Negotiating Differences.
Transnational adoption, Norwegianness and Identity Work

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how Norwegian transnational adoptees negotiate and deal with the transnational adoption-related differences when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness. By doing so, it also sheds light on the inclusion/exclusion processes through which the Norwegian "we" is constructed, and how the boundaries demarcating this position are challenged and transcended. The notions of "looking different" and "being adopted" are examined as possible terms through which hierarchical differences are produced in relation to Norwegianness. The empirical analysis is built upon fourteen in-depth interviews and one written life story with/by adult Norwegian transnational adoptees. Of the fourteen interviews, ten were face-to-face and four were computer mediated. The theoretical framework is mainly located within the field of feminist postcolonial studies, and the dissertation focuses especially on the following concepts: Othering, racialization, whiteness, hybridity, racism, majoritization/minoritization, and intersectionality. "Race" and gender are understood as social phenomena produced in social relations and in terms of embodied practices. The dissertation uses the concept of biocentrism to examine the meaning of adoption in relation to Norwegianness, and studies identity in terms of enactment. The dissertation introduces the concept of "outsider within" to underline the researcher's position regarding her "object of study" as well as to critically re-read the research process. The author argues that being critical and reflexive about her own situatedness makes her analysis more rich and robust. The theoretical framework that examines the meaning of transnational adoption in relation to constructions of national identity is central to the dissertation. The dissertation concludes that adoptees are *kinned* not only to their adoptive family but also to the Norwegian "we". Adoptees locate themselves in a position of privilege regarding their access to the nation, a position which those who have migrated to Norway cannot access. However, though adoptees experience themselves as belonging to the Norwegian majority, this belonging is systematically challenged.

Keywords: Transnational adoption, Norwegianness, identity, enactment, "race", racialization, whiteness, phenotypical differences, racism, majoritization/minoritization, intersectionality, hybridity, "outsider within", kinning, biocentrism.

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[2] Hydén works at Linköping University (Sweden), but is an Adjunct Professor in the faculty.

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Yan Zhao,

Bodø, the 3rd of November, 2012.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction: transnational adoption, identity work and constructions of Norwegianness

1.1   Background

1.1.1   Encountering transnational adoption – my personal experience of moving from China to Norway

September 1, 1999, on flight from Chongqing to Guangzhou, China

It was the start of the semester. After a one-month summer vacation in my hometown, Chongqing, I had boarded a flight to Guangzhou, where I was studying for a bachelor degree in English language and literature. The plane was getting to be full and most passengers were on board. Then I heard a baby crying and adults coaxing and talking, in English. I looked up – four western men, each carrying a Chinese baby girl were walking on board, followed by their wives and two western children, a boy around 10 years old, and a girl around 5 years old. From their accent, I understood that they were from the US. The narrow aisle on the plane was obviously not designed for cumbersome Americans. Carrying babies on their chests and bags on their shoulders, they certainly had difficulties walking through the fully seated plane. People stopped talking to each other. They watched the Americans and the crying Chinese babies and murmured, "Who are they?" "Aren't these *Gwai lo*[3] holding our Chinese children?" "How can this happen?"

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[3] Gwai lo (鬼佬; Cantonese) is a very common Cantonese slang term for foreigners and has a long history of racially deprecatory use. Literally meaning "ghost man," the term is sometimes translated into English as "foreign devil." The word "ghost" (鬼 Gwai) refers to the paler complexions of stereotypical Caucasians. The term emerged in the 16th century when European sailors appeared in southern China, as they were associated with barbarians. Historically, Chinese people had the image of its borders continuously breached by "uncivilized tribes" given to mayhem and destruction. The term was popularised during the Opium Wars in response to the Unequal Treaties. In Southern parts of China, the term "gwai lo" was used. In Northern parts of China, the term "(Western) ocean ghost" ((西)洋鬼子 (Xi) Yangguizi) was used.

This was the first time that I saw western couples adopting children from China. It was the first time that I knew adoption could be international, just like flights, businesses, schools, marriages and so on. A complicated feeling arouse in me. I did not know whether I should feel happy or sad for those baby girls. They probably would have a better life in the US, but would they one day miss the place and the country where they were born? Would their parents one day know that the baby girls they had deserted had been adopted abroad? Would they regret their decision or would they feel happy? When I left the plane, I looked at the baby girls for the last time and said in my heart, "I wish you good luck in your future life! And I wish that you one day come back to the place where you were born."

April, 2001, the White Swan Hotel, Shamian Island, Guangzhou, China

The American Hardwood export council was arranging a trade conference at the White Swan Hotel on Shamian Island in Guangzhou. As seniors majoring in English, a group of classmates and I were hired as interpreters for the conference. When we arrived at the White Swan Hotel, we saw a middle-aged western woman playing with a very young Chinese girl. Later, we saw a big group of western couples eating breakfast with their adoptive Chinese children in the dining hall of the hotel. Suddenly one girl in our group said, "You know what? I think these children are lucky. They will have a much better life than they would have living in an orphanage." "You think so?" another girl interrupted, "Don't you think it is a shame for all Chinese, for the whole nation?" "Don't put everything on a political level!" the first girl argued. I did not know which side I should support, but I felt sad that the baby girls had to leave for a very different country. I began to remember the baby girls I met on the flight. How were they doing now? I suddenly realized that the international adoption of Chinese girls was not a matter of individual cases: it was becoming common.

Summer 2003, Steigen and Hamarøy, Nordland, Norway

I met two Asian children, one boy and one girl, at a local grocery store in Hamarøy. I was told that they were adopted from South Korea. As a new immigrant in this small community, I was excited to meet them. Of course, I did not know them, but they looked familiar to me. They seemed interested in me too, as they also watched me from time to time. I walked over to them, but when I was about to speak, I was not sure which language I should use: Chinese, Korean,

Norwegian, or English? They probably could not speak Chinese or Korean, perhaps they could speak a little English, but they could certainly speak Norwegian, a totally strange language to me at the time. Finally I said "hello" to them. They were so shy that they ran to their mother, a white middle-aged woman, and hid behind her back. Then they and their mother spoke Norwegian, which I did not understand. I felt awkward. As of that moment, the children did not seem familiar to me anymore. The mother came to me later and told me that her children were 9 and 7 years old, and both were adopted from South Korea. I said, "I am from China."

Autumn 2007, Bodø, Nordland, Norway

I had lived in Norway for four years. I had recently finished my master's degree in Sociology and had found work teaching Chinese in an evening class at *Folkeuniversitetet*. Altogether, there were 10 students in the class. In the first class, I asked them to introduce themselves briefly and talk about why they were interested in learning Chinese. To my great surprise, four told me that they attended the class because they had daughters adopted from China. Two told me that they were a couple and they were in the process of adopting a child from China. I had not expected that more than half of the class would be adoptive parents (or -to-be). It was through these adoptive parents in my Chinese class that I came to know the community of adoptive families in Bodø, and especially a group of families who have adopted girls from China. The first time that my family and I showed up to their Chinese New Year party, one 4-year-old girl pointed to me, asking her mother, "Mom, is that lady my mom in China?"

That autumn, I attended a seminar on adoption organized to mark that year's "adoption week"[4] in Bodø. Ane Ramm, who had just published her book *Adoptert, et annerledes perspektiv, et livsløp, et oppgjør*[5] (Gyldendal, 2007) was invited to talk about her book and her experience as an adoptee from South Korea. The room was full of Norwegian adoptive parents. I noticed that among the audience I was the only one whose face was Asian. Then Ane Ramm came into the room. She

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[4] Week 47 is the annual national "adoption week" in Norway.

noticed me immediately and she nodded to me with a smile. After the presentation, she came to me and asked, "Are you adopted too?"

1.1.2 A decision for a PhD dissertation on transnational adoption and transnational adoptee's identity work

Ane Ramm's question made me awkward. I am not adopted, and I am not an adoptive parent. As whom do I appear in a seminar about transnational adoption, about the people who are adopted from one country to another country; and for what reason is my family and I well integrated in an adoption community? In the beginning, I was simply interested in knowing how children adopted from China do in their lives in Norway. Sometimes I simply mixed them up with the baby girls I met on the plane – how are their lives in the US? In many ways, I set up a connection between myself and the children adopted from China, a connection based on all of us being Chinese. I call them Chinese, but will they call themselves Chinese? Is there any connection, and if yes, what connection?

During the seminar, Ane Ramm said that as it became common to adopt children from foreign countries, more and more people became interested in knowing about transnational adoption (a term use in this dissertation, and will explain later), but there was still not enough knowledge about it in Norway. In that moment, I thought, "Why not have transnational adoption be my topic when I apply for a PhD scholarship?"

Transnational adoption emerged as a topic I was interested in researching for my doctoral dissertation first through my encountering transnational adoption in China and Norway, secondly through my experience with the adoption community in Bodø (where I was considered as biological mother of an adopted child, an adoptee from South Korea, and my son was perceived to be adopted). I am especially interested in transnational adoptees' identity in relation to Norwegianness. I wondered whether transnational adoption made a difference to them as they created identities as Norwegian. Do they perceive themselves as being different compared to other Norwegians? Since I, with my Asian face, can possibly be mistaken for being an adoptee, have they been mistaken for being

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[5] In English: Adopted, a different perspective, a life course, and a settlement (My translation)

me, a foreign student, an immigrant, or someone else? How do they make meaning of (transnational) adoption in relation to their identity as Norwegians?

This is how this study initially emerged. I submitted a project proposal together with my application for a PhD scholarship to Bodø University College on 30 April 2008. In June, I was informed that I was granted a three-year PhD scholarship in Sociology. I started this project on 18 August 2008.

1.2 Transnational adoption in Norway

Since my study primarily concerns transnational adoption in the Norwegian context, it is necessary to provide some background about the topic before I explain my research question and the main purposes of the study further.

1.2.1 From domestic adoption to transnational adoption

Before the 1970s, almost all adoptions in Norway were domestic. Statistics show that only one of ten children adopted in Norway in 1966 was born in foreign countries, and the number increased to two (of ten) in 1971 (Jakobsen 2001). The proportion of transnational adoptions increased slightly through 1970s. On average, around 30% of adoptions each year in the 1970s were transnational (ibid). The number of transnational adoptions surpassed domestic adoptions in Norway from 1982 onwards, and from 1989 to the early 2000s, the proportion of transnational adoptions has remained relatively stable, varying between 70%-80% (ibid). However, in the last couple of years, there has been a dramatic decrease in number of transnational adoptions. This is mainly because some countries, mainly China, have imposed stricter requirements on western couples who apply for adoption. At the same time, legislative amendments to the Norwegian Adoption Act that took effect in 2002 opened for greater access to the domestic adoption of stepchildren. In 2008, the proportion of transnational adoption reduced to 54%. Nevertheless, with the exception of the adoption of stepchildren and foster children, nearly all adoptions in Norway nowadays are transnational. For statistics of adoptions in Norway from 1966 to 2008, see table 1-1:

Table 1-1: Adoptions[1], by type of adoption. 1966-2008

Annual average. Year	Total	Type of adoption			
		Transnational adoptions	Stepchildren	Foster children	Other [2]
1966-1970	791	83	309	..	..
1971-1975	881	260	391	..	230
1976-1980	976	330	488	..	158
1981-1985	892	456	324	..	114
1986-1990	857	530	234	..	94
1991-1995	831	561	181	..	89
1996-2000	865	607	191	..	67
2001-2005	890	702	143	..	45
1986	845	477	262	..	106
1987	787	465	231	..	91
1988	880	566	229	..	85
1989	918	578	249	..	91
1990	855	563	197	..	95
1991	833	549	196	..	88

Annual average. Year	Total	Type of adoption			
		Transnational adoptions	Stepchildren	Foster children	Other[2]
1992	851	564	184	..	103
1993	786	543	170	..	73
1994	788	545	162	..	81
1995	898	605	192	..	101
1996	822	523	220	..	79
1997	814	534	213	..	67
1998[3]	1 094	795	210	..	89
1999	802	527	207	..	68
2000	792	657	105	..	30
2001	908	711	162	..	35
2002	989	785	157	..	47
2003	870	656	158	..	56
2004	791	652	101	..	38
2005	890	704	138	..	48

Annual average. Year	Total	Type of adoption			
		Transnational adoptions	Stepchildren	Foster children	Other [2]
2006	657	438	174	35	10
2007	703	417	236	43	7
2008	553	298	223	23	9

[1] From 2006, Statistics Norway received a full copy of the central adoption register once every year in order to produce the annual statistics. Before 2006 the adoption reports have been submitted by the population register to Statistics Norway for statistical purposes.

[2] Before 2006, this includes foster child adoptions, anonymous adoptions and other types of adoptions. From 2006, foster child adoptions are in its own group.

[3] Including a large backlog of adoption reports.

(Resources: Statistics Norway (SSB) 2009,
http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/02/02/10/adopsjon_en/tab-2009-06-11-01-en.html)

Today, if a Norwegian couple intends to adopt an unknown baby, the most feasible solution for them is transnational adoption. Unrelated Norwegian babies are rarely available for adoption due to factors such as easy access to birth control, good welfare arrangements for single parents, and social acceptance of unmarried single parents (as well as of teen parents[6]) (Sætersdal and Dalen 1999: 33; Jokobsen 2001). Those who adopt/apply to adopt children from foreign

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[6] I also notice that today it has been more socially accepted to be a teen parents in Norway, since several popular magazines in Norway, such as "Hjemmet," "Familien" and "Det Nye" have published positive stories of teen parents with unexpected pregnancies.

countries are often involuntarily childless couples, or couples who want to have more children, but have been unable to have further children by birth. However, there are also parents who adopt out of humanistic, religious or political reasons (Sætersdal and Dalen 1999: 29, 37-38; Jokobsen 2001). Transnational adoption is strictly controlled by the Norwegian authorities. It must be organized through one of the accredited adoption organizations.[7] There are three such organizations in Norway: "*Verdens barn,*" "*Adopsjonsforum,*" and *"InorAdopt,",*all subject to the supervision of the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (*Bufetat*). Norwegian authorities do not prohibit single persons from adopting. However, few sending countries other than India, Ethiopia, Nepal[8] and China[9] accept applications from single applicants. Thus far, no sending countries that cooperate with Norwegian adoption organizations accept applications from same-sex couples; and nearly all countries demand that applying couples are married, which means that partners and couples who cohabit are not accepted (NOU 2009:21:s87).

1.2.2 Transnational adoption in Norway in a global context

When talking about transnational adoption in Norway, people often automatically refer to Norwegian couples adopting children born in foreign countries, often in poor non-western, "Third World" countries. Since the adopted children often look "foreign" (most notably with different skin color), I call this "visible transnational adoption." However, in the early 20th century, there were also invisible transnational adoptions in Norway. For example, after the Second World War,

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[7] Yet, exemption can be applied if the applicants intend to adopt a child from their own country of origin or from a country with which they have special and strong ties/connections. In this case, the Norwegian Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs take over the role of the adoption organization. ("Information about adoption in Norway" from Bufetat: http://www.bufetat.no/engelsk/adopsjon/, information updated May 28, 2011)

[8] However, Norway has now stopped working with Nepal (see http://www.adopsjonsforum.no/index.aspx?article=326825&mid=326825; information updated April 27, 2012)

[9] China had stopped receiving applications from single applicants as of 2007. However, new rules in March 2011 allows single women between 30-50 years old to adopt special needs children.

children were adopted from Germany, Austria and Greece by Norwegian couples (Hognestad and Steenberg 2000: 61). Besides being a receiving country of transnational adoptees, Norway was also once a sending country of transnational adoptees: under the German occupation during the Second World War, 200 to 250 children with Norwegian mothers and German fathers - the unwanted products of Nazi Lebensborn Breeding program - were sent to Germany for adoption or fostering. After the war, some of these children were sent to Sweden for fostering or adoption (ibid: 60; Lindner 1988).

Contemporary transnational adoption, or the visible adoption of non-white children from "Third World" countries (as well as some white children from "Second World" countries[10]), was initiated in the aftermath of the Korean War from 1950 to 1953 (Hübinette and Tigervall 2009: 121). The Norwegian Korea Organization (in Norwegian "*Norsk Koreaforening*", later named "*Verdens barn[11]*") was established in 1953. Arranging the adoption of orphaned or abandoned children in post-war South Korea to Norway gradually came to be the focus of the organization's agenda, as part of its South Korea aid programs. Since then, around 6,500 children have been adopted to Norway from South-Korea[12]. China opened access for transnational adoption in 1990, and is now one of the main sending countries of transnational adoptees. The first child adopted from China to Norway arrived in 1991 (Dalen and Rygvold 2004: 6, 8). Until 2008, there were around 2,640 children adopted from China in Norway.[13] In all, there are around 20,700

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[10] In recent Nordic feminist postcolonial studies, there has been a new focus on the relationship between postcolonialism and postsocialism, and on the ways in which Central and Eastern European countries are similarly constructed as the "second world", just as the "Third World" has been constructed by the "First World" (Mulinari et al. 2009: 2)

[11] In English, "Children of the world"

[12] This calculation is based on data (6,080 in 2004) from Korean Statistics (provided by Korean-Swedish researcher Tobias Hübinette through private communication) and data from Statistics Norway from 2004 to 2008 respectively 93, 82, 63, 44 and 45 (SSB table 06688 and 05739).

[13] This calculation is based on the data (1,650 up to 2003) from Monica Dalen and Anne-Lise Rygvold (2004: 8) and data from Statistics Norway from 2004 to 2008, respectively 269, 326, 165, 145 and 84 (SSB table 06688 and 05739).

(until 2011) transnational adoptees living in Norway.[14] In addition to South-Korea and China, the main sending countries are Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Vietnam, Philippine, Peru, Russia, Romania and as well as other countries in Asia, South-America, Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. Besides Norway, other common receiving countries include the USA, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Canada, France, Italy, Australia and New Zealand. Between 1998 and 2007, Norway, as well as its Nordic neighbors, Sweden and Denmark, are the top-ranked receiving countries in terms of the number of transnational adoptions in proportion to its population (NOU 2009:21:s19).

Transnational adoption follows certain patterns that reflect both present global economic, political, and social conditions and historical colonial power relations: while most countries of origins are poor, undeveloped non-western countries that were previously colonized (the "Third World" countries, or the Global South), the receiving countries are rich, developed countries (the "First World" or the Global North). Recent changes in transnational adoption also mirror changes in these global patterns. For example, with economic and social development in some Asian countries, such as South Korea, China, and India, and Central Eastern Europe, such as Russia, Romania and Hungary, there are fewer and fewer children available for transnational adoption. In addition, several countries, including South Korea, China and Romania have become more critical of their transnational adoption practices (NOU 2009: 21: 15-16, 33-34). Therefore, in recent years there has been a dramatic decrease in transnational adoptions; at the same time, there is gradual increase in transnational adoption from poorer countries, such as Ethiopia, Guatemala, and South Africa (ibid: 34). It can also be predicted that more African countries will join the practice of transnational adoption as sending countries, since there continues to be a strong demand among childless western couples for adopting children.

However, it should also be noted that not only have some sending countries become increasingly critical towards their transitional adoption practice, there

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[14] This calculation is based on the data (15,000 in 1999) from Barbro Sætersdal and Monica Dalen (1999: 36), the statistics from Statistics Norway from 2000 to 2008 (see table 1-1) and statistics from the three Norwegian adoption organizations in 2009 (347 children), 2010 (344 children) and 2011 (304 children) (http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adopsjon updated on April 27, 2012).

have also been critiques and debates among the receiving countries since the transnational adoption began. For example, when the Norwegian Korea Organization started working with adoptions from Korea in early 1960s, debates emerged within the organization and in the Norwegian society about whether transnational adoption was the best solution for homeless children in South Korea[15]. A group of international adult transnational adoptees, especially those adopted from South Korea are critical of some aspects of transnational adoption, and ironically call it "transracial abduction"[16]. These critiques or counter-arguments are mostly concerned with ethnic issues, cultural identities, adoptees' experiences of racism in receiving countries, industrialization of transnational adoption and so on.

1.3   Research questions and the main purposes of the study

In accordance with my research interest as described in section 1.1, my main research question is: How do Norwegian transnational adoptees negotiate and deal with looking different and being adopted when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness?

 In my study, I consider "looking different" and "being adopted" to be two forms of difference that relate to transnational adoption and that can produce a difference for transnational adoptees in relation to their identities as Norwegians. I ask whether these differences are made relevant for transnational adoptees when they do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. If they are, how do transnational adoptees work with them, or how do they negotiate and deal with the differences to enact being Norwegian?

The purpose of this study is primarily to develop more knowledge about transnational adoption, which is a practice that has become common in the current globalizing context. With increasing numbers of transnational adoptions, transnational adoptees have formed a special group in Norwegian society. This

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[15] Information is from Verdensbarn's information video.
http://verdensbarn.no/info_Informasjonsvideo.nml (information updated May 28, 2011).

[16] http://www.transracialabductees.org/ (information updated May 28, 2011).

group can be distinguished from both the native Norwegian majority and from immigrant groups. Still, we do not know very much about how transnational adoptees in Norway position themselves when facing the differences of "looking different" and "being adopted." Nor do we know how they construct the meaning of transnational adoption when creating their identities as Norwegians. Transnational adoption, and adoption generally, have mostly been studied in relation to the formation of family and kinship (e.g. Goody 1969, Dalen and Sætersdal 1992, Howell 2006). However, it has seldom been studied in the context of the construction of a national identity, as for example Norwegianness. My study casts light on this under-studied question.

Secondly, transnational adoptees' identity work in relation to Norwegianness can help us understand the present globalizing multiethnic/multicultural Norwegian society, which has an increasing number of immigrants from non-western countries. Not least, it can illuminate how in such a multiethnic and multicultural context, the Norwegian "we" is constructed through a mutual inclusion/exclusion process. What does it mean to be Norwegian, or to be included in the Norwegian "we"? Some Norwegian ethnic relations and migration studies scholars argue that the inclusions and exclusions around the Norwegian "we" center on questions of "race" (e.g. Gullestad 2002, 2006, Berg et al. 2010). Though transnational adoptees are often considered different from immigrants, they also look different from the majority populations. How do they experience "looking different" in relation to Norwegianness? I believe their experience with racialization and racism can provide us with an important perspective from which to explore the inclusion/exclusion process around the Norwegian "we," and to critically examine the construction of Norwegianness.

Though identity, and particularly ethnic identity, has been a frequent topic in previous studies on transnational adoption and transnational adoptees, it has mainly been studied in relation to adaptation processes. These focus on how transnational adoptees have to adapt to a "new" family and society in their learning processes and daily lives (e.g. Sætersdal and Dalen 1999, Botvar 1999, Brottveit 1999). Though it has been pointed out in these studies that as teens, adoptees need to do "additional work" when developing their identities (Dalen 1999: 30-31), the researchers failed to address the extent to which this "additional work" was necessitated by the majority society. My intention to illuminate the inclusion/exclusion process in relation to Norwegianness through

an analysis of transnational adoptees' identity work is an attempt to put the research focus on the majority society and on the construction of Norwegianness. I illustrate how the "additional work" is not only caused by certain transnational adoption related differences, particularly "looking different" (Botvar 1999), but is also generated by the majority society, not least based on how "looking different" is perceived in the Norwegian society.

Finally, this dissertation is an empirical study about transnational adoptees' identity work, written in the discipline of sociology. Sociology has a long tradition of studying *identity* and the formation of the *self*. Sociological studies of identity/self differ from psychodynamic approaches, and mainly focus on interactive social relations (e.g. Mead 1962[1934], Goffman 1971, Burkitt 1991), often in relation to wider social structures (Giddens 1991; Beck et al. 1994; Bauman 1995). When studying transnational adoptees' identity and identity work, I follow this sociological tradition. At the same time, I intend to illustrate that the interactive process through which identity is performed and enacted is often simultaneously a process of negotiating certain relevant differences. In other words, when studied as a process of social relations, the key question regarding identity is how differences are treated and handled.

1.4 Transnational adoption, difference and identity work

The issue of identity has been long a central topic in adoption and transnational adoption studies (e.g. Kirk 1964, Brodzinsky 1990, Sætersdaland Dalen 1999, Brottveit 1999). The theories of sociologist Harold Kirk are relevant for my study on adoptees' identity work. Kirk's research focus is on the adoptive parents, who he considers to have a role handicap in a society where the biological family model is considered the normative ideal, and adoption is thus always perceived as a "next-best" solution. Kirk finds that to deal with this role handicap, adoptive parents can choose between two different strategic positions: *to reject the difference* and *to acknowledge the difference* (Kirk 1964 in Sætersdal and Dalen 1999: 62-63; and in Barfoed 2008: 28). Later, the clinical psychologist Brodzinsky further developed Kirk's model by adding a third position: *insistence of difference* (Brodzinsky 1990 in Barfoed 2008: 28). The leading Norwegian adoption researchers, Monica Dalen and Barbro Sætersdal, have also critically applied Kirk's

model in their studies on transnational adoptees' identities (1999). Dalen and Sætersdal criticize Kirk's model for ignoring various stages of adopted children's development, and for not paying attention to the cultural, social and political contexts between different countries. Moreover, they consider Kirk's generalization to be based on incomplete data (ibid: 64). Based on these critiques, and in order to make Kirk's model (which is based on domestic adoptions) applicable to transitional adoption, Dalen and Sætersdal have also, adjusted Kirk's model by adding a third position: *to stress the differences* (ibid: 64-65).

I think the theories of Kirk, Brodzinsky, and Dalen and Sæterdal are important, as they form a good departure point for studying the question of identity in adoption through their focus on how *(transnational) adoption-related difference* is dealt with. Though Dalen and Sæterdal's critiques and further development of Kirk's theory are important, I argue that there is still something important missing in their extended version of Kirk's model: 1. the situation-dependent context of dealing with the difference; 2. a negotiation process in which the difference is made relevant/irrelevant. My disagreement with Dalen and Sæterdal is based on our different theoretical understandings of the identity concept, which means that when researching similar topics we have focused on different aspects. This issue is discussed further in the theory chapter.

Beside Dalen and Sæterdal, other researchers who have studied transnational adoptees' identities in the Norwegian context are Pål Ketil Botvar (1999) and Ånund Brottveit (1996, 1999). They have also studied adoptees' "Norwegian/ethnic" identities in relation to transnational adoption-related differences, such as their skin colors and ethnic backgrounds from their countries of birth. They conclude that due to these differences, transnational adoptees need to do extra identity work.

1.5   A postcolonial perspective on *transnational* adoption

While "utenlandsadopsjon" is the sole term in Norwegian for describing the phenomenon of adults in one country adopting a child/children from another country, we do find different terms in English, such as *foreign adoption*,

international adoption, *intercountry adoption*, *transnational adoption* and *transracial adoption*[17]. Though all these terms refer to the same type of cross-border adoption[18], they have different theoretical implications. In my study, I choose to use the term *transnational* adoption and *transnational* adoptee. In my view, when a child is adopted from one country to another, the primary borders that the adoption crosses are national, and these borders continue to play a significant role in shaping our identities in today's globalizing context.

Recent literature on adoptions across national borders increasingly uses the term "transnational" rather than "international" (eg. Dorow 2006, Hübinette and Tigervoll 2009, Howell 2006, Volkman 2005, Petersen 2009). The change of terms from *inter-* to *trans-* implies a shifting perspective in the field. Lene Myong Petersen, for example, points out that to study adoption as a transnational process should "be read as an attempt to think adoption in connection to other flows of artefacts, people, body parts, goods, ideas, thoughts, religions, ideologies, identities, social practices, money which circulate in a global world" (Petersen 2009: 35). As a transnational practice, it exceeds, traverses and transforms different forms of boundary markers (ibid). I agree with Petersen, but would add that when we study these flows, we need to frame them in their historical context; in other words, in relation to the colonial past.

Some researchers claim that while "international adoption" includes a historical perspective, "transnational adoption" is focused on the present (Kim 2007 in Petersen 2009:35). I think this separation is quite farfetched and too simplistic. In my view, focusing on the "transnational" aspect can also open a historical perspective in the analysis. For example, in Sara K. Dorow's analysis of transnational (China-US) adoptions, she identifies several overlapping histories related to Chinese adopted children (Dorow 2006); Tobias Hübinette and Carina Tigervall's (2009) use of a transnational perspective in analysing the experience of racialization among adult adoptees and adoptive parents in Sweden is framed in a wider postcolonial analysis. Similarly to Hübinette and Tigervall, when choosing

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[17] In a recent workshop on adoption at the14[th] International Metropolis Conference (Copenhagen, Sept. 14-18 2009), several researchers also used the term *inter-racial*.

[18] An exception is the term "transracial" or "inter-racial adoption", which in the context of the US can also refer to domestic adoptions or adoptions within the national border.

the term *transnational*, I intend to bring in a postcolonial perspective to study adoptions across national borders.

I think *transnational* is a better word than *international* to illustrate the global cross-border journey of the children. As a journey, there are always a departure point and a destination point. When adoptions across national borders are studied as *transnational*, what we see is not only the direction of the flow of children but also particular power relations within this flow, which can affect the adoptees' lived experience and identity work. These power relations have to be studied in a historical context as remaining effects of colonial histories. For example, when studying how transnational adoptees negotiate the difference of "looking different", I illustrate how specific power relations are performed through the notion of "race" in a minoritizing/majoritizing process, which the transnational adoptees have to deal with when doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. In this way, a postcolonial perspective helps enable my analysis. In the next chapter, I discuss how I apply this theoretical approach.

1.6   The growing research field of "critical adoption studies"

Knowledge about transnational adoption and transnational adoptees has been developed in various disciplines in both the social sciences and natural sciences. These disciplines include psychology, pedagogy, sociology, anthropology, psychiatry and genetics. In addition, transnational adoption/adoptees have been studied in interdisciplinary fields, like social medicine, social work, and special needs education[19]. As I discussed in section 1.2, I intend to contribute to this field mainly from within the discipline of sociology. Furthermore, closely related to my postcolonial perspective, I also situate my analysis in the relatively new field of "critical adoption studies"[20] (e.g. Eng 2003, 2006, Hübinette 2007, Hübinette and Tigervall 2008, 2009, Petersen 2009).

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[19] A good overview of the earlier studies on transnational adoption and of the historical development of this knowledge field internationally can be found in Monica Dalen's "The status of knowledge of foreign adoption" (1999).

[20] Here I thank Tobias Hübinette and Carolina Jonsson Malm for their informative discussions with me on this research field through emails in January 2009.

Inspired by critical race studies, critical whiteness studies, feminist and queer theories, critical adoption studies examines the premises and perspectives of mainstream society to analyze and understand adoption and transnational adoption. By doing so, they challenge the western notion that transnational adoption is "a left-liberal progressive act and a way of creating a rainbow family," (Hübinette 2007: 178) or an ideal, humanistic, undoubtedly good practice that is a form of aid to Third World countries. To situate my study in the field of the critical adoption studies, I critically examine the majority Norwegian society with a focus on the construction of Norwegianness through inclusion/exclusion processes.

