GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

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International Master of Science in Social Work

Discursive Construction of Adoptive Identity: The Case of Ethiopian Born Adult Adoptees Living in Sweden

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study is to find out to what extent adoptees' encounter with different discourses within the society impact their sense of self as adopted persons and, on the other hand, how they negotiate and position their identities in the communities they live in.   In an attempt to find answer to these questions, I drew upon social constructionism approach and discourse analysis as theoretical framework and methodological approach respectively.   Based on primarily in-depth interview carried out with 6 adult adoptees among which the majority live in Goteborg, narratives or stories were obtained and then analysed. In line with the social constructionism thinking, adoption and adoptive identities found to be various, multiple, dynamic, at times, contradictory and changing. The variations and multiplicities are observed not only among individuals but within an individual narrative. The production of adoptive identities is not a unilateral project of adoptees but also a joint venture that involves the surrounding discourses the former have contact with. Accordingly, the study has identified four categories of discourses that impacted on adoptive identities construction, among which the making of the strangers (persecuting difference discourse) appeared to be the dominant one. This discourse does not only externalize adoptees but also affect their self-concept and their identification with Sweden. Contrary to past research that partially or fully individualized and pathologized adoptive identity, the research relocated it from individual to the society where discriminatory treatments emerge from. This result, along with another finding—i.e. the negotiating capacity of adoptees, suggests, among other things, the need to promote less damaging discourses and non-hostile way of speaking about adoption and adoptive identity. It also indicates that adoption social work and other concerned institutions should work towards empowering both adoptees and adoptive families so that they would be able represent and advocate their adoptive identities.

Key words: social construction, discourse, adoptive identity, and socialization

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Acronyms

AEF=Ethiopian and Eritrean Grown-up Adoption Organization

AICAN= Australian Intercountry Adoption Network

DS= Discourse Analysis

EPI= Email Personal Interview

GR= Grade Report

HC= The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption

ICA= Intercountry Adoption

ICA= Interracial Adoption

MaSC=Macro Social Construction

MiSC= Micro Social Construction

MIA= Sweden Intercountry Adoption Authority

UNCRC= the United Nation Child Rights Convention

IIWW= Second World War

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3) Introduction

3.1) Background

Adoptive identity has become one of the areas that have been dominating adoption discourse in Sweden, particularly in academia, clinical and welfare circles. Increase in number of research on adoptive identity can be considered as a major part of the discourse. Most research conducted in Sweden have psychodynamic, attachment, and psychoanalysis conceptual orientation and (as spelt out in the literature review part) places adoptive identity in psychological and psychical structure of individuals (see Matwejeff, 1992 and 1993; Irhammer, 2002; Irhammar & Bengtsson, 2004). Though there have been some attempts to treat the subject from relational and sociocultural angles, they still give more weight to the internal psychological structure and subsidiary position to the former as explanatory variable (For example, Von Greiff, 2000). On the whole, these research are marked by two shortcomings. First, they dwelt too much on adoptees' awareness of their adoption status and search for their biological origin and "ethnic" roots. Second, they discuss identity in general and adoptive identity in particular from "essentialist" point of view; considering it as "fixed', "single" and as having its own "essence." In most cases deviation from what is taken as "fixed" and "real" adoptive identity would be abnormalized. Such pathologizing discourses usually emphasise pre-adoption background, and they tend draw a picture of adoptees as helpless that cannot escape their fate or people who are passive and, therefore, at mercy of the society (whose only source of salvation). Adoptees' actual experiences and potential for negotiating their status as adopted persons attracted little attention.

By drawing on the social constructionism approach this GR tries to shift the focus form 'biology" and "root' to 'perceived socialization' and from pathologizing and victimizing discourse to adoptees actual and potential ability to negotiate and position their identities in the wider society. Depending on the way adoptees are treated in the adoptive community, their understandings, interpretations and subsequent reactions to these treatments; the types of adoptive identities constructed vary, changing and fluid. Thus, in this study, the interplay between public discourses and self--discourses (the action and reaction aspect) is taken as the preferred site to explore what it means to be an adopted person. While making adolescents as subject of study offers a very rich information on "formative stage" identity formation (Irhammar, 1997), I believe that it is at adulthood a person develops the mental capacity to understand and describe the abstract and complicate nature of life in a way that offers holistic picture without which identity research bears very little fruit (Kroger, 2007). Reliance on primarily their account is also to explore and explain what does the adoptive identity entails for the adoptese themselves and to get insight into the perceived role of socialization agents like families ,friends and peers, schools etc adoptees encounter with in the construction of adoptive identity.

Socialization is taken as a venue in which different discourses interact to influence each other. It is undrestood in this study as "the way individuals are assited in becoming members of one or more groups.'' The word "assist" indicates the agentic power of individuals in the process of sociliaztion (Grusec & Hastings, 2007:1). Socialization agents stands for those institutions that come into contact with an individual and perform the role of making him or her members of society. The major ones are family, peer groups, schools, religious instituions , and in adulthood, employers and intimate partners (Maccoby, 2007).

3.2) Aim and Objective of the Study

Adoption came to my attention for the first time when I worked for a few months as a social worker with an organization operating on international adoption (INA). The time was obviously too short to claim meaningful familiarity and intimacy to the issue but long enough to develop in me a germ of interest that grew up here in

Sweden while I was taking courses related to child welfare to the extent of affecting my choice of 'grade report' topic. Back in Ethiopia, my inspiration came from two directions: 1) Influence of the dominant ICA discourses, and 2) personal interest engendered by work experience. There were two different discourses on ICA: on one hand, realizing that the adoptees are sent (have come) to the affluent Western countries, there are people that consider them as fortunate; and, on the hand, there are pessimist who regard them as children whose fate in foreign land is not known. Information was not available to affirm or deny both sides. On personal level, my engagement in home studies and witnessing as babies left their local areas for adoptive countries created in me (as it is the case for many professionals who came into contact to pre-adoption stage of ICA) the question 'what does it mean to be an adopted person ?' This has been a riddle far fetched to solve at that time. I chose this topic with the aim of contributing to solve this riddle and, partly, to offer a clue as to how the adoptees are living in adoptive environment based on their own account. For me ICA represents a kind of international social work whose fruit should be scrutinized in terms of the 'self' it produces.

The significant of the research will be filling the knowledge gaps (in both Ethiopian and Sweden) as to the constructed nature of adoptive identity and the role of socialization agents and thereby informs policy making in the field. It is also my belief that it will contribute towards the promotion of non-damaging adoptive discourses and the need to work towards 'communal discourse' on adoption in general and adoptive identity in particular. It may also serve as a means through which adoptees make their voice heard, as part of the ongoing effort to enhance their participation and empowerment in the adoption discourse.

The main objective of the study is to find out to what extent adoptees' encounter with different socialization agents and discourses impact their sense of self as adopted persons and, on the other hand, how adoptees negotiate and position their identities in their respective societies.

3.3) Research Questions

To address the aforementioned aim and objective, the study will focuses on the following major questions:

- How do adult adoptees define and make sense of adoption and adoptive identity?

- How encounter with different socialization agents (socialization process) and adoption discourses in the wider society impacted adoptees' adoptive identity construction?

- How do adult adoptees react to the perceived role of socialization agents and negotiate their identities in the society?

3.4) Coverage

This degree report, inter alia, introduces the background, the purpose, and the main questions of the study, followed by literature review that covers the major research conducted on adoptive identity in Sweden, and brief over view of ICA in both receiving (Sweden) and sending (Ethiopia) countries to set the context of the study. In subsequent chapters, theoretical framework and methodological approach, result and analysis and discussion and conclusion with some implication of the finding of the study for adoption social work are presented.

3.5) Ethnical Issues

Researching adoption in general and using adoptees as informants entails personal, emotional and private aspect of their lives and thus involves a great deal of ethical issues that necessitated meticulous treatment of both of the process and the result of the study. Informed consent was sought from each interviewee, which was preceded by the provision of information on the purpose, content and the possible consequence of engaging as an informant in the research project. After informed consent was obtained the research was conducted in strict observance of confidentiality. Particular care was taken not disclose their identities and other sensitive information like town of adoption during the production, storing and communicating the result of the research to possible consumers.

4.) Literature Review

4.1) Previous Research

Researching ICA and interracial adoption (IRA) is a recent phenomenon. Sweden (along USA) is a pioneer in adoption practice and research in 1970s. Since then research taken ICA as their topic of interest have made their way to other countries and have grown both in number and scope, following the spread in practice of ICA (Dalen, 2001).

Dalen (Ibid), in her research review , pointed out that ICA research do vary from one region or country to another in terms of issues of inquiry, and methods employed and target groups. This is of course closely related to the particular social context the country or region found itself in and its implication for ICA and the concern it raises, the research tradition in vogue among scholars etc. In USA and UK where there has been concern around ethnic and racial minority, adoptees' ethnic identity and belongings and self-confidence have been the dominant subjects. In Western Europe, according to Dalen (Ibid), identity researchers appear to be a recent phenomenon. In these countries, including Sweden, the initial focus has been on topics like initial period of adaptation and their mental and physical health development.   Language and school performance has taken the dominancy following the mental and physical development of adoptees. She mentioned, including herself, the works of researchers in late 80s and early 90s like. The past few years have witnessed a significant shift of focus towards identity (see for instance, Irhammar, 1998; Dalen & Sætersdal 1992). Methodologically, interview survey has been the dominant. Qualitative studies in general and In-depth interviews in particular are a new development; they appeared on the scene of international adoption research following the growth of adoptees into adolescence and adultship(Ibid).

Cederblad (2003:33) broadly categorizes research in Sweden in to four interrelated groups: Clinical (such as aggression, defiance, hyperactivity and social behaviour among the youth and suicide, suicide attempts, psychiatric illnesses, addiction and criminality in adult adotees); epidemiological (that compares adoptees psychological and psychiatric problems against other groups in the population of the same age), school performance (which again compares adoptees with non-adoptees); and identity (which explores adoptees attitude towards their biological and ethnic origins (Ibid:34). From this and other plethora of studies, I have selected a few and major ones which I think are relevant for my grade report.

In Sweden, as already intimated, adoptive identity research have been a recent tradition as compared to psychological and adjustment oriented ones. It started with domestic adoptees or 'Swedish born adoptees' as subject of study. Matwejeff (1992&1993) did two research in one year difference whose target in the first were 18   (aged from 22 to 52) and in the second 5 Swedish born adoptees(aged from 35 to 40)in which she tried to explore their attitude towards adoption. In both study adoptive identity is treated in terms of adoptees' inclination to search and meet their biological parents which, according to the finding of the research, adpotees found it to be threatening to the adoptive parents. The benefit of meeting biological relatives from what she called 'existentialist point of view' was also emphasised. This tendency towards "biological root" and "ethnic background" was consolidated by a relatively large scale, comprehensive (it includes age, sex and others dimensions), mixed- method (qualitative and quantitative) and longitudinal study. In this Swedish epidemiological study, 181 adoptees (the majority came from Asia and Latin America) and their adoptive parents took part. After 7 years, the second survey was conducted

whose participants were 42 adoptees at early adulthood (25 to 34) who were 18 years and older in the first study (Irhammar, 2001). The study argues that the essential feature of personal identity is "the possibility to tell your history and react on who you are in relation to your origin." Accordingly, two salient issues of identity were identified and addressed by interview. 1) Like the study we cited earlier, the attitude of adoptees towards their biological root and their related interest to seek information about it. Besides, the meaning they attach to biological parentship was also looked into. 2) Adoptees "self – ethnic identity" and interest in ethnic root which is linked to societal view and treatment of adoptees as immigrants. Hence, the interest of the authors, as far as identity is concerned, was adoptees' view towards biological and ethnic root (Ibid). Besides, the meaning adoptees attach to what it means to be biological parent was also discussed. Though there is a tendency to talk about relational and social factors, it appears to be minimal and treats them in terms of their contributory role to the biological factor.

The summary of the finding of this important research is, in most cases, presented by comparing the two parts of the research. Accordingly, thinking about ethnic identity remained the same, i.e., 70 percent, where as interest in search for information has shown sharp decline in the second study which is related to absence of the factors that propelled them to think about their biological family such as divorce of adoptive parents and the adoptive parents contact with adoptees biological family in the second part of the study. It is also interesting to note that those who had not shown any inclination towards their biological parents in the first research started to do so in the second one which the research explained it in terms of less degree of Psychic "well-being." Significant change has also been witnessed among the adoptees attitude towards their ethnic origin: 50 percent of those who were disinterested in the first study shown development of concern of those who had interest in the first research, a few less than half lost it. Adoptive parents lack of contact with biological family served as a factor for the disinterest identified in the in the first research. How they came to develop interest after seven years is not addressed in the abstract (Irhammar, 2003). There is a tendency also to relate what Irmammar called 'non-Swedish identity' (to which some adoptees identified themselves with) to less psychic wellbeing and a high age at adoption. Irhammar (Ibid) concludes her summary that the role of family related variables such as divorce, psychic and attachment styles diminishes as adopees get older.

Minimal treatment was given to the problem linked to what is called "external identification" (Cederblad, 2003:84),.i.e., the situation in which people who are strangers to adoptees identify the latter as immigrants in a derogatory manner usually in the streets and around shops (Irhammar, 1997). Related to the absence of discrimination and stigma in the work places which the respondents reported, failure to identify oneself with Swedish is resulted from the individuals feeling of "being different" rather than relating him/ herself with the country of his birth in a positive way,' It is not difficult to witness the tendency to pathologizing interest of adoptees to look for their biological parents and ethnic identity, feeling of difference and "non-Swedishness'.

Though inherited the tradition of focusing on biological and ethical background, Von Greiff (2002) appears to be the first to offer detail treatment to socialization as the major explanatory variable. In a qualitative research involved 12 adopted young adults from Colombia; she attempted to find out about adopted persons' perception of their life situation and their childhood development. The study concluded that the adoptees have encountered both 'opportunities and difficulties' in the course of the socialization process into Swedish society. This engendered ambivalent attitude towards the result of adoption. They had their own strategies to overcome the difficulties in what she described as "complex picture" of socialization.

The study also revealed that most of the interviewees had had frequent dream and fantasy about their biological origin. Von Greiff underlines individual variations with regard to factors behind such experience and preoccupation. Accordingly, for some, discrimination, which they faced in the course of their lives,

serves as a reason behind their search for biological families while for others not. She did not explicitly explained the link between being treated as "adoptees'' by the surrounding society and their felt-identity which is 'something between Swedish and immigrants. But the fact that all of the adoptees felt that society identify them as immigrants when they grow up seems to engender in them the feeling of in-between Swedes and immigrants for the majority and to look for their biological root, for some (Von Greiff, 2003).

