that contemporary anthropologists do not exist in an academic vacuum but that ethnographic knowledge may be produced with reference to other disciplines.

To strive for multi-sited insight regarding the research question and to capture the field comprehensively, this thesis complements anthropological conceptualisations of the ethnographic field with relevant observations of cross disciplines. While the thesis is not of transnational or indeed ‘global’ character, it is multi-sited in so far that it seeks to capture the multiplicity of social spheres that contribute in rainbow family’s experience within the contemporary Finnish structural and cultural context. By analysing different experiences of doing rainbow family and by incorporating relevant literature from anthropology, critical feminist theory and social policy, the thesis seeks to engage in both micro- and macro level discourses of doing rainbow family in contemporary Finnish society.

1.5 Reflexive Ethnography

Ethnographic fieldwork requires personal engagement of the researcher in the field. Scholars (i.e. Sluka and Robben 2012, Huttunen 2010, Rastas 2010) point that researcher’s relation to the participants consequently contributes to the formation of data obtained. Sluka and Robben discuss a ‘reflexive trend’ in post-modern research that recognises how knowledge produced within ethnographic text is a discourse generated by ethnographer’s positioning in relation to the phenomenon under study. In relation to reflexivity, scholars (i.e. Sluka and Robben 2012, Rastas 2010) furthermore argue that ethnographer with a research agenda is responsible of the fieldwork process and as such, ethnographic research is never entirely collaborative in nature. The authors (ibid.) highlight that ethnographers today are expected to acknowledge in the text that asymmetric power relations between the researcher and participants influence the outcome of ethnographic discourses.

Huttunen (2010) points that making transparent one’s access to the field and positioning oneself critically in research field are central elements of reflexive ethnography. Similarly, Rastas (2010) notes that while ethnographic research can be collaborative, it is guided not according to the

interests of the participants, but theoretical conceptualizations and formulations of research questions are defined and conscious choices of the researcher. For Rastas, bringing transparent the researcher's relation to the participants and the field under study is essential characteristic of reflexive ethnographic work. For Thomassen (2013) contemporary emphasis on reflexivity in ethnographic fieldwork is a response to the criticism concerning ethnographic texts where the transparency of knowledge production is left ambiguous.

In terms of reflexivity, Rastas (2010) notes that it is essential for ethnographer to explain the logic by which the researcher conceptualises data, that is, what and why she has chosen to include in ethnographic text. Furthermore, situating the research within chosen literature is essential element of good ethnography. As each choice regarding the research question is a conscious decision, the journey of proceeding through ethnographic process should be made open for scrutiny. Similarly, Aull Davies (2001) notes that ethnographer should be able to critically examine her positioning in research field throughout the text to render the analysis transparent to the reader throughout the different stages of interpretation. Contextualization of the ethnographic field in the wider societal framework as well as the collecting of data from various point of views as noted by Rastas (2010) and Huttunen (2010), are essential in order to situate the research field in the broader context of social relations and structures.

Sluka and Robben (2012) point that anthropological fieldwork is changing its nature for to the circumstances where growing number of ethnographers compete over limited resources. The layout contributes to outcome where single-sited ethnography is replaced by anthropologists who cooperate with fewer research participants who contribute to the nature of ethnographic study. As a master's student in a two-year study program, I believe that the ethnographic process was affected by internalised pressure to collect data as time and cost efficiently as possible, joint with the opportunity to conduct lesser amount of interviews as initially outlined. As already noted the data obtained in ethnographic interviews and during participant observation, was complemented with analysis of data from online sources, such as civil society organisations' webpages, online discussion boards and documents dealing with legislation to cross analyse the research question from various perspectives. I am convinced that, for example, by being able to reflect participant's experiences in public services and in social interaction to legislation that assigns different rights and duties with mothers and fathers provides a stronger argument concerning normative kinship than any of the aspects alone could. Furthermore by analysing the

data from anthropological, critical feminist and sociological point of views, outcome is a richer understanding of the research question.

Rastas (2010) notes that the ethnographic research interests are not the sole definers of final research questions, but practical questions concerning for example the quantity and quality of research data contribute to the final outcome. This research was equally influenced by the practical conditions of ethnographic process. For example the fact that all participants who agreed to be included in the thesis were unmarried or had otherwise opted out from registered partnership contributed to the shape that the research question took. Rather than focusing on boundaries of rainbow parenting from the premises of registered partnership, the research question came more involved with normative connectedness of parenting and partnering, thus observing the boundaries of kinship through the case study of Finnish Rainbow Families outside the institution of registered partnership.

Stepping aside from the process of doing ethnographic research, Aull Davies (2001) brings forth three epistemological characteristics useful in evaluating ethnographic research: reliability, validity and generalizability. The first relates to the repeatability of ethnographic researcher. According to the author, another researcher operating under same circumstances should be able to make same observations in ethnographic field and hence make same conclusions as the original researcher. The second notion, validity, is applied to evaluate how well reasoned the theories applied to analyse the research data are. Validity is also concerned with the multiplicity of methodological ways to obtain data assuming that, for example observation and interview jointly contribute to stronger argument than either of them alone would. The last notion, generalizability, should become evident in the section of discussion, in so far that the research should be demonstrated as relevant to the theoretical debate in the level of abstraction, beyond specific issue that the ethnographic research problematizes.

While reliability and validity relate to the reflexive ethnographic process I have proposed in this chapter, the notion of generalizability is equally essential in ethnographic research. By discussing the case of rainbow parenting in contemporary Finland, the thesis engages the discussion of doing family more generally to the interconnected questions of equality, citizenship and universal welfare.

2. Conceptualizations of Contemporary Family

The thesis explores how kin-relations actualise in Finnish rainbow families that are not organised according to legitimised institutions of partnering such as marriage or registered partnership, nor necessarily governed by biological relatedness. The core questions tackled in this chapter are:

- How is family conceptualised in contemporary anthropological literature and how does this reflect the structural framework that defines kin-relations in Finland?
- How does the every-day family life among the participants correspond to aforementioned conceptualisations?

In this chapter, the thesis introduces the reader an overview of contemporary discourses of kinship as a culturally subjective notion. Anthropological, theoretical framework of family is reflected with the structural reality in Finland and compared to the actualised kin-relations among participants of the study.

2.1 Kinship in Anthropology

Ladislav Holy (1996) discusses the role of kinship studies as anthropologically essential field to the conceptualisation of social organizations and their structures. Historically, kinship studies in anthropology wanted to establish how procreation contributes to ways in which social structures are established. Kin relations were essentially seen as interlinked with transfer of culture. Borrowing from David Schneider, Holy refers to the ‘doctrine of genealogical unity of mankind’ (ibid. 16) to argue that the traditional anthropological emphasis on biological relatedness is not universal but culturally determined approach that privileges biological reproduction as the basis of structuring kin-relations.

In order to understand potential ambiguities between everyday life of doing family and the structural framework in which contemporary family is conceived, it is useful to understand how the notion of family has evolved in anthropological discourse.

Janet Carsten (2003) discusses the role of kinship studies in anthropology upholding dual purposes. Primarily during the first half of 20th century kinship studies were assigned to define political structures within societies and communities that did not have the dominance of centralised state-

institution. Secondly, and most importantly for the thesis, kinship studies have evolved away from the structural analysis to conceptualise the ways in which notions of ‘personhood, gender and bodily substance’ (ibid. 6) actualise in everyday interactions. In the West where social organisation was associated with nation-state rather than kin structures, family was long categorised as a domestic institution that provides limited knowledge of the politically propelled social order. Hence, what kinship signifies was conceptualised as fundamentally different between ‘the west and the rest’ (ibid.). According to Carsten, emergence of feminist scholarship in anthropology challenged dichotomy between public and private spheres, whereby the former was addressed as political, while the latter was excluded from the analysis. By placing family institution in intersection of the two spheres, public and private, feminist scholarship brought western family in the limelight of anthropological kin studies.

In this thesis, notion of family as a canvas where spheres of public and domestic reflect on one another is applied as an analytical tool to examine how cultural and structural norms influence not only kin-relations but also individual’s perceptions of belonging and equal citizenship in contemporary Finland. Structural framework is significant in so far that it potentially shapes how equality and social justice actualise in the experiences of rainbow parents.

In relation, Carsten points that ethnographic attention on family life as a locus of political and cultural subjectivities, demonstrates kinship as evolving notion that is embed in the overall context of society. By asking how public sphere contributes in experiences of social hierarchy/egalitarianism among the participants, the thesis analyses discursive power that actualises in levels of both, structural and cultural, in the everyday life of rainbow families.

Janette Logan (2013) discusses new kinship studies in anthropological discipline by exploring the ways in which people construct families with focus in the quality of the kin-relations that define the family. Rather than focusing on how structural consequences of biological connectedness contribute to the organisation of kinship, recent anthropological account of family can be understood as:

‘Attempt to re-theorize kinship relations beyond the assumption of the heterosexual, biologically reproduced nuclear family and mirror sociological studies of the family which emphasize human agency, practice and process’ (ibid, 35).

Family is a dynamic unit that can be analyzed in reference to the everyday practices establishing kin relations (Carsten 2003, Logan 2013, Weston 1991). Logan discusses legislation as a medium

through which social values of belonging are established from top-down regulation of parenting. Guarding access to reproductive technologies and opportunities of adopting, are among ways in which the legislator acts as a gatekeeper of kin-relations. For example, by denying male couples the option for adoption is communicative of the ways in which the Finnish state regulates structural meaning of family.

Rainbow families discussed in this thesis challenge the assumption that biological connectedness preconditions relatedness as a social category. By engaging in family practices that are bound by affinity and care rather than biological and legal connectedness, rainbow families I met question the interpretation of family that prioritises genealogical sameness in its core.

In reference to differentiated definitions of biological and social that are applied in anthropological study of kinship, Holy (1996) refers to the categories 'genitor/genetrix' and 'pater/mater'. While the former describes biological subject who is involved in impregnation, the latter is applied in reference to socially recognised parent. Holy argues that the inter-relatedness of social mother and biological genetrix is featured less ambiguous than the connectedness of social father and genitor due to the fact the woman gives birth to the child. While motherhood in the West is conceptualized as a naturalised condition of the genetrix, analysis of fatherhood is established through father's 'relationship to the mother of the child' (ibid. 22). The ideological presumption according to which child needs its mother to survive has contributed to the view that motherhood in kinship studies is less problematized notion than that fatherhood, according to Holy.

A distinction that assumes mother as a primary caretaker is applicable to the contemporary Finnish legislation, where legal paternity is confirmed either by marriage to the mother of the child, or by recognition of fatherhood after the child is born by both mother and father (Finlex: Isyyslaki 30.3.2015). Fatherhood is acknowledged through established relationship with the mother rather than the genealogical connectedness between the child and the father.

In terms of rainbow parenting, second parent adoption is possible when the individual has legitimised his or her relationship to the biological parent of the child by registered partnership (Finlex: Laki rekisteröidystä parisuhteesta). Parenthood of the social cannot be recognised unless the parent is in a registered partnership with the biological parent of the child. Consideration of the quality of kin relations between the parent and child is not included in the legal discourse of parenting.

Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) limits father's paternity allowance to those legally verified fathers who share household with the legal mother. Paternal leave is not earmark for the father, up to 54 working days of which 18 working days can overlap with the maternity leave (Kela: Isyysvapaan ajalta isyysrahaa). Simultaneously, maternal allowance is earmarked for 105 working days and the mother can reclaim the allowance notwithstanding her relation to the other parent (Kela: Äitiysraha). As the recognition of paternal entitlements is preconditioned to established relations and cohabitation with the child's mother, ideological basis that guides the distribution of judicial rights and responsibilities, sees mother as the primary caretaker of the child.

The ways in which biological categories of genitor/genetrix and social categories of pater/mater are conceptualised is a context-specific, rather than universal attribute. Holy (1996) points out that for example, increasing development of reproductive technologies has paved the way to question the naturalness kin-relations. For example surrogate mothering brings forth the question of biological mother when ovum and womb are not necessarily bound to one body in procreation. In Finland, surrogate mothering that assumes artificial insemination is not, under the current legislation, legally possible (Väestöliitto, sijaissyntytysjärjestelyt).

In relation to aforementioned legislative premises, the thesis analyses how families where biological mother does not equal primary caretaker or where parenting is not verified by related legal institutions such as registered partnership or judicial parenthood negotiate kin-relations. In the following pages the thesis problematizes culturally and structurally normative assumptions that continue to privilege biological mothers as primary caretakers of the child. Furthermore, the thesis analyses how structural framework in which individuals operate contributes to the identification of rainbow parents as full members of the society.

Holy argues that the notion of nuclear family as a unit where offspring is legitimized by marriage and where the kin share one common spatial household is under-defined, cultural assumption prevailing in the West. In the academic discourse, structural-anthropological conceptualisations of nuclear family inclined to position family as 'a distinct, static and durable social unit that can be distinguished and separated from other units of the same kind' (ibid. 59), according to the author. This thesis problematizes the hegemony of nuclear family in contemporary Finland and asks how the structural and cultural normativities contribute to the experience of doing family and negotiation of kin relations in everyday life.

