

Double or Extra? The Identity of Transnational Adoptees in Sweden

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Abstract

Transnational adoption has been well-established and successful in Sweden. The notion of double identity is espoused today, embracing the national identity of the birth country as well as the Swedish identity; but it is often adoptive parents more than adoptees who are concerned with this. Hidden in the double identity, there is a presupposition of the type of axiom expressed in terms such as ‘blood is thicker than water’, placing biological origin as the essential value. However, some adoptees are more positive and flexible in constructing their identities, which should be worth more attention. This biologised ideology may discriminate adoptees and immigrants; it betrays a flaw in the Swedish self-image of their society as ‘colour blind’ and ‘anti racist’.

Keywords: Transnational adoption, identity, Sweden, biological origin.

What we call 'natural' sentiments were held in great disfavour in their society: for instance, the idea of procreation filled them with disgust. Abortions and infanticide were so common as to be almost normal [...] to the extent, in fact, that it was by adoption, rather than by procreation, that the group ensured its continuance. One of the main objects of warriors' expeditions was to bring back children. At the beginning of the 19th century it was estimated that not more than one in ten of the Guaicru group [belonging to the Caduveo tribe, note by Deguchi] were Guaicru by birth. Such children as managed, in spite of this, to get born were not brought up by their parents, but fostered by another family (Lévi-Strauss 1961: 162).

Introduction

In his lectures at the Collège de France in the academic year of 1981-1982, Michel Foucault argued that the 'care of the self' (*epimeleia heautou*) was given importance in classical and late antiquity. It was not just a principle, but also an abiding practice and became 'bio-politics' (Foucault 2005: 2-3, 492-493). Seneca, for example, reflected on what he had done and how he had behaved to others during the day, before going to bed.

However, although the 'care of the self' had been overshadowed by the 'know yourself' (*gnōthi seauton*) in the Western history of ideas, it was strongly related with the latter in Ancient culture; you must know yourself because you must take care of the self (Foucault 2005: 462).

Today, these two ideas are no longer strongly entangled with each other, but the 'know yourself' is often evoked when 'care of the self' (or the welfare) of those children born from donated gametes, becomes an essential issue. To know one's own gamete donor or one's genetic parent is regarded as a basic right and is legally ensured in Sweden (2003, both sperm donors and egg donors), Norway (2005, sperm donors only) and some other countries. This is considered to be necessary for the welfare and the best interest of a child from gametes donation. To know one's genetic origin is regarded as indispensable for a healthy establishment of the personal identity; who you are means whom you are from. In this sense, the 'know yourself' is biologised and genetically oriented. It concerns the 'care of the self' of a child. As Melhus writes on the rescinding of anonymity of sperm donors in Norway, to deny a child the right to know his or her biogenetic origin can be regarded as denying the child the right to know him or herself (Melhus 2011: 59). Thus, 'know yourself' and 'care of the self' are entangled in the present day, in the context of bio-powers by which living human bodies are governed and regulated (Foucault 2003).

In this paper, I will explore the implications of biological origin to identity in the field of transnational adoption in Sweden, which is one of the most prominent transnational adoptee receiving countries. The principle, that adoptees should have enough knowledge of their birth countries is said to be necessary for them to develop a wholesome personality just like those born from donated gametes.

Adoptees are regarded as the citizens of their birth countries as well as citizens of Sweden (double identity). Some of them, however, think of themselves, not as members of their birth countries, but as 100% Swedes. Their origin does not occupy the most prominent place in their inner selves. The idea of the double identity, however, sometimes may have a discriminative effect on transnational adoptees. Once the knowledge of the biological origin is accepted as fundamental to identity, transnational adoptees are quite often tied to their birth countries and are frequently asked such questions as ‘when do you go to your birth country to find your biological mother?’ As the drive for the biological origin is considered as paramount (cf. Melhuus op.cit.), they are not presumed normal if they are indifferent to it.

My research in Sweden and other Nordic countries started in 2000. It was originally intended to be a comparative study of socio-legal attitudes to assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) in Nordic countries.¹ However, I realised that obstetricians often suggest transnational adoption as an alternative to start a family for infertile couples and that transnational adoption, at present, is well established. It seems to have caused some effects on the notion of relatedness. This is quite astonishing in Japan, where transnational adoption is quite rare and no legislation on ARTs exists.

My interest as a social anthropologist working with kinship studies has since 2003 thus shifted to transnational adoption. I have conducted semi-structured interviews with more than 30 adoptive parents and adoptees as well as personnel at the Adoption Centre and NIA (National Board for Intercountry Adoptions, Sweden, now MIA = Swedish Intercountry Adoption Authority). I have asked adoptive parents about the reasons for transnational adoption, the adoption procedure, what they think of the birth countries and biological mothers of adoptees and so on. I have also asked now adult adoptees what they think of their national identities and their birth countries, who they think are their (real) parents and so on. In addition, I included the data, collected in 2006, of a transnational adoptive family in Iceland as well as Norwegian data from other sources. It is not only because they shed light on Swedish cases, but also because trends of transnational adoption in Nordic countries show more similarities than differences.

General Trends of Transnational Adoption in Sweden

Background

Even if it is not as extremely manifested as it is in the Caduveo people, in the above epigraph, it is a well-known fact that in many societies, in order to continue the family and the kinship group, adoption of children has been practiced. These children were originally born into groups of others. Adoption made them members of another group, where they became important resources for the continuity

of this group.² However, adoption is not limited only to a certain geographical area or to one country or ethnic group. Transnational adoption or inter-country adoption started after the Second World War and the Korean War. This meant that children who had no relatives and lived in childcare institutions were taken to foreign countries, where they were given a citizenship, a legal status and were raised. The total annual number of these children rose to over 40 000 in 2003.

It has been said that wars, famine and diseases, but recently also financial difficulties after the collapse of socialism, have been the main causes for not being able to raise children in their birth countries and is thus the reason for letting them be adopted to foreign countries.³ Countries providing children for adoption have been countries in Asia and Africa etc. in the so-called 'south'. The countries in the north, apart from Ireland before the 1980s, have not provided any children for transnational adoption but have been solely at the receiving end (Selman 2005a and b). Admitting that most of the adoption families are happy families without conflicts, transnational adoption has also been criticised as an exploitation of the south by the north, a disguise for human trafficking and child pornography (Hübienne 2004; Takakura 2006). In addition, most transnational adoptions are inter-ethnic, meaning that parents in western countries adopt children from Asia, Africa and Central and South America. The view has also been voiced that some of the children whose appearance differs distinctively from others in the white (Caucasian) society have faced discrimination and/or their personal identities have not developed smoothly (Gullestad 2006: Ch. 9 and 10).