Though she focused on the attitude of adoptees towards their biological and ethnic background , Von Greiff warns the danger of Swedish adoptive discourses obsession with the roots of the adoptees for It conveys a message that adoptees "should seek his root", which may not always be healthy. This should be something better left to the adoptees personal choice (Ibid). Her discussion of the influence of socialization process and public discourses on adoptees underscores that the "overdoing" of root discourse is problematic. Apart from the effect root discourse, she did not mention the impact of the content and direction of socialization process or different discourses, which I think, is much more important. Interestingly the coping mechanism of the adoptees to combat 'difficulties' is a big stride in a sense it brings the agentic side of adoptive identity formation into attention. Whether the coping strategy includes their self –identity construction capacity and the potential to self- representation in the wider public is not addressed. Besides, the major shortcoming of the study appears to be its "essentialist" approach that looks for some kind of "true" and "fixed" identity, i.e., biological and ethnical root, relegating the dynamitic and variable nature of adoptive identities.

4.2) An Over View of Intercountry Adoption in Sweden: Receiving Country

A Brief History

Adoption has been part of the human history for a long time; legal provisions provided by Hammurabi's Law which are traceable back to Babylon's time and ancient adoptees like Emperor Sargon of Babylon, Moses, and Marcuse of Rome are cases in point (Cederblad, 2003). ICA, on the other hand, is a recent development in Sweden and elsewhere. Though the significance presence is felt and therefore associated with the IIWW, it's acknowledged root goes back to 1930s when around 500 children from Israel were brought to Sweden first for foster care, which, latter on, placed the majority of the children in Adoption (Lomfors as cited by Hubinette, 2001). This makes Sweden, along USA, one of the pioneers in this field (Dalen, 2001). Following this, during and immediately after IIWW, Sweden placed children from Finland and Germany into adoption or permanent foster care (some with Jewish origin (ibid).

In all cases war, displacement and/or famine were the major factors for sending children for adoption, while economic prosperity and '"social modernity" Sweden have been experiencing believed to have created a favourable condition to receive children (Ibid). This may be attributed to a number of interrelated social and economic causes such as the rapidly declining birth rate, fast economic growth associated to improved social conditions, and enhancement of women's right which resulted in large and increasing number women's labour force participation (Elmund, 2007; Hubinette, 2001).

According to the result of a survey released by MIA, the number of foreign adoptive children placed into Swedish facilities from 1969---2007 are 47 294 of which 1086 are from Ethiopia (http://www.mia.eu/english/totals.pdf). On average Sweden has been adopting 900 to 1800 children annually since 1970s (MIA: 2005). This obviously places Sweden among those countries with high adoption rates (Lindblad et al, 2003).

MIA, an executive body under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, is the governmental body in charge of coordination and intermediation of ICA. Among its main responsibilities, monitoring the activities of adoption organization in Sweden (which are 6 at present) in line to the principle of the best

interest of the child as it is spelt out in the UNCRC and HC, which Sweden has ratified and been active participants in drafting (Ibid). The Adoption Organizations are voluntary and authorised by the Intercountry Adoption Intermediation Act (LIA) of 1997 to carry out the frontline adoption activities as pr the guideline prepared by MIA. In 1979, the Swedish parliament has issued a policy on ICA in which the best interest of the child considered as the "over ridding" principle concerning adoption matters.

The Condition of International Adoptees in Sweden

Most research (see **Hubinette, 2001; Lindblad, et al, 2003 & Elmund ,2007**) conducted on the current status of international adopotees to which Ethiopian adoptees are part of ,draw a grim picture of the adoptees in different walks of their lives and emphasis problems they are facing . These research attempted to compare adoptees with non-adoptee Swedish, immigrants, and domestic adoptees which make the finding more sound.

In a very comprehensive and comparative national cohort study, variables like family, employment condition, and health and education status were discussed. The research targeted 5,942 Swedish intercountry adoptees born between 1968 and 1975 who were compared with those sampled from the general population, immigrants, and a siblings group (all age matched—in national registers from 1997 to 1999) . It has come up with the finding that adoptees, as compared to Swedish were found to have more often psychiatric conditions and were long-time beneficiaries of social assistances. The educational level appeared to be the same while the general socioeconomic status is lower (Lindblad et al, 2003: 190). Another comprehensive and comparative research (reported to be the biggest ever conducted in Europe) undertaken based on the statistics obtained from the register of the Total Swedish Population, which reviewed cases of 17, 172 (Non - European adult international adoptees born between 1960-79), came up with similar findings. In a summary given by Hubinette (2001), the cases were compared, like the previous one, to non-adoptee Swedes, immigrants, adoptive parents and domestic adoptees. He identified that in terms of socioeconomic condition, international adoptees (similar to immigrant) tend to be unemployed and thus become receivers of social welfare assistance compared to domestic adpoptees and non- adoptee Swedes. Moreover, the rate of hospitalization for drug and alcohol abuse, psychiatric illness and suicide attempts found to be higher than even-non European immigrants and the Swedes. This research also underscores females' more vulnerability and exposure to conditions like suicide (Ibid). There are also other research that provides a very abysmal picture of the adoption story (see Elmund, 2007; SOU, 2003) that reveals the statistical over representation of internationally adopted persons in different health and other problem related areas. This may explain why, according to the finding of Elmund's (2007) study with regard to identity, very large numbers of adoptees do not want to identify themselves with Sweden when it comes to national identity. In accordance to this study, out of the sampled population of internationally adoptee ask about their national identity, 70 % cited the country from which they were adopted while only to 5 percent mentioned Sweden.

4.3) Intercountry Adoption from Ethiopia: Sending Country

Adoption , or in its local name, 'Gudiftcha' 'Yemar Lij' or 'yemadego Lij' , is a traditional child rearing mechanism existed for a long time in Ethiopia, though it is not practiced widely and usually, like domestic adoption of other countries, invisible. As far as my experience is concerned , attempt to promote, systematize and make it part of the child welfare system is absent due to various reasons, among which lack of commitment on the side of the responsible bodies is one. ICA, on the other hand, is a phenomenon, started in 1970s in more pronounced way, during and following the infamous and drought and famine and lengthy civil war that left 'thousands of children' orphaned and abandoned. Recently, the onset and spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic has been the major cause for sending children to other countries for adoption (Howell,

2006). This push factors combined with the concomitant pull factors mentioned earlier in western countries, augmented the number of children adopted from Ethiopia.

Starting from 1995 to 2006, according to AICAN, Ethiopia sent 5139 children to 12 western countries, including 166 who came to Sweden. This Sweden figure varies from the one given by MIA, i.e., 257. Taking the latter one, Sweden is the 6th country in terms of the size of children adopted from Ethiopia. USA (1371), France (1195) and Italy (867) and Spain (554) the major receiving countries in terms of the size of the number of children adopted from Ethiopia (http://www.aican.org/statistics.php). Ethiopia has been sending, on average, around 800 children per year to different countries including Sweden (Howell, 2006). The number has been growing for the past five years. Ethiopian popularity seems to be attributed to easy and less cumbersome adoption procedures. This, Howell says, "seems to be overriding any concern of that might be harboured about colour and race." (Ibid: 203-204).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the official body responsible, inter alia, to oversee and monitor the proper implementation of the UNCRC, has developed the National Guideline on Child Support --Alternative Approach that includes "Direction for the Adoption of Ethiopian Children" (Ibid, 204--205). Ethiopia has not signed the HC which is considered by outsiders as a sign of lack of willingness to abandon private adoption which the HC prohibits.

With regard to its implementation, foreign adoption agencies are responsibility to make sure that the adoptive parents have fulfilled the necessary criteria. They are required to submit the result of their investigation to the Ethiopian Embassy which takes the case to the Ethiopian courts. The agencies have also the responsibility to send reports as to the status of the adopted child to the Ethiopian Government every six-month until the child become 18. This method of follow up is supplemented by visits conducted to adoptive countries by experts to make sure that the child is in a good condition (Committee on the Rights of Child, 1997).

The Situation of Ethiopian Adult Adoptees in Sweden

Ethiopian Children came to Sweden for the first time in 1969 when 7 children were adopted. Since then around 1086 children are adopted until 2007 (information secured by email from MIA). Though the number of children adopted from Ethiopia has been oscillating, there are signs that it has started to show increasing trend recently. Though the information I have secured from MIA does not say about the ages of adoptees, given the average age of adoption, i.e., two and very recently one year, it is estimated there are around 678 adoptees 18 and above which is close to the estimate of the AEF (personal email interview with one representative of the Association on telephone).

How Ethiopian adoptees fared in Sweden? I have not come across a research that shows to what extent 'blacks' in general and Ethiopian adoptees in particular are represented in the samples taken from International adoptees. It appears that research on International adoption basically focus on Korea, China, Latin America and India (For example,Irhammar, 1997; Hubnitte, 2001). It is also important to not that Ethiopia is not one of the ten countries (Columbia, India, Vietnam, China, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, Vietnam and Belarus) who have international adoption cooperation with Sweden. Since they are part of the general population of the adopted persons in Sweden, there is no doubt that Ethiopian adopted persons share all the 'blessings' and 'curses' of international adoption already cited. But it is also important to note that being black increases their degree of visibility which may put them in a more difficult situation as compared to others who are not black. Though data is not available that deals with Ethiopian or black adoptees' cases in isolation, there are some clues and anecdotal cases demonstrating that there is a feeling among adoptees that it is worse for 'blacks' in general and Ethiopians in particular in terms of the

discrimination they encounter. The 'black' vis-à-vis 'chink' comparison made by one Ethiopian adoptee illustrates this point. "It is harder to be a Negro Than a Chink" (Melen, 1998: 45). Here "Chink" is a derogatory term used to Korean adoptees by some Swedes. Therefore, blackness and its implication in the lives of adopted persons and its relation to prejudice and discrimination that they suffer was rarely touched upon. Though this study does not claim to do so, the attempt I made to see adoption from the vantage point of Ethiopian adoptees perhaps throws some light on the effect of greater visibility of Ethiopian adoptees on their living condition.

Ethiopian adult adoptees has established an association called Adopted Eritrean's and Ethiopian's Organization –"Adopterade Etiopiers and Eritreans Förening" (AEF) in an attempt to 'make voice' heard and bring their efforts together to their common case. It provides its members with an environment to share experience and knowledge about being adopted from Ethiopia and Eritrea. And also subscribing the general tendency to search for 'roots' which is partly the result of the root centred discourse surrounding adoptive identity, AEF facilitates root contacts , contact between Ethiopian and Sweden who are interested in adoption (http://www.aef-forening.com/).

5) Theoretical Framework and Methodological Approach

5, 1) Social Constructionist Approach to Identity

In the West, identity discourse is a recent development (Kroger, 2007. 12). Likewise adoptive identity started to attract attention in the last 30 years in Northern America and 20 years in Europe. Theoretical treatment of adoptive identity obviously is a lofty project that tries to bring together two hotly and intensively debated issues, namely, adoption and identity in academia, political and welfare circles. The well-acknowledged complexity each of these issues entail separately get worsened when the two merge together under 'adoptive identity' in an attempt to get insight how adoptees make sense of their "unique" condition as adopted persons.

Adoption is a social project or social construct (like gender, class, and sexuality) both in the case of customary or legal one (O'Halloran, 2006'). So is adoption identity, i.e., "the sense of who one is as an adopted person." It is concerned with "how the individual construct meaning about his or her adoption" (Grotevant et al 2000: 381). This is to say that adoptive identity fits in the forgoing identity discourse of social constructionism.

Since Erikson, who is regarded as the father of 'identity', introduced the concept 20 years ago, identity has developed in many directions both in academia and public sphere (Ibid :11). Demonstrating the complexity of identity, the number and variety of theories sought to explain it are not few, resulting in myriad and, at times, contradictory, pictures. Kroger identified 5 broad approaches which he called them 'contemporary', which dictate theory formulations and correspondent research traditions. 1) Historical Approach seeks to understand identity in the context of "historical relativity." Here the social, economic, and cultural occurrences at a specific given time are the main factors that explain identity. To this end, researchers from this tradition employ a methodological strategy named a "sequential historical research" which combines cross- sectional and longitudinal approaches (Kroger, 2007:14). 2) Structural Stage Approach to Identity, according to Kroger (Ibid), comprises a number of theoretical schools (such as psychodynamics and psychoanalysis) who share the notion that it is internal psychological or intra-psychic (ego) structure dwelling in the person that serves as a means to make sense of the surrounding world. In this sense identity is explained in terms of this internal structure that changes overtime and effecting changes how one perceives and experience life. Piaget is one of the pioneers in this field (Kroger, 2007). Researchers in this school use systematic measurement tools like Washington University Sentence Completion Test (SCT). 3) Sociocultural Approach to Identity which can be broken into more specific theoretical approaches like interactional theory and macro-social constructionism (for example Foucault and also Gergen) (Ibid).The main preoccupation of this tradition is the role of society (through language and action) in identity construction. Society provides the individual with alternatives from which he/she selects while doing identity construction. Identity is, therefore, viewed as primarily as a "product of societal discourse" which offers different combination of resources and limitations to the individual. 4) Narrative Approach (whose popularity is on the increase these days) shares the functional purpose of language with regard to identity but differing on who does the construction. Hence, language is taken as "a text out of which identities are constructed, justified and maintained" by the people (Ibid, 23). Kroger (Ibid) states that identity is the confluence of two processes: "internal psychological process" and societal "messages and demands" on the individual. He called it 'psychosocial construction'. It basically explains how an individual person brings together his/her lived experience and consequently creates one's identity. 5) Psychosocial Approach is a project that endeavours to integrate the two different explanations of identity: biology, individual intra-psychic dynamics, and sociocultural. Kroger (Ibid) assigns Erikson and Levinson under this theoretical framework.

Historical Approach fails to consider individual differences, while the Structural Stage Approach offers scant treatment to the impact of social context. But the main problem lies on the ontological side, .i.e.; they do see identity as something fixed and having its own essence which is not. The Psychosocial Approach also shares "essentialist" thinking, though acknowledges the influence of society (Erikson as cited by Kroger, 2007: 10).