Since there are some similarities between the Norwegian context in which my study is based and the other Scandinavian countries (Sweden and Denmark), I discuss the key Scandinavian work on critical adoption studies that have informed this dissertation. Scandinavian critical adoption studies share a focus on explicitly showing the relevance of "race" in the lived experience of transnational adoptees. Scandinavian critical adoption scholars also emphasize that the practice of transnational adoption and related issues such as kinship, roots, race, identity politics, family ideal and politics must be critically examined in relation to the logics, ideologies, or governmentalities of the Scandinavian model of welfare state.

In Sweden, Tobias Hübinette and Carina Tigervall (Hübinette 2005, 2007, Hübinette and Tigervall 2008, 2009) are the leading critical adoption scholars. Hübinette and Tigervall focus on highlighting the relations between "race" and transnational adoption. Hübinette and Tigervall argue that the systematic differentiation and discrimination due to perceptions of phenotypical differences that adoptees and their parents experience in their daily lives, illustrates the Swedish *colonial complicity.*[21] In other words, Swedish society and culture are deeply ingrained with colonialism and race thinking, and in contrast to common perceptions of the issue, racism is *not* just a question of right-wing political extremism, Nazism and Fascism (Hübinette and Tigervall 2008, 2009). They discuss transnational adoption and racialization experiences in relation to the

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[21] Colonial complicity is a concept developed in Nordic postcolonial feminist studies, which refers to "processes in which (post)colonial imaginaries, practices and products are made to be part of what is understood as the 'national' and 'traditional' culture of the Nordic countries" (Mulinari et al. 2009: 1-2).

Western left-wing liberal politics of the welfare state in the receiving country, where adoption is assumed to be a progressive practice. Furthermore, Hübinette studies transnational adoption, particularly from South Korea, in relation to the ethno-nationalist ideologies of the sending country (Hübinette 2005, 2007). By putting transnational adoption in a wider global and historical context, Hübinette argues that Korean transnational adoptees, as victims of both western multiculturalist ideology and Korean ethnonationalism, suffer a "psychic violence" and a "physical alienation" through which their Asian bodies are being "fetishized, racialized, and essentialized" (Hübinette 2007: 193).

In Denmark, the most recent critical adoption study was conducted by Lene Myong Petersen (2009). Through an engagement with the poststructuralist concept of *subjectification*, Petersen explores the subject formation and racialization of Korean adoptees in Denmark. Her analysis shows a tension between racialized subjectification as central to adoptees' experiences and a mainstream discourse in Denmark that denies racialized differentiation. Therefore, with colorblind, anti-racist ideologies serving to silence the racialized otherness and white privilege, there is no room for adoptees to articulate their racialized experiences of othering. Based on the analyses around racialization and subjectification, Petersen suggests that transnational adoption can be understood as "a racialized (affective) economy of intimacy, in which kinship, belonging, identity, cultural intelligibility, social existence and value, are negotiated and exchanged, promised and foreclosed" (ibid:327). Through linking transnational adoptees with affective labor in a racialized economy of intimacy, which serves to consolidate and maintain specific ideologies in the receiving country (see also Eng 2003, 2006), Petersen's conceptualization makes it possible to contextualize transnational adoption within other transnational movements of labor in a global economic system.

Within Norwegian scholarship on adoptions it is difficult to find a study that explicitly follows the critical perspective found in the works of Hübinette, Tigervall and Pedersen. Earlier I have mentioned the studies conducted by Pål Ketil Botvar (1999) and Ånund Brottveit (1996, 1999), who both study transnational adoptees' "Norwegian/ethnic" identities in relation to their skin colors and ethnic backgrounds. They point out that racism, particularly everyday racism in Norway, can influence adoptees' life qualities (Botvar 1999) and their identity development (Brottveit 1999). Botvar and Brottveit's work can partially be included in critical

perspectives on adoption as their studies (particularly Brottveit's) of transnational adoption scholarship include a critical view of racism. However, in their work, racism (a dimension of "race") is mainly studied as an epiphenomenon of transnational adoption. They point out that transnational adoptees in Norway often need to do additional identity work, but for them, the extra work is mostly due to adoptees' "exotic look" and a biographical discontinuity (e.g. Brottveit 1999: 99). I would argue that they fail to explore how the extra identity work is ultimately caused by the racialized perception of Norwegianness among the majority populations.

Studies conducted by Geir Follevåg (2002, 2006) and Signe Howell (2006, 2009) can also be considered critical adoption studies in the sense that both have challenged a taken-for-granted biocentric premise in mainstream Norwegian adoption research. Howell's concept of *kinning* and Follevåg's critique of biocentrism are central to my theoretical approach to adoption in this study, and will therefore be explained in more detail in chapter 2. However, I also see Howell's work as lacking a critical examination of the transnational adoptees' experience in the receiving country. For example, I agree with her that when a child is adopted to Norway, he/she is not a "*tabula rasa*" who would automatically and effortlessly become Norwegian (a common perception held by many); quite the contrary, the child arrives with "a backpack full of past experience" that affect their personality and identity development in Norway (Howell 2004:229). However, I see this emphasis on the child's pre-adoption experience in the birth country as a main explanation of the so-called "identity problems" in the child's later life in the receiving country as ignoring the social relations and conditions in the receiving country. The racialized construction of Norwegianness and otherness, are also important factors in understanding how adoptees develop and create their identities.

1.7   The organization of the dissertation

This dissertation is organized in ten chapters. In this first chapter, I have introduced the theme, the research questions and the main purpose of my study. I have also contextualized the historical and intellectual frameworks that inform the background of my study. Through a dialogue with earlier research about

transnational adoptees' identity, I emphasized that in analyzing transnational adoptees' identity work in relation to Norwegianness, I focus on the majority Norwegian society. I explore how, in a multiethnic and multicultural context, the Norwegian "we is constructed through a process of inclusion and exclusion. To enable a critical examination of the construction of Norwegianness, I rely on a postcolonial perspective and critical adoption studies.

In chapter 2, I introduce the key concepts and theoretical approaches of the study. I discuss how I engage these concepts and theories in my analysis, as well as how I bring different theoretical approaches together to provide a comprehensive answer to my research questions. Chapter 3 is on methodology, and I discuss various methodological choices I have made from the research design (what I planned to do) to the research practice (what has been done in collecting the data and doing analysis).

Chapter 4 is a link between methodology and analysis. In the first half of the chapter, I discuss how my situatedness as an "outsider within" in this study has influenced the data collection/production in research interviews, and how it is necessary and important to take these influences into consideration when developing my analysis. Then in the second half of the chapter, I show that by exploring the challenging interactions between the informants and myself during the interviews, I uncover my own cultural blindness and taken- for-granted assumptions, which is important as I further develop my analysis.

Following chapter 4, there are five empirical chapters (chapter 5 to chapter 9). In chapter 5, I analyze how my informants interpret and answer the commonly asked question "where are you (really) from." By doing so, I explore how they, as transnational adoptees, make and negotiate meaning around looking different and being adopted in relation to Norwegianness. I look at how these two transnational adoption-related differences are made relevant in the processes through which adoptees do identity work in relation to Norwegianness. I illustrate how "being adopted" marks a majority position. Yet, because they look different or do not look white, my informants can easily be placed in a minority position. It is in relation to the majoritizing/minoritizing process that my informants are negotiating the meaning of transnational adoption-related differences and doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

Based on the finding from the analysis in chapter 5 that "looking different" is the difference that makes a difference for my informants in relation to their identity around Norwegianness, chapters 6 and 7 explore the difference-making process of "looking different" in relation to Norwegianness. I illustrate how "looking different" is made significant for my informants when they do identity work around Norwegianness. In order to explore this difference-making process, I analyze how my informants experience looking different in a white-dominant majority context; in other words, their experience of being minoritized and racialized. Chapter 6 explores my informants' experiences as children. Here, my analytic purpose is to scrutinize how this difference-making process is a question of doing "race." In chapter 7, I discuss the informants' experiences as adults, focusing on the intersection of "race" and gender in the difference-making process of "looking different."

Chapter 8 and 9 deal with what my informants do with the difference of "looking different" or deal with the minoritization process as they do identity work in relation to Norwegianness. In chapter 8, I discuss how my informants strategically mark their majority position in a context where "looking different" is made meaningful in defining a person's position in relation to Norwegianness and "being adopted" as a majority position is no longer explicit. In order to illuminate this question, I analyze my informants' "Oslo stories." Here I analyze not only the contents of these "Oslo stories," but also the manner in which these stories were narrated in informants' interactions with me during the interviews. This chapter illustrates that one common way that my informants deal with the minoritization process is to make the difference of "looking different" irrelevant in defining their positionality.

However, this is not the only way that they deal with the minoritization process. In chapter 9, I discuss how my informants also try to include or incorporate the difference of "looking different" in their identity work. Here, I illustrate that by including this difference they have enacted a hybridized Norwegianness. I also explore how they construct the meaning of the hybridized Norwegianness they enact in relation to the majoritizing and minoritizing process. By doing so, I demonstrate that in their enactment of a hybridized Norwegianness, my informants enact a more generous and inclusive Norwegian "we" that provide them with more space to do identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

Finally, chapter 10 is the concluding chapter, where I revisit the findings from each empirical chapter and discuss them as a whole in relation to the research question and my research purposes. Based on these findings, I raise some new questions for future research.

Chapter 2:   Theoretical approaches

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical and conceptual framework of the dissertation. I introduce the relevant concepts and theoretical approaches and expound on how I apply them in my analysis. In this study, I ask: How do Norwegian transnational adoptees negotiate and deal with looking different and being adopted when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness?

In formulating this main research question, I have brought certain theoretical premises, understandings, and approaches to the phenomenon I study. Therefore, the discussion in this chapter is also a further elaboration of my research question as well as an exploration of the theories I use to illuminate it. I frame my discussion in three thematic areas: first, I discuss relevant theories concerning "looking different"; next, I discuss theoretical understandings of adoption; and lastly, I explore theoretical approaches concerning identity and identity work. Within these areas, I introduce theories from different disciplines and traditions, including sociology, anthropology, feminist theory, postcolonial theories, and Actor-Network-Theory/Science and Technology Studies (ANT/STS). I also discuss how I am going to bring these theories together in my analysis.

2.2   "Looking different"

Whether and how "looking different" is made meaningful and significant to transnational adoptee's identity work in relation to Norwegianness is an important aspect of my study. I employ postcolonial theories to analyse this question. I am particularly inspired by postcolonial feminist theories, feminist studies on "race"/ethnicity, critical whiteness studies, and contemporary migration studies that use postcolonial theories. Since "looking different" is talked about by my informants as a bodily difference that is intertwined with gendered difference, there is also a need to study "looking different" in the context of gendered difference and in relation to the body. Therefore, I also rely on feminist theories of gender that deal with questions of the body and the biological, and on

feminist theories of race that address materiality. Next, I introduce the key concepts and the main theoretical perspectives.

2.2.1 Phenotypical difference, whiteness and hybridity

In this dissertation, "looking different" means looking different from majoritized Norwegians. In this sense, the transnational adoptees that I interviewed "look different." I discuss this difference as a *phenotypical difference*. Phenotype is originally a biological term, which refers to "any observable characteristic or trait of an organism."[22] Recently, it has been borrowed by social scientists, particularly in race/ethnicity studies and critical whiteness studies, to discuss how specific visible physical features, most prominently skin colour, are reified to mark racial or ethnic boundaries (Wallman 1986:229; Alcoff 1999: 40, 43; Berg 2008, Hübinette and Tigervall 2009).

In order to explore how "looking different" becomes significant for transnational adoptees in relation to Norwegianness, I explore whether and how the power relations behind this difference-making process operate through the notion of "race." In other words, I examine whether and how this difference-making process is also a process of doing "race". Phenotypical difference, with its focus on racialized bodily features, is therefore a useful concept in the analysis of transnational adoptees' lived experiences of "looking different" in Norway. It helps focus the analysis on how the transnational adoptees face questions of *not being white*.

To examine how transnational adoptees negotiate "looking different," I focus on the process through which they do, construct, and perform whiteness. Here, phenotypical difference is useful, because it reminds us that in addition to physical bodily features, other phenotype markers like clothing and behaviors can be significant in the processes through which a difference is produced. In this way, *phenotypical difference* not only helps me examine of the ways in which "looking different" is a question of doing "race" or of "race" thinking. Furthermore, it helps me examine how "race" is produced, performed and reproduced in a process of negotiation. Theoretically, I understand "race" as a relational phenomenon, and

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[22] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenotype (last download date: 2011.05.28)

not as a biological category. I discuss this further when elaborating on the concept of *racialization*.

Whiteness is another concept that I use in this analysis. Using the definition from critical whiteness studies, I understand whiteness not only as reference to the phenotype of the majority population in western society, but also to their privileged positions or "locations that are historically, socially, politically and culturally produced" (Frankenberg 1993: 6). When I say that transnational adoptees do or perform whiteness in negotiating their phenotypical difference, whiteness refers to "a set of normative cultural practices" (ibid: 228).

When exploring how whiteness is negotiated and performed by my informants, I find that they have constructed a whiteness that is not white. The question is thus how to understand this whiteness. To answer this question, I find the concept of *hybridity* useful. Developed by key postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha (1994), Stuart Hall (1990), and Paul Gilroy (1993), this concept helps us understand hybrid identities and cultures as a colonial and postcolonial effect. Homi Bhabha, for example, develops the notion of *hybridity* in relation to "a Third Space" of cultural enunciation, in which all cultural statements and systems are constructed through an ambivalent act of interpretation (Bhabha 1994: 37). With the introduction of "the Third Space," Bhabha challenges the colonial hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or "purity" of cultures and thus opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity "that entertains differences" yet "without an assumed or imposed hierarchy (ibid: 4). Further, Bhabha's hybridity theory says that the colonized and the colonizer are mimicking and contaminating each other and thus create a new kind of subject – the hybridized (Bhabha 1994 in Hübinette 2007: 184).

I mainly use Bhabha's hybridity theory to examine my informants' non-white whiteness or Norwegianness. I argue that when my informants position themselves in a majority Norwegian position in interviews, they perform a hybridized whiteness. As the power relations in the process in which they experience being racialized and minorized to some extent is similar to that between the colonizer and the colonialized, I think Bhabha's notion of hybridity is productive. It focuses the analysis on how adoptees' whiteness/ Norwegianness is performed through a negotiation of the phenotypical difference which is produced through "race" thinking. This use of hybridity also fits with my non-

essentialist understanding of the concept *identity*. When studying identity and identity work, my focus is on an ongoing process of what I call "identity-in-making" that occurs through concrete situational interactions. To study identity in this way, I need a theoretical tool that works against essentialist understandings of identity. To study my informants' whiteness or Norwegianness as a hybrid or a hybridized one challenges the essentialist understanding of being Norwegian and Norwegianness. I elaborate further on non-essentialist understandings of identity in 2.4.

2.2.2 Exploring the *othering* process: racialization, ajoritization/minoritization, and racism

In this dissertation, I examine processes of inclusion/exclusion through which some are included in the Norwegian "we," while others are excluded. I understand this as a process of *othering*. The concept of *othering* was first developed based on Edward Said's study of orientalism. Said shows that the construction of the Orient has been fundamental in defining "Europe (or the West) [functioning] as its contrasting image, idea, personality and experience" (Said 2003: 1-2). The Orient has become one of the Europe's "deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (ibid: 1). In other words, through a process of othering in which the Orient is produced as the essentially different *Other* in contrast to the West or Europe, a binary division between two unequal power positions has been constructed: the West as the dominant, strong and progressive one, and the Oriental as the subordinated, weak and backward one.

The concept of othering is thus useful to explain how the division between a Norwegian majority and a migrant minority is made and remade. In order to keep my analytical focus on processes, I use the concepts of *majoritizing/minoritizing* or *majoritization/minoritization* to illustrate that the majority and the minority are unstable categories that are mutually constructed through an inclusion/ exclusion's process (see also Brah 2003, Staunæs 2004, Berg et al. 2010). Through a minoritizing process, some are market as "the Other" (Brah 2003 in Berg et, al 2010: 20). In other words, minoritizing and majoritizing processes can be studied as *othering* processes within an Orientalist discourse.

According to Said, Orientalism is a subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudice against non-Western peoples or people of color and their cultures, and it includes particular assumptions about "race" through which invidious racial stereotypes

have been produced (Said 2003 in Mcleod 2010: 44-45). Thus, by studying the Norwegian majority-minority division as an othering process, I examine how "race" works to shape the majority-minority division. In this analysis, I also rely on the concept of *racialization*, which is broadly used in feminist postcolonial theory. In short, racialization can be said to describe a constant process of doing "race" (Berg 2008). Feminist postcolonial studies of "race" apply the concept in two different ways. These can be briefly summarized as, "Who and what are being racialized?"

In her book "Det norske sett med nye øyne"[23] (2002), Marianne Gullestad defined racialization as the "categorization of *other* people on the basis of characteristics that are assumed to be innate"[24] (Gullestad 2002: 117). Later, in "Plausible prejudice" (2006), she redefined the concept by removing the word "other" (Gullestad 2006:25). In this redefinition, Gullestad clarifies that both self and other are racialized through the process of racialization. This change in Gullestad's definition reflects a disagreement within feminist postcolonial studies, not least in the Nordic countries, on whether we should include or exclude the white unmarked majority "we" in the study of the construction of "race." For example, a group of postcolonial Nordic feminist researchers have applied the concept of racialization to address the connections *between* biological racism which legitimized colonialism *and* the discrimination and cultural racism experienced by those who migrated to Nordic countries from non-western countries (Mulinari et al. 2009: 4, see also Hübinette and Tigervoll 2009: 121). In applying the concept of racialization to the study of migrant minorities' experience with discrimination and racism, these researchers have adopted an approach that excludes the experience of majorities from studies of racializing processes.

On the other hand, researchers who intend to include majorities in studying racialization, claim that "whiteness," as the unmarked majority position, is a

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[23] In English, "The Norwegian seen with new eyes."

[24] My translation and emphasis. In Norwegian "Kategorisering av andre mennesker med referanse til antatt medfødte karateristika." My translation is made in relation to her (re)definition of the concept in her English book "Plausible prejudice" (2006). Even though Gullestad have given us two different definitions of racialization in two books, she uses the same majority-inclusive approach in her analyses in both books. Therefore, I consider her redefinition in 2006 to be a clarification rather than a change of perspective.

racialized construction. Further they emphasize that minority and majority positions are mutually constructed (Staunæs 2003, Staunæs and Søndergaard 2006, Berg 2008, Berg et al. 2010). Relying on a poststructuralist understanding of categories, and an analytical focus on processes of *doing*, these scholars develop a *majority-inclusive approach* and argue that social categories such as "race"/ethnicity and gender are not exclusively related to ethnic (racialized) minorities or women (Staunæs 2003). Instead, racialization must be examined as a relational phenomenon (Berg 2008).

When racialization is used to scrutinize minorities' experience of racism and discrimination, the first approach highlights the unbalanced power relations between the racially constructed categories, for example, the white majorities, and the immigrant minorities from non-western countries. This approach to *racialization* seems to enable my analysis of how my informants, as transnational adoptees, experience being minoritized because of specific phenotypical differences, such as skin colour, eye shape and hair colour. However, I also find that there are two ways in which this approach can limit my analysis.

First, in this approach, I need to pre-determine two categories and decide who belongs to the majority and who belongs to the minority. Anne-Jorunn Berg has discussed the problem she and her colleagues faced when conducting a project on the meaning of the term "ethnic minority women" (in Norwegian "innvandrerekvinner") – whom should they choose to interview as "ethnic minority women"[25] (Berg 2008)? Similarly, I ask whether I can pre-categorize my informants or adoptees as minorities. If I do, how do I account for the negotiating processes through which my informants position themselves as part of the majority? Therefore, the first approach will inhibit my analysis of how my informants negotiate the transnational-adoption related differences in the identity work around Norwegianness. In addition, the understanding of majoritization and minoritization as relational processes that mutually construct the majority-minority dichotomy suggests that racialization as a process of doing "race" or making "race" relevant is a two-way process.

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[25] The project is named "likhet og forsjellighet i konstruksjoner av kjønn og etnisitet" (See Gullikstad, Lauritsen et al. 2002).

The second problem is that even though the first approach, with its emphasis on the unbalanced power relations between the racially constructed categories, illustrates the historical continuity with the colonial past through the remaining effect of "race," it may lead me to ignore *change*. In other words, how "race" thinking and its logic currently works and operates in a new and more disguised form. As my interview data show, "race" as a purely biological concept that is naturalized to explain people's phenotypical differences, is not the only difference-making element that operates in the majoritizing/minoritizing process. Other elements like culture, class, gender, dialect and even the background of being adopted, may also be appropriated to mark my informants' majority position.

Therefore, in my use of *racialization*, I rely on the majority-inclusive approach as my general theoretical frame. I have previously argued that the difference-making process of "looking different" in relation to Norwegianness and how my informants deal with it constitutes a way of doing whiteness. Here, I also want to add that a majority-inclusive approach to racialization is one of the key points developed in critical whiteness studies. Frankenberg, for example, argues that to speak of whiteness is "to assign everyone a place in the relation of racism" (Frankenberg 1993: 6).

Racism and racist discrimination are the topics that I had discussed with my informants in the interviews, particularly in relation to their experience of being racialized and minoritized. One theoretical question I focus on in this analysis is how to explain the relations between the concepts of racialization and racism, or how to understand racism in relation to the process of racialization. To illuminate this question, I have referred to the Norwegian debates about racism (e.g. Lien 1997, Høgmo 1997, Gullestad 2002, Rogstad and Midtbøen 2010). Once central question in this debate is whether racism requires a negative or racist intention. I find that racialization can provide a more fruitful approach to understand racism. One problem with focus on intention in the definition of racism is that when studied empirically, it is difficult to uncover an actor's intention. How can we know whether a person's intention is good or bad?

In this study, I have chosen an ANT (Actor-Network-Theory) inspired approach to basic sociological concepts like actor and action, instead of a traditional sociological approach such as Parson's (1991[1951]). Consistent with the ANT

approach, I study racism or racist actions as specific hurtful and harmful effects of a disadvantageous process of racialization, effects that are enacted through people's communication/interactions (see also Høgmo 1997, Gullestad 2002).

2.2.3   Intersectionality as a feminist postcolonial critique of postcolonial theories of "race"

Intersectionality is another feminist concept that is central to my analysis. With its intellectual roots in feminist critical race theories and feminist standpoint theories (e.g. Crenshaw 1989, 1994; Collins 2000), this concept can be read in relation to feminist postcolonial critiques of androcentric postcolonial theories that ignore gender and exclude women's experience and subjectivity (e.g. Mills 1998, McClintock 1995). Intersectionality also challenges a self-interested Eurocentric western feminism that ignored the issue of race and thus produced "third world/women of color" as racialized others (e.g. Mohanty 1984, Alexander and Mohanty 1997, Oyewumi 2002). Thus, intersectionality is a way for feminist postcolonial scholars to examine the ways in which various socially and culturally constructed categories interact on multiple levels and manifest as inequality in society; it also helps to explore how these categories intersect in constituting our daily lives (Phoenix and Pattynama 2006).

An intersectional perspective means that when I explore how "race" is produced as a difference-making category in the majoritizing/minoritizing process, I pay attention to how this difference-making process is interwoven or co-constituted with other difference-making processes. In this way, intersectionality works as a concept that keeps scholars sensitive to the complexities in researching people's lived experience and enables analyses of aspects we normally do not consider relevant(Berg et al. 2010: 26, 29). For example, I ask if the majoritization/minoritization is about a process of doing "race" and whether "race" as a difference-making category works alone. Are there any other power relations involved? In my interview data, I find that processes of racialization and gendering are interwoven. In other words, at the time when "race" is produced and made relevant, gender is produced and made relevant simultaneously. "Race" and gender are so intertwined that I cannot merely focus on the racialization process independently of the gendering process. Therefore, intersectionality is a useful theoretical concept through which to explore the intersection and co-constitution of "race" and gender in my data. I scrutinize how "race" and gender as *different*

difference-making categories, representing two different power relations, work together in my informants' lived experience of being minoritized.

Though the notion of intersectionality may sound simple, its application in empirical studies is rather complicated and involves different theoretical and methodological approaches to categories, as well as different analytical levels[26] (see Berg et al. 2010). In this study I have chosen a constructionist and interactionist understanding of identities. In addition, I have also chosen a poststructuralist approach to study categories like "race" and gender – that is, "race" and gender are studied as processes of doing "race" and doing "gender." Therefore, when applying intersectionality in my analyses, I use a non-additive, intracategorical approach (see Staunæs 2003, Berg et al. 2010). This means that in my analyses I avoid considering "race" and gender to be pre-determined categories that people carry or wear "in uniforms," and that together can strengthen the minoritizing process. Instead, I focus on how "race" and gender are mutually constituted and performed in an interwoven process of racialization and gendering.

This intracategorical approach alerts me to how the production or performance of one category of difference can "overshadow" the production or performance of another category of difference; this is what Danish feminist researcher Dorthe Staunæs describes as "saturation" (Staunæs 2003:107). This approach is particularly useful in the exploration of how my informants negotiate phenotypical difference by engaging different categories of differences in the interviews.

When the categories of "race" and gender are to be analyzed as processes of doing "race" and gender, this means that the analysis must work against essentialist understandings of these categories. Yet to conduct an intersectional analysis of "race" and gender, I also need them to be somewhat stable analytical categories. Thus, as Jasmin Gunaratnam argues, in researching "race"/ethnicity,

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[26] For example, Leslie McCall identifies three different approaches to categories in studying intersectional complexities: *anticategorical, intracategorical* and *intercategorical* (McCall 2005). Nira Yuval-Davis separates four different intersectional analytical levels: *organizational/institutional*, *intersubjective*, *experiential* and *representative* (Yuval-Davis 2006).

scholars need to work both *with* and *against* racial and ethnic categories at the level of epistemology and methodology (Gunaratnam 2003: 29). This kind of "doubled research practice" (ibid:29) is not only relevant to researching "race" and ethnicity, but also to gender and to the intersections of these categories. Gunaratnam uses specific examples to explain how such a "doubled research practice" can be achieved by "attending to the complex effects and mediations of ethnic and racial categories *in situ*[27]" (ibid: 42). She writes:

> *In this attention to localized dynamics, the discursive connections that ethnicity and 'race' maintain with the wider social and historical context can be traced and mapped. At the same time, we are also able to address how racial and ethnic categories are infected and differentiated in the local, although it might appear* **as if** *they had unchanging, transcendent qualities and meanings." (ibid: 42)*

Gunaratnam's approach suggests that when exploring the intersection of "race" and gender in my informants' lived experience, it is necessary to pay special attention to the contexts in which "race" and gender are made relevant and meaningful. In doing so, I find that the body gets significantly involved in the intertwined process of racialization and gendering, because both "race" and gender are performed and made meaningful through an interpretation of the body. For example, when my informants describe how they were both racialized and gendered because they "look different," they talked about their phenotypical differences as bodily differences that are perceived to be biological. Then how to deal with this involvement of the body when I intend to conduct a doubled research practice, working both with and against categories? With this question, I move to the next part of my discussion.

2.2.4 The body that matters – feminist theories of gender and "race" that deal with the question of the body/biology and materiality

As I explained, I have chosen to study "race" and gender as social phenomena that are produced and performed in social relations, instead of seeing them as biological properties or categories. Yet how should I then understand my data that show that doing of "race" and gender does involve bodily differences and

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27 The author's original emphasis.

biology? Should I for example distinguish between biological gender ("sex") and a social gender, and then leave the question of the body outside my analysis? Is it possible to include the body and bodily differences in a study of "race" and gender as social constructs? To answer these questions, I have referred to the feminist gender theories that deal with the biological or the body, and to those who try to bridge the gaps between biology and social science in understandings of gender (e.g. Butler 1993, Birke 2003, Fausto-Sterling 2003).

For example, Anne Fausto-Sterling makes it clear that a division between sex and gender is problematic because it prevents us from looking at the complex mutual interactions between the biological being and the social environment (Fausto-Sterling 2003). Furthermore, to leave "sex" outside the feminist discussion of gender as a social and cultural practice, will make feminism vulnerable to a new tide of biological difference (ibid: 123). Fausto-Sterling's argument thus suggests that including the body in my discussion of gender as a social phenomenon strengthens my analysis. In this context I find Judith Butler's theorization of the social construction of gender as an *embodied* performance particularly useful (Butler 1993, 1999). Butler's work makes possible to examine the participation of the body in the process through which gender is produced and made relevant in social relations. Though Butler only discusses gender, "race" can be studied similarly as an embodied practice of doing "race." Therefore, in my analysis of how "race" and gender are made relevant in the informants' experiences of being minoritized, I analyze the processes of doing "race" and gender as embodied practices.

Though both "race" and gender are social phenomena constructed through social relations, "race" and gender do have materiality in people's lived experienced, not least because they have real visible racialized and gendered effects (see Alcoff 2006). Therefore, I study how my informants involve their bodies in performances of gender and "race" in combination, and as the real effects of their experiences of being racialized and gendered. In other words, my analytical focus is on the meaning-making process in which the body and bodily differences are made meaningful in my informants' lived experiences of gender and "race."

2.3   Exploring the meaning of adoption – is biology (ir)relevant?

In this dissertation I have assumed that adoption is relevant to adoptees' identity work in relation to Norwegianness. I explore how my informants construct the meaning of adoption in relation to Norwegianness. For example, do they feel less Norwegian, because they are adopted, or because they were not born Norwegian?

In anthropological studies, adoption is often studied in relation to procreation, kinship, parenthood/childhood and families. The Norwegian anthropologist and adoption researcher Signe Howell writes that, "(transnational) adoption is about making kinship (… and) creating significant kinned society when biology fails to do the job" (Howell 2006: 34). Thus, adoption, when understood as an alternative way of making kinship through social practices, is often considered *secondary* when compared with a naturalized making of kinships through biology or blood ties. Furthermore, because the biological model of procreation is used as the central reference to the study of kinship, kinships made through social practice such as adoption tend to be considered "*fictive*" (ibid: 38). The centrality of biology in understanding adoption as a kinship-making practice can be expressed through the saying, "Blood is thicker than water."

The Norwegian literary scholar and adoption researcher Geir Follevåg, points out that biology has been central to nearly all research and thinking about adoption. He sees this as biocentrism[28] (Follevåg 2002, 2006). By *biocentrism*, Follevåg intends to highlight a dichotomous and hierarchical structure and a normalizing process where the biological is constructed as normal and positive while adoption is constructed as abnormal and negative (Follevåg 2006:25-26). As an adoptee himself, he is especially critical of dominant research on adoptees' identities, such as that conducted by H. David Kirk (1964), Betty Lifton (1990), and Monica Dalen and Barbro Sætersdal (1999). He argues that these studies all emphasize the

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[28] In Norwegian "biologisentrisme". Later, with inspirations from feminist and postcolonial theories, Follevåg has further developed the term as "*biologocentrism*" to highlight the power relations in the dichotomous and hierarchical structure between the *biological* and the *adoptive*, in a similar pattern as between *men* and *women* in the term *androcentrism*, the *white/European/western* and *the colored/non-European/oriental* in the term *ethnocentrism* (see Follevåg 2006: 25-26). In this dissertation, I use *biocentrism* instead of *biologocentrism*.

importance of biological roots in relation to the identity formation. When adoptees' identities are studied like this, they are as a starting point understood as problematic, incomplete and always lacking something. He also warns that such a biocentric understandings of identity follows the same logics as racism and neo-Nazism, and can thus have dangerous consequences (Follevåg 2002: 32, 47).