Contemporary Situations in Sweden

Today, Norway and Sweden are the first and the third largest adoptee receiving countries, when the number of adoptees and the population of the receiving country are taken into consideration (Selman 2005a and b; see Yngvesson 2010 on statistical data in Sweden). Sweden started transnational adoption in the middle of the 1960s. Several reasons can be stated as background factors: the wish to receive a labour force, good conditions of welfare for single women with children, the legalisation of abortion and the rapid fall in the number of domestic adoptees (in 1998, the number of domestic adoptees including adopted foster children was only 49, according to Andersson 2000: 367). In addition, due to the development of media and transportation, people saw or heard directly or indirectly about the situation of Vietnamese children who had become orphans in the war. In order to rescue these children from distress, humanitarianism and philanthropy gained momentum. At this time, even couples with biological children adopted from abroad.

However, at present, transnational adoption has been established as an alternative method for infertile couples to have children. For example, Åsa (a pseudonym, hereafter all the names are pseudonyms), living in Stockholm had tried in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment five times, both in Sweden and abroad; she had

finally become pregnant, but her pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. She gave up on receiving further treatment and decided on transnational adoption to start a family. Another example is Mika. After having been married for over 5 years and not being able to have children, Mika who is a Finnish woman living in Stockholm and now has two adopted children from Colombia, was considering transnational adoption and IVF treatment at about the same time. Meanwhile, Lotta, born in 1971, decided to adopt from Korea without trying the mentally stressful IVF treatment even once. Since she had had Korean adoptees among her classmates from an early age, and her elder sister was a domestic adoptee, she said that she did not have any uncomfortable feelings towards transnational adoptees. It was not important for her to have children who would carry her genes. She just wanted to become a mother.

To receive an adoptee, the first step is to contact the local welfare committee. A social worker checks whether potential adoptee parents are suitable by asking questions about background, occupation, interests, various human relationships, motives, religious and ethical views etc. Eventually permission will be granted by the government if the applicants are judged to be qualified as adoptive parents. In the meantime, adoptive parent candidates take part in a 'course', arranged by the local government, to learn about transnational adoption. After receiving the final permission, the adoptive parent candidates send the necessary documents to the desired country through a private adoption agency NPO.⁴ The cost of adoption varies depending on the providing country, but in Mika's case it was about 160 000 Swedish Krona (SEK) for the first child and about 169 000 SEK for the second child. In addition, the adoptive parents have to travel to the adoptee's birth country to fetch the child. In Colombia, the adoptive parents are required to stay for 8 weeks and start to take care of the child, while staying in the culture of the birth country. This cost is not included in the adoption procedure fees; the fee may be from 82 000 SEK up to 95 000 SEK, which has to be paid separately. Mika said that the cost of adoption was higher than the amount the couple had spent on infertility treatment. Borrowing an expression from Sweden's largest transnational adoption agency (Adoption Centre, called AC), 'it is the cost of purchasing a new car'. After the finalisation of the adoption, cancellation of the parent-child relationship is prohibited (NIA 2003).

Transnational adoption has been widely accepted in the Swedish society, but in recent years, its problems have also been addressed. In April 2002, national newspapers wrote about research results, according to which the suicide rate of transnational adoptees was 3.7 times higher than the rate of native Swedes. Thereafter it was reported repeatedly that not only the suicide rate, but also the rates for crime, mental illness and alcoholism were higher than those of an average Swede in the same age group (Maeno 2005: 3). This report on transnational adoption was published in *The Lancet* and other journals (Hjern, Lindblad & Vinnerljung 2002), and it was widely covered by media. In one TV show, adoptees (from Korea) crit-

icised the transnational adoption system per se, while other transnational adoptees voiced counter-arguments.⁵

It has been voiced that since this occasion, Swedish society, which until then had viewed transnational adoption positively on humanitarian grounds, has started to weigh out the negative aspects as well.

Identity Problems

Adoptees who had criticised the transnational adoption system per se in the programme in 2002 had come from Korea in the 1960s and the 1970s and were adults at the time of the broadcast. They had grown up thinking that they were 100% Swedish, but based on their appearance they were spoken to in English and they had experienced being asked such questions as ‘You speak good Swedish. Where have you learnt it?’ Some women had also been subjected to sexual harassment. When visiting their birth country, because their gestures differed and they could not speak the language, Korean people did not accept them as Koreans, and even if they had hoped to obtain clues of their birth parents and relatives, they could get almost no information. They felt deep anxiety and bewilderment about their national identities as ‘Swedish but not Swedish, and Koreans but not Koreans’.

However, even before the commencement of this debate during the end of the 20th century, transnational adoptees born in the 1960s and the 1970s had started to talk about their experiences as adults. One of these experiences was no less than the identity related question of ‘Who Am I?’ For example, von Melen who has summarised the results of interviews with 18 adoptees, introduces an Ethiopian adoptee, Tedros, who said as follows.

Admittedly I am adopted, but I’ve come to realise that I’ll never be accepted as completely Swedish. In that sense, I’ve come to be in the same situation as immigrants. When people first see me, they take me for an African. It’s something I have to live with, and I have to make the best of it. Should I try to be even more Swedish, or should I try to pursue my roots? I believe that what gives a person strength is going back where they come from. If I have a strong and positive relationship with my biological mother and with Ethiopia, then it can strengthen me as a person. One day I want to be able to say ‘I’m Ethiopian and I’m proud of it!’ (von Melen 2000: 49)

Having a different skin colour, a different eye colour or having a type of hair which differs from white Swedes, some of the first adoptees have not only been mistakenly thought not to be Swedish, but have also suffered from curious stares and at times also from racial discrimination.

However, national identity problems did not emerge only at the end of the century. Before the 1980s, the dominating idea was that no matter where a person was born, anyone could become a Swedish citizen (I call this a single identity). It was required that immigrants and their children, as well as transnational adoptees, would become fully Swedish, and they also tried to do so (Yngvesson 2000: 182).

Therefore, it was determined that memories and experiences of the country of origin were unrelated and unnecessary in order to be Swedish (or become Swedish). However, as there was an increase in adoptions of children with an appearance different to the native population, psychologists repeatedly carried out follow-up surveys on their growing process. When the research progressed, it was found that some of those adoptees who had not been infants at the time of the adoption, and had come to Sweden after acquiring the customs and the language of the birth country, were stumbling to learn Swedish and had problems with interpersonal relationships and self-formation. It was also reported that transnational adoptees, who did not have particular problems in terms of mental well-being, also wanted to know who their birth parents were. The way of thinking changed, and it was considered that the desire to know about one's origin or biological roots was a normal part of identity development (Christensen 1999; Irhammar 1999). In the late 1970s, Alex Haley's bestseller *Roots* also helped people to realise the importance of their origin. It was assumed that national and personal identities of adoptees would be firmly established if they could attain proper knowledge of their biological parents and birth countries.