2.2 Doing Family

This section of the thesis asks how kin-relations are made meaningful in everyday interactions through the example of Finnish rainbow parents who partook in the study.

Kinship and family are notions informed by cultural codes and rules that create naturalised structures of belonging. Holy (1996) points out that kin-relations are always informed by the wider social context in which they actualize. As a focus of anthropological inquiry, Holy asserts redefinition kinship as a dynamic category that organises contemporary ways of relatedness. The author calls for broadening the definition of family beyond biological reproduction to include relatedness that actualises in everyday practices of nurturing and caring. Rather than prioritising genealogical connectedness, families are made meaningful in doing.

Contemporary study of kinship is increasingly involved with analysis of relatedness that is informed by wider societal phenomena linking to political, religious, economic and ideological discourses that influence people's everyday experiences of relatedness. Increasingly, anthropologist is interested to analyse how macro level of structural and cultural discourses are negotiated in the micro level of everyday life, as argued by Holy. By application of ethnographic research methods this thesis captures rainbow family in relation to the dominant structural and cultural discourses of family in contemporary Finland. Process of doing family is addressed in the attempt to establish how non-normative relatedness is realised in everyday interaction and whether social policies, - encounters and public services are experienced to courage and/or discourage an equal status of rainbow families in the society. The thesis enquires whether perceived expectations of external environment bring forth doing family as a conscious practice among rainbow parents. Furthermore the thesis analyses how social identities of participants are negotiated in the intersection of external norm and domestic reality.

Kath Weston (1991) addresses kinship not as a public institution but rather as a concept that arranges lasting solidarity and affinity among individuals who engage in processes of doing family. Weston's conceptualization of family is not depended on legal recognition of partnering nor genealogical connectedness of family members, rather family is a unit based on social relations of choice. While legal framework privileges the normative family, in practice family is always a heterogeneous and fluid unit, where individuals negotiate belonging and relatedness in a multiplicity of ways. Weston's ethnographic research among gay families in the late 1980s San

Francisco approaches family away from the structural positioning, as a process of doing where belonging is produced, communicated and experienced in the absence of legal and biological verification of relatedness.

Deborah Dempsey's (2004) assumption of Western nuclear family is also one to note. For Dempsey the western conceptualisation of nuclear family, characterised by affectionate relationship between two opposite sexes and their biological children as a family-unit, does not correspond to the varieties of contemporary families. As noted by Weston (1991), Dempsey also highlights the role of choice in defining kin relations thus problematizing biology and law as evident characteristics of family. Weston (1991) and Dempsey (2004) discuss friendship as a potential source of enduring solidarity and support adding to the quality of relationship constituting the kin. The authors question argument according to which familial care and internalization of obligations derive straightforwardly from genealogical ties and legal endorsement of kin relations.

Nevertheless, Dempsey brings forth the 'cultural logic of inheritance' (ibid. 1148) that in the context of Western kinship continues to prioritise genealogical tie as a source of individual identity. The author argues that rather than being rejected, normative assumption that emphasises transmission of substance (blood and genes) from parent to child continues to be negotiated within the choices of lesbian and gay individuals who seek to start a family. In her Australian case study, Dempsey explores how lesbian women and gay men choose with whom to engage in reproductive relationships. According to Dempsey's analysis, the importance that rainbow parents place on biological relatedness when engaging in family-making processes is a complex process. The author argues that the interconnectedness of biological and social parenting is consciously evaluated by rainbow parents who engage in reproductive relationships.

This thesis does not fully adhere to Dempsey's argument that genealogical connectedness is of significance to lesbian and gay parents and that biological relatedness necessarily contributes to kinship arrangements and parenting strategies within families. While the participants of this study organised parenthood in their own ways, privileging of biological connectedness as interlinked with social partnering was only evident in the case of Pete, who explicitly expressed that kin relations in the multi-parent family were organized to secure that the child was involved with her biological mother in everyday life.

Where Weston (1991) highlights enduring love and choice as the core characteristics that organise kin relation in her research, for participants in this thesis the rhetoric of ‘best interest of the child’ rose as the most fundamental organizing principle of kin relations. The rhetoric that concerns the best interest of the child is multiple as noted in the introduction. Yet the stability of parent child relations was the core element of the child’s best interest as discussed here. In reference, Pete highlighted that when engaging in a relationship with his current spouse, the arrangement of multi-parent family was the only option available to make sure that the child’s interests would be privileged. As noted by Pete

“From the beginning I understood that this will not work out unless Sandra and Erik form a relationship of their own. Sometimes I feel it would be easier if Tea would just live with us two (Pete and Erik) but this would have an impact on her if her mother was not there or if she had some conflict with us” (recorded interview 10.2.2015)

In Pete’s rhetoric, stable mother-child relations, and secured presence of the mother in everyday family life were essential characteristics of what was described the child’s best interest.

In Dempsey’s study (2004), participants inclined to select partners for reproduction with whom they had established relationships prior to ascertain trustworthiness of the person. In this thesis two of the participants’ children were conceived during prior heterosexual relationships of participants, one was conceived by using unknown sperm donor and one was conceived by unnamed acquaintance that was not involved in the lives of the parents nor the child. In the three cases, (but Pete’s) second biological parent was not involved in the life of the children or parents of the child in any way. The three participants did not explicitly nor implicitly suggest that absence of the biological parent is a deficit in kin relations. This observation would suggest that the connectedness of biological and social parenthood is in more corresponsive in terms of mother-child than father-child relations.

In relation to the criticism according to which it is in the best interest of the child to have established relations with biological father and a mother, it was pointed out by the representative of the FRFA that “when a parent does not exist it is not missing”. In this way the representative abandons the argument according to which engaging in rainbow family constitutes secondary form of doing family where the interest of the child cannot be met with equal standards to the idealised, heterosexual nuclear family.

The examples referred above are indicative that when biological connectedness between a parent and child is not invested with meaning, does not alone contribute to significance of kin-relations.

Rather, the relatedness between child and parent actualises through social parenting, irrespective of genealogical or judicial status or the parent/child relation.

Dempsey argues that individuals negotiate the interconnectedness of biological, social and legal - categories in multiplicity of ways. Rather than analysing kinship in a vacuum, lived family relations shift through time according to the wishes and circumstances of parents and children involved. In this respect, the thesis accords with Dempsey, as kin-relations analysed in here were changing to individuals' changing circumstances and evolving relationship statuses. Nevertheless, commitment to maximise the stability of parent-child relations through time was a common feature of kinship arrangements discussed in this thesis. In the cases where structural and cultural normativities did not support stable and secure parent-child relation, insecurities were expressed. Among participants of the study, everyday life of parents was designed so that it best accommodates the child. In relation, loyalty to the child and his or her prioritisation was a conscious feature governing parents' decision making processes.

Weston (1991) points out that the concept of homogenous nuclear family is a myth, while the ways in which kinship actualizes are always fluid and multiple. For the author, difference in lesbian and gay kinship when compared to heterosexual counterpart culminates in the role of genealogy whereby genealogical connectedness is described as less constant feature in gay and lesbian perceptions of kinship. Among participants featured in the thesis, biological connectedness was not assumed as a precondition of kin-relations nor was it telling of the quality of parent – child relation. For example in the case of Kriistina her self-conceptualisation as the mother of her child was expressed as self-evident: commitment to the child through time, enduring love, and responsibility of a caretaker contributed to the experience of parenthood irrespective of genealogical connection.

In relation, the representative of FRFA highlights that for rainbow families', genealogical connectedness presents "an option", to which parenting strategies alone are not constrained. In an event that brought together gay and lesbian couples planning to have children and representatives of the FRFA and Pirkanmaan SETA, the notion of child's best interest was a central element of discussion. The representative of association framed rainbow family as a unit where freedom from normative family forms potentially opens new possibilities for children and parents alike. For example, in discussion of co-parenting between friends and forming multi-parent families, the representative highlighted that multi-parent option is potentially beneficial for children and parents alike as they provide greater networks of enduring trust and "more laps for the child to sit on".

Logan (2013) argues that blood tie inevitably flourishes in the discourse of kinship in popular, academic and public discourses where parenting options are hierarchically positioned to start with the assumption that biological and social parenting correspond to one another. According to Logan, adoptees and social parents remain discussed in the discourse of 'fictive family', connoting the prioritisation of genealogical connection. Moreover, Logan emphasises the role of legislative tie to established security and ownership over the parent – child relation in absence of genealogical connection. The author argues that social parents who lack both genealogical and legal verification of the kin relation, are structurally and culturally positioned in below to those families connected by sexual procreation. In the absence of both, legal and biological verification of kin-relation, the quality of parent-child relation is easily disregarded.

In experiences of Kristiina, it came evident that her social environment did not confirm her parental status in the absence of genealogical connection. For example Kristiina expressed disappointment in that, "nobody has ever thought that I too could be wished for happy mother's day". In Kristiina's words "lack of grandparents' support" was also a factor that contributed in the experience of being in a disadvantageous situation. Furthermore, the participant felt rejection of her parenthood status in structural terms, whereby Kela did not recognize her status as a parent and subsequently failed to secure her right to see the child. Not being entitled to parental benefits also contributed to Kristiina's frustration as it put her financial disadvantage. As the child spent every second week in Kristiina's household, she considered to be equally responsible for caretaking and in providing the child's material needs to parents whose status is legally acknowledged.

Commitment to the daughter Moona was nevertheless self-evident characteristic of Kristiina's life. As noted, Moona lived with Kristiina every second week. Parenting experience was reconfirmed by taking responsibility of the child in everyday life such as going to doctor's, or opening a bank account shopping, sharing and providing food, to name a few examples. Encounters in services such as bank, healthcare or schooling with the child as a parent, had been "stress free", according to Kristiina.

Weston (1991) discusses fictive kinship as a concept whereby family actualises through everyday interaction, rather than approach of family as a positivist, predefined unit that can be discovered. As an example, Weston discusses her study among homosexual families in San Francisco where

preparing and sharing of food were practices whereby kinship ties were made in the everyday level of interaction.

Participants of this thesis emphasised the role of shared activities in doing kin-relations. For example, Pete-the biological father in a multi-parent family noted:

“We do feel like a family in that Sandra *and* Erik *and* I are *all* involved and that we are all doing this together. For example, *we* always gather to eat together here at *our* home”

When discussing interaction between Pete’s concurrent and natal families, he noted that

“Now the situation is relatively good with my parents. For example every Sunday *we all* go to my parent’s place for lunch with Sandra *and* Erik” (recorded interview 10.2.2015)

In both cases, Pete stressed words *and*, *together*, *we*, and *all* to emphasise that Sandra, Erik, Pete and Tea are all involved in everyday actions that constitutes family life. For Pete, conceptualisation of family was very much linked to common activities that all members of the family were engaged in, such as attending grandparents’ as a family and sharing food together. Despite the fact that Pete, Erik and Tea lived in a separate flat next to Sandra, Tea’s mother, in Pete’s rhetoric they were one family as they did things together in everyday life. In addition to visiting grandparents and eating together, sharing responsibility to assist Tea with her schoolwork, taking her to hobbies and attending parent evenings at school were among activities that Pete explicitly highlighted as things that the parents are jointly involved in.

Carsten (2003) develops prominent conceptualisations of kinship away from notions of substance (blood) and conduct (law). Rather stability and permanence in social relations derive from networks of caring friendships, perceived as ‘real’ kinship ties. The author highlights that kin-relations are lived out in shared experiences preconditioned by time, attention and care that constitute the most important characteristics influential to the quality of kin relations. Biological connectedness alone is not of primary relevance

‘Where birth does not imply certainty, endurance, or solidarity, it is emptied of most of the symbolic meaning it has in the dominant discourse of kinship, and time itself has a key role in producing new meanings for kinship’ (ibid. 150).

In relation to her study among adult adoptees, Carsten notes that legal documents confirming adoptive parents replaced notions of blood and birth. Carsten's analyses the realness of adoptive family in comparison to the genealogical parents who are not invested with emotional capital by the adoptees.

However, as argued in this thesis, lack of legal and/or biological connectedness does not inevitably mean a decrease in the quality between the relationship of social parent and child. For example, Kristiina had organised her life to assure the constancy of parent-child relation. As the child's legal parent lives in a small community in West Finland, for Kristiina living in the same neighbourhood is self-evident despite the fact that for example job opportunities would be greater should she be prepared to relocate. In reference to this, Kristiina noted that the question of relocation becomes actual when her daughter Moona is old enough and has finished school at least. With no legal insurance that would secure Kristiina's right to contact and meet with the child, accommodating her life to make it as easy as possible for Moona's legal parent to allow Kristiina in Moona's everyday life was essential. While the absence of legal verification influenced to the practicalities of everyday life, for example in reference to maternal benefits and joint custody, it was not shown to influence the quality parent - child per se.

Experiences of rainbow parents analysed in this thesis do not fully reflect Weston's argument that love and choice are the two main continuous principles of gay and lesbian kinship. Carsten's and Logan's observation that legal verification of parent-child relationship is significant to confirm kin-relations beyond biological connectedness neither fully explains how the participants of the study measure the value of their kin-relations. Combining elements from the aforementioned arguments, the core of kin-relations is based on the commitment to stable and attentive adult-child relationship that constitutes as a founding principle of doing rainbow family under analysis in this thesis.