The basic traits of the remaining two theories—Sociocultural and Narrative Approaches – resemble that of the two broad categories of social constructionism Burr came up with, namely , Macro Social Constructionism (MaSC) and Micro Social Constructionism (MiSC) respectively. The construction of identities (which are fluid and multiple) and the role of language in the identity production process are at the centre of these approaches, though the primacy they do offer to individual or society differentiates one from the other. While Sociocultural and MaSC give the emphasis to social influences with some degree of acknowledgment of individuals active reaction and self construction , the Narrative Approach and MiSC focuses on the individual's capacity to construct one selfhood without completely ruling out the impact of social and institutional factors. The type of Narrative Approach Kroger (2007) presents seems to uphold partly the individual inner psychological structure which may differentiate it from the Discursive Psychology (DS) of Burr (2003) which place emphasis on the self- construction capacity of individual in interactional and relationship setting(Burr, 2003). In my opinion the two discursive traditions are so interwoven that it is advisable, though delicate and not easy, to treat them together to get the full picture if identity construction dynamics. The possibility of synthesis of the two approaches Burr talks (Ibid) about should be pursued to do justice to the proper understanding of identity construction whose all stakeholders (individual and society) active and multiple role recognized. The need two treat these approaches together can be clearly evidenced when we look at the confusion arose as to where to place Kennet J. Gergen: while Burr places him in DS (Ibid: 136), Kroger (2007) associate him with sociocultural (i.e.,MaSC).

My approach will be what I would somehow identify with Gergen and Harrie (see Burr: 2003),i.e., social constructionist approach that, besides acknowledging the influence societal discourse , also appreciates agency as significant factor implying the interplay between the two is important in the construction of identity. Gergen (2000) attacks the tendency to think in terms of binaries or dichotomies like self/other, inner/outer, individual/society and proposes to look at humans as "constituents of a process that eclipses any individual within it, but is simultaneously constituted by its individual elements." Emphasising their inextricability in other words he said, "The self and other are locked together in a generative of meaning" (Ibid: 131). Subscribing Bakhitinian "relational being", he underscores the need to understand our lives in the context of relation.

> Here we find a vision of human action in which rationality and relationship cannot be disengaged, in which our every action manifests our immersion in past relationships and simultaneously the stamp of the relationship into which we move. However you should also notice that traces of individualism still remain at the centre of the account. It is individual who carries past dialogues into the present, who thinks in dialogue, and is born afresh within ongoing dialogue. (Gergen, 2000: 131)

In a way that breaks this duality, Gergen bestows 'power' on the individual, which is usually associated with groups/ institutions (For example, Foucault) to which I will return in detail with regard to its implication to identity discussion.

Identity is a recurring subject among social constructionist ; it is even preferred as a replacement concept to "personality" for it is considered as a powerful tool to make sense of human being. This is an attempt to avoid the essentialist connotation the latter signifies. Social Constructionist view identity as a social concept and, hence, socially manufactured. Accordingly, the social constructionism notion of identity entails an act of identifying (considered as equivalent of identity formation); it has nothing to do with the nature or "essence" of the identified thing or phenomenon. In other words stands for the meaning and the purpose the thing or phenomenon serves to the identifier (person or group), rather than its essence. Human dimensions like

gender, sexuality, race or colour, working and middle class are seen as "socially bestowed identities" in a sense that an individual identity is a product of cultural available discourses to which a person is exposed through social relationship (Burr, 2003). For example, in the case of adoption there are culturally available discourses enable us to talk about the discourse of adoption to which adoptive identity is part of (Ibid). Apart from cultural construction, there is also self –discourse that bring us back to the role of agency in identity construction.

The implication of the recognition of "the relational being" from agnetic side is worth looking into, this time, in the context of people's freedom to choose from and react to a range of discourses available in the course of self- reconstruction. One has the capacity to negotiate his or her identity discourses. In the course of negotiation, he/she may accept the available discourse (as it is), modifies or resists it and present altogether a new discourse (Burr, 2003). Power denotes the existence of competing discourses of identity and the one which has the better resources and authority influences other discourses. In his discussion of three waves of identity politics: résistance, self- representation and political reconstruction, Gergen illustrates how people react to discourses available to them in a given culture. Resistance implies the agents' capacity and action to say no to the identity discourses in the market which they think are derogatory. For example minorities may oppose texts, pictures, paintings that they believe misrepresent them (Gergen 2000). Self -representation, the second wave of identity politics, takes the reaction of agents one step further--i.e., they do not only oppose but also promote their version of identity or endeavour to have "control of one's public identity" or societal identity discourses. This brings into the picture the consciousness raising and "political activism," that connotes raising ones "voice" and standing for one's own "right." Magazines, films, conferences etc produced and distributed by different groups are cases in point (Ibid: 44). Burr (2003:37) underlines "A person who is skilled discourse user has at his his/her disposal the means to bring of his/her desired identity construction for him him/herself, and to resist those offered by others which is seen in everyday life."

As already alluded to in the above deliberation, in social construction, identity is not only socially manufactured, but also multiple, emanated from diverse discourses which in turn are related to various perspectives available in the society. Accordingly, an individual may have different identities. Different groups at different times may identify a person differently. Some constructions may be preferred over the others and considered "true" or "real" depending on the sociocultural context one lives. An individual may continuously reconstruct himself in different times of his or her life and also in his or her encounter with various groups so that it serves a certain purpose. This demonstrates that identity is not fixed but fluid and in the course of change (Ibid).

Epistemologically and methodologically, social constructionism argues that our social world is constructed through discourses and, thus, can be known by studying these discourses which are, as already mentioned, multiple and various. Identity, therefore, is accessed through language or in the form of discourses or narratives (Ibid).

Where this does leads us? The implication can be seen on three fronts: First, by offering a new understanding of identity as a socially constructed and multiple phenomena, if reveals the exact location of problems related to individual and society: it relocates problems from intrapsychical domain to societal discourses. For example, understanding that depression is not psychological but social helps one to have a "normal" view of self, know the exact place of problems and able to deal with them effectively. It gives the possibility to pursue "less damaging" discourse (Ibid: 12). Second, it engender the desire to "speaking right" and "have once voice heard" and to get accepted whose significance can be subsumed under "enjoying greater power in society", i.e., jobs, education, social status etc. Third, closely related to, the second one, it advocates for a forum for "mutual identity discourse" (Gergen, 2000: 7). In Gergen's own word

"constructionism offers a bold invitation to transform social life" through "generative discourse." That is why he calls for the need to reconstruct the "public debate" in pursuant to "less hostile way of speaking together." This will "transform" identity thinking and relationships surrounding it (Ibid).

5, 2) Methods

As I have already mentioned, adoptive identity is better understood from the vantage point of social constructionist whose main topic of study is discourse. Discourse analysis signifies a significant departure from a "conventional" and "traditional" way of studying identity (for example, psychoanalysis and psychodynamics) that have been dominating adoptive and other identity research in Sweden and elsewhere (Example, Irhammar, 1997 and 2002). This school of thought places identity in the realm of internal psychological or intrapsychic structure of a person under study and look for a "unitary status of selfhood." Social constructionism refutes this and, instead, proposes the need to focus on language and discourse (Grossely, 200: 24). It is important t to take heed at this juncture that discourse may be used by other traditional methods and discourse analysis may employ other conventional materials like statistics as object of analysis (Bryman, 2004). Discourse has its varieties. For this study, I have taken what I think is comprehensive and apply to my project (though it is usually related to Foucauldian type of DA). Accordingly,

> A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphor, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event, person or class of persons, a particular way of representing it in a certain light. …a multitude of alternative versions of events are potentially available through language, this means that, surrounding any object, event, person etc. there may be a variety of different discourses, each with a different story to tell about the object in question, a different way of representing it to the world. (Burr, 20003: 64)

Such discourse materials represent social relationship at different level. In a way that merges the local level relational concern of MiSC with the structural and wider societal emphasis of MaSC, Palridge (2006) offers a description that underscores this relationship.

> Discourse analysis considers how people manages interactions with each other , how people communicate with particular groups and societies , as well as how they communicate with other groups, and with other cultures. It also focused on how people do things beyond language, and the ideas and beliefs that they communicate as they use language. (Palridge, 2006:110)

This approach recognises the presence of other sociocultural Identity discourses with their ideological and power implications making their way to a person through, inter alia, socialization, and the capacity of the individual to react and thus construct self –discourse (Gergen, 1998). It is also possible to see the micro/ macro connection in this quote (Burr, 2003).

In line to my interest in the individual account, this study is primarily based on "narrative construction of identity" (Grossley,2000: 21) or "Self –discourse" (Gergen,1998 :70) in that it seeks to captures the adoptive identity construction project of adoptees through their stories , which is indicated above as one type material for discourse analysis. Qualitative interview, more specifically, in--depth interview is used to obtain the stories from the subjects. Through interview, the study attempts to get insight into what the lived experience of the adoptees constitute from their "own perspective based on and in their own words." It also looks into how different interacting and complicated factors in the wider society affect the lived world of the adoptees and the meaning they attach to it. This is what Kvale called post modernist apparoach to interview because of its focus on the social construction of realty in before and during an interview (Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 2001). Why in-depth interview? In-depth interview allows flexibility and openness that renders freedom to the interviewees to narrate his or her experience with minimal intervention from the interviewer a

framework that is limiting (Bryman, 2004: 321; Kvale, 1996: 24-25). The concept of socialization serves to gauge the nature, direction and intensity of the influence of public discourse over the individual and the individual capacity to react and negotiate ones preferred identity.

Besides interviews, relevant documents (additional life stories of Ethiopian in other published materials) that represent some kind of discourses were consulted as supplementary sources.

5, 3) Procedure

Though the initial intent was to conduct all the interviews in a face -to-face situation, inadequacy of the number of respondents I managed to meet in Goteborg necessitated to look for adult adoptees elsewhere and to employ other modes of interview too. Therefore, apart from 4 in-depth interviews, I conducted 2 "email personal interviews" (EPI) (Bryman, 2004: 477) with 2 adult adoptees living in Stockholm. Needless to say, using mixed mode of interview for such small sample size has its own effect on the outcome of the research. EPI came in with both its own strength and limitations, like any other research tool. As to its limitation, because of the absence of facial contact, missed some significant visual and auditory cues; could not do probing resulting in too short, at times, incomplete responses. But it solved the problem of distance helping to reach those respondents otherwise inaccessible. Transcription was not necessary. I have perhaps benefited from my physical absence which might have affected Interviewees' response (Bryman, 2004). In an attempt to minimize the short coming, a number of frequent change of mail and telephone calls were done and probing and follow up questions were posed as soon as response are secured. Attempt to build a relationship of mutual kind was done by email and on telephone before and during the personal interviews. I have also tried to encourage respondent reassure the significance of their written response (Ibid).

The initial interview guide with rough topics was expanded upon by including meticulously phrased words with the aim of reducing misunderstandings the absence of face-to-face interview may cause in the case of email interview. The interview guide basically comprises of meaning of adoption and inter ICA, what it means to be adoptee, the difference between being adoptee and non-adoptee, the perceived influence of different socialization agents and discourses on formation of adoptive self –identity, reaction and negotiation practice of adoptees,and the fear and hopes of adoptees with regard to adoptive identity. No particular order was imposed and interviewees were free to omit or add issues as they wish. Attempts were also made to ensure if the questions were relevance to the research topic and have the capacity to facilitate good interaction during the interviews which are termed as thematic and dynamic criteria respectively by Kvale (1996).

The personal demographic questionnaire, informed consent form, and the interview guide were emailed to 3 of them, and handed to the rest 2 before each interview. In the case of EPI the interview were preceded and followed by frequent contacts with the interviewees on telephone and by email. It took them 2 to 3 weeks to write and email it back to me. Clarification and follow up interviews were done after receiving their mails. Some of the questions which were not addressed in the first interview were answered in the follow up. Since it involved writing, the response given happened to be very brief as compared to the interview conducted in the face –to- face situation in Goteborg. In spite of my insistence, some of the questions remained unanswered.

Of the three face-to-face interviews, two took up 45 minutes and the other two, 2 to 3 hours each. Two interviews were carried out in two cafeterias (which were quite and convenient) found in Goteborg, while the other in the respondent's office. Three of them looked enthusiastic to tell their stories; but this apparent enthusiasm was affected as they were going through some of their "not-good" times. I did briefing and debriefing before and after each interview. Like the EPI, these interviewees were also contacted by email and

telephone for possible clarification and additions. In most cases they were curious why I wanted to conduct research on adoption and also discussion about life in Ethiopia was part of my briefing both on telephone and mail. There is a possibility that my Ethiopian identity have influenced their response too. Some told me during the interview that they suspected I may be an adoptee to which I had to explain my non-adoptive status and why I am interested in the topic.

Usually the process of the interview starts with a relaxed mood, self-reflection, and which latter on develops into sentimental and emotional engagement that makes stop talking abruptly or avoid the issue. Remembering thoughts and events happened to be difficult in some cases. After interview, some told me that it made them to reflect on things they have never thought about and part of their life they never imagined is linked to their adoption. It is possible to say a significant part of the interview time was taken by remembering, saying something and then correcting , and also , sometimes skip or give fragmented response with a mix of " I don not remember." One interviewee who had no chance to see the interview guide before we met for interview said that it was not what he expected, and he was not willing to reveal what his anticipation was. Though all of them happened to be comfortable with English language, I have noticed them, on a few occasions, asking "what is this in English?" in search of a better word that represent the meaning they want to convey. Interpersonal and communication skill happened to be important. One interviewee happened to be a person of few words, which resulted in a short and repetitive response.

5, 4) Participants

The initial plan to confine the study within Goteborg was abandoned as I came to notice the very few replies for my invitation. This necessitated inclusion of adult adoptees else where in Sweden who are willing and can participate in the EPI. Accordingly, on the whole 6 adoptees did participate in the study. Representativeness was not sought during recruitment; rather as already intimated, the aim is to get insight into the experience of adult adoptees. Respondent inclusion criteria includes adult adoptees in early adulthood and in middle adulthood (Kroger, 2007), adopted from Ethiopia (no preference to the place where they came from)   those who can speak English, and adopted in Swedish family (one or both parents). No adult within the range of middle adulthood turn up for interview. Diversion from the common subjects of identity study, i.e., adolescence to adulthood is meant to use the capacity of adults to reflect and think abstractly having a relatively developed "life philosophy" about different part of their life (politically, religious, inter personal, and sexual) (Ibid).

