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POLICY DISCOURSE

& Utilitarianism

Homo adopticus –

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Overview

Primavera and Johanna, or Homo adopticus, were not born in Sweden. They were given up for international adoption in the South and were received in the North as Homo aequalis' own children. Homo adopticus, in this essay, are intermediated to Homo aequalis by the adoption agencies. The adoption process, as a part of a culturally constituted and constructed negotiation can be of analytical interest from a social anthropological perspective. I will now give the reasons for this. The phenomenon of international adoption can be considered as 1) a manifestation of the relationship between North-South 2) an exchange of children 3) a reflection of Homo aequalis' cultural system of values 4) a ritualised process which transforms a social conflict to harmony, in respect of the 'involuntary childless' Homo aequalis 5) a preservation of Homo aequalis' cultural habitus 6) an endeavour to resemble the Southern kinship solidarity; the adoption agencies can, in a similar way to the UN, EU and Nato, be studied as kinshipping institutions, and 7) a reproduction of Homo aequalis' culture. It is my experience that these aspects have fallen in between the sentences in the adoption discourse. Now, if the adoption activity may be observed, in the first room, as an exchange of children, then I see a room occupied with undepicted experiences, actors, structures and contexts. This is a view of a segregated depiction of reality which is incoherent with my perception of reality. Peculiarly, I have always regarded children as active participants in a family structure, existing within culture and co-existing with other cultural systems in a wider global context, within which the adoption activity is outlined. However, this might just have been an illusion or, perhaps, the reason for the disregarding of Magnus', Bianka's, and Vanessa's perspectives could be that these aspects have not been framed within the wide contexts they participate. What do I know? Anthropologists Esther Goody and Caroline Bledsoe have argued: "Fostering cannot be regarded solely in terms of the micro-movement of children, but must rather be looked at in terms of the (replication and) reproduction of a society and culture" (Cited in Modell in Franklin and Ragoné 1998:169).

Considered as a part of a cultural system of prestations and counterprestations, in accordance with the principle of reciprocity, I argue that Homo aequalis' adoption activity can be studied as a manifestation of relations of power and exploiting practices. Homo adopticus in this essay represent an interface of the North-South relation. However, this study is limited to observing only a few of the many actors represented on the receiving end of the interface reflected by Homo adopticus (in the North). It is shown how kinship intrinsically and kinshipping as an instrument is essential to understanding the underlying logic of the cultural system under which Homo aequalis orient themselves within and by. Through the intermediary adoption agencies Homo aequalis undertake the task to secure 'the best interest of the child'. Moreover, this is a pledge inscribed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In sum, this convention divide the world into the dichotomies: North-South, Good-Evil, and Rich-Poor.

Freedom, Justice, and Equality are the cornerstones of Homo aequalis' culture. The policy 'in the best interest of the child' is a perception which can be derived to Homo aequalis' measure of the well-being of nations. These measures are conducted with the aim of producing and reproducing a satisfactory defence of perceived conditions. To draw the conclusion, based on the knowledge achieved by putting economic poverty in relation to economic wealth, that there is a necessity to formulate the ideological policy 'in the best interest of the child' can be viewed as a conclusion which, in the end, reflects Homo aequalis' cultural habitus. Because 'children' are not considered as social and cultural actors in the North they represent a natural category. It is the intention to achieve the ends of the policy which transforms 'children', as a natural category, to cultural actors.

Because kinship, in the words of Marshall Sahlins, is a social relation of reciprocity, of mutual aid, the generosity (North takes care of South's children) is a manifestation of debt, putting South (the recipient of the generosity/aid) in a circumspect and responsive relation to North (the donor of the generosity/aid) during that period the generosity/aid is unrequited. The economic relation of giver-receiver is the political relation of leader-follower. This is the working principle. Strictly, it is the operative ideology (Sahlins 1978:133). At least according to the theory which is represented by the cultural system of prestations and counterprestations, within which the adoption activity is a part of, obscuring relations of power and exploiting practices.

The structure of this form of exchange is a hierarchy of levels of integration, but from the inside and on the round it is a series of concentric circles, with *generalised reciprocity* in the middle, then *balanced reciprocity*, and finally *negative reciprocity* (Sahlins 1978:198). Thus, when the circle of charity is compressed, that of negative reciprocity is potentially expanded (Sahlins 1978:220). On the one hand, this, more or less explicitly, illustrates the preservation of Homo aequalis' cultural habitus as the Homo sapiens of freedom, justice and equality. The institutionalized adoption activity is just one among many institutions this can be looked upon. If, on the other hand, the negative reciprocity would expand, the striving to achieve the democratic ideal of a society; by the people, of the people, and for the people, would be severely compressed. Explicitly that is Homo aequalis' enlightened moral (Horkheimer and Adorno 1997). "The bond of mutual aid is constructed by closeness, while it is weakened by farther distance" (Hylland Eriksen and O. Hessen 2000:146).

In sum, the essence of this essay, from an analytical perspective, with an analysis of 'the best interest of the child' as a manifestation of Homo aequalis' cultural habitus/moral, is not whether policy *is* just, but how Homo adopticus experience/evaluate it, and, moreover, how their experiences of social realities are expressed in the best of worlds. Primarily, this is an essay aiming at equalizing the relationship: We-Them. Secondly, this is an invitation to a further discussion; it is not *the* period of the discourse...

Keywords: Homo adopticus, North-South, international adoption, policy, discourse

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PART I

Introduction

”Welcome to the world of adoption”, it says on the folder with adoption information which I am holding in my hand at the moment, sitting on the fourth row in the Z-hall of the ABF-building in Stockholm, on a Thursday evening, by the end of March, where the Family Association in Favour of International Adoptions¹ (FFIA) has arranged a gathering for potential adoptive parents.² Why am I *here*? What is the definition of ‘adoption’³? Who adopts⁴ and who is being adopted⁵? For what/which reason? A sheet of information from the Adoption Centre (AC) “Directed to the person considering adoption”, says: “The activity of the Adoption Centre proceeds from the values expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Hague Convention on International Adoption. The both of them states: “The child, for the full and harmonious development of its personality, needs to grow up in the environment of a family and in a surrounding of happiness, love and compassion. In other words, children have a right to a family!” This text could *inter alia* be analysed and restated more simply: Children that are not growing up in the environment of a family will become emotionally unstable. So, the first step in evaluating a ‘need’ statement is to identify the result of the convention and test the descriptive claim that something is a necessary condition to achieve it (Woodhead in ed. James and Prout 2001:67). What is the reason for establishing this convention? This question will form the central theme of this essay⁶.

¹ This is my translation of the FFIA adoption agency (compare to Swedish “Familjeföreningen för Internationella adoptörer”). The same goes for most of the institutions being mentioned in this essay. What is more, this essay was written in Swedish, the interviews were conducted in Swedish and this essay has been translated to English by me. Please send questions and comments to my email: Cidah789@hotmail.com

² Reading further in the folder. “Thank you for demonstrating your interest in our information, and warm welcome to the world of adoption. Choosing the world of adoption will become exciting and perhaps a bit different than what you had expected. For you, this world will also mean that your life is enriched with a child to love, a second homeland in the family, new friends and experiences. The cardinal interests of the FFIA membership activity is keeping and establishing contacts between adoptive families, seeing to the existing collective interests for the children’s origin and cultural heritage, and looking after the adoptees’ civil rights” (Information sheet FFIA, Adoption).

³ Adopt: Adopt a child as sbs own with permission of a court order (met.) Make as sbs own (Bonnier Swedish Dictionary 2002:16).

⁴ Adoptive parents: Parents of adoptive children (BSD 2002:16). However, note should be taken of the fact that single parents adopt why this dictionary definition might need a wider frame of reference.

⁵ Adoptive children: Children which sb has adopted (BSD 2002:16).

⁶ This essay can be considered as an analysis of Homo aequalis’ cultural ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu 2004). Social anthropological Homo academicus define culture, this complex of meaning construction, as socially and individually various and changeable. According to Karin Norman, we (humans) do not have a culture, we are cultural. Social life is not only formed by the actors’ perceptions, but as much by the result of concrete material and political realities: Production, consumption, means of living, rule of politics and power relations. The point of the social anthropological perspective is that these aspects are not fundamentally segregated, although the connections between these aspects are multidimensional and difficult to define (Norman 1996:225).

I will now provide a possible explanation to the establishment of this convention. The word 'child', in the Bonnier Swedish Dictionary, is defined: "Son or daughter; not fully adult person [...], a product of, a child of (its time)" (BSD 2002:53). It seems that this definition depicts children as proto-adults, and, in other words, that children are regarded as products of their time; as objects. It could be seen that this definition of 'children' conveys the knowledge of some kind of system of dominance under which 'children' are living and oriented, before these "products" are transformed to adults. Apparently, there is a relation of power between child-adult. Bourdieu might have classified this relation as a particular form of symbolic violence, through which varied power relations are reproduced from time to time, from one generation to another (Bourdieu 1996:20, Swedish foreword). The symbolic violence is manifested in the fact that 'children' are deliberated from their agency.

Homo adopticus are 'the children' whose social realities are being described in this essay. Because there is no analytical concept for describing social and cultural actors whom are intermediated for national, intercultural and international adoption, I have constructed one; Homo adopticus. However, analysed in this essay are actors whom were intermediated for international adoption. Starting from the next paragraph, with my feet as my only carriage, I begin my walk towards an understanding of Homo adopticus social realities.

Homo adopticus, a *Mondain* Similar to Anyone!

The reader will meet two social categories of Homo sapiens, the one being Homo adopticus and the other Homo aequalis. Homo aequalis refers to Dumont's (1966) analytical classification of "Westerners". The both of these social categories are, of course, in the first room, Homo sapiens, that is, actors creating meaning (Hannerz 1992:vii). Homo aequalis, in analogy to Homo adopticus, shall be considered as metaphors. These metaphors are being used to depict existing actors whom, in this essay, are living in Sweden.

Moreover, the North-South concepts will be applied as these are used in the poverty or globalization discourse. Vera-Zavala, a critic of the globalization discourse claims that "globalization has been under development since the beginning of the colonization of what has come to be referred to as 'the South' or 'the Third World'; Africa, Asia, and Latin America" (Vera-Zavala 2003:15). The binary opposite of the South is the North, that is, North America, Europe, Australia and, to some extent, at least within the globalization discourse, Russia.

Magnus, one of the Homo adopticus interviewed, reacts heavily in regard to the apparent classificatory reification which has been constructed by me. "We are considered as a new

people; the Adoptees. Everyone is pulling our strings, wanting to create and rule us, in one way or the other. We are considered as the children of the general public..." I want to emphasize strongly that all concepts that are used should be conceived as metaphors representing social realities. The binary oppositions Homo adopticus-Homo aequalis and South-North contain a dynamic, that is, these are not reifications of individuals or parts of the world. Then, why are these concepts necessary i.e., if Homo adopticus is a regular *mondain* (Bourdieu 1984); a citizen or co-creator of the world, similarly to common people? Why should Homo adopticus and Homo aequalis be differentiated? The reason for categorizing the informants is because I want to enable a creation of consensus in relation to the views of realities, as the informants experience them. It might provide an understanding for a few persons having arrived to Sweden for some reasons. Possibly, the description of these individuals could contribute to an understanding of Swedish perceptions of the concepts: childhood, family, kinship, friendship, and ethnicity/self-identification. I hope to shed some light on these concepts.

Homo adopticus arrive to Sweden from several countries ⁷. In the year of 2005 there were somewhat fewer than 19 000 Homo adopticus living in Sweden ⁸. The lingua franca used in this essay by Homo adopticus is the Swedish, that is, the language Homo adopticus verbalize, argue, analyse and communicate with. In some respects Homo adopticus form a homogeneous group. Indeed, Magnus and the other Homo adopticus have 1) experienced one or several separations 2) in most cases experienced a stay at a child care or foster care institution before the international adoption, and 3) experienced a reform of their life situation.

Naturally, Homo adopticus make up a heterogeneous group in other regards. Johanna, Sandra and Klara were given up for international adoption from South Korea, as were Magnus and Vanessa. They were, however, given up for adoption at a different age and for various reasons (see the Social Matrix in Appendix A). Furthermore, Amanda and Primavera arrived from the same continent; South America, although from different countries, that is, Bolivia and Chile respectively. Mariana and Bianka originate from Iran and Sri Lanka respectively. As the other informants, they have grown up in different villages in a particular

⁷ In the statistics, until 2003, Homo adopticus were categorized as "children having immigrated to Sweden later to become adopted". Since 2003 Homo adopticus arrive in the name of "Arrived extra-Nordic adoptive child". According to the Swedish Intercountry Adoptions Authority (MIA) the classification was changed in order to write linguistically clear and to be precise. Accordingly, it is the same group of adoptive children as referred to earlier (Mail corr. MIA 2006-05-04).

⁸ According to the statistics on the MIA homepage (www.mia.eu 2006-06-02) approximately 45 000 adoptive children (with an increase of 1 000 children/year) have arrived to Sweden as adoptive children from foreign countries. According to the report from the Representative of the Child 2004(06):19, there were approximately 17 000 adoptees from foreign countries in Sweden during the composition of the report. This provided, it could be concluded that there are about 19 000 adoptive children living in Sweden 2006.

neighbourhood in Sweden. Though, Johanna has grown up in Norway but she is now living in Sweden. All in all, this illustrates the constitution of Homo adopticus as a heterogeneous group. It seems Homo adopticus could almost be considered as a diaspora.

Conventionally the concept of diaspora, according to the anthropologist Ulf Björklund, could be defined: “the part of a people that are not living in their country of origin. Despite this simplicity or maybe because of its simplicity this concept contains obvious difficulties. For instance, what is representative of a ‘people’? And what makes up a country of origin?” (Björklund in Hannerz 2001:89). Homo adopticus are not a ‘people’ and, taken as a group, have no particular country of origin. Though, the diaspora concept could perhaps form a frame of reference in regard to the actors that are described in this essay. This frame of reference is a proof of my active participation in the cultural field/space of those social realities described by Mariana and the other Homo adopticus (Bourdieu 2004; Martinez in ed. Crawford and Turton 2003).