For these reasons, the direction of transnational adoption policies changed. The same principle as in the Artificial Insemination Acts (established in 1984) can be found here as well, i.e. the welfare of children is seen as more important than the rights of parents. This law makes sperm donors non-anonymous and establishes children's rights to know, when they reach the age of 18, who their biological father is. It was a predecessor to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was approved in 1989. The UN Convention Article 7, Paragraph 1 establishes the right to know 'parents': 'The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality, and as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.'⁶ The wording 'The parents' means the biological or genetic parents in general. The rights of children who want to know their parents and origin should be protected and should be given priority over the rights of the parents.

In addition, it has been stated concerning adoption in article 21 of the Convention, 'Parties that recognise and/or permit the system of adoption shall ensure that the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration'. In accordance with this spirit, a special committee was set up by the Hague Conference of Private International Law in 1988 to discuss international adoptions. It was partly also established to prevent child trafficking in the guise of adoption. The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption was drafted in 1993. It has been enforced since 1995, and currently 46 countries have ratified it. Sweden played a leading role to create the draft of the Hague Convention (NIA 1998). According to the convention, utmost efforts for adoption inside the child's birth country should be made first, but when this cannot be done and if it is determined that transnational adoption is the best

option for the child, the adoption process should be initiated (article 4).⁷ The reason behind this is that compared with transnational adoption, in cases of domestic adoption it is relatively easy to find information about biological parents, and it is more difficult to link it to trafficking. However, these are not the only reasons; in terms of genetic characteristics, children are not far from the people living around them, which is said to be favourable for the welfare of children. It was supposed that the adoptees were less liable to be isolated and discriminated because of their difference in appearance.

Therefore, in cases of transnational adoption, it is considered in Sweden that it is desirable to maintain the double identity of the adoptees.⁸ The double identity (*dubbel identitet*) means that adopted children are Swedish, but at the same time, they are also members of the nation and the ethnic group of their birth country. In other words, they belong simultaneously to the nations and the ethnic groups of the two countries; this is considered desirable for the personality formation and mental health of the adopted children. The American anthropologist Yngvesson, who has studied transnational adoption in Sweden for many years, maintains that a double identity is allegoric with Foucault's *heteroclite* (the hybrid, mixed one) (Yngvesson, op. cit.). Foucault claims the following concerning the *heteroclite*.

In such a state, things are 'laid,' 'placed,' 'arranged' in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a *common locus* beneath them all. (Foucault 1970: xvii-xviii)

Heterotopia nullifies the identification form that ascribes order, classification and grouping based on blood-related kinship relations and an exclusive membership of a nation. For example, Mika who has adopted two children from Colombia mentions that the children were born in Colombia and their biological mothers are Colombian, but the adoptive parents themselves are Finns (living in Stockholm), so the children are also Finnish. However, the children's nationality is Swedish and they speak Swedish in the kindergarten. Mika also says

My husband was adopted domestically in Finland, so I'm the only person in this house who is not an adoptee. I belong to the minority!

The traditional Western concept of identity as belonging only to one nation, having only one language and only one biological relationship is no longer mainstream in Mika's family as well as other adoptive families. Due to this policy of double identity, the suffering that the 'single identity' generations experienced, is not completely avoided, but has been radically reduced.

Who Talks About Double Identity?

Does this mean that there are no problems attached to double identity? It is a bit naïve to espouse it as the new form of identity. In fact, it is the adoptive parents rather than adoptees who actively talk about double identity. I will introduce nar-

natives of adoptive parents who do not maintain the traditional ‘single identity’. Maria in Gothenburg who has adopted three children from Korea provides the following description.

Because in our family, only my husband and I are native Swedes, we are a Swedish-Korean family.

Susanne an adoptive mother of a boy and a girl from Korea, living in Stockholm also said.

When I’m on the subway by myself, I don’t talk to the surrounding immigrants and they don’t talk to me. I keep my distance from them with the same attitude as other white Swedes. But when I get on the subway with my children, not only Asians, but also people from other ethnic groups smile at them and play with them. They also talk to me as the mother of Korean children. I don’t have the unfriendly attitude I have when I am alone either. I think that at such moments adoptive parents of foreign children, like me, have an important part to play in connecting Sweden and foreign countries.

Furthermore, it is often the adoptive parents who are interested in the birth country of their children and who feel gratitude towards it. ‘Motherland tours’ (*åtterresor*, return journeys, return trips) have so far been planned and arranged by AC.⁹ A couple who had adopted two children from Chile through AC made the following inquiry.

We adopted two children from Chile in the 1970s, but we didn’t go to Chile to pick up them, so we thought when our children grow older, we would go on a trip there as a family, but they don’t show any interest in Chile at all. However, thanks to Chile we were able to become parents, so we have continuously been grateful to Chile for many years. So may we, the adoptive parents, join the motherland tour to Chile, although our children are not going?

AC agreed.

There are also adoptive parents who feel they have become adopted by the birth countries of their adopted children. For example,

A couple who had adopted from Colombia were charmed by its culture. Through adopting from Colombia, they had developed a special love and ties for the country. They described that they felt as if they had become adoptees of Colombia (told by an AC staff member).

However, many adoptees define themselves as Swedish (only). Parents express that even if their children are invited on a tour to visit their birth country, they do not show the slightest interest. I will confirm this by examining the narratives of the adoptees themselves. Lin is the 18-year-old adoptive daughter of Maria. When I visited their home for an interview, she was absent but left the following letter.

I don’t think I would like to return to Korea or look for my ‘real parents’, because it could be very painful and I wouldn’t know how to react.[...] I’m very satisfied with my present life and my present parents. I don’t understand why I should look for parents in Korea.

She was very critical of Korean adoptees who attack transnational adoption and South Korea.¹⁰

Anders, Lin's younger brother, also said:

Because I have the experience that I went to South Korea to pick up my little brother with my family when I was three years old, I think it would be fun to travel to Korea, but I don't want to look for my Korean parents.¹¹

Katarina, also a female adoptee from Korea, now lives in Stockholm with her native Swedish husband and two sons. She was adopted in the 1970s. Her adoptive parents did not fly to South Korea to pick her up, but met her for the first time when they fetched her at Arlanda Airport. At that time, this was very common.