Follevåg's critique of biocentrism in adoption research fits with my anti-essentialist understanding of identity. His critique also reminds me that in order to study identity as a relational and interactive process of acting and of being enacted, I need a different understanding of adoption than a biocentric one.

Signe Howell is another critic of biocentrism in adoption studies. Howell argues that even though adoption, as a social practice of making kinship, is meaningless without a biological model for kinship as a reference, it is important to emphasize that kinship is in the final analysis a "kinned relatedness" (Howell 2006: 38). Further, she introduces the concept of *kinning*, by which she means "a process by which a foetus or newborn child is brought into a significant and permanent relationship with a group of people, and the connection is expressed in a conventional kin idiom" (ibid: 8). According to Howell, adoption is an extreme example of such a *kinning* process, but not a unique one (ibid: 9). In my view, Howell's approach provides a *non-biocentric* perspective on adoption. This approach is consistent with my sociological understanding of identity. In addition, it helps me analyze whether and how being adopted is an (ir)relevant difference in my informants' identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

However, when I claim to adopt a *non-biocentric* perspective, it does not mean that biology is not meaningful at all. When my informants told me how they experienced being minoritized, they talked about their phenotypical difference mainly as a racialized and gendered *bodily* difference, where biology was explicitly made relevant and meaningful. As I already discussed, to deal with the question of the body and biology, I focus on the meaning-making process through which these are made significant to my informants.

2.4   Exploring identity and identity work

To study how transnational adoptees negotiate the difference of "looking different" and "being adopted," I study it as a process of how they do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. Yet, what do I mean by identity work? How do I understand the concept identity?

2.4.1   A sociological interactionist understanding of identity

Identity is a topical issue, both in our daily lives and in academic inquiry, either as a personal project in relation to one's self-reflexivity in the changing late modern/postmodern age (e.g. Giddens 1991; Beck et al. 1994; Bauman 1995), or as identity politics. However, it is not easy to define identity. The concept of identity can be defined very differently by different theoretical approaches and in different disciplines. In a sociological study like mine, it is important to point out that the sociological conception of identity differs from that in the psychodynamic tradition, where identity is studied in relation to an "inner core" of a psychic structure (Scott and Marshall 2005: 287). This is the case even though the psychodynamic understanding of identity is more influential in our daily use of the term, in the sense that we always relate identity to questions such as, "Who am I?" or "What is the real me?" Instead of the "real me," sociologists focus on social relations. They study identity as a process where we constantly identify or dis-identify with significant others. Identi*y* in sociological studies is thus a question of identification (Hall 1996, Lawler 2008).

The British sociologist Steph Lawler points out that when identifying with others, we always simultaneously deal with *sameness* and *difference*, because all identities are relational – that is, to identify as something relies on "not being something else" (Lawler 2008:3). This perspective is important to my study, as it points out that identity not only involves a process of identifying, but also a process where we need to work with or negotiate differences in order to be identified as the same – which is exactly what I mean by identity work. Thus, I want to study whether and how, in order to be identified as Norwegians, transnational adoptees need to work with adoption-related differences: the difference of "looking different" and the difference of "being adopted." For example, are these differences relevant to their being identified as Norwegian? If they are relevant, what can transnational adoptees do with these differences in

order to be included in the Norwegian "we," or be considered "the same" as other Norwegians?

To answer both questions, I analyze the social relations that transnational adoptees experience, and look at specific interactions in which particular differences are perceived as relevant or irrelevant. It is also in these social interactions that transnational adoptees do identity work, for example to make relevant differences that others consider irrelevant. This approach means that I concurrently employ a constructionist and interactionist understanding of identity. Here, identity is understood as being unstable, fluid, context-dependent, and always involving on-going processes of social interactions with others (e.g. Goffman 1971, Potter and Whetherell 1987: 95-115, Gullestad 2002:64). Within this approach, I study identity or identity work in contextual and situational interactions where the two involved parties are constantly positioned in relation to each other (for example, in relation to a majority and a minority positions) in an ongoing process of interaction. It is in this process that specific identities are produced and performed, or, in the term used in this dissertation, *enacted*. In other words, in studying identity, I emphasize a process of doing or enacting identity. Next, I explain how I study identity as a form of interaction and as an *enactment*.

2.4.2   Identity as enactment

I study identity as something that is *enacted* through our actions and interactions with others. This also means studying identity as a concrete enactment in specific interacting situations, first and foremost the interview situations. This methodological application of the interactionist perspective is further discussed in the next chapter. Here, I continue to explain how I study identity as enactment.

In social science, the term "enact" first appeared in the study of organizational psychology, mostly in the work of Karl Weick (1969) in his "enactment theory": when people act they bring structures and events into existence and set them in action. Later, the term "enactment" has been borrowed by Science and Technology Studies (STS) to show how different realities have been enacted or constructed in knowledge production (Law 2004, Mol 2002), and how transdisciplinary knowledges can change over time while both conserving forms of authority and shifting the terms of authority (King 2011).

Literally, the word "enact" has two different meanings: the first one is to "make (a law), decree, ordain"; and the second one is to "perform on, or as though on, the stage of a theatre."[29] My sociological understanding of *enact(ment)* takes the word's second meaning as its starting point. In sociology, Erving Goffman has applied a dramaturgical approach to the study of human interaction. He compared self-presentation in face-to-face interactions to a kind of performance on a stage (Goffman 1971). Therefore, identity is not about who the person is, but how the person performs in relation to others, that is, how s/he acts and reacts. The idea of conceptualizing identity as a kind of performance is not only found in sociological theories, but also in entertainment jargon.[30]

Judith Butler's theory of *performativity* shows that gender is performative and that what we take to be the "internal" essence of gender is "one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts, at an extreme, a hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures" (Butler 1999: XV). Butler's performative understanding of a gendered identity is useful to my study because she emphasizes that identity as a process of performing is also an embodied practice.

Though Butler's speech-act-theory-inspired approach to performativity is fundamentally different from Goffman's symbolic interactionist approach, Steph Lawler has successfully combined the two approaches in her own theory of identity as a masquerading, or *a self-impersonation* (Lawler 2008, chapter 6)*.* For Lawler, thinking about the relatedness and differences between the two approaches is important and productive when thinking about identity. For example, she considers both approaches to enable conceptualizations of identity as something that is performed and achieved rather than innate. Most importantly, it is not achieved in isolation (ibid: 104). For Lawler, while there is an emphasis on the actor's interaction with an audience in Goffman's work, Butler's theory of performativity shows that gender is always achieved in a social context, a social order, or indeed a discourse (ibid). Based on these related but different

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[29] Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English with Chinese Translation (1987)

[30] In the popular Norwegian televised singing competition "X factor," the juries have commented that good performances showed a "strong identity."

perspectives, Lawler has developed her own concept of "impersonation" to describe the performing/performative aspect of identities. She explains,

> *While we are accustomed to understanding 'impersonation' as meaning fraudulently or otherwise assuming the characteristics of **another person**, I am using it here to mean a process by which we assume characteristics we claim as our own. Through this process, we become (social) persons through performing ourselves. (ibid: 103-104; original emphasis)*

Lawler's theory of impersonation is similar to the way in which I conceptualize *enactment*. Both are sociological concepts and are closely related to the understanding of identity as a relational and interactional process of doing and performing.

Yet, to study identity as enactment also involves an understanding of sociological concepts like "actor" "act", and "agency." To return to Karl Weick's "enactment theory": when people act, they bring structures and events into existence and set them in action (Weick 1969), which in turn illustrates the difference between *enact* and *act*. In the traditional sociological understanding (for example in Parson's theory of action), "to act" means that an actor acts rationally based on specific intentions, goals or motives, through calculating gain and loss in relation to the means and conditions (Parsons 1991[1951]). Put differently, "to enact" means "to set something/somebody in action." This definition is reminiscent of French sociologist and ANT-theorist Bruno Latour's new definition of "actor," developed to produce a new way of thinking about the social and a new way of doing sociology. According to Latour and other ANT-theorists, an actor is *not* the source of action, in contrast to what is commonly believed in traditional sociology. "An actor is what is made to act by many others" in an actor-network, or indeed a worknet, according to Latour (Latour 2005: 46). Furthermore, in an ANT perspective, humans as well as objects have agency[31] and are actors (ibid).

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[31] Latour's conceptualizations of "actor" and "agency" are rather complex and need to be understood in the context of his overall elaboration of ANT. One difficulty in reading Latour is that he uses certain words (for example, "actor" and "agency") in a double sense – both their meaning in the old (or traditional) sociological sense and in his new way of conceptualizing the social. "Agency" is a term he borrows from traditional sociology, but he introduces a different meaning for the term. In short, agency in a Latourian sense is the

This is an innovative understanding of *actor* and *act*. However, in my reading of Latour, I am more concerned with the theory's continuity with earlier, more traditional sociological theories. One such continuity lies precisely in Latour's conceptualization of *act*. When explaining what he means by *act*, Latour borrows the notion of *performing* on a theatre stage by referencing Goffman. He says:

> To use the word 'actor' means that it's never clear who and what is acting when we act since an actor on stage is never alone in acting. Play-acting puts us immediately into a thick imbroglio where the question of who is carrying out the action has become unfathomable. As soon as the play starts, as Erving Goffman has so often showed, nothing is certain: Is this for real? Is it fake? Does the audience's reaction count? What about lighting? What is the backstage crew doing? Is the playwright's message faithfully transported or hopelessly bungled? Is the character carried over? And if so, by what? What are the partners doing? Where is the prompter? If we accept to unfold the metaphor, the very word actor directs our attention to a complete dislocation of the action, warning us that it is not a coherent, controlled, well-rounded, and clean-edged affair. (Latour 2005:46)

As we can see, what Latour addresses in his conceptualization of *acting* is in line with what Goffman and other interactionists (e.g Mead [1962] and Blumer [1969]) emphasize as the *relational* aspect of social actions and interactions. Therefore, the study of identity as a specific enactment covers my interactionist approach to identity and identity work as performance. In this dissertation, I use both "perform" and "enact" to discuss the *doing* of identity, or the process of creating identity, yet with a slightly different emphasis.

When exploring how gender and "race" are performed in a way that includes the participation of the body, I use Butler's notion of embodied performance. When my informants involve their bodies to perform gender and "race," this is also a performance of particular gendered and racialized identities. Therefore, when I

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ability to do something or making a difference. Or we can briefly summarize Latour's conception in this formula: Agency (Latourian sense) = actors + objects (in old sociological sense) = actant (a new term coined by Latour) (see Wu et al. 2008).

discuss how my informants strategically engage their bodies, for example, through certain ways of talking, gestures etc, to convince an audience of their identity, I use term "perform" to emphasize that such identity work is an embodied practice. Elsewhere, I use "enact."

My use of enact/enactment contains the notion of performing/performance. However, the concept of enactment is more than performance. It also contains an ANT-inspired approach to inquiry into the multiplicity or non-convergence to singularity of realities (Mol 2002, Law 2004). My interview data shows that all my informants enacted Norwegianness, but they were Norwegians, or performed Norwegianness, in very different ways. In other words, there is no universal or singular Norwegianness that is enacted; on the contrary, it is creatively enacted through multiple interacting practices. At the same time, I also use enact/enactment to stress that when something is performed, it is also an achievement with specific real effects. Something is enacted as real. Not only identities, but also differences can be enacted very differently. When discussing how my informants negotiate adoption-related differences when doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness, I also apply feminist STS-researcher Ingunn Moser's concept of "interference" (Moser 2006) to discuss how *different* realities of difference can be enacted in the same moment of interaction in a negotiation process.

2.5   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced key concepts and theoretical approaches that I apply in my analyses. When elaborating on these theoretical approaches, I have discussed how I am going to apply them in my analyses so that they facilitate my analyses. In other words, what I have done in this chapter is to build my own theoretical framework. In addition, in building the theoretical framework for my study, I have paid attention to how to combine different theories and apply them in such a way that the different theoretical approaches are compatible with each other.

When conducting this study, I have examined my own position or situatedness in relation to the production of knowledge. Here, I have mostly engaged with feminist epistemological theories, particularly feminist standpoint theories and

Donna Haraway's "situated knowledges." Since this is an important part of my study, I discuss these theories separately in chapter 4.

When explaining how concepts and theories are to be applied, I have briefly included some of my empirical data. Yet, how have this data been collected or produced in my research practice? What research methods and methodological considerations have I included when working with these data? How have I processed the data in conducting the analyses? These questions will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3:   Research design and research practice

3.1   Introduction

This chapter deals with the question of methodology. David Silverman defines *methodology* as "a general approach to studying research topics" (Silverman 2005: 109), including "choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis, etc. in a planning and executing a research study" (ibid: 99). Since methodology is closely related to how knowledge has been developed and produced through the research process, it is important to document the validity of the study. For me, to write the methodology chapter is about making links: linking the research questions to the research design, linking research design (what I planned to do) to the research practice (what I have actually done), linking the collected empirical data to the selected theoretical approaches and analytical methods, and finally linking analysis back to the research questions. All in all, this is about accounting for how certain methodological choices shape the research design and practice so that the research questions can be satisfactorily discussed and answered.

3.2 Choice of research method and recruitment of interview informants

When studying how transnational adoptees negotiate and deal with particular transnational adoption-related differences to do identity work in relation to Norwegianness, my research focus is on the meaning-making negotiating process in which the differences are made relevant or meaningful to their enactment of Norwegianness. It is also through this meaning-making process in which inclusion and exclusion are negotiated and done that I explore how Norwegianness and the Norwegian "we" are constructed in the present multiethnic/multicultural Norwegian society. Based on this research focus, I examine transnational adoptees' reflexive narratives about their experiences of looking different, of how their adoption-background is made meaningful to their Norwegianness, and what they do when the differences matter. I have therefore chosen to use qualitative data.

The easiest way to collect such narratives is to rely on existing texts. For example, the Swedish adoption researchers Tobias Hübinette and Carina Tigervall, chose to analyze a corpus of published adoption memoirs written by adult adoptees and adoptive parents to analyze experiences of racialization (Hübinette and Tigervall 2008, 2009). Such published self-narratives can also be found in Norway, including Follevåg's *Adoptert identitet*[32] (2002), Ane Ramm's *Adoptert*[33] (2007), articles and readers' feedback published in the adoption associations' magazines, as well as posts published during internet debates about transnational adoption. Celebrities who are adopted from other countries have also produced narratives about their experience of being adoptees in Norway. For example, some of the these texts can be found in Hadia Tajik's (ed.) *Svart på hvitt*[34] (2001). Therefore, when designing this research project, I considered text analysis as optional. Yet, when collecting such published texts written by adoptees in Norway, I found that few texts directly touch on my research questions about adoptees dealing with differences in relation to Norwegianness. This suggested that I needed to collect more data.

My first intention was to collect more narratives from transnational adoptees, so that these collected texts together with the existing published texts written by adoptees could be analyzed as whole. Yet, I also wondered whether people were willing to take the time to write their life stories (or autobiography[35]) just for the purpose of research. As Atkinson and Silverman (1997: 111) suggest, in today's so-called "interview society," where mass media products like "talk show" and "celebrity interviews" are popular, people may be more willing to be interviewed to make sense of their lives. In order to let more possibilities open at this early stage, when contacting the potential informants, I provided them with two choices: either they could send me their written life stories or autobiographies, or they could participate in an individual interview with me.

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[32] In English "Adopted identity" (my translation).

[33] In English "Being adopted" (my translation).

[34] In English "Black on white" (my translation).

[35] Both "(life) stories" and "autobiography" were used in the invitation. In spite of the differences between the two terms, I used them interchangeably to invite reflexive narratives on how transnational adoptees, experience growing up and living in Norway.

I began to contact potential participants in the summer of 2009, after the project was registered and approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD[36]). An advertisement about my project and a call for adult transnational adoptees (age 18 or older) to participate in my project was published on the websites for "*Verdens Barn*" and "*Adopsjonsforum*" (see appendix 1). Besides the age requirement, another requirement I set for the selection of informants was that they should not have a typical Norwegian appearance. The response was meager. Through this channel, I recruited five informants. Thereafter, I again contacted "*Verdens Barn*" and another organization for transnational adoptees. From them I got a contact list of persons who might be interested in participating in the study. After individual contact (by email, SMS, or telephone) with the persons on the lists, seven people agreed to participate in my project as my informants. In addition, I recruited three more informants through "snow-balling."

Among the fifteen informants, two chose to write their life stories, and the rest agreed to participate in an interview. Among the two who had agreed to write life stories, one withdrew from the project later due to her busy work schedule, while the other wrote to me soon after our agreement. The written life story has around 2000 words, and the informant mainly writes about his experiences growing up and in school. Specifically, he wrote about how he experienced and coped with bullying from his peers because of his phenotypic difference (skin color and eye shape) and language problems. In the text, he also reflected on how these experiences have influenced his perception of identity.

However, when I started to analyze this informant's narrative text as well as the select published texts written by transnational adoptees, I encountered a problem, in that this data could not sufficiently answer my research questions. The written texts could have provided entry points for an investigation of how adoptees make adoption and/or their looking different meaningful in relation to Norwegianness. Yet for me, the way in which meaning is produced in the texts seemed self-evident. When reading the texts, I often felt a need to ask the authors questions about the way they understood their stories. After some time, I realized that what I lacked here was space for negotiation, which is itself an important aspect of my exploration. Interviews provide the space for such negotiations. Therefore, I

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[36] In Norwegian "Norsk samfunnsvitenkaplige datatjeneste".

decided to not do texts analysis and autobiography/life stories, and to only focus on interviews as my research method. Accordingly, I contacted the informant who had sent me his written life stories, and asked whether he was willing to participate in an interview with me. He agreed.

3.3   General information about the informants

Among the 14 informants, nine are female and five male. The youngest informant was 18 and the oldest 39 at the time of their interviews. They live all over Norway, from Tromsø in the north to Kristiansand in the south, from bigger cities like Trondheim, Tromsø, and Stavanger, to smaller villages. No informants are from Oslo or Bergen, the two biggest cities in Norway, or lived there at the time of their interview, but several had previous experience of living in Oslo to study or work.

Their countries of origin include: Korea, Colombia, Chile, India, China, and Vietnam. All informants meet my requirement that they not look phenotypically Norwegian. This is based on their own assessment: at first glance, they can easily be mistaken to be foreigners or immigrants.

These informants are what I will call average representatives of transnational adoptees in Norway – average in the sense that their life experiences are not extreme, neither positively or negatively. They are common people whom we meet in our daily lives. The only thing special is that they were adopted from another country. In daily life, they are high school or university/college students, social workers, teachers, or industrial workers. Some are married or cohabit with a partner (with and without children); some have a boyfriend or a girlfriend; some are single; and some are divorced and have children.

Besides the geographic location, country of origin, occupation, and marital status, the informants' life experiences and their opinions about issues like returning to birth countries, self-identification with birth countries, and whether to continue or stop the practice of transnational adoption, differ a lot. These different life stories have enriched my data material and shed light on a wider range of adoptees' life experiences. As to the different and even conflicting opinions among my informants, I do not aim to discuss whether they argue these points well or not, or whom I agree with or not. Instead, my analytical focus is on the

contexts in which these opinions were expressed, how they were related to the way informants positioned themselves in their interaction with me, and how Norwegianness were differently (or similarly) enacted in these differing opinions.

3.4 The interview as a research method for collecting data

3.4.1 Face-to-face interviews (F2F interviews) and computer-mediated interviews (CMIs)

During my contact with the informants[37] about how we could meet each other to do the interviews, I suddenly realized that not all the informants were willing to meet me in person. Some of them equated my request for an interview with an anonymous telephone survey when they agreed to participate in the project. Here, I learned a lesson that I should have explained more about the type of interviews I intend to conduct. After a new round of further explanation, one informant asked me whether it was possible to do the interview on phone. This was a solution I did not feel comfortable with. I have always been nervous and insecure when talking to strangers on the telephone, and furthermore the conversation would be in Norwegian, which is not my mother tongue. This would also make the recording and transcription more complicated for me. I considered doing interviews online, for example, through the instant message program MSN messenger (hereafter "MSN"). I proposed this to two informants who had difficulties meeting me in person. They both agreed. Later I also conducted two more interviews through MSN with informants who did not have problems meeting me in person. In the latter two cases, the MSN interviews were used to limit the travel expenses. This illustrates one of the most powerful advantages of computer-mediated interviews: the low cost (Mann and Stewart 2002: 607). In total, among the fourteen

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[37] Since the interview is my only research method, participants in my study are also "interviewees." Yet, I choose to call them "informants" in this dissertation to emphasize the active role they played in the process of collecting information. In other words, they did not just passively answer my questions during the interview process, but actively participated in an interactive process with me through which the information/interview data was produced and collected.

interviews I conducted, ten are face-to-face (F2F) interviews, while four are what I call "computer-mediated interviews" (CMIs).

One thing I need to specify is that during the MSN-interviews, functions like audio- and video-chatting were not used, even though one informant did suggest using web-camera the second time we met online. I intentionally avoided this, because it would be much easier for me to control the online communication by using texts via keyboard, and CMI in forms of only texts (not mixture of texts, sounds and videos) would also make the later analysis less complicated. Besides, not all CMI informants, especially those who were reluctant to meet me in person in the first place, would feel comfortable to face a stranger through the web-camera.

3.4.2   Semi-structured interview and the interview guide

Since what I intended to explore was mainly how the informants' negotiate the meanings of being adopted and looking different in relation to Norwegianness, it seemed that what I needed was in-depth interviews, where the informants share concrete stories and their reflections on these stories in relation to the topics of the study. At the same time, transnational adoption is a complex phenomenon, so I considered a well-planned structure to be important. An interview guide (see appendix 3) was thus prepared in advance and was used in both F2F interviews and CMIs. In order to emphasize the structured feature of the interviews, I chose to call my interviews *semi-structured*. With this term, I mean that I had certain standardized question in the interviews to introduce the topics I intended to discuss with every informant, while at the same time I also included non-standardized questions that allow for different opinions, stories, and constructions of meaning in the data production. In addition, I asked questions that were not in the interview guide to follow up on the informants' stories.

My interview guide may look very detailed and thus more than *semi*-structured. This touches another methodological issue I will discuss later, namely the language. Briefly put, to prepare such a detailed, well-structured interview guide was mainly because the chosen interview language (Norwegian) is not my mother tongue. Therefore, I tried to prepare for the interviews as well as possible. The interview guide has functioned in different ways as a guideline to possible questions. Generally speaking, it was used more during F2F-interviews than during CMIs. As I discuss later, it was difficult to follow the interview guide during the interviewing process for CMI due to the specific features of the communication

form. In the F2F-interviews, the more interviews I conducted, the less the interview guide was strictly followed or referred to during the interviewing process. This is mainly because I became less nervous or uncertain during the interviews. However, in all interviews I asked the informants to give me some time to go through the interview guide briefly before we ended the conversation so that I could make sure that the important issues had not been forgotten.

3.4.3   The issue of language

Before I started conducting the interviews, there is another decision I needed to make, namely language. What language shall I use during interviews, Norwegian or English? Neither is my mother tongue. At the time the interviews were conducted, I had lived in Norway for 6 years. I did not find it difficult to communicate in Norwegian in my daily life, but I did not always have confidence in my Norwegian, especially my spoken Norwegian, because certain pronunciations were (still are) difficult for me. At the same time, I considered it advantageous to do the interviews in Norwegian. This was mainly because I had experienced that many Norwegians are unwilling to speak English. Besides, I had, without considering the language issue, already sent out the information[38] (see appendix 2) about my project to the selected informant-candidates in Norwegian. Thus, those who agreed to be my informants were already under the impression that this foreign researcher can speak Norwegian.

After some thinking, I decided to conduct the interviews in Norwegian. Even though my pronunciation of some words can be difficult to understand, there are always room for questions and clarification in a conversational situation. Therefore, it would not affect the communication process significantly. Besides, using a tape recorder in the interviews could also facilitate interviews done in Norwegian. While I had chosen Norwegian as my interview language, I decided to use English as my backup language. In other words, when I had problems expressing myself in Norwegian, I used English to clarify.

In spite of the decision to conduct interviews in Norwegian, one F2F interview was conducted in English and one CMI was partially conducted in English. In both cases, the informants suggested using English as the interview language. Though

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[38] In Norwegian, "Informasjonsskriv."

English is not my mother tongue either, I consider it a more convenient language for me, not only because my English is more fluent than my Norwegian, but also because my informant and I would be placed in a more equal relationship in English (as neither of us were native English speakers). However, to agree to use English, I had also made a quick methodological evaluation. Conducting some interviews in English could provide me with an opportunity to evaluate how much the choice of language influenced the process of collecting data through interviews. Through the subsequent comparison, I can see that there was no significant difference between interviews conducted in Norwegian and in English. However, this does not mean that conducting interviews in Norwegian had not influenced the process of collecting/producing interview data. On the contrary, the language played an important role in how my informants and I positioned each other during the interviews. This will be further explained in the next chapter.

Among the ten F2F interviews, I transcribed five. A native Norwegian speaker transcribed the rest. In order to guarantee the quality of data and to improve the accuracy of the interpretation of the data, the native Norwegian speaker has reviewed all the transcripts I produced at least once. All the quotes from the interviews done in Norwegian have been translated to English in this dissertation. I have also edited some interview excerpts to make them clearer and more coherent.

3.5 A constructionist approach and an interactionist perspective

David Silverman raises an important methodological question about applying qualitative interviews as a research method: "What status will you accord to your data? … (A)re you seeking objective 'facts', subjective 'perception' or simply 'narratives'?" (Silverman 2001:83). This question touches on my methodological concern about which approach to take when using interviews to collect data. When I state that I have chosen a *constructionist*[39] approach, I mean that I

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[39] I am aware of the debates about/between *constructionism* and *constructivism* (e.g. Kjørup 2001). Since the difference between the two has little implication for my methodological choice of interview approach, I use the two terms interchangeably in this dissertation.

understand the interview data as mutually constructed through an interactive process during interviews between the informants and me as the researcher. This choice of approach is mainly determined by my research goal of examining the meaning-making and negotiating processes and my theoretical understanding of the core concept of "identity." At the same time, this methodological approach is closely related to my epistemological understanding of knowledge production as a feminist practice of "situated knowledges" (Haraway 1999), which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. As a very brief explanation, I consider interviews to provide a necessary context for my knowledge production in this study.

Consequently, this constructionist approach determines that in my analysis, it is important to study the interactions, or how the interview data is produced or constructed. This is what I mean by an "interactionist perspective," which is based on the assumption that the meaning of an action or a phenomenon is created or constructed in interactions between humans, or between humans and things (Järvingen and Mik-Meyer 2005: 10). What this *interactionist perspective* emphasizes in relation the constructionist understanding of the interviews is that the interview data are not just produced or constructed through the research practice of interviewing, but are also coproduced by *both parties to the interviews* – the interviewer (or the researcher) and the interviewees (or the informants). Therefore, I have intentionally chosen to include myself (as the interviewer/researcher) in the data as one of my analytical strategies. I elaborate on this in greater detail in the next chapter.

One main critique of constructionist approaches to interviews is that it seems to "deny the value of treating interview data as saying anything about any other reality than the interview itself" (see Silverman 2001: 97). This critique raises two important methodological issues: 1. how to treat the informants' accounts, or even before this question, whether an analytical focus on the interactive aspect of interviews would necessarily mean that interview data consist only of the interactions or communications in the interview itself; 2. how to evaluate the validity of the interview data.

To begin with the first question, I need to clarify that the constructionist approach is a very wide approach under which there are various positions. My own position in this study is close to that of Holstein and Gubrium, in what they call "the active

interview" (1995), which aims to answer both "how" questions (the interactive aspect) and the "what" question (the content of the informants' accounts). With this position, I consider both the interactions between the informants and me in the interviews and the informants' accounts, to be valuable data. Further, these two are not separate aspects of the interview data. The strength of combining the two aspects lies in that, as Holstein and Gubrium point out, it can "show the dynamic interrelatedness of the *whats* and *hows*" (Holstein and Gubrium 1997: 127).

In this study, I find that it is necessary to analyze both aspects, not only because they can supplement each other, but also that to answer my research questions, I need both *how* data and *what* data. For example, to answer the questions like how adoptees negotiate the difference that transnational adoption makes in relation to Norwegianness, and what kind of inclusion/exclusion process has been involved, I need to focus on *how*. In this way, the interview process can itself illustrate the negotiation and positioning process related to inclusion and exclusion. At the same time, to further explore the racialization process my informants experience, to discuss how of the way they make meaning of transnational adoption in relation to Norwegianness can tell something about the present Norwegian society (about how "we" and "they" are mutually constructed), I need to focus on *what*. However, if both the *whats* and *hows* are particular constructions in the particular context of the research interview, how can we know that the data are valid and can say something more general about the social world we live in and the phenomena I study? I will now move to the second question.

To consider the interview data (both *whats* and *hows*) as constructed or (co)-produced for the purpose of research does not mean that they are not real. On the contrary, as Bruto Latour clarifies,

> *To say something is constructed means that it's not a mystery that has popped out of nowhere, or that it has a more humble but also more visible and more interesting origin. (Latour 2005: 88)*

Then the question at stake here changes to whether it is well or badly constructed (ibid: 89), or back to the question I am discussing, whether my construction of data through interviews is a good, or a valid construction. In my research question, I ask how transnational adoptees negotiate the meaning-making process related

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to transnational adoption-related difference when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness. When I understand identity as something enacted through a person's interactions with others, the interviews I have conducted with the fourteen informants provides specific interactions in which meaning is negotiated and particular identities enacted. In other words, the interviews themselves (instead of what has been said in the interviews) are examples of the process I want to study. As a researcher, I am also one of the informants' *others* the informants interact with. To study a process that I have been involved in is advantageous, as I am able to critically reflect on my own role, and my own position (or positioning process in relation to the informants) in this interactive process. As I will show in the next chapter, these reflections can strengthen my analysis and research results.

At the same time, if the production of the interview data is a valid construction in relation to the research question, then the accounts given by my informants in the interviews must also be treated as valid in relation to the context in which they are produced. Hammersley and Atkinson, arguing for a constructionist approach to interviews, say that "accounts are not simply representations of the world; they are part of the world they describes" (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 107 in Silverman 2001: 95). I agree with this argument, because I do not intend to use the interviews data to mirror specific truths, e.g. about transnational adoption, or to reveal the genuine experiences or perceptions of adoptees. Rather, I would say that the informants' accounts are valid and relevant, not only because they are part of the world they describe, but also because they are part of the world that the informants and I have discussed, as well as the reality we construct together. Therefore, I consider our interactions during the interviews to be valid enactments which I intend to explore, and I consider what my informants told me to be valid accounts in relation to the specific enactments.

