**Abstract**

This thesis investigates children’s perspectives on the diagnosis Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - the so-called ADHD diagnosis. I examine diagnosed children’s perspectives on what ADHD means to them in their everyday lives.

ADHD is a medical, psychiatric diagnosis, which is often given to children in the child- and adolescent psychiatric practice. Furthermore, it is a diagnosis which is attracting a lot of attention in national as well as international research and heavily debated in professional and public contexts. There has been conducted a considerable amount research in this field, often with a medical and neuropsychological focus but very few studies focus on ADHD from the child’s perspective.

In this thesis however, I will take a sociological approach and view ADHD as a social and cultural construction. Trough qualitative interviews with different children diagnosed with ADHD, I will examine the children’s own perspectives towards the ADHD phenomenon. The empirical data consists of individual interviews with four children aged 11 to 13 years as well as a group interview with the same children. The empirical investigation is focused on achieving insight into which consequences the ADHD-diagnosis has had on the children’s everyday relationships. Furthermore, the investigation takes the approach that children are competent individuals with opinions and views on influences, which affect their own lives.

The children’s accounts are analyzed by using James, Jenks and Prout´s understanding of children and childhood. I focus on the children´s own experience of ADHD especially when they talk about the importance of friendships and I use Erving Goffman´s theory on stigma to analyze their accounts of the stigmatizing effect of ADHD. By adding the results of other researchers in the field, this thesis will show that ADHD-diagnosed children of similar age have different perspectives on the significance of the diagnosis. The children have different, as well as similar, accounts and the view on the ADHD-diagnosis as something which is not constant but rather as something which surfaces at different times and in different contexts, is something they have in common. The data also show that the significance of friendships, as well as their own perception of mastering relationships, is a key aspect for the children. Furthermore, the children describe the diagnosis as stigmatizing and display ambivalence towards the helpful effect of the diagnosis, because they experience that it can attract help in everyday life, as well as unwanted response from their surroundings.

In this thesis I will also discuss the possible impact of the qualitative aspects of the children’s accounts and how they can be used practically. It is recommended that diagnosticians to a higher degree collaborate with- and consider the perspectives of the children than is common practice currently.