When I was a child, nobody talked about the double identity. Mother never hung Korean pictures or flags. I liked it. Mother bought me books about Korea, but I hadn't been to Korea, so I didn't know anything about it. I didn't look Swedish. I was short. I didn't have blue eyes or brown hair. I couldn't compare myself to the models in the fashion magazines, but when I entered junior high school, my new friend said 'Your hair is so beautiful'. It gave me confidence. It's true that at one time I was sick of my appearance, but I can't tell the difference if it was because I was adopted from a foreign country, or because it was what can be seen in adolescent girls. Above all, I always thought that I was Swedish. My native language is Swedish and I have acquired the cultural traditions of Sweden. But on the other hand, I'm very proud of this extra thing my Swedish friends don't have. I have something very special, I'm very proud of it. (Responding to the comment 'It's not double, but it must be more like 120%') Oh, yeah! Absolutely! (Responding to the question, if pregnancy and child birth had made her want to meet her biological mother) No, not at all. Until now, I have never thought about such a thing.

The next case is about a woman born in 1974 who did not come to Sweden but to Iceland as a Korean adoptee at the age of 7 months. However, her narrative shows similarity with Swedish adoptees so I include it here.¹²

I know my Korean name, but I don't use it as a second name. I haven't been to Korea yet, so I really want to go there, but I don't think that I want to look for or meet my biological parents. I may visit the orphanage, but I only want to see the Korean country and people. I just want to know what the atmosphere is like there. I think I am fully Icelandic. I'm not in touch with other adoptees from Korea. (Responding to the question of whether she wished to see her biological mother after giving birth to her daughter) No. But I think I have learnt to understand my biological mother better after the birth of my daughter. I can understand now that she loved me very much, because she was able to let me go, but this doesn't lead to the feeling that I'd like to meet her. I don't think now that I would especially like to meet her.

The following case is not from my research, but from the work by Signe Howell, a Norwegian anthropologist studying transnational adoption in Norway.

A Swedish girl who visited her birth country India said, 'I'm a coconut girl, brown outside, but white inside', but she continued that she has never had any problem with it. Those who participated in the motherland tour looked forward to visiting India and the orphanage they were raised in, but no one had the intention to look for the biological parents. (Howell 2006: 201)

Howell likens the experiences of Norwegian adoptive parents who raise adoptees as citizens of Norway to transubstantiation (transformation of bread and wine into the holy entities of the flesh and blood of Christ at a holy communion) (ibid.: 64).

It is also possible that adoptees' own ideas vary depending on their development and life experiences; but regardless of the age differences, it seemed that they were satisfied with the single identity. Rather, it could be said that the double identity does not aim at the double, but it is a means to achieve a stable personality of the single identity. In other words, it makes the awareness of being fully Swedish and the attachment to Sweden more enhanced.

The Pit-fall of the Double Identity

Is the other identity equal to the 'Swedish' in the case of the double identity? When visiting transnational adoptive families, almost all the families had decorated their living room with pictures, arts or miniature flags of the birth country of the child, and sometimes there is a photo of the child wearing an ethnic costume of the birth country on the wall. In this way, things that are used to convey the culture of the birth country are somewhat superficial such as clothing, food, art, sports etc., and many of them belong to what is called 'traditional culture' from the Western point of view. This is Orientalism, but how could the other identity possibly be formed by showing these kinds of things?

Behind the idea of conveying and learning about things of the birth country is the premise, which rather than emphasizing 'the country', emphasizes the birth itself and how it cannot be changed. The conviction that the birth, e.g. the biological origin, forms the basis of the identity is becoming more widely spread through the laws on artificial insemination and egg donation in Sweden and Norway. The principle that children born through sperm or egg donation have been guaranteed the right to know their biological parents when becoming adult is built on the following assumptions. Your identity becomes complete through knowing your origin. However, it is assumed that the origin is the biogenetic one. Moreover, because it is never possible to correct or change this identity, the knowledge of the genetic origin is regarded as more fundamental than social and cultural ties. The knowledge of one's own genetic origin is considered to be the same as one's own identity (Melhuus 2003, 2005, 2012).

This idea, however, also creates the misconception that if you are an adoptee, you naturally want to know about your birth and always have a desire to go to the birth country to look for and meet the biological parents and relatives. For those adoptees who do not especially want to go to their birth countries and meet their birth mothers, this misconception leads to being relentlessly asked questions such as 'When will you go to your birth country? When will you meet your 'real' mother?', which can confuse and irritate them. Jonas is such an adoptee who came to Sweden from South Korea in 1976 when he was 16 months old. He does not

remember anything of Korea and has never been there since he came to Sweden. When he was married and adopted a daughter from China, he was again embarrassed by the same question, 'Why didn't you adopt from South Korea, your birth country?'

However, in childhood the experience that the adoptive parents are always with their adopted children and are their only 'real' parents is more important than the fact that there is also a biological mother, or knowing who she is. Lin, the first adoptee of Maria from Gothenburg, travelled to Korea with her adoptive parents when they were collecting a boy who was to become her younger brother. She was six years old at that time. When she came back from Korea, she realised that she had also been adopted just like her brother; in other words, deserted by her biological parents. She was taken by a fear tinged with the realisation that if that mother had deserted her, this mother might do that her as well. Every day for about a month after that, she continued to ask such questions as 'Is mom also going to desert me some day? Will granny always be granny? Is dad also going to desert me? Will mom always be my mom?' Maria said that every time she answered repeatedly that such a thing will not happen. This contradicts the assumption that adoptees have a strong drive to look for their personal origin and biological parents. More important for adoptees' personal development is their ability to feel assured of having someone who accepts them unconditionally, who gives them a place to belong to and never deserts them. Overlooking this may also lead to discrimination of those adoptees who are not interested in their origin or biological parents and may lead them to being viewed as abnormal.

When using the word 'double identity', this is discussed as an identity of belonging to two countries, Sweden and the country of the origin. However, rather than a nation and a citizenship, it is a matter of ethnic identity determined by biological origin.

For example, a female transnational adoptee was born in Chile and her mother was Chilean, but her father was a Korean salesman who was visiting Chile coincidentally. Her origin is in Chile, but she is half Asian. She consulted AC 'How can I find out about my roots? I don't know where to start'. In her case, it can be said that her identity was more a triple identity than a double identity. In AC, she was advised to begin with finding her biological mother. She started to learn about Chile, but she was also interested in Korea. Moreover, the official at AC said that:

The search for roots is not limited to knowing Colombia. This is a multi-ethnic nation, so sometimes we should enter deep into the culture of the ethnic groups living there. Because this Colombian-born adoptee was of 'mixed blood', finding her roots would be complicated.

As can be seen here, when discussing the double identity, this identity seems to refer to another country, another nation, which is contrasted to Sweden. However, the statement indicates that ethnicity determined by biology matters in the formation of the second or the third identity. If the double identity is Swedish and

Korean, and because Korea is not (assumed not to be) a multi-ethnic (racial) nation, it is only said that the new identity to be cultivated should be Korean.