3.6   Methodological discussion about F2F interviews and CMIs

In collecting data, I have used two different types of interviews: F2F interviews and CMIs. In this section, I will briefly discuss the methodological issues related to my use of these types of interviews. I first discuss how the different forms of communications between F2F interviews and CMIs have affected my research

practice when collecting data. Then I discuss how I evaluate the validity of the data and finally how I handle the two types of data in the analysis.

3.6.1 Conducting F2F interviews and CMIs

F2F interviews and CMIs are different forms of communication. This difference has exerted an impact on my data collection. One difference that is easily noticed is that CMIs are much more time-consuming than F2F interviews. The F2F interviews I conducted lasted from one hour to one and a half hours. The CMIs took much longer, as typing is often more time-consuming than speaking. The longest MSN interview in this study lasted more than 7 hours, while the shortest one took more than 4 hours. But again, as an advantage, CMI saves the time-consuming process of transcribing, as the data are already textual right after the interviewing ends. However, because of the time-consuming feature of CMI, I found that after a couple of hours online, both the informants and I felt tired and were not concentrated. In order to avoid this problem, I chose to divide each CMI into two parts. Specifically, for each CMI, I met my informants twice on line and on two separate days[40]. I created a longer break between the two parts of one CMI in order to prevent exhaustion and thus secure the relevant data. I will come back to this.

However, the biggest difference I experienced with these two types of interviews during my data collection relates to context and forms of interaction. In F2F interviews, I was able to meet the informants in person, thus I was given an opportunity to observe the informants' bodily performance and facial expressions, which are valuable data for my research topic on *identities* and my theoretical understanding of it as something that is "done," "performed," or "enacted" though interactions. In CMIs, I did not have the same context. The removal of the bodies from the interview context changes the nature and form of interaction from *orality* to *textuality* (Markham 2004: 362). Thus, what I faced during the CMI process is mostly texts typed and sent in a chatting box on the screen. I often wondered how my informants reacted to my question and with what kind of facial expressions they were typing and sending me the texts.

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[40] There were 2-4 days in between, mostly depending on when we agreed to meet again.

However, I argue that this does not necessarily mean that CMI is disadvantageous compared with F2F interviews. Even in F2F interviews, it is impossible to catch all the "non-textual social cues"[41] that may be significant to the interactions. In my F2F interviews, extra attention was paid to what the informants said because of my choice of language, which means that many (but not all) of the non-textual social cues may have been ignored. At the same time, in CMIs, both my informants and I have actively applied certain symbols such as smiley face ☺ or :), laugh :-O , and Acronyms 'LOL' (laugh out loud) to compensate for the lack of visual context and to convey the mood and attitude. I also consider the noticeably more time-consuming nature of the informants' response significant, as it can indicate whether a response is immediate or hesitant. One important feature of Windows-messenger is that the typing status of your chatting partner is shown at the bottom of the chatting box. For example, I noticed that during some questions my informants typed back and forth several times before they finally sent the message to me. I made note of these situations, because they can be significant to the analysis of the interactions. One advantage of CMI is that it gave me time and allowed me to do this without interrupting the communication process.

A lack of non-textual social cues can sometimes lead to uncertainty in the interactive process. For example, in conducting the first MSN interview, when the informant suddenly became "quiet" for some time, I got puzzled or even unsecure, "Did I just say something wrong?" "Is there a misunderstanding?" or "Is he just thinking about the question?" In order to avoid unnecessary speculation and misunderstanding, I made agreements with my informants at the beginning of interviews, such as: when we need to leave the computer to do some personal errand, we send each other a message; If we don't understand each other well, we shall be frank in asking for clarification; if the informant needs time to think about the question or the answer, she types "……" etc.

In addition to the lack of non-textual social cues, another significant difference in the form of interaction in CMI is the taking of turns. In an online synchronous conversation like the CMIs I conducted on MSN, breaking the turn-by-turn rules found in F2F communication is allowed (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 257). Raising a

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[41] Non-textual social cues here refer to facial expression, gestures, and other body language. The term is borrowed from Benwell and Stokoe (2006:251-252).

new topic while waiting for the answer from the other part, or suddenly returning back to an earlier issue for clarification are common practices and are not regarded as rude or impolite. In this way, misunderstandings can be more easily cleared up. In fact, I did feel that I was more at ease in CMIs than in F2F interviews. At the same time, I also noticed that the CMI informants took more initiative to bring up new topics. In contrast to the informants in F2F interviews, who mostly answered my question or followed the topics I raised, CMI informants seemed more eager to know about my opinions about certain issues.

Because of the flexible turn-taking in CMI, I found that it was more difficult to control the interview. One delicate trap of collecting data online is exactly that you continue to collect data simply because you *can* and not because you *should* (Markham 2004: 362). One paradox for me is that on one hand, I wanted to make use of the freer communicating space to collect various versions of open-ended narratives; on the other hand, I had to ensure that the collected data was relevant to the research questions. How to use or follow the interview guide therefore became an important question for me. As I mentioned, I had intentionally divided each CMI into two parts. I had thus created a good opportunity to go through the first part of the interview in relation to the interview guide, or to conduct an ongoing evaluation of the data. I could adjust the second half of the interview accordingly to ensure that the goal of the interview was reached. At the same time, I tried not to let the conversation get too scattered during the interview, at least not from my side. For example, I avoided bringing up a new topic during the discussion of one topic; and I also tried not to be so quick to respond while the informant was still typing; instead, I wrote down the follow-up question so that I could raise them at a proper time later.

3.6.2   Virtual space, virtual identities? Are F2F interactions more real than CMI interactions?

Since the interactions of the interviews are an important aspect of my analysis, and forms and contexts of interaction differ between F2F interviews and CMIs, the question is how to evaluate the validity of the data in relation to the differences in the interactions in F2F interviews and CMIs? Since my project deals with identity, theoretically understood as an enactment or performance, it can also be questioned whether the identity performed and enacted in CMI interaction online is virtual, in a sense that it is not real or even is false. B. Benwell

and E. Stokoe (2006) have elaborated on this question with reference to a series of studies of online communities. One question they ask is how we can understand identities as "real" or " virtual" and how boundaries between "real" and "virtual" identities can be challenged by a constructionist account of identity as something always in process and elusive (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:244-247). I think Benwell and Stokoe's point here is that if I consider online communication (like the CMI) to be an effective valid interaction in which certain relations are made and positioning work done, then the identity enacted on CMI should be studied as similarly "real" as those enacted in F2F interactions. Even when I faced my informants in person in F2F interviews, I could never know whether their performance in the interviews were their "real" selves or just a "fake" show. But again, as I explained in my theoretical approach, this is not the question that I intend to answer in this study. What I am concerned with are the enacted relations which are real.

I also want to point out that CMI was mainly applied in this study as an alternative to F2F interviews. In this way, computers and the internet serve a mostly "mediating or facilitating function" (ibid: 249). I accessed the four CMI informants in the same way as those I interviewed face to face. As I described earlier, some of my informants were recruited through advertisement published online. In addition, many of the informants I interviewed face to face had communicated with me through email or SMS before we met in person. Even though these digital online communications were not used as parts of the data, it can be said that my investigation started by exploring informants' virtual identities. As to the CMI informants, two of them I had talked with on telephone either to schedule the interview or to inform about an unexpected internet problem; three of them sent me their pictures when we discussed their appearances in relation to "Norwegianness," and the last one I met in person later on another occasion. In this way, I did experience the border of the "virtual" identities and the "real life" identities to be blurred in my study.

Even though F2F interviews and CMIs are different in interaction forms and contexts, I have chosen not to analyze the F2F interview data and CMI data as two different types of data, but rather analyze them together as a whole. This is mainly because I had adjusted my research practice accordingly during the interviewing process so that the data from F2F interviews and CMIs are compatible, and also because I consider the remaining difference between the

two types of data to not be significant to my research goal. However, I have paid extra attention to the specific interactional features of CMI data in my analysis, for example the irregular language use and the flexible turn-taking.

In online communication, there is often more room for creative language use, and the grammatical organization of language is looser (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:260, 263). In my CMI data, I found some irregular language use, mostly obvious typing mistakes, or shortened words for the pragmatic rapid-response purpose (for example, "u" for "you", "yr" for "your" in English, "d" for "det", "e" for "er" etc.). When quoting the CMIs in later empirical chapters, I have chosen to change the irregular language use back to a regular form. The flexible turn-taking also leads to there often being more than one thematic thread running in paralleled in one online conversation (ibid: 257). When analyzing how my CMI informants organized specific narratives, I sort out the different thematic threads and pay extra attention to the narrative structure – that is, how different separate messages are organized as a whole to form a narrative. Precisely because of the different forms of interaction, when quoting interview data in the empirical chapters, I choose to mark whether a quote is from an F2F interview or a CMI.

3.7   Processing the data in the analysis

Since my study is designed with my specific research interest and clearly defined research questions that are informed by analytical and theoretical discussions, I have chosen to take an explorative approach when processing the data in the analysis. By explorative approach, I mean that when doing the analysis, I use the pre-defined research questions as my departure point and general guideline to navigate the data and to develop analysis that can best illuminate the research questions. This contrasts with an approach that uses the data as the departure point to develop analysis that can generally reflect the whole picture of the empirical data. Yet, in practice, such an explorative approach is *never* a linear. For example, first there is a process of moving from the research questions to empirical data and looking for the parts that can illuminate the research questions. Subsequently, there is a process from the chosen data back to the research questions, where you identify specific points that can answer the questions. This

is a much more complicated process and includes a back and forth communication between my research questions and the empirical data.

In doing the analysis, I first brought my research questions to bear on the fourteen interviews, evaluating whether the data can illuminate the research questions, and looking for the common aspects and patterns in relation to the research questions. Based on this first communication between the research questions and data, I went back to my research questions and developed my analytical focuses, questions and strategies accordingly. Then I brought these analytical focuses, questions and strategies to bear on each interview and conducted detailed analysis (for the concrete analytical methods, see 3.7). Afterwards, I summarized the analytical points from all interviews under the respective analytical questions, which functioned as different aspects to illuminate the research questions. I then examined the similarities and variations among the analytical points, from which I also evaluated how these points, despite variations, can answer the overarching analytical questions. When I found it difficult to draw conclusion(s) from the variations, this suggested that there was a need to justify the analytical aspects, based on the empirical findings. I therefore asked: what does the data tell me, and how can this information answer the research questions? In this way, by bringing the empirical findings back to the research questions, I revised the operationalization of the research questions and adjusted my previous analytical focus accordingly. I then brought the adjusted analytical focus back to the data, reorganized my analytical points, summarized similarities and variations, and in this way started a new round of linking my empirical findings to the research questions. Very often, in the new round comparisons for similarities and variations, I found it necessary to go back to the single interviews to re-evaluate certain analytical points. It was through several rounds of such back-and-forth operations between the research questions and the empirical data that I finally decided on the organization of the analytical aspects, which in turn has organized my empirical chapters. This process also helped me consider whether the analysis of the data was satisfactory to answer the research questions. Since both the research questions and the operationalization of research questions are informed by theory, I also considered the practice of linking empirical data to research questions to be a process of linking empirical experience to theories.

The empirical data used in this dissertation have primarily been selected to illuminate the research and analytical questions. Thus, I choose the examples that can best illustrate the main analytical arguments. The selected examples are not only the best illustrations but are also representative, because the main analytical points were developed through my analysis of the fourteen interviews as a whole. In the empirical chapters, I use such examples to demonstrate how certain analytical points have been developed. Then I discuss the analytical points in relation to the rest of the data material or to what other informants have told me. Here I not only discuss similarities to illustrate the representativeness of the chosen example, but also to identify variations between informants. By doing this, I intend to provide a necessary context in relation to how certain analytical points have developed based on the data as a whole. Yet, I also want to point out that despite the common patterns and similarities that I can find in the fourteen interviews in relation to answering the research questions, the informants did emphasize different things in the interviews, and their examples of common experiences also varied a lot. One informant may be more detailed and vivid in answering some aspects of the interview questions, but less detailed in answering other aspects of the questions. Consequently, one informant may be cited more frequently in one chapter, but less in other chapters.

3.8   The analytical methods

As I have shown in the earlier discussion, the methodological issues have been considered along the way in the research process, from research design to research practice, and from data collection to data evaluation. In this part, I discuss my analytical methods in general terms.

In their introductory book on discourse analysis, M. Winther Jørgensen and L. Phillips encourage their readers to develop their own analytical models by combining different approaches – a process they call "making a complete package." At the same time, they emphasize that the content of the "package," including the philosophical premises, theoretical understandings, methodological guidelines and specific analytical techniques, should be integrated and consistent with each other (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 1999: 12, 155). I think Winther Jørgensen and Phillips's description of developing and conducting discourse

analysis as a process of "making a complete package" is valid for methodological approaches other than discourse analysis. Earlier, I discussed how I have chosen a constructionist approach, and how based on this approach, I have chosen an interactionist perspective, and how based on this perspective, I have developed my analytical strategy, namely to include myself in the analysis. This is precisely a process of making my own package. Yet, to make the package complete, I also need to discuss how to operationalize the general analytical perspective and implement the analytical strategy in practice. What kind of analytical methods shall I combine with the overall perspective and approach in my analytical practices so that the analysis can satisfactorily illuminate the research question?

3.8.1 A combined narrative analysis of *whats* and *hows (or the "told" and "telling")*

In considering research interviewing as a process where two active participants jointly construct narratives and meanings, Elliot Mishler calls research interviews *a narrative event* (Mishler 1986 in Riessman 2008: 16, 23). Following Mishler's perspective, what my informants told me under the interviews were neither facts nor authentic experiences, but a telling, or tellings; narratives constructed through interview interactions. I think Mishler's understanding of research interviews as narrative events fits with my constructionist approach to interview data. Then can a narrative approach be applied as an effective analytical method?

In contrast to other analytical approaches in qualitative enquiries, e.g. category-centered approaches in Grounded Theory, narrative analysis relies on *extended* accounts treated analytically as *units*, rather than as *fragmented* accounts that are treated analytically as *thematic categories* (Riessman 2008: 12). In other words, the strength of doing narrative analysis is to allow me to look at the sequential and structural order of how interviews as narrative occasions are organized, which is a necessary analytical approach in this study. As I have discussed, my research questions determine that my inquiry of the interview data includes questions of *whats* and *hows* (see 3.4 my ref. to Holstein and Gubrium). I find that an efficient way to answer how adoptees negotiated the meaning that transnational adoption-related differences made in relation to identity work around Norwegianness, is to see the interview process itself as such a negotiation/meaning-making process. Yet I cannot satisfactorily illustrate this process without paying attention to the sequential order and the organizing

structure of the interviews. In other words: *how various topics have been moved, circulated, and interwoven during the interviews.* What topics did I raise, how did one topics move on to other topics through the informants' response to my question, and how were these different topics woven together? In this way, I consider a narrative approach to facilitate my enquiry with regard to the *hows*.

At the same time, to analyze the interviewing process as an interactive narrative event, I cannot ignore the content of what was said in this process. As narrative events, the research interviews produce narratives, which are mainly constructed by the informants during the interview process with the interviewer as the audience of their storytelling (Riessman 2008: 8-9, 23-27). When the informants' narratives are understood as developed in a dynamic process with the participation of the researcher, I find that I can apply narrative analysis as a concrete analytical method to implement my interactionist perspective on conducting and analyzing research interviews. Mishler's distinction between what is "told" – informants' reports of events and experience, and the "telling" – the narrative form (Mishler 1995 in Riessman 2008: 53-54), can thus be integrated into a general narrative approach. At the same time, I also consider this distinction consistent with Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) *whats* and *hows,* which I use as my general approach to research interviews.

As I said, when scrutinizing the racialization process my informants experience, and examining the meaning that being adopted, looking different, and being Norwegian play, I mainly analyze the *whats* or what is "told." Here I have mainly conducted a cross-case *thematic narrative analysis* – for example, what kind of events were selected in the narratives, what are the main messages/meanings that are conveyed by the informants. Though the focus is on *what was told*, how it was told was inevitably included in the thematic narrative analysis. For example, in analyzing my informants' experiences of racialization or racism, I have also looked at how various select events were put together to form a narrative whole, and how this narrative was constructed in relation to the positioning and identity work my informants do in their interaction with me. In this way, my thematic analysis is constantly supplemented by *a dialogue/performance analysis*, which interrogates how the interview is "interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as a narrative" with emphasis on the "influence of the investigator, setting, and social circumstances of production and interpretation of the

narrative." (Riessman 2008: 105). Here I also consider a dialogue/performance analysis can implement my analytical strategy of including myself in the analysis.

3.8.2   A Supplementary "frame"[42] analysis

When conducting narrative analysis, I find that to focus on the interactions, or to look at the production and interpretation of narratives, I cannot ignore an important question: whether there is a common framework of understanding between the informants and me. For example, doing narrative analysis enables me to see how different topics move and circulate during the interviewing process, but I find that there were situations where my informants and I seemed to discuss the same topic, but were in fact talking about different things. These situations are meaningful to my investigation of the negotiation process in the interviews.

The Danish media researcher Ida Schultz has discussed the importance of *the common framework of understanding[43]* in her analysis of her research interviews with journalists (Schultz 2005). Here, she borrows the term "framing" from Goffman (1974) to refer to an ongoing process, where she and her informants, in positioning each other as "journalists in practice" and "journalism in the academy," have created certain agreements and consensus about the field of journalism, which work as a common framework for their further conversations (Schultz 2005: 86). In a similar way, when negotiating the meaning about whether and how transnational adoption produces a difference in relation to Norwegianness, my informants and I were involved in a mutual positioning process around Norwegianness. Yet, in contrast to that between Schultz and her informants, I experience the positioning process between my informants and myself to be far from smooth. This led me to ask whether in asking and answering one question my informants and I shared the same frame of understanding, and if not, how they differed . Such a "frame" analysis requires me to conduct a critical examination of my own assumptions in shaping the research design and research

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[42] Here I use quotation mark to indicate that what I call "frame analysis" is not the same as what we normally would consider a frame analysis as a wide general social scientific research method that was initially developed by Goffman (1974). Rather it is based on a particular way of applying it to analyze a specific analytic aspect.

[43] "Fælles forståelsesramme" in Danish.

practice. This relates to the influence of my own situatedness and positioning work in this project, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

3.9   Ethical considerations

Finally, I discuss the question of ethics. Referring to individual and communal codes of behavior based on a set of principles for conducting research, research ethics help researchers to be aware of what can go wrong if one does not pay attention to the constraints on experimental practice, its products and its goals (Shrader-Frechette 1994: 2, 20). In a qualitative enquiry like mine, questions relate not only to the values of the researcher, but also to the researcher's responsibilities towards those studied, the informants (Silverman 2001: 257). The researcher's values are certainly important in shaping the whole research practice. As Max Weber points out, only through those values do certain problems get identified and studied in particular ways (Weber 1946 in Silverman 2005: 257). However, considering that my study is not characterized as value-disputed, I mainly talk about my responsibility to my informants: how to take care of their privacy and interests and how to secure their rights through my research practice.

In order to get the necessary approval on ethical issues, this study was submitted to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Under guidance from NSD, I have also prepared detailed written information about my study project (*informasjonsskriv,* see appendix 2) for potential informants, which in practice functioned as the "informed consent". In this document, I not only introduce the theme and research question, but also address the main research purpose behind the study, such as why I am interested in studying this topic, why I consider the study important, and what kind of knowledge I intend to produce. In addition, I provide information about the informants' rights in participating in this study as well as assure them of how I am going to handle their personal information discreetly to protect their identities. Prior to each interview, I made sure that each informant had read the information; In particular, I ensured that they had been informed of their rights, like voluntariness in answering the interview questions and the right to withdraw from the study at the any time of the research process.

My study touches on certain sensitive topics like experiences of racism, and personal stories of adoption in both birth and receiving countries. When

preparing the interview questions, I tried to avoid stepping over accepted boundaries for what can be shared, which often relates to cultural common sense about what can be talked and what cannot. Yet how the informants would react to certain sensitive question is very individual, and is difficult to predict or estimate. Besides the cultural common sense, it also depends on the relations established between the researcher and the informants. Therefore, I consider trust and being honest important in my communications with the informants. I told all the informants before the interviews that if they considered a question to be inconsiderate or difficult to answer, I would appreciate it if that they told me directly. In fact, I experienced that all my informants were open in discussing with me the questions that can be considered sensitive, such as questions about biological parents, memory about the birth country, and experiences of racism.

When handling the data, I have replaced informants' names with pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. In addition, when presenting the informants in the analysis, I have also revised certain relevant personal information, like country of origin, place of residency, age, educational background, occupation and so on to avoid "back way identification" (Hvinden 1994:108 in Annfelt 1999:51). Such changes were made with one prerequisite, namely that they would not affect the validity of analysis. In situations where some personal information like origin of country, education background, geographic location, or even a particular event is meaningful to the analysis, but can indirectly expose the informant's identity, I have chosen to exchange the pseudonyms of informants or to make two pseudonyms for one informant – a technique which has also been used by other researchers (e.g. Annfelt 1999).

Aside from the research practice, I have remained extra cautious when asked about my research project by colleagues and friends who are interested in the topic I study. This was because the adoption community in Norway is relatively small (and this is also the case in the relatively small city where I live). Furthermore, as several of my informants note, transnational adoptees are in a way more visible because they look different.

3.10   Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have discussed various methodological issues at the various stages of my research practice. The aim has been to show how this study has been designed and conducted to achieve the research goal. To this end, I have discussed my methodology as a practice of making links. I have also discussed how different important factors at various stages of my research practice have been considered and coordinated as a whole in my concrete research design and practice. I have talked about my analytical strategy of including myself in the analysis. This concerns the epistemological and methodological question of the researcher's role and location in knowledge production. How do I understand my research practice? How has my situatedness influenced the data collection/production and analysis? Will the strategy of including myself in the analysis affect the validity of the study? If not, what is the strength of my study? These are the important methodological questions that I touched upon but have not yet explored in relation to epistemological discussions. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on these questions.

Chapter 4: Examining the "outsider within" – a methodological exploration of my situatedness in this research

4.1   Introduction

This chapter is a link between the previous chapter on methodology and the analysis in the later chapters. In this chapter, I further the methodological discussion about the production and analysis of the interview data in relation to my own situatedness to the research, which I describe as "outsider within." By doing so, I develop appropriate analytical methods to strengthen the analysis, and then apply the methods in an introduction of the analysis to come.

In the methodological exploration of my situatedness as an "outsider within", I draw on feminist epistemological discussions about science and knowledge. In particular, I use feminist standpoint theories and Haraway's "situated knowledges" (1999) to discuss how my situatedness as an "outsider-within" in this specific project has shaped/influenced the process of data collection/production, and consequently how this affects my analysis and knowledge production. When I describe myself as an "outsider within", this points to my position as a foreigner or immigrant who has lived in Norway for 6 years (at the time of starting the project). This is in many respects a minoritized position, and majority white Norwegians will normally perceive me as a minority. Examining my own situatedness helps me gain better insight into this research field about transnational adoption and transnational adoptees, and thus enables me to situate myself in my research. In other words, it helps me be aware of my own vantage points, and at the same time discover my own cultural blindness and open my "blind spots". This also enables me to engage with the informants' stand(-)points in my analysis. I therefore believe that being critical and reflexive about my own situatedness strengthens my analysis and makes it more robust.

While exploring my situatedness in relation to the research, I found that some of my initial presumptions and premises in the research design were taken for granted, which meant that I experienced some challenging moments during the interviews. Thus, to discuss or deconstruct the taken-for-granted premises by analyzing the challenging interacting moments in the interviews can be a good

departure point from which to develop the analysis. In the second part of this chapter, I illustrate that by analyzing what Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Phillips call "crisis points" in interview situations (Winter Jørgensen and Phillips 1999: 132), I am able to deconstruct two of the premises that are important for my later analysis: the *meaning of being born in a country* and *the significance of biology in the parents-child relation*.

4.2.   My situatedness as an "outsider within" in the project

When conducting the interviews, I often felt myself located in a perceptible "outsider within" position. In saying this, I do not mean that I was located in a static or fixed position, even within a single interview. On the contrary, I see "outsider within" as an appropriate way to describe a process in which I was perceived differently by each informant, and in which the informants and I were positioned differently as topics changed or circulated in each interview. For example, when they told me about their stories of growing up in Norway, I was obviously an "outsider." In this case, they often explained things more explicitly or exhaustively, as insiders telling a story to an outsider. This included the use of expressions such as "You know in Norway, we…," "It is more … than you can imagine," "Do you understand what I mean…?" However, when we moved on to talk about living in Norwegian society with a different skin color or phenotypical features compared to most Norwegians, I became an "insider." Then the informants may talk more implicitly, like "Yeah, you certainly know that," or "You know what I mean."

The process of being positioned as an "outsider within" that I experienced in conducting interviews has certainly something to do with my self-presentation as "a Chinese researcher/student who has lived in Norway for 6 years." At the same time, "outsider within" is also embodied in my Asian appearance and in my Norwegian language skills. I have conducted most of the interviews in Norwegian. My spoken Norwegian, and noticeable northern dialect ("Nordlending") with a strong foreign accent may well indicate my "outsider within" position. One informant told me that when I first contacted him through email, he thought that I was like him and had grown up in Norway, because he thought my written Norwegian was very good. Yet when we met face to face and talked, he was

somewhat surprised. He could tell immediately from my spoken Norwegian that I was not like him. He could see that I had lived in Norway for some length of time, yet he was not so sure how long. He told me that he did speculate about this for some time during our interview. Thus, my positions and my positioning in relation to my informants changed even during a single interview.

In many ways, I think the "outsider within" position depicts an extensive zone where I found myself flexibly located in relation to the positions my informants took in telling their life stories during the interviews. This is a zone that I called "somewhere in between": I am neither an insider nor a total outsider. It is in this extensive room that I was situated and able to explore how my informants do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. It is with these multiple and dynamic relations that my informants and I co-produced the interviews that form the empirical data for this analysis.

4.3. A theoretical exploration of "outsider within": feminist standpoint theories and "situated knowledges"

The black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins has described African-American women scholars' position in the American academy as "outsiders within." She argues that black women intellectuals can creatively use this marginalized position as both an insider and outsider to the white mainstream society "to produce Black feminist thought that reflects a special standpoint on self, family and society." (Collins 2004: 103-122). Collins' argument is of great importance to my study, although the "outsider within" role that she describes may not be exactly the same as the one I describe. In conducting this project, I consider myself a foreigner/immigrant researching Norwegian society. When proposing this project, I believed that my position as "foreign," as a "newcomer," could provide me a different angle from which to "see" the things that other researchers in a majority position cannot see. I think this is probably also the reason that many consider my participation in the field of transnational adoption interesting. I am expected to produce something "new." However, as an "outsider," a newly arrived immigrant, I also meet doubt: Do you really understand, or can you really see what is going on in this society? Therefore, a question that concerns me throughout this study is how to convince my majority

audience of the strength of my research. What Collins suggests is that, first, the "outsider within" position may constitute an advantageous position from which to gain deeper insights, and, secondly, it is legitimate to include my own personal and cultural biographies in my study.

I think that to fully understand the "outsider within" position that Collins argues is an advantageous epistemological position, we need to return her argument to the context of the feminist epistemological discussions in which her argument is embedded. In feminist science theories, knowledge production is to a great extent about "vision": to see, and how to see. This is a broadly conceived and embodied vision that also emphasizes the importance of location, or the position from which the researcher is seeing (Haraway 1999: 176, Berg and Kristiansen 2010:225). In this sense, Collins' "outsider within" can be understood as a feminist standpoint position. Feminist standpoint theory advocates starting research from the perspectives of women or other subordinated or marginal lives (Smith 1987, Hartsock 2003 [1983], Harding 1986). According to standpoint theories, the so-called objective, universal and value-neutral knowledge in the positivist paradigm does not exist, and all knowledge is produced in a certain historical context, and from certain social positions or standpoints. What's more, the standpoint theorists believe that people in oppressed and marginal positions hold certain epistemological advantages (Harding 1986; Li and Su 2005: 21).

In my own reading of feminist standpoint theories, the favorable epistemological positions that oppressed people possess is based on their unfavorable positions of disempowerment, which enable them to see from below. Even though I may benefit from the standpoint theories in documenting the reliability and potency of my research, I find it difficult to identify my "outsider within" status as a static and always oppressed position, especially when I conducted the interviews. In contrast to Collins' "outsider within" which represents a collective position or standpoint in a general field of knowledge, the "outsider within" position I can identify in my study is a flexible individual location specific to concrete interview situations. Therefore, I cannot find a clearly defined standpoint that belongs to me as a young, immigrant, female researcher, which is the most oppressed identity I can probably claim to favor my standpoint in knowledge production – it simply becomes an empty rhetoric.

For me, Collins treats the "outsider within" as a position that is too fixed in a rigid structure of oppression and domination. For example, she discusses three key themes in black women's standpoint in a way that suggests that there are essential features that can define a group called "black women" and whose standpoint is always-already different from that of, for example, white women or black men (see Collins 2004: 105-115). It can, of course, be argued that Collins makes this argument in order to clearly exemplify the connection between power relations and general knowledge production. However, in the context of this project, if I put my focus merely on the power relations, I may lose the nuanced picture of the subtle relations between my informants and myself in the interview situations, for example when we discussed topics like ethnic/national belonging, racism, multiculturalism, and immigration politics. It is in these subtle relations that we are positioned in relation to each other. In one moment, I am included in informants' "we": for example, we are both women who look Asian; we both represent the multicultural Norwegian society; we are both the "right kind" of minorities in contrast to those who engage in crime; or we are both mothers of our "mixed-race" children. In another moment, I am excluded from their "we": we, the transnational adoptees, are culturally Norwegian while you are not; we have a Norwegian upbringing while you do not; we speak Norwegian in a way that tells others that we are Norwegian, while you do not. In scrutinizing these subtle relations, I see fragmented identities, not only among my informants, but also in myself. This reminds me of Haraway's poststructuralist critique of standpoint theories: there is no visual vantage-point based on a self-identity (or self-identification) of being subjugated (Haraway 1999: 176-182). For Haraway, "the greatest resource for would-be 'knowers' is our nonessential, nonnaturalizable, fragmented identities and the refusal of the delusion of a return to an 'original unity'" (Haraway 1985 in Harding 1986: 193).

As a critique of standpoint theories, Haraway posits a theory of "situated knowledges" (1999). Instead of "locking" knowledge production in a fixed site of subjugated positions, Haraway provides "a commitment to mobile positioning and to passionate detachment" (Haraway 1999: 179). That is to say, a researcher's situatedness in a field of knowledge is not about any specific position or standpoint, but a process of positioning, an intellectual movement among various positions or standpoints. Consequently, the strength of research does not rely on how good a knowledge position is, but on the necessity of looking at the process and exploring the relations in this process.