2.3 Personhood and Identity in Choosing Family

Carsten (2003) discusses the role of personhood in contemporary kinship studies. The author points to two traditional ways of conceptualising the person: collective and individualist. Conceptualization of personhood is always interlinked to the historical, political and cultural context of society in question. For example, while in the West, modern societies arguably uphold an individualistic approach to person as a distinct and unique being, in clan-, or caste based societies individual is defined as a fragment of wider collectivity where person's position is structurally

determined by its location within the collective. Carsten challenges the aforementioned dichotomy by noting that line between individualist and collectivist approach to personhood is always fluid depending on cultural circumstances. As people are posited in relation to others around them, kinship contributes to the ways in which people come to being in different contexts. As already noted in this thesis parenting in Finland is a governed process whereby the state regulates the construction of kin-relations through legislation that privileges some ways to do family over others. Moreover, as demonstrated further in the following pages, public expectations of parenting can influence parenting choices beyond legal boundaries among persons who do not fit the biologically connected, heterosexual parenting model. Personhood in contemporary Finland hence actualises in reference to the wider collective.

Weston (1991) discusses homosexual identity as traditionally conflictual notion with the conceptualization of family. Among Weston's participants, people expressed that a coming out with gay identity was shadowed by the internalised limitations that individuals associate with doing family characterized as:

‘Double sided sense of fearing rejection by the families in which they had grown up, and not expecting to marry or have children as adults’ (ibid. 25).

As noted in the introduction of this thesis, in Finland conception by which homosexuality and family are harmonious to one another is argued as relatively new (Jämsä 2007, Moring 2013). In this thesis, all participants noted that rejection of family-arrangements and lack of support from the natal families contributed, or had contributed, towards anxiety and insecurity among the rainbow parents doing family.

For example, Kristiina noted that her father's attitude towards the “unchristian arrangement” had remained absolute throughout the years and that she considered the loss of grand-parents' support as the biggest deficit of her family and her child's life.

Saara, who had children from her previous heterosexual marriage noted that the heterosexual marriage was “a compromise” that Saara associated with a “good-girl syndrome”. When discussing her “coming out” with her sexual identity, Saara got very emotional and got to tears in her eyes:

“I remember not so long ago I thought I could never be openly lesbian as I could never do that to my children. Even though I have always been an open and tolerant person somehow when the question is so personal I just continued to fulfill others' expectations of me. I finally got myself together and confronted my children. In the same evening my

youngest son came to my bedroom, hugged me and said: Mum, there is nothing wrong with you being a lesbian” (recorded interview 15.3.2015).

For Saara, the fact that her children were supportive of her sexuality was an unexpected relief.

Saara’s perception was that by being public lesbian and a mother she had to overcome the internalised shame and confront external expectations. The internal pressure to imitate normative kinship models led in a sense of ambiguity within the self, whereby the expected moral codes of social environment were condemning of homosexual identity and family making as mutually exclusive notions. In relation to her child’s approval, Saara was under assumption that the shift is generational. The fact that her children were not condemning towards her sexual identity contributed to a feeling that the children have learned a different set of moral codes than what Saara had internalised in her childhood.

Weston’s analysis presents gay kinship as transformative of the norm rather than a unit that seeks to imitate heterosexual archetype of family. In reference, the author discusses gay and lesbian community as a source of loyalty and commonality in the endeavour for broader conceptualisation of family. As she describes in her ethnography regarding San Francisco,

‘Sexuality was reconstituted as a ground of common experience rather than quintessentially a personal domain’ (1991, 107).

The notion of rainbow community as a source of identity divided participants of the thesis. While some saw that rainbow community provided individuals with peer support, sense of belonging and reconfirmation of one’s identity, not all of the respondents wished to be identified by their sexuality as a defining characteristic of their family status.

For example Pete was doubtful in discussion of sexuality and family, in that he did not connote his sexuality influential in terms of the parenting experience. Rather, the participant expressed that his active parenting as a father had been questioned for example by child health center and by members of extended family. The question of parenting and caretaking as governed by gendered expectations thus were perceived as more relevant in terms of doing family than sexuality per se.

Kristiina neither was active in rainbow community. She found that activities prefixing rainbow-emphasise differences between homo- and heterosexual ways of doing family thus stigmatising rainbow parents as fundamentally distinct group. Rainbow community as a collective source of

sameness signified a construction of unnecessary boundaries between rainbow- and other forms of doing family in Kristiina's experience. The participant associated the activist rainbow movement inclined to position rainbow family as distinctively marginal. The emphasis of marginality was unnecessary even annoying in Kristiina's experience. Rather, the participant expressed that by showing her own example of active social parenting, she wants to bring forth similarities of rainbow- and other parenting as inclusively "normal".

On the other hand, for example Saara, who came out with her sexual identity after having had her children and after divorce of her heterosexual marriage, participated in rainbow-family camps, attended demonstrations for minority rights and engaged in various Internet forums to discuss with other rainbow parents and to meet people. For Saara, sexual identity was a factor that decisively contributed in her self-identity and experienced her sexual identity to influence her family-life. By actively participating in collective activities directed to rainbow families, the category of 'rainbow' was meaningful distinct community where she could share experiences of doing family as a lesbian parent. While the community of rainbow families was, in Kristiina's experience, heterogenous, she nevertheless found it as a source of belonging. Rainbow families participating in common activities offered Saara a sense of sameness simultaneously as she felt rejected by other people near to her. For example, for being close to her natal family, Saara expressed social isolation that derived from the dissent of her mother and siblings since she had expressed her sexual identity. Commonality of rainbow families, in Saara's rhetoric derived from the shared acceptance of combining minority sexual identity with doing family.

As discussed, identification processes of rainbow parents vary from parent to parent. Others see their families as belonging to the collective marginal of rainbow families, seeking reconfirmation to the collective identity within the rainbow community. Simultaneously others do not find sexual identity relevant in terms of parenting and doing family and as a result do not wish to be identified as particularly marginal for that reason. Those parents, who do not consider sexuality a significant characteristic of family-life and identity, do not pursue as many social relations within the rainbow community as those who express their sexual identity influential in terms of kinship. The parents I discussed with that do not find sexuality decisive characteristic of the family life and family arrangements are more ready to reject the experience of rainbow family as distinct, collectively different family form in contemporary Finland. On the other hand those parents, who identify their sexual identity as inseparable from their family life, are more ready to turn to the community of rainbow families as a source of belonging and shared experience.

Weston discusses two parallel discourses that steer the conversation of doing rainbow family: transformative and assimilationist. While the former depicts family 'as independent of all social constraint', the assimilationist identifies 'family solely with procreation and heterosexuality' (ibid. 198). Weston argues that gay activist movement has historically rejected heteronormative social structure that prioritises family as the core organising unit of society. As gay and lesbian individuals were historically depicted as 'non-procreative beings' (ibid. 204), for the sexual identity, notions of family and kinship have represented the border of division between hetero- and homosexual identities. For the author, cultural prioritisation of procreativity connected with heterosexual romantic love has seemingly excluded lesbian and gay individuals from the sphere of family life, instead portraying sexual minorities as the societal 'other'.

For Weston, family is a cultural category in constant transition that cannot be definitely appointed as an institution reproducing heteronormative social order neither is it free from social constraints that approach family as a heterosexual institution of public interest. The notion of rainbow family breaks the split between hetero- and homosexual identities by referring to enduring solidarity, love and nurture as universal features of family, according to Weston. As exemplified in this thesis so far, anthropological conceptualisations of family vary according to time and place of analysis and approaches employed by the ethnographic researcher. While acknowledging that there are multiple conceptualisations of family in both structural and academic discourses, this thesis examines family as a unit where affinity and commitment to the child, whether biologically or socially connected with the parent, governs kin-ties and actualisation of family in everyday life.

3. Normativity, Governmentality and Sexual Citizenship

This section of the thesis attempts to conceptualise social inclusion and belonging in the experience of rainbow parents. The notion of heteronormativity is employed to describe how participants of the thesis identify within the overall society, charged with regulatory capacity that defines the social boundaries of belonging. This chapter discusses links between heteronormativity, governmentality and sexual citizenship in more detail to analyse interconnectedness of the aforementioned notions in relation to rainbow parenting in contemporary Finland. The research question tackled in this chapter asks:

- How is heteronormativity conceptualised and how does the concept relate to sexual citizenship and identity among rainbow parents?

3.1 Conceptualising governmentality and heteronormativity

Hilgers (2011) discusses different anthropological ways to approach neo-liberalism as the governing format of contemporary social organization. For the author, neo-liberalist assumption operates to create self-disciplined individuals in order to maximise the efficiency of social cohesion and –control. According to scholars (i.e. Hilgers 2011, Sharma et al. 2012) governmentality adapts in different spheres of power to produce citizens as self-aware subjects who regulate their encounters within the social sphere, in order to fulfil moral criteria assigned with good citizenship. In this thesis I bring forth the neo-liberalist logic of governmentality as an analytic tool to illustrate how normativity sustains societal status quo by gatekeeping belonging and social inclusion.

Sharma et. al (2012) suggest that in the era of neo-liberal governance regulatory structures once monopolised by the state have spilled over the entire society to produce omnipresent power that operates not only through institutional practices but moreover frames wider cultural, social and political discourses of citizenship and belonging in the society.

Rather than analyzing state-apparatus as a value-free authoritative body, the authors (ibid.) highlight that state is a cultural construct, and as such fluid and ambiguous in its operation. Observing contemporary governance in the micro-level, anthropologist is in a unique position to establish cultural peculiarities of the state and point how meaning is communicated. Various levels of transactions that seemingly appear as value-free, administrative linkages between individuals and

institutions communicate cultural assumptions of citizenship and national belonging. By paying attention to people's everyday encounters with public and non-public institutions, it is possible to witness how the governing bodies of state and society actualize in people's perception. Relevantly to the thesis the authors argue that family remains as one of the core institutions governed by the normalised mechanisms and activities in modern society. According to the authors, it is essential to point out how the state and related organisations, facilitate people's participation in society and how organizational discourses are composed to either support active participation or exclude actors from the hegemonic discourses.

Surya Monro (2005) argues that heterosexuality and gender roles assigned with partnering and parenting are supported in structural levels to maintain prevailing boundaries of sexual identity. The author discusses social exclusion as a process by which minority identities are marginalised in structural and cultural discourses that safeguard idealised personhood in contemporary society. As a consequence, individuals who do not fulfil the criteria assigned with good citizenship are denied the opportunities that would enable them to actualise civic rights and responsibilities as equal citizens. The author argues that social exclusion operates in various levels. While legislation and other institutional regulation may directly exclude individuals socially, cultural norms and local discourses of belonging can furthermore disable individuals from realising their potential as full members of society.

The author addresses her critique to the notion of hegemonic citizenship that belongs to the 'white, male, able-bodied and heterosexual' (ibid. 149) human. Monro places citizenship in the core of the discourse of inequalities that maintain narrow conceptualisations of socio-political belonging in contemporary society. Rather than disregarding the multiplicity of identities that operate in a given society, actualisation of equal citizenship demands recognition of pluralism as a starting point of civic belonging. Monro argues that existing social system is exclusive of various minority groups, including those that relate to sexual minorities.

Monro's observation of social exclusion as a multi-layered phenomenon in spheres of structural and cultural is exemplified in the stories of rainbow parents. Participants of this thesis noted that experiences of disadvantage stem from various levels of interaction. Social exclusion was not thus limited to structural disadvantages, but encompassed a spectrum of experiences that actualise through social relations and encounters. In socio-cultural terms, the dissent by natal families, ignorance in welfare services towards family arrangements and lack of information concerning the

rights and duties of parents in a rainbow family were expressed among reasons contributing to social exclusion. In structural terms, refusal of legal parenthood and subsequent denial of parental leave and –grants were listed among elements that were experienced as differentiating the participants from the societally idealised, nuclear family –type of arrangement. Hence to conceptualise the ways in which rainbow parents negotiate feelings of disadvantage and belonging, a holistic approach that incorporates levels of cultural and structural is relevant to the analysis.

Diane Richardson (2004) discusses the notion of sexual citizenship in relation to neoliberal social governance that moves away from top to down application of power, instead emphasising individual's rights and duties as a self-governing citizen. For the author, normalisation of preferred behaviour is a central characteristic of neo-liberal governance, the goal of which is to create self-regulating individuals who reproduce the established criteria of citizenship. Social belonging is thus presented as the reward of self-disciplined citizen. Richardson argues that the claim for normalcy by gay and lesbian identities joined with the quest for equal rights potentially reconfirm heteronormative assumptions of good citizenship. Marriage and marriage like institution such as registered partnership in such discourse are produced as rites of passage through which homosexual identities are normalised as equal and ordinary citizens.

Richardson (ibid.) brings forth interconnectedness of sexuality discourse and citizenship studies. For the author, normality of citizen is constructed jointly with heterosexual identity and within such conceptualisation of normalcy gay and lesbian identities occupy a space of the marginalized, homogenous group who want to be acknowledged as incorporated citizens within the existing social structure. According to Richardson

‘Within such discourses lesbians and gay men are represented as oppressed minorities seeking access to core institutions such as marriage, family and the military, as good citizens who want to be included and share in the same rights and responsibilities as heterosexuals’ (ibid. 392).