Exploring the possibility of grasping an understanding of the social realities of Klara, Bianka and the other informants whom orient their lives and actions in Homo aequalis’ culture, I have read adoptive family magazines, information pamphlets and adoption literature. Moreover, I have studied the homepages of the adoptees’ own associations and also the homepages of the adoption agencies.⁹ Also, two participant observations were conducted, the one at the FFIA information meeting for potential adoptive parents and the other at the AC.

Furthermore, I have conducted eleven semi-structured interviews. Each interview was carried out during an hour approximately. I had selected six topics¹⁰ and had one particular section focusing on Homo adopticus’ own reflections. Really, these interviews should be considered as casual conversations. I have classified nine of the eleven informants as Homo adopticus. It is their experiences of social realities which depict the core of this essay. Viola and Viran are categorized as Homo aequalis. Viran is a native Swede. She works at an adoption agency, however, I have interviewed her as a private person. Viola, last but not least, is a Swedish adoptive parent of two adoptees.

⁹ See links on www.mia.eu. What is more, I have watched the movies *Bombay Dreams* and Susan Brink’s *Arirang*. However, I will not analyse the homepages or the movies. That might become a future project.

¹⁰ Specifically: Family, kinship, friendship and considerations on adoption, on Sweden and on the policy discourse ‘in the best interest of the child’.

Theory

I will apply the principle of reciprocity in the same regard as Marcel Mauss, Pierre Bourdieu and Marshall Sahlins. Furthermore, I will use some particular anthropological genres that have been inspired by Foucault's power theory.

Ulf Hannerz (1992:17-8), as well as I, see that there are realities outside culture with which people interact, whether their grasp of them through their culture is perfect or imperfect; "everything" is not socially constructed. Simultaneously, in analogy to Noam Chomsky, I realize that there are relations of power that will not disappear as a consequence of disregarding them (Chomsky 1996:89-90). This culture analysis invites the reader to an epistemological contestation and estrangement from his/her cultural system (Bourdieu 1984:xiv).

I will argue that the phenomenon of international adoption can be studied as a part of a cultural system of prestations and counterprestations, in accordance to the principle of reciprocity, and as a manifestation of relations of power and exploiting practices. Homo adopticus, in this essay, represent an interface of the relation between North-South.

Studying the adoption activity as an exchange between the North and the South, it can be seen that this multidimensional exchange, in the words of Mauss, represents a total social phenomenon. Mauss claimed that a total social phenomenon contained the essence of all societal values and institutions (Hylland Eriksen and O.Hessen 2000:138), for instance, moral and religious values. In the context of international adoption, this exchange follows the rules of the principle of reciprocity: it is a duty to give, to receive and to reciprocate (Mauss 1925:9). This principle implies that the recipient's counterprestation must be equal to the giver's prestation. However, as countries in the South are 'poor' according to the policy 'in the best interest of the child', or incapable of fulfilling Homo aequalis' aesthetic standard of preference that have been conventionalized ¹¹, the countries which give up Homo adopticus for international adoption receive the greatest value in the transaction, since Homo aequalis is "saving and rescuing" children by providing Homo adopticus with "a decent condition of life" (Information sheet, Children Above All – Adoptions ¹²). This means that countries in the South lose most of their prestige as they are unable to balance the exchange. Consequently, as long as Homo aequalis is in a position of maintaining the power to define what is 'in the best interest of the child', countries in the South can always be viewed as incapable of providing children with 'the best interest', whatever that may be.

¹¹ For instance, the Right to a stimulating environment, education and *the* family.

¹² This is my translation of this adoption agency (compare to Swedish "Barnen Framför Allt – Adoptioner").

I will now make explicit the relation between the adoption exchange and the human moral. As the cornerstones of Homo aequalis' culture express freedom, equality, and justice, it is possible to argue that the institution of adoption was created on these principles. Countries in the South do not reflect these principles, therefore, the international adoption activity was institutionalized. Homo aequalis' perception 'in the best interest of the child' makes a splitting of the world: the best (North) and the non-best (South). The implication of this is that Homo aequalis are distancing themselves from Homo sapiens in the South as They, apparently, cannot take care of their children, in accordance to Homo aequalis' moral values and preferences of interest. That is, the South is located in an area outside of Homo aequalis' morally cultural perceptions of what is 'in the best interest of the child'.

The rule of *negative reciprocity* or *lex talionis*, prevails in this area; 'where all is permitted' (in the biblical sense). Following this argument, the adoption activity, through the UN Convention and the policy discourse, can be seen as an institution transforming the natural/non-moral to the cultural/moral. Thus, the adoption activity can be considered as an instrument of kinshipping. The fact that Homo aequalis is in the position to define the policy discourse as a rule in Homo sapiens' culture illustrate the way in which Homo aequalis demarcate the boundaries of the morally acceptable and the morally blameworthy (Norman 1998). For instance, it is considered morally acceptable to put a price on children given up for international adoption.

Mainly, Homo aequalis adopt infants and healthy children, that is, there are very few Homo aequalis adopting seventeen year old "street kids"¹³ or African 'HIV-children'. This is an indication that the transaction of adoption is canalized by a demand. Accepting this, the arena where this transaction takes place can be considered as a market. Prevailing on the market is the principle of *balanced reciprocity*. On the market the transaction is direct or in precise balance, that is, the reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and without delay. It follows from the fact that moral values and duties change with increased social distance. The following example might clarify this. A mother giving her child a birthday present does not expect her child to balance the value of the gift directly as the transaction take place. The transaction is based on the mother's putatively altruistic intention or on moral duty, in contrast to transactions on the market. The birthday present, in this case, is given within the frame of *generalized reciprocity*, which is the principle prevailing within the frame of those the mother considers as socially close.

¹³ 'Street kids' is a classification established and defined by Homo aequalis, which is contextualised in an article by Bartholdson in Hannerz (2004).

Using the above emphasized concepts, Marshall Sahlins has illustrated how the moral changes with increased social distance. It is through the transaction of adoption that a bond is created between Homo aequalis' cultural space and the natural space. This is the way in which the adoption activity can be seen as an institution of kinshipping, transforming the natural to the cultural. It is expressed in the constructed relation.

Claude Lévi-Strauss has argued that the moral obligations created from the transaction, (i.e. someone gives something to someone) reflects the elementary principles of society, that is, the origin of the moral, the duty and the values (Hylland Eriksen and O. Hessen 2000:143). During my climbing of this conglomerate of meanings¹⁴, I will indeed together with, amongst others, Mariana, Amanda, and Bianka, discuss the meaning of kinship in itself and the role of the adoption activity in Homo aequalis' culture as an instrument of kinshipping¹⁵. It might clarify the fact that the bond of mutual moral obligations is created by closeness, while it is weakened by increased distance, socially as well as geographically. Again, I would like to emphasize that this is one and only one theory. It is solely my intention of making a modest attempt at intellectually grasping a consensus of the relation North-South.

PART II

The Archi-écriture¹⁶ of Globalization and the Constitution of the Measure of the Nations Well-Being

Here, it is my purpose to conduct an analysis of the North-South relationship. To shed light on the arena on which Homo adopticus orient their actions and to frame it in those wider contexts it maintains a part of, I will show how and why Homo aequalis' adoption activity, similarly to the fashion industry (see Aspers 2001)¹⁷, expresses idealized pictures of 'the good society' in the North as well as normative social patterns of behaviour in accordance with Homo aequalis' measure of well-being which is offered to Homo adopticus in, for example, Sweden. I will do this by discussing some perceptions concerning globalization.

¹⁴ The picture on the front cover is intended to illustrate this conglomerate of meanings which I climb.

¹⁵ Analytical relations between 'kinship'-'kinshipping', amongst other relations, is of interest from the utilitarian perspective because I argue that the adoption activity could be considered as an instrument for handling the conflict Nature-Culture.

¹⁶ 'Archi-écriture' refers to Jacques Derrida (1993:9-10, Swedish foreword). The archi-écriture of globalization is a deconstruction made by me. This deconstruction expresses an analytical critique of the globalization, seen as a peace-making process, which, according to this deconstruction, is not preferable as it would be the same as an 'absolute violence' (in the sense of Derrida), in analogy to the communication form 'in the best interest of the child'.

¹⁷ However, Aspers has explicitly chosen not to discuss the political aspects of the fashion industry.

Homo aequalis' cardinal ideals, according to Louis Dumont, could be denominated: equality and freedom. These concepts assume their common principle and a valorised representation, that is, the idea of the human individual; humanity is made up of men, and each man is conceived as presenting the essence of humanity (Dumont 1966:4; see also the UN Convention on the Human Rights). Starting from this fact it can be understood, according to Dumont, that Homo aequalis' perception of themselves is not innate but learned (Dumont 1966:8).

There are in fact many characteristics of human culture that can be viewed as almost universal, for instance, verbal language, religion, one or the other form of kinship and humour (Hylland Eriksen and O. Hessen 2000:102). Recognized philosopher, Peter Singer, has observed the following: "During the last century there have been attempts made at working out a global declaration of ethics, that is, a collection of principles that are universally accepted in all cultures" (Singer 2003:129). "The occurrence of the genuinely *multiracial* communities, as a consequence of the desegregation in the American south, illuminate the fact, according to Singer, that although it might be difficult to suppress *racism* it is clearly possible"¹⁸ (ibid 2003:145, my emphasis).

Moreover, Singer poses a question: "Is there a relation between poverty and economic globalization?" (ibid. 2003:87). If we accept the facts that 'poverty' is a concept produced by Homo aequalis, that Homo aequalis is the active agent who promulgate economic globalization, and that the World Bank is the actor in the North, being the owner of the monopolized production of knowledge of the conducted measures of the nations well-being, it can be viewed that the philosophical inquiry put by Singer tends to have been put within the frame of an ethnocentric form.

Furthermore, Singer states: "Whether *we* accept or reject the assumption that economic globalisation is a 'good', we are still able to ask *ourselves* if there are ways in which it can be made to work better, or at least less bad" (ibid. 2003:28, my emphasis). It seems that by *We and Ourselves*, Singer is referring to Homo aequalis. Seen from another view, a different question could be put: What is the underlying logic to putting the question that the globalization should work better or less bad?¹⁹ In Singers mind, the equation is simple:

¹⁸ Certainly, the concepts of 'race' and 'science of racism' are important to those wanting to expel minorities, tone down tendencies of solidarity with 'poor' people and reintroduce Victorian hierarchies between classes and ethnic groups (Hylland Eriksen and O. Hessen 2000:103). I am, however, afraid that my knowledge is inadequate as to whether the race biologists and other evolutionary theoreticians have succeeded in verifying the existence of races. Though, it is my belief that there are varied races of neither man nor animal.

¹⁹ According to Gita Sen (in ed. Pettifor 2003) the presence of Primitive Accumulation recurs every time the resources of a new region of the world are eyed by the greedy, or when a new group of people is seen as a barrier preventing free access to such resources. In the view of Gita Sen, the colonial period was one such time, when the Primitive Accumulation went global (Sen in ed. Pettifor 2003:130).

“Raising taxes for people with high income in the rich nations and using this capital to increase development aid would reduce inequalities in the poorer countries” (ibid. 2003:154).

That equation will be tested by the principle of reciprocity. The South, receiving the greatest value in the aid, loses prestige as the South is incapable of balancing the reciprocity. Thus, intrinsically the aid contains a power relation and hides exploiting practices. Therefore, South is put by North in a symbolic relation of debt. In the words of Gita Sen, ‘debt’ is a marvellous mechanism because it usually makes the use of force unnecessary (Sen in ed. Pettifor 2003:130). Consequently, North’s resources, North’s control over the living condition of the bearers of the debt, the security of South’s old age, the children’s future and North’s ability to make decisions based on their own assessment of their needs and realities all become forfeit to the moneylender (ibid: 2003:131). That type of social interaction and mutual obligations being created through reciprocity does not necessarily imply the advantage to all actors involved (Hylland Eriksen 2000:196). In the view of Bourdieu, the gift is a manifestation of a provoking challenge with the purpose of being contested/responded to (Bourdieu 2004:12). Furthermore, Bourdieu claims that actors involved in the exchange relationship are in possession of the interval between the obligatory moment (the exchange, reciprocation) and can, for this reason, act against their counterpart by manipulating the temporal aspect of the transaction. In other words, the proficient strategist can turn the development aid into an instrument of power to limit the capacity of the recipient to balance the transaction or the symbolic bond (ibid. 2004:15). One wonders, thus, what could be implicit of this symbolically strategic process?

Probably, in the context of the adoption activity, the most important account of the ideological struggle to achieve the ends of the policy²⁰ could be depending on the concept of ‘poverty’. For this reason I will further the analysis to contemporary levels of meaning in respect to the measure of the well-being of nations. *Homo aequalis* seems to part the world in two by the established meaning of ‘in the best interest of the child’. The world is divided into the ‘rich’, best of worlds (North), on the one hand, and the ‘poor’, non-best part of the world (South), on the other hand. Now, I raise the questions: Wealth of what? Who defined the concept of ‘poverty’? What underlies the rich-poor dichotomy?

What constitutes ‘poverty’? Singer proposes the following: What has been described as absolute poverty “is a condition of life characterized by starvation, illiteracy, disease, filthy environment, high rate of infant mortality and a short expected length of life which falls below every plausible definition of human decency (reference taken from Robert McNamara

²⁰ For instance, *Homo aequalis*’ interest in providing children with ‘the best’, which the policy discourse indeed refrains from making explicit.

in the World Bank Development Report 1978, World Bank, New York 1978:iii cited in Singer 2003:82).

It has been argued that *Homo sapiens* living outside the borders of the best of worlds have fewer material possessions, though this does not reflect ‘poverty’, the argument goes. According to Sahlins, ‘poverty’ is not a certain small amount of goods nor is it just a relation between means and ends; above all it is a relation between people. As such ‘poverty’ is an invention constructed by *Homo aequalis*. This concept has been cultivated [as a relation of debt/dependency;...] (Sahlins 1978:37-9, my accentuations) in ‘the best of worlds’. In other words, North has evolved quicker and possesses richer fields of luxuriant intellect, compared to South.