The process of getting access to Ethiopian adult adoptees has been difficult and took longer time to the extent of causing delay which affected subsequent works of the GR. The attempt to reach them through institutions and personal networks involved a number of visits and re-appointments.   My meeting with one social worker from " FAMILJERÄTTSBYRÄN" in Goteborg, which was held after several unsuccessful visits (for they were reluctant to cooperate) provided me with the telephone number (which did not work at that time) of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Grown up Adoption Organization (AEF) and advise to contact MIA for the general information I sought regarding adult adoptees in Goteborg. Following some discussion and having read the letter of purpose of the study, AEF become willing to distribute my invitation letter to Ethiopian adoptees, which turned out with four responses: one from a person living in Goteborg and three from Stockholm. While the person from Goteborg expressed willing to take part in my research, latter three said they could not participate for they live in Stockholm not in Goteborg.   With the decision to conduct personal interview by email, I re-invited the latter for EPT and one declined to reply and another, though expressed his willingness could not make it because of other commitments. So this ended up in one in-depth face to face interview and another EPI.

Three interviewees living in Goteborg were accessed through my personal network. Two of them said that they do not have any contact with adoptees at present for various reasons. One adoptee introduced me to her sister who was adopted by other parents whom I included in the sample and interviewed by email. The number of Ethiopian adoptees living in Goteborg, according to AEF's estimate, is around 10. I could not confirm the authenticity of this figure from either local adoption office or the National Agency for Intercountry Adoption (MIA).

5.5) Analysis

Though discourse is a methodological tool, most of its function and benefit comes at the stage of analysis, whether the material for analysis (the data) is natural or purposely collected for the given research. Discourse analysis does not offer procedure or blueprint to follow during the conduct of analysis (Fairclouph, 1997). Those who tried have come up with varieties of rough guidelines; some dwell on detail language structures and grammars while others on thematic analysis (see Fairclouph, 2003; Wodak & Mayer, 2002). For this interview I have followed a mixture of approaches which I borrowed from Rossman and Marshall (2006), Kvale (1996) and (Daiute & Lightfoot, 200), in a way that helps me to focus on thematic area of the interview text. I transcribed it in to 97 pages. It was a verbatim transcription that focused on that part relevant to my research topic.

It is important to not that analysis was not a self contained process. It was started at the data collection stage of the interview when interviewees and the interviewer search for meaning when the interview process was underway and also while doing the transcription, which latter on was further systematized by separate discourse analysis as the final phase of the analysis (Kvale ,1996). Interviewees' engagement in analysis was evidenced as they try to sift and select, withhold some parts of their accounts in an attempt to craft their stories around their preferred central theme (Burr, 2003). Of course, these, in part, may be done in an attempt to impress the interviewer as they construct their stories.

As per this "Analytic Procedure" (Rossman and Marshall, 2006: 156), first I tried to read and re-reread the transcriptions and together with the information secured by email (which did not require transcription) to get the feel of the general theme of the data. Following this stage, I tried to scrutinize the data very closely to find subtle meanings in one texts and interrelationships among its different parts or, sometimes, with other texts. This involved also thinking back and forth between the theoretical frame work and the data. Then I have identified those recurring themes, and patterns (Rossman and Marshall, 2006). For more salient issues that arise, I have written "analytical memos" which I, latter on, used to relate the themes to the general context. Finally I have interpreted and discussed the themes and the memos as they relate to each other and the research question (Stewart & Malley, 2004).

My role during the course of data gathering and analysis was what Kvale (1996: 206) called "the traveller approach" where I have take part in creating stories (involving in construction) and making sense of the stories when I analysis and eventually report. But this did not involve engaging in Identification of pre-existing or predefined meanings, rather implies the act of guiding the interviewees in making his or her own interpretation in the course of the conversation (Kvale, 1996).

Among criticisms labelled against discourse analysis, limiting analysis to text alone (For example, interview) (MiSC) and separating discourse from the people who use in (MaSC) are the common ones. What is sought in this study is better insight of the interviewees' perspective, meaning making and construction of identity, and his or her life world, a purpose best served by interview text. Production of different understanding of the social world, which is considered as another weakness, is really where its strength lies for social practice that interview is interested in is diverse in nature (Ibid).

5.6) Validity, Reliability and Generalizabiltiy

In the quantitative research circle, where "science" is vigorously pursued, truthfulness, accuracy, repeatability, and consistency are measures of "legitimate research." Qualitative research like DA challenges the very assumption on which these measurements lie on. DA is not concerned about identifying objective facts or making "truth claims"; what is "real" in social constructions is either "inaccessible" or is part of the discourse that represents it. Knowledge about this reality can be accessed through, discourses which are locally and culturally produced and, thus, do vary from place to place , time to time and one group to another , implying values, at times, conflicting understandings. Hence, DA rules out the concepts of reliability, validity and generalizability as they understood in traditional scientific inquiry (Burr, 2003: 150). Then how does DA measures the value or acceptability of its findings? There is no universally applied criterion; researchers in this tradition use various set of checklists among which I have borrowed Taylor's (2001) that comprises, inter alia, measure of coherence, rigour, deviant case, and quality of interpretation.

Apart from an attempt to clarify and make the theoretical approach sound, I have tried to locate where and how my work relates to previous research which involved identification of what is covered and the gaps which my project addresses (Ibid). To achieve coherency, I attempted to base my decision on sound and explicit evidence upon which my argument and counter argument rested. Also very closely related to coherency, I have taken different measures like spotting cases of different or , at times, contradictory findings during the analysis and attempt was made to relate it to the whole body finding of the study. The analytical procedure I have adopted enabled me to use systematic guidelines that got me through from selecting thematic area, identifying patterns, and keeping analytical memos etc. Transparency was also pursued as I tried to provide detail information as far as possible on the method I used; how the method relates to the theoretical approach I have subscribed to and in-depth description of analytical procedure; and how the findings are identified and then linked to discussion and conclusion. Explanation before and after each chapter and, sometimes, sections of a chapter have also served such purpose. The implication of the findings of the GR in terms of contributing to the stock of knowledge in social work and the practical benefit they render to adoptees was also discussed (Taylor, 2001; Kvale, 1996). Since the analysis basically depends on language, informant's usage of words and phrases are scrutinized within each narrative and among different narratives in relation to the thematic area emerged during the analysis. It is important to take into account that accuracy and facticity of "the identity account" is not sought in this study rather a "social and political" purpose is pursued (Kitzinger, 1989: 82).

To sum up, given the small sample size , the focus on specific areas (that perhaps may miss some of the essential complexities of the issue) , and limitations of the study related to, among others, the mix two mode of interviews, problem with the recruitment strategy and a one- person (only one researcher) undertaking, the finding should be taken with caution and reader discretion. To me, it is possible to conclude that the study basically succeeded in bringing up the issue of adoptive identity as "socially constructed" in the context of "relational being" for any possible future discussions and further in -depth and large-scale team research.

6) Result and Analysis

6.1) Interviewees' Profile

Table 1) Some major demographical information on research participants

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Educational status	Occupation	Age of Adoption(in months)	Marital Status
1	David	M	34	College	Freelance/ Teacher	3	Married
2	Marline	F	35	Bachelor Degree	Social Worker	3	Married
3	Margarita	F	26	Bachelor Degree	Teacher	8	Singel
4	Sophie	F	32	Masters	Translator	9	Cohabitation
5	Michael	M	21	College	Student	9	Single
6	Elizabet	F	35	Bachelor Degree	Project Leader	3	Cohabitation

For reasons related to confidentiality, some information that might have some bearing on (like place of adoption) the result of the study is not revealed. The overrepresentation of women in the sample was not intended. Therefore, it should be understood in the context of a sample that comprises only those adoptees favorably responded to my invitation letter which was distributed to all members of AEF living in Gotheborg and elsewhere in Sweden.

All interviewees were adopted from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Except the younger one who has a plan to do so in the future, five of them have visited Ethiopia at least once among which four have contacts to their biological parents. Two adoptees (male and female) found abandoned before they were given for adoption. Both adoptive parents of all the participants are Swedish who were in most case factory workers. Except Sophie's father, all are alive at the time of the interview. Excluding David and Michael, they grew up in small towns where people know each other very easily and also when (particularly during their childhood) there were no black people.

David has a sister who is an adoptee, about whom he said little during the interview.   He has married to Ethiopian woman and had two children. He is a religious man which he attributed it to his parents' religious background.

Marline had been living in Stockholm before she came to Goteborg. She has recently given birth to a child. Her husband is non-Swedish, who has, according to her, also a unique background (not adoption). She is currently working with Immigrants. She has got two twin sisters of which one (who grew up in another adoptive family).

Margarita's father, 49, has retired now.   She speaks four languages: Swedish (her adoptive mother language), France, Spanish and English. She, like Marline, is working with immigrants. Sophie has two adopted sisters: one, her twin sister who grew up in the same home and currently living in another city and the second, a woman adopted from Korea.

6.2) Data Analysis

I feel the need to make clear at this juncture that among many varieties of adoption (sometimes confusing) available in adoption literature which are transborder in character, my focus is on ICA that for this particular study is understood as a type of adoption that involves interracial transfer of children from one country to another. I combined ICA and what is called Interracial Adoption (IRA) together in an attempt to represent the main characteristic feature of adoption that brings children from Ethiopia to Sweden (O'Halloran, 2006). This chapter of the GR looks into primarily the interview material obtained through in-depth interview and EPI. I have tried to pay attention to the difference of the data secured using the two modes of interview and their implication for analysis, as already mentioned in the methodological chapter.

By taking the interview material, which is the subject of discourse analysis, I tried to investigate the main themes and the perspectives represented within the broad framework of my research questions. Accordingly, how adoptees make sense of adoption in general and ICA in particular, the extent to which other discourses impacted the constructed adoptee identities and in what way the adoptees' negotiate their identities are the issues that dictated my analysis and the search for themes and patterns within the themes. Though in the course of the interview many issues have been raised across the interview texts, I will focus on the recurring, dominant , various and , at times, contradictory discourses of the object of my research ,i.e. adoptive identity and other closely related issues. Needless to mention, depending on the family to which they have been placed, the 'when' and where' of the placemat, what they encountered in the course of their daily lives, the accounts or narration of adoptees vary. Though there are communalities, the issue they raise and the direction of, or the perspective, conveyed differed too. Altogether the interviews did emphasised, in the course of meaning making, on issues like race, colour, difference, place, national identity, language, social reaction.

6.2.1) Making Sense of Adoption

> ….I mean, from the beginning there is this family who wants a child, may be or there are parents who wants to do good to the world , there are some people, wants to do that, if but …it is…you know…I can not say that I am, I think that adoption is, I mean, in a way adoption is ….i am very grateful, because , otherwise my life would have been very, very different , may be I would not have been alive , probably not . But, h………, it has taken me sometime to come to that clue that I am grateful because it is not easy to be adopted, specially not in a country .. as Sweden, because you know when I came to Sweden, there were or there were …, I mean the people who live there was, you know, Swedish. So it was very unusual, and I grew up in a small city as well. And my sister and I were the only dark persons in this area. So um…. you were like a person that somebody, you know, brought to Sweden. You know, …in that time people have such perception about Ethiopia , as well starvation and like I was the saved one, and h….the saved who is going to be… grateful to be here. I got often this question If I was not happy to…to… you know …… That is also very difficult because when you are a child, I was three months old when I came to Sweden, (. …) and you know it is difficult to know , to know something about what am I going to be grateful for ,you know I do not know how it is in Ethiopia….

That was seemingly fragmented but illustrative extract that Marline gave me in response to my question "what is your understanding of adoption?" I found it illustrative because it accentuates "the very complexity" of adoption that all my interviewee share. As reiterated through out their narrations, these spontaneously generated lists of issues justify not only the complexity ICA involves but also demonstrates adoption's possible ramifications.

ramifications. It touches upon concerns like who involved? Why? The process of adoption, its implication for the child, age, attitude of society etc. which are today subjects of debates in different circles.

The extent of this complexity was visible in the account of all interviewees as they tried to piece together fragments of ideas, engage in long pauses, intense remembering and defining and redefining etc. In most cases they prefer lengthy narrations (interrupted by my probes and follow ups questions) after which, they offer summarises in a few words or couple of sentences.

The adoptees used two metaphors, "place/home" and "journey" and the adjective, "natural" to represent adoption. More than half of them   cited "place/ home" metaphor with different representations. For Marline it is a place where "you don't really belong to… one or the other side; you are in the middle." For Margarita it refers to a middle place "many ways are crossing"; David described it,   "it starts from something you go back to." The metaphor "journey" , says Marline, denotes " to live in a country where you are not totally accepted or …."   The rest used adjective "natural" positioning adoption in a natural contra unnatural/ normal vis a vis abnormal debate and argue for the former based on their experience and its consequence on their lives. Michael gave me an indirect response: "may be I almost forgot I am adopted" in a way that exhibit that he is not thinking about it. If he has to think, he added, the meaning of adoption is "pretty diffuse..." And emphasized "good life" as a measure of it, "it does not matter where in the world you live as long as you have good life." Elizabet gave a meaning close to the official one, i.e., "to accept non biological child as ones own…."

The "Place" metaphor shows the adoptees preoccupation with the relocation (from one country to another) caused by the process adoption and its implication latter in their lives. It is raised in the context of belongingness, one needs acceptance from, or/and need language and other skills to associate to. The experience of being accepted, not being accepted and not feeling at home, or belonging or not belonging to a particular country are the main meanings attached to it.

Though the degree may differ, all adoptees accord importance to adoption in their life placing themselves at the pro side of the "pro/against" adoption debate. "I am grateful" and "very good for me" are phrases they used to show its significance by relating it to their imagined situation in Ethiopia—i.e. what would have happened if they had not been adopted. Some sound to be ambivalent as they say, for example "I am grateful" and "it is difficult to know, to know something about what am I going to be grateful for" Margarita, in a very passionate way, though adoption is where she said her life starts, depicted it as a necessary evil by saying ,"it is sad adoption should exist." But these contradictory stances get solved as all support the practice of adoption with extreme care that necessary. Marline underscored the need to "think more than two times" before a decision is made on adoption both in the sending and receiving country.

6.2.2) Self -Discourse on Adoptive Identity

Responses from interviewees to the questions of "what does it mean to be an adopted person?" and "what is the difference between to be adoptee and not-adoptee?" have communalities in terms of what the process involves and the object of identification they prefer to identify themselves to. The process involved difference /sameness analysis which as it is conceptualized by Kelly as "abstraction" (as cited by Harrie & Gillet, 1994: 136) that involves evaluation of the relationship adoptees has to the object of identification from which they produce lists of similarities and differences , sift the similarities and differences in terms of one's purpose and context; and decide on how to combine differences and similarities and in what proportion ; it also involves continual evaluation and, in case of failure, redefine the existing in favor of a new identification etc.