Access to marriage and official validation of family-life based on sexual coupledness and shared household are means to obtain equality by emphasizing the sameness of homo- and heterosexual identity, according to the author. Within the discourse, homonormativity emerges as a category that seeks the normalization of homosexuality by means of assimilation to the existing heterosexual social structure.

Richardson argues that normative assumption of heterosexual identity naturalises heterosexual social structure and renders different sexualities as fundamentally different and therefore **othered**. The author suggests that sexual-othering and consequent social exclusion are significant for the reproduction and protection of heterosexual identity. Normalising gay and lesbian identities by institutional inclusion brings visible the heterosexual ordering principle of existing social system and as such underlays potential to structural change. The author notes that normalisation of homosexuality through institutions such as marriage potentially replaces boundaries of othering away from sexual identity, instead emphasizing the normative behaviour as a central element of socially included citizen. The author suggests that the question of social justice and -inclusion potentially moves away from the division between homo- and heterosexual identities to address the division of the normative and non-normative ways to act and to do family. Normalisation of homosexuality by incorporation of equal rights within the framework existing social system does not on its own challenge the question of heteronormative citizenship and social structure, but the practices reconfirm established social structures and societal discourses, according to the author.

Brandon Robinson (2012) discusses heteronormativity as a social system that naturalises heterosexuality simultaneously producing homosexuality as its binary opposite, a perversity that abandons norm. Similarly, Jason Hopkins et al. (2013) define heteronormativity as

‘The set of ideas, norms and practices that sustain heterosexuality and gender differentiation and hierarchy, including romantic love, monogamy, and reproductive sexuality’ (ibid. 98).

Robinson (2012) discusses assimilation and marginalisation of rainbow parents in present-day Netherlands, describing the country as ‘the most accepting country of same-sex marriage’ in Europe (ibid. 327). According to Robinson, the claim for sameness among homo- and heterosexual identities has provided LGBT –people with equal civil rights in the Dutch context where marriage carries the symbolic value, as a ritual of conformation, where the wicked homosexual attains the status of respectable citizen. Robinson refers to homonormativity to describe the internalisation of heteronormative ‘institutions and norms such as marriage, monogamy, and gender conformity’ (ibid. 329) by sexual minorities. Thus homonormativity reduces differences between hetero- and homosexual identity to the object of sexual affinity, according to the author. Rather than challenging social structure based on heteronormative order, homonormativity reconfirms traditional social structures by seeking sameness within and by adhering to the existing institutions.

Robinson notes that norms, governed by regulations and acknowledged by socially acceptable practices, legitimise actions appraised as normal in the given social context.

For Robinson, norms govern the social inclusion of subjects whose practices are acknowledged as normal, excluding those who do not adhere to the dominant structures, regulations and institutions of contemporary society. Hence norms exhibit power by guarding the borders of acceptable social practice and by monitoring the conditions of good citizenship. Robinson argues that the struggle for social acceptance contributes in a self-regulation of homosexual subjects who internalise heterosexual norms, suppressing alternative ways to express sexual identity associated with shame and social exclusion. The fear for stigmatisation contributes in resentment of minority sexual identities that

‘stand out because they fear that the stereotypical community members will be used as the example of the whole community’ (ibid. 332).

Robinson argues that inclusive citizenship should step away from the construction of normalcy. For the author, equality of diverse sexual-, and gender identities can actualize when entitlements and responsibilities of citizenship are freed from heteronormative institutions and structures that patrol social belonging and frame the boundaries of good citizenship.

In Finland, for example, it may be argued that the call for equal marriage in legislation exemplifies homonormativity in operation. Rather than questioning legislation that preconditions actualisation of equal civic rights to the institution of marriage, the activist effort is directed to include sexual minorities to the very institution. On the other hand, as Moring (2013) argues, the activist effort operates as to further change in those spheres where the potential of making a difference is maximised. A legislative change that would recognise a child with three judicial parents is not perceived as a feasible target within the current public discourse of equal citizenship. The campaign for equal marriage in Finland is efficient because the claim for equality within the premises of existing structure is normative enough, according to Moring.

In relation to the findings of this study, people’s experiences of public institutions varied. Two of the four parents I interviewed reported that one of the most frustrating characteristic of starting a rainbow-family, is the lack of information provided by the public services regarding family-making processes and the legal rights and duties associated with parenthood. For example Kristiina, a social parent noted that “everything must be done alone” and Maija, a biological mother highlighted her frustration in that all information she had obtained was from the 3rd party NGOs or internet forums

and that she herself has been “the educator” of civil servants by forwarding information obtained by desk-top research and giving tips on training events organized by activist organizations.

None of the participants in this thesis had registered their partnership, thus resisting registered partnership as an institution with capacity to define kin relations. The participants felt frustration where their relationship status contributed in differential treatment of their families. Access to information and lack of sensitivity towards different families, were communicated among causes that connote social injustice and -exclusion of rainbow families by the Finnish public services in the experiences of participants.

For example, in Kela webpage, legal entitlements that concern rainbow families are published. Nevertheless many the existing parental entitlements that would benefit rainbow families are tied to judicially registered partnership and the participants of this study fell outside the scope of Kela’s inclusion (Kela: Sateenkaariperhe). Especially Maija, who lived in a domestic partnership with her spouse expressed her frustration over that her family fell outside the scope of rights to which heterosexual parents in domestic partnership are entitled to. Because her spouse was not recognised as a second parent, subsequent rights concerning parental leave – and grants were also denied.

Representative of the FRFA noted that parents in rainbow families must strategize parenting to navigate in a public environment where one exception after other interferes with the process of doing family. In Finland, child counsellor (lastenvalvoja) is a public service that operates to guide families that depart from the model of heterosexual nuclear family regarding legal responsibilities and opportunities available for families in different situations. For example, confirming one’s paternity when the child is born outside marriage, custodial rights and matters regarding child’s welfare are dealt with child counsellor (Helsingin kaupunki: Lastenvalvoja). Two of the participants Maija and Kristiina had been in consultation with the child counsellor and both had positive experiences regarding the reception and information provided during the encounter, for example regarding social parent’s opportunity to apply for custodial rights. The parents reported that professionalism experienced in the encounter with child counsellor should be broadened in services throughout the society to provide overall support to families in various situations.

Both Pete and Maija expressed that organisations such as child health centre and family coaching held gendered presumptions of parenting, which gave the participants a perception that the chosen family-arrangements are not supported throughout the public sector. For example, not addressing

Maija's spouse as an equal family member was perceived as disrespectful and insulting by the participant. Maija's experience in family coaching was such that afterwards she and her spouse turned to private family coaching services, where encounters were received more positively. As expressed by Maija "especially because everything went so wrong in municipal family coaching", the private sector service was perceived as a useful and supportive to patch the negative experiences in public family coaching.

That gay and lesbian couples do not have access to public reproductive clinics was considered as prejudiced and unfair by Maija. While the participant did not expect that treatments would be compensated by the state, nevertheless denying access all together was considered as discriminatory since the services are priced differently in public and private clinics. Regarding private fertility clinic Maija attended, she noted that while the service was perceived as generally appropriate, frustration was caused by doctors who changed regularly and the expectation that the family circumstances needed to be regularly repeated to the changing personnel. Maija expressed frustration for having to continuously explain their situation as a lesbian couple in a relationship and wanting a child. In participant's own words, "to have a family like mine in this time and place should not be that astonishing". Maija's experience can be interpreted in the light according to which childlessness is a norm associated with lesbianism and homosexuality, whereby rainbow families with children continue to break the expectation according to which family remains as commonly a heterosexual category.

During participant observation, it was explicitly expressed on several occasions by the representative of FRFA that rainbow parents "bring a lot of money" to private fertility clinics and private family coaching services. Family-support services available for lesbian and gay individuals are factored by the socio-economic status of individuals creating thus hierarchies according to the individual resources. Moreover, by highlighting that rainbow families are desired customers of private fertility clinics, underlying thought that rainbow parents are wanted in private sector services is put forward by FRFA. This observation may be mirrored to a research sponsored by the Ministry for Employment in 2007, according to which one fifth of rainbow parents reported stigmatisation or fear of stigmatisation as an element that discourages rainbow families from using public services (Jämsä, Kuosmanen 2007) Furthermore 40 % of participants had reported insensitivity towards rainbow families in family coaching child health centre (ibid.)

Discussions with participants demonstrate that peoples' perceptions of public institutions were not governed only by the lived experiences but also individual expectations of encounters played a role. For example Maija noted that she and her spouse decided to invite doula to the child birth because they wanted to make sure that they do not have to stress whether the hospital staff can support the whole family

“I was nervous about how things will go before hand but all went pretty well, even though the midwives changed three times during the childbirth. I felt that the doula was important in supporting us as a family in that we did not have to worry about justifying our right to be there. She too is a volunteer from the 3rd sector services. It would have been pretty lonely without her. We were both very satisfied that she was there with us” (recorded interview 1.4.2015).

In Maija's rhetoric civil society services are essential to bridge the gap between the reality of her family and the public family services provided by the council. In her experience, societally active rainbow community is significant particularly for its capacity to reconfirm that homosexual identity and doing family are not mutually excluding notions.

Fear of exclusion is recognised by the activist organisations working with sexual minorities and rainbow families. In 2014 Pirkanmaan Seta, the Pirkanmaa regional advocacy organisation started a support program “sinuiksi”. Representative of the organisation comments that there is a strong demand for such service:

“People contact us because they want to avoid bad experiences. They come and ask advice because they want to be safe that the professionals are not totally ignorant. To feel safe that someone has tested the services. This is a low threshold service for those purposes”

In a recent publication, discussed above that deals with rainbow families in public services in Finland, it is noted that rainbow families are less likely to use public services due to the fear of discrimination and internalisation of compulsive success, whereby the fear of being stigmatised for failure causes suppression of expression. According to the survey, rainbow parents are more likely to opt out from using public services than their heterosexual counterparts. (Juha Jämsä, 2008).

The fear of stigmatisation due to family form is a real consideration for rainbow parents using public services. Moreover one negative experience in a public service can contribute in lack of trust towards public welfare and state services more generally. The outcome may be a self-guarding individual who uses private sector service and relies on the support from civil society in the fear of rejection or humiliation by the state-based services.

3.2 Governance by assimilation or transformation

Davina Cooper (2006) discusses further the interconnectedness concerning the concepts of governmentality and sexual citizenship. For the author, sexual citizenship signifies enlarging civic membership to include sexual minorities by bringing forward the equal rights discourse. Cooper argues that emphasis on sexual citizenship represents a form of governmentality, whereby accommodation and recognition of minority identities within existing social structure monopolises a societal discourse, simultaneously confining the boundaries equality within limits of the existing structure. The discourse of sexual citizenship operates to best accommodate various minority identities within.

As the web of power is no longer confined to the state-institution alone, citizenship is simultaneously associated with multiple sites of identification:

‘The emergence of new registers of citizenship, consumption-based, cultural, cosmopolitan, global, environmental challenges perspectives that restrict citizenship to the attainment of prescribed and static rights or construe it as a universalised form of belonging’ (ibid. 932).

Sexual citizenship can be conceptualised as a specific discourse that defines boundaries of belonging and equal citizenship according to the logic of neo-liberal governance that outreaches the power of state institution alone.

Sexual citizenship and related discourse on homonormativity suggest that by engaging in a nuclear family type arrangement, homosexual and lesbian identities obtain recognition for their claim to engage in a rainbow family by the external structural and cultural environments. Rainbow family where two parents have registered their partnership and where they share one household is an arrangement that can be provided structurally with the rights and duties of family welfare.

It can be argued that when Finnish legislation extends welfare entitlements of family life to couples in registered partnerships, individuals are encouraged to normalise their status by internalising the moral codes of the heteronormative social structure. As noted within this thesis, those parents who do not adhere the model of nuclear family, or who otherwise abstain from the registered partnership are, to differing levels, excluded from the sphere of legal / social recognition thus creating new hierarchies of belonging.

Judith Butler (2002) argues that the state is only a legitimate body to govern belonging in so far that its hegemony to regulate rights and duties of citizenship is maintained and recognised universally. As noted by Cooper (2006), increasing globalisation and emergence of moral codes such as international human rights alters the role of the state as the sole body with ultimate capacity to govern and regulate what legitimate family should look like. Increasing moral pressures that arise outside the scope of state institution can shape normative values associated with kinship. Simultaneously, moral codes, such as international human rights can become charged with an element of universality, by enforcing the argument for change in state-level legislation.

Butler refers to state as an abstract organisation that realises normative power beyond the legislative framework, but that simultaneously represents only one site where power is working in contemporary society. Private services for family coaching and private clinics that provide reproductive technologies to individuals regardless of sexual identity, demonstrate that state is not an independent governor of citizenship and belonging in relation to kinship. Furthermore, the non-governmental institutions who operate to inform and support both governmental institutions and individuals concerning the rights and duties of rainbow families, expose a network of operators who facilitate people's right to self-define their kin relations beyond the preconditioned definitions of belonging. In relation, online databases and peer groups demonstrate the importance of active citizenship by creating informal networks where information, social connections, and support are available for citizens who do not fit the hegemonic assumption of person- and parenthood.