The results of the ‘poverty’ measures are dependent on where the ‘poverty line’ is drawn. A great number of ‘the lesser developed countries’ are clustered just above and below the ‘one dollar a day-line’²¹. What is more, amongst other issues, according to Hunter Wade, the World Bank is in a monopolized position in the global production of knowledge concerning the ‘poverty statistics’ (Hunter Wade in ed. Pettifor 2003:139-140). In the late 1990s the methods of measuring poverty were reformed. Consequently, the international ‘poverty line’ was removed some hundredths. This contributed to the fact that the ‘extreme poverty’ was reduced by 50 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa, that is from 4 to 2 per cent. Further, ‘poverty’ was reduced in Latin America from 24 to 15 percent. Interestingly, in Africa in the south of Sahara poverty increased from 39 to 50 per cent. Thus, reformation of measure methodology and new standards of measure imply changes upwards and downwards – without correspondence to reality (ibid. 2003:139-140, my accentuations). Now, in accordance with North’s standard of measure, what is the nature of the assumption that people in the South are not living in the best of worlds?

Amanda says: “Here, there is no spirituality. Contrasted to South America, Sweden is materialistic.” Sharing Amanda’s opinion, Sahlins claims the following: [*Homo sapiens* in the South] did not suppress their materialistic impulses, however, they never institutionalized these impulses as did *Homo aequalis* in the North. Therefore, *Homo aequalis* are limited in their regimes of thought concerning ‘the poverty’ of *Homo sapiens* in the South, regarding the fact that They have *nothing*; possibly, it would be a great challenge to consider Them to be free (Sahlins 1978:13-4, my accentuation and emphasis).

²¹ Indeed, ‘one dollar a day’ is a concept expressing multivalence (see Hunter Wade in ed. Pettifor 2003).

PART III

‘in the best interest of the child’

As illustrated in Part I, it seemed that children were incorporated within a system of dominance. Apparently, we are ‘children of our time’. One amongst many frightening aspects arising from theorizing over ‘children’ is the branchy question: is the child human?²² The Convention on the Human Rights, stated in the year of 1948, solely speaks of individuals whom were born to *human* life: “All men are born free and equal in value and rights” (URL 6, SOU 2005(90):48, my emphasis of human). Were Amanda and Viola born free and equal in value? When did Klara leave that betwixt-and-between condition she, in similarity to Mariana, was framed in before arriving to Sweden as an extra-Nordic child (age 0-10) later to become adopted? When in fact was the natural transformed to the sociocultural? Were Sandra, Bianka, and Vanessa humanized when besprinkled with holy water in Homo aequalis’ church, in accordance to the ritualized Christian process? Did Magnus indeed turn in to a human at his first hair-cut?

Acknowledged in the literature studied by me, it has been said that the twentieth century was the century of the child (ed. James and Prout 2001:1). Speaking of children, especially younger children, there is likely a widespread perception in our society that their lives are characterized by their emotions. In this view children are represented as natural in relation to adults. Because what is considered as natural is associated with what is conceived of as universal to man, ‘children’ are transformed to a natural category (Norman 1996:94).

As it seems, all our knowledge on children and childhood is centred around the experience of adults, that is, the engineers of the conceptual framework and the scientific methods (Boh and Sadav 1992:10 cited in ed. James and Prout 2001:89). Seemingly, this is also the case with the adoption literature, being written by adoptive parents and/or for adoptive parents or around the adoptee’s return trips to their countries of origin (see e.g. Kats 1992; Yngvesson 2006).

Presumably, anthropological research has contributed the most in the analysis of age, considered as a societal structuring principle, by demonstrating the way in which perceptions about age and maturity varies, in their content and meaning, from time to time, and cross-culturally (see e.g. Bernardi 1985; La Fontaine 1979, reference in ed. James and Prout 2001:16). Philippe Aries (1962, reference in ed. James and Prout 2001) contestation of this

²² See McMahan 1981 Problems of Population Theory in Ethics. Also see URL 1-9 where ‘children’, more or less explicitly, are being represented as ‘children of their time’.

perception is to be found in his suggestion that ‘childhood’ arose between the 1400th and the 1800th century (ibid. 2001:16). This contestation can be viewed as an analytical critique of science concerning ‘children’. Explicitly, the knowledge of children tends to be evolutionary and tied up within Homo aequalis’ particular regime of thought. For instance, when discussing with Sandra and Primavera, it was revealed to me that their experiences of ‘kinship’, ‘family’ and ‘friendship’ certainly are cultural processes in which they are involved, specifically in the reproduction and transformation. It could be seen as a new paradigm. A paradigm in which ‘children’ participate in the construction and organization of their environment, in decision-making, have perspectives of their own, interests, skills and abilities. Indeed, they have needs which necessarily need not only be satisfied by adults (Theis in ed. Scharzman 2001:100). Possibly, this could clarify the achievement of cultural knowledge, how meaning is constructed and how Homo adopticus constructs their understanding of themselves²³ and Others²⁴. When meeting Johanna I will illustrate this in a passage further ahead.

Before this information was presented to me, I held the belief that Homo adopticus, first and foremost, were some extra-Nordic children whom had wandered to Sweden for some reason. I emphasize this to demonstrate that the social sciences in no way are neutral advocates for the concepts of ‘children’ and ‘childhood’ but active contributors to their construction and reconstruction (ed. James and Prout 2001:29). Science must be viewed as a particular regime of knowledge and as a social institution (Delanty 2000:x). Regarding this information of value could be essential as the adoption activity in this essay is observed as a social institution within which adults are struggling to satisfy ‘the best interest of the child’. This struggle is an emblematic practice in the adoption activity which exemplify Foucault’s concept: *regime of truth* (ed. James and Prout 2001:23). Visualized in front of me, I see an analytic passage of Homo aequalis’ adoption activity, being viewed as a kinshipping institution striving to achieve the ends of the policy discourse.

²³ See Bauman’s study (2000) with Southallians which supports this point.

²⁴ It has been said to be an established knowledge that even the infant is an active agent (SOU 2005(73):166), simultaneously it is a fact, according to the same Public State Report (2005(73):168) “[that adopted children] have special needs of attachment [which is why attachment is particularly necessary as soon as the adoptive parents receive the child in their care]”. Analytically, this seems to imply 1) a distinction of children born in the North and Homo adopticus 2) that attachment, in the context of Homo adopticus, becomes necessary only when the adoptive parents *receive* Homo adopticus, and 3) that institutions in a monopolizing position of the production of cultural knowledge tend to construct a knowledge which might generate somewhat generalized images of social realities which possibly could be in some need of further research. Strictly, these three aspects illustrate an image of a social reality which, for instance, take into account neither the relations of power occurring in the adoption exchange between the biological parents and the adoptive parents, nor the transaction of adoption viewed as an exploiting practice, by means of the commodification of Homo adopticus.

Homo aequalis' adoption activity can be contemplated as existing within a social space, in Bourdieu's sense. This space occurs, for example, when a limited group of people (Homo aequalis) and institutions (adoption agencies) strive for something they have in common; providing children with 'the best'. The reason for this struggle might be discovered in the intention to pursuing the ends of the policy discourse which intrinsically reflects the image of Homo aequalis' habitus. In short, this will be illustrated.

Johanna was a year and one month old when she was given up for international adoption. Still unchristened and never having experienced a haircut, in the year of 1976. As we speak, Johanna is a philosophically candidating woman in her thirties, directed to studies on Media and Communication. Johanna, would you like to share your experience: Considering your life in total, how happy (or satisfied) would you say that you are?²⁵ "I feel dissociated". Johanna is proud and happy of being a part of Homo aequalis' culture, though she does not fully feel that she belongs to a national community. Utterly peculiar, Johanna has grown up in Norway, that is, one of the most economically rich countries in the world. In most respects, growing up in a family environment in Norway should have been 'the best'.

Stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have got a right to a family! Would you share with us your experience of that right, I am asking Magnus. Gently putting his head to rest on the shoulder while looking right out the window, Magnus is responding accordingly: "Now, correct me if I am wrong, but... I feel like a foster child." It is Magnus' experience of feeling like an orphan. "I don't mean that you couldn't love your 'parents' due to this experience, however, fundamentally I am 'parentless' and 'kinshipless'. It is my experience that I have been incorporated in a Swedish family."

The UN Convention gives no answer as of when, in the life of Magnus, he was transformed to a human being. However, Magnus was given up for international adoption to arrive in the best of worlds, in which he was christened, growing up and living in the Christian ideal of a nuclear family for seven happily years, until his adoptive parents were divorced. It could be seen that this particular image of the nuclear family expresses a norm in Homo aequalis' culture and that not fully human individuals, according to Homo aequalis, have got a right to grow up within this particular structure.

²⁵ In the last few decades, new research has emerged from psychologists and sociologists using surveys to explore and measure Homo sapiens' subjective feelings of happiness (or 'subjective well-being'). This work is relatively unknown by economists and policy-makers, according to Marks. The response to this type of question, now being put to Johanna, is intended to receiving information concerning many aspects, for instance 1) physical observation of happiness as smiling and laughing (gladness) 2) to electrical activity in parts of the brain as well as 3) other Homo sapiens' assessment of how happy the respondent is (Marks in ed. Pettifor 2003:133). Those interested in seeing a statistic image of a measure of human well-being can find it in ed. Pettifor (2003:133).

Accepting this, it seems to exemplify an important struggle in pursuing the ‘best interest of the child’, which appears to compose the foundation of the system of value asserted by the adoption activity. It might be viewed as a struggle for what is to be considered as a good environment to grow up within, security and compassion amongst those, chosen by the adoption agencies, to present themselves as good care takers. What is more, regarding the above mentioned, it might be the case that it relates to: aesthetic preferences, acknowledgement, and who is in the position with the power to define (Bourdieu 1996:23, Swedish foreword). I would like to investigate this statement further by rooting the policy discourse in the discipline of social anthropology.

Anthropologists Chris Shore and Susan Wright claim that through policy, the individual is categorized and given such statuses and roles (Shore and Wright 2005:4), as is the case with ‘in the best interest of *the child*’. The study of policy, therefore, leads straight into issues at the heart of anthropology; norms and institutions, ideology and consciousness, knowledge and power, rhetoric and discourse, meaning and interpretation, the global and the local, to mention a few (Shore and Wright 2005:4). Policy language and discourse, Shore and Wright suggest, provide a key to analysing the architecture of modern power relations (Shore and Wright 2005:12). A key concern is who has the power to define (Shore and Wright 2005:18).

The unspecified definition of ‘the best interest of the child’, sheds light over the global areas in which ‘children’ locally are not living under ‘the best’ conditions, according to *Homo aequalis*. What areas and conditions are to be considered less good to live in and act within as ‘products of their time’ and, moreover, may be necessary to be “saved and rescued” from?

I put this question to Johanna, who wandered in from South Korea to Norway, responding: “It might be considered good to adopt African ‘HIV-children’, because in their countries of origin it is a lack of parents and economic resources to care for the children in need. I am not resistant towards all international adoptions, however, I see a lot of ethical question marks concerning adoptions from South Korea which is a rich country.” Anthropologist Raymond Apthorp shares Johannas experience, claiming that the gap between theory (‘in the best interest of the child’) and practice (international adoption) are crowded spaces of moral preferences of interest and biases without which life and policy would be unwriteable (and unreadable) (Apthorpe in ed. Shore and Wright 2005:55).

Continuing my excursion, I meet Vanessa. I ask her to elaborate her thoughts concerning the policy discourse. Vanessa has got lots of thoughts²⁶. Moreover, Vanessa imagines that on

²⁶ Vanessa: ”The essence of the matter concerns the sufficient investigation that the child is available for adoption and that the adoptive parents are appropriate care takers. Furthermore, beyond these fundamental demands, the family shall be satisfyingly prepared and the adoptive family shall be given support, if in need,

a structural level there is a vision that international adoption is not to be considered a permanent solution. “The adoption activity supports a development aiming to the purpose that children should remain in their motherlands and that the option of adoption should be possible only after all other possibilities in the motherland have been investigated. However, there is simultaneously a risk that the countries of origin do not develop a strategy to take care of their children.”

Viola, an adoptive parent, believes that “one cannot know what is in the best interest of the child, however, it is possible to see to that the child is provided the best conditions.” Viola, in the same manner as Shore and Wright, claims “that it is as well a question of who defines policy; it cannot be wrong to want the best interest of the children, however, it might be something wrong with the actors defining the best interest of the child. Some people can be of the opinion that ‘good’ for the child means providing the child with economically well condition, others that the children should grow up on the countryside...”.

It seems that there are split meanings in Homo aequalis’ culture concerning what is ‘in the best interest of the child’. I sit down to read a public report produced by the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Before turning to this report awakens a question which I implicitly have and will discuss and analyse throughout this climbing of Homo aequalis’ contested conglomerate of meanings: Why is it that Homo aequalis have concerns for the best interest of the child?

A possible answer to this question might be that Homo aequalis reproduce their cultural habitus through this concern/consideration. The policy discourse is a manifestation of an ideological struggle which is constituted of Homo aequalis’ fundamental principles of democracy and of the human rights, for instance, the right to a family. I have now reached page 116 in this report, in which Billy Thorstenson, a recognized Homo aequalis, in a particular statement, calls attention to the following:

“Providing the potentials for a dignified life to all people must be the most important task of each society. Pursuing this goal, we have come a long way in Sweden. Children provide content to life. Not being able to reproduce children is often a tragedy to these certain people. Society has got a responsibility even in relation to this group of people. This responsibility should be further expanded than only compensating adoptive parents for the additional costs with which they are inflicted through state charges and the extra expenses as a result of the state governing of the adoption activity” (Ds S 1987(1):116).

Contemplating for a moment, in the shadow of globalization that is emitted from the statue of the policy discourse in front of the adoption agency walls of equality and freedom, I am

after the adoption has been issued. These are the elementary prerequisites for the successful adoption in the best interest of the child.”

thinking the following: Is responsibility to be expanded to those not being able to care for their children because they live outside *the society*? As this question does not settle my anxiety I turn to Johanna, hoping that she might be able to straighten my inclination of reaching an understanding for the inquiry. The discussion regarding the to-be or not-to-be of the adoption activity is in fact, according to Johanna, a luxurious discussion; a discussion to be held in the privileged industrialized countries. “Adoptive parents are living in such economical well-being that they can purchase a child. Now, my adoptive parents did everything right within the frames of the law, however, it became wrong for me.” It is not Johanna’s experience that adoptive parents are evil; the problem is directed to actors earning their living on this phenomenon. “The children are transformed to commodities.”