Accordingly, the common, salient and recurrent objects of identification emerged are "national "and "ethnicity" which are common in ICA literatures (see Weinriech & Saunderson, 2000; Irhammar, 1997 &1999; Howell, 2006). The respondents identified themselves into three groups of birth country and/ or adoptive country: "either/or", "Both/and" and "Neither/nor." In addition to this, some identified themselves in terms of "Blackness and/or whiteness" which sound to have equivalent comparative value as being Swedish and Ethiopian.

The adoptees also made unsolicited comparison with different sectors of societies living in Sweden like non-adoptee Swedes, immigrants, and adoptees. These divisions are not exclusive but, often, overlapping and the designation show preferred representation of adoptees. Though the focus has been on race, color and pre-adoption background, there are also other issues of comparison that include like language, access to and benefit of the good things of life (education, health, etc.). In their accounts they may relate themselves to one or combination of these issues. Though the concern is adoptees' self definition, it is important to take heed that it is not self-contained task and it could be (as we will soon on see in this chapter) influenced by what Irhammar (1997) called " external Identification."

6.2.3) Different /Sameness Analysis: To be Different or Not- to- be Different

As already intimated, adoptees have related themselves with the Ethiopia and Swedish society in different ways. Three adoptees unequivocally said they are Swedish, with explicit or implicit acknowledgment of the fact that they were born in Ethiopia. For example, Margarita stated "I am Swedish born in Ethiopia." One interviewee represented herself a person with triple identity, i.e. Swedish, Ethiopian and black, adding colour to national identity.   Two interviewees can be related into the "neither /nor" mode of identification --neither Swedish nor Ethiopian. This deserves a little bit illustration. To do so I will take Marlines case who dealt with "being difference" profusely.   She referred to the issue of biology or color and experience as point of comparison which led her to the conclusion she does not belong any were. In the case of biology or color, she identifies herself with Ethiopia. She describes that she does not look like "Swedish … you clearly see that I am not Swedish." By virtue of being born in Ethiopia, she declares, she is   "from Ethiopia." Even if she believes that she is different from those who are Swedish on the ground of her look, she did not want to identify herself fully with Ethiopia either for she cannot speak the language and not familiar with the social code therein. On the other hand the same issue (language and culture) that distance her from Ethiopia seems to be point of similarity to Sweden: "Going to Swedish school system" , " watching the same program on TV " and "doing the same hummers and jokes."

In a manner that conveys the dilemma she is in,   she talks about, in her narrative, the problem of identifying herself with both countries. She could not consider herself as Swedish because of lack of recognition from the community and neither with Ethiopia whose language and cultural code she is not familiar with. Thus, her difference / sameness analysis she did based on the resource available to her resulted in "not belonging one or the other side." The experience of racism "situates her outside belonging in Sweden." (Yngvesson; 2007: 570)

The normative and ethics of resemblance carries much weight for the western countries like Sweden where " blood" and "biology" are taken as a major criterion when it comes to establishing child –parent relationship (Ibid). Contrary to this, most of the adoptees claim "biological child" status and though they do not resemble physically to their parents and not born into their respective families. In this case, difference being ignored, as something not important or worth paying attention to. Marline affirms "I am just their child" and David "I don't see

any difference. What should be the difference I have Swedish parents .They are my parents. Parents for me are someone whom I am living with. That is actually the way I look at it." Speaking about the source of his conviction he described, "They didn't tell me I am different," David underscores that this is his experience and other peoples' experience may be different from his depending where one growing up. Accordingly, growing up in a "uniform environment" like "some kind of place where all are Swedish" can be a source of different treatment and therefore feeling. Comparing oneself with immigrant is also a common theme in all of the adopptees' accounts. Most of them did not consider themselves as immigrants. But some spoke about having "semi- immigrant background." Marline, in response to my question that whether she is similar to immigrants stated that she shares "differences" and "feeling of not totally accepted." in Sweden. The fact that she does not have to learn Swedish and the culture of Swedish people separate her from them.

One interviewee compared herself with Sweden born adoptees and pointed out their advantage to " keeping their stories intact " not visible and , as a result, not being subject of discrimination as she is. Some adoptees has not only made Ethiopian adoptees as subject of comparison but also strongly identified themselves with or showed willingness to do so. Marline draws a positive, though temporary, picture of adoption calling it "special experience to be adopted" which is " exclusive." This is the time Marline became passionate about adoption. Margarita shares this narration of the significance of relating oneself with Ethiopian born adoptees and AEF which did not work for her as she expected on the ground that they do have different views of " being adoptee"—she said they have a kind of "negative" attitude towards adoption and, whereas she has " a positive experience " which made it difficult to get along with them. In spite of their difference, she is sympathetic to their view for it emanated from their experience of hardship. This seems to have affected her "positive" attitude towards adoption partially. The feeling of "to be different " is happened to be not static but changing according to the account of adoptees.

Sophie was not aware of the colour difference between her parents and her: "I don't think a child sees colour… the most important thing is that you are surrounded by people who love you and with whom you feel safe." She noticed it when she started to encounter "teasing" for being black in a school at early age which was changed or in her word "became normal" as she began to live in another place where a lot of immigrants including blacks like her live being accepted. Marline's desire of "wanting not to be different" from her family and surrounding people during her childhood has changed after she has experienced racism at her adolescence. This was a time, according to her account, when racism, as part of the youth culture, spread in her town which she has been victim of. This engendered in her fear of attack and other mistreatment, and preoccupation with thought of her skin colour.

Related to the aforementioned difference/sameness analysis and resultant identification with different groups, adoptees came up with three diverse but overlapping constructs of adoptive identities.

a) Adoptive Identity as Dynamic and Incomplete Project

Here adoptive identity is addressed with a clear expressed awareness of its changing nature, fluidity and continuous process of construction and reconstruction it involves as experienced by some adoptees. Hence, who one is as an adopted person may not only vary from one interview to another but also within a respondent's life world : at various stage of his/her life time (childhood, adolescent and adulthood), the spatial temporal context he/she find her/himself in and a specific purpose a particular discourse serves at a given time. I will give two examples.

Margarita's story is evidently filled by this theme. For her, in the absence of any information about her biological parents (because she is found abandoned), adoption is where, according to her self discourse, her life begins. Replying to the question I put to her in connection to the visit she made to Ethiopia to see the place where she was found and its purpose, i.e. Whether it is to complete her story as part of her identity construction project she gave me the following account:

> No because I have another angle. It is not my way to see it; it is not my philosophy. Because I don't feel, I know that a person can never be complete. So identity is not some thing static. It is always dynamic .and even you are born in a wood and your parents surround you 24/7 [24 hours per day 7 days per week] you will not feel be complete .Because you are in a world… (Laughs)

She discursively constructs adoptive identity in a way that gives sense to her unique background and story of abandonment in which birth is completely replaced by "adoption." Her unknown past, in away, informed her philosophy that identity is a never ending process and, hence, "incomplete identity" is normal and unavoidable. That is why she embraces the she considered "satisfying" experience of adoption. Many respondents felt that they were not different to their parents and even took themselves as "whites" but, after they grew up, they start to perceive themselves as are blacks. Sophies also argued against one identity: "I think when it comes down to it; it's a matter of one's own individual standpoint. There is not only one 'adoptee identity' but several and each and every one have the possibility to make a decision regarding this issue."

b) Adoptive Identity as Skill

Most of adoptees notion of adoptive self constitute skill which the adoptees needs to acquired through experience of living, not by being born into a certain family and group. Some exclusively ascribe it to skill and some in combination with birth and biology. David in response to the question I put to him whether he identifies himself as an Ethiopian, in a manner that equate "Being an Ethiopian" to "Being an Adoptee" he said:

> No, no, if I go identify my self as adoptee , I have to have something or whom…to relate to , to….you understand me, I need to speak their language, I need to have that culture , I can not just call me something because , I cannot call me a doctor , if I am not a doctor . if I am a doctor I have to have some skills , I cannot call myself Ethiopian, because I have no Ethiopian skills."

You remember we have already seen Marline's account of, in spite the fact that she was born there, not able to identify herself with Ethiopia because of lack of language and cultural code which she thought are very important when it comes to adoptive identity. The challenge of identifying one with birth country expressed in terms of lack of capacity to communicate with the people: identity here is represented as something acquired or skill. Consequently they construct the stranger-self (in relation to their birth country) who lacks those skills that make up identity. On the other hand, most associate themselves (except two adopotees) with Sweden because of their linguistic ability. A case in point is Michael who represented himself as "a Swedish Guy" for, according to his narrative, he speaks fluent Swedish and also thinks "Swedish way." In such cases visit to Ethiopia is justified by the need to figure out and being aware of the "skipped–identity" and to work out what is lost and gained because of adoption.

c) Adoptive identity as Homelessness

One of the interviewees who drew the picture of adoption as a "place" sees herself as a person who has no where to call "home". Answering my question what exactly adoption means to her, Marline said, "I think what that mean is you are not really feel at home any were", by "anywhere" she refers to neither Ethiopia not Sweden. She defined homelessness as lack of "given place." As an alternative to this lack of place "out side" to associate one to, she has sought and identified an alternative place she named "inside". The "Inside" alternative downplays preoccupation with national identity and colour / race and explains it in terms of her capacity (for example, fluency in Swedish language) and other alternative identity constructs like career. That is what her "I am not only an adoptee" signifies.

This is , as her narration tells, attributable to two factors: one, the series of stereotyping comments and discrimination she has been subject to in Sweden ; and second , lack of "skill"—language and cultural code— which inhibited her from associating herself to Ethiopia. Her narration that turns suddenly sentimental at this juncture demonstrates that the stigma and discrimination has impacted on her thinking and life a lot. Comments like "go home", "you are black" and "you do not belong here" have created fear and feeling of her "whole existence" as threatened. Margarita latter on came up with the notion of being a universal citizen: "I would like to be treated as people, as we are human," living "in the same universe" and "having the same capability." Opposing the discourse of "difference" which she has been exposed to and traumatized by, she calls for a new understanding of adoptive identity embedded in the notion of human being. A world anybody claims belongingness to and, at the same time, no one makes the other stranger. In consequence, she came up with a "universal citizen discourse" which removed the hegemonic border and colors centered discourse from her thinking.

6.2.4) Encounter with Socialization Process and Adoption and Adoption Related Discourses

Out of the interviewees narration of their relationship to other discourses emerged a number of issues that shows the complexity and delicacy of dealing with the matter. Encounter and contact to socialization agents (like families, friends, schools, work places and other groups of people and institutions) and their discourse on adoption and adoptive identity has its own impact on adoptees view of themselves as adopted persons. The degree of significant the impact they have on an individual's particular life, and the strategies they follow to enormously differ from one discourse to another, demonstrating the extreme complexity involved during interaction. Time, place, social and cultural context also play paramount role. ICA is not a stand alone scheme; any discourse surrounding it touches other factors like race, immigration, country background, gender and age and other aspects of adoptees' life. Since rendering detail analysis to these important issues like gender and age would be beyond the scope and envisaged territory of this GR. I will, instead, pay attention to the most salient and recurrent thematic areas.

Though all of, needless to say, the participants encountered with the major socialization agents(family, school, peers, and work places), as already noted, the significance placed upon each in the narrative various depending on the particular experience and purpose of the account given. On the whole, family and school took the lion share of their stories. Apart from this, the critical aspects of the discourses adoptees placed emphasis on vary: some dwelt on ethnicity /nationality, race, colour and immigrants, while others on adoption experience and their reaction to other discourses. My reading through the transcriptions informs me that difference/ sameness is not only the often cited issue but also served (either implicitly or explicitly) as the organizing topic dictating other aspects of their narrations. Hence, my purpose here is to find out how various difference/ sameness discourses (on colour nationality and other related issues) impacts adoptive identity formation. To this end, the accounts of adoptees can be divided into four categories, namely,

promotion sameness, indifferent to difference, despised and persecuted difference, and celebrating difference. These categories are not exclusive but overlapping.

a) Promoting Sameness: Destroying Difference

In the account of half of the adoptees', promotion of sameness or reduction and denying of difference is the major preoccupation of primarily their families, in some cases, their friends and peers. This ranges from seemingly mere and innocent questions to extreme cases of attempt to change their physical appearance like washing skin and straighten their hair to make them look Swedish. Though interviewees themselves were not subject to such attempts to change their appearances, some of them (like Margarita) made mention of their adoptee friends' (from AEF) encounter of the problem which they referred to it as "mean and cruel." As to their own experiences, they said their families and close friends used to say to them that they were "not different". David, referring not only to the family but also to his friends and others whom he came across, reiterated, "No body told me that I am different."   Marline's descriptions offers illustrative example. Marline grew up where difference (blackness) is easily visible and as a result   she and her twin sister, the only blacks in that small town, has been target of stereotyping and discrimination. At home, she has been treated and told as if she was not different, and not black but "brown". Marline's perceived of her mother's attempt of 'samization' as "unconscious" act though it is meant to produce less black whiter child. Capturing the family level discourse on 'race' (Blackness):

> Marline: for example it was forbidden to say black; it was like 'brown',
> Interviewer: Forbidden?
> Marline: no, it was not forbidden. It was just like my mother very very careful to say I was brown, not black.
> Interviewer: Did she say why?
> Marline: I think h…I don't think she knows…she did not say, well...
> Interviewer: you didn't ask at all?
> Marline: I think I understood
> Interviewer: what did you understand?
> Marline: I think i…..h….you know.. it is more beautiful to be a… more brown .. <u>you know as close as you are to white.</u> That is better. but I don't mean that my parents meant that if I would have been black, black, black , she would have loved me anyway. But I don't think, I mean, it is a perception many people have, like my biological mom she has that, that opinion as well.