Even though "situated knowledges" is a direct critique of standpoint theories, I do not read them as completely different theories that are opposed to each other. Rather, I consider them to be two theoretical strands which have mutually developed in conversation with each other, as both rely on an epistemology of partial perspectives, in opposition to both positivism (seeing from nowhere) and relativism (seeing from everywhere) (Haraway 1999, Harding 1992). In line with Haraway's critique, Harding further developed standpoint theories and argued that "strong objectivity" [44] (Harding 1992, 1993) could bridge the distance between "situated knowledges" and feminist standpoint theories. Therefore, in my theoretical exploration of my situatedness as an "outsider within," I am more concerned with building links between the two theoretical strands than with making a choice between them. I used standpoint theories as my departure point, yet I aimed to incorporate the critique from "situated knowledges" so that I could see how my situatedness as an "outsider within" has helped shape my research practice and the production of interview data, and consequently how I can develop my analyses based on this situatedness.

4.4   "Outsider within" in the research practice of interview

In exploring how I am situated within the research practice, including in process of preparing the interviews and designing the research, I find that the "outsider within" position is both advantageous and disadvantageous. When I describe it as an advantageous position, I mostly mean that it has given me certain advantages in accessing the data. For example, several informants told me that one reason that they said yes to participate in this project was that they considered it interesting that this project was conducted by a foreign student. One senior Norwegian researcher once told me that as an "outsider" (or a "foreigner") I could raise certain questions that she could not. For example, she told me that it was nearly impossible for a Norwegian researcher to ask how my informants would perceive themselves different or not different in relation to their Norwegianness, as this may break the discourse of "equality." In addition, as an "outsider", I could

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[44] For example, Harding writes, "Strong objectivity requires that the subject of knowledge be placed on the same critical, causal plane as the objects of knowledge. Thus strong objectivity requires what we can think of as 'strong reflexivity'." (Harding 2004[1993]: 136)

make my informants talk more explicitly about certain issues. For example, when I asked Christian why he liked to live in Oslo, one of the things he told me was that he lived in Frogner. I first considered this answer to be irrelevant or simply a specification of where in Oslo he lived, so I kept asking the same question. He understood that, as an "outsider," I did not have the background information on Frogner and Oslo: I did not know that Frogner is an up-scale residential area on the west-side of Oslo which is a popular residential area for the upper(-middle) class. He then explained more explicitly that, "Oslo is more class-divided than what you have heard." As an "insider" telling stories to an "outsider," he also explained that a foreign-looking man you met in Frogner could well be a diplomat, or a successful businessman. Yet to a native Norwegian researcher, Christian may not necessarily give these detailed explanations, which did facilitate my exploration about how he constructed and enacted Norwegianness.

Yet, as an "outsider within," I also met challenges and difficulties when conducting the interviews. There were moments when I found the conversation difficult to continue. There were also moments in my analysis when I doubted whether I had asked questions that were irrelevant or even foolish. To some extent, these challenging moments reflect my disadvantageous position when collecting the interview data. It is therefore necessary to examine these challenging moments in greater detail. To illustrate these moments, I relay the story of the "awkward" or "unsuccessful" interview with Martin.

Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Phillips use the term "crisis points[45]" to describe that something is going wrong in interview interactions, or the interactions are not fluent (1999: 132). I consider the interview with Martin "unsuccessful," mainly because I identified an intense feeling of crisis all the way through the interview, and I can also easily identify these crisis points in my analysis. For example, in the beginning of the interview, I asked Martin to describe his childhood in Norway as an adopted child from Korea. He answered, "It was ok" ("greit" in Norwegian). When I asked him how it was ok, he thought for a little while and said, "I don't understand what you are asking?" Later, he mentioned that even though he did not have many negative experiences, he was once bullied

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[45] "Krisepunkter" in Danish.

by other children and called "jævla guling."[46] I was very focused on the topic bullying, particularly bullying based on different skin colors, so I kept asking about it, in spite of Martin's unwillingness to talk about it. In the end, he got obviously irritated. He interrupted my question concerning bullying and said, "I don't think a person can live throughout his life without once being bullied, right?"

I got more and more insecure in asking questions, but I had to keep the conversation going. Then Martin began to yawn. It can be said that during this interview, the crisis feeling I had was getting gradually more intense and his yawn finally made the feeling of crisis peak. I was sure that my questions were boring and irrelevant, and that I had failed in this interview. As the interview was already a "failure," I decided to tell Martin about my difficulties in conducting this interview with him. Since I knew that he had participated in similar research interviews before, I also wanted to know what he thought of our interview in comparison with the ones he had done with others. Then he told me that other researchers who had interviewed him were adopted themselves, so they were able to raise questions concerning the adoptees' daily lives, which I could not come up with because I did not have these experiences. In addition, he thought I was not so reflexive under the interview, so it took longer than necessary.

I am very happy that I had this honest talk with Martin in this "unsuccessful" interview, not because I find "excuses" for my developing interviewing skills in that I am not adoptee myself and could not ask relevant questions that "hit" the right points to "trigger" my informant to tell about his life stories about being a transnational adoptee, but because I was made aware of my disadvantages as an "outsider within" in data collection/production. Earlier I have talked about my situatedness as an "outsider within" in relation to how I am positioned in the Norwegian society. Here, to explore my situatedness in a concrete researcher-informant relationship, I see that I am also an "outsider within" in another sense: I am a researcher studying adoption, but I am not adopted myself. As shown in the interview with Martin, it was mainly (yet not only) the "outsider within" in the latter sense that had led to certain difficulties and challenges for me in conducting the interview.

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[46] A Norwegian slang, which can be translated as "You damn yellow man!"

After reading the interview transcription repeatedly, I think that when Martin said, "You are not so reflexive so it took longer," he mostly meant that I did not really understand what he had told me, so I asked certain questions that I was particularly focused on repeatedly, such as, "How did you feel when you were called 'Jævla guling?' "Did you feel like you were not Norwegian then?" "How do you consider yourself different as a person who is adopted from another country?" So he had to spend more time explaining to me that as an adoptee with a different phenotypic appearance, he had not had the negative experiences I expected him to describe. Martin noted that, "I *didn't* experience that much harassment or have a lot of negative experiences; that I look different is *not* like what you perceive from your immigrant experience of looking different" I got the sense that what he also meant was, "why can't you get it after I have explained it to you several times. Ok, you are not adopted yourself, so you cannot understand what I mean."

Another thing that I did not understand was his "crazy" story from middle school. When being asked whether he felt well included in his childhood and adolescence, he told me that he was a little crazy ("gal" in Norwegian), misbehaved a bit ("rampete" in Norwegian), *and* (for me, it was "*but*") he had no problems in his social life. When he first told me this, I was really quite puzzled and I could not understand exactly what he meant. With my own experiences in middle school in China as my frame of reference, I wondered how a "crazy," "misbehaving" boy could have no problems and be socially included. Therefore, I got stuck at this point and kept asking about this repeatedly. From his later explanations, and also from the stories of other informants, I understand more and more what he meant by "crazy" and "misbehaving." He was referring to the school culture in Norway: how it is important to be considered "cool" and to be included in the "popular gang." While the inclusion I considered was in relation to his Norwegianness, he was telling me about being included in terms of his popularity. Thus, when he began to yawn, he was obviously tired of answering my questions about the same things. This is what he meant by "you are not reflexive." Martin's comment here also exemplifies what I discussed in the previous chapter: that my informants and I may not necessarily have a common frame of reference during the interviews, which again points to the importance of analyzing our frameworks.

4.5 Managing the disadvantage of being an "outsider within" in analysis

Regardless of the advantages and disadvantages I had and hold in collecting data for this project, the data collection is now complete. A more important question for me is how to make use of this data and analyze it well. What to do with the interview data I consider "unsuccessful," such as the interview with Martin? How can I use it as data in my analysis?

As I explained, I considered some parts of interviews as not being successful, mainly because the interactions were not smooth, or the informants did not provide "rich" data in answering my questions, as my questions seemed "irrelevant" to them, or failed to hit the "right" points. However, I think it is valuable to ask what "rich" data means, and whether it is synonymous with "expected data." Does rich "data" only lie in what informants say in answering my interview questions?

I must state from the outset that I was not always a wise researcher and I did ask some "foolish" questions in the interviews. Some of my interview questions could have been asked in a more reflexive and tactful way. However, as a serious researcher aiming to learn from the informants and understand more about transnational adoption, I think it is much better to ask "foolish" questions than to pretend to be wise by avoiding these questions. To find out that certain interview questions were considered "foolish" by the informants is also a research finding.

Secondly, in conducting a semi-structured interview, the interview questions should be open to allow different stories to emerge. So, when a different version of a story is generated, I cannot decide that it is not useful simply because it does not meet my expectations, such as when Martin told me that when he was young he did not consider himself different. The same is true regarding my discomfort that some of my questions were considered foolish. Instead of considering the unexpected cases to be problems, I think they in fact enrich my data. Certainly, I need to include these moments in my analysis.

Thirdly, one strength of qualitative research is that it enables scholars to conduct cross-case comparisons and analysis (Johnson and Christensen 2008, ch. 14). One of the interesting parts of this research is that my informants met both me as a person and my interview questions differently. While I found it difficult to keep

the conversation going with Martin, in other interviews I found that the interactions were generally pleasant and not challenging. How do these differences emerge? If I want to provide a good analysis of the "successful" cases, I cannot just ignore the "unsuccessful" cases. In this way, the analysis of the latter strengthens the analysis of the former. Based on these three arguments, I think that the interview with Martin can still be in use for analysis. The question is how.

In chapter 3 I explained my interactionist perspective as applied to the interview as a research method – that is, I look upon interviews as a kind of negotiation. In any negotiation, confrontation cannot be avoided. Margaretha Järvinen also points out that interview is a meeting "where (at least) two sets of premises, attitudes and interests confront each other"[47] (Järvinen 2005: 29). When the interaction between the informants and I (as the researcher) did not progress smoothly during the interviews, the challenging interactions can be understood as a kind of confrontation. With the word "confrontation" I do not really mean physical or verbal confrontation between the informants and me, but rather, as Järvinen describes, the confrontation/collision of certain ideas and premises between the informants and myself which led to the interviews being awkward and challenging (ibid). In this way, the unsuccessful interview or the unsuccessful moments in the interviews make me reflect over my own situatedness. For example, what kind of presumptions and premises did I bring with me in creating the interview questions? How did I develop my focus on the negative stories like bullying at school, discrimination, and racism? Does it have something to do with the focus in media or scholarly literature? How do adoptees' identities in relation to Norwegianness become a question for me, but not necessarily for adoptees themselves? When my questions were not well received by the informants, like in the interview with Martin, I also began to think that maybe some of the presumptions or premises I held were taken for granted or they did not sit well with the worlds the informants inhabited.

In order to learn something from these confrontations, and in order to better situate myself in my analytical work, I start my analysis by examining my own situatedness, particularly my situatedness in the moments of challenging interaction during the interviews. This exploration is methodologically necessary

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[47] My translation from Danish.

and important to develop a strong analysis. Adoptees have criticized research on (transnational) adoptions in Scandinavian countries for being characterized by myths, ignorance and prejudices (Sloth 2006). Here, I bear this critique in mind, and argue that to break the myths, ignorance and prejudice, as the researcher I must first and foremost discover my own cultural and experiential blindness by revealing my own taken-for-granted presumptions. The aim of this process is not only to reveal my own blindness, but also to deconstruct them so that I can gain a better understanding of the informants' experiences. Thus, exploring my own situatedness is a good departure point from which to develop the analysis.

4.6   To deconstruct my own premises – two examples

In this part, I move from my methodological discussion to the concrete analyses. I show how I am able to discover my cultural and experiential blindness by examining my own situatedness in challenging interview interactions. I use two examples to illustrate how the analyses of the challenging interactions during interviews have enabled me to deconstruct my taken-for-granted premises. One example is the interview with Lisa. Through our discussion about the TV-program "Tore på sporet," I "detach" myself from my emphasis on biology in understanding the adoption story. The other example is my interview with the "China girl." In this example, I mainly discuss how my initial assumption on the meaning of the birth country was deconstructed. I choose to use these two examples because the deconstruction of these two premises (on the meaning of *biology* and *the birth country*) are significant prerequisites for my later analysis of how my informants, as transnational adoptees, experience themselves differently in relation to Norwegianness.

4.6.1.   A Discussion on "Tore på sporet"

In chapter 2, I noted that in this study I have chosen to take a "non-biocentric" approach to the study of the meaning the adoption. Yet, what I have not yet discussed is that this choice is made after a self-critical reflection about my own biocentric presumptions, made in a dialogue with the interview data. Here, the deconstruction about the meaning of biology is precisely about this self-critical process of reflection.

"Tore på Sporet" was a popular Norwegian TV program that helped people search for and reunite with a person, often biologically related, with whom they had lost contact. The program had 6 seasons from 1996 to 2009, and was presented by journalist and former athlete Tore Strømøy. However, despite the big success in audience ratings, the program has been highly criticized by adoptees, who claim that they are not interested at all in their biological roots and thus consider it unnecessary to search for their biological parents (Follevåg 2002, Sand 2006, Andersen 2008). Geir Follevåg, with his anti-biocentric critique, describes the popularity of the TV program as an effect of a dominant biocentric thinking among the general population (Follevåg 2002). I find Follevåg's arguments to be convincing, as I also believe that the meaning of biology is socially constructed. Therefore, after I read Follevåg's critique, I decided that the next time I watched "Tore på sporet," I should use Follevåg's (and other adoptees') critical lens to watch and analyze the program. "Use your reason, not your emotion," I told myself.

I then watched an episode[48] of "Tore på Sporet," which was yet again about transnational adoption. This time, Tore Strømøy helped a Korean woman look for her biological son, who was adopted to Norway more than 20 years ago. The boy's father made the decision about the adoption after he and the boy's mother were divorced, and the mother did not know about the adoption until very recently. She had been looking for her son all these years. The first part of the program told a moving but tragic story about a loving mother who had lost her son. Through the help of Tore Strømøy, the woman finally met her son in Norway, in the home of the boy's adoptive parents. The scene of the reunion between the mother and the son was touching. As a biological mother myself, I had a great sympathy towards the biological mother. My emotion again won over reason, and I could not hold back my tears.

The next day, I met one of my informants, Lisa. The interview with Lisa was pleasant. We went through many topics about adoption and adoptees' life experience before we started discussing "Tore på Sporet." Similarly to other informants, Lisa had frequently been asked whether she would like to meet her biological parents. In line with Follevåg's critique, Lisa considered people's curious

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[48] The episode was shown on 25th of October, 2009 on NRK 1.

questions about her biological roots to be an effect of "Tore på Sporet." For Lisa, it was not important to search for her biological parents. Further, she considered some of the adoptees' decision to search for biological parents as being "selfish." This is how we began to talk about "Tore på Sporet":

> Lisa: People want to know whether I want to find my family in India. So I just tell them the truth, that I don't have any interest in looking for them, and that I think it is better to respect the choice they have made. And … I understand that their choice was not something they just did for no reason. It is something they have thought about and it was a difficult decision.

> Author: So you just tell people what you in fact think of it?

> Lisa: Yes, exactly. Ehh… I hope that people come to understand this issue better. There are so many people who have watched the TV program "Tore på Sporet" with that guy who travels around with people to find their families. Do you know the program I am talking about?

> Author: "Tore på Sporet"? Yes, I have watched the program. In fact, I just watched it yesterday. [Laughs]

> Lisa: Yeah, right. [Laughs] And the thing is that many people expect, because of this program, or want everyone who are adopted to travel back to look for their families. But this is not true. I don't want to do it and I know many adoptees who don't want to either. But of course there are those who want to.

When Lisa critiqued Tore Strømøy and his program, she was at the same time creating a distance, or a gap *between* many of the adoptees - including herself - for whom biology is not that important *and* Tore Strømøy as well as his general audience who feel emotionally involved by the program (obviously including me). To some extent, this gap implies that we, who are touched by the program or who emotionally agree that biology or biological roots are important, cannot really understand how adoptees experience their adoptive kinship and a life without a biological roots. I also think this gap reflects what Martin told me earlier, that since I am not adopted myself, I was unable to ask questions that would "trigger" good stories from my informants.

I tried to put myself in the adoptees' position or standpoint to understand transnational adoption, for example I tried to watch the program "Tore på Sporet" with the critical lens of Geir Follevåg, but I failed. Now I was in a conversation with Lisa, and she was telling me exactly the same as Geir Follevåg does in his books. Can I then really understand my informants and engage myself with adoptees' perspective in my analysis? I think I understand the points that Lisa (and Follevåg) makes, but still I cannot include their perspective in deconstructing the meaning of biology in their lives. There is a collision *between* our perspectives, I as a non-adoptee, and Lisa and Follevåg as adoptees. I became a little puzzled. I chose to discuss how I perceived the program with Lisa, focusing especially on the episode that we both watched the day before.

> *Author: Yes, I understand what you say. But at the same time I … I, ehh… for example when I watched the tv program, because I am not adopted myself (Lisa: Mmm.), I cannot put myself in your situation when watching it. (Lisa: No.) At the end of the program shown yesterday, the presenter Tore Strømøy met the adopted boy and his adoptive parents in the studio. They had a very short conversation (Lisa: yes.) where the boy said that it was not the Korean woman who was his mother, but it was the mum and dad in Norway who were his parents. (Lisa: Yes, yes.). I think the words hurt a lot, because his biological mother didn't know about the adoption and she had thought of him every single day before she finally met him in Norway. As a biological mother myself, I think it is difficult to understand.*

> *Lisa: Yes, but … Can she really expect something else? She cannot expect that he will say, "They, the adoptive parents in Norway, are not my parents anymore." You cannot expect that when a child has been with a family all his life, whether they are biological or not, they are always my parents. When I was ill, it was they who took care of me; it was they who tied my shoes when I needed the help. It was they … right? This is not about genes, but about everything around us, isn't it?*

Instead of continuing the pleasant conversation with Lisa, I chose to bring up my "biocentric" thinking for discussion and confront Lisa's point of view. When I told Lisa what I thought of the program, I placed myself in the biological mother's position. With this position, I expressed my puzzlement and incomprehension (and even disappointment) towards the adopted son who in fact did not consider

his biological mother to be his mother. When responding to my puzzlement, Lisa placed herself in the adopted son's position and saw me in the biological mother's position. Notice how she changed subject positions: "Can *she* expect anything else? *She* cannot expect that he would say …" – "*You* cannot expect … they are still my parents. When *I* was ill…when *I* need help…" The discussion here between Lisa and me then turned out to be one between an adopted child and a (biological) mother who wanted biology to mean something.

It was a good decision to let my perspective be directly confronted with that of my informant. Through the confrontation I am better able to see Lisa's (and Follevåg's) point of view, and to understand it in relation to my own standpoint as a biological mother. When Lisa was ill, it was not her biological parents who take care of her, but her adoptive parents; when she needed help, it was not her biological parents who tied the shoelaces for her, but her adoptive parents; the biological parents have been absent in her upbringing, and it is the adoptive parents who are present. I have to ask myself: am I *only* a biological mother? I am my son's biological mother, and at the same time, I am present in his everyday life: I take care of him when he is ill, and I tie the shoelace for him when he needs help. In this way, I am not only a biological mother; I am also an "adoptive" mother in terms of Lisa's description. I had let my biological role speak automatically for my "adoptive" or my social presence as a mother. The kinship between a child and the parents is not only about biology but also a relation established and maintained through the presence in each other's everyday life. I did not see it earlier as the biological focus concealed my "blind spot." I took for granted that the social is an automatic accessory of the biological. Yet through confronting my perspective with that of my informant, and by deconstructing my own perspective, I have achieved a better understanding of what Follevåg means by "biocentrism." In this way, the deconstruction also helps me include my informants' perspective in the study of their lived experience.

4.6.2. My interview with the "China girl"

As the name suggests, "China girl" is adopted from China. She was adopted to Norway when she was still an infant. She grew up in a small town in Northern Norway. At the time of the interview, she was about to finish high school. "China girl" was recruited to participate in this project through an adoption association in which her parents are members.

"China girl" was one of my first interviewees in the early phase of the data collection. Like other new researchers, I had been quite nervous before I met my informants. Yet, before I was going to meet and interview "China girl," I was quite excited and I was even eager to meet her. This was mainly because that she was adopted from China, the country where I am from. I thought that it would be easier for me to interview her. After all, we both are from China: we look the same, and yes, as the Chinese song goes, "we all/both have black hair and black pupils" and "we all/both have a Chinese blood running in our bodies, no matter wherever we are." Maybe we have something in common to talk about; maybe I can get some "unique" stories. I was full of expectations before meeting "China girl."

To some extent, my expectations that I would be able to obtain some unique (also in a sense "truer" or "deeper") qualitative data from "China girl" were consistent with the ideals in the concept "race-of-interviewer-effect" (RIE), discussed in survey methodology in the 1950s and 1960s, especially in USA and UK. RIE presumes that racialized differences between informants and interviewers can affect the "genuineness" and "accuracy" of what informants say, particularly with regard to "racial topics" (Rhodes 1994 in Gunaratnam 2003: 54). In other words, RIE presuppose that more "genuine" and "accurate" data will be achieved when the interviewer is of the same race/ethnicity as the informants, for example between me and "China girl."

However, the interview with "China girl" did not go as I expected. It turned out that the expectations I had towards "China girl" and our interview were merely an imagination. I even doubted after the interview whether I should still call her "China girl." She is just a "Norway girl," I would say. For example, I did presume that origin, or the birth country (in this case, China), would be important for "China girl," so I expected that she would express a kind of curiosity (if not longing) towards her "motherland." In the interview, I had tried several times to "trigger" her to talk about her "connection" to her birth country. I asked her whether she was interested in knowing more about her birth country, whether she had some special feelings when she read books or watched TV programs about China, whether she was particularly interested in knowing someone who is also from China (for example me), and whether she would feel something special when she is eating in a Chinese restaurant. But the answer from her was just no – nothing special. She was seemingly neither more nor less interested in China, compared to

other Norwegian youths. I asked her whether she was interested in visiting China. She answered yes, but added that maybe the travel would be more interesting and meaningful for her parents than for her. When she told me that she did not feel anything special when she was together with other "China girls" at school (those who are either adopted or from migrant families), I asked, "But can you in a way identify yourself with them?" "China girl" thought a little and said, "Ehh… maybe I don't really look like a Chinese. …I don't know. Maybe I look more like being from Thailand, since people sometimes ask me whether I am from Thailand."

Thus, there was nothing special, nothing unique or deeper in this interview with "China girl." That we were both born in China had no effect on her. Through this interview, I was somewhat disabused of my presumption that being born in a country must mean something for the adoptees. This made me reflect over whether origin or birth country is as important as I had assumed, and why it is important for me but was not for "China girl." I had to reflect on how my assumptions about origins were constructed. These questions started a process in which my own assumptions about origins were deconstructed.

I grew up in China in the 1980s and 90s under the communist regime. During my upbringing, I was taught to be proud of my motherland, and to be proud of being Chinese. Since the 1980s, with the enactment of the reform and the policy of opening the country up,[49] the Chinese government made great efforts to attract more overseas Chinese back for economic investments. One of the efforts was to build a common Chinese identity among the Mainland populations and the overseas Chinese populations (see also Ong 1999). Overseas Chinese artists under this political and economic atmosphere began to appear on stage for the mainland Chinese public. The pride of being Chinese among the overseas Chinese and the longing for the motherland have been expressed in some of the most popular songs, such as Zhang Mingmin's "My Chinese heart"[50] and Fei Xiang's "Hometown's clouds,"[51] both presented for the first time for the Chinese public at

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[49] Or the program of Chinese economic reform that was first launched in 1978. "Reform" refers to the economic reform of decentralizing the state control and gradually turning to a market economy. "Opening" refers to the opening up of the country to foreign investment, and permission for entrepreneurs to start businesses.

[50] 张明敏 «我的中国心» Zhang Mingmin is a singer from Hongkong.

[51] 费翔 «故乡的云» Fei Xiang, a Chinese-American pop icon and musical singer.

CCTV New Year Gala[52], respectively in 1984 and 1987. The songs were once so popular that even now more than twenty years later, most of the Chinese in my generation can still sing them. In this way, the domestic and Chinese nationalism were strengthened through overseas patriotism.

When I expected to have something in common with "China girl" based on our Chinese origin, the songs, particularly Zhang's "My Chinese heart" was probably running in my mind, subconsciously or unconsciously – "*Even though I have western clothes on me, my heart is s*till Chinese. My ancestors had long before determined all I am is Chinese. Yangtze River, the Great Wall, Huangshan Mountain, the Yellow River, all mean so much in my mind ..."[53] With reference to the song, when "China girl" told me that she would like to see the Great Wall if she travelled to China, I did see a hope to "open" her up to talk about her connection to the "motherland." I therefore asked her whether and how the Great Wall means something special for her. "China girl" answered,

> "Ehh… no, it is nothing special. … It is a well-known structure, worldwide. This is the only reason… I remember I saw it in the movie Mulan when I was younger."

 "China girl" did not grow up in a context that was similar to the one I grew up in. While the Great Wall to my mind is naturally linked to the pride of being Chinese expressed in "My Chinese heart," "China girl" had never heard of the song, and she grew up singing Norwegian songs. The Great Wall means different things for us; "from China" has a different meaning for us – there is no "Chinese heart" or "Chinese blood." In this way, my taken-for-granted biological translation of the Chinese nationalist project is deconstructed. "Origin" does not have an automatic effect on a person's identity construction. "Origin" can be inscribed with various meanings.

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[52] CCTV New Year Gala is a Chinese New Year special program produced by China Central Television (CCTV), broadcast on the eve of Chinese New Year. The broadcast has a yearly viewership of over 700 million viewers, making it one of the premiere television events of Mainland China. The show features various acts, such as drama, dance, music, and comedy.

[53] My translation from Chinese.

4.7   The deconstructions and the further analysis

These two deconstructions not only help me to gain a better understanding of the experiences of transnational adoptees, but are also significant for my further analysis. Here, I explain the connections. In this dissertation, I intend to illuminate how transnationally adopted persons negotiate and deal with the transnational adoption-related differences when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness. As I explained earlier, I mainly consider two differences as constituting the transnational adoption-related differences, namely looking different (the phenotypical difference) and being adopted. As a person who looks different from majority Norwegians myself, and from the literature on migration studies in Norway, I certainly knew that the phenotypical difference would be significant concerning adoptees' enactment of Norwegianness. Yet, as a difference related to the transnational adoption, I assumed that phenotypical difference also made the adoption-background (being adopted) impossible to hide or forget; one that indicated that adoptees were not only adopted, but also adopted from another country. Thus, even though I had formulated two *different* differences, they were in my formulation quite closely related. I can now see that when asking about whether these differences are relevant to the informants' identity work in relation to Norwegianness, my focus was originally more on the *adoption* – being adopted and *being adopted from another country.*

The assumptions or presumptions that I deconstruct above are precisely about how I assumed transnational adoption would be a basis for the production of difference for my informants in relation to Norwegianness. Yet, I took both for granted.

In the first example I showed that when we think about how adoption, including transnational adoption, can produce difference for adoptees, we are often inclined to relate the difference to the importance of biology, and thus assume that growing up in an adoptive family with adoptive parents (compared with those who grow up in a normalized biological family with biological parents) is one of the axes of difference that are important to adoptees. For example, Lisa told me that she was often asked whether she wanted to find her biological family. I have also heard that some adoptive parents who have biological children were asked whether there was a difference in their relationship to the adoptive children compared to the biological ones. Therefore, I took it for granted that

adoption would certainly produce a biology-related difference in adoptees' upbringings, which would again produce a difference for them in relation to Norwegianness. For example, they were not *born* as Norwegians, or they were not *born* by Norwegian parents.

With this "biocentric" assumption, I asked my informants how they experienced themselves as different because they were adopted, how they thought about their adoption background (being adopted) during their upbringing, and how they and their adoptive parents talked about adoption at home and so on. Since I was focused on the difference that adoption would make to my informants' daily lives, I asked questions in a way that suggested that adoption was a big and central part of their upbringing, and they (as well as their parents) had to deal with the difference all the time.

However, through the analysis of my discussion about the TV-program "Tore på Sporet" with Lisa, I have deconstructed the assumption about how adoption would necessarily produce a biology-related difference when adoptees are compared with other Norwegian children. The deconstruction helps me to better understand my interview data. In fact, most of my informants described a normal family life and upbringing in the interviews. They told me, for instance, "I grew up just like other Norwegian children." "I have a normal relation to my parents." "As a child, you don't think of it all the time, right?" One informant told me that adoption may sometimes be relevant, for example when other children commented that she did not look like her parents she might go to her parents and ask why. Yet, she emphasized that it was not as if she and her parents needed to sit down and talked about it every day. This is also why when I asked Martin to describe his childhood as an adoptee in Norway, he just answered that "it was ok. … I don't understand what you are asking." All these suggest that biology-related difference in their family relations was not necessarily an important issue in their everyday lives, at least not in relation to the topic I am researching – identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

Another assumption I brought with me in understanding how transnational adoption would produce difference in relation to adoptees' identity as Norwegians relates to the meaning of the birth country. I took for granted that being *born* in a country must mean something (indeed this is also a "biocentric" premise). As my informants were born and adopted from another country, I

believed that the meaning of the birth country would automatically give them a connection to their birth countries or a sense of being Chinese, Korean, Indian, etc. Yet, as I shown in the second example, "China girl" seemed indifferent to her birth country. Similarly, another "India girl" told me, "India is an exciting country, not because it is where I am from, but because it is India."

Through the second example of the interview with "China girl," I have illustrated how my assumptions about the meaning of the birth country were deconstructed. When I say "deconstructed," it does not mean that the birth country would necessarily mean nothing at all to all my informants, but that there are always processes through which the meaning is made and constructed. In my interview data, there are also informants who in fact expressed a close connection to their birth countries, for example, Kristin, who was adopted from a Latin American country. Yet she also added that her close connection to her birth country as well as to the Latin American community in Norway had more to do with her having lived and studied there for some time than merely with the fact that she was adopted from there.

When these two taken-for-granted assumptions were deconstructed, I wondered how my informants understand their phenotypical difference and adoption background in relation to Norwegianness and whether and how the differences of *looking different* and *being adopted* are made relevant by adoptees when doing identity work. Since I had attached meaning to the birth country of my informants as part of my exploration of how they produce their identities, I mainly regarded the issue of being Norwegian or not as a question about their national or ethnic belonging: that is, as they were born in one country and grew up in another, which country do they belong to. Yet, with the meaning of the birth countries having been deconstructed, I am wondering what the issues are when my informants talk about themselves as being Norwegian or not. I discuss these questions in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: "Where are you (really) from?" – Transnational adoption and the production of difference in relation to Norwegianness

5.1 Introduction

Following the deconstruction of my own presumptions about how transnational adoption-related differences would generate/produce difference for adoptees in relation to their identities as Norwegians, in this chapter I discuss how my informants understand their phenotypical difference and adoption background in relation to Norwegianness. By doing so, I intend to illuminate whether and how the differences of *looking different* and *being adopted* are made relevant by adoptees when doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

In order to illuminate this meaning-making process, I analyze how my informants perceive and answer the commonly asked question, "Where are you (really) from?" In my interviews, I asked informants whether they had experienced being asked "where are you (really) from" and how they answered. Initially, I asked these questions to clarify how my informants locate their national or ethnic belonging as persons who are born in one place/country and grow up in another. However, it turned out that this is a very common question that nearly all informants encounter in their daily lives. Indeed, this is a commonly asked question in general. While for many of us, "where are you from" is simply a question we ask and answer as a social etiquette, for transnational adoptees, this is not an easy question. One informant said,

> *This question is difficult to answer. Are they actually asking where you are from, in other words where you were born, or where in Norway you are from? Therefore, I always wonder what they ask about. Is it just something they are curious about? (Erik)*

"Is it just something they are curious about?" This question indicates that the "where are you from" question can have different and complex meanings for adoptees. These meanings relate to the negotiation of transnational adoption-related differences in relation to Norwegianness.