The association Children Above All – Adoptions, was formed in the middle of the 1970s as a charity association [...]. The association was maintained as a charity and interest organization in respect of adoptive families until the year of 1979. That year the law was changed in Sweden and, consequently, it became possible for non-profit organisations to apply for authorization to intermediate international adoptions (Information sheet, CAA-A). The main purpose and founding intention with the charity activity is to help poor and sick children, in those countries in which CAA-A are active. The intention is to help the children by providing them with a better environment (Information sheet CAA-A). However, the adoption activity and the charity activity are maintained segregated. This is necessary, according to the MIA (the Swedish Intercountry Adoptions Authority), as there is a risk that the charity might be seen as an incentive to the giving countries to leave children for international adoption, when the children indeed could have remained in their countries of origin. Thus, “the charity activity must not threaten the integrity of the adoption activity. That is, the child’s rights in the adoption process must not be substituted for economical interests” (Mail corr. MIA 2006-05-08). It is a contested issue, according to the MIA, since many of the sending countries in fact are interested in having economical support from receiving countries. A support which would be given to aid the children that remains at the child care centre ²⁷.

Johanna is also expressing the complexity in the charity-adoption issue. “Dependency is constructed from the money being generated as a consequence of the adoption transaction. Money is necessary as a means to constructing welfare. When South Korea intended to stop the adoption activity to the USA, the USA threatened to sanction the trade relations between the USA and South Korea” (see Sarri, Baik and Bombyk 1998).

²⁷ For those interested in expanding their knowledge in respect of the issue of bribes, the sociologist Joakim Thelander has written a dissertation on this phenomenon ”Bribes, in the Service of the Good? Charity Workers Discussing Everyday Corruption (This is my translation of the thesis). Also see Wästerberg (2004).

What is all this? Adoption, charity, bribes, and sanctioned trade relations, what about the unbaptized children? The CAA-A work is supported by twelve founding values, amongst others 1) they ALWAYS see to what is the best for the child in question 2) provide adoptions from many countries, making CAA-A less vulnerable in case something should occur in any one of the giving countries, and 3) providing the CAA-A humanitarian values, that is, spreading information about the charity and child sponsor activity and also the ethical value in respect of the adoption transaction as well as their humanitarian work (CAA-A Magazine No. 3-4 2005:7). I pose myself the question: How is it possible to maintain the adoption and charity activity segregated within one and the same organisation?

I recollect a discussion I had with Primavera some time ago within the academic citadel. The best interest of Primavera was intermediated when she was adopted to Sweden. I ask her to share her experience. "To me it has been a good experience. My adoptive parents have always called attention to my origin. I have always been accepted as a 'Svensson'²⁸." However, it is the belief of Primavera that those adoptees which have not had their origin accepted perhaps alienate themselves from their family.

There are good and bad child care institutions according to the CAA-A. However, not even the best one's are a good substitution for the nuclear family (CAA-A no. 3-4 2005:10). I ask Amanda, leaving the child care institution at the age of four, what is her experience of the child care home in Bolivia? "My first three years of living has been of vital importance to my future condition of life. Without these memories I wouldn't have made it." Amanda liked the child care centre. "The other children and me were living there as in a collective." Amanda felt appreciated. "The Swedish family maintaining the child care centre treated their biological children and the rest of us as equals²⁹."

The CAA-A claims that there are at least two good aspects by being adopted from the Red Cross child care institution in Thailand. Firstly, the Red Cross Centre is a smaller child care centre where the care takers are warmly engaged in the children. The general opinion regarding the co-operation during the years, according to the CAA-A, is that the children have been well tended to and stimulated. Secondly, the adoption charge is relatively low (Information sheet CAA-A). Finally, I am starting to discern some kind of understanding of the connection between children, charity³⁰ and adoption.

²⁸ 'Svensson' is the stereotype of the Swede which Primavera use as a metaphor to depict her feeling of self-identification.

²⁹ Amanda: "I remember the shepards watching their sheep graze. The only thing I owned was a small purse given by a native to the child care centre. In this purse I kept a small comb. One of the biological children threw this comb in the sheep faeces. I told the manager and he scolded his child thoroughly. We were treated equally."

³⁰ For a further discussion on children and charity see Hart (1997). However, this discussion should perhaps be studied with a cautious eye as it tends to contain Homo aequalis' values and evolutionary hypotheses.

Homo aequalis defined 'the child' as "not fully grown up" or as a "product of its time". The CAA-A has recently expanded their charity activity and are now engaged in a foster care project in the interest of Chinese children with dysfunctions. Why this? It seems that the CAA-A makes a distinction between children and children. In accordance to the CAA-A measure of well-being it seems that foster care is in the best interest of disabled children whom, for this reason, are not adopted in such great proportion.

The Family Association in Favour of International Adoptions, one among the five of the authorized adoption agencies, also maintains activities of charity. These are some of the purposes of the FFIA charity activities: "maintaining charity activity in a manner that pleases the members and contributes to an increased commitment to questions concerning the children's rights." Asking Magnus, found on a train slowly motioning towards the end of the world in a South Korean province during the marching in of the 70s, what is his experience of the commitment taken by the adoption agencies on questions of his rights, for instance, the right to a family? "Well, my adoptive parents were divorced when I was seven. At the moment they have new respectives with children from their previous marriages." Is that not 'the best'? Now you have 3 mothers, 3 fathers and even more siblings. Contemplating this a righteous moment Magnus answers the following: "It can be said that I grew up with a single mother. The women's rights organisations have struggled for the womens rights. If the woman is tired of her old man, she is free to leave him, taking with her the children." It is very likely that Magnus was 'abandoned' as a consequence of 'poverty', though he is indirectly experiencing that his situation would have been similar in South Korea, that is, "economically equal to nil."

The ideologies of the adoption agencies can be seen as a manifestation of Homo aequalis' habitus/value system, in the shape of the emphasis on 'standard' and 'children's rights' which can be derived to the UN Conventions. In a homogeneous world these distinctions would pose as irrelevant. However, when the point of reference is a culturally diversified compound, represented by the UN, generalisations of standard and rights are more problematic. "The natural is confounded with the cultural" (Woodhead in ed. James and Prout 2001:75). "Children's rights', similarly to 'needs', is a Western way of constructing child-adult relations (ibid. 2001:80).

The Moral Dimension of the Policy Discourse

Homo aequalis, through the adoption activity, considered as a promise-keeping institution in the North, pledge a promise of securing the best interest of the child. The function of a moral

principle is to guide action: policy is prescriptive (Narvesson 1976:161). The policy discourse is a principle of moral value in close connection to North's cultural system of value. It is indeed Homo aequalis' preferences of interest constituting the logic manifested in the policy.

Amanda, could you tell us in your words, why in the name of heavens it could be of value to contest an ideological struggle to provide 'the best' interest of the children: "The Swedes are blinded by their benevolence; they are shallow. This shallowness and the perception of their acting good are present in the minds of many Christians. It is the perception that they "save and rescue" Us that proves the point that they consider Us as objects." Furthermore, Amanda says that the perception of oneself as a good person is dangerous; "it is not an indication of love!" This sounds a bit pessimistic, let us see what Sandra has to say about this.

Sandra wandered in to Sweden at the age of six. She is experiencing that she has lead a better life in Sweden, contrasting her twenty-one years here with the six years of living in South Korea. Sandra's bioparents³¹ had her just after their graduation from high school in South Korea. Sandra says: "It was too early in their lives to have me." In a similar way to her parents, Sandra wants to enable the conditions of a normal and secure life i.e., by means of education. I proceed cautiously to ask Sandra if she would like to define the goodness in being internationally adopted, with the intention to put her definition in relation to Amanda's perception that goodness is a dangerous imperative for action. According to Sandra "the goodness consists in being able to choose, obtaining the possibilities to do a lot, growing up in a secure environment with safe parents, and being able to see things which I wouldn't have had a chance to see if I had been living in South Korea. In Korea I would have had other needs. My contemporary belief is that it has been an advantage to live in Sweden. I see a lot of flaws in the Korean society. The Korean society is different and perhaps not really OK." Emptying the last of what is left of the cooling Chai-thé in her cup, Sandra reflexively points out the following: "My system of thought is Western."

Must you not accept this, Amanda? Has it not been verified that Goodness is not always derived from Evil? There are happy Homo adopticus. Amanda, putting her palm of humbleness on her puckered forehead, simultaneously as directing her gaze away from me into the empty nothingness, saying: "The happy adoptees?! Well, the adoption activity is certainly like a lottery. Sometimes you win and sometimes you loose...". Amanda, your

³¹ 'Bioparents' is the term I apply as an abbreviation for 'biological parents', referring to genitor and genetrix. Ever since Malinowski's study among the Australian Aborigines, anthropologists have made a distinction between two types of fathers, that is, genitor and pater (Holy 1996:16). Genitor is today applied by anthropologists to define the biological father and pater is used to define the social father. The meaning of social father states the fact that he is not the biological father but has an ascribed character as the role of a father, that is, for instance, the father of an adopted child. The concepts genetrix and mater are applied to describe the biological mother and the social mother respectively.

words provide us food for thoughts: In fact, the policy discourse could be founded on Homo aequalis' preferences of interest on the cultural cornerstones of justice and solidarity.

Still finding it difficult to understand the necessity to conventionalizing a policy in 'the best' interest of the child I turn to Klara, hoping that she might have some thoughts concerning this. Being a Master of Political Science and, furthermore, a Master of Development Studies, I ask Klara: Whereof can the policy be derived? "I believe that many adoptions in the 70s were related to and founded on the sense of solidarity." Ok, I seem to get closer to some sort of understanding. Having read in an article written by sociologist Jo Boyden, I learned that in the North it is an accepted perception that education is a fundamental civil right, that is, an end each society strives after. Universal literacy and knowledge of mathematics are considered vital to the economic development and the well-fare society (Boyden in ed. James and Prout 2001:201; also see the UN and Hague Conventions).

The CAA-A considers education to be of value, in accordance to their system of values. However, policy-makers rarely notice the irony that school attendance consistently results in an increase of child labour because children must work to buy uniforms and utensils (ibid 2001:212). Of course, some of the adoption agencies charity is invested in purchasing uniforms and utensils but, according to Boyden, it is the poor quality of education and the lack of opportunity for skilled employment in many countries which is a contributory factor to the parents' often very negative attitudes to schooling³² (ibid 2001:212). Moreover, teaching in many areas in the South takes place in the language of the former colonial powers. Parents in poor homes are frequently unable to speak the colonial language (ibid. 2001:213). Thus, for many children, schooling acts neither as a channel of upward social mobility nor as an instrument of social change and personal development [simultaneously as it can] undermine the direct transmission of cultural practices (ibid. 2001:213; see also Kulick 1992:175-180). Therefore, if there is a correlation between the policy and the sense of solidarity, it is manifested in this statement and the struggle that indeed guides Homo aequalis' preferences of interest, for instance, the value of education in the South as well as in the North.

Guide me to an understanding Klara, how is it that adoption and solidarity are conciliated? Those are beautiful words I have never quite understood. "Daniel, I believe that it relates to the way one constructs the concept of solidarity. Now, the concept of adoption is constructed

³² This is obviously a generalized assumption in demand of further research. When I visited Sri Lanka, the school system was divided in two by private schools on the one hand and public schools on the other. Public schools were less prestigious according to the youths I hung out with. However, youths attending to private schools were well off socially and economically. Though, the assumption made by Boyden might be warranted in smaller villages on the countryside.

on a fundament of justice. I have friends that are parts of the so-called ‘rainbow families’³³.

Such families were perhaps not always constructed on a genuine longing for children but on the concept of justice”. Then, in some cases adoption might be grounded on the intention of solidarity and similarly being of the belief that it should be just, considering the many children not obtaining education. Klara’s gaze reflects my conclusion of uncertainty drawn from her explanation being manifested in the paradoxically mute gesticulations as follows: There is only one best interest of the child?

It has been the explicit goal of children’s rights specialists to crystallize in international law a universal system of rights for the child based on Homo aequalis’ normative perceptions of childhood. The present UN Convention on the Rights of the Child comes closer to this goal than any previous international instrument³⁴ (ibid. 2001:197). What kind of globalization is this convention intended to create? On the one hand, the nature of the prescriptive policy discourse expresses a *genitum consensus*; “everybody” can agree to the rationality and plausibility in pursuing its ends. On the other hand, the policy begs the question of what actually is ‘in the best interest of the child’ (Shaffer 1990:6 cited in Woodhead in ed. James and Prout 2001:80).

Certainly the policy discourse is a prescription open to cultural interpretation which would be context-specific and may well vary amongst various actors whom believe that they have the wisdom to shape the children’s futures³⁵ (ibid. 2001:80). Anthropologist Sally price would perhaps have claimed that this implied that the policy-makers tended to be the actors taking the responsibility to, on the one side, outline a policy and set the financial value and make judgements of the child’s potential quality of life, and on the other side, defining what individuals (for instance, infants and healthy babies) shall be adopted, followed partly by the reason that the adoption agencies are active only in ‘democratic’ countries and partly because the charity is invested in certain orphanages that reflects Homo aequalis’ aesthetic preferences,

³³ Homo adopticus included in family constellations where the adoptive parents’ biological children are present can be termed as ‘rainbow families’, which Klara is referring to. Simultaneously, a rainbow family could be consistent of only adoptees but with different ‘colours’, that is, they originate from different countries. With this in mind, I am not sure whether anyone has dared to defined this concept clearly.

³⁴ However, until the year of 1995 neither the USA nor Singapore had ratified the convention (ed. Stephens 1995:36). According to Henrik Berggren, in an article in Dagens Nyheter (URL 9), all countries besides the USA and Somalia have ratified the UN Child Convention, at least until the year of 2006.

³⁵ ”The conventional moral perception as well as the perception, according to the Human Rights Convention, is of a kind that once a government has been acknowledged as legitimate it occurs automatically the consequence that this legitimacy brings with it the right to maintain trade with the *resources* of that country. The ostensible plausibility rests on the assumption that the government conducting the trade is ‘legitimate’. This, according to Singer, sounds like a concept of moral judgement, concerning a regime’s right to rule” (Singer 2003:95, my emphasis). Also see Vike in ed. Shore and Wright (2005) where there is a discussion of, what has been termed, knowledge fetishism, presenting knowledge as property of competent individuals (2005:214-5).

and on a third side, to market available children and deciding the child's future life (Participant Observation FFIA and Information brochures from AC, FFIA and MIA).