If the contrasted second identity is biological, then, the initial 'Swedish' identity, rather than referring to all people who have civil rights, takes on the meaning of 'white' native Swedes. As HübINETTE and Tigervall write,

it is not always easy to separate ethnic identities from racialization, as such 'ethnic' variables like language, culture and religion almost always seem to fall back upon a certain body, which is decoded and read as belonging to a certain race, which in its turn is linked to a certain ethnicity (HübINETTE & Tigervall 2009: 341).

However, it could be said that the hidden logical construction is the contrary, and the starting point is in fact the 'white Swedes'.

Sweden is often said to be a 'colour blind' and anti-racist society. 'Colour blindness' implies seeing other colours but accepting the differences and not valuing 'one colour' (white) more than others or considering homogeneity as the ideal. Metropolitan cities such as Stockholm and Gothenburg are places of multiculturalism. However, the satires, slurs and discrimination expressed by native 'white' Swedes about other ethnic people, based on the differences of outer appearance, do exist and sometimes surfaces in public debates (HübINETTE 2012). Consider the second and third generation immigrants born in Sweden. They have the rights of Swedish citizenship. They are, however, not only statistically classified as immigrants, but also continue to be viewed as immigrants rather than genuine Swedes. In Gothenburg, for example, many immigrant groups tend to live in low status suburbs with those of the same ethnic group; this is contrasted with the wealthier native 'white' Swedes living in the affluent inner city (cf. Lundström 2010: 152). Immigrants are spatially segregated.

Many transnational adoptees live in the affluent areas, since their adoptive parents are of the middle or upper classes and they are treated in the same way as the non-adopted Swedes in their community. Nevertheless, it is frequently reported or confessed by adoptees themselves that when they leave their neighbourhood and start to live elsewhere, some of them are often viewed or treated as immigrants or foreigners (HübINETTE & Tigervall 2009b; HübINETTE & Andersson 2012; cf. Gullestad 2006). These experiences arouse in them feelings of confusion, sadness, anger or agony. As Tobias HübINETTE criticises, even if transnational adoptees are grown up in Sweden, speak Swedish as their mother tongue, have the same 'habitus' as the majority of white Swedes and belong to that society, their skin colour and different appearance does not qualify them as native 'unmarked' Swedes (HübINETTE & Tigervall 2009b; see Waugh 1982 for the use of the term 'unmarked' in semiotics).¹³

Not all the adoptees have such annoying experiences. However, if an adoptee identifies himself/herself as Swedish and shows little interest in the quest for origins, s/he is frequently asked such questions as 'Why on earth haven't you been to

Korea to find your biological mother?', as in the case with Jonas mentioned above¹⁴.

Malinda was an adoptee from Liberia in mid 70s. She married a native 'white Swede' and their biological son was born after they had adopted two boys from South Africa. That he is a biological son, however, does not make her and her husband love him more than the two adoptive sons. They are her 'true children' as well. But after the birth of her biological son, she was frequently asked, 'You must be so happy to have your biological son, mustn't you?' This makes her embarrassed every time.

I couldn't understand why I was being asked a question like that. If I were asked who is special to us, I would say Peter (her first adopted son), because we could become parents when we adopted him.

The irritation Jonas and Malinda feel is not different from the exasperation of other adoptees when they are misunderstood as immigrants or tourists. 'Blood is thicker than water' is still an axiom for the native 'white' Swedes who asked such questions, and this may have the effect of discrimination (cf. Brottbeit 1999: 132). Adoptees who do not accept 'blood' ties as a supreme and fundamental value and show interest in the quest for biological origins might be considered as unnatural or as anomalies. This is against the ideal of a 'colour blind society' that does not recognise homogeneity as the hegemonic value. If classification and differentiation of people based on the biological origin and ties is called biologisation, the serious matter in contemporary Sweden is biologisation rather than racialisation of a society, since the same 'white' natives who do not accept the biologised axiom might also be regarded as anomalous.

Biologisation lurks in the notion of double identity. The foremost of the two identities of an adoptee is 'Swede', but it is the Sweden of the 'white' people that is implied, to which s/he is not connected by biological ties. Some adoptees feel they are not fully incorporated into this Sweden. Micke was born in Ethiopia and adopted in 1970. His adoptive parents already had a biological daughter born before and a biological son born after his adoption. He is the only 'non-white' in his family, but he is very satisfied with his family and does not feel isolated. However, he feels that his identity is 85% to 90% Swedish and about 15% Ethiopian.

You can see from my appearance at a glance that I have come from Ethiopia. More than anyone may suppose, the appearance is indispensable for defining one's identity in Europe.

In such case, the second identity is expected to fill this gap; searching for it is advocated as it could provide the fundamental ingredient of one's identity (biological origin). Since his first visit to Ethiopia, Micke has acquired a strong attachment to Ethiopia and he is well contented with his Ethiopian origin.

Thus, since biologisation is the essential fundamental criterion, the double identity cannot be regarded as heterotopia or the site of heteroclitite (Foucault 1970: xviii).

Some adoptees also share an essentialist idea that biological origin is the constituent of personal identity. Even if they were adopted from the same country, the life histories and experiences of adoptees in adoptive countries are greatly different from each other; as an adoption agency personnel said, 'there was not a single case which would be exactly the same as others.' But some adoptees who are very critical about transnational adoption define themselves as 'we, the Korean adoptees' to demonstrate their own political position even though they grew up in different countries and in different situations (Hübinette 2005). However, not all adoptees from Korea are critical of transnational adoption. Few of the Korean adoptees I met complained of experiences of discrimination or harassment, and most of them are very satisfied with their public as well as their private lives. They can identify themselves in different ways through the relationships with others whom they interact with in their daily lives (cf. Brottveit op.cit.: 13).¹⁵ The expression 'we, the Korean adoptees,' essentialises the identity and experience of adoptees, disregarding their differences.

The adoptive parents are also obsessed with this biologisation. Maria tells her children that their birth mother may still live in their birth country and that she was in a difficult situation when she had to leave them. She persuades them to understand the birth mother's anguish and not to feel hatred towards her. She said that she was relieved, when she overheard her children talking to each other: 'There may be birth mothers in Korea, but our real mother is the mom who is here'. Her relief probably reflects her and her husband's bad feelings about not being able to provide the fundamental origin, leading to thoughts like 'I would like to take the place of the birth mother', 'I have taken her place', and 'I'm the real mother'.

Susanne who had adopted two children from Korea told me the following story:

A friend of mine who had a Korean adoptive child was contacted by AC. 'The biological mother of your adopted son has got pregnant again. She wants the child to be adopted by the same adoption family as before. Do you intend to accept this child?'¹⁶ My friend was thinking about adopting another child from Korea, so she replied 'Of course'. She replied 'Naturally of course', because the new adoptee would be a biological sibling of their already adopted son. They now have two boys born from the same biological mother. There is another family who adopted three children from a Korean birth mother. The adoptive mother says 'I wonder if such a call might come again. It would be like a wonderful gift'.