I will mainly discuss this negotiation process in relation to a majoritizing/minoritizing process as theorized in postcolonial feminist theories (Brah 2003, Staunæs 2004, Berg et al. 2010). When facing the "where are you from" question, my informants were brought into particular majority-minority relations. It is through a positioning process between the two dichotomous positions, that they negotiate the difference of looking different and the meaning of being adopted. In analyzing how my informants negotiated the difference of looking different, I borrow the concept *phenotypical difference* (Wallman 1986, Alcoff 1999) and discuss how looking different is made significant in relation to the construction of majoritized Norwegianness. In the analysis of how interviewees negotiate the meaning of their adoption background, I engage the anthropological understanding of adoption as a "kinning" process (Howell 2006), and discuss this process in relation to adoptees' enactment of Norwegianness.

5.2   "Where are you *really* from?" – A difference for adoptees in relation to Norwegianness

Normally when a Norwegian person is asked "where are you from" (unless he/she is abroad or at an international event), their identity as Norwegian is not in question. S/he only needs to respond with a place in Norway. Yet how do adoptees experience this question? According to my informants, when asked this question they would also answer the place where in Norway they are from; where they grew up. They find this to be a natural response. For example, Kristin said that,

> It is much more natural for me to say that I am from Tromsø, because I am from Tromsø. I grew up here and it is here that I feel at home, even though I have also lived in other places in Norway and the world. It is here that my family lives, it is here that …. yes, everything.   (Kristin)

Similarly, another informant told me,

> Håvard: I know I wasn't born here. But I have grown up and lived here since I was very small. So I always consider this to be my "birthplace."   (Håvard)

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In anthropological studies, the adoption process that adoptive parents experience has been compared to a process of pregnancy. In this metaphor, the moment when the child is finally allocated to the adoptive parents after a long time of waiting, is regarded as a symbolic *birth* (Howell 2006: 70-74). Interestingly, here Håvard described the place where he grew up in Norway as his "birthplace," implying that he was in a way (re)born when he was adopted to Norway. In both examples, my informants feel that it is natural to say they are from the place in Norway in which they grew up, because that is where they have established social networks and become social beings.

However, in contrast from majoritized Norwegians, after answering the place where in Norway where they are from, my informants would very often be asked "where are you *really* from?" How do they interpret this "really" question? Here is an excerpt from my interview (CMI) with Halldis:

> *Author: What did you think when you were asked, "Where are you really from?"*

> *Halldis: When I was young and up to my 20's, I was very provoked when people didn't "accept" my answer that I was from Stavanger, because I felt totally Norwegian. Now I am more rounded at the edges. When unknown people ask, I see quickly whether what they ask for is "Korea." Then I just say it immediately to avoid a long interrogation.*

When explaining how she interprets this "where are you *really* from" question, Halldis connected the question to her Norwegianness. Her first answer "from Stavanger" is the one that enacts her as a "real" Norwegian. Yet, when people further asked "where are you really from," this meant that her enactment was not received or "accepted," even though Halldis herself "felt totally Norwegian." This is also the reason why Halldis got provoked. From Halldis's explanation, we can see that for adoptees, the "where are you from" question can exceed the meaning about geographic location and turn into a question of inclusion and exclusion related to Norwegianness.

Similarly, Terje told me,

> *When I meet people who don't know me, they will of course ask, "Where are you from?" Then I answer, "Sandnes." But in fact they ask about "where*

*really – where I am **originally** from. Then I say Korea. So in one way or another they actually ask whether I am Norwegian or not. (Terje)*

Here Terje also pointed out that for him the question "where are you *really* from" was in fact about whether or not he was Norwegian. Like Halldis, when Terje was asked "where are you really from," he knew that the answer people were looking for was "Korea." Yet, when telling me how he was asked "where are your really from," he added an explanation for me about how the word "really" should be interpreted, with a stress on the word *originally* – "in fact they ask about "where really ('hvor egentlig')" – where I am **originally** ('opprinnelig') from." In analyzing Terje's words, I consider this extra explanation important, because through this explanation, he separated two words; *really* ("egentlig") and *originally* ("opprinnelig"), which are normally used as synonyms.

When translating my interview data from Norwegian to English, I find it difficult to choose one exact corresponding word for the Norwegian word "egentlig." As Terje suggests, this Norwegian word contains two overlapping meanings: "originally" and "really." I am not sure whether "originally" also means "really" in English. But if I refer to my mother tongue, Chinese, it is easier to find the corresponding word to "egentlig" – "到底" (dàodǐ), which can be translated into English as "on earth",or "really*"*, and literally means "to the final end" (with an implication of *origin*). In this way, the Chinese word *到底* (dàodǐ) can also be said to contain the double meaning of "really" and "originally," like the Norwegian "egentlig." Through my travels through languages to explore the meaning of the word "egentlig," I wonder whether there is a common cross-cultural and naturalized construction of meaning: where you are originally from is where you are really from; and consequently the question about origin is also about who you *really* are. I think this is why Halldis felt provoked by the question when she was asked "where are you *really* from," because it can easily be interpreted as "Am I not a *real* Norwegian? I feel totally Norwegian!"

When Terje intentionally separated the two words and added an extra explanation with a stress on "originally," I understood him to mean that when he answered Korea, he meant that Korea was where he was *originally* (rather than *really*) from. He thus implied that when he first answered that he was from Sandnes, he did so because he considers Sandnes to be the place he is really from, and that he really is Norwegian.

The separation of *really* and *originally* also emerged in my interview with Signe. Signe told me that when she encountered the question "where are you *really* from," she would throw the question back and ask, "What do you mean?" She explained,

> "What do you mean?" I would say. I am very direct in asking questions, because I want to make them think about the way they are asking me the question. Because there are people who are not considerate, they don't think before they ask. If they don't mean to have a discussion or something like that, I will say, "Do you mean where I was born?" … Then they understand, "Ok, she is from Sandnessjøen," or "Ok, this is what I mean, the **origin**." (Signe)

From these three examples, I first understood my informants to not consider themselves different in terms of creating identities as Norwegian. As Halldis said, she felt totally Norwegian. Here, I read the informants' strong sense of being Norwegian in conjunction with the deconstruction of the meaning of the birth country from the previous chapter. Being born in a country does not necessarily mean that you will have a connection to it, still less a belonging. This is how both Terje and Signe separated the meanings of *originally* and *really*. However, even though the informants do not consider themselves different in relation to Norwegianness, they do experience being market as different. This is the second message I get from the informants. The difference lies precisely in the word "really" when they are asked where they are from, because when they are asked in this way, they feel that they are not accepted as real Norwegians.

I need to clarify that I do not intend to claim that adoptees are rejected as Norwegians by other Norwegians, but rather that adoptees cannot take their Norwegianness for granted. Thus the difference is that while for most Norwegians, the question "where are you from" will normally not bring their Norwegian identity into question (unless it is in an international event), for adoptees, it does. The next question I discuss is: how is the difference is made, or what is it about?

5.3 "I know they ask because I look different." Phenotypical difference as the source of difference with regard to the minoritizing process

When I asked my informants how they felt when they were asked where they were "really" from, I noticed that they displayed an ambivalent attitude. On one hand, as Halldis told me, they feel provoked by the question, because they feel like they are not accepted as "real" Norwegians. On the other hand, to some extent they consider it natural or understandable to be asked this question. For example, when Terje told me how he interpreted the question, he said, "When people don't know me, they will *of course* ask, 'Where are you from?'" I think my informants found it natural to be asked this question, not only because asking someone where they are from is such a common question in social settings, but also because they understood why people are particularly interested in that "really." Here are some examples of what my informants said:

> Example 1:
> Some ask me this question because I look different." (Berit)

> Example 2:
> Some people just want to hear "Korea" because they see that I don't look Norwegian. They will not stop asking the question before I finally say it. (Halldis)

> Example 3:
> I have encountered that question many, many times. In a way, I think it is natural to ask about it, because I have a different skin color. (Lisa)

In the above three examples, all the informants refer to their looking different to explain why they are asked where they are "really" from. In putting these three examples together, I intend to show what "looking different" is really about "not looking Norwegian" (example 2), and "having a different skin color" (example 3). I analyze how this difference of looking different is made meaningful to the informants' identity work in relation to Norwegianness in terms of *phenotypical difference*. As discussed in chapter 2, as an analytical concept, phenotypical differences shed light on how a person's visible physical features (predominantly skin colour) are reified to mark racial or ethnic boundaries (Wallman 1986:229;

Alcoff 1999: 40, 43; Berg 2008). This concept helps me explore the exclusionary process that my informants experience because they look different. Using phenotypical difference as a conceptual tool, I see that the above examples show how particular racial boundaries have been constructed around Norwegianness: looking different means looking different from majority Norwegians, who are white. In other words, my informants know that being Norwegian in practice equates to being white, and whiteness is constructed as the racial boundaries that define a person's position in relation to Norwegianness. In this way, the transnational adoptees who are not white, or phenotypically not Norwegian, can easily be excluded from majoritized Norwegianness. This suggests that when they are asked "where are you (really) from," my informants can be placed in a minoritizing process. Lisa's further explanation illustrates this minoritizing process well:

> *When I lived home, I was seldom asked because everyone knew who I was. But immediately after I moved to Trøndelag, I was like 100% sure that most people think, "Where is she from?" and "She must be Muslim." Isn't it? Many people have these prejudices before they talk with me. But I don't think this is something I care much about. (Lisa)*

Here, Lisa places herself in the position of people who asked the question and vividly describes how she was involved into a minoritization process through which she was taken to be "Muslim." First, that she looked different made people wonder where she was from, and then because of her phenotypical features, she was assumed to be Muslim, which in Norway is a minority position. Last but not least, Lisa pointed out that in assuming she was Muslim, people held certain prejudices. As an insider or a person who in fact belongs to the majority, Lisa was well aware of the minoritization process and she knew the position from which she was asked "where are you (really) from."

I also want to point out that this minoritization process, which was initiated by Lisa's phenotypical difference of being not white, is at the same time a process of racialization. In mentioning the prejudices behind the minoritizing process, Lisa noted that the minority position that is made available for her through the racialization process is a disfavoured position. This suggests that transnational adoptees who share particular phenotypical features with immigrant minorities

can be exposed to racist discrimination and even racism. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next two chapters.

To return to my analytical question in this chapter, the above examples show that when encountering the question of where they are from, my informants were brought into a particular majority-minority relation. It is thus within this relationship that my informants negotiate the meaning of looking different and being adopted in the interviews. In other words, I need to investigate the meaning-making process in relation to the minoritizing and majoritizing processes. Thus far, my analysis shows that when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness, my informants have to deal with the difference of looking different – or looking different is made relevant in relation to their identity as Norwegians. The difference is that they can easily be placed in a minority position because of phenotypical difference. This is also how looking different is made relevant and meaningful in relation to Norwegianness.

To be asked, "Where are you (really) from" is indeed something that an immigrant can experience in his or her everyday life. For example, in a Norwegian TV-commercial, a white Norwegian taxi passenger asks a black taxi driver, "Where are you from?" The taxi-driver answers with a pure northern Norwegian dialect: "I am from Harstad, what about you (Æ e fra Harstad, enn du)?" – an answer which the passenger cannot comprehend. In this way, it can be said that when asked "where are you (really) from," the transnational adoptees are often pushed into the same minority position as that of an immigrant, not only because they look different in the same way as the immigrants, but also because of their *origin*. When they use their origin/birth country to answer the further question of "where are you really from," it can confirm the minoritizing process, because, origin – a place that can be concrete or abstract (such as a nation) - is often considered an important criteria for collective identifications (Eriksen 2000:264-266). After explaining how looking different is made relevant in relation to the informants' identities as Norwegianness, I will now continue to discuss how they construct the meaning of their adoption background in relation to Norwegianness. In order to answer this question, I analyze how the informants answer the "where are you (really) from" question.

5.4 Being adopted and the production of difference in relation to Norwegianness

5.4.1 "Being adopted" as a majority Norwegian position

-"Where are you (really) from?"

*- "I am **adopted** from …"*

Instead of answering which country they were originally from, my informants usually answer, "I am **adopted** from…" This is an interesting point. As Renate told me,

> *I sometimes feel a bit weird when I say that I am adopted. In a way I feel like that is a relevant thing to add when I say I am from India. (Renate)*

Here, Renate says that she finds it strange but also relevant to say that she was adopted when answering questions about where she is from. Renate emphasized that she was very different from those "real Indians" in Norway, particularly the young girls from Indian immigrant families. Here is a short excerpt from our interview (CMI):

> *Author: When you were together with other Indian youth, can you in a way identify yourself with them?*
>
> *Renate: The only thing I have in common with them is the appearance. And we are different on most of the things: language, belief, values. … For example, I have more freedom than the Indian girls. They must stay at home, and they never hang out on the town, something like that. Mm… and they are not allowed to have boyfriends.*

Here we can see that Renate considered it relevant to talk about her adoption background, because this information was necessary to distinguish her from other Indians, particularly Indian girls in Norway. That is to say, Renate intentionally avoided answering directly "I am from India," precisely because "from India" can easily confirm the minority position she is provided when being asked "where are you from." Therefore, by adding the information that she is adopted, Renate aims to reject being minoritized as an Indian immigrant, even though she looked Indian and she was born in India.

In a previous quote from Halldis, she said that she used to feel provoked when asked "where are you *really* from" because she felt like people did not accept that she was from Stavanger. She also said that,

> *When being asked "where I am really from," I felt like I had to defend myself as Norwegian. Usually, I answer that I was born in Korea, but grew up and live in Norway, or I would just say that I was adopted from Korea. (Halldis)*

Similarly to what Renate told me, Halldis's answer illustrates that "being adopted" can be used to mark a position that is different from the minoritized "non-Norwegian" that the question provided them with. At the same time, noting her adoption background was also an effective way for Halldis to defend her Norwegianness. I must point out that Norwegianness here is the majoritized one. In other words, "being adopted" can effectively mark a majority position that allows my informants to enact a majoritized Norwegianness. Then the question is how "being adopted" is made relevant in the enactment of the majoritized Norwegianness? In order to answer this question, I analyze how my informants construct the meaning of their adoption background in relation to Norwegianness.

Halldis's comment show me that to her, being adopted means "born in Korea, *but* [growing] up and [living] in Norway." Another informant, Kristin told me,

> *If I answer that I am from Tromsø [to the question "where are you from"], then they ask, "Yes, but where are you really from?"Or they ask, "Have you grown up in Tromsø? Were you born here?" …So I think they in a way try to classify me, or put me in a place. (Kristin)*

Here, Kristin describes another way that people try to understand where she is *really* from, by asking whether she was born or grew up in Tromsø. More importantly, Kristin points out that by asking this, people want to "classify her or put her in a place" – in other words place her in a position or a category. I think that what Kristin describes as classification is indeed a process of majoritizing/minoritizing. For her, the question of where she is "really" from is about which position or category she should be placed in: a minority position or majority position? If we read Halldis's comments in the context of Kristin's explanation of what the "where are you really from" question means, it helps us understand that when Halldis said that she was "born in Korea *but* grew up and

live in Norway" to defend her majoritized Norwegianness, her emphasis was on the latter part of the sentence, signalled through the use of "but."

This construction of the meaning of adoption contrasts with how I previously assumed that transnational adoption produce or generate a difference for adoptees in relation to Norwegianness. As I noted in the previous chapter, when I ascribed meaning to the birth country of my informants, my emphasis was obviously on having been born in Korea (or India, China etc.). The differences between my emphasis on the meaning of transnational adoption and the way the informants understood the significance of their adoption background also reflects our different positions from which we talk about Norwegianness in the interviews. I am a foreigner or a new immigrant in a minority position and wanted to emphasize the importance of the birth country, and my informants were in a majority position and wanted to tell a different story. That is to say, when my informants and I negotiated the meaning of adoption in the interviews, the conversation itself involves a process of majoritization and minoritization. This point will be further discussed later in this chapter. Here I will continue to explore how meaning-making narratives of adoption can contribute to adoptees' enactment of a majoritized Norwegianness.

This is Lisa's explanation for why she used to add information about being adopted to answer the "where are you from" question:

> If someone asks, for example, "Where are you from," I answer, "I am from Larvik." "Yes, but where are you really from?" – "Oh, I am adopted from India." This is my standard answer. I usually point out the fact that I am adopted from India, not that I have family from India. I think this is about how to identify myself and not putting myself into another category. … Because immediately after I say that I am adopted, people say, "Oh, I see, you have Norwegian parents." (Lisa)

Like Kristin, Lisa also believes that the further clarification of where she is "really" from is a question about classification and categorization, or whether she should be placed in a majority or minority position. For her, to answer the question was a matter of self-categorizing. In this way, to intentionally add the information about adoption in the answer can be regarded as a process in which Lisa majoritizes herself. Or, I would say that revealing the adoption background represents a turning point in which Lisa moves from being minoritized to being majoritized.

Further, in Lisa's explanation, I see how the meaning of adoption is created in relation to the process of majoritization. For Lisa, "being adopted from India" means that she has Norwegian family and Norwegian parents. Lisa's meaning-making in relation to adoption was consistent with that of the other informants (e.g. Renate, Halldis, and Kristian). All referred to adoption to indicate the kind of close connections that adoptees have to the majority Norwegian society, including having grown up in Norway or in a specific Norwegian place and having a Norwegian family. Yet, I think Lisa was even more specific, as she pointed to an intimate parent-child relation to stress this close connection: she has Norwegian parents. Some immigrants also have families in Norway. For example, some have their spouses and spouses' families in Norway. Not least, second generation[54] immigrants have their families in Norway. In addition to growing up in Norway, all were born in Norway. Yet to have "Norwegian" (read: majority and "white" Norwegian) parents is a unique relation that adoptees have. In order to show that their association to the Norwegian society through adoption is unique, some of my informants have also made a comparison between themselves and the children of immigrants. For example,

> *Being adopted, I only know the Norwegian culture, so I don't experience the "cross-pressure" ("krysspress") between cultures as the immigrant youth do. (Halldis)*

> *Cultural influence is much more important to a child's upbringing than anything else, such as genes. In fact, we can also see this from the immigrant families. Mm… the second generation, as we often call it, the children of immigrants, have a different culture than their parents. And many are struggling because they have gone to Norwegian schools and they have learned the Norwegian values, but at home, within the four walls, there is a different culture, normally, right? So they have a culture clash all the time. (Lisa)*

Halldis and Lisa used respectively "cross-pressure" and "culture clash" to describe a kind of cultural conflict that children of immigrants can experience in Norwegian

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[54] According to Statistics Norway's definition, second generation immigrants are persons born in Norway to parents who were both born abroad.
(http://www.ssb.no/ssp/utg/200102/2.shtml last download data: 2012-06-02)

society. This pressure or clash is thought to be a result of having to live with two different cultures, the Norwegian one outside home and a non-Norwegian one that their parents impart to them at home. In contrast, as both informants pointed out, adoptees have never experienced such "cross-pressure" or "culture clash," because they grew up in Norwegian families with Norwegian parents, and they live only with one culture. In other words, being adopted indicates that adoptees have grown up and lived in the majority Norwegian context all the time. In this way, the comparisons made in the above quotes constituted a majoritizing process through which both informants emphasized their majority position.

In chapter 2, I discussed the concept "kinning," which challenges the biocentric understanding of kinship as an automatic formation based on blood ties, and emphasizes the social and relational aspect of kinship, especially between the parents and the child (see Howell 2006). In my empirical data, I see how the intimate parent-child kinship is referred to by adoptees to account for their close connections to Norwegianness. This close connection makes them different from immigrants, and positions them as more legitimate and more acceptable Norwegians. I therefore argue that through the "kinning" process, the adoptees become not only "kinned" family members in their Norwegian families, but also "kinned" Norwegians who are considered part of the Norwegian "we." In this way, kinship becomes important in the constitution of relations that include some and exclude others (Lawler 2008: 32). Or, as Sarah Franklin argues, "Establishing identities is (itself) kinship work in action" (Franklin 2000: 221 in Lawler 2008).

Analyzing the interview data as a whole, I see that for my informants, being adopted means having Norwegian families, particularly Norwegian parents, and growing up in Norway, within a majority context. Though they were not born in Norway, and do not look like white Norwegians, they have sufficiently strong connections to Norway to be considered and accepted as majority Norwegians. This is how adoption is made meaningful when my informants do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness: being adopted constitutes their majoritized Norwegianness. In the previous chapter, I discussed my assumption that adoption would be a main factor that produced difference for my informants in relation to Norwegianness. However, here I show that on the contrary, adoption is a factor that can remove or unmake the difference that is generated by looking different.

This suggests that in the interviews, there were ongoing processes of negotiation on the meaning of adoption. In these, adoption moved between being the basis on which difference was produced to being that which unmade difference. I discuss this next.

5.4.2 Negotiating adoption: from producing difference to undoing difference

The following quote from Lisa illustrates the negotiation process between the informants and me:

> *Author: Have you ever considered yourself different because you are adopted?*
>
> *Lisa: In fact I haven't had any problems, ehh… or noticed that it is different for me to be adopted in comparison with my friends. Ehh… but I think maybe … ehh … maybe I will understand better at the time when I look for jobs after I finish my education … and something like that. Then you will be categorized in a totally different way than you are in a school context. Because at school, I am a person not a paper … do you understand what I mean? My friends at school, they have never thought about those things, because we are in the same class … Do you understand what I mean?*
>
> *Author: Mm.*
>
> *Lisa: But when you are going to work, and you are going to a job interview, then it may happen. Ehh….*
>
> *Anthor: Mm.*
>
> *Lisa: But it can also be an advantage, as well as a disadvantage. … For example, once I was called for a job interview, a part-time job I had earlier. On my application they saw that I had a Norwegian name. Then we also talked on the phone before the interview. But when I entered the room for the interview, hehe… I noticed that he, my previous boss, he was confused. (Author: Mm) It is alike that you should come as a Norwegian blond, with a very Norwegian appearance because you have such Norwegian name as I have, right? But they understood it quickly. So in a way, it can also be an advantage. Yeah, where are you really from? Immediately after you say that*

you are adopted, "Oh, I see. You grew up in Norway. You have Norwegian parents." Then you are in a way a step above the others. It is like, "Here are Norwegians" – you come into this category immediately. (Author: Mm) While you, who have a foreign name, which indicates that you are an immigrant … No, then you are placed in a different category than I am.

Author: Mm… but …

Lisa: Because I have Norwegian norms and values.

When I asked Lisa whether she had perceived herself to be different because she was adopted, she related the difference in relation to Norwegianness, that is, how she may be categorized differently in different contexts. To illustrate this, she also contrasted the school context and the context of looking for jobs. In her example of the job interview, Lisa pointed out that the difference that came into effect here was generated by her phenotypical difference: she was not blond, or she did not have the Norwegian appearance her name suggested. In this way, the different categorization she mentioned is precisely what I analyzed earlier: looking different, adoptees can be identified or categorized as minorities. At the same time, I see that when answering my question on how adoption might generate difference for her, she did not relate adoption to the difference-making processes connected to biology or birth as I had assumed she would. For example, her parents in Norway are not her biological parents; she was not born in Norway. This implied, again, that when the difference was connected to Norwegianness, the difference was mainly about her phenotypical difference.

Yet, what is more important for my analysis of the conversation is the interaction between Lisa and me, which I consider a process of a negotiation between us on the meaning of adoption (being adopted) in relation to whether and how it can produce difference in relation to Norwegianness. The negotiation process is interesting, because I see that Lisa drew on my position as an "outsider-within" to compare and illustrate her own position. Let me first discuss the negotiation process.

This conversation began with my question of whether Lisa perceived herself to be different because of her (transnational) adoption background. When asking this, I assumed that being adopted could simply mean being different, or that there would be certain differences generated by her being adopted. Lisa's answer

partially confirmed my understanding of adoption as producing difference. She told me that in some contexts, for example when she looked for jobs, she could be categorized differently in relation to Norwegianness, or she could be categorized as a minority Norwegian. However, more importantly, Lisa also revised this construction of meaning by telling me that "it can also be an advantage." With the example of job interview, she showed me how her adoption background could make her be identified or categorized as a majority Norwegian. This is because "being adopted" in this context simply means "you grew up in Norway and you have Norwegian parents" (indeed "you are one of us, the majority"), or as she concluded in the end, "I have Norwegian norms and values." Thus, when adoption was mobilized to indicate a person's majoritized Norwegianness, the meaning of adoption was reconceptualized from producing difference to undoing difference.

When negotiating the meaning of adoption in the above conversation, I also see that while I intended to make Lisa talk about the differences caused by adoption in relation to Norwegianness, the conversation ended by Lisa talking about the difference between herself as an adoptee, who belongs to the majority, and me, as an immigrant who belong the minority. The quotation I have included here is just an example to illustrate that my interviews with the informants, as a process of collecting data, can themselves reflect such a minoritizing/majoritizing process. When I intended to use phenotypical difference and the adoption background to encourage my informants to talk about their alternative belonging to their birth country, which I thought would produce difference in relation to Norwegianness, I did sometimes draw on my own experience of looking different and being born in another country. Yet by examining the interaction as a process of negotiation, I see that my informants clearly distanced themselves from my standpoint. They may not have wanted to be compared with me, exactly because I, as an "immigrant" who looks different and who was born in another country, am positioned as a minority, while they, as adoptees, are positioned as the majority.

The positioning work Lisa did in this conversation was also reflected in her question to me: "Do you understand what I mean?" When inserting this question twice in her explanation of how "being adopted" can both produce and undo difference for her, she positioned me as an outsider, both an outsider in relation to the Norwegian society, and an outsider in relation to adoption. Therefore, she wondered whether I, as a new immigrant, could really understand what she told

me about how she can be positioned or categorized in a totally different way than I am. She also wondered whether I could understand that, as an adopted youth, she may *not* experience any difference in her daily life, for example in school. In this way, my own situatedness in the study has an impact on what my informants told me and emphasized in the interviews.

Lisa also noted that our names made a difference between herself as an adoptee and me as an immigrant. Because she was adopted by Norwegians, she has a very typical Norwegian name. As shown in her example of the job interview, her very Norwegian name can also indicate her majoritized Norwegianness in the context of work applications. She also implicitly mentioned her spoken Norwegian. When she talked to the job interviewer on the phone, she was just the same as any other Norwegian. Thus both her identity on the application, indicated by her name, and her identity on the phone, indicated by the way she speaks Norwegian, positioned her as an unmarked majority Norwegian. Then, when telling me that she nevertheless could notice a slight confusion from the job interviewer, she underlined that the only thing that marks her as different was phenotype - that she is not white or blond.

With Lisa's story about the job interview, I also want to point out that questions of where the informants are "really" from are not necessarily verbalized explicitly. This question can also be posed through facial expressions, minor forms of behavior, or even a glance. For example, Lisa read the job interviewer's confusion as such a questioning. In the short moment when the confusion was expressed, Lisa was brought into a minoritization process where her majoritized Norwegianness, enacted through her name and fluent Norwegian, was doubted or unrecognized. I would say that "where are you (really) from" is only one example of the minoritization process that adoptees experience in their daily lives. There are other moments or situations where the adoptees cannot take their Norwegianness, or majoritized Norwegianness, for granted. This will be explored in more detail in the next chapters.

5.5 Conclusion: Ambivalent majority/minority positions caused by transnational adoption as difference-(un)making in relation to Norwegianness

In this chapter, by analyzing how my informants interpret and answer the commonly asked question "where are you from", I have explored how they, as transnational adoptees, construct and negotiate the meaning of looking different and being adopted in relation to Norwegianness. I have also discussed how what I consider transnational-adoption related differences are made relevant in the process in which they do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

By analyzing the "where are you(really) from" question in relation to a majoritizing-minoritizing process, I have illustrated how the meaning of looking different and being adopted are produced and negotiated in relation to the transnational adoptees' ambivalent positioning between the unstable majority/minority positions. My data shows that as transnational adoptees, my informants consider themselves to belong to the unmarked white Norwegian majority. Yet, because they look different, they can easily be identified as immigrant minorities. So *looking different* is the difference that marks my informants as different in relation to Norwegianness. Then, by discussing transnational adoptees' *phenotypical difference*, I illustrated how whiteness is constructed as the Norwegian norm, or as the racial boundary that defines a person's position in relation to Norwegianness.

However, *being adopted* can be used to "defend" or emphasize transnational adoptees' majority position. In other words, *being adopted* is the difference that can undo or "unmake" the difference of *looking different*, because transnational adoptees' adoption background is perceived as a close or intimate "kinned" connection to the majority – they have majority Norwegian parents, they grew up in majority Norwegian families, and they were brought up in the majority Norwegian culture.

Since looking different is the difference that matters to adoptees' positioning in relation to Norwegianness, in the next two chapters I explore this difference-making process further. I discuss in greater detail how looking different is made significant for transnational adoptees as they do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

Chapter 6: The relevance of "looking different" as a question of producing "race" – the informants' experiences as children

6.1 Introduction

In the next two chapters I examine the logic behind the minoritization process through which my informants are constructed as "looking different." This is the minoritization process my informants experienced because of their phenotypical differences. By doing so, I intend illuminate how "looking different" has been made significant for transnational adoptees as they do identity work in relation to Norwegianness. To this end, I analyze how my informants experience looking different in their daily life situations, where "looking different" refers to phenotypical differences. My analytical focus here is on a racialization process, which I argue forms the basis on which "looking different" is made relevant for my informants.

As we saw in chapter 5, Lisa noted that when she was a child and lived at home, she was rarely asked where she was from, because everyone knew who she was. This is a common story among my informants, and similar stories can also be found in other studies about transnational adoptees in Norway (Brottveit 1996, Sætersdal and Dalen 1999). This narrative suggests that as adopted children growing up in a relatively small and well-protected environment, the informants' adoption background was often "visible" in a way that confirmed their belonging to the majority. Therefore, they were less likely to experience being minoritized. However, this does not mean that they avoided being racialized. In the interviews, I brought up the topic of bullying as a way to enquire into their experiences of looking different when they were children. Here, my informants' stories vary: while some experienced a lot of bullying in their childhood, others described the environment they grew up in as integrated, which meant that they rarely experienced any bullying. Yet they had all experienced comments about their "different" appearance.

The common narrative, exemplified by Lisa's story, suggests that there are differences in my informants' experiences of looking different and in the way they made sense of this (as children and as adults) in relation to being Norwegian.

Their divergent experiences and ways of understanding these appear to depend on the different social contexts in which their phenotypical difference was made relevant. Though their experiences of "looking different" as children and as adults are both about processes of doing "race," they highlight different aspects of how "race" is produced and made relevant. I have therefore divided my analysis of the difference-making process related to "looking different" into two chapters. In this chapter, I analyze my informants' experiences of looking different as children in a context where they were relatively well protected. In chapter 7, I examine their experiences of looking different as adults in a more challenging context.