When all options have been attempted, in accordance to the UN Convention, that is placement within the borders of the country of origin, it is indeed just to intermediate the adoption. This was stated clearly during the participant observation at the FFIA information meeting: "Children have got a right to a family, growing up in an institution can never be an option".

Women having children in extra-marital relations are stigmatized, it is stated in the information brochures from, for example, the FFIA. However, this might be a statement in need of further empirical research. What is the elementary reason composing this perception that the children are abandoned as a consequence of social stigma and/or 'poverty'? The documentation concerning the children's past often contains only the information "abandoned". From this, it is concluded that social stigma or 'poverty' is the *raison d'être* for the abandonment of the child (Information brochure FFIA 2006:11). I ask Johanna what information is stated in her legitimate adoption documentation? "It says 'found on the street', though I have always carried a sense within me, telling me something is not right. After seeing my biological parents it turned out that grandma had kidnapped my brother and me without the knowledge of my bioparents." It appears as if the adoption documentation in the social reality of Johanna tends to contain somewhat misguided information. I ask myself whether the gap between "the socioeconomic aspects" and "the forced influence of norms" are in demand of further logical analysis and empirical research?

Now, if respect is not taken in consideration to the physical time when, for example, Johanna was "created" and as it seems like typological time³⁶ is applied to determine the historical context of Johanna, one can be lead to believe that Homo aequalis distance themselves from other Homo sapiens being contemporary to Homo aequalis. On the one hand, according to this analysis, the anonymity and the timelessness of Homo adopticus could be viewed at as an expression of a relation of power and a manifestation of Homo aequalis' superior maintenance in relation to the South. Simultaneously, on the other hand, there are children, or as I categorize individuals; social and cultural actors whom experience a problematic social reality.

I have gathered some Homo adopticus to start a discussion. Mariana, what is your experience of having a child of your own? "That's a huge experience. I wondered if my child would look like me. I have been jealous of those having real siblings, because they look so

³⁶ That is, the contrasting of 'poor' traditional societies and 'rich' modern societies, implicated that rich societies have developed further and are better than traditional societies.

much alike.” Sandra does not have any kids of her own but says that she might even be able to adopt a child of her own “as there are so many children in need of adoption.” Klara agrees, also considering the option to adopt a child. It is Klara’s belief that an understanding has been created in regard to the problems that may occur when adopting children. This, in the view of Klara, might prepare adoptive parents in a better way than previously. Primavera joins the conversation by saying that she too might consider to adopt, though she would preferably have kids of her own. It is important to her. Primavera is aware of the ambivalence this resonate; “blood means nothing, though it would be nice to see someone looking like myself. Also, at the same time, it depends on my partner’s will.”

It appears as if the interest in adopting a child is great. However, I consider the thought that Homo aequalis’ policy ‘in the best interest of the child’ tends to make possible a homogenizing categorization of children, to whom Homo aequalis do not have any relation. Possibly, the policy transforms and commodifies the children, simultaneously as, to some extent, the social conflict of ‘the involuntary childlessness’, putting Homo aequalis in a socially anomalous condition, is turned into harmony.

I narrate the information I received during my participant observation at the AC information meeting held in respect of potential adoptive parents. “Adoptive parents are entitled to an adoption subsidy when the adoption has been authorized in Sweden. The subsidy is SEK 40 000 per child. Consequently, if siblings or twins are adopted at the same time the support is double. After the customary investigation of credit rating [adoptive parents] are justified to lend the total sum of the adoption without any security. The instalment is 10 years and the rate is up to date.” Informing further, the representative of the AC says “it is important to give the child all of what can be considered necessary. In other words, you are not going there as backpackers to have your child. Therefore, we recommend certain hotels in the giving countries.”

Enlightening my audience, I narrate that I indeed was exposed to the know-how concerning the methodology applied if one wants to promote ‘the best interest of the child’. “Firstly, you, potential adoptive parents, make a payment of SEK 10 000. Then half the sum of the adoptive charge minus the already paid SEK 10 000, shall be paid. Finally, you pay the rest of the charge for the child when you have received information that a child is available for adoption. When the time comes to pick up the child we are recommending a travel agent which we have consulted for a long time. The reason is that the agent offers the possibility to change the flight tickets free of charge. This travel agent is specialized on adoption travels.”

Amanda, having remained silent during the discussion, bursts out: “The arrogance of the Western view of man is remarkable!” During the period of growing up, in the case of Amanda,

being constructed by Homo aequalis, some Homo aequalis have addressed Amanda what follows: “Mustn’t you be so happy to have come to Sweden!?” Amanda perceives that the assumed sense of gratitude Homo adopticus are expected to experience, is expressed in sayings like this one which, at the same time, keeps one in line. It is Amanda’s experience of being “treated like an object or an animal of consolidation” by Homo aequalis.

PART IV

Homo adopticus – Visual Realities of the Family,

The anthropology of experience explores the individual perceptions of one’s culture, that is, the way in which actions and practices are received by the consciousness (ed. Bruner 1986:5). However, the difficulty in exploring experiences is the fact that it is only individuals who can experience their own life, received through their consciousness (ed. Bruner 1986:5).

Therefore, I want to explore the way in which Homo adopticus construct their understanding of ‘the family’, for example.

Asking Vanessa for her experience of ‘the family’. She contemplates some nanoseconds to pose a counter-question: “Do you mean the way in which I view my relation to them or who they are?” I find this question difficult to understand. Did I not pose a simple question to Vanessa? When speaking to Viran, a native Swede, she responded concisely: “Cousins are relatives, siblings and parents constitute the family.” Apparently this was a simple question, in the view of Viran, but not to Vanessa. Thus, I try to clarify my question, asking: I would like to understand what occurs within you when considering ‘the family’. Vanessa responds: “In a traditional manner I have a biological family. However, it is my experience that my adoptive parents are my family. What is more, I have two kids of my own whom I consider my family.”

The concept of ‘the family’ seems to be problematic, which is why I want to understand how Homo aequalis define the parent concept: “The parent, according to the Law, is the one being the biological parent of the child or the one having adopted the child” (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:229).

Several pages have been written about parents, the family and cultural ideals of ‘the family’, however, very few pages have been written of Homo adopticus experiences of ‘the family’ (see Berger and Pihlgren 1986; Bohman 1973; Halldén 1981; Kats 1992). In fact this is true of other literature concerning research on children (see e.g. ed. Shepar-Hughes and Sargent 1998, reference in the article by Chin in ed. Schwartzman 2001:132).

What is a ‘family’? Adoption, in the words of Norwegian anthropologist Signe Howell, can be said to confirm doxic (unreflected) ideas and values regarding children, relatives and continuity. Doxic understandings of who you are and should be, are clarified in all cultures, that is, what constitutes the good life and indirectly through ideas in connection to the procreation process (Howell 2001:76). The procreation process symbolizes a performative and transformatory ritual. It can be viewed as an expression of status enhancement and a transformation of a social conflict to harmony (Turner 1997).

I understand there are complexities in the family concept. To make it more complex, as the Christian ideal of the nuclear family tends to exclude homosexuals, I want to observe what it can be like to be a parent in the “homo world”³⁷, using the expression applied by Sara Stenholm and Cecilia Strömberg³⁸. It is indeed “an experience of being an outsider in being a gay and having children”, in the view of the homosexual couple composed of Pether and Mario (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:173).

Primavera has devoted much consideration to the debate concerning the right of homosexuals to adopt internationally and be verified as appropriate adoptive parents. Primavera has no doubts concerning the homosexuals’ ability to give the unconditional love in the best interest of the child. Bianka agrees, contesting the system of thought which assumes that it would be a problematic act conducted if homosexuals should be admitted to adopt internationally.

Sören Andersson at RFSL (the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights), holds that RFSL just might start an adoption agency of their own, though he hopes that this will not be necessary, as there are already [five] adoption agencies receiving tax revenues (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:210).

The homosexual adoptive parents, Alexandra and Eva, have lied to the adoption agency to adopt. Alexandra, being asked: “What are you going to say to the children about your lying to get them?” “When you have two kids loving you, that question is completely absurd. They are so happy having us as parents.” Eva adds: “The answer is right there, we lied to get you because we love you” (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:91). Eva and Alexandra are being asked: “How do you support your argument, having lied to China which is unwilling to adopting Chinese children to homosexual families?” “Well, given the fact that there are such a great number of children suffering in China, it is justified.” Eva considers the children as “no-

³⁷ In the year of 2003, that is the twothousandandthird year after the conception of Jesus Christ, homosexuals were permitted the opportunity to be investigated as appropriate adoptive parents (URL 8, statement from the Swedish Ministry of Justice 2002-10-24). According to the Representative of Homosexuals, in the context of adoption, there are no plausible reasons to violate homosexual actors rights (URL 9).

³⁸ For the record, it is Stenholm and Strömberg whom have conducted the interviews with Pether, Mario, Sören, Eva and Alexandra.

one's children" (almost similarly to the reaction on page 3 by world citizen Magnus, in this essay). In the view of Eva these are souls which have arrived to the world in need of a home (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:88). In fact Eva has seen a televised program on children, documenting the fact that in *one* child care institution, children had been locked up without being given any food (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:88, my emphasis). It is Eva's experience that she would not have wanted to grow up in a child care home, "I would like to have had someone belonging to me, a mother or a father" (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:91). This could be contrasted to Amanda's experience of having wanted to stay at the child care home.

Signe Howell, being an adoptive parent, claims that the family is considered important for the following reason: [in the North, Homo aequalis grounds the family on the Christian ideal] of the nuclear family – a unit living in a house of their own and taking part in family focused activities (Howell 2001:74). The family, in Howell's view, is not only culturally anchored, highly profiled, and prioritized in contemporary Norway, but also a social fact of political importance³⁹. In fact, women remaining without children can be blamed of being egoistic. They might even be considered as self-absorbed business women (Howell 2001:83). It tends to exemplify the necessity of living up to the ideal of the nuclear family, at least in Norway. Seemingly, Homo aequalis must reflect the norm. Otherwise Homo aequalis will be exposed to social control.

Amanda, having no contact with her adoptive parents, has experienced the enormous force of Homo aequalis' culturally constructed family concept. In the words of Amanda, she was disregarded in her meeting with the Swedish psychiatric care. It is Amanda's experience that she was neglected when saying: "I don't believe that my parents love me...". Whereas the psychologist slammed his fist on the table, saying: "O, they surely do!" It is Amanda's experience that the psychologist favoured the adoptive parents and paid no interest in understanding Amanda. Apparently, this expresses a certain case where a particular Homo aequalis had difficulties in understanding why anyone, living in the best of worlds, according to Homo aequalis, could experience other views in respect of the, in this case, nuclear family. Now, Foucault might have claimed that this is utterly natural within a *regime of truth*, considering Homo aequalis' culture as such a regime.

³⁹ Mentioned as a matter of curiosity. Recomposed families, that is, families where mom and dad have composed a family with a new partner, are doomed to splitting more frequently than traditional nuclear families (URL 3, Demographic Reports 2005(2):123). In the view of Signe Howell (2001) there are statistics showing (also see Botvar (1994) reference in Howell 2001) that adoptive parents, apparently, have a further obligation/duty in respect of the child to preserve the marriage (Howell 2001:84). However, prevailing statistics tends to be heteronormative (see URL 2-4). As an example, single parents or homosexual parents like Eva and Alexandra cannot divorce in the juridical sense, because they are indeed classified as single parents.

Adoptive parents' social procreation process is, according to Howell, completely dominated by the preservation of the social quality (Howell 2001:83). During this period, adoptive parents are actively working with transforming the child, considered as a natural category, to their own. The child has been transferred from the negative reciprocity circle to the generalized circle. In fact this process calls attention to the conflict Nature-Culture. Thus, when Homo adopticus are 'conceived' at the airport in Homo aequalis' culture or, when, in the case of Amanda, she was sold to her adoptive parents, it was the starting point of the process of turning Amanda in to a fully-fledged member of her adoptive parents relations. The parents have struggled hard and long to becoming a family, according to Howell, thus, they put much effort in embodying the ideal (Howell 2001:84). In the survey on fully grown adoptees from foreign countries, conducted by the linguist, Birgitta Hene, it is stated the following, on Homo adopticus' relation to the family: "Mainly, it seems, most of them have a good and close relation to their adoptive parents, though not all of them express it as clearly as shown in the above quotes" (that is, the quotes in Hene 1987:57b).

In the light of Howell, adoptive parents handle the conflict between the biological and the social in a most satisfying way (Howell 2001:86), however, this essay put the experiences of Homo adopticus in focus, to balance the *intellectual bias* (Bourdieu 1990:385) in the study of the extra-Nordic children who wandered to Sweden later to become adopted. Now, Primavera's adoptive parents seem to have succeeded most satisfyingly in handling the conflict Nature-Culture, but in the case of Amanda the adoptive parents did not succeed in a seemingly satisfying way.

Alexandra, being classified as a homo adoptive parent by Stenholm and Strömberg, will round off the discussion of the ideal of the nuclear family by answering the question whether she recommends others considering adoption to characterizing themselves as single heterosexuals. Alexandra responding: "In comparison to being inseminated in a clinic, I would recommend it a 100 times more" (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:92). Asking Amanda: Do you consider yourself as a human being with an end intrinsically or could it be that you indeed are "no-one's child" being born as a means to provide an alternative option at least hundred times better for Homo aequalis, to be spared clinical insemination? The cold and stiff gaze of Amanda answers my question. Alexandra ending the discussion, when saying: "[the adoption process] was even easier than I had expected" (Stenholm and Strömberg 2004:92).

Kinship,

Vanessa, what are your experiences of 'kinship'? "Kinship... Do you mean openly or specifically? When I grew up I... Well, I was the stereotype of a 'sunflower child' of the 70s. It is in this image I have lived until becoming an adult, in fact it was then I started to experience an inner anxiety."