If the adoptive parents in Sweden think; 'If you live together, you're family', why do they rejoice and say; 'We are so lucky to be able to adopt biological siblings'? They do not only think; 'Biological siblings should live together'. But are they particular about the biological ties as well? The wish 'I hope I get such a phone call again' means adoptive parents do not realize that behind the adoption there might be an unhappy woman, who is single and without relatives, and who becomes pregnant over and over again. This reflects the aspect of transnational

adoption as human trafficking and interference of the south by the north. As mentioned already, since the Hague Convention on transnational adoptions was enforced, children's welfare is the priority and is respected over the interests of the parents. However, if adoptive parents do not want children, the entire transnational adoption process would not start. Accordingly, it is difficult to deny that the interests of those who want to become parents underlie the whole process.¹⁷

In addition, transnational adoptees (the single identity generation in particular) who suffer from identity problems actually seem to be similarly connected by the notion that biologically homogeneous people constitute a 'nation'; a Swede is a Scandinavian (white), and those people whose skin colour is not white are not real Swedes (biological determinism). For example, Tedros, an adoptee from Ethiopia describes the situation:

I'm not Swedish and I'm not Ethiopian. I feel like I'm swimming in a huge ocean with no boundaries and I'm in the middle. I can swim to the left or I can swim to the right, but no matter what I do, I never get anywhere. I'm always stuck in the middle. (von Melen 2000: 50)

Von Melen who is an adoptee from South Korea herself has pointed out:

At one and the same time, I am both Swedish and Korean, and this split identity is not unproblematic. Many people find it hard to deal with (loc.cit.)

On the one hand, Tedros says he is neither; on the other hand, von Melen says she is both. However, neither of them feel that their identities are well established. This is the problem these transnational adoptees share. They also accept the view that the identity should be something with a single definition. The vague position that they are both A and B, or they are neither A nor B has the possibility to give them special powers ordinary Swedes, Koreans and Ethiopians do not have, but they cannot value it positively.¹⁸ This is not their fault, but it reflects the sense of identity people around them have and how they regard transnational adoptees ('The Swedish society is originally a white society').

However, other adoptees have built their identity positively without referring to their place of birth or the biological origin. In the next section, I will consider such cases. It is also discussed whether the adoptees are really looking for their own biological origin, when they say they want to visit the country of birth and see the orphanage where they were taken care of.

Natural Becomes Plastic – Another Way to Understand Identity

I asked three adoptees from Korea, living in Gothenburg (a 22-year-old woman, a 17-year-old girl and a 16-year-old boy), the following questions. 'If your birth mother (biological mother) was not actually Korean, but a Japanese woman who had happened to come to Korea as an exchange student, which one is more important for your identity, Korea or Japan, or both?' The two women said Japan cannot be ignored. But Anders who was a high school student (Maria's son and

Lin's younger brother) said that he is first and foremost Swedish. When considering the other identity, it is Korean not Japanese. Because he was born in Korea and lived there for a short time, it was not important whether his birth mother was Korean or Japanese. This answer surprised his adoptive parents, especially Maria who was present on the occasion. The adoptive mother considered that 'the situation changes depending on how involved the Japanese woman was with Korea. For example, if she had been in Korea only for a short time and returned to Japan, I would teach my child about Japanese culture and history. Of course, because the father is Korean, I would also teach about Korea. However, if it appears that the Japanese woman had stayed in Korea thereafter, I would teach more about Korea than Japan. But either way, Japan cannot be ignored'.

However, it could be said that Anders' answer is consistent with defining the identity as that of a Swede and a Korean.¹⁹ Despite of his different looks, he said he has always accepted himself as Swedish without being especially aware of it. Using this as a clue, I interpret his answer as follows. The important thing for him is that he was raised in Sweden by a Swedish couple (parents) and he generally speaks Swedish. This fact was very natural for him. He knows that in addition to his Swedish adoptive mother, he also has a biological mother. His Swedish adoptive mother had told him about her. However, for him, his real mother was not his birth mother, but the Swedish mother who had raised him. Biology is no longer natural nor does it have any importance to him. The relationships cultivated in his place of living but also the place where such relationships evolve, are first priority for him when defining his identity. This logic can also be found in his attitude toward Korea. His birthplace is in Korea, and in spite of the short time he spent there (he was taken to Sweden when he was three months old), the fact that Korean foster parents took care of him was more meaningful for him than who his birth mother was. He could not take 'biology' seriously.

What does Korea mean to him if Korea does not form the foundation of his identity to the same extent as Sweden does? Katarina's expression gives a clue; she is an adoptee from Korea who has been introduced earlier. She said that 'of Korea, Koreanness' is something extra, something special. It is something that the vast majority of the surrounding white Swedes do not have. Therefore, to be born in Korea, rather than being something fundamental and essential, makes her presence special and different from those around her, and she is proud of it.

A similar attitude can be found in Selma, the daughter of a woman who came to Iceland as an adoptee from Korea (the daughter was 10 years old at the time of the interview in 2006). Selma is very interested in Korea and wants to buy anything Korean. When Koreans appear on television, she says 'Mom, it's Korea, Korea'. Of course, it can be said that there is a psychological impulse for this interest, because she knows she also has biological roots in Korea through her mother, but it is probably not a universal psychological urge to see biological roots as absolute. The mother considers Selma as entirely Icelandic. She has never

been to Korea and cannot speak Korean. Her father is a native Icelander, and she leads her everyday life as an Icelander. Thus, ‘Korea’ for the daughter is something no one of the native Icelandic friends around her has, something only she herself has, a valuable quality that makes her presence special and different from the surroundings; and it is reasonable that she is interested in Korea for this reason. Here again, ‘of Korea’ is not something fundamental or essential.

In Anders’ case, as well as in the cases of Selma and Katarina, Korean is so to speak a ‘bonus’ identity, which is added to the ‘Swedish’ or ‘Icelandic’ identity. Anders is good at football and he says, ‘my (biological) father might also have been good at football’. He sometimes cites this to explain his difference from his friends, and it can be assumed that this is the ‘Korea’ inside of him.

Among Swedish children whose parents have divorced, such expressions as ‘bonus’ and ‘plast’ (plastic in English) are used to refer to their step-family.

A great many Swedish couples co-operate to raise children together even after the divorce. Divorced partners will often live close to each other so that children can visit the parent they do not live with. If the ex-husband or ex-wife finds a new partner and starts a new family, the children commonly move frequently between the two households (see Table 1). When leading such a life, children can have strong ties with their parents’ new partners. Parents’ (especially the parents children live together with) new partners are called ‘plastpappa’ or ‘plastmamma’ (plastic papa/mama), or ‘bonuspappa’ or bonusmamma (bonus papa/mama). ‘Plast’ (plastic) means artificial, man-made, and a bonus means a specially given free gift.

