Monthly Seminar

Anthropology of Children and Youth Network

Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, VU University Amsterdam

Friday 14 March 2014 10.30-12.00
VU University Amsterdam, Metropolitan Building, room Z-009

A review of early-years childcare services aiming to explore the state of Children’s Rights in the Netherlands
Olga Middendorp,
alumna Institute of Education, University of London

This seminar explores how decisions about childcare are made at different levels in the Netherlands. The focus is on how this influences and impacts family lives and especially the rights of babies of approximately three months old (when the maternity leave ends). The ongoing debate about how the care of young children should be arranged is explored in this research. From an Euro-American viewpoint, a substantial body of literature in the field of developmental psychology is anchored in the presumption that throughout hominid evolution, mothers were exclusively responsible for nurturing offspring. This viewpoint, underestimates the sustained joint effort it requires to rear healthy human children. Cross-cultural studies underscore the fact that multiple carers (next to parents and family) are a common feature in many societies and that this pattern of childcare appears to work. But nowadays, the benefits of this pattern is questioned in many Western societies and institutionalized childcare services do not facilitate.

The Anthropology of Children and Youth Network (based at VU University, Amsterdam) brings together academics and practitioners engaged in research and work with children. Through monthly seminars, the Network promotes child-oriented theory, methodology, and research ethics. Besides, it serves as a platform for (interdisciplinary) academic research and it enhances dialogue with practitioners through joint research projects, publications and conferences.

Convenor / Dr Sandra J.T.M. Evers, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, VU University Amsterdam.

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