Perhaps, Viran can provide me with an understanding from a 'Swedish' perspective, how is kinship experienced? "I hold my siblings as socially closest. Their boyfriends 'come in second-hand'." Ok, what if we discussed the assumption "blood is thicker than water", then, what is your experience Viran? "In my view it is the environment that is of most influence. It is the persons you grow up together with that you are bonding with, as I see it. For example, I have a sufficient bond to my brother's friend whom I 'grew up with'. We are not related, however, he is a person 'you would do anything for'." Viola shares this experience too. "The closeness is way more important than the kinship relations. It is the relation that matters." Hearing this I consider briefly the assumption that the bond of mutual obligations is created by closeness while it is weakened by increased distance.

Now, the study of kinship has gone through many changes during the years (Holy 1996:3). Claude Lévi-Strauss claimed that "[...] the first social act took place when a man gave his sister to another man." Thus, two social institutions were created, that of marriage and the avunculate (Hylland Eriksen and O. Hessen 2003:143).

International adoption can be considered as an act of kinshipping. Howell claims that kinship and family life takes a central place in most people's conceptions of the 'good' life and the individual identity. Meaningful relations are often expressed in an idiom of kinship (Howell 2001:95). The idiom of success, in the view of Howell, is to be found in the anchoring in the relations of kinship (ibid. 2001:84). Holy suggests that kinship should be interpreted as "a certain cultural perception of relations derived from bodily shared and/or spiritual substances and their transmission" (Holy 1996:171).⁴⁰ As for the experiences provided by Homo adopticus in regard to kinship, this interpretation tends to present itself as a bit weak and might be in need of being brought up to date.

Magnus and Vanessa were provided by the South Korean state to be adopted to Sweden. They were certainly not given away by a man to become married. Simultaneously no avunculate occurred because, in accordance to Homo aequalis' legislation, it is in fact the

⁴⁰ In the words of Mario I Aguilar, kinship as suggested by Holy, needs to be adjusted by taking into account other social and individual relations, including friendship relations within a particular society (Aguilar in ed. Bell and Coleman 1999:170).

legitimizing of the adoption which determines Homo adopticus' right of inheritance.

Seemingly, the legalisation of the adoption contributes to the break of the generalized bond of reciprocity, between Homo aequalis and the biological parents in the South, and consequently, converting it into negative reciprocity.

In the perspective of the particular adoptions of Magnus and Vanessa, Lévi-Strauss' concept of affinity tends to be somewhat misleading. However, the importance of affinity is that it relates to one among many social institutions which is not constituted on mutual descent or blood. I receive a vision, telling me the following; in the case of Magnus' and Vanessa's constructed kinship relations, it is perhaps possible to express this particular relation with the term: Ethnolinear ⁴¹.

Recently, many anthropologists have illustrated the correlation between kinship and other domains, as for example, ethnicity, social class, forms of co-existence and gender etc. Nowadays, the analysis is focused on processes of reproduction, gender, and sexuality or on the self and personhood. Kinship is discussed within the context of these processes (Holy 1996:6). How can kinship be defined in the context of adoption? Who is considered a relative and for what reason? Explanations used by people vary from society to society in regard to whom they consider close. However, as Holy suggests, these explanations are based on the perception of consubstantiality, that is, the sharing of the same substance. In various societies people consider themselves related, because they share [the same blood or semen] (ibid. 1996:9). This is kinship relations expressed in the genealogical idiom.

Sandra says: "I have suppressed most of my early experiences of my biorelatives ⁴²." However, Sandra is in contact with her biofamily on her biofather's side. "I have no contact with the relatives on my biomother's side." Today, Sandra's biomother has children of her own in their twenties. Sandra says that it would be too problematic meeting her biomom. "I don't want to expose her to such a situation. That's culture. On the side of my biofather I am experiencing a kinship bond, even to my biological siblings ⁴³ whom I care about. I am experiencing a distance in regard to my (bio)aunt and to my (bio)uncle ⁴⁴ both socially and geographically. In fact it was my uncle who left me at the child care home." Sandra has the experiences of one kinship in South Korea and another in Sweden. "I don't conceive of my

⁴¹ Ethnolinear is the term I use to depict Homo adopticus' ethnic origin. The terms matrilinear and patrilinear tend to be inadequate if applied to the narratives of Magnus and Vanessa which indeed can be seen as constructed by Homo aequalis' kinshipping institution, the institution of international adoption.

⁴² Biorelatives is short for biological relations. This term is used by me because it is missing an anthropological concept for deriving Homo adopticus' bonds of kinship.

⁴³ That is, in her country of origin. In this sentence Sandra is not referring to the biological children of her adoptive parents whom in a juridical sense, are her siblings.

⁴⁴ Perhaps Sandra's uncles could be defined bioavunculate and socioavunculate respectively if the concept of the avunculate should have any meaning in the social realities of Homo adopticus.

sister, also being adopted, that she is in fact adopted. It is my experience that she is my sister⁴⁵. My (adoptive)parents are very open about my being adopted. It is not something I consider problematic⁴⁶.” Simultaneously, others do have problems with the fact that they have been adopted. Amanda, for instance, experiences an estrangement in respect to her adoptive relatives in Sweden (depending on several aspects).

In contrast to existing research, adoption literature, and state reports (see table of references) these ethnographic descriptions demonstrate indeed the various experiences of Homo adopticus’ perceptions of kinship and, furthermore, that it is related to several factors.

Friendship,

Now, Vanessa is saying that she has friends, some being ‘Swedes’⁴⁷ others being adoptees. I am asking her, what are your experiences of these friendship webs? “To me, it is very important to unite my social worlds. Some adoptees keep them divided.” Again, I take shape like a question mark, why this distinction? I was of the belief that Homo adopticus’ friendshipping was equivalent to that of Homo aequalis.

In similarity to the concept of kinship, the concept of friendship is loudly negotiated. Generally speaking, Homo aequalis considers friendship as a relation from which one can derive emotional support, counselling and, in situations of need, material support (ed. Bell and Coleman 1999:1). However, friendship is not just a relation between people. It is in fact a relation founded on spontaneity, unforced emotionality and compassion (Carrier in ed. Bell and Coleman 1999:21).

Moving on, I ask Amanda, growing up in a small town in the south of Sweden, how are your friendship relations constructed? “I have ‘Swedish’ friends whom were not born in Sweden, though they grew up here from an early age. Also, I have friends being adoptees.” Johanna, growing up in Norway under other conditions where adoptees are common, depicts a different image of reality: “During my childhood I noted there were many adoptees... However, I never managed to connect with adoptees from South Korea. They wanted rather to assimilate with the society, not with other adoptees.” Being 13-14 years of age, Johanna went

⁴⁵ Here, another anthropological concept is missing, that is a concept capable of defining the relations within a family having adopted children as well as biological children.

⁴⁶ Unfortunately, there are no analytical concepts for describing Sandra’s experiences of her kinship relations why it is my hope that I will someday be able to use this essay as an instrument to developing a new direction; the anthropology of adoption practices.

⁴⁷ The aim of this essay in general and in this particular case is not to define whom could be categorized as a ‘Swede’, but to shed light on a complexity in Homo adopticus’ organisation of their social web/s of friendship.

on a camp for adoptees that was arranged in Norway. There Johanna found a sense of togetherness. “I would like to regain that sense of belonging to something greater.”

In her pre-gymnasium period, Mariana spent time with Swedes. “In the gymnasium I connected with people from my country of origin. I tried to feel like an Iranian, though I never succeeded.” Today, Mariana has friends from various countries, none being adoptees though. “In my opinion I experience it tiresome meeting other adoptees and also talking about the adoption with Swedes.”

Sandra grew up in a part of Stockholm where she was almost the only adoptee. Sandra says that she has done modest attempts “to socializing with other adoptees. You’re not really directed towards them. That is, when you were young, however, being older it is nice to meet with other adoptees.”

Magnus narrates his relations of friendship. “In my youth, I mostly hung out with Swedes. Today I spend time with adoptees from South Korea, but also from other countries. You could say that it is a choice of a political matter.” It is Magnus experience that it is easier to socialize with adoptees because they experience the same situation.

At last I am beginning to grasp Karin Norman’s argument “that meanings are symbolized in and through social relations. However, these relations have many ends and implications, often being complex and many-sided. Consequently, these are difficult to interpret” (Norman 1996:225).

When asking Viola of her experiences of friendship relations, she tells me that her family is close to one other family having adopted children. In a bit of a harsh way, Viola says: “Some adoptive parents want us to have some kind of a club, just because we don’t have homemade children.” It is Viola’s experience that families and the children should grow up as equal to others as possible. “One should not exaggerate this matter of adoption...”.

Now, I do not get any smarter. It seems that friendship is formed and restricted by social, economical, political and historical factors that relates to the geographical spaces where the friendship is conducted and negotiated. I lie down in the soft grass to consider this conglomerate of meanings before continuing my walk towards some kind of understanding of Homo adopticus’ experiences of ethnicity and identity. Some instances before being embraced by the softness of the foundation, falling in to an unexploited space of slumbering, the question strikes me like a bolt from the blue: Is it possible to grasp Homo adopticus’ self-identification?

Sweden,

Viran, you were born in Sweden by Swedish parents, what are your thoughts on Sweden?

Viran, sipping some café latte, saying with a smile: “It is a good country to live within, what can you think?” Mariana says some years ago it was her experience of feeling like a Swede on the inside and looking like a wog on the outside. However, currently, today, it is Mariana’s experience of being ‘Super-Swedish’.” She feels at home here.

Klara, on the other hand, experiences some thoughts of ambivalence in respect of Sweden. Thinking before she speaks, Klara says: “To me, Sweden is not ‘at home’ anymore.” It is Klara’s experience that she did not feel at home after coming home to Sweden after a longer stay abroad. “However, I have my family here which makes Sweden feel like home, that is, when I see my family living in the northern part of Sweden.” Similarly to the swirl being stirred in the café latte, Klara’s thoughts get deeper and deeper.

The anthropological study of ethnicity has experienced many changes during the years. The shift from a static to an interactional approach was accomplished by Fredrik Barths differentiation of the notion of ethnicity from that of culture (ed. Vermeulen and Govers 1994:2). Barths claimed that the collective experiences of individuals collective boundaries being created in regard to ‘the other’, give rise to a collective identity and segregate one ethnic group from the other. “Ethnic identities can be viewed as products of classifications of ascriptions, and self-identifications derived from ideologies of descent [...]. It is from this perspective ethnicity is a part of culture” (Roosen in ed. Vermeulen and Govers 1994:85). Primavera, with her spring warm voice, says, that it is her experience of being a part of Sweden and the ‘Swedishness’. Her adoptive parents were born in Denmark. It is important to her that she is both from Chile and has one foot in Denmark. Primavera saying: “I don’t see a conflict in having three identities.” In the view of Primavera the concepts: ‘the Swede’ and ‘Swedishness’ must be expanded and refer to adoptees and immigrants. “I have always considered myself as a part of Sweden. Immigrants and adoptees are Swedes.”

Magnus says that it is his experience of being included in society barely more than the immigrants. He feels like a guest here. In the perspective of Magnus it is only the adoptees having visited their country of origin whom can answer the question whether they like it here or not. “I have reached the repulsive conclusion of feeling comfortable neither in Sweden nor in Korea, simultaneously as I indirectly don’t feel comfortable in the presence of immigrants.”

Bursting out in my head is a thought occupied with Homo adopticus’ heterogeneously differentiated experiences: This matter of self-identification might be a discourse of

complexity difficult to settle? The chairman and the administrative director of FFIA, Lars-Erik Ek and Britt-Marie Nygren respectively, in the magazine for adoptive parents, argue what follows: “Society is becoming more and more multicultural. There are such many immigrants from various countries getting married and *races* are mixed. The Swede appears in many ways! Consequently, it will not be possible to determine whether one is adopted or not. Our origin will not be of such importance anymore, from the perspective of the society. Therefore, adoptees will not stand out as significantly” (FFIA no. 1 2005:14, my emphasis).

In the view of Thomas Hylland Eriksen, modern ethnicity and nationalism is nothing but the attempt of the modern society, in a gigantic scale, trying to replicate the kinship solidarity in the South. Notably, *Homo aequalis*' civil state society attempts to construct moral values on other principles than kinship, local belonging, and religion (Hylland Eriksson and O. Hessen 2000:147). The UN, NATO, and EU can stand as examples. These unifications can be considered as expressions of the attempt to construct kinship solidarity. Perhaps the adoption activity can also be seen as a kinshipping institution, with the intention of reproducing *Homo aequalis*' culture.

and Thoughts Concerning the Policy Discourse from the Perspective of *Homo adopticus*

We, the informants and I, have now reached the point of the mountain where the reader will be able to observe the horizon in the best of worlds. While reading an article in Sweden's greatest magazine (Metro 2004-12-04), read by more than one million readers of “the most important news of the world”⁴⁸, Viola narrates a story being told by one of her children: “It is much better in England, at least they are nice in the stores. The shop assistants here are rude.” Remembering the chock Viola experienced, she said: “What?! Now, surely it cannot be like that, could it?” Whereas Viola's child responds: “You don't know anything!” Today Viola's child lives in England. Viola, as a parent, experiences this incredibly offensive when her children are not being treated well. “In England, the children available for adoption are promoted on TV and in magazines. There prevails the principle: Blacks can only adopt blacks. Whites can only adopt whites. Coloured can only adopt coloured. It sounds most extraordinary. Simultaneously, it might even be better... “ (See Perry (1998) for a further discussion). In the view of Viola it is not a simple equation and, furthermore, I am no mathematician, therefore, I continue reading.

⁴⁸ Also see Hübinette (2005) for *Homo adopticus*' representation in South Korean popular culture and Said's (2004) critical evaluation of *Homo aequalis*' texts and representation of Them.

According to Metro, six out of ten adopted children to Sweden are girls. Margret Josefsson, information coordinator at the Adoption Center, says: “Those having requirements of sex prefer girls. Those adopting from countries where people are of shorter length rather choose a girl, since it is considered easier being a short woman.” Now, Amanda, in relation to the Swedish standard of length, you are short. What thoughts are generated in you when being presented to “the most important news of the world” of this character? “It is my experience that considerations are taken to the interest of the adoptive parents.”