Notice in a way that sound self -critical approach, she redefined   "forbidden" to "very very careful."   In congruent to her labeling people as "unconscious" said about her mother, "I do not think she knows." Once again there emerged what may appear contradictory representation of her mother: the mother who was constructed as " very very careful"   portrayed in other place as " unconscious" who is not aware what she is doing. This , though may sound a sign of "inconsistency," , "immaturity," or "delusion"; it demonstrates one of the traits of self-discourse—" the dilemma ridden" nature of adoptees thinking (Wegar, 1992).   It has a moral element in it which signifies her attempt to balance seemingly two conflicting motives. In this case the "unconscious discourse" is meant to remove blame from her mother and her biological mother (who shares adoptive mother's construct of Marline's colour), which is her first task as a child and, on the other hand; tell who was doing the "samization."   This one is generated at family level, in a day to day interactional level. Though at the time of her interview she described her reaction to such "color blind" approach as "vanity, very shallow….it has to do with the "outside" it is not "inside." Her mother's discourse seems to have had produced a childhood who had been longing for sameness until her adolescence: "I think, I…when I was a child, it was very important for me <u>not to be different</u>, it was very important to be like <u>any body</u> else .That was the most important thing." Specifying "anybody", in another part of her narration, she reiterated " I thought I was <u>like white</u>…like I was not different"   the possible object of difference at family level is colour and physical appearance because of the absence of biological tie and its implication in a child—parent relationship. On the

other hand, in most cases the children felt they got the same treatment as "biological child" which of course is important in mitigating the negative aspect of feeling difference.

b). Indifferent to Difference:

Most of the families (in some case friends, schools and work places) of interviewees' have had this role. An extract form Margarita's story elaborates this. Margarita states that difference was not a point of discourse to the extent the she become aware of it; when raised, parents present it in a way that shows that either they do not pay attention to it or it does not reveal their stance and hence she has no access to the 'real' position her parents hold. In the narrative of adopttees from such background, this is portrayed as '"normal." In Marline's account, the main actor representing the family is the father who is very close to her, a closeness that is related to the story he used to tell her every night before she falls in sleep which continued till her adolescence. Colour, ethnicity or "race" were not directly treated in her narration; they were hidden in her adoption story and her pre-adoption background, the main theme of the story her father used to tell her.
"My father used to tell me a story about a girl named 'Tigist' which I knew was my Ethiopian name and that is my second name now. They wanted to…my father, specially my father, he wanted me really strongly that i should be named 'Tigist'. My mom wanted a Swedish name. There was always difference between…"
By constructing her father as a person who is interested in her background for which she attributed to the reflexive and analyzing capacity and "cultivated" manner he acquired from higher education, she narrates her story that tells his influential role on her attitude about adoption.

> Margarita: He told me what he knew and what i always known about my background, my history and he told me the story every night, and I could not sleep with out hearing this story, not a single night. One time when my father was really really ill so…. he told me his throat is hurt very badly and [he said] 'i cannot speak.' I got really really upset.
> Interviewer: Because that disease did not let your father tells you the story?
> Margarita: ya, really really he had to tell me the story and i was not able to sleep without hearing it…

It was a five minute story of her abandonment and consequent adoption. The powerful effect of the story alone and, sometimes, added to the humoristic approach of her mother as described below made her to "normalize" adoption and adoptive identity, which only continued until her adolescence, until when she encountered another influential discourse that had a "denormalizing" effect.

> Since it has always been light up by jokes and lights up by the fact that he told me the story for so many years it has resulted in some kind of normalization um….so for me I see it as …natural phenomenon. Since they have not shown their feelings um…they… they directly to me it has not been visible; they have never been serious about it in terms of crying and show anger and disappointment and said anything negative at all. I have only this perspective and had to analyze the other side myself. It was..., so their attitude affected me in that way that I see it more, as a normal thing.

The abandonment story was narrated in such an easy manner (that suits a child of her age) , interesting and was romanticized so that Margarita likes it and, in effect , minimized, if not removed, as much as possible the negative effect such "an abandonment story" may have on her life later on. Margarita's attitude towards her father, her "addiction" to the story and the "liberal" perception she developed towards adoption, demonstrates the success of the attempt, though still she have some questions not get answered regarding her past. The effect of such indifferent (absence of parents' stance towards adoption and adoptees color) may vary depending on how the adoptees make sense out of it. In the case of most of the accounts we do have at our disposal there is no doubt that perceived indifference has a normalization impact.

It is not only the family, socializations agents like peers and close friends of the interviewees, conveyed for the adoptees the emotion of indifference towards adoption in general and color in particular. This applies almost for all adoptees. Margarita, for example, told me that her friends do not pay attention to her color.

> Margarita: well I suppose since they did not asked me, but now a days they don't see my color. They don't; we grew up together. One day they asked me "Are you going with us?" to what you call "solarium"
> Interviewer: what is that?
> Margarita: It is a machine. You lay in it and get some burn to have, to get more color. That is Solarium. And they asked me one week "Are you coming? " To which I said "No stop nagging [me] I am ...Why should I" (laughs). So they did not aware of; they did not see [her color].

In a way that tells that indifference is synonyms to normal said, "It has been normal for them." Marline's account also reveals that her friends are "conscious her color and adoptive status but do not talk about it and therefore appeared not to have interested in her difference. These are one of the socialization agents adoptees seems to be comfortable to identify themselves with. Here for Marline the fact that her friends do not even raise adoption in general and color in particular is taken by her as a sign of being understanding and very diplomatic.

C) Celebrating Difference

Here adoptees accounts involves narrative construction of the role of some socialization agents they came across as what I called "discourse of celebrating difference" for, according to the account of the adoptees, the agents' value adoptees difference in terms of race, color and pre-adoption background and treat them positively in non damaging way. Of those agents fall under this category, schools, AEF and work places are the major one as described by the interviewees. It is not that these organizations are best positioned to own such discourse; rather it is a matter of, as the accounts suggest, experience which depends on socio-cultural and spatial-temporal variability that affects the relationship these groups have to adoption and that dictate the nature of the construct (Burr, 2003). Though it is not among those themes extensively dealt with in the narrations, it appeared to be strong and influential when raised in those few cases it got treated. Sophie recounted such instance and its powerful effect on her life. In contrast to her early years of elementary school which she suffered discrimination for being black, her difference got respected in another school found in a relatively bigger city where she transferred when she was 16 and other ethnic groups including blacks live.

> However, when I was 16 and I started a new school in a bigger city called (Y) which was close by, everything changed. (Y) was very different from the small place I had grown up in. The people were more open in (Y).

> In my new school people were friendly towards people who were different and the city was multicultural with a lot of immigrants. Having another ethnic background was regarded as something positive. People were interested in me as a person and being black was something positive. I felt as if my self-confidence and self-esteem got much better. Around this time, I also became more and more interested in Ethiopia as a country and the history of my biological parents.

Sophie recovered her self-esteem she lost in the early years of her schooling in a place where her difference is respected. "Black was something positive" perception instilled in her an interest in her Ethiopian background. Others respect for her difference (colour) in consequence led her to positive identification with both countries and her colour: This can be contrasted to the negative experience of Marline which resulted in the opposite effect.

> I am very proud of my Ethiopian heritage and I am also proud and thankful for growing up in Sweden. For me being an adopted person is being aware that my identity is formed by two different cultures. My personality and the way I behave is a result of both my biological origin as well as the place I grew up in.I have made the decision

to affirm and recognize my Ethiopian heritage and therefore I feel that being an adoptee for me personally is being both Swedish and Ethiopian and black.

c) Stigmatised and Persecuted Difference :The Making of Strangers

Stigmatized difference ranges from a mere labeling as outsider directly or indirectly to extreme form of discrimination that goes to the extent of mistreatment and abuse. Half of the adoptees reported in their narrative that their difference and background has been the object of externalizing comments at different times, age, and place. One adoptee indirectly mentioned that she was treated differently. The rest did not indicate that they were treated negatively because of their color and adoptive status. Marline who said was adopted during the first wave of adoption (from Ethiopia) offered a detailed account of differing degree of maltreatment in relation to her blackness and adoptive background by different people which can be summarized by the title of her undergraduate thesis "To be Sweden but don't look Sweden" in a way that shows her preoccupation with the negative side of difference making discourse and the dilemma it embodies.

Narrating how she experienced the discourse of "stigmatised difference" and how it affected her adoptive identity of "belonging nowhere," she clearly demonstrated the impact of uncontrolled and untamed discourse on her perception of her whole life—her "whole existence" and her adoption in particular. Central to the understanding of her discourse is the way she related colour ,i.e. blackness to being adoptee in her self-discourse in the context of her time –the first wave of adoption"-- when Sweden was more or less homogenous country. At that time, she and her sister were the only blacks living in the town she grew up, and also, on the other side, Ethiopia was known for the infamous 1970s famine. Her narration shows that all these factors has their contribution for the "persecuted difference discourse" she encountered and, in effect, produced her "no given place" adoptive identity.

In her narration are included the whole range of difference creation and pathologizing strategies such as "minor" work place comments: "you are almost like us" and "I must say you speak fluent Swedish." These comments upset her for they convey to her to her that they are relegating the fact that she has spent her entire life (starting from three months old) in Sweden. This is, in a way, denying her right to belong.   There are also other more painful and "traumatic" treatments of racialization which were clear in their intent, "go home." Margarita also encountered people at Goteborg University who believe "she did not speak Swedish" a comment she reacted to in humoristic way by saying "though I am a Swedish teacher."   Marline offered one of the typical moments of her experience of racism.

> I have a moment which was very very traumatic, and it was also when I was a teenager, it was (not audible) night, it was not very late, it was dark outside and I was going with a friend on a long ….like how do you say… on small…. it is more like more walking to the city. It is more like a small road we were walking there. There was a man, old man grown up man, may be in my father's age, you know, he came bicycling, you know. And when he saw me (he saw me in a distance) when he passed me, he started to shout at me. He was furious, you know , he was like…(insane), not insane, but when he saw me he got really really mad to shout … things like I should wash myself , not walk on the street of the Swedes, because I was like making it dirty ; I should go back home and …I don't remember every thing (she stopped to talk for a while, in a way that looks not wanting to remember and then continued) . But he was really shouting, shouting you know, long before...until he became this small (showing something tiny), I can see him you know (referring his disappearance from her sight)

Her shiny faces suddenly changed following the development of the story into what she called "traumatic" incident. Proceeding with her immediate reaction, "ya, and that was …it was such a…shock for me. He was not even doubting, shouting at a little girl. I was not more than 13 years old, may be or something like that you know …" concerning her feeling, she reflected," I just remember, you know it hurts" … For the question I posed whether she related this with her adoptive status at that time, she responded "I do not know if he was

thinking about me as an adoptee..." after a pause remembered, ".... it is more like being different...he relate to me as a black girl."

In another part of her narration, she pointed out that in those days her blackness and adoptive status are inseparable for, in that time, "being black" is equivalent to " being adoptee" in the absence of immigrant there is no other reason a black person, more specifically a black child would be there in exclusively white community. When I asked her how she interpreted the incident, she answered "it meant that I have no really the right to be there or did not have the right to.... I was not like them, I mean he could say that to me and I would immediately know that...." This corresponds to what she had encountered in a school setting. A boy teased her "Kunta Kinte" the main character of the book written by Alex Haley "The root", which later on converted into a movie which narrates the story of a man who left Africa as a slave and struggling for his "African identity" which was transmitted at that time on Swedish Television. For Marline both coveys a message of "you don't belong here." Like what Sophie and Elizabet felt, Marline expressed the helplessness that engulfed her "I could not say something that hurt him as much as the thing he said to me." Indicating the depth and breadth of its effect, in another place she says "it is my whole existence which is threatened." Because of a chain of the incidents of stigma and discrimination, Marlines expressed her unmet need to defend herself "by saying "I don't know how to respond to...." succumbing to the "you don't belong to" discourse which was common among racist at that time. She said this is the theme:" I was really sad I felt that …you know ...that there was no place for me, really. I thought I did not belong really." In a mood that conveys remorse she stated that if she had not been adopted , if I have not been an immigrant , I could , like , told myself , well I have my family, I know where I come from or I know who I am and you u understand...that is actually the theme.

This unequivocally demonstrates the effect of racist discourse on her identity in general and adoptive identity in particular. But Marline does not blame any body for that, instead, she locates the problem in her self that implies negatively affected self esteem "I think h....it is easy to… believe that something is wrong with you. I think that is, may be, how I explained it that ..."

Sophie and Elizabeth encountered such racist discourse which the former said affected her self-esteem. The teasing and other stereotyping treatments did put her childhood into problem "complex thing for me as a child was that I looked different from the rest of the children in the neighbourhood/school where I grew up. When I was a child I didn't want to stand out in the crowd, I wanted to look like everybody else, having blond hair, blue eyes and white skin."

The other two interviewees, David and Michael, made no mention of experience of stereotyping and discrimination. This of course is not quite a common type of discourse in the adoptees' community. For my question that sought explanation during the interview for not experiencing stereotyping comments and stigma, growing up in an environment where different people with different race and colour lives which created tolerance was their response. The existence of different ethnic groups does not by itself warrant a social milieu free of stereotyping and discrimination; the most important thing is, as their accounts demonstrate, whether the difference is respected or not. Marline also underscores the significance of time difference in which a person is adopted. According to her, there are indications as to the reduction of incidence of negative treatment of adoptees during the second wave of adoption. That was the time Michael and Margarita were adopted, i.e., a period immigrant started to come in large number into Sweden.

6.2.5) Negotiation

Hitherto I have, by going through the narratives of the adoptees, tried to show how adoptees are represented in their discourses, the methods and strategies used by socialization agents to influence (deliberately or in cognito) them and how it linked to their self-discourse.

In the following part we will look into, using the accounts, how adoptees evaluated, reacted and negotiated their identities in their respective community in the course of their daily lives. As we do so, you we will soon notice the going back and forth between other discourses and the self- discourse, as narrated by adoptees, this time focusing on how adoptees felt, understood and reacted to others discourse and, conscious or unconscious awareness of their freedom and agentic position which as I have already discussed in the theory part, involves skills of discourse manipulation. The negotiation may involve embracing of other discourses (full or with modification), and to borrow again Gergen's terms, resistance and self- representation which shows the other way flow of discourse. I may, sometimes use, an alternative category of my own ,i.e. evaluation, self- discourse construction and promotion or advocacy of self discourse, which is similar but carries more empowering and aggressive sense in my attempt to relate it to adoptees discourse. In almost all narratives, adoptees recounted a story of negotiation they engaged in regard to their adoptive identity. The purpose of this part of the analysis is not only to look into the negotiating practice of adoptees as represented in their accounts but also discern the potential adoptees may have to strongly advocate their adoptive identity for the betterment of their life.

Depending on their experience and the context they have been brought up in (sociocultural), the description of negotiating practice and skill vary-so does their awareness of it.   Even within the individual narration variations are observed based on their age and other factors. What is common for all account is the evaluation of other discourses (the socialization agents). Not all of the adoptess , as indicated in their account, engage in all of the negotiating practices I listed earlier.