All respondents of this thesis communicated that internet is important source for information regarding rights and experiences of doing family as a rainbow parent. In cases of Saara and Maija, internet provided important platform through which to engage in social activities and events as a self-identified members of rainbow community.

Conversations with the participants showed that negative experiences in public services potentially diminish citizen's trust to the state institution, encouraging individuals to seek support in 3rd sector and private services. For example, as demonstrated explicitly by Maija's experiences, services in the private sector can substitute the lack of support and insensitivity experienced in public welfare services.

Butler argues that state recognition continues to lay foundation of public acceptance and is an important target to be met in order to achieve inclusion as equal members of civil society. Simultaneously the author points out the limitations of state-apparatus as a governing institution of contemporary civil society:

‘It is crucial... that we come to think critically about what the state has become during these times or, indeed, how it has become a site for the articulation of a fantasy that seeks to deny or overturn what these times have brought us ‘ (ibid. 28).

Butler discusses mobilization of anthropological structuralism and Levi-Strauss’ claim regarding exogamy and heterosexuality as universal principles that organise families and communities in contemporary West. For the author the discourse of ‘symbolic order’ (2002, 28) is fortified in social structures that reproduce boundaries of belonging in contemporary society. The notion of kinship as fundamentally heterosexual is embed in the taken for granted symbolic order, according to the author. According to Butler, family is of particular interest the governing apparatuses, such as nation and state as families operate as sites of cultural reproduction. Transformations within the sphere of family bring forth the potential for cultural transformation in the level of society. By preconditioning civic rights with specific ways of doing family, the state-apparatus is governing the protection of heterosexually ordered social structure, Butler suggests.

In terms of socio-political order, Weston (1991) discusses the difference in assimilationist and transformative models of belonging. While the former accommodates rainbow families

‘by simply extending certain rights (i.e. custody, adoption, marriage) to lesbians and gay men and treating them as members of another minority group’ (ibid. 208, brackets added)

the latter ‘recognises gay families that span several households or families that include friends’ (ibid.).

The approach according to which integration of rainbow families is facilitated by homo- and heterosexual parents’ assimilation to existing heteronormative ideal of doing family provides rainbow families with increasingly equal rights to heterosexual counterparts. In such view, difference between hetero- and homosexual identities is the object of romantic affection argued not as a sufficient reason for social exclusion. On the other hand, a transformative model of belonging reconstitutes the conceptualisation of family according to individual choice, where predefined family arrangements do not dictate the distribution of welfare to the citizenry. Weston argues that

by recognising one way to do family, different ways to organise kin-relations are consequently delegitimised. For example, by prioritising marriage as a legitimate method to partner and to parent, the different ways in which people engage in doing family are consequently disregarded as secondary.

Richardson (2004) questions the dichotomy between assimilationist and transformative models of inclusivity by pointing out that the growing discourse of equal rights implicitly paves the way for enlarging normative conceptualization of family. The author suggests that with the process of normalisation, boundaries between homo- and heterosexual identities potentially blurr. Consequently

‘a sexual identity may become less significant, an identity thread rather than a core self-definition’ (ibid. 401).

Hence, Richardson notes that the notions of assimilation and transformation are not ambiguous to one another when situating social inclusion of rainbow family in contemporary society.

Hopkins et al. (2013) discuss the role of legalized partnering in constituting rainbow family as societally equal unit to the heterosexual equivalent. For the authors, increasing visibility of families in different forms has facilitated the demand to acknowledge rainbow families cultural level. Simultaneously registered partnership and equal-marriage have provided rainbow families with structural verification that they are recognised. In the activist work preceding legal and public recognition, activists

‘have confronted anti-gay politics that stereotype lesbians and gay men as over-sexualized and incapable of maintaining committed relationships and stable families’ (ibid. 99).

The emphasis on sameness regarding homo- and heterosexual identities has created normality of individuals stripped from sexuality as a viable claim to seek legitimisation of rainbow families. Hopkins et al. highlight that marriage is ‘the most universally accepted form of legal relationship’ (ibid. 101). Rainbow families inevitably face structural inequalities when access to formalised relationship is denied. The authors argue that by engaging in parenting practices that challenge legal commitment between husband and wife, and the biological connectedness between parent and child, rainbow families challenge the foundations of family in contemporary, Western conceptualisation whether consciously or unconsciously. Hopkins et al. abandon critique according to which assimilation, as a demand for legal recognition of homosexual parenting and a partnering would simply verify existing foundations of social structure where family is embed. Rather, doing rainbow

family is a process that involves continuous negotiation during which heteronormative values are on one hand echoed and on the other, questioned in everyday life.

‘It cannot be denied that same-sex couples and their families are increasingly being recognized by, and incorporated into, a broad range of social institutions from health to education to the law, despite the widespread lack of legal relationship recognition’ (ibid. 106).

Instead of simply assimilating, the authors argue that normalisation of homosexual and lesbian parenting is a process of individualisation, where existing structures and practices are negotiated to suit the circumstances of different types of families.

Question concerning ‘normality’ of rainbow family was present in the discussions among the participants of the study. Observations in this thesis echo the claim by Hopkin’s et al. according to which people negotiate their sexual identities in relation to their family life in a highly individualistic manner, by internalising some and rejecting some characteristics of normative family life. The levels in which people identify with sexuality and as a member of societal minority reflect how accepted the participants felt in their everyday social environments.

While one participant expressed sexual identity as unrelated to the process of doing family, for others the notion of ‘rainbow’ was a defining characteristic of family-life. The emphasis that people put to sexual identity in doing family correlated to an extent the experiences of rainbow parents in public services and elsewhere. Among the participants, families whose status was questioned by the social environment, the parents were more inclined to seek reconfirmation of their family-identity in activist organizations and peer-groups. Simultaneously the parents, who did not express negative experiences in public services or other everyday encounters with friends and other familiar people, were less involved in the collective activities designed for rainbow families. They also discussed their families in the framework of new normal rather than that of marginal. Rather than speaking of one static web of norms, it is essential to point out that different individuals I interviewed occupy different environments where the normative expectations differ.

For example Pete in a multi-parent family noted that the three parents have jointly attended parental evenings and that Pete’s spouse Erik, checks and signs for example the child’s homework. Despite not having official status of parent nor guardian, Pete spoke of Erik as an equal parent in the core the family. The fact that Erik’s participation to watch over and sign school work and his attendance in parental evenings and correspondence with teachers had not been challenged by the school’s staff

signified to Pete that the family-arrangement is respected by school. Pete noted that after years of difficulties he felt so “chill” about the family arrangement that for example participating in activities designed for particularly rainbow families was not experienced as relevant. The assumption according to which sexual identity of parents would place the family in societally oppressed position was not validated by the experiences of Pete. Instead of associating with a minority-status that conflicts with normative assumptions of citizenship, Pete did not place his situation as fundamentally distinctive from other ways of doing family.

Saara, who felt that her social environment and particularly the members of the natal family objected Saara’s sexual identity, noted that everyday life actions concerning her family needed to be done in secrecy to avoid confrontation. For example, when Saara’s female partner moved in the same household with her and the children, Saara did not share the information with her friends and family until after her moving in was completed due to expected attempt of manipulation and condemnation by the familiar people towards the new family arrangement. Because Saara felt that other people close to her continuously criticised her for her sexual identity, Saara felt her status as a mother and as a lesbian was deviant from the normative assumption. Thus sexuality and coming out as a lesbian were characteristic that influenced the overall experience of doing family. Rejection of the lifestyle that incorporates lesbian coupledness and children contributed in Saara’s identification as different and socially marginalised. Association with the members of rainbow community and participation in collective activities were important means to identify with people who shared the experience of doing rainbow family as a process that challenges the normative kinship.

In discussing belonging, Saara noted that the rainbow community was not homogeneously welcoming of her participation. For example, due to Saara’s previous heterosexual marriage, the participant expressed having the genuineness of her sexual identity repeatedly challenged by the community of rainbow families. To be involved in the activities with homosexual and lesbian parents and their children was important in order to reconfirm others’ of her sexual identity as real.

Whitehead (2011) points that emphasis on marriage-based inclusion leaves invisible those homosexuals who do not adhere to the claim that to legitimise one’s family as real, one should commit to marital-type institutions. In Finland campaigns regarding equal rights of LGBT have centered on the right to marry (i.e. Tahdon 2013 -campaign), preceded by the call for registered partnership that was verified in legislation 2001 (Oikeus: Rekisteröity Parisuhde). The claim according to which families other than the heterosexual, married with biological children should

legal and political acknowledgement has received increasing attention since the demographic of Finnish families has started to change in a wider societal level. Increasing divorce rates have contributed to increasing numbers of single-parent families, two-household families and blended families, to name a few examples. Simultaneously arrangements for foster- and adoptive families are becoming more visible. People's increasing international movement has contributed to increasingly multicultural fabric of families, where different values and ways of doing family contribute to different ways in which kin-relations are organised (Monimuotoiset perheet Ry). Furthermore, the discourse of family can be argued to broaden as different interest groups are growing in number. For example increasing divorce rates have brought forwards the claim to recognize legally two homes for children whose parents do not share the same address. (i.e. YLE: Eroperheiden lapsilla on yhä useammin kaksi kotia).

As the demand to recognise diverse ways to do family gains public attention, privileging marriage based welfare structure is increasingly problematic. Simultaneously as normative assumption of nuclear family is challenged by activists the claim for gender-neutral marriage legislation is proceeding in Finland. The two developments set a scene, where on one hand rainbow activists seek marital rights to establish equality, and on the other hand increasingly diverse civil society seeks to diminish legislative privileging of marriage in family welfare.

The argument for stable parent-child relations that is conceived to connote best interest of the child contributes to moral justification of rainbow families in doing. Cooperation of various organisations (monimuotoiset perheet) that lobby for more inclusive family-welfare exemplifies and argument according to which current social policies do not adequately and equally address different needs of children in contemporary families.

Mignon Moore and Michael Stambolis-Ruhstorfer (2013) discuss a 'generational shift' in parenting strategies whereby planned family making has become increasingly available option for individuals who identify with a sexual minority. In Finland, the Rainbow family association was established 1997. The association announces itself as active in providing information, support and contacts to people who identify with a category of rainbow family. Simultaneously, the association operates to campaign for legislative changes and educates professionals in public welfare sector on how to encounter rainbow families. As the amount of Finnish rainbow families has grown, the association has widened its scope of activities. The trend is descriptive that increasingly, homosexual identities

are coming out with their claim to be recognised as an equal citizen with the right to engage in family-making processes as heterosexual individuals.

This thesis argues that among the participants those, who felt social exclusion due to normative expectations or family-life and kin-relations either in public services or through interpersonal encounters, expressed frustration towards the societal hegemony of heterosexual kinship. In the meanwhile those, whose experiences were not perceived as excluding or otherwise improper, did not identify as belonging to marginal or socially deprived category of doing family.

In cases of Saara and Maija, the conflict between normative environment and individual circumstances contributed to a closer affiliation with activist organisations and wider rainbow community. Their experience of doing rainbow family was perceived as different from what was understood as predefined expectation. To Saara and Maija, rainbow community offered reconfirmation that their sexual identities do not conflict with or otherwise obstruct the processes of doing family. Belonging in rainbow community derived from the sense that sexual identity of parents contributes in the family's condition decisively when one or more parents identify with a sexual minority.

On the other hand for example in the cases of Kristiina and Pete, even though the participants had experienced exclusion by the social environment and reported partial treatment in some public services (i.e. child health centre), sexual identity was experienced as less significant in terms of kinship and parenting experience. Feelings of frustration could not be reduced to sexual identity per se in the experiences the two participants. In the case of Kristiina, accommodating her life to secure shared custody despite legal verification, her young age when becoming a parent and complex relationship with the legal parent of the child were contributing factors to her vulnerable position in structural terms. The situation in Kristiina's experience was a consequence of complex circumstances that could not be directly reduced to her sexual identity.

For Pete, assuming the role of active caretaker since the birth of his child had contributed to situations where his role was questioned due to his gender both by relatives and by child welfare services. In a multi-parent family, the participant did not feel that the sexual identity of Pete or his spouse contributed decisively to the everyday life of the family. As such Pete did not find it appealing to partake in the community of rainbow families as for him, sexual identity of parents

was not a source of sameness per se, and the rainbow community was subsequently not prioritised as a source of communality.

As argued by Butler, (2002) contemporary anthropological attention to kinship intersects with various social phenomena and racial, gendered, economic and scientific attributes are increasingly influential in the experience of doing family. Based on the findings in this thesis, frustration among rainbow families does not always connote the question sexual identity alone, rather ambiguities with social environment can mirror non-normative living arrangements outside the scope of nuclear family in more general level. Anthropological attention to the level of everyday interaction problematizes the assumption of hegemonic, heterosexual nuclear family by revealing how categories of belonging actualise through social relations.