Listening to this, Mariana narrates her experience: “Mother told me that I would most certainly have ended up becoming a cleaner (that is, a profession of low-status) in Iran. At the moment I don’t have any thoughts on adoption. I am more focused on my ADHD-diagnosis, which I recently received.” Mariana has studied the research on the ADHD phenomenon which apparently did not come a long way in explaining the fact that some individuals “get” ADHD. Seemingly, it prevails various beliefs in respect to the cause. However, a probable explanation can be related to prenatal birth. Speculating why she has received the ADHD-diagnosis Mariana says: “If I was born prenatal, I believe that the adoption could be a contributing factor and adding to the ADHD. There are in fact many adoptees having ADHD.”

Hearing the discussion, Bianka wonders whether we are discussion in favour of or against adoption? I explain to her that I will take part of Bianka’s contemplations whatever her opinion may be. Then Bianka leans back and says: “My views have gone through many changes since I started to do research on the phenomenon of adoption, privately as well as academically.” It is Bianka’s experience that the matter of how the adoption is experienced, depends on the adoptive parents’ perception of reality; “There are good and bad parents. An alcoholic can turn and become a good parent, while a good parent can become an alcoholic.” In the view of Bianka, there is no social investigation in the world being the appropriate one to investigating the appropriateness of the adoptive parents.

In my view, all this discourse on adoption sounds very complicated. When reading Birgitta Hene’s study, the following was stated: “Although several adoptees have many bad experiences, *none* distances themselves from international adoption. *Most* of them claim that it is good or considerably positive” (Hene 1987:127, my emphasis). Seemingly, Hene’s ethnography tends to produce a one-sided picture of this complex conglomerate of meanings.

Now, the evening is closing. The fire was lit over which we now cook corny porridge, while admiring and contemplating the adoption agency’s firm and massive walls over which the enlightened statue of ‘the best interest of the child’ paints the heaven with a cosmetic blush transcending to a nuanced *aurora borealis*.

The words of Primavera paint the sky with orange faded glittering streams in between the interstellar nebolouses, when saying: “Providing the children unconditional security and love, that the children are accepted and cared for, that they are respected for being the individuals they are. That is my view of what is in the best interest of the children.” Bianka tied the laces of her one shoe, while the words of Primavera fertilized the sky. Bianka, while tying the laces of the other shoe, says: “If the children are better off here, then the adoption might just be the best interest of the children.” Bianka narrates that she suffers from asthma, which has been developed here in Sweden. Bianka says: “In ‘the lesser developed countries’ one strives to get food and the body struggles against dangerous diseases while we, living in the North, are walking around thinking: Hmm..., how will I analyse this SMS ⁴⁹. There are no ways of comparing such complex worlds.” It is Bianka’s opinion that the policy discourse should not be based on the assumption of adults that something is in the best interest of the child. “It is the child who should decide what is the best interest.”

Magnus, similarly to the rest of us, being devoured by the superlatively precious and solidararian heaven, breaks the séance like silence, saying: “I am of the perception that it is ethically impossible to know what is ‘in the best interest of the children’.” However, Magnus believes that support in the countries of origin is to be considered good. Please elaborate further, Magnus. “After the tsunami (in the year of 2004) there were many potential adoptive parents wanting to bring the children home... yes, that’s how the discourse goes”, Magnus says with an apologetic laconic Janus faced smile and continuing, “to bring here, I mean. However, it was chosen in the countries that relatives should be found to care for the orphaned children.” Does Magnus in fact mean that children in the South have relatives that they might possibly be adopted to? I am struck by a surrealistic thought of insanity ⁵⁰: If the institution of adoption can be considered as a part of a cultural system constructed by Homo aequalis with an implicit aim of taming the untamed, then, how did Homo sapiens in the South act before Homo aequalis institutionalized the adoption activity and incorporated Homo adopticus within a system of prestations and counterprestations which commodifies Homo adopticus and thus, obscures relations of power and exploiting practices?

Anthropologist Judith Modell provides a depiction of Debra (Modell’s informant) fully prepared to go to the Court in the hope of receiving custody of a closely related child. Debra complained about the paperwork her appearance at the hearing entailed. Debra explained the following to Modell: “In the old days there was no need for papers. We just ‘hanai’ the child”

⁴⁹ SMS (Short Message Service) is an abbreviation for describing the event that one message of information has been sent from a cellular phone to another.

⁵⁰ That is, in the sense of Foucault (2001).

(Modell in ed. Franklin and Ragoné 1998:164). ‘Hanai’ refers to the informal adoption practice – a person giving a child to another person without the necessity of going to the Court. Hanai represents continuity from one generation to another independent on genealogy but based on generosity, that is, not on biology but belonging (ibid. 1998:159). This particular pre-colonial adoption practice seems to have been maintained traditionally on Hawaii. However, regarding the existence of particular adoption practices in Other countries, how they were constituted and whether these are still practiced, will of course need further empirical research.

In any way, it seems to remain ambivalent perceptions concerning institutions, public as well as private, in *Homo aequalis*’ culture. According to the information provided during the participant observation I conducted at the FFIA information meeting, it could never be an alternative of consideration that children should grow up in an institution, yet *Homo aequalis* in the North leave their children every day to the day care institution, without any single thought that this certain institution would be a representation of Evil.

Magnus, I do not understand anything. In the North it is not an act of injustice placing children in the day care institution. However, in the South this seems like an utterly unjust act⁵¹ (Information sheet AC, FFIA, CAA-A). Magnus, what is the underlying logic of the above? “The matter of ‘the best interest of the child’ is that we, Westerners, have defined happiness in accordance to materialistic objects, that is, the variables of the measures of well-being are GNP, cars, stereos etc. This comparison can be viewed in regard to poor conditions in the suburbs, where the material standard of living indeed are not all that. Are we to adopt them as well?”

Observing the dazzling activity of delusions, the heaven hypnotizes us and we fall into a deep hyper realistic sleep. Some acts of consciousness following, I am woken up from the paralyzing slumber of the hypnosis, by Amanda’s twisting and turning, still wide awake. I say to her: Amanda, your experience of ‘the best of worlds’ has not been idealistic. Considering this, the thought came to my mind of an acknowledged *Homo aequalis* that goes by the name of Derrida. Now, Derrida would not claim any communication form to be more “true” than any other. However, he might perceive the communication form ‘in the best interest of the child’ as an expression of a fundamental activity of signs, which he denotes: the *archi-écriture*. It is Derrida’s perception that this *archi-écriture* constitutes the deepest impulse of the human existence. It creates differences and contradictions between the objects and between the signs,

⁵¹ Johanna, who has visited the SOS Child Village in Seoul, says: “Technically these are institutions, however, they are constructed to replicate common family houses. Siblings are not separated. The children attend to local schools and have friends ‘outside’. The ‘care mothers’ dedicate their lives to raising the children. Actually, it is not that different to the way in which adoptees live (in the North).”

simultaneously as it is in fact *the* process which delays and procrastinates (Kemp 1990:16), for instance, the inevitable end of man; that is, the perfection of life.

Now, Amanda, I am interested in coming to know your deepest impulse of motivational force, do you agree with Derrida? “I have memories from my early childhood, being carried on my mother’s back, watching the sky, the sun, and the stars. I feel closely connected to the sky. The Buddhists’ denote this feeling as self-lessness, that is, the connection to the cosmos. It provides a sense of the existence of a meaning. Life has no beginning and no end. The existence does not end. Therefore, one should deal with the problems here and now. There is no where to escape. You are caught within your self. Instead you will have to try to find what is true of life, the existence and what matters the most to yourself.” Amanda intends to apply Buddhism as a means, not to achieve eudemonia, but serenity.

This point will level my tour over this monolithic heavenly cultural conglomerate of meanings in the North which I have climbed. My shoes have become to worn out why it seems that my feet are now my only carry. And so I’ve got to push on through towards new horizons.

APPENDIX A

Never, that is, in no time, would it be possible to reciprocate what you, the informants, have given to me. This essay is just a modest counterprestation. Paolo, I praise your insightful, constructive comments and your never-ceasing commitment in guiding my climb over this mountain of meanings and your ubiquitous experience in choosing pathways in moments of collapse and progress. You are indeed the cure for the prevailing disease in Babylon! This goes out to all of you having made this walk possible: As the beams of the sun lighten up the existence within our solar system, so shall your wisdom cover the universe for all time!

Reflexivity and Social Matrix

Trusting the statistics, I migrated to *Homo aequalis*' culture as an extra-Nordic child (age 0-10) later to become adopted (www.mia.eu). I was picked up and received as my adoptive parents' own child, with permission from the Swedish Court. I am a product of my time whose best interest were taken care of in a decadent and ashy-grey suburb about 15 minutes away from the conglomerate of meanings. Almost in a similar way to *Candide* (Voltaire 1759), I grew up in an atrophying area in Sollentuna which is sometimes referred to as "the village of negroes". This is the part of 'the best of worlds' in which I lived and emanated colours from the pale but symbolically colourful rainbow family being created as a matter of fact when my adoptive sister, just out of the blue, wandered from South Korea (age 0-10) to *Homo aequalis*' culture later to become adopted by those being mentioned by *Homo aequalis* as the nuclear family. During my childhood I noted in the statistics that *Homo aequalis*' culture had the best reading ability, low rate of infant mortality⁵², good health⁵³, clean water, electricity, longest length of life and well-being measured as a variable in relation to the Gross National Product per capita and so-on-and-so-on. Now, I have invested my cultural capital in the academy to construct an identity as *Homo academicus*⁵⁴. At the moment I am a master student living in one of the many suburbs to Scientific City (Bourdieu 1990:389). Strictly, I live in the periphery of the centre 15 minutes by train from and to the conglomerate of meanings.

Studying other people's social life and cultural perceptions one could not fully stand outside, that is, if the study is to become purposeful. It would be like positioning oneself in the role of the inaccessible observer. A role which contradicts the essence of anthropology which is constituted on knowledge-through-interaction, reflection, and empathy (Norman 1996:226-7). At the same time, it is constituted of contemplating over your own society's ways of making distinctions and your own cultural perceptions on, for instance, children (Norman 1996:228).

In this paragraph I will present some of the advantages of studying *Homo adopticus* as a part of this particular social category. 1) I can relate to the underlying logic of the informants' statements because I have experienced most of the situations referred to during my 26 years of existence in *Homo aequalis*' culture 2) it might be easier to talk to someone located in the same social and cultural position, even though we have completely different experiences of

⁵² The rate of infant mortality is often used as a variable in the measure of the well-being of a nation. [...]. From an international perspective, Sweden has a very low rate of infant mortality. In fact in the year of 2002 Sweden had the lowest rate of infant mortality in the whole of the European Union (BR 2004(6):135).

⁵³ In an international view the health of children and youth in Sweden is very good, in fact it is among the best in the world (BR 2004(6):119). See the Report from the Representative of the Children (BR 2004(06) for further statistics in respect of *Homo aequalis*' superlative culture.

⁵⁴ *Homo academicus* refers to Bourdieu's definition (Bourdieu 1990:1996), that is, a person being paid to play seriously [...]. *Homo academicus* earnestly busies themselves with problems that serious people ignore – actively or passively (Bourdieu 1990:381).

the reality 3) the themes chosen for discussion with the informants are either completely missing or very insufficiently outlined in the prevailing research and literature 4) it is my experience of perceiving Sweden from at least three perspectives when orienting myself within social realities, that is, from the perspective of A) my own self-identification B) the role Other people ascribe to me i.e., immigrant, adoptee, Swede, suburban, working-class etc. and C) I never fully belong to any one group and I do not identify with any one group, in any situation or at any moment. It is my experience of being alienated from the social and the cultural in Homo aequalis' culture which enables a distancing, for instance, from Homo aequalis' orientation within the *regime of truth* Homo aequalis lives, acts, justifies and reproduces their cultural reality. Simultaneously, I am, of course, not completely alienated all the time, which enables the transcending of and taking part in the roles I am being ascribed by Others and also the part I ascribe myself in the here-and-now, then-and-there, in that situation, and at that instance. As a matter of fact, this essay could be considered as a tentative attempt, in a dark room, of approaching an enlightened consensus of what is referred to, by Others as: reality, life, the necessity of the existence, knowledge, and meaning. In short, this is an attempt of grasping why and what on earth I am doing here, as a "meaning-making being" (whatever that may imply) within a corpus of complex stimuli-response systems amongst transmitters and receivers. Concerning the disadvantages, these could perhaps be seen as confluenced within the advantages.

Manifested below is a social matrix with parts of the informants social arrangements. I have maintained contact with the informants by sending an email of inquiry to all persons inscribed in my list of email addresses, asked acquaintants and people I am not acquainted with, if they know anyone being an adoptee. Furthermore I made flyers which I have spread on busses, trains, and other public spaces. Before conducting the interviews I have explained the following 1) my project aims at comparing images of reality (Banks 2001) 2) I am not interested in anything particular; I am only interested in viewing the pictures of reality in regard to the themes I have chosen 3) I will not further or analyse their images of their experienced reality, it is my hope that their images will make possible a foundation for further research by other students/social scientists and hopefully others than adoptive parents and adoptees, and finally 4) the informants will receive a copy of the interview to make comments, change, add or extract text, that is, because I might have missed something or not managed to note it. In this way I have attempted to make the informants participate actively in the process. Moreover, I have sent preliminary drafts to the informants with the intention of letting them view and comment on the way in which they experience that they are represented and anonymized. I have offered coffee during the interviews and as compensation for sharing with me their experiences of their realities I have offered a pleasant conversation.

Social matrix, that is, a constellation of the informants' social organisation. Considering the integrity of the informants the names are fictive and constructed by me. The ages of the informants varies. Mariana, Sandra, Primavera, Viran, Johanna, and Klara are in the age of 25-30. Magnus, Vanessa and Amanda are approximately in the age between 30-40. Viola is not the youngest with her 61 years, while Bianka with her 23 years is not the oldest.