 Marline gave the account of her evaluation and subsequent rejection of her mothers (both biological and adoptive) construction of "less black" (close to white) identity downplaying it as "vanity", for it focuses on the outside leaving the most important part, the inside, aside.   This evaluation, of course, represents her current view, which is quite opposite to her childhood perspective that subscribed to this idea and tries to abide by the "I wanted not to be different" mentality.   There are instances, of course, in which she came to reject some of the lessons and strategies her mothers thought her when she found them impractical in the face of the strong discourse she encountered outside home. With hesitation, Marline told me that her mothers forewarned her about the mistreatments she might encounter in the school and outside both as a black person, as a girl and an adoptee (which imply multiple discrimination). In line to this, her mother advised her to use a kind of "an eye for an eye" retaliation as a strategy that suggest employment of derogatory comments like the racist and others did.

For her this was not palatable for she was aware that it cannot produce the effect that other discourses had produced on her--i.e. externalized her. For her saying, "you are white" in response to "you are black" is senseless. As she grew up the "helpless child" constructed by racism started to be more evaluative, engaging in more positive non-damaging self construction and making one's voice heard as adult at schools and in the work place. Her engagement in hard work was also partly an agentic act which was geared "to prove herself."   She works hard to achieve this even when the job is easy to carry out. Her self-representation is appeared different based on her specific purpose she wanted to achieve " it is not always I present myself the same, way all the time." According to her, she is selective (which also applies to other interviewees) she does not tell the whole story. She gave an example of job in which interviews she had

presented herself in various ways at different times. In line with her discourse that "I am not only an adoptee" she emphasis the other part of her identity, for example, her profession. In such instances her adoptive identity is advocated in combination to others or retreated from. In a way that shows that it is the climax of her narration, she did put adoptive identity in the context that sounds like "citizen of the world." She reconstruct "being adoptee" as a person who is "human" living "in the same universe" and having "the same capacity to do things." She calls for a new understanding of adoptee, not as a "stranger" and "different" that as far as her experience in concerned, threatened "her whole existence." Sophie shares the age difference in terms of negotiation experience. During childhood when her adoption and colour was under attack, she portrayed herself as a helpless child who does not even seek support from others. As adult she "affirm" and "recognize" her Ethiopian background and therefore able to represent her adoptive identity "being both Swedish and Ethiopian and black."

A more active role came with Margarita's account, though, at times, contradictory stories of the narration emerge. In line with her belief we are already familiar with, identity in general and adoptive identity in particular is a dynamic and never completed project, she has been engaged in evaluation of others discourses (as other adoptees did), after which she did continuous self- construction and reconstruction and avocations work. For a question I asked her to what extent adoption is important to her, she responded, "it will be important when I wanted it to be." Her representation of herself changes depending on what she wants to achieve in a specific discourses situation. She affirms that "I am positive …I always see myself as a person." At another time she present to people the "teacher self." Generally she locates herself among those "….who has strong opinion and can speak for themselves …." she sound and affirmed that even "at this period in my life I feel strong and confident with myself." But she warned me that there are times this is not so, citing the time when she felt that she has nobody to depend on when her father was sick and could not be around her for some time. Margarita, in agreement with Gergen's power endowed self we raised in the theoretical part, summarizes her agentic power in the following fragmented but authentic way

> …… but I feel that you always survey and you are always prepared to arg… h…. not to argue but to give argument h…justifications that you are doing good and you are well and you can, if you meet someone in the tram or the store h….It is not that legitimate to criticize your parents probably. It also means that you….all the other who do fit and have some kind of advance before you and you have to push, using your elbows literally (laughs)

She takes the responsibility from her parents and in a metaphoric language of "pushing" represent the toughness that discharging it involves. She also draws a complex picture of doing the pushing by bringing other aspects of her personal identity (that might affect her) in to the narration: "it is also a fact that I am younger than, that I am a women, and that I am small and that I am not a big person my parents h…they have no higher education and h…the adoption part the fact that I am adopted is part of the other component of my identity." Her mother's lack of university education and the context of this part of the narration of "lacks" seem to overlook her father's education she mentioned earlier in her narrative. Besides, extracts from her narration like "I would have to fight for my identity" and "adoption is important to me when I want it to be important" shows her life and narration is much about constructing a free person who wants be in charge of her own life. Depending on the situation she finds herself in, she constructs identity as a "Swedish" using Swedish language as a tool or putting on traditional Swedish clothes; as a "black person"; and as a "Teacher" etc.

7) Discussion and Conclusion

Having adoptive identity--i.e., the sense of who one is as an adopted person--as object of the study ; drawing upon social construction theory as a theoretical framework that underpin this research project and with the aim of finding answer to the three questions listed earlier in the introduction part, I have tried to analyse the interview material in the previous chapter. In this part, I will discuss how the finding helps to address the aim and research questions of the study by going back and forth between theory and the result of the study, and also consulting, when the need arises, previous research (conducted here in Sweden and elsewhere) on adoptive identity and thereby weigh their significance and contribution in light of the purported goal and its implication in improvement of social work practice .

Depending on the family to which they have been placed, the spatial -temporal aspect of the placement, the discourses they encounter in the course of their life, the accounts or narrations of adoptees varies. My tendency is to focus on common themes per se and as they underlie the variations and contradictions that make up the narrations; examine the self discourse contra other discourses relationships of the themes. The main subjects treated in all of the narratives are difference/sameness discourses (in terms of race, colour, nationality, culture and language) , experience, belongingness, perceived socialization process , stigma and discrimination, their perception and reaction to other discourses etc. As already touched upon in the previous section, difference/sameness discourse was the organizing theme upon which the rest of the issues rely on. The analysis of the accounts of adoptees demonstrate that the nature of "difference/ sameness discourse," which is doing the balance sheet between difference visa -a -vis similarity, determines the content and predisposition of the account of adoptees offer on adoption and adoptive identity. This difference /sameness analysis they have been engaged in results in identification with their preferred objects, i.e. nation, race, occupation etc.

One of the themes got elaborate treatment in the accounts of adoptees is the interpretation and importance they offer to adoption. Though difference exists among their accounts, most of them represented adoption as a place, which shows the adoptees preoccupation with the relocation caused by the process and its implication latter in their life. The place is raised in the context of belongingness, one needs acceptance from, or need language and other skills to associate one self to. Movement from one country (Ethiopia) to another (Swedish) served as a reference point which the adoptees became aware of and try to interpreter what it entails. As a social construct, movement shows the "act of the adopters" that realocate child from one place to another (O'Halloran, 2006:9). Though there are other factors that may create place thinking, adoption discourses adopted persons have come across with in and outside families appear to be the major ones. They may range from a family story telling "you are born and come from…" to a question the child encounter outside home from strangers "where are you from?" The names given to the types of adoption (Intercountry adoption and international adoption etc) and the common definitions associated with it also instigate place mentality. The names given to the types of adoption (Intercountry adoption and international adoption etc) and the definition associated with it also create place mentality. For example, the HC which many countries ratified defines ICA as " a change in habitual resident" from one "Contracting country— "the state of origin " to " another contracting country---the receiving state." The immigrant status adoptees are given in official circle and among the public is also another influential discourse. Given discourses like these that engender "geographical" thinking both in and outside families; it is not surprising that most constructed adoption as a "place/home" one belongs or not belongs to. But this "place" metaphor was not necessarily depicted as problematic. That is why all adoptees (Including those who suffered stigma and

discrimination) accorded paramount importance to ICA in their lives getting on the pro side of the "pro / against adoption debate." Some even went to the extent of relating it to their imagination about what would

have happened if they had not been adopted, with of course cautionary statements concerning its implementation. They underscored the need to "think more than two times" before a decision is made on adoption cases both in the sending and receiving country.

Grotevant et al (2000:381)   states that adoptive identity is "how the individual constructs meaning about his/her adoption." In the course of carrying out this construction, the interviewees did two things in their account. First, they defined adoptive identities and second, based on their definitions, they identified themselves with different "objects" among which nation/ethnicity and, sometimes, colour appeared to be the common ones.   To expand a little bit on adoptees' task of definition and identification, I shall start from the latter one which will be followed by the former, i.e. the definition.

The place metaphor the adoptees employed in their self-discourses explains why adoptees constructed their adoptive identities primarily in terms of " either/ or" , " both/and" and "neither/nor" of the two countries engaged in the adoption process—i.e., Sweden and Ethiopia. Remember we have already seen that there are variations between individual adoptees discursive production of self: Swedish, Swedish and Ethiopian, or neither Swedish nor Ethiopian. It is also interesting to see that almost all adoptees considered themselves as white during their childhoods which latter on changed upon growth in to adolescence. Identification may not be as clear-cut as it may sound here. There appeared not a few cases in which dilemmas and contradictions marked their narrations as they engaged in the task of conceiving and re-conceiving themselves to align their accounts to various   purposes (moral motive) at different times both during the interviews and ,as they reported, in their day to day lives.   Sociological conception of ambivalent helps to understand and acknowledge contradictions within narratives of such a nature.   In a world where multiple   and various meaning exists for a phenomenon or object, a person engages thinking and " searches for meaning by trying different moves between constructions of the world ." So seemingly contradictory parts and episodes of the same account can be manifestations of audible thinking of trial and error as one picks and drops alternatives or combines different representations of things (Kelly as cited by Harrie & Gillet, 1994: 136). So dilemmas should not be seen as symptoms of inconsistence, delusion or confusion etc (Wegar, 1992).

Here underlying the varieties of adoptive identities constructed is the difference/ sameness analysis the adoptees have made in the course of identity production. Apart from nation/ethnicity and colour based identification discussed above, they compared themselves with groups of people the adoptees came up with in their daily lives like families , non- adoptees Swedes, immigrants etc as important part of their discursive representation of the adoptive self with its implication which is important part of identity formation among adoptees (Dorrow, 2006) .

Returning to the second task, i. e. defining, adoptive identities are discursively represented as "skills"
 (Language and culture orientation) that should be acquired, as "dynamic and incomplete" project, and as "homelessness."   Though out their narrations adoptees explicitly and implicitly reiterated that adoptive identities are not something visible in a person. Such kind of conception evidently calls for disengagement from the "essentialist" approach that seeks "fixed" quality and something that has its own "essence" to which scientific endeavours oriented to.   Usually deviation from this "fixed" one is labelled as a mental health problem (Irhammar, 1997& 1999). Adoptive identity, as the accounts of interviewees demonstrate, has no "unified subject" to which a   "scientific" efforts would be geared to; but is "complex, multiple, at times, contradictory" (Watkins, 2004). As we have seen in the previous chapter, what one is as an adopted person is far from being uniform not only among respondents but also within an individual narrative offered. Adoptive identity per se was not identified as a problem. As already intimated in the literature review and elsewhere in

this paper, there is a tendency to pathologize adoptive identity, among others, in academia. For example, there are instances in which adoptees who inclined to wards "non- Swedish" identity are considered   as

having some kind of mental health problem (Irhammar, 1999: 184), locating the problem into the person. Though I do agree that identity construction is more demanding for adoptees as compared to non-adoptees (Grotevant et al; 2000: 381) and stereotyping and discrimination may cause preference towards non-Swedish identity (Irhammar 1999) as the accounts of the respondents unequivocally demonstrate, it is problematic to conclude that such an identification of "difference" is an indication of individual's mental problem. Rather, as we shall see soon,it is a societal one.

Discursive Influence

The extent to which adoptees have been under influence while they have been constructing their adoptive identity was another issue their accounts revealed. This discursive impact of the socialization agents upon the their self-discourses can be better captured by the position the former (the agents) occupy in the social construction of difference with regard to the adopted persons. The adoptees have been exposed to various, at times, conflicting, discourses, in which case , those with more authority and resources , as Gergen (cited in the theoretical frame work part) put it , dominate and influence individuals and groups with the less resource and authority. As the finding of the analysis tells , the discourses create distance or impose distinctions forcing adoptees to re-evaluate their discursive positions both in relation to the discourse owners and the wider community.

It is against this background the impact of the discourses weighed and four categories of influences (which are not exclusive) created in the analysis part. The categories obviously showed the intensity and direction of influence of the discourses on the adoptees as presented in their accounts. As per this intensity/ direction criterion, we can have two types of impacts: perceived positiveness and perceived negativeness.

Perceived positiveness occurred when socialization agents celebrated or respected individuals' differences and integrated the differences into (not avoided or tried to erase) Swedishness. This allows adoptees to construct adoptive identity that is not damaging and oppressing. Besides, indifference to difference attitude of socialization agents is also depicted by the adoptees as positive handling way of differences. Deliberately or otherwise not paying attention to differences of the child /person (colour and background) is another strategy which did not affected the adoptees negatively. The indifference should not be taken as exclusion of the issue, rather as it is implied in the narrations, indicates an attempt not to have or show clear stance which, may appear to them as sign of "normalization" and , in effect, non-damaging. Though this may work at their early ages, as most of the accounts demonstrate, the normalization effect would be eroded as one grows and specially confronted with others which may have not only different but also opposite discursive positions. Of course it is important to take heed that disclosure of difference also needs the utmost care, otherwise it would be damaging (Grotevant, et al, 2000).