3.3 Marriage and Transmittance of Culture

Carsten (2003) seeks to bridge anthropological analysis of kinship between “the west” and “the rest” by breaking the approach to kinship in the non-western societies as inherently public and political, as opposed to the West where implications of family have been conceptualised as primarily private domain. Instead, new kinship studies ought to emphasise expressions of kinship as symbols that negotiate political dominations within the context they inhabit. Carsten refers to work of David Schneider to point out that various societal phenomena, such as kinship, religion, and nationalism all expect abiding solidarity as the basis of social relations:

‘Schneider noted the parallels between the two principal ways one can be a citizen – by birth or by “naturalisation,” that is, a legal process – and the two ways one can be a relative – in nature or in law. He suggested that, just as in kinship the two elements of nature and of law give rise to three categories of being a relative (by birth, by law, and by a combination of the two), so the same is true of citizenship’ (ibid. 155).

Similarly to Anderson’s widely applied theory of nation as imagined community, Carsten notes that the imaginary of kinship renders the concept of family as seemingly natural and constant organisation. The author argues that in order to analyse connotations of law and nature in contemporary kinship, anthropological focus should establish the processes that invest ‘emotional power’ in the production of kinship as a bounded category of identification. For Carsten, the ways in which loyalty in kinship is produced interlinks with wider set of social establishments such as religion, ethnicity and nation that are transferred through procreation from one generation to another. By conceptualizing solidarity as a source of cohesion in kin-relations, the mechanisms by

which boundaries of belonging are produced and naturalized in wider set of communities is subsequently opened for further analysis, the author argues.

As kinship is no longer observed as a ‘natural’ category, it follows that social family relations render as questions of choice rather than factual reflections of blood and law. Carsten argues that the exercise of choice destabilises the discourse of kinship particularly because it presents new fragility of relations that have previously been taken for granted:

‘If it marks a cultural shift, this shift is not confined to domestic or private contexts. Intense media debates, publicly voiced concern, and legislative innovations over new forms of family, and the “rights” of parents to have children or even of children to divorce their parents underline the political salience of contestations over the domain of the family and of the symbolic space that kinship will occupy in the future’ (ibid. 181).

Cultural conceptualisations are increasingly entering the discourse of kinship and simultaneously politicising the notion of family. New forms of kinship bring forth questions of inclusion and exclusion that previously passed as unquestioned. In the micro-analysis of kinship, the question of relatedness reflects assumptions about the boundaries of belonging in various imagined communities, according to Carsten.

The thesis addresses conceptualisation of family in Finnish public discourse and explores how structural and cultural definitions are reflected in rainbow parents’ lived experience of belonging. The meta-narrative of this thesis concerns with an understanding of child’s best interest according to which stable and secured parent-child relations form the foundation of self-defined kin-relations. In its limited scope, this thesis seeks to broaden the discussion concerning family with specific focus to rainbow parenting in Finland. By privileging a family where two legally coupled heterosexual individuals live in a shared household with their biologically and legally connected child, the state effectively ignores the growing multiplicity of families, of which the rainbow family discussed in this thesis is but one example.

According to Butler (2002), within the discourse that opposes rainbow families’ equal rights, the child has been produced as

‘a dense site for the transfer and reproduction of culture, where culture carries with it implicit norms racial purity and domination’ (ibid. 22).

The question regarding homosexual’s right to have children is associated with wider changes in the sphere of culture, such as immigration, which allegedly threatens the imagined homogenous

national community, the author argues. Hence for Butler, by the governance of kinship through institution of marriage, the state confines boundaries of national belonging to those individuals, who are deemed to abide its normative structures. In this light, heterosexual nuclear family is a medium through which culture is transmitted from one generation to another. If marriage signifies a universal acceptance of one's family then by legitimising their committed relationship to one another, individuals reclaim their rightful place within the imagined national community.

The purpose of this thesis is not to problematise the interconnectedness of normative family and national belonging in detail. However the chapter has brought forward the perspective by which the state maintains to support the concept of nuclear family for it is assigned with the capacity to preserve the imagined national coherence.

This thesis aims to demonstrate the interconnectedness of cultural and structural environments and analyse how they contribute to the overall experience of rainbow parents discussed here. The thesis approaches the thematic question holistically by including various elements and experiences of inclusion and exclusion that influence the identification processes of rainbow parents, thus questioning the division of public and private in the sphere of kinship and family.

With reference to contemporary politics situated in France, Camille Robics, (2014) illuminates the importance of new kinship studies in academia. With regards to reforming legalisation of registered partnership Robics argues that structural anthropology provided opponents of the reformation with academic arguments that present heterosexual marriage as universal foundation of social coherence. Within the debate, heterosexual nuclear family was portrayed as the core feature of established symbolic order that is necessary for the functioning of socially coherent nation. The claim of structuralism provided an argument according to which heterosexual union is the ultimate public institution and a necessity for societal contract between the citizenry and the state. According to Robics

‘Like abstract universalism, heterosexuality had now become one of the defining traits of the French Republic. The normative heterosexual family needed to be defended because it provided a basis to rearticulate republicanism, to reassert a universalism that appeared increasingly threatened by postcolonialism, globalization, the European Union, and the ever-expanding American way of life’ (ibid. 13).

Robics argues that conceptualization of kinship in the French political debate was associated with wider discourse concerned with French nationalism. Within the discourse, heterosexual

nuclear family was portrayed as the core foundation of society. Hence, legislative changes that deal with entitlements of family are a question concerned with the collective foundation of belonging in French society. The anthropological structuralist theory was, in the French case, applied to argue that culturally informed family is in fact a universal unit and a collectivist institution in the core of the nation-building process.

Robics' analysis is important as it brings forth an example of the potential power and political weight of anthropological theories in contemporary debates of public policy. In the globalized national environment, where fluidity and complexity of demographic conditions continues to increase, notions of belonging and normativity, as well as the principles of code and conduct are increasingly vulnerable to politicisation.

Since the initiative for equal marriage was approved by the Finnish parliament in November 2014, by January 2015 an activist association for 'Genuine Marriage Association' (Aito Avioliitto Ry) was established in Finland. In its website, the association claims that a heterosexual marriage is a universal organisation 'practically known in all human communities throughout the history' (Aito Avioliitto: Tietoa meistä). Furthermore, the association claims that 'a marriage between a man and a woman benefits the society in a unique way', 'is in accordance with human rights' and that 'nuclear family is a natural building block of society' (ibid.). Similar to the argument put forth in Robics' case study, in Finland the claim on marriage as an institution between a man and a woman draws parallels to the universal symbolic order and national coherence.

4. Partnering, Parenting and Gendered Kinship

This chapter employs notions established in this thesis thus far regarding the conceptualisations of family in contemporary Finland by mirroring the experiences of rainbow parents to concepts of sexual citizenship and homonormativity. With particular focus to the intersections such as gender and parenthood on one hand and partnering and parenting on the other, the chapter asks:

- How participants negotiate their everyday lives in relation to the prevailing socio-structural environment, and how are the notions of gender and partnership perceived as relevant to doing family?

4.1 Legitimised Partnering in Doing Family

In relation to doing family, Butler (2002) notes that contemporary kinship falls in between the spheres of public and private: While families and individuals are not fragments of collective in a way that one's blood lineage would determine one's social position, nevertheless family is an organisation that is governed and bound by culture and law.

Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer (2011) point out that to establish the differences between heterosexual and homosexual nuclear families, differentiated concept of marriage and registered partnership should be established. While the participants of this thesis were not in a registered partnership they categorised registered partnership as an institution parallel to marriage when marriage is not an option. The choice to opt out from such arrangement was a conscious decision by the participants.

A representative of FRFA expressed that the difference between marriage and registered partnership is moreover symbolic, with the right to adopt (in other case but internal adoption) as the main difference to heterosexual marriage. Symbolic difference includes legislation on name, whereby registered partners do not automatically assume the opportunity to have shared surname (Oikeus: Laki rekisteröidystä parisuhteesta). Neither is registered partnership automatically internationally comparable to marriage, hence issues of recognition might arise if the couple should move abroad (European Union: Registered Partnerships). While this thesis recognises that differences between registered partnership and marriage exist, its purpose is not to problematise these differences in detail. Rather, this thesis employs registered partnership as an institution that, while not entirely compatible with heterosexual marriage, it imitates the function of marriage, as an institution that to a large degree governs the rights and entitlements of family life that concern with lesbian or homosexual parents.

Jaye Cee Whitehead (2011) discusses marriage as a union that organises rights and duties of individuals and legitimises belonging in contemporary society. By monopolising rights-based belonging within the limits of marital-style unions and by controlling individuals' access to such unions the state is effectively governing individual's deservingness to full citizenship. In terms of registered partnership, this thesis demonstrates that while couples in registered relationships have acquired most rights associated with marriage, families that are not bound the legal commitment of two parents are to differing degrees excluded from the civic rights associated with family life.

Within the discourse of sexual citizenship, broadening marital rights to include same-sex couples assumes that minority sexual identities should be included in the sphere of neo-liberal governance. For Whitehead, marriage is a

‘Sacred contract offering access to legal rights and responsibilities of self-governance’
(ibid: 297).

As a consequence one cannot seek marital rights without accepting to be governed within and according to the existing social code, the author points. Whitehead argues that the element of risk is central to the maintenance of existing system, whereby marriage provides security from external stigma and internalised shame, associated with individuals not adhering to the code of good citizenship.

Butler (2002) discusses the ‘regulatory control on normative kinship’ (ibid. 16) and argues that by controlling legitimatisation of coupledness and predefining welfare entitlements of family, the state effectively operates against universalist egalitarianism and invalidates person's right to self-definition. The insistence on marriage as a fundamental principle that legitimises kinship demonstrates how intimate relationships are not solely private social ties but moreover governed as worthy of public concern. A flip side of marriage as a Universalist expression of belonging: Butler notes that opting out of marital institution constitutes effective exclusion of families from the sphere of societal recognition, thus contributing to experiences of rejection and self-doubt.

By conditioning legitimate kinship to marriage- or marriage like institution such as registered partnership, the discourse of equality is produced in relation to marriage and subsequent rights. Butler problematizes a social system where marriage is assumed as a gateway to normalcy, and whereby the call for equality is based on the argument that same-sex couples are of one variation

within the normative, heterosexually organised nuclear family. By extending the right to marry inclusive of same-sex unions, boundary between legitimate and illegitimate citizenship is reorganized not according to sexual identity, but according to those who choose to marry and do family within the existing social structure, and those who resist it. Outcome is a new hierarchy of belonging where those who seek marriage entitlements are seen as potentially included citizens, while those who do not seek legitimatisation under the condition of marriage are produced as self-excluding others. Central to Butler's critique is the institution of marriage itself as a mechanism that legitimises kinship and enables one's civic rights. By insisting on the notion of marriage, various forms of doing family from single- to multi-parent arrangements remain marginalized. Hence seeking equality by securing access to marital rights ratifies societal significance of marriage and subsequently fosters the division between legitimate and illegitimate ways of doing family thus creating new hierarchies of belonging, according to Butler. As long as the activist movements on equality centre their attention to marriage-rights, discourse on same-sex marriage remains synonymous for individual's rightfulness to have a family in structural and cultural discourses, the author argues.

Regarding the discussion of gay marriage Butler discusses polarised debate where same-sex access to marriage is either supported on the grounds of the equality discourse, or rejected on the basis that it violates societal 'symbolic order' (2002: 26), based on the union of woman and man and their biologically connected children. Equality of Sexual Identities- versus Symbolic Order between Husband and Wife discourses, individuals are positioned to take a simplistic yes or no stand in an issue whose complexity exceeds the question of marriage alone, Butler notes. By emphasising right to marry as the core question of same-sex equality, the discourse concerning equality beyond its ascription to predefined categories of belonging is left unquestioned. The confrontation between Tahdon 2013 that is behind the initiative for equal marriage and Aito Avioliitto ry that advocates to maintain the current legislation of marriage limited to opposite sexes, can be viewed as an example of the clash between two opposing discourses in Finland.

Yvette Taylor (2011) discusses legislative changes in the context of United Kingdom that bring forth conceptualisation of family as a culturally subjective notion. The author refers to equal marriage legislation as a policy that potentially recreates rainbow parents as included, normalised citizens with equal rights to welfare entitlements and social recognition to the heterosexual counterparts. For Taylor, marriage is a form of legitimised partnering that validates one's claim for parenting and doing family. Marriage arguably reconfirms existing social structure and power

relations when extended to include sexual minorities. Taylor employs homonormativity to describe a process whereby the demand for social inclusion replaces contestation of existing institutional and cultural constructions that maintain heteronormative social structure in a given society. In this way, marriage is presented as an institution via which inclusion is an attainable solution to reclaim equal citizenship status. Taylor argues that legitimisation of homosexual partnering produces gay and lesbian identities as newly accepted citizens, who are no longer perceived as deviants of the existing social structure. By adhering to the principle that marriage is a precondition that validates gay and lesbian parenting, the existing social structure ‘depolicitises gay culture’ (ibid. 287) and encourages social cohesion. For Taylor, inclusion of gay partnering in level of structural is significant in level of symbolic, whereby inclusion of homosexuals in the existing social structure symbolises recognition of homosexuals as legitimate citizens, equipped with equal rights and responsibilities to their heterosexual counterparts.