	1992/1993	2000/2001
Living with both parents equally	4	17
At least once per week	23	23
Every two weeks or less than once per month	53	48
No contact	9	4
Lost or dead	7	6
No answer	4	3
Total	100	100

Table 1. Swedish children living with divorced parents (Takahashi 2004: 106)

If we use this expression, it may be said that ‘Korean’ is a bonus identity for Anders. The identity based on a biological relationship does not become absolutely ‘natural’ or ‘fundamental’, but it becomes something newly added and thus artificial (plastic). On the other hand, the relationship based on nurture has been transformed into the natural relationship.²⁰

Why do many adoptees visit their birth countries then? It is not necessarily because of ‘a biological urge’ to meet the birth parents or ‘a psychological tendency any adoptee possesses’. Instead, it is a journey to discover ‘the lost time’. Even if they were not able to meet their biological mother, some adoptees describe how

nice it was to visit the orphanage they had been in and to meet the staff who had been working there. It was an experience that filled a blank space, which had been created by the fact that they had been deserted without any photos from infant days, or without any person who could have talked about their first days based on those photos.²¹

Rather, it is the adoptive parents who have been caught up in the 'stereotype' that the biological origin is fundamental and cannot be erased. The concept that knowledge of the biological origin is essential for the identity of the child, and that the biological origin is even synonymous with 'who you are' is the 'power effect' of modern Sweden, as Foucault argued in his celebrated works (Foucault 1977 and 1978). It can be said that by accepting (obeying) this power, people become 'subjects' as Swedish. It is inescapable that the adoptive mother who is involved in these power relations has given Anders information about his biological origin and about where he has come from. However, by replacing the biological relationship of a 'natural' meaning with the relationship in the actual living place, Anders unconsciously departs from the power relations that presuppose 'biological' as fundamental. Being 'a Swede' should be seen as an expression referring to the irreplaceable relationship in the living space where daily life occurs, rather than as an identity of a member of a nation state.

Postscript

In order to take 'care of the self' of transnational adoptees and to help them develop a firm personal as well as national identity, it is taken for granted first by psychologists, then by ordinary Swedes, that to 'know yourself' – which is equated with to 'know your biological origin' – is essential and indispensable (Irhammar & Cederblad 2000). For some adoptees such as Anders, however, 'care of the self' is practiced in the everyday relationships with those irreplaceable others (adoptive parents, friends and so on); it is not accomplished by the knowledge of his birth. While not only psychologists but also ordinary Swedes connect 'care of the self' to 'know yourself', which means 'know your biological origin', Anders disconnects from that assumption.

However, the idea that 'blood is thicker than water' (*Blod är tjockare än vatten*) still holds here. If, as expressed in this saying, the notion of 'blood ties' has penetrated through Swedish and other Nordic societies as a root metaphor for the knowledge of one's biogenetic origin (a metaphor to prove oneself as oneself and accept it as a fact), it is not easy to free oneself from these. Signe Howell, who states that transnational adoptions in Norway have been successful, expresses how adoptive parents raise adoptees as transubstantiation (Howell 2006: 64). This metaphor in itself reflects the binary opposed image of 'Norwegian' = white / non-white = minority, which is the image Norwegians have of the society them-

selves.²² Furthermore, the bonus 'pappa' is a bonus, because he is not the 'real' 'pappa'.²³

It has also been pointed out that after the media reports on transnational adoptions in 2002, there has been hesitation to talk about adoption as openly as before, and some adoptive parents are more nervous about how their adopted child is treated. A couple who adopted a boy from Indonesia while they were living in Singapore blamed the coach of their son's football team for not choosing him as a regular member and they suspected racial discrimination to be the main reason. According to the brother-in-law of the adoptive father, it was just a matter of the boy's athletic ability. To find another reason, however, it could be said that this suggests the dark side of Swedish society today (not only limited to Sweden).

Swedish society today is no longer a homogeneous 'white' society, but is in the process of becoming a multi cultural or multi ethnic society. It is considered to be an antiracist society where colour-blindness is the norm (Hübinette & Tigervall 2009: 335). However, if not as overtly anti-immigrant as the movement emerged in recent years in Denmark, discrimination that can only be seen as racism from the point of view of the targets is also present in Sweden. For example, researchers from overseas who are employed at universities have raised critical voices. Because they are immigrants of a different appearance, they are not appointed for full professorships or other key positions, and their careers inside universities are hampered. If the situation does not improve, some consider migration to the United States with their families, and in order to provide their children with necessary English communication skills, they send them to American schools (in Sweden). Furthermore, those who have a professorship criticise the situation that if foreign researchers are not productive, they will be given a cold shoulder immediately, but the positions of Swedish professors with lacklustre performance are secure only because they are Swedes (cf. Gullestad 2006). In these cases, the 'knowledge' of biological origin is plainly disconnected with the 'care' for the others. The premise of this exclusion of immigrants from Swedish communities is the same as that of double identity of transnational adoptees, i.e. biological origin is irreversible.

Transnational adoption in Sweden and other Nordic societies is expected to continue in the future; but at the same time, the view that adoptees cannot help but look for their biological parents or relatives because the biological origin and the race are seen as unchangeable and something fundamental, will also follow adoption. Unlike the Caduveo people, a balance between this kind of biological determinism and other views is necessary. In order for Sweden to become a truly 'colour-blind' society and fulfil a heterotopia which rejects identification based on blood-related kinship and the exclusive membership of a nation, the meaning of blood ties and differences in appearance need to be questioned and discussed again.

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Notes

- ¹ After publishing a book on British attitudes on ATRs (Deguchi 1999) I realised that very little is known about the Nordic situation, which was the main cause for the research.
- ² See Bowie (2004) and Howell (2006) on the development of anthropological adoption research, which has been an important field of kinship research.
- ³ This explanation, however, requires careful examination. For example, a major adoptee-providing country, South Korea, is not currently poor. The nation’s birth rate is in continuing decline, and its fertility rate is 1.15, the lowest in the world. Cultural factors, such as the emphasis on paternal blood relations and the prejudice against children born out of wedlock have to be taken into consideration, when explaining why South Korea belongs to the top rank transnational adoptee-providing countries. Among the major providing countries, only Vietnam and Haiti have a gross national product per capita that is below 500 U.S. dollars. There are no countries with a gross national product of 304 U.S. dollars or below (used as the indicator for the poorest developing countries) (Selman 2005a and b).
- ⁴ The waiting time for the adoption varies from case to case. In Mika’s case, she submitted an application for adoption to the government in November 1999, sent documents to Colombia in July 2000, and received a reply in January 2001 that a child had been found in Colombia. She went to Colombia to fetch the child in February, and after staying there for eight weeks (an eight-week stay is required in Colombia) she brought her adopted daughter to Sweden. When applying for the second child in November 2001, she sent the documents to Colombia in September 2002, received a reply in February 2003 and then went there to bring home a boy.
- ⁵ Swedish television broadcasts can be watched in the neighbouring Norway. A 27-year-old female journalist Hanne Andersson was adopted from South Korea to Norway as a child. When watching the programme, she was astonished by how intensely the topic was debated by the transnational adoptees. She described how she became interested in why transnational

adoptees had clashed against each other so emotionally, and this led her to write a special feature article on transnational adoptees in the Saturday edition of the newspaper (Howell 2006: 106-7).