Perceived Negative Influence is resulted from the rest two categories of discourses, namely, promotion of sameness and the making of strangers--the two extremes. Usually the sources of the former are multicultural or bicultural families (Grotevant et al, 2000) who themselves are victims of stereotyping and discrimination for adopting racially different child and as a result take "samization" as a strategy to, at least , comfort themselves.This ranges from the impossible project of changing colour and straightening hair (making it blond) (my interviewees did not experience it) to seemingly positive " you are the same" comments. Since the former is absent from the interviewees narration, we will look at the effect of the latter. "Denial of difference" into which comments like "you are the same" falls has its root in the good intentioned antiracist discourse of "colour blindness" that started in 19 68. The discourse is meant to promote equality

and avoid racial discrimination by treating a person as if he/she has no difference at all (Hubinette &Tigervall, 2006). This perspective shares the problem of the "indifference strategy"; it leaves the obvious difference without explanation and subject adoptees (for instance, when they encounter with other discourses) denial that puts them in to Identity conflict. Difference is something not to be erased or overlooked. It is much more so in cases of TRA when it is hardly possible to ignore it (Grotevant et al, 2000). The making of strangers or persecuting difference, as the account of the adoptees directly and indirectly indicated, ranges from the seemingly innocent question "where are you from?"—which respondents interpreted as having "you do not belong here" message to blatant comments and acts of discrimination like "go home." Mainly the source of such discourse is the racist movement (i.e., homogeneity discourse) which the anti-racist movement has been fighting against in Sweden (Hubinette &Tigervall, 2006). The discourse of homogeneity of racist started in 1880s as part of the Swedish nationalist discourse that able to extend its influence till now and depicts Sweden as a nation with a "uniform and homogenous culture" which in turn served as a reason among its advocates to voice their concern that "the ethnically homogenous country" has been in danger because of the incoming of immigrants and refuges. According to this group Swedishness is "not procured with the abstraction of citizenship and Swedish passport; rather, Swedish belonging is transmitted by birth and health through out ones life time as treasured position" (Peterson, 1997: 64-66). Most Interviewees have been victim of racism perpetrated by this "discourse of homogeneity" and there are also other research confirming the existence of this today in the daily lives of adoptees (Hubinette &Tigervall , 2006). Elmund (2007: 49) citing a recent government research states the existence of "systematic ethnic discrimination through out the whole society" that significantly affects intercountry adoptees. Therefore, though all of the four categories of discourses seems to exist in various degree affecting adoptees identity formation, the dominant one, according to interviewees' narratives, other autobiographies and biographies (see Melen, 1998) and research cited above , appears to be the racialization or "homogeneity discourse" whose existence was uncovered after 1990s(Hubinette& Tigervall, 2006). This obviously is a challenge for "the hegemonic Swedish images of International adoption" in which adoptees are seen as symbol of cross cultural collaboration and parents as saviours. Such act of discrimination affects one's identification with Swedishness which cannot be linked to poorer metal health. It is rather the consequence of the socialization process and the flaws of adoptive identity discourses embedded in the society (Hubinette &Tigervall, 2006). Therefore, the effect of stereotyping and discrimination should not been seen only in terms of low self-esteem, though it is (which occurs when the adoptee accept the stereotyping as an inescapable fate), but also as part of the general problem of adoptees which Hubinette &Tigervall (2006) has reiterated with a "multiple burden discourse" that has started to attracting enormous attention now a days. It focuses on the multitude of problem adoptees are suffering from because of structural and societal problems.

The narrative of adoptees relocate the problem of racialization into the society as the perpetrators have been , in most cases, strangers to the children and socialization agents like schools and work places (secondary socialization agents). Though the finding of some research I have consulted indicated the place where racialization often occur, they did not give it the proper weight in a way that inspire the solution seeking process. This is attributed to their propensity to locate identity problems, because of (partly) their theoretical orientation, into the individual interapsychic structure as the major explanatory variable of identity formation (see Irhammer, 1999; Von Grieff, 2001). Both "samization" and "the making of strangers "leads create identity problem: so does indifferent to difference. What is important and practical, according to their accounts, is what I like to call "deference to difference" and, thus, acceptance of multiple and changing identities.

Negotiation: Struggle to Survive

As important as adoptive identity per se and its relation to getting recognition or acceptance from stakeholders in the society, the agentic side of identity development is also worth paying attention to. What should be accepted in the first place are adoptees themselves who do have the capacity to self- represent and advocate their self-constructed identities. As we have seen , in the narratives , adoptees were constructing their adoptive identity based on their interpretation of adoption and within the framework of their envisaged purposes and in light of their experiences with their adoptive parents , country of birth, country of adoption, immigrant etc in a spatial-temporal context. This involves continuous evaluation and, in case of failure, subject to change and redefining. This explains the "dynamic, fluid, filled with anticipation" character of adoptive identities (as cited by Harre & Gillet, 1994: 136). Thus, their self-discourse need to be heard and equally valued in the community of adoption discourses, which hitherto not as such the case (Watkins, 2004; Hubinette &Tigervall, 2006).

In the theoretical framework part of this GR I have discussed the macro/ micro debate of social constructionism and argued for the marriage between them as a better approach to understand identity in general and adoptive identity in particular. My navigation through the account of adoptees shows that adoptees are both influenced by other discourse and also able to create their own self-discourse drawing upon the surrounding as resources.

Melen (1998) represented the life of ICA as something that requires "strength" and "courage" as she narrated the lived experience of 18 adoptees in Sweden whose adoption stories she summarized in her book entitled "Strength to Survive and Courage to Live." The experiences of the respondents of this study also concur with Melen's representation. Out of the navigation I have done through their narrative , two types of negotiation emerged depending on adoptees implicit or explicit effort to negotiate and awareness of one's power and preoccupation with self- representing endeavours: 1) Active or proactive negotiation in which adoptees explicitly and actively present themselves and their adoptive identities ; and 2) Passive or reactive negotiation, the type of negotiation done in a condition which adoptees are oblivious of their agentic power because of the constrains and limitations imposed upon them by the stereotyping and discriminatory treatment of the society. It has also occurred in cases when families' discourse and socialization effort happened to be weak as opposed to discourses outside home. It involves evaluation and, based on the result, rejection or acceptance of other discourses, and frequent feeling of helplessness and self-blaming. There is the possibility for passive negotiation to gradually progress towards the active one as the adoptees grow up into adultship. But as they grow up they enhance their self-construal and represent themselves to those people who come across them. Like taking initiative to introduce self and participate in debates on race and adoption at school, write essays to promote self -representation. Active or proactive negotiation, on the other hand, involves awareness of the difference they can bring about at least on their own thinking and pursue various strategies not only to resist but also to represent their adoptive identities to others. Their strategies comprise, among other things, taking initiatives to provide information, justify the normality of adoption, acting out different identities in different settings with or without relegating or denying the other identities at local and intractional level. Negotiation can be affected by adoptees' feeling of lack of capacity to affect others, particularly the structure and the wider context them in.

Both types of negotiation are meant for individual survival in adoptive community. With such kind of negotiation it is difficult to address strangers' act of stigma and discrimination. It should be understood that

influencing, the capacity to negotiate to the extent of changing other discourses, though starts with individual , demands collective action (like women's movement). The recent attempt to organize oneself and publications of autobiographies of adoptees are can be viewed as good starts in the long journey awaiting adoptees to empower themselves and influence adoption discourses (Hubinette &Tigervall , 2006). As Gergen (cited in the theoretical part) puts it, individuals do have power. But this power requires proper cultivation so that adoptees can employed use it to further represent adoptive identity, negotiate and combat the hegemonic discourses that work to incapacitate adoptees.

The relationship between societal discourses Vis- a- vis self-discourse of adoptees at present seems to be eschewed to the former one which, in effect, marginalized the latter. Understanding the notion of "relational being" which link both the MiSC and MaSC calls for rectification of this schewness that entails empowerment of adoptees to represent themselves and advocate their discourse skilfully and also promote a dialogic forum. Socialization being the venue of the interaction of multiple of discourses the adoptees come across it should be the focus of where damaging discourse should be hunted and dealt with.

To sum up, among those plethora of ICA discourses available, let me offer a passing remark on three of them which I think are often heard and, hence, with great potential to influence adoptees: 1) "Adoptees faring well discourse" which is basically represented by adoptive agencies and some early research (http://www.mia.eu/english/sweden.pdf). 2) The second--i.e., "coming to terms discourse" acknowledges the problem adoptees face but tend to blame their pre-adoption period and their inability to adjust (for example, Irhammar, 1999). 3) There is also another discourse is basically represented by Hubinette (korean adoptee) and other scholars whose discourse may be called "multiple burden discourse "that emphasise on the challenges adoptees face in different walks of lives. These in one way or another inform adoptive identity construction of adoptees. The hegemonic one seems to be "coming to terms discourse" that tend to blame the adoptees preadoption past and, in some case, their present (not able to adjust). It is, in effect, disempowering (example, Irhammar, 1999, 2002; Lindblad, et al (2003); Grotevant et al, 2000). "Adoptive status" is drawn as "fixed" and "assigned" to the individual by the society. In this case, adoptees as we have already mentioned are left to the mercy of the society with almost no or, if there, little agentic power. They are entitled to the minor capacity to come into terms with the given. The adoptees' account show that a person cannot avoid being adopted but is free to represent him/herself, negotiate the how of adoptive identity among the society should be constructed. In congruous to its fluidity , variability and , sometimes , contradictory character or in the words of the interviewees " skill ", " dynamic and incomplete" " subjective" and multiple character of adoptive identities; the individual adoptee is a "relational being" endowed with personal power which can be mobilized for emancipatory discourse.

Implication for Social Work

Thinking in terms of the individual /societal dichotomy and, based on the theory one subscribes to, locating one self on either side of the binary and, accordingly, tailoring social work practice is one of the areas that affects the social service offered in Sweden and elsewhere (Scott as cited by Wegar, 2000). Looking at the research mentioned above, the theory that serves as background for adoption social work ,i.e. mainly attachment theory, modern infant and psychodynamic theory and psychoanalyses theories (http://www.mia.eu/english/parents.pdf), and the services provided by social workers (limited to mainly pre adoption investigation and early adoption follow up and counseling) (http://www.mia.eu/english/sweden.pdf) , it is possible to conclude that the focus is on individual , neglecting the social part and the interrelationship between the two. This focus on individual coupled with the pathologization of adoptive identity by most of

the research (whose finding inform social work practice) has caused neglect of the stigma and discriminator perpetrated by different groups of the society. Closely related to this, social work's emphasis on child-centered strategy and service provision that underemphasized or relegated adults has results in absence or inadequate post adoption services (confined to root searching and contact arrangement). Generally it is possible to say that the stigmas that exist surrounding two members of the adoption triangle or triad --adoptive child and adoptive parents ---show that "adoption is a stigmatized social institution." Which explains the inadequacy or absence of post--adoption service as a "standard" part of adoption social work (Wegar, 2000).

The major findings of this study points out that new understanding of adoptive identity and individual/ society linkage is essential. Re-conceiving adoptive identities as multiple and changing and re-conceptualizing the individual as "relational being" is necessary. Accordingly adoption social work needs to consider embracing a kind of " a two-pronged approach": one, dealing with the individual adoptees and their close surrounding like families and , two, having an intervention strategy that tackle the stigma and discrimination adoption in general and adoptive identity in particular suffer from the society they are living in. The two should not been seen as separate schemes. Dealing with stigma and discrimination necessitate empowerment of adoptees both at childhood and adulthood levels so that they could be able to negotiate (in a sense we have been talking in this study) their identities in the society. The intervention should be done at all phases of the adoption: pre, during and after adoption. The dynamic and multiple nature of adoptive identity that suggest dialogue among different discourses in a manner that prevent or minimize damaging discourse in both academic and public arena need to be emphasized.

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Interview Guide

Instruction

Dear participants,

I really want to thank you for your willingness to participate in this study which is unthinkable to conduct without your invaluable experiences and insight. Following the invitation letter for interview and informed consent form I sent you and our discussion on telephone and by email on the purpose of the study, you have agreed to participate in telephone interview. This is an interview guide which outlines particular issues I am interested in. As you have noticed the blank spaces are not meant for your response; you need to use separate pages to answer. It is advisable to put it in the context of your life history. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I. Definition of adoption

1) What is the meaning of adoption to you?_____
2) How do you explain intercountry adoption (type of adoption in which children are adopted from one country into another country)?_____ What about interracial adoption (children adopted into a different race than their own)?
   _____

II. Meaning of being an adoptee

3) What does it mean to be an adopted person to you?_____
4) What do you think is the difference between adoptee and non-adoptee?_____
5) To what extent is being an adopted person important to you?_____
6) How did you come to know that you are adopted? How old were you at that time?_____ From whom did you here it the first time? _____
7) What was your immediate feeling after you heard your adoptive status? And how did you react at that time? _____
8). How does your awarness of your adotive status affected your attitude towards yourself and your relationship to your family and the surrounding people?_____
9). How do you explain the reason for your adoption both to yourself and to other people?_____

III. The perceived role of socialization agents?

10) Among families, peers (friends), schools, work place, churches, and people whom you meet casually (strangers) , which institutions or group of people do you think most influenced your perception of your self as an adopted person? (select not more than four)

   _____

11) What were/ are the major 'comments' and ' sayings' ' questions' of these institutions and people you have been frequently exposed to as an adopted person?_____

12) How did these institutions and people treat you as an adopted person during your childhood, adolescence and adulthood)? _____

13) How did you interpret the way they treatment?_____What were your subsequent reactions?_____

14) Please describe your perception of how the view of those institutions and people you selected treatment on adoption and adopted people influenced you as a adopted person? Does it vary over your life history, i.e. childhood, adolescent and adult?_____
How?_____

III. The Impact of adoption discourses

15) Among the media, laws, literature (fictions and others), movies or others , which one influenced your view on adoption and adoptive identity most? (you Can choose four)_____
_____

16) What are your perception of the ideas and the views they about adoption and adopted person discussed on affected you most and in what way? _____

17) How these ideas and views influenced your perception of yourself as adopted person (child, adolescent and adult ?_____

IV. Negotiation and evaluation

18) To what extent do you think you have been under pressure from others to have your perception of yourself as an adopted person?_____

19) How difference in appearance influenced your perception of yourself as an adopted person? _____

20) How have you been expressing and presenting yourself (during your childhood, adolescence and adulthood) to your family, friends, in school and workplaces?
_____

21) Where do you locate yourself in the Swedish society? _____
_____
_____

22) How much do you think you are satisfied with your adoptive identity?_____
_____
_____

23) How do you like other people around you and the society to view you and other adoptees?_____

24) What do you think is the most important thing in your life?_____

25) What are your hopes and fears as an adopted person in the future?_____
_____

26) Any thing you want to add_____

Informed Consent

The following is a presentation of how I will use the data collected in the interview.

The research project is a part of my education in the International Masters Program in Social Work at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. In order to insure that my project meets the ethical requirements for good research I promise to adhere to the following principles:

- Interviewees in the project will be given information about the purpose of the project.
- Interviewees have the right to decide whether he or she will participate in the project, even after the interview has been concluded.
- The collected data will be handled confidentially and will be kept in such a way that no unauthorized person can view or access it.

The interview will be recorded as this makes it easier for me to document what is said during the interview and also helps me in the continuing work with the project. In my analyze some data may be changed so that no interviewee will be recognized. After finishing the project the data will be destroyed. The data I collect will only be used in this project.

You have the right to decline answering any questions, or terminate the interview without giving an explanation.

You are welcome to contact us or our supervisor in case you have any questions (e-mail addresses below).

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