Whilst none of the participants were in a registered partnership, the significance of symbolic recognition was evident in the discussions, particularly in relation to the status of sole custody and domestic partnership that in Finland is only legally recognised as a union between a man and a woman (Oikeusministeriö: Avoliitto). For example, Saara noted that once her spouse moved in to live with her and the children, she contacted Kela that she no longer requires housing benefits granted to her on the basis of being a single parent. After the initial notification, Saara noticed the month after she had received the benefit. Saara called the office to reconfirm that she no longer needs the benefit, as there are two working adults sharing the home and that she would like to return the granted benefits for the time her spouse has been living in the shared household. The participant describes her frustration over the discussion with Kela’s representative, according to which the voluntary repayment cannot be accepted, as the law does not recognise same-sex couples who cohabit to be involved in a domestic partnership. Saara officially complained about her situation to Kela, but continued nevertheless to be granted with the benefits on the basis of being a sole-custodian. For Saara, the attempt to return the social grant should have been accepted on the basis of equal citizenship. Rejection of the return was interpreted as an act of exclusion by the state institution. Obtaining institutional recognition over her domestic partnership and acknowledgement of her family’s new status was preferred to the material benefit Saara was entitled to when institutionally categorised as a single parent. The symbolic recognition of the relationship status was conceived as more meaningful than the material recognition of social grant on the basis of sole custodian.

Similarly Maija expressed frustration related to her judicial status of being a single mother. Maija, also in a domestic partnership with her spouse pointed to the symbolic significance of structural recognition:

“Of course it is not fair that our partnership is not recognised... We both participate in taking care of the child. Now that the baby is still small I am at home and my spouse is working. She does the food shopping more often and I do some other things. It does not matter who does what, we are equally involved in this yet I am considered as a single parent” (recorded interview 3.4.2015)

For Maija the fact that her spouse was not legally recognised as a partner nor as a parent, demonstrated systemic injustice, since heterosexual couples in domestic partnership with children are legally acknowledged in relation to one another. Maija acknowledged that by registering their partnership officially, the parents could pave the way for domestic adoption; however the couple, according to Maija, opted out from this option as they associated registered partnership with submitting to pre-defined standards of kinship. Maija expressed that her and her spouse had decided to stay in a domestic partnership “because this way suits us the best”, rejecting registered partnership as an institution that governs the status their family. Feelings of social exclusion derived from different standards according to which hetero- and homosexual partnering legitimises parenting in domestic partnership. While in contemporary Finland, for heterosexual couples living together, marriage is increasingly an institution of choice. For homosexuals, a registered partnership has emerged as an institution that preconditions assimilation, sort of a rite of passage on the way towards structurally and culturally acceptable family life. Not being legally recognised as a two-parent family contributed in Maija’s perception that the family status in Finland is hierarchically positioned according to parents’ sexual identity.

In reference, Taylor (2011) discusses potential of registered partnership to recreate boundaries of good and bad homosexual, where sexual minorities are provided with the opportunity to assimilate in the existing system or to resist it, latter of which is depicted as voluntary self-exclusion, deviation from the wider society. For the author, social inclusion and claim for respectability are bound with compliance to the opportunities of existing institutional framework. Taylor’s fieldwork in the United Kingdom demonstrates that an opportunity to register partnership legally can be experienced as an internalised expectation. According to this homosexual couples should register their partnership legally in order to validate their status as rightful citizens, yet demonstrate gratefulness for the opportunity to actualise civic belonging. The author problematises structural developments

whereby legislation, conditions rights and duties of homosexual citizenship to internalisation of existing social structure, without questioning the predefined categories of belonging within the structure.

Maija and Saara were by law recognised as single parents despite living in a domestic partnership with their spouses. Kristiina was a social parent, and a legal guardian whose parenthood was not legally recognised and who did not live with the biological mother of the child. Nevertheless Kristiina had unofficially arranged kin-relations to share the custody of the child with the legal parent. Pete was a biological father in a multi-parent family cohabiting with his daughter and his spouse, and the biological mother of the child. Pete did not explicitly experience social exclusion of his family or structural privileging of heterosexual coupledness that legitimatises kinship, while the three mothers expressed frustration, feelings of injustice and marginalisation as a consequence of combining family life with sexual identity in the existing institutional framework. Rather than emphasising the role of welfare entitlements, the participants brought forwards the importance of gaining recognition to families' right to self-definition in the level of symbolic. Absence of rights and duties that apply to heterosexual parenting and partnering was experienced as an institutional denial of participants' kin-relations. For example, when discussing of her family status Maija expressed that "officially and legally we don't exist". Ignorance in institutional level towards rainbow families was again experienced as frustration towards the governmental apparatus and considered to define the boundaries of belonging and family in the societal level unfairly.

In Finland majority of welfare entitlements of rainbow family are bound with the institution of registered partnership. For example recognition of the status of social parent in Kela, domestic adoption, widow's pension entitlement, lower level of inheritance tax and child increase in unemployment benefit are attached with registering of partnership (Sateenkaariperheet Ry: Parisuhteen rekisteröimisen merkitys). The prominence of registered partnership as an institution that validates rainbow family is exemplified for example in FRFA's recommendation that all female couples using unknown sperm donator should register their partnership prior to starting a family. As domestic adoption and other entitlements are only available in a registered partnership, FRFA encourages individuals to register their partnership in order to maximise the civic rights of family members.

Taylor (2011) argues that as registered partnership leads to structural recognition of family-life and by committing to the marriage-like institution, rainbow parents reproduce societal norms that

govern kin-relations and parenting in contemporary society. FRFA's recommendation that rainbow parents should register their partnership in order to maximise basic rights of the family is in accordance with Taylor's assertion that realisation of civic inclusion by registered partnership is privileged over abandonment of marital style institution.

4.2 Gendered Parenting and Kinship

This thesis discusses how normative discourses of everyday life can contribute in experiences of doing rainbow family, and the extent to which people experience social inclusion or exclusion due to their non-conventional family arrangements in contemporary Finland. During the thesis process it became clear that question of gender cannot be isolated from the discourse on rainbow family, since expectations of parenting and roles assumed by the normative division of domestic labour intersect the discussion of doing family in contemporary Finland. This chapter continues from the anthropological observations brought forth earlier in this thesis, whereby the biological mother is naturalised as the primary caretaker of the child. While this thesis has so far demonstrated privileging of motherhood in structural level, the chapter now looks at the process of gendered parenting through everyday experiences of the participants.

Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer (2013) argue that gay men are both structurally and culturally in the most marginalised position when engaging in active caretaking. The authors argue that the scholarly emphasis that deals with rainbow families stresses the conceptualisation of parenting roles of mothering and fathering within families. This is indicative that the study of gay and lesbian parenting problematizes dichotomous gender division. This section of the thesis discusses some of the complexities that relate to gendered parenting in the framework of Finnish society.

Gerald Mallon (2004) argues that by denying structurally equal status of gay partnerships, contemporary society consequently discriminates against rainbow families in economic, legal and emotional terms. The author describes child rearing as inherently gendered process in the contemporary West. While fathers remain depicted as secondary caretakers, mothers are largely assigned the role of nurturer and the head of domestic household. Mallon's ethnography among urban gay fathers in New York City demonstrates how conceptualisations of gender, moreover than sexuality, influence active male parenting as a negligible experience. Participants of Mallon's study expressed that welfare services were often 'unwelcoming and uncooperative' due to the 'gender

based limitations' (ibid. 134). Mallon analyses the cultural assumptions of hegemonic masculinity in different services as contradictive with equal parenting. The author argues:

'The images that our society has had of men parenting children include the divorced dad who sees the kids on the weekends and Thursday nights, the workaholic dad who just writes checks, and Mr. Mom, who pitches in with child care but still defers to the child's mother as the expert on what the child needs' (ibid. 135).

Mallon's notion of culture that preferences mother as a primary caretaker of the child is partly echoed by the findings of this thesis. Pete, biological father of multi-parent family noted that in the child-health centre, his role as the primary caretaker was questioned to the point he no longer considered the services to be useful for his family:

"I finally told them (the local health centre) that we do not want to come here anymore as they only asked irrelevant questions and the services were useless for us. The nurse got so angry with me she was convinced that I am abusing Sandra or something like that. The situation was extremely agonising; it was very difficult to try to have a constructive conversation when all they see is problems in everything what I do" (recorded interview 10.2.2015)

Rather than referring to his situation as a gay parent per se, Pete experienced that welfare services that he counted on to support the family in times of difficulty were counterproductive in that they offered little support in circumstances where the biological mother does not equal the primary caretaker of the child. In Pete's experience, by being an active parent and the main decision maker when it comes to the welfare of the child, his role was challenged in the child welfare services.

Parenting as a gendered process in contemporary Finland is also echoed by the FRFA. One of the support persons for the association claimed that fathers in Finnish legislative discourse are dealt as if "little helpers of mothers". As noted earlier in this thesis, the assumption of mother as a primary caretaker is noticeable in parental benefits that privilege entitlements of the biological mother in the domestic sphere. Moreover, possibilities for adoption remain different for men and women in contemporary Finland where women are allowed to adopt. (Sateenkaariperheet: Miten lapsia tehdään?).

Experiences of participants in this thesis suggest that Finnish welfare services for families communicate gendered presumptions of parenting. For example, Maija, the biological mother co-parenting with her spouse referred to family coaching services as "old fashioned":

“Women are advised that as they are women they should oversee that the husbands don’t do this or that. And that the women should guide their husbands in this and that. Instead of thinking that the parents are both on the same side of parenting and that for example either of the parents can be the one who goes to work or does housekeeping. It was very insulting for us.” (Recorded interview 3.4.2015)

While gendered assumptions of parenting are influential for men who seek active roles as caretakers, the postulate of motherhood and fatherhood as culturally constructed way to appropriate roles within the family is influential for spectrum of families, including those where the father is absent.

Anne-Lisa Ellingsæter et al. (2006) discuss politicisation of parenthood in Scandinavian context. The authors point out that questions dealing with family arrangements and division of support mechanisms by welfare state reflect contemporary conceptualisations of family in societal level. The authors see that interconnectedness of gender equality, labour markets and kin-relations are all influential in policymaking processes of the welfare state. According to the authors, the Nordic model of welfare is arranged according to notions of egalitarianism and universalism, whereby the welfare entitlements are ideally distributed universally to the citizenry irrespective of gender.

With specific reference to Nordic countries, Johanna Lammi-Taskula (2006) discusses the role of welfare state in shaping gender relations in families. While for example in Sweden fathers are entitled to parental leave and – benefit whether they live with the mother of the child or not, in the Finnish case parental entitlements to fathers are only effective if the father lives with the mother of the child. Furthermore the structural asymmetry of mother and father is evident in paternity leave that is voluntary, relatively short, and taken when the mother of the child is also at home. The author argues that within the existing Finnish welfare system, mother is expected to assume the role of primary caretaker, while father is provided with rights that enable him support the mother.

While economic rationality and opportunities for parental leave guide how gender relations actualise in each family, Lammi-Taskula points out that each family negotiates their relative position between domestic and public spheres in individualised manner. The author furthermore argues that prevailing social and cultural norms in Finland encourage good mother as a primary caretaker, simultaneously positioning father as caretaker hierarchically below that of mother. Lammi-Taskula calls for ‘new discourses on parenthood’ (ibid. 96) as a precondition for more equal

distribution of childcare, whereby both genders are recognised with capacity and aspiration for caretaking within the domestic sphere.

Anette Borchors (2006) problematises questions of gender equality and policies of parenting by bringing forth family as an institution of public interest and a medium through which gender division is purposefully maintained. The author argues that gendered division of public and private domains is in the core of neo-liberal society, and that the divide continues to influence the ways in which gender relations actualise in contemporary families.

In reference to broadening the conceptualisation of parenting, FRFA participates in joint initiative with various other NGOs (Monimuotoiset perheet) who advocate equality for a diversity of families. Recognising officially social parent's right to meet the child, advocating gender neutral arrangements for parental leaves and –benefits and providing families with knowledge and support concerning the rights of families are among the goals of the initiative that seeks to change the predefined gender divisions of mothering and fathering. Increasingly, attention is brought to kin-arrangements where traditionally assumed gender-roles are challenged (Monimuotoiset perheet: Poliittiset Tavoitteet 20.5.2015).

With reference to parenting as a gendered process and family-making as influenced by prevailing normative assumptions Ellingsaeter et al. (2006) point that welfare policies contribute to the ways in which societal values potentially actualise:

‘Family policy metaphors have normative powers, political metaphors are part of the language of power, and may be more influential than metaphors within other social fields’ (ibid. 269).

The authors argue that the ways in which parental entitlements are distributed in society shape the normative assumptions on parenting strategies in levels of social and cultural. The authors recognise that greater gender equality within the public cannot actualise without increasing equal opportunities of parenting strategies in the sphere of domestic.