Name		Amanda	Johanna	Mariana	Sandra	Magnus	Klara	Primavera	Bianka	Vanessa	Viola	Viran
Homo adopticus		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
Homo aequalis		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X
Biosiblings		X	X	?	X	?	?	?	X	?	X	X
Halfbiosiblings				X					X		-	X
Adoptive-siblings		X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	
Halfadoptive-siblings									X			
Sociobiological siblings		-	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	-		
Halfsociobiological siblings						X		X	X			
Own children				X						X		
(adoptive)parents married		X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X		-
Visited country of origin		X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X		
Seen biofamily members/bio-parents		X	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	-		
Current occupation		On the sick-list	Author, amongst many other occupations	Working in a school for children with special needs	Administrator	University teacher	Administrator	Student	Student	Administrator	Head of Finance	Adoption administrator
Education		Basic education in arts	B.A. in Media and Communication	Child minder	B.A. of Economics	Ph.D.	M.A of Political Science and M.A. of Development studies	B.A. of Political Science	Final period of the Public Administration Programme	Graduate from Social Studies	B.A. of Economics	M.A of Public Administration
Adopted private or through adoption agency		Private	AA	AA	AA	State-State	AA	AA	AA	State-State		
Arrival to adoptive country	Year	1972	1977	1978	1985	1972	1977	1980	1982	1973		
	Age	4 years and 2 months	1 year and 6 months	1 year and 1 months	6 years	Almost 1 year	3 months	5 weeks	3 months	1 year and 6 months		
Reason for being adopted		Bioparents divorced, the biomother's new husband did not accept Amanda	Kidnapped	?	Bioparents considered themselves too young having children. They wanted to study while being young	Found on a train	?	Born in an extra-marital relationship	Economical reasons. Biofather left before I was born. Biomother's new husband did accept her children of the previous marriage, though, I was already given up for adoption	No further information than what is written in the legalised adoption documents, that is, abandoned. There were many findings from South Korea at that time... Though one cannot be sure.		

Meaning of symbols:

X: Yes

- : No

?: Don't know

: Didn't ask

APPENDIX B

Antropologi/Utilitarianism

In this section I will give further details about utilitarianism and provide evidence showing that utilitarianism stands neither in a contradictory relation to anthropology nor is it irreconcilable with anthropology: Observing utilitarianism as a theory, I will demonstrate that utilitarianism constitutes a part of social anthropology. The view advanced in this appendix is by no means new; it is solely a synchronization of knowledge existing in segregated areas. I am well aware of the fact that utilitarianism is a moral philosophy constituted in the North, as is the case with social anthropology, that is, they were conceived in *Homo aequalis*' culture.

Social anthropology, as an intellectual discipline, can be derived back to the year of 1860 (Kuper 1997:x). A genealogy of modern anthropology can readily be traced through its relationship to a core set of ideas related to reproduction, or "the facts of life" (Franklin and Ragoné 1998:2). Anthropology has aimed at putting modern society in relation to traditional societies, which might contribute to Our general education (Dumont 1966:2). The history of anthropology is attached to the colonial history of the North. However, it was the pioneering perspective of Franz Boas which reconstituted anthropology to a non-[discriminating]⁵⁵, non-hierarchical and relativistic culture science (Rabinow in ed. Haan 1983:54). Boas is mostly recognized in regard of his 'historical particularism' (ibid 1983:4), that is, the emphasis on each culture's particular ethnographic perception or the study of cultures *sui generis* (McGee and Warms 2004:135). From the one to the same.

The principle of means and ends, or utilitarianism, is a moral theory. What constitutes a moral theory? This defines a moral theory: A theory which provides the reasons for regarding something as good, evil, right, wrong etc. (Narvesson 1967:62). Utilitarianism, being a teleological moral theory, holds that the moral values of acts are due to the value of their consequences (Narvesson 1967:70).

What constitutes an act? The specific act the agent can be said to have 'done' is determined by his broader intention. In turn, 'consequences' is usually confined to events which are not only caused by the act in question. Circumstances, finally, are part of the "background" of the act, in the sense that they are conditions which prevailed in the neighbourhood of the act (Narvesson 1967:97). If a poor person steals from a millionaire, is this wrong? This depends, in part, on whether the system by which the poor person is poor and the millionaire is a millionaire is justified. If it is not, then stealing from him may not be wrong at all. On the contrary, the millionaire may be the one who is the thief. [...]. This is perhaps the principal source of difficulty in social philosophy, in which we must weigh the justice of institutions against the acts of individuals carried out against the background of those institutions. (Narvesson 1967:185).

If I accost someone with words in order to change his behaviour, I am using a method which won't work unless he is rational to some degree. There is no use blaming mountains, because they don't understand the concept of blame (nor anything else). There is a kind of "blame" which works for horses and dogs, but not for mosquitoes (Narvesson 1967:115). The principle of utility explains why we should employ that language in appraising the conduct of fully rational people who know what they are doing (Narvesson 1967:115).

⁵⁵ I have replaced the term 'racist' in favour of discriminating.

It is strongly emphasised by Narvesson that it does not exist such a thing as “the utilitarian way of life” any more than there is such a thing as the “democratic way of life”.

To put them in that category is to put unnecessary obstacles in the way of solving them. Properly conceived, these problems are all concerned with ways of satisfying the general interest i.e., with ways of improving everyone’s life to his own satisfaction. Whether a policy, system, or practise achieves this or not is, in principle, knowable by observation (Narvesson 1967:244). In short, utilitarianism can be used as an instrument, for instance, to analyzing resulting utility/pleasure in regard to the actors concerned by the act. Similarly to anthropological studies of meaning/content in respect of actors.

The utilitarian – and any other moral theorist, for that matter – must, according to Narvesson, have some method of rating different acts, such that one is preferable to another. [...]. The “quantity” in question for the utilitarians is “happiness” (or what people put value on). [...]. John Stuart Mill defined “quality” as an index of value of pleasure (i.e., of its preferability or desirability); quality is of a ‘kind’ (not degree) (Narvesson 1967:81-82). It is for this reason that we will, in general, assume that what a person enjoys, what pleases him, or what he prefers, likes, wants, desires etc., are likewise measures of utility (Narvesson 1967:90). Serenity, as an example, can be considered as an index for measuring utility in relation to something Amanda attempts to achieve, that is, something Amanda considers preferable.

Happiness is necessarily found in persons, we can detect its presence or absence in them, in those cases in which they are not identical with ourselves, only by observing them, talking with them, and acting with them. We have no other methods of “measuring” happiness than these (Narvesson 1967:213). Utilitarian’s have no duty in making other people happy, however, they have an obligation to regard other peoples happiness (Narvesson 1967:207).

It is the observation of acts and their consequences which provides us with further criterias of weighing actions utilities (Narvesson 1967:90). Implicitly, in my view, this illustrates an aspect of power. That is, it is the observer observing the act in consideration who is in the position of measuring the utility of the act in respect of the observed actor. The principle of utility only affords judgements of evaluating, and not judgements concerning justice (Narvesson 1967:151). In my view this is a great insufficiency in respect of the utilitarian theory. However, the principle of utility appears to be a better instrument for evaluating actions than the prevailing neo-liberal or hedonistic-egoistic analytical tool of judgement in Homo aequalis’ culture. Utilitarianism provides an evaluating guidance which maximizes the utility for as many as possible, including ego, being concerned by the act, for as long time as possible and avoids the contrary. Judgements of justice and injustice must be justified by reference to people’s interests in order to have any point and (therefore) any meaning (Narvesson 1967:152).

What constitutes justice? The fundamental idea of justice is doubtless equality of treatment of various kinds, and the essence of the utilitarian position is that we are to regard others as equals to ourselves in point of the value of satisfying their interests (Narvesson 1967:223). Without other interests, there can be no moral interests (Narvesson 1967:256).

The cornerstones of Homo aequalis’ culture are freedom, justice and equality. What does this mean? In what way will these principles achieve and satisfy Homo aequalis’ image of themselves? Homo adopticus was seen as a point of reference to grasping an understanding of these ideals, through the means of analysing Homo aequalis’ policy ‘in the best interest of the child’. A moral principle should be informative in its providing of guidance for our acts. If it only says we should do what is best, then this answer is uninformative unless and until we know what is best (Narvesson 1967:68).

Then, how can matters be outlined clearly and precise? An example. When I spot a bluebird in my backyard, I know there is a bluebird in my backyard. But this overlooks the distinction between knowledge and those perceptual states that (in the relevant cases) are its prerequisites. Seeing is perceiving, but it is not believing: it is merely the prerequisite to believing, when what you believe is about what can be seen. And knowing is being able to produce a satisfactory defence of what you believe (Narvesson 1967:259). The policy ‘in the best interest of the child’ is constituted of the perception grounded in *Homo aequalis*’ measures of well-being, conducted to produce and reproduce a satisfying defence of perceived conditions, for instance, by putting economical poverty in relation to economical wealth. In fact this is one of the prerequisites for achieving the knowledge to outlining the policy discourse.

It has not been my intention to analyse the intrinsic value of the policy discourse as such. In the view of Narvesson this would be committing a mistake, that is, by inferring that “values”/judgements are ‘subjective’. According to the view advocated by Narvesson, no theory of value is implied at all. We can quite consistently allow that intrinsic values are “objective”, whatever this may mean. It is Narvesson’s perception that if two people are of different opinions about the intrinsic value of something, then, *at least* one of them is wrong (Narvesson 1967:69, my emphasis). The essence of my essay, from an analytical perspective, in analyzing the policy discourse as a manifestation of *Homo aequalis*’ habitus/moral, is not whether policy *is* good but if, for instance, *Homo adopticus* experiences/makes judgements in respect of it and, moreover, how a few of *Homo adopticus*’ experiences of reality are illustrated in the best of worlds.

Because *Homo sapiens* are moral, make distinctions and conduct actions grounded on their preferences of interest, it will always be necessary to analytically evaluate actions. “Once we understand the essentially performative nature of ethical language, on the one hand, and its connection with reasons on the other, we are in a position to understand how the utilitarian theory is not confined to giving merely an account of the ‘objective’ sense of ethical terms. Indeed, we are able to see why it is misleading to think of the ‘objective’ and the ‘subjective’ as essentially different meanings or senses of ethical words. [...]. Once we make this important distinction, it rapidly becomes evident why the agent’s intentions, motives, state of information, psychological pressures, and so-on, become relevant on the utilitarian view (Narvesson 1967:119) in similarity to social anthropological perspectives.

It will continue to be necessary to do what we all believe we ought to do, namely, to consult before we act (Narvesson 1967:160). We have to be very sure that we know all the facts which we would believe to be relevant, and has considered them carefully. The reason for this is that the actor’s total happiness (i.e., the worth of his whole life from his point of view), is in question and not just the next day or the next five minutes (Narvesson 1967:160).

As an example, consider the consequence if all couples in every country would be justified in adopting children being born by individuals/parents not having been married for at least 5 years, without a ‘good’ economy, an impeccable police record, and ‘good’ health (Information brochures AC, FFIA, CAA-A and BV). If everyone of the sum y would/should do x , those of the sum z who do not want/consider doing x can be ignored, and then the work of finding a fruitful method begins, in other words: do not invent a rule, find a method solving the problem (Narvesson 1967:130) to children being ‘in need’ of adoption.

Maximization of utility in regard to ego, must be put in relation to others utility. If the result is negative, the action is not in consistence with the principle of utility, considered as a guidance of our actions (Narvesson 1967:166). There is no point in criticizing an avalanche, but there is point in criticizing human action (Narvesson 1967:167).

This is Narvesson's final formulation of utilitarianism: one alternative has more objective moral value than another if and only if it produces a greater net amount of what is valued by those affected than the other produces (Narvesson 1967:91).

Considering the world, constituted as a complex and heterogeneous conglomerate of meanings, it could be of interest and in fact relevant to analyze homogeneous and universalizing policy practices. It is Ahmed and Shore's view that new theoretical approaches will emerge almost by themselves from the challenge of confronting new domains of policy and practice. The obstacle in the way of the anthropologist is identifying these domains towards which the anthropologist wishes to turn his experience (ed. Ahmed and Shore 1995:28). The challenge lies not in escaping from developing new perspectives on, for example, particular practices of adoption but recognizing the plurality of ways to adaption within the perspectives.

Anthropology has great potentials in pursuing meanings, defining and levelling relations. It has not been the explicit aim of this essay to declare a new paradigm, only putting together some of the elements which possibly could constitute the foundations for such a paradigm. "In not calling attention to the moral dimension, anthropology is reduced to being neither a science nor a part of humanity (ed. Ahmed and Shore 1995:33).

Hopefully, emerging out of the above, it will be presented a genuine anthropological study of adoption practices: "Comparative policy studies with a [contextualized perspective] regarding social policy practices at policy formulation, impact and evaluation, together with the ideological cornerstones (Homo sapiens) of these processes" (Donnan and McFarlane in ed. Shore and Wright 2005:263).

The task for the future is in making anthropology relevant to its public (Homo sapiens) as well as its practitioners (Homo sapiens) (ed. Ahmed and Shore 1995:40). To put it simply, anthropology is a discipline capable of doing something good/utilitarian (ed. Ahmed and Shore 1995:33).

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Interview with Sandra. Length: 1 h 25 min. Location: Café in Stockholm. Date: 2006-03-21.

Interview with Magnus. Length: 45 min. Location: Informant's office. Date: 2006-03-24.

Interview with Klara. Length: 1 h 15 min. Location: Café in Stockholm. Date: 2006-03-24.

Interview with Primavera. Length: 50 min. Location: Classroom at Stockholm University. Date: 2006-03-27.

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http://www.metro.se/site/metro/discuss/?entry_type=kolumn&archive_author_id=2544&entry_id=10996 Denna länk går till artikeln: Det finns lyckliga adoptivbarn också. Av Lena Sundström, där man också kan läsa reaktioner på artikeln. Publicerad i Metro 2000-05-04. (Article in Swedish)

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/road/Classic/article/0/jsp/print.jsp?&a=15201> En annan artikel: Mer skånsk än utlandsadopterad. Av Lena Sundström. Publicerad 2002-04-04 i DN. (Article in Swedish)

http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did_6235879.asp

En artikel: "Vad betyder blodet"? Ingenting! med bl.a. Astrid Trotzig. Publicerad i SvD 2003-09-28. (Article in Swedish)

<http://www.transracialabductees.org/>

This is a link to a homepage created by adoptees, depicting a dark view of the phenomenon of international adoption.

<http://www.childrenshomeadopt.org/20Jan2005.html>

This is a link to the article: The Korean Drop. This article provides a dark view of being an adoptee. This article was written by a Korean adoptee.

www.mia.eu

Provided here are the links to the adoptees' own homepages and the adoption agencies in Sweden