As I discussed in chapter 2, I use a majority-inclusive approach (Staunæs 2003, Staunæs and Søndergaard 2006, Berg et al. 2010) in my analysis of racialization. Thus, I examine the racialization process as a relational process in which "race" is done and made relevant through my informants' interactions with others. As several informants talked about their experience of being bullied or with racializing remarks as examples of racism, I also discuss the racialization process my informants experienced in relation to theoretical discussions about racism. The latter discussion mainly focuses on the question whether racism must be based on racist intentions (e.g. Lien 1997, Gullestad 2002, Rogstad and Midtbøen 2010). My analysis of my informants' experiences of being bullied at school by peers who were often not thought to have bad intentions can help illuminate this question.

6.2   A "Muslim" is not a Muslim; a "negro" is not black – Bullying and comments on phenotypical difference from peers

Comments and remarks about their appearance was the most common form of bulling that my informants experienced as children. Very often, such bullying happened at school and was from their peers. Here is an excerpt from my interview (CMI) with Christian:

> *Author: You mentioned when you were small, you were once bullied at school? What kind of bullying was it?*

> *Christian: Just that they thought I was from a Muslim country.*

Author: Do you look like a person from Middle East or Africa?

Christian: No.

Christian: I look like a Latino.

Christian: Like Ricky Martin.

Author: (…) Then how could you be misunderstood as a Muslim?

Christian: Because the kids didn´t think that far… If you were black-haired with fair skin and big eyes, you resembled a Muslim... if you had black skin, whether you´re from South America or New York, they would think you´re from the jungle of Africa. And just because you had yellow skin, with chinky eyes and were actually Indonesian, they´d think you´re from China… Kids don´t really think that far...

In chapter 5, I quoted Lisa, who told me that when asked where she was from, she may have been perceived as a "Muslim," even though she was born in India. Christian also told me that he had been bullied as a "Muslim" by other children at school, and he was not born in a "Muslim" country either. Then how were they both looked upon as "Muslim"? What does "Muslim" mean? I find it useful to analyze Christian and Lisa's stories in conjunction.

In the quote above, Christian explained that, "If you were black-haired with fair skin and big eyes, you resembled a Muslim." Obviously, "Muslim" here has nothing to do with religion, or even the region a person is originally from, but becomes a descriptive racialized phenotype to indicate certain bodily features, for example, "black hair," "fair skin," and "big eyes." In addition to the "Muslim" category, Christian also explained how other racialized positions, like "African" and "Chinese," were produced based on various phenotypical features, like skin colour, hair colour, and eye shapes. Such phenotypical features, depending on which systematic differentiations are being produced and performed, is, as postcolonial studies scholars point out, "deeply ingrained with colonialism and race thinking" (Hübinette and Tigervall 2009: 121).

Not only is "Muslim" used as a descriptive racialized image, it is also an image with particular negative meanings that are often used as a contrast to a positive

construction of majoritized Norwegianness. For example, Lisa told me that when people assumed her to be "Muslim," this included particular prejudices (see chapter 5). When Christian told me that he received comments about "being from a Muslim country," he told this as a story about bullying. In other words, "Muslim" indicates not only a person's phenotypical difference, but also a difference-making process related to such phenotypical differences, a mutual process of inclusion and exclusion in relation to Norwegianness. This racialization is a relational process, through which both the marked position of "Muslims" and the unmarked position of the Norwegian "we" are constructed. To better illustrate the relational aspect of this racialization process, I provide another example from my interview with Isabel.

Like Christian, Isabel was adopted from a Latin American country. While Christian was bullied as a "Muslim," Isabel was called "Negro" or "Negro child" (in Norwegian "Negerunge"). When Isabel told me about her experience with racialization - or in her own words racism - she intentionally included the experiences of her son. In fact, she initially brought up racism and bullying at a very early stage of the interview by telling me that her son was exposed to serious bullying at school because like his mother, his skin was darker. I asked,

> Author: When you were young, were you exposed to this kind of bullying problem?
>
> Isabel: Yes, I was, but not as bad as for my son.
>
> Author: How? Can you explain a little more?
>
> Isabel: I got comments about my skin color. I was called "Negro." But I had many friends when I was in primary school, so I didn't care so much.
>
> Author: How about your son?
>
> Isabel: He doesn't have so many friends. This is a problem.
>
> Author: I see. But when you were bullied at school, how did you react to it?
>
> Isabel: The first time I reacted to it was when I was 12, because it was an adult who called me a swear word - "Negro child." Then I realized that I was not as white as my friends.

Author: Is your skin very dark?

Isabel: No, I look like a person from Asia, Thailand.

Author: Then why were you called "Negro" or "Negro child"? I am from Asia, and I haven't experienced being called "Negro."

Isabel: Because for whites, those who are not white are all Negroes, even though they are from Asia. It is a generic term.

(Quoted from CMI with Isabel)

From this excerpt, I first see that to be called "Negro" does not necessarily mean that you have black skin. Rather, it stands for a more general racialized image rooted in colonial histories of slavery. More importantly, as shown above, "Negro" is appropriated to refer to a general non-white otherness in Norway. Then, through this "othering" process, Norwegianness is constructed to equate to a racialized whiteness. This is why, when she was called "Negro child" by an adult, Isabel realized that she was not the same as other children, because she was not white. In this way, it is important to emphasize that the majoritization of the whites must also be included in the process of racialization, together with and in relation to the minoritization of the "Muslim," as illustrated in Lisa and Christian's stories, "Negro" in Isabel's story, or any other forms of non-white otherness. Isabel's story highlights that "Negro" as a minoritized position and "white" as a majoritized one are constructed in relation to each other through a racialization process. It is in relations that "race" as a difference-making category is made relevant. Or as Marianne Gullestad says, "Racialization creates 'race' as a social phenomenon," and "'Blackness' and 'whiteness' are relational categories that mutually define each other" (Gullestad 2002: 207).

6.3   Silent racialization

In addition to the verbalized racist remarks, I also noticed a silent racialization that adopted children experienced from their peers at school. This was particular talked about as something occurring among girls. For example, Renate told me,

Renate: I was incredibly shy when I was a child, and had very low self-confidence. At home and in the neighborhood, I was very well included, but at school, I was not. I had no girlfriends in my class, only those in other grades. So in a way I was "bullied." But I do not know whether this is because I was "different."

Author: What kind of bullying was it?

Renate: It was a kind of ostracism from the girls. Boys were not like that. The girls never said anything to me, but when there was one of them who were also "out of the gang" for a while, she then became friends with me, until she was included in the gang again. (…) We were a small class with only 6-7 girls.

(Quoted from CMI with Renate)

Even though Renate was not sure why she was silently excluded, or whether this silent exclusion had something to do with her being different, she did tell me that she was the only girl who looked different, or was not white, in her class. Therefore, in my analysis, I regard such silent exclusion as a silent process of racialization which is based on a person's phenotypical differences. With the term "silent racialization," I also want to stress that racialization is about a process of doing "race" in relations and through interactions, with - and without - words.

Tone told a similar story about silent racialization:

I was extremely shy when I was little. In that small community where I grew up, I always felt different. Of course this has something to do with that I am adopted, because I look different. It was like I really wanted to be the same as the others. And it was hard not to be the same. So I was very stressed at school. It was very hard. I don't know, maybe my class was special because we were around 20 in the class and only seven girls. And one girl was really, really popular. And she kind of set the standard for what is cool or not, you know. It was horrible with this kind of thing and I felt insecure. Who you should go with, who you should not go with? What to wear and how to get accepted? There were many unwritten rules. And that is very stressful. (Tone)

Similarly to Renate's experience, the girls in Tone's class did not say anything to her out loud. In her own words, I would say that she was excluded by silent "unwritten rules." Even though she did not explicitly say that she was ostracized in the way as Renate did, from the way in which she described her uncertainty and stress, it was obvious that she was never accepted or included, particularly by the girls in the class. More importantly, Tone also related the exclusion she experienced in her class to the problem of "not being the same": she was not white. In comparison with the example in section 6.2, what made Tone stressed was not the verbalized remarks, but the unwritten rules according to which she as a non-white girl was never considered cool or popular in the class.

What Renate and Tone described here was not something that was widely shared by the other informants. In fact, several informants described the school environment where they grew up as integrated. However, the two examples illustrated a common phenomenon of silent racializations. For example, through unwanted staring or attention from others because they look different. In addition, these two examples, particularly Tone's uncertainty and stress, illustrate that though the racialization is silent, it can lead to the same effect of exclusion, and the result can be as painful as verbalized racialization.

6.4   Are bullying from other children at school racism?

6.4.1   Bullying at school as "Hobby racism" – an ambivalent attitude

Thus far, I have analyzed how "race," which is produced and made relevant through a process of racialization, is relevant to the production of difference in relation to Norwegianness. To exemplify such a process, I have discussed how my informants experienced being racialized by other children at school. My informants provided these examples when I asked about bullying based on phenotypical difference. In the interviews, I also asked how my informants understood this bullying; for example, whether they consider it racist. In asking this question, my intention was to examine whether the informants understood the difference that emerges from "looking different" to be a question of "race." They had different opinions on this point. For example, Christian and Isabel talked about encountering racializing remarks like "Muslim" and "Negro" from other

children at school. Yet their attitudes towards these comments were rather different.

When Christian explained why he was called "Muslim," he mentioned that "Kids didn´t really think that far" (see 6.2). This explanation implies that it is understandable or even acceptable that children make such racializing remarks. As I will also show in chapter 8, Christian also linked racism to people's knowledge about minority immigrants. In this way, it can be said that Christian considered it understandable and acceptable that children made racializing remarks, exactly because children are less knowledgeable, or they are too young to understand the negative meanings behind those remarks. This attitude was common among my informants.

However, some informants thought comments like "Muslim" and "Negro" were examples of racist bullying or harassment. Even though small children make these comments, they are not acceptable. This is the position Isabel took when she shared her stories. Following her story of how she was called "Negro child" by an adult (see 6.2), I asked,

> Author: But I am very surprised to hear that you were called "Negro" by an adult. How could an adult treat a small kid like this?

> Isabel: I have experienced more racism as an adult than when I was a child. Very often it is adults who taught children words like "Negro," "Pakkis,"[55] "Svarting"[56] and something like that. Then with the attitudes they learned at home, the children brought them to school.

When I expressed my surprise and commented, "How could an adult treat a small kid like this?" I implicitly held a similar attitude as Christian – that is, it was to some extent understandable and acceptable for a child to say "Negro," but not for an adult. This shows that Christian's attitude is common not only among the informants, but also people generally. However, Isabel corrected me and pointed it out clearly such remarks, like "Negro," "Pakkis," and "Svarting" are racist

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[55] "Pakkis" is a derogatory name in Norwegian to call a person from Pakistan.

[56] "Svarting" is a racist term in Norwegian to call a person with dark skin, and can be translated to "darkie" in English.

remarks; even though they are made by small children, they are *not* innocent – it is adults who teach children the words. In other words, the racist remarks by school children reflect a general racist attitude at home, or even in the whole society. When I adopt Isabel's clear position on this question and go back to read the stories of how she and her son experienced looking different at school, I also get another message: that even if the racist comments are made by children, they hurt just as much as those from adults.

In this analysis of Christian and Isabel's stories, I have illustrated two contrasting attitudes among my informants to the bullying events they experienced at school. When further analyzing the data as a whole, I find that the two different attitudes were not only expressed among different informants, but can also be found in the one and same interview, even though the informant may choose to emphasize one more than the other. In other words, these different attitudes were in fact not opposed to each other, but reflected an ambivalent attitude towards the bullying informants experienced at school. On the one hand, they wanted to ignore the bullying by telling themselves that the intentions were not bad, or the children did not know what they were doing. On the other hand, these remarks did have a painful effect on them. Terje's comments about what he calls "hobby racism" illustrate this ambivalent attitude well:

> *I think bullying is one thing. When these remarks are constantly about your appearance and origin, like "guling," "Sloping eyes," "Go back where you came from" and that stuff, I do not see it merely as a general harassment or bullying that other kids can experience in Norway. Mm… Because the bullying I experienced, it happened because I looked different, of a different race. (…) When we were small, it was, yes, it was the teachers who said that these remarks were racist. (…) In the middle school, we also got tips from the teachers on how to cope better with these remarks than resorting to physical measures. So I learned quickly how I could cope with these racist comments in a humoristic way. For example, if someone said, here in Norway it is usual to say to Asians, "You are yellow." So I just answered, "Yes, you are white." So we joked about this. I answered it back in a funny way. The other children thought it was funny, because I didn't mind, instead, I joked back. I thought myself that it was funny, to some extent. (…) So I learned not to care about these remarks, in a way, I learned to cope with it by accepting it. Mm… There is a saying about it, "Turn the other cheek ."*

This is what I called "hobby racism": you don't mind it; instead, you make jokes of it because you have to cope with it. But everything has a limit in terms of how far one can go and on how much you can bear. After I entered high school, I was challenged even more by the racist remarks. They saw quickly that I didn't care, so they played it even more. That's when I learned how far I could go before I was made into a laughing stock. (Terje)

When telling me this, Terje's tone was partially self-ironic, partially pained. To meet the racist remarks at school on a daily basis was a big challenge for Terje in his upbringing. In this quote, Terje underlines that the bullying he experienced was not the sort of bullying that other children can experience too. Rather, a form of racism. In addition, he points out that the difference that looking different made in his experience of being bullied is clearly related to "race." Furthermore, not only was it a painful experience for Terje to be the target of the racist remarks, he also had to cope with these remarks. On the one hand, the teachers at school made it clear that the racist remarks were not acceptable and that the comments were racist. On the other hand, by giving tips to Terje about how he could cope with these remarks, they also taught him indirectly to accept the racism, or to ignore the racism by making it into a joke. This is what Terje called "hobby racism," a term that illustrates the ambivalent attitudes that my informants display towards their experience of being bullied by other children when they were young.

With the word "hobby," Terje implies that this kind of racism, was perceived to not have any bad intentions; instead the racism was a type of joke, made to be funny. At the same time, "hobby racism" also expresses the painful effects of such racism without "bad intentions." These painful effects made Terje realize how far he could go to tolerate such racism. Here, he ironically referred to the Bible, "whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

The ironic tone also reflected Terje's ambivalent attitudes towards the way he was taught to cope with the racist remarks. When he told me how things changed after he learned to deal with the racist remarks in a humoristic way, he said,

When other children saw that I didn't care about these remarks, but rather used them as a kind of "backfire ["return fire"] in a funny context, everything changed. Everything became joyful and harmonious. I was accepted and I achieved a status in the class as the "funny guy." Then the last year in middle school was a good year for me in every respect,

particularly for my social life. (…) So, if you bite your teeth together, and don't care what others say to you, if you endure it, you can quickly be more accepted and you can get along well with others. (Terje)

Everything seemed go much better for Terje after he learned to play the "hobby racism." Yet, in Terje's description, I read a painstaking effort behind the superficial harmony and joy, which he described as "if you bite your teeth together," and "if you endure it." So, even though "hobby racism" had certain positive effects on Terje's school life, it was painful, and the cost for Terje to be accepted by his peers was obviously high. From Terje's words, I also see how an adopted child's struggle with racism can be interwoven with his struggle to be accepted, to achieve a popular status in the school setting.

6.4.2 Bullying at school as everyday racism

The ambivalent attitude on whether bullying at school, such as racializing remarks from children, are forms of racism reflects disputes in the Norwegian discussion about racism on whether racism requires racist intention behind it. The two different sides of the debate concerns different theoretical understandings of the relations between the concepts of *racialization* and *racism*. The Norwegian anthropologist Inger-Lise Lien, for example, defines *racism* by separating it from *racialization*. With a reference to Robert Miles (1989), she sees racialization as a natural cognitive process, while racism is a negative continuation of it – that is to say, racism as an observable excluding practice must have a negative intention behind (Lien 1997: 20). She uses examples to emphasize that racialization that aims to include immigrant minorities is not racism (ibid: 25).

On the other side of the debate, there are researchers who use racialization as an alternative and more fruitful perspective from which to explore racism as a social phenomenon that also exists at the structural or social level and is taken for granted and rarely discussed (e.g. Gullestad 1992, Rogstad and Midtbøen 2010). For example, by applying theories of racialization, Marianne Gullestad illustrates how racism can be located in majorities' taken-for-granted practices that contribute to maintaining a permanent "otherness" along ethnic divisions in western society (Gullestad 2002). Jon Rogstad and Arnfinn H. Midtbøen also write that an important goal of theories of racialization is "to show how 'race' is rooted in people's fundamental perceptions of realities and acts as a confirmation of

majority populations' self-image at a structural or social level."[57] (Rogstad and Midtbøen 2010: 37).

Using racialization as a theoretical perspective to reflect on the majority society's taken-for-granted practices complements the "majority-inclusive approach" (Staunæs 2003, Berg et al. 2010), that I adopt in this study. In the above analysis, I have used racialization as an analytical concept and illustrated a relational inclusion/exclusion process in which the majoritized whiteness and minoritized "otherness" are mutually produced based on phenotypical differences. At the same time, my analysis also highlights that a racializing action, for example, the "innocent" racist remarks from children, "hobby racism" practiced in a seemingly harmonious way, or even silent racialization, can have very painful exclusionary effects. As I discussed in chapter 2, one problem with the intention-driven definition of racism is that when we study a concrete action sociologically, it is difficult to enquire into the actor's intention empirically. By using the racialization perspective, my analysis shows that it is more useful to consider racism or racist action as the hurtful and harmful effects of a racialization process, effects that are enacted in the communication and interactions between people (see also Høgmo 1997, Gullestad 2002). In addition, my data points out that the hurtful racializing remarks from small children reflect a general racist attitude among the majority society and are thus not as "innocent" as considerate is normally perceived.

"Everyday racism" is a useful concept that is closely related to racialization. Everyday racism focuses on the concrete practices of exclusion – regardless of the intentions behind them (Rogstad and Midtbøen 2010: 39). At the same time, in reflecting on the majorities' taken-for-granted practices, everyday racism also defined a type of racism that people generally accept as an implicit truth, fear, misunderstanding or generalization (see Høgmo 1997, Gullestad 2002, Biong 2010). For example, when Christian thought that it was understandable and acceptable that children made comments about him being "Muslim," he illustrated the general idea that children are not knowledgeable. In other words, the children generalized based on misunderstandings. I would therefore call the bullying my informants experienced at school everyday racism.

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[57] My translation from Norwegian.

My data shows that my informants also experienced everyday racism from old people. When narrating these episodes, the informants represented old people similarly to the way they represented innocent children: neither group was thought to really mean what they say, or were thought to be ignorant. For example, Isabel said,

> *Many old people are more racist than young people. Even my own mother believed that all immigrants live on welfare benefits. (…) It is bad if you are an immigrant and you live on welfare benefits, because you are then thought to be exploiting the Norwegians. (Isabel)*

Here, Isabel illustrated how common it was for old people to be fearful based on incorrect information and misunderstandings when meeting minoritized peoples. In using her own mother as an example, Isabel also showed that such a racism is a common practice even among those closest person to you. Another informant, Halldis, said,

> *Well, I haven't experienced much bullying. But I remember once, when I was young, my brother and I sat outside, selling lottery tickets to collect money for the organization "Save the Children." An old lady came to us. Then she stuck her face right up to mine and said that I could not see more than half as much as she could ... because I had so narrow eyes. I was then only 7 years old. (Halldis)*

Halldis describes an awkward comment from an old lady; a comment she did not know whether to laugh or cry over. The old woman can easily be thought to not have had any bad or racist intention, and her comment can be represented as merely ignorant. However, with this example, I want to show that to a seven-year old girl, such a comment can hurt as much as a comment based on bad intentions. In relation to the discussion about everyday racism, my data shows that as a form of generalization or misunderstanding, everyday racism can sometimes be legitimized by explanations that are directly related to a person's lack of knowledge.

6.5 The serious racialization and racist events

Besides the "trivial" events of everyday racism, some of my informants also talked about more serious and violent racializing events that they experienced as children. Within the understanding of racism that I discussed above, these serious racializing events are no doubt racist. Here is one excerpt from the interview with Erik:

> *Author: How did you begin to train and practice martial arts?*
>
> *Erik: Now you're onto something interesting. Because … when I was in first grade, when I began to go to school, I remember one of my first days at school… it scarred my soul. And this made me feel pain.*
>
> *Author: What happened?*
>
> *Erik: It was that I was taken by the big boys. They were boys from the sixth grade, at that time. Then … for some reason, I do not know whether it was because I was adopted, because I was small, or because I looked different. But they took me then. And they took me to the toilet, and they harassed me down there. They pushed me ... and in the end they peed on me ... In other words, I was thrown into the toilet ... They held my head down in the toilet. Very humiliating ... Mm … And I cried and was very scared … And they told me, "If you tell anyone about this, we'll beat you every single day." Then I had two choices. One was to become a strong person. So I went right up to the principal's office, and reported what had just happened, or I "gossiped" as they would have called it. So they were taken. … But on that day when I felt the fucking piss smell in my hair, and the degradation there... so I thought, already at that time when I was very young, "Never again will this happen! I cannot accept this. I will die rather than experience such humiliation and degradation. And afterwards I started to practice martial arts. I started doing karate …*

For Erik, what happened on one of his first days of school was a horrible and unforgettable experience. In his words, this experience had "scarred his soul." And it was also because of this extremely humiliating experience that Erik started martial arts. When Erik connected this experience with being adopted, being small, and looking different, I see an implicit and explicit link to "race." The explicit link is

that he mentioned "looking different," or in other words, he did not look like a white Norwegian. The implicit link is that he said "I was small." Through the whole interview, the height problem – that he was physically shorter and smaller than his peers – was one of the main topics that Erik organized his narratives around. When talking about himself as "small," he not only referred to it as an individual difference, but more importantly as a phenotypical difference of looking Asian and small. For example, in the interview, he described himself as "a little Asian man in a tall white Norway." I discuss this in more in detail in the next chapter. My point here is that though Erik did not explicitly talk about this serious event as racist, it is indeed one of the worst racist actions that a small child can experience. And it is also worth noticing that such serious violent racism can even be conducted by children. To return to what Isabel told me about the general racist attitude in society, I argue that racism does not disappear, and regardless of whether it is everyday racism or more serious violent racism, the whole society has a responsibility to fight it.

Tone also told me about her experience with neo-Nazism when she was a young child.

> Tone: In some places in Southern Norway, there are struggles with a Neo-Nazi environment. There are some Neo-Nazi gangs.
>
> Author: Did you experience something yourself?
>
> Tone: Yes, I remember once when I was very small, my mother and I went to a place near Oslo. In the street, we met a gang of Neo-Nazis. When we were passing them, they began to shout at me, "Who should get her out of the country?" And then my mother, she was so, so angry.
>
> Author: What did your mother do?
>
> Tone: I don't remember. I was very small at that time. But I remember her reaction: she was very, very angry and upset. She told me this afterwards. It was something that scared me. It was very scary to think that there were people out there who would chase after me and get me out of the country.

Tone's story shows that Neo-Nazism, as an extreme form of racism and xenophobia, can bring challenges and serious consequences for transnationally

adopted children. Maybe we can also read Tone being scared of being chased and thrown out of the country, in the context of her stress or struggles to be the same during her childhood (see section 6.3). She was threatened with being thrown out of the country precisely because she looked different; at the same time, this threat also increases her struggles in her identity work (that she wished to be white). In this way, the existence of Neo-Nazism and racism in Norway (as well as in other western countries) not only brings challenges to transnational adoptees, but also suggests that they must do extra identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

6.6 Conclusion: The relevance of "looking different" to the production of "race"

In this chapter, by analyzing the informants' childhood experience of looking different, as a racialization process, I have illustrated that the making of difference based on phenotype in relation to the majoritization/minoritization process is a way of producing "race." It is through a process where "race" is produced and made relevant, that "looking different" is made meaningful and significant for my informants in their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. By discussing the racializing events exemplified in this chapter in the context of a theoretical discussion about racism, my analysis highlights that bullying can bring transnationally adopted children painful excluding effects. Then by applying a majority-inclusive understanding of racialization as an alternative perspective through which to understand racism, I suggest that racism can be understood as certain hurtful and harmful effects of a racialization process that is enacted through people's communication and interaction. The "trivial" and seemingly "innocent" racializing events, represent everyday racism. In addition to everyday racism, I also show that the challenges brought by "looking different" can be serious and involve violent racism. In this chapter, I emphasize first, that the difference that "looking different" carries is enmeshed in racial logics. Second, the process through which "race" is produced and made relevant has a painful excluding effect for transnationally adopted children, which they have to deal with in doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

Chapter 7: The production of difference through interwoven racializing and gendering processes – the informants' experiences of looking different as adults

7.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways in which "looking different" is produced as a form of social difference, and argued that this is a process of racialization. However, in my data analysis, I find that in this process, "race" is also produced in relation to and together with gender. Thus, as my informants were racialized, they were often subject to a simultaneous and interwoven process of gendering in which, gender and "race" were thoroughly intertwined. Therefore, to better understand how the informants experienced being minoritized because of their phenotypical differences, I cannot focus on the racialization process independently of the gendering process. In this chapter, I further explore the ways "looking different" is made relevant by explicating this interwoven racializing and gendering process.

To explicate such an interwoven process, I analyze how my informants, have experienced being minoritized as adults because they are perceived to look different. However, this does not mean that gender is only made relevant for my informants once they are adults. The main difference between their experiences as adults and as children is that as children their adoption background and thus majority position was known to the people around them. As adults, their adoption background is often not obvious, and they cannot take their majority position for granted anymore. Yet, this difference does not necessarily require different analytical perspectives on how "looking different" is made relevant through the production of "race." In other words, racializing process can also be intertwined with a gendering process both in childhood and in adulthood. For example, when analyzing how Renate and Tone experienced being excluded and bullied through a silent racialization process, I found that "gender" was performed and made relevant at the same time. Through these exclusionary processes, both informants were targeted as students who did not look Norwegian or white, but also as girls "who were extremely shy" (see 6.3). I therefore do not consider the two sets of

data to require different analytical perspectives, but I do use them to highlight different aspects of my analysis.

In this chapter, I mainly rely on postcolonial feminist theories, and in particular on the concept intersectionality. I adopt a non-additive intracategorical approach (Staunæs 2003, Mulinari et al. 2009, Berg et al. 2010) and focus on the co-constitutions of "race" and gender. Using this analytical focus, I explore how "race" and gender as two *different* categories that produce difference. I examine how two different power relations are combined in my informants' lived experience of being minoritized.

I found that my informants often talked about their phenotypical differences as a question about biology. When analyzing how the body and biology are involved in the process of racialization and gendering, I apply feminist theories that attempt to bridge the gap between biology and sociology (Birke 2003, Fausto-Sterling 2003) and focus on the meaning-making process through which the body and biology is made meaningful for the informants. I therefore do not separate between biological gender and social gender, or between "race" as biological difference and ethnicity as cultural difference, in my analysis. Instead, I consider gender and "race" to be socially constructed phenomena that are performed and made relevant through embodied practice (Butler 1999[58]); though socially constructed, they also have real effects in people's lived experience (Alcoff 2006).

7.2   Phenotypical difference as a "biological" difference that concerns "the body"

In the previous chapter, I mentioned Erik, who talked about himself as "a little (short) Asian man living in the tall white Norway." Through this contrast, Erik vividly described a stereotyped phenotypical image of being an Asian man in Norway. By referring to his height as a phenotypical difference, Erik talked about his phenotypical difference as a bodily difference. Closely related to this bodily

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[58] Butler mainly used embodied practice to examine the performance of gender (1999). Here I borrow her concept to also understand the performance of "race" as embodied practice.

difference, he talked about a bodily change or "transformation" that he experienced during his stay in Korea, where he was adopted from.

> *Erik: When I was in Korea, I experienced a transformation that my soul could not manage. I studied social science in Bergen, so I believed that many things were socially constructed. But this transformation occurred at such a deep psychic plan that I just could not even analyze it myself.*

> *Author: Can you explain more?*

> *Erik: This was just a good warm feeling which came to me without me even thinking about identity. My body changed. Something happened there, but it happened without my being aware of it. It took several days or maybe one week before I began to realize that something happened. Then I began to notice my body, and the feeling of just walking on the street, just to know that I was in Korea, just to look around the people who are of the same height as me … this is something social, but all these … and the smells. I just felt an enormous transformation. Like… it was a kind of warmth, I will say. It was just like coming out from your breast and then spread all over. And the food! I believe that the Korean food is good for me. I don't know what it is about … But I think this is not sociology; this is biology. I believe the food that my ancestors have eaten for generations are good for me in one way or another, compared to potatoes and the food in Norway. So I was happier in Korea. I looked at myself in the mirror. Something happened. I had some totally different features on my face. I was … Ehh… I didn't want to leave. I didn't want to leave when I was to travel home.*

Erik told me about how his body had unconsciously changed in a positive way and how he felt "good and warm" in Korea even without reflecting on the question on identity. In this quote, Erik emphasized that what he talked about as a "bodily transformation" was a question of biology that concerns the body, in contrast to a question of sociology that concerns the social. Erik knew that I was doing my PhD in Sociology. Thus, when he contrasted biology and sociology in telling me about this "bodily transformation," he seemed to imply that, "what I tell here is not something that you, a PhD student in sociology, can understand and analyze." He also mentioned that even though he had studied social science and saw much of the world as socially constructed, he could not analyze this change himself. The question then is what I, who also have a social science background, can see from

this change of "the body." How can I analyze this involvement of "the body," which is normally considered the realm of biology, in my examination of the way looking different is made meaningful?

I analyze the bodily change that Erik described in relation to his phenotypical differences. First, I consider the bodily change as a positive change in how he experienced and made meaning of certain bodily features when his context changed. As we can see, these bodily features, such as being short and certain facial features were what made him phenotypically different in Norway. However, when he was in Korea, these features suddenly became normalized, and he was not market as different any more. This is what his "nice feeling" is about. Notice how he described this nice feeling: "just to look around the people who are of the same height as me." In other words, I read what Erik considered a biological change of his body mainly as a change of social context in which his experience of his body and his interpretation of certain bodily features changed.

Yvonne also referred to her body to talk about her phenotypical difference, albeit implicitly. In the interview, Yvonne emphasized that as a Norwegian woman she was very independent, which made her different from immigrant women in Norway. She also told me that she preferred to have a white Norwegian husband, because it was important for her to have gender equality at home. Here, Yvonne turned to a gender-related cultural difference to revise the separation of majority/minority, and placed herself in the position of the majority (this is discussed in more detail in the next chapter). In short, in the interview Yvonne presented a gendered self-image of being an independent and liberated Norwegian woman. However, there was a turning point, or an inconsistent moment, where Yvonne broke with this self-image. This happened when Yvonne began to talk about a connection between her phenotypical difference and her problem with the "boyfriend things":

> *Author: We have talked about the challenges of looking different when you were small in [the place where Yvonne grew up]. Besides the things you have mentioned, are there other problems or challenges you experience because you look different?*
>
> *Yvonne: Mm… yeah, about boyfriends. I have been stressed about it. Because I used to be very shy. It was like that, I don't know, other classmates always got boyfriends, but never me, because I was so shy about*

it. I think Asian culture is different when it comes to boyfriend things, you know.