While Ellingsaeter et al. focus on analysis between gender relations and equality between fathers and mothers, their observation regarding the ways in which welfare policies can alter normative understandings of family is useful to conceptualise the dynamics of rainbow families accordingly. The authors recognise that contemporary family arrangements are increasingly informed by

conscious choices. Rather than adhering to existing models, family arrangements are organised according in individualised ways. The authors refer to the notion of ‘institutionalised individualism’ to discuss the emphasis on rights and duties of individual, rather than collective unit of the family in the Nordic welfare system:

‘On the one hand, many of the traditional social relations, bonds and belief systems that regulated people’s lives have lost meaning, on the other hand the individual is regulated by the institutions of the modern society, such as the labour market, welfare state and educational systems, with all their rights and duties’ (ibid. 269).

While the contemporary focus of state intervention lies in regulation of individual, the authors point that parents nevertheless make decisions as members of collective units, such as a family. Inevitably structural and practical considerations influence how social relations actualise and how families are constituted beyond the approach of individualised personhood.

The aforementioned is brought forward in this thesis to demonstrate how logic of welfare entitlements in contemporary Nordic states can communicate and shape normative assumptions of gender, parental choice and equality. As this thesis problematizes the universalist claim of welfare services to analyse how rainbow parents negotiate normative conceptualisations of family in contemporary Finland, it is essential to establish the link between the logic of welfare policy and reality of rainbow families.

Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer (2013) argue that especially lesbian mothers are inclined to seek second parent adoption to verify the institutional bond between the child and a social parent. The authors argue that legal protection of child-parent relationship contributes in a secured affiliation between the child and the parents. As in Finland second parent adoption of rainbow parents is subject to registered partnership, none of the respondents of the study had been through the process of internal adoption. Pete’s child was the only one with two legal parents, mother and father, while the children of other respondents only had one legal parent, second parent had the role of social parent. Unlike Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer argue, none of the participants in this study expressed that lack of legal connection would contribute in the quality of parent-child relationship. Moreover, the absence of legal connection was perceived influential externally in relation to the cultural and structural environment in which families operate. Legal validation of the parent-child relationship was not considered relevant for the quality of kin-relations per se; instead legal

recognition was considered as relevant in terms of societal recognition, expected norm according to which others evaluate and the validity of kin-relations.

While none of the respondents expressed legal status as interfering with the affinity or level closeness between social parent and the child, elements of frustration were nevertheless present in some of the discussions. Frustration emerged from lack of information available regarding the legal possibilities of social parents, and lack of entitlements and benefits. Furthermore asymmetric legal status between parents in some cases contributed in levels of tension.

Within the scope of this thesis the question of legal parenthood as a substitute of biological connectedness did not communicate itself as relevant per se in terms of parent-child relations. The ambiguity caused by lack of legal status was, to an extent, present not only in terms of structural disregard of the social parent but also in terms of subsequent asymmetry between rainbow parents. When discussing with Kristiina about social parenting, she highlighted that aside from her insecure legal status, she found that her ex-spouse was “the one complaining” about the hardship of being the only one legally responsible of the child. In her rhetoric, Kristiina emphasised that she had always wanted to take an active role by insisting to have the child living with her every second week and by participating in everyday life activities such as shopping, opening of a bank account for the child and attending to doctor. Despite Kristiina’s experience as an equal parent in terms of love, care and affection, her lack of legal status contributed to the tension between her and the legal parents. Experience according to which her ex-spouse posited herself hierarchically as the primary parent due to her legal responsibility over nurturing and parenting created ambivalence between the parents. Not having the legal status actualised as tension between the parents, when shared responsibilities and shared custody could not be judicially confirmed.

Maija and her spouse had decided to count on private sector services and relied on the support of the activist organisations as well as peer support found online, due to the experience that her spouse had been ignored in public services. Throughout our discussion Maija emphasised that her spouse was an active parent and that she carried out responsibility for the shared family and household. By highlighting the role of the spouse in the family, Maija explicitly brought forward her belief that the social parent was an active caretaker within the family, despite the lack of legal connectedness. In conversations with Kristiina and Maija, it came clear that the participants had internalised an expectation according to which the active role of social parent in family requires reassurance and approval of others.

Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer (2013) argue that contemporary discourse on family is grounded on legalised coupledness and that extension of marital rights to homosexual partners ‘reinforces the disciplinary power of marriage’ (ibid. 493). The authors argue that legal protection of families should be broadened to suit different individual needs and various choices made in families. For the authors, homosexual parenting strategies are central to the debate for their potential to demonstrate multiple conceptualisations of family beyond its grounding in the marital union. In reference to parenting strategies, the authors note that most rainbow families are formed by prior heterosexual engagements. They also recognise that increasing normalisation of homosexual coupledness has in recent years provided more options and strategies for rainbow families in their own right, for example through ‘donor insemination, surrogacy, and/or adoption’ (ibid. 495).

Saara and Pete had children from previous heterosexual marriages. Kristiina’s spouse had initiated her pregnancy in heterosexual encounter with unknown genitor. Kristiina and her spouse had been together throughout the pregnancy and as such Kristiina had been an active parent to their child since her birth. The three respondents, whose children were from direct heterosexual encounter, had children above the age of 10. Maija, the biological mother of a 9 month-old baby, had visited fertility clinic together with her spouse to initiate the pregnancy.

In Finland, adoption and donor insemination are available options for independent females. Lesbian couples in registered relationship can both become legal parents of the child inseminated in a fertility clinic. Surrogacy in Finland is not legal, and the adoption possibilities for men are limited when compared to the female counterparts (Väestöliitto: sijaisynnytyjärjestelyt, Sateenkaariperheet Ry: Miten lapsia tehdään).

Representatives of SETA and FRFA emphasised the variety of options available for homosexual and lesbian couples who wish to start a family. For men, multi-parent families and foster families are most viable strategies to engage in family making processes. As discussed earlier in this, in the case of Pete, his prior heterosexual engagement was significant for the arrangement of kin-relations as his ex-spouse and the mother of the child shared the responsibility of caretaking and was considered as an equal family member. Simultaneously, for the female participants the genitor was either unknown or otherwise not considered a social parent. In the limited scope of this study it can be concluded that biological connectedness of the genitor and child is more likely to influence to arrangement of kin-relations than the biological connectedness of the genitor and child.

Conclusion

Guided by relevant scholars I have tried to demonstrate how ethnography, as a method of collecting and analysing research data, has been applied for the master's thesis in question. My aim has been to problematize how self- and normative conceptualisations of rainbow family correspond to one another in contemporary Finland on one hand, and on the other to analyse how different notions of family conflict one another. By reading literature from fields critical- and cultural studies and social policy, the thesis has demonstrated how ethnographic method can be complemented with multidisciplinary approach. Moreover, the thesis has brought forth ethnography as a reflexive process by shedding light to the limitations and strengths of ethnographic method in different stages of the research process. Despite the limitations, I am convinced that the flexibility of ethnographic research is in the core of its power. Rather than dictating the research agenda, ethnographer is compelled to observe and follow relevancies of the ethnographic field in their own right.

By bringing forth questions of parenting and legitimised partnering and parenting as a gendered process, the thesis has, through the lens of rainbow parents, tried to question the ways in which civic rights are distributed differently according to the civic status and gender of the parent.

In the introduction of this thesis I pointed out that the parliamentary discussion concerning equal marriage law stirred the initial inspiration to study the question of rainbow family from the perspective of peace and conflict studies student. Whilst the initial idea was to narrow the thesis question down to experiences with public services alone, discussions with rainbow parents convinced me that people's experiences of doing rainbow family are linked more widely to the normative assumptions of family and parenting in various levels of everyday experience. Governance and sexual citizenship became meaningful categories for the thesis in problematizing the moral expectations that are assigned with societal belonging, and how the conceptualisation of family is regulated in both cultural and structural levels. While the structural definitions assume top-down governance and citizenship, in levels of culture conceptualisation of family is further influenced by notions such as international human rights and private sector services that see rainbow parents as customers to capitalise on.

The thesis has brought forward analysis of heteronormativity as a form of governance that relies on the symbolic reality of heterosexually organised nuclear family as a hegemonic institution that

organises contemporary society. The thesis has problematized the dichotomous construction of marginal homosexual in relation to the normal heterosexual and analysed whether the category of 'other' actualises in the everyday life of rainbow parents.

The thesis has analysed the experiences of rainbow parents in two levels; one emerging from lack of judicial security and one related to the lack of cultural models, leading to a necessity to challenge the pre-existing models by rainbow parents. The thesis recognises that law continues to materialise social conceptualisations that are concerned with kinship and parenting. Through cross analysis of different data and by being sensitive to the participants' experience, the final form of the thesis was influenced by the ethnographic process.

The conceptualisation of family as presented in this thesis is influenced by the feminist scholarship that sees kinship in the West as worthy of academic attention for it demonstrates how public and political actualise in the micro level of everyday life. Rainbow families in Finland challenge the characteristic of family, such as genealogical connectedness of parent and child, and problematize prioritisation of mother as a primary caretaker of the child in law and culture. For example, that mothers have earmarked maternity allowance that for the father remains both voluntary and shorter in time, structurally prioritises mothers in the sphere of domestic. Simultaneously, questions concerning the quality of parent-child relations are excluded completely from structural definitions of parenting while genealogical connectedness continues to define the boundaries of parenting.

The thesis analysed how cultural and structural expression of civic belonging and/or exclusion relate to one's family life. The thesis finally posits that family, as a category of identification, is naturalised in everyday actions that communicate unity, love and care by prioritising stable parent-child relations. Stability of parent-child relations is posited as the core organising principle of family life. Personhood of a parent actualises in reference to the family and to the wider community which inflicts its regulating capacity over the family unit. While the structural injustices potentially cause frustration in reference to the participants' relation with public services or other people, the normative expectations were not reflected in the everyday life of rainbow families, nor did they contribute in the organisation of individualised kin-arrangement.

The thesis addressed the question of rainbow community as potential source of belonging and sameness among rainbow parents. Nevertheless it was concluded that rainbow parents and -families are highly heterogeneous groups who negotiate sexual identity and belonging in highly

individualised ways. No homogenous lesbian or homosexual culture with which rainbow families can identify with exists. Yet, in those cases where participants assumed social injustice to stem from the sexual identity of the parent, connectedness between the parents and wider rainbow activism was most evident.

In reference, the dichotomy of assimilation/ transformation has been discussed. The notion of homonormativity has been brought forward as a category that regulates how the moral criteria assigned with good citizenship is internalised by homosexual and lesbian parents. Normalisation of preferred behaviour potentially creates self-governing citizens. By excluding homosexual and lesbian parents as fundamentally different, the existing structure is protected and maintained as seemingly natural and evident system. Registered partnership was presented as unit that imitates marriage, but that maintains its secondary position in relation to heterosexually organised marriage. Registered partnership legitimises belonging in structural terms and can be compared to marriage as a rite of passage in societal belonging. On the other hand the thesis has demonstrated that for example the call for equal marriage can be seen as combining elements of assimilation and transformation, whereby advocating equal marriage is important step that furthers advances of societal transformation in wider perspective. Simultaneously the thesis has pointed out that emphasis on marriage based –rights debate readily oversimplifies the question of societal equality and right to self-define one’s familial arrangements.

One of the core arguments put forward in this thesis is the insistence that equal citizenship is preconditioned by societal acceptance of plural identities that intersect with one another in a multiple ways to create individualised identities. Hence by conditioning civic belonging under predefined categories of belonging, Finnish society fails in its claim to provide universal welfare. Fear of exclusion and rejection operate in a symbolic way, and one negative experience can contribute in avoidance of public services. On the other hand, the hegemony of the state with the capacity to define boundaries of belonging is in transition, as is for example demonstrated through the private fertility clinics that capitalise on lesbian parenting. Power no longer operates from top to down, and exclusion of rainbow parents does not necessarily operate in all spheres of society. Increasingly pluralistic ways to do family have furthered civil society activism that put pressure in recognition of multiple families. Common characteristic in the civil society initiatives presented in the thesis and in the experiences of participants is the demand that the state recognises self-defined kin-arrangements and arranging equally social entitlements and responsibilities that support the actualisation of stable parent-child relations.

This thesis is an attempt to advance the discussion of family in contemporary Finland by bringing forth family as a unit that is governed by ideological presumptions of culture that do not reflect people's individualised experiences of doing family. Moreover, as a student of peace and conflict studies, I seek to move the discussion of rainbow family towards general questions of citizenship, belonging and governance. As rainbow families continue to increase and become more visible in forthcoming years, the question concerning equality and family policies will grow in importance within the Finnish society. Reclaiming the promise of egalitarianism will be ever more actual goal of contemporary society.

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Attachment 1:

Call for participants

Hyvät vanhemmat!

Etsin osallistujia gradu-projektiin jonka aiheena on sateenkaarivanhemmuus ja yhdenvertainen kansalaisuus. Noin 30–40 minuuttia kestävään haastatteluun kaivataan erityisesti sosiaalisia tai biologisia sateenkaarivanhempia.

Lähde kanssani kahville tai lounaalle, kutsu mukaan vaikka puistoon tai piipahtamaan luonasi. Voimme toki olla yhteydessä myös sähköisesti. Sinun kokemuksesi ja näkemyksesi ovat korvaamattomia tietouden lisäämiseksi!

Annan mielelläni lisätietoja itsestäni ja gradusta. Mikäli sinulla on mahdollisuus osallistua haastatteluun ota yhteyttä:

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