- ⁶ In addition, the following is stated in article 8. '1. Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognised by law without unlawful interference. 2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity.' This has been established to enable the retention of the child's background ; in other words, this concerns identity related matters.
- ⁷ This is based on article 21 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 'b. Recognise that inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of child's care, if the child cannot be placed in a foster or an adoptive family or cannot in any suitable manner be cared for in the child's country of origin'.
- ⁸ According to Yngvesson, the following incidents influenced this idea significantly. In December 1992, an 11-month-old boy and his mother were kidnapped in Colombia. The mother was murdered, and people nearby found the abandoned baby and reported it to the authorities. The authorities urged the baby's relatives to come forward through media, but because no one showed up, the baby was recognised as abandoned. In June 1993, an adoption by a Swedish couple was approved, and the boy moved to Sweden. In September of the same year, the mother of the boy's birth mother (e.g. the biological grandmother) received an anonymous phone call saying that her grandchild had been abandoned. The grandmother tried to look for the grandson, but it was already too late. The grandmother appealed to the court; in 1995, it was ordered that the adoption was not effective, and the adoptive parents should return the adopted child to the maternal grandparents. However, the Swedish side refused, because the child was already a Swedish citizen, and the judgment in Colombia did not affect the legal relationship between the adoptive parents and the child. In June of the same year, 1996, the grandmother visited Sweden, but she could not take the child back to Colombia. However, negotiations were held between the adoptive parents and the grandmother; they reached an agreement in 1997, according to which 'the child stays in the custody of the adoptive parents, but the grandmother has visiting rights once a year. The child goes to a Spanish class, and the child and the adoptive parents are to visit Colombia in due time'. The AC who mediated this adoption also admitted that because there were no other parents, the child should stay with the adoptive parents, but the maternal grandmother will always remain the grandmother of the child (Yngvesson op. cit.: 174-176). Yngvesson states that this case has made an air hole in the clean-break model of transnational adoption assuming that the ties with the birth country and the relatives there should be completely cut off. Even before this incident, some adoptive parents had treated their adopted children according to the idea of double identity. Thus, this incident probably did not trigger as radical a change as Yngvesson claims. In addition, this case is special. Many adoptees coming to Sweden do not know their biological families.
- ⁹ The motherland tour is practiced in other Nordic counties as well.
- ¹⁰ Though it is true that the non-white bodies of transnational adoptees are markers of their different origin than white Swedes, and become a factor of everyday racism (Hübinette & Tigervall 2009; Andersson 2012), very few adoptees I met told me of such experiences, and all of them are supportive of transnational adoption.
- ¹¹ The family visited South Korea for three weeks in the summer of 2011. They enjoyed their trip and are very surprised that South Korea is now greatly developed.
- ¹² Apart from some anthropologists (Yngvesson 2010), many Scandinavian scholars only concentrate on their own countries and seldom pay attention to their neighbours.
- ¹³ In Spain, adoptees from Russia and other East European countries are preferred because they are 'invisible' among the 'white' (Marre 2009, cf. Khabibullina 2009).

- ¹⁴ As Irhammar and Cederblad show, one-third of adoptees with a Swedish ethnic self-identity had an active interest in their ethnic origin(for example, reading about their birth country and its culture)(Irhammar & Cederblad 2000: 156).
- ¹⁵ Irhammar made an analysis that adoptees of lower social class were more often related to a non-Swedish self-identity and those from Latin America have more interest in their personal origin than those from Asia. This kind of quantitative research often neglects the negotiation of identities by adoptees in their daily experiences (Irhammar 1999: 179-180).
- ¹⁶ According to Susanne, biological mothers of adoptees from Korea often get pregnant again. She said that they have no relatives and they may have been raised in an orphanage.
- ¹⁷ If the welfare of children is the first priority, and in spite of the fact that adoption of street children and disabled children should be desirable, the reality is not necessarily so. The agreement on shortening the procedure to adopt children with disabilities is in itself a manifestation of the fact that these children are not adopted so readily.
- ¹⁸ Known as the forefront critic of transnational adoption and a transnational adoptee of the single identity generation from South Korea himself, Hübinette maintains, based on Ho Mi Barber, that adopted Koreans are a group of the special 'third space', who violate categories of race, citizenship, language and religion. He seems to take a positive stance on the ambiguous position of being A and B, but neither A nor B (Hübinette op.cit.: 22-3). However, neither A nor B, but being 'in a third position' C, only means that adopted Koreans are defined unambiguously with one definition again.
- ¹⁹ Even when talking about the Korean identity, it was in answer to a question prompted by the author. It did not mean that he would have thought of himself as a Korean.
- ²⁰ Adoptees who were too much caught up by the biological identity and were puzzled with being both Swedish and Korean may have thought in the same way. Even though they viewed the relationships fostered in the place of living as the most natural, when they had problems with these relationships including those with adoptive parents, they experienced a sense of alienation and sought refuge in the place of origin, but felt marginalised again, which resulted in a deepening identity crisis.
- ²¹ Lévi-Strauss wrote in his celebrated *The Savage Mind* that the virtue of archives is in the fact that they bring us into contact with the genuine historical nature. The value of archives is not about their contents, but about being directly exposed to the materialised past (for example, Bach's signature or letters directly written by him as physical evidence of a person who has an especially important or irreplaceable past). Special importance or irreplaceable past can be said to be about singularity or inalterability, but Lévi-Strauss calls it pure historicity or fundamental contingency (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 242). When adoptees visited an orphanage where they had been taken care of, it is about getting in touch with their genuine historical nature embodied in the form of still present buildings and staff working there.
- ²² The Sami people have lived in both Sweden and Norway already before international adoptions and immigrants, but however, they are still a minority and do not seem included in 'We Norwegian'.
- ²³ If this kind of expression is used also in cases of adoptive parents' divorce and remarriage is still to be researched. I would like to address this question in the future.

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