Author: How about now?

Yvonne: Mm … I have no problems to get to know boys I don't like. But, hehe… [being a little shy] when I meet boys I like, then it is difficult for me to have contact with them.

Author: Why?

Yvonne: Because Mm… I don't know, maybe it is because of my background from Vietnam. I have read Vietnamese love stories and watched TV from Asia. It's like the girl is always shy, you know. And the boy should take initiative. So she is just passive, waiting for the boys, being incredibly shy, even when she is in love. And I have been like that.

Suddenly, Yvonne presented a different - in fact, a quite contradictory - gendered image of herself: being shy and passive when it came to the "boyfriend" things. It is also interesting to note that in this context Yvonne talked about herself as an Asian or Vietnamese woman, and no longer as the independent, liberated Norwegian woman. Even though Yvonne mentioned "Asian culture" and her "background from Vietnam," it was in fact not about "culture" or "background." When she talked about herself as an independent Norwegian woman, what she emphasized was her Norwegian culture and background. Also, recall that she raised the "boyfriend problem" when I asked about the relevance of looking different. Thus, in my view, when Yvonne explained that it had something to do with her "Vietnamese background," what she meant was her Vietnamese appearance, or even her Vietnamese female *body*. Yvonne did not mention "the body" explicitly, but she did vividly sketch out a stereotypic image of carrying an Asian/Vietnamese female body, the meaning of which was imparted through its representation in literature and media – "she is just passive, waiting for the boys, being incredibly shy, even when she is in love." When she added in the end, "And I have been like that," she put herself in the represented Asian/ Vietnamese female body. She identified with this stereotypical and phenotypical image through certain common phenotypical features, or the bodily features she shared with Asian/Vietnamese women. Moreover, I found that Yvonne performed this

embodied Asian/Vietnamese femininity of being shy in that interview moment too.

In both examples, I see an involvement of the *body* in the way that "looking different" is made relevant. Furthermore, in both narratives I see that gender was also performed and made relevant in the racialization processes they described. The next question I discuss is how to analyze this involvement of the body in relation to racialization processes in which gender is also performed and made relevant.

7.3   The body as the site where the categories meet

7.3.1   The interwoven process of racialization and gendering

Even though there was a disparity in Yvonne's performance of gender between an independent liberated Norwegian woman and a shy, restrained Asian/Vietnamese woman, I do not want to divide social gender (as a Norwegian woman, with reference to culture) and biological gender/"sex" (as an Asian/Vietnamese woman, with an implied reference to the body or biology). Rather, I consider the story of Yvonne to be a good example through which to illustrate that the performativity of gender is an embodied practice (Butler 1999). For me, when Yvonne presents her as an independent Norwegian woman in the interview, this was done through a gender performance that involved the body, for example, through the way she talked, dressed and behaved. When she presented herself as an independent, liberated Norwegian woman, I perceived her performance of this identity to be embodied. Furthermore, being shy and passive is not a biological aspect of being an Asian woman. As Yvonne also points out, how an Asian girl behaved/performed when it came to the boyfriend things had something to do with "Asian culture," not "Asian nature." As many feminist theorists have criticized, a division between social gender and a biological sex will not enable constructive analyses of gender in social and feminist studies (Birke 2003, Fausto-Sterling 2003). Such a division often leaves "sex" in the realm of scientifically verifiable fact, which makes feminism vulnerable to a new tide of biological difference (Fausto-Sterling 2003: 123).

However, I understand Yvonne's "gender trouble" with the "boyfriend things" to not only reflect an embodied performance of gender, but also an embodied practice of "race." Let us return to the quote where Yvonne explains why she has problems getting to know boys she likes. Here, Yvonne describes a stereotyped image of Vietnamese/Asian women being "passive," "waiting for boys," and being "incredibly shy," an image she formed through literature and television. This stereotyped image is not only a gendered image, but also a highly racialized one. That is to say, when Yvonne included herself in this stereotypical body image – at the moment when she said, "I have been like that" – and performed this femininity of being shy and passive, she at the same time performed a gendered Asianness. In this way, I see gender performance to involve the body; and in this embodied practice of doing gender, there is at the same time an embodied practice of doing "race." Thus, through Yvonne's embodied practice during the interview, both gender and "race" were performed and made relevant. At the same time, I see that gender and "race," as categories performed through interactions, have real gendered and racialized effects that meet on the site of the body. When Yvonne performs a gendered Asianness, I saw an Asian woman. Therefore, I my further analysis, I consider the body as the site where categories meet.

More importantly, as my analysis shows, processes of racialization and gendering are intertwined. This quote from another part of the interview with Erik further illustrates and explicates this interwoven process:

> *Author: You said that you often felt lonely when you were together with your friends. Do you think that this had something to do with your being adopted?*
>
> *Erik: Ehh … no, at least not directly. But I think adoption has influenced much of my upbringing. (…) It was not that I could not be included in the groups. But to feel a belonging, to feel that I was one of them is something different. So I felt lonely even though I have been the midpoint of the group. Mm… I think this had something to do with my height. I have followed the feminist debates. Mm… Feminists often ignore the differences among the men: they say men are men, right? But I think there is a big difference between a tall man and a short man. So I have this height problem. But it is*

difficult to say whether this problem is related to the adoption. Anyway this is one part of me as a little Asian man in a tall white Norway.

Author: But are not some Norwegian men, I mean ethnic Norwegian men, also very short?

Erik: Mm… maybe… as I said, it is difficult to associate it with adoption directly. Being a small Asian man … this becomes a stereotype that I feel I fit right into, like this is something for me. I will say that generally you have a low status. This is a kind of masculinity conflict between men: to dominate or to be dominated among the men. At the same time, I feel to be, or to have a different appearance, becomes something more, in addition to … yes, in addition to the height, just strengthens that dominance relation. That is … first they dominate you because they are taller than you, stronger than you in a way … you may think like this. But also you are sort of in the minority. This I think is problematic. I don't feel good when walking in the street in Norway.

I began with a question on whether and how any transnational adoption-related difference would make or produce a difference for Erik in relation to Norwegianness. Erik related the difference-making to certain bodily features or his racialized phenotype as "a little Asian man" in contrast to a context of "a tall white Norway." In other words, it is the phenotypical difference that produces a difference for Erik in relation Norwegianness. From Erik's further explanation of how being an Asian man could exacerbate his subordination as a short man to a tall white Norwegian man, there is a clear intersection of "race" and gender: both a racialized difference between the Asian men and Norwegian men, and a gendered difference within masculinity between a tall man and a short man. Furthermore, Erik's explanation of how "race" and gender worked together to place him in a doubly dominated position fits with the "additive approach" to intersectional analysis (see Crenshaw 2001[59] in Yuval-Davis 2006).

First, Erik described a gendered masculinity through which taller men dominated him. Next, Erik perceived that a racialized difference between himself as an Asian man and white Norwegian men exacerbated this dominance. It can be said that

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[59] The same as (Crenshaw 1994) in my reference list.

Erik described two separate processes, the process of gendering through which he as a short man was subordinated to a tall man. Then there was an additional racialization process, through which he was racialized as an Asian man who was subordinated to a white man. Elsewhere in the interview, he told me how he had been racialized by being called "Chinaman," "Ching Chong" and "Guling" – a common racialization experience that Erik shared with other male informants who were adopted from Asian countries. When the racialization process were added together with a gendering process, Erik was locked in a doubly unfavorable or subordinated position as "a short (+) Asian" man. I see Erik's additive description of how he as a short Asian man was locked into an dominated position through an intersection of "race" and gender as an interesting parallel to feminist (particularly black feminist) elaborations on how minority colored women suffered "a double, triple and multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression" in white mainstream society (Crenshaw 1994, Collins 2000, Oyewumi 2002).

Yet, in recent feminist studies of the intersection of categories like gender and "race"/ ethnicity, the focus has been on the co-constitutive process in concrete performances of categories in people's lived experience. Scholars claim that the intersection of various categories is more complicated and subtle than being simply added together (Staunæs 2003, de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005, Berg et al 2010). With an intra-categorical approach, these studies have repeatedly shown that gender and "race" (as well as ethnicity and class) "are mutually constituting, coming alive in and through one another" (Mulinari et al. 2009: 5). Using this analytical focus on the co-constitutive process, I can see that Erik's explanation of how he was disfavored as "a short/little Asian man" illustrates a mutually constituting process of gendered and the racialized differences. In other words, a gendered difference within masculinity (in this case height) marks and maintains a racial border between Asian men and Norwegian men; and a racialized difference between Asian men and Norwegian men also contributes to the constitution of a gendered dominance of tall men over short men. In this way, when Erik was placed in a disfavored position as "a little Asian man," he experienced an interwoven process of racialization and gendering. We cannot separate these two processes in Erik's lived experience as a "short/little Asian man," precisely because both processes took place simultaneously and both involved Erik's body. We can separate these categories in theory, but we cannot separate them when analyzing the experiences of a living body – or the body was the site where the categories meet.

Like Yvonne, Erik also pointed that there are certain stereotypical images within which he easily fits. He outlined contrasting stereotypical images of two racialized phenotypes: Asian men being non-white and short, and Norwegian men being white and tall. I want to stress that "non-white"/"white" in Erik's description do not (only) refer to skin complexion, but is also and perhaps more importantly connected to other racialized phenotypical features. For example, my interviews show that eye shape, instead of skin color, was constructed as the most noticeably phenotypical difference for adoptees from Asian countries.

7.3.2 The body as the site where categories meet: different interweaving process of racialization and gendering

In the introduction, I explained that my analysis of the interview data shows that whether "race" and gender intersects in the informants' experience of "looking different" is unrelated to age. However, the way these intersect through embodied practices of doing "race" and "gender" does relate to age, because the body does change at different life stages. With this change, the embodied and enacted categories - such as "race" and gender - are inscribed with different meanings. For example, Erik told me that his height problem or the problem related to a conflict of masculinity began during the period when "hormones began to bubble." This suggests that when analyzing the way processes of gendering and racialization are interwoven, we need to understand it within a heteronormative framework where the meaning of gendered difference and the favored and unfavored masculinity/femininity are produced. For example, in the last chapter I quoted Christian's story of being bullied by other children as a "Muslim" when he was a small child. But Christian also emphasized in the interview that to be perceived as "Muslim" was something that he only experienced at primary school.

> *Author: How about later when you were in middle school or high school?*
>
> *Christian: When I reached that age when you began to see girls, I was one of the popular boys. Then I was Mr. (the name of the middle school) and Mr. (the name of the high school)…*
>
> *Author: I can imagine it. I have several friends from Latin America and they are nice-looking.*
>
> *(Excerpt from CMI with Christian)*

The interview with Christian took place online. When Christian told me that he had been perceived to be "Muslim," I asked him whether he looked like a person from the Middle East. Christian answered that he looked like a Latino and he resembled Ricky Martin (see 6.2). In this quote, following my compliment that my friends from Latin America were nice-looking, Christian sent me a picture of himself, maybe to illustrate how "Ricky Martin" he was. Christian clearly presented himself in the interview as a good-looking, handsome Latino man who was popular among women. In this way, he performed a favored racialized masculinity, or a gendered Latinoness through an interwoven racializing and gendering process. And this favored gendered Latinoness was not only performed by Christian, but was also performed through his interaction with me. I offered a personal compliment after Christian described himself as "Rick Martin": "I can imagine it. I have several friends from Latin America and they are all nice-looking." Through this interaction, a stereotypical image of Latino men was produced. This was a gendered and racialized image in which Latino men are good-looking, sexy and popular among Norwegian women. This kind of stereotypical image was also produced in my other interviews. For example, a female informant who was adopted from Latin America, Kristin, also mentioned that, "Norwegian women like Latin American men."

Christian's story of being a popular Latino among Norwegian women stands in contrast to Erik's story of being a "little Asian man in a tall white Norway." Erik's story places him in a disfavored gendered position in comparison with white Norwegian men, while Christian's story places him in a favored gendered position. In other words, the two examples illustrate two different interweaving processes of how of the embodied performance of "race" and gender can lead to different racialized and gendered effects in people's lived experience. These different effects were not only shown in how the informants were differently positioned in relation to white Norwegian majorities, but also in how they made meaning of their phenotypical differences. In turn, this can affect how they negotiate and deal with difference when doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. This will be discussed in more detail in chapters 8 and 9.

7.4   To bring the body *in situ*: The presence and absence of gender in the process through which "looking different" is made relevant

Thus far, I have illustrated an interwoven process of racialization and gendering in the way that *looking different* is made relevant in informants' lived experience. Yet the question is whether processes of racialization and gendering are always intertwined in this process. Is gender always performed and made relevant in my informants' lived experience of racialization? To illuminate this question, I begin with a quotation from my interview with Isabel. In the previous chapter, I illustrated how she experienced being racialized as a child, where she ended by telling me that as an adult, she experiences even more racism.

> *Author: Can you tell me what kind of racism you experience as an adult?*
>
> *Isabel: When I am at the shopping mall, the security guards follow me to make sure that I don't steal. I must remember to take the receipts for the things I buy in case I will be stopped by the security guards for a check. Many people whom I and my husband have met at parties think that my husband has "imported" me from Thailand. Old people give me nasty looks when I shop at the supermarket.*
>
> *Author: Why?*
>
> *Isabel: Because I have more in my shopping carts than they do. (…) Because if I have bought more than they have, they think that I have more money than them, which I receive from the welfare state. It is horrible if I am an immigrant and I live on the welfare state. Then they think that I exploit Norwegians.*
>
> *(Excerpt from CMI with Isabel)*

This quote illustrates the various situations in which Isabel is positioned in different racialized non-Norwegian positions: as a refugee from the third world who is likely to steal, as an unemployed immigrant who comes to Norway to exploit Norwegians, and as a woman from Thailand who comes to Norway to marry a white Norwegian man (Isabel described her husband as "an ethnic Norwegian man"). In these various racializing processes, gender was not always

performed or made relevant. In other words, gender can be present or absent in the construction of difference related to Norwegianness. In order to further explore the presence/absence of gender in this difference-making process, I analyze how Isabel was differently perceived in the various situations by applying the analytical concept of a "scene."

In narrative approaches, "scenes" are often used as analytical units through which to examine how narratives are presented dramatically. For example, Catherine K. Riessman (2003), uses scenes to approach the organization of the storytelling. She finds that in each of the scenes, different figures are presented. Through the sequence of time, different scenes are chained together and thus the narration as a whole is organized (Riessman 2008: 112). As a form of storytelling, narratives are often organized through time. However, I think narratives can also be chained together and organized through changes in space. For example, the Chinese literary critic Zhang Shijun has examined the narrative spaces in the famous ancient Chinese novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*[60] (Zhang 1999)*.* She has examined how windows, doors, porches and other architectural units function to link or switch the different scenes in organizing the storytelling. Inspired by Riessman and Zhang, who both apply scenes as analytical tools in their narrative analyses, I also see that there are different scenes in Isabel's narrative. Indeed, Isabel's narrative is organized through the switching of these scenes: *shopping center - party - super market*. In addition to switching the different scenes, she presents different figures in the background, such as the guards (at the shopping center), her white Norwegian husband (at the party), and the old people (at the supermarket).

However, in contrast to Riessman and Zhang, my analytical focus is not on the sequence of the narrative form, but on the comparisons and even the contrast between the scenes. Since my analytical focus in this chapter is on gender and its presence in adoptees' experiences of racialization, I am mostly interested in the contrast in Isabel's narrative between the scene where her white Norwegian husband is present and the scenes where he is absent. In her husband's absence, Isabel's non-white body was stereotyped as that of a poor refugee who would

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[60] The original title in Chinese is «红楼梦» (*Hong Lou Meng*), composed by Cao Xueqin sometime in the middle of the 18th century. Another version of its English translation is titled *the story of the stone*.

mostly likely steal, or that of an immigrant who come to exploit the Norwegian welfare state. In this lived experience of racialization, I see gender as being absent. Thus gender does not always intersect with "race" even though they are both present (and meet) on the body. Instead, it can be said there was an intersection of "race" and class, through which the Norwegians were constructed as belonging to a rich global upper class who the refugees/immigrants came to steal from or exploit. In this example, we also see that there are certain stereotyped images of immigrants and refugees as thieves or even criminals. Even though immigrants and refugees are different categories and refer to different groups of people, in the context Isabel described, they are interchangeable and both refer to those whose bodies are not white – those from the poor "Third World."

However, when Isabel was in a scene with her white husband at parties, she was no longer (or maybe not only) a refugee who comes to steal or exploit the welfare state. Instead, she became a woman from Thailand who were "imported" by her white husband. It is in this scene in which her white Norwegian husband was present that gender came to the fore, and it is in this scene that gender intersected with "race" at the site of body in her experience of being racialized and minoritized as a Thai woman in Norway.

Earlier, I have explained that when analyzing the role of the body in adoptees' experiences of minoritization and racialization, we can look at the body as the site where the performance of different categories meets. Yet in Isabel's narrative of her experiences with racializations, I find that in various scenes (shopping mall, supermarket and parties) with various interactions (between Isabel and security guards, between Isabel and old people; and between Isabel and her white Norwegian husband), different categories were enacted and performed. Consequently, that Isabel looked different was endowed with different meanings. That is also how she or her non-white body was perceived differently under various scenes described in this narrative. In this way, when analyzing how categories (like "race" and gender) through which difference is produced operate in people's lived experience, it is necessary to examine the role of the body in concrete situations.

In chapter 2, I discussed the importance of "work[ing] both *with* and *against* racial and ethnic categories" (Gunaratnam 2003: 29). With references to a series of postcolonial researchers (like Avtar Brah, Gail Lewis and Kum-Kum Bhavnani),

Gunaratnam suggests that in order to conduct such a doubled research practice, our analyses should attend to "the complex effects and mediations of ethnic and racial categories *in situ*" (Ibid: 33-42). From my analysis of Isabel's narrative of her experiences with racialization, I see how the category of "race" may work differently in intersection with different categories and lead to different racialized effects on the body. Following my earlier approach of looking at the body as a site where categories meet, here I argue that to bring the body in concrete scenes is one feasible approach through which to examine the complex effects and mediation of racial and ethnic categories *in situ*.

7.5 Sexualization in the intertwined gendering and racialization process

At several points in the interview, Isabel talked about herself being perceived as a woman from Thailand. In Isabel's narrative, "Thai woman" is another stereotypical racialized and gendered image. But what kind of connotation does it have to be a Thai woman in Norway? As an outsider within, I know that there is a relatively large group of Thai women in Norway who are married to Norwegian men. This is how Isabel was included in this stereotyped image in a scene when she was together with her white Norwegian husband. As an Asian woman myself, I have several times been perceived to be from Thailand. But as an outsider, I did not catch the deeper meaning of the stereotype, particularly when Isabel used the term "imported."

> *Author: You said many people think that your husband has "imported you from Thailand." Is there any negative meaning here?*
>
> *Isabel: Yes. For many Norwegians, it is negative that a Norwegian man finds a wife from Thailand.*
>
> *Author: But why negative? Is it because Thailand is not a rich country? I know several Thai women in Bodø. I think they are very nice and they always smile.*
>
> *Isabel: I don't know why Norwegians consider it negative. Maybe it has something to do with that they consider it a kind of prostitution that a man*

picks up a poor woman to rich Norway. It is the same about girls from Russia and Poland. So we could say that because it is a poor country. (…) It is stupid that many people hold such attitudes. (…) And many men I have met in my adulthood think that women who are not Norwegian are easily fooled ("lette å lure".)

(Excerpt from CMI with Isabel)

From Isabel's explanation, I see that the stereotyped image of being a Thai woman in Norway is an image of being a prostitute, who has come to Norway by being "picked up" by a Norwegian man. From this explanation, we can see that the image of "the Thai woman" is not only a racialized and gendered one, but also a sexualized one. In other words, in the interwoven process of racialization and gendering, there can also be a process of sexualization through which "the Thai woman" becomes not only a racialized object, but also a highly sexualized object – an object that, like internationally circulated goods, can be "imported" to (and then "consumed") in Norway.

In their widely read book "Hvem er jeg? Adopsjon, identitet, etnisitet"[61] (1999), Barbro Sætersdal and Monica Dalen told similar stories about female adoptees from Asia (particularly Vietnam) on how puberty marks a beginning of their being perceived as sex objects that are associated with the stereotypical image of Asian women as "cheap" and "frivolous." In their discussion, they argued that this stereotypical image was directly linked to the popular "sex tourism" to Thailand and some other countries (ibid: 76, 120). I think media reports on the existence of phenomena like sex tourism[62] and transnational marriages between Norwegian men and Thai women[63] also produce particular images of Thai women which in turn are fixed and then appropriated in the racialization and othering processes.

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[61] English translation of the title: "Who am I? Adoption, identity and ethnicity"

[62] For example, Document 2 on the Norwegian television channel TV2 has shown a documentary program on sex tourism to Thailand, titled "Sexreiser til Thailand" (20. November, 1995) and "Pattaya for mine føtter" (1. Februar, 2010).

[63] For example, the TV-Norge documentary series "Et lite stykke Thailand" (in English "A small piece of Thailand") tells stories of Thai women and their Norwegian families. It was first shown in 2008 and then was rerun several times afterwards because of its popularity.

Lene Myong Petersen's study of Korean adoptees in Denmark (2009) includes similar narratives about "the Thai Woman." In her analysis of how the female informants' femininity has been racialized, "the Thai woman" is used as an analytical category to illustrate the ultimate racialized and gendered otherness of women with Asian female bodily signs, which her female informants prefer to distance themselves from (Petersen 2009: 190). In this way, this literally nationalized/ethnicized category ("Thai woman") becomes in Petersen's analysis a racialized category that can include any women with Asian female bodily signs, for example female Korean adoptees.

However, in my interview with Isabel, "the Thai woman" is no longer a racial category for women from Asia or women whose bodies are read as Asian, but a cross-racial category. For example, Isabel herself was adopted from a Latin American country; and in her narrative of the stereotyped image of being "the Thai woman," she also referred to women from Russia and Poland. In the end, she even extended the category by saying that "many men I have met in my adulthood think that *women who are not Norwegian* are easily fooled." In this way, "the Thai woman" becomes a cross-racial category that includes any non-Norwegian woman whose body can be brought into an imagined sexualized scene that is related to, for example, prostitution, "being picked up" and "imported" to Norway and "easily fooled."

Even though it becomes a cross-racial category, "the Thai woman" is still a highly racialized image, and those included in this category are mainly identified through particular phenotypical features that are associated with "race". Regardless of whether they are Latin American women, Asian women, or even Russian and Polish women, when included in the stereotypical image of "the Thai woman," they are all read as having certain bodily features that indicate a gendered non-whiteness – one that is erotic and exotic. Here again, we see an intertwined gendering and racialization process, with the gendering process being a sexualized heteronormative one.

7.6 Conclusion: The production of difference through interwoven processes of racialization and gendering

In this chapter, I have further explained the ways in which difference is produced through constructions of what it means to "look different." In this chapter, I have illustrated how "race" is performed and made relevant in its intersection with gender, and difference is also produced through an interwoven process of racialization and gendering. Since my informants have talked about their difference as a bodily difference, I have examined how the body is involved in the racializing and gendering processes.

I started my analysis by pointing out the importance of the body in my informants' experience of being minoritized. Then by regarding both racialization and gendering as an embodied practice of doing "race" and gender, I suggested understanding the body as the site where embodied racialized and gendered effects meet. I also illustrated different interweaving racializing and gendering processes which led to different racialized and gendered effects in people's lived experiences. Following this discussion, I discussed whether gender was always performed and made relevant in the production of the meaning of "looking different." Here, I discussed gender's presence and absence in this process in relation to how the meaning of "looking different" changes when the body was brought into different scenes. I followed Gunaratnam's methodological discussion on how to work both *with* and *against* categories in researching "race" and ethnicity (Gunaratnam 2003), and argued that to bring the body into scenes is one feasible approach through which to examine the complex effects and mediations of racial and ethnic categories *in situ*. Finally, by further analyzing the gendered and racialized stereotyped image of "the Thai woman," I illustrated how in the intertwined racializing and gendering process, there can also be a process of sexulization. This sexualization process reminds us that to examine the gendering process that is interwoven with racialization, we need to examine how gender is performed and made relevant in relation to the heteronormative framework in which the meaning of gender is produced.

By exploring how my informants experienced "looking different" with regard to the minoritization process, I have showed that when doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness, my informants need to deal with of the difference that "looking different" makes; they need to deal with the challenges that are brought

on by their phenotypical differences. Next, I discuss what my informants do to deal with the challenges, or how they deal with the minoritization process when doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

Chapter 8: Enacting majoritized Norwegianness – my informants' Oslo stories

8.1   Introduction

In chapters 6 and 7, I illustrated how my informants experienced looking different in relation to Norwegianness, or how they experienced being minoritized because of their phenotypical differences. This indicates that when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness, they have to deal with this minoritization process. In this chapter, I discuss how my informants dealt with this minoritization process in the situations when their phenotypical differences were made relevant, and what they do to enact themselves as majority Norwegians.

As I explained in chapter 5, when asked where they are from by a stranger, my informants can answer "I am adopted" to mark their majority position and thus to enact their majoritized Norwegianness. Yet, how about in other situations? For example, the situations where racialization and minoritization are silent? Obviously, they cannot refer to their adoption background all the time and to all strangers. In order to answer how they dealt with the challenges of being minoritized because of "looking different," I analyze my informants' Oslo stories, with Oslo as a context where *looking different* would suddenly become more meaningful in relation to Norwegianness, while the *adoption background* could no longer easily be used to explicitly mark their majority position. By analyzing these Oslo stories, I want to know what kind of strategies they used to mark their majority position in a context like Oslo.

When I asked my informants about their experience in Oslo and when they told me their Oslo stories, the interviewing process itself became a majoritizing and minoritizing process. As the researcher, I was interested in knowing how looking different would cause them challenges. In other words, when asking about their Oslo stories in the interviews, what I expected was their stories about minoritization. Yet, when answering my question, my informants were more interested in telling me stories of how they can avoid minoritization, because as adoptees, they were different from the immigrant minorities, a category that I myself belong to. They would rather tell me their Oslo stories from a majority position than from a minority position. When we positioned each other like this, a

majoritizing and minoritizing process was enacted in the interviews. I find that to analyze this process can in fact deepen my analysis of how my informants dealt with the minoritization process by enact themselves as part of the majority. In accordance with my methodological decision to develop my analytical methods by combining what Holstein and Gubrium calls "whats" and "hows" (Holstein and Gubrium 1997), or what Mishler calls "told" and "telling" (Mishler 1995 in Riessman 2008: 53-54), I look at both *what* my informants told me in their Oslo stories (their strategies of dealing with the ways that looking different produces difference in Oslo), and *how* they told their Oslo stories (their strategies of dealing with the relevance of "looking different" during the interviews).

Theoretically, I continue to apply the concepts of majoritization/minoritization and focus on the processes through which the majority-minority positions are co-produced, revised and remade (e.g. Brah 2003, Staunæs 2004, Berg et al. 2010). In examining majority and minority as unstable categories in a process of doing categories, it is also necessary to work both *with* and *against* the analytical categories (Gunaratnam 2003: 29) such as "race", culture, and class. In order to conduct such a double practice, I borrow Dorthe Staunæs' concept of "saturation" (Staunæs 2003), and Ingunn Moser's concept "interference" (Moser 2006) to examine how difference was done or enacted differently by my informants in concrete moments of interaction. In total, I analyze four Oslo stories that showcase four different strategies.

8.2 Oslo – a perceived multicultural setting that serves as a common context in the analysis

I have chosen to analyze my informants' Oslo stories in order to explore how they enact themselves as majority Norwegians in situations where their adoption background was no longer obvious, and their phenotypical differences would turn to be more meaningful in indicating who they are. I find that when my informants and I were talking about Oslo, Oslo was commonly perceived as the most multiethnic or multicultural place in Norway, as the largest minority populations live in the Oslo area. In addition, Oslo is also perceived as the most challenging place for transnational adoptees, who can easily be perceived as minority immigrants and be targeted by negative events like racism and discrimination. An

excerpt of a conversation between two Norwegian adoptive mothers from an earlier research report on transnational adoptees' experience with racism (Brottveit 1996), illustrates this common perception of Oslo:

> *Adoptive mother 1: "There is nobody who has said anything to my child. He was accepted by everyone."*
>
> *Adoptive mother 2: "But you must be aware that when you send him to Oslo, he can be knocked down in a back street."*
>
> *(Brottveit 1996: 133; my translation)*

In this conversation, adoptive mother 1 is talking about how her adoptive son is accepted by everyone in their home community. However, adoptive mother 2 reminds her that this is not always the case: when he gets older and leaves home, there will be many challenges. Obviously, Oslo here plays a role as the most unfamiliar and most challenging setting for transnational adoptees, in contrast to the "dear safe home." It was within such a challenging multicultural setting that my informants were asked about the challenges brought on by their "looking different," and in which they talked about how as transnational adoptees they could avoid being perceived as immigrants.

As I presented in chapter 3, the 14 informants in this project came from different geographic locations in Norway: some from small villages and others from relatively larger towns. None of them was from Oslo. However, most of them had stayed in Oslo, or even lived in Oslo. It should be noted that what my informants referred to as Oslo varied a lot: some used Oslo to refer to the more limited urban area of the city Oslo, while others used it to refer to the Oslo metropolitan area. However, for all of them, Oslo represents a challenging multicultural setting. Analyzing my informants' Oslo stories can therefore provide me with a common context for my analysis.

8.3   Strategy 1: "Upbringing" and "culture" as the difference

8.3.1 Martin's Oslo story: "He, one of my buddies has always said that he does not like foreigners or something like that, but he is always nice to me."

Martin grew up in a small town located one and half hour's drive from Oslo. When telling me about his life there, Martin described himself as a tough, fearless and rebellious young boy who was part of the popular group at school. Because of his "popular" status at school, he seldom experienced any bullying or other negative events from his peers. In answering my question about how he experienced looking different, he told me that he somehow did not notice that he looked different. He asked me rhetorically, "You didn't notice it when you were a kid, right?" Yet, he told me that when he was older and moved away from home, he gradually realized that he was somehow different. When I asked him how this change happened, he said,

> *I have been with all kinds of people, all ethnicities. Then I began to understand gradually that I was not Norwegian. Then I started to think that I was Korean, right? So I got mental problems. It took some time for me to, in a way, accept it. (Martin)*

It is important to clarify that when saying that he was Korean, Martin did not at all deny being Norwegian. He explained,

> *I am Korean, but I have a Norwegian upbringing: a Norwegian culture and upbringing in me. This is my inner image now. Do you understand? This is how I look at myself now. But before, before I was 20, I had always looked upon myself as Norwegian: white, blond hair – a wrong picture, isn't it? (Martin)*

From the above explanation, we can see that to call himself Korean is mainly to make his self-picture consistent with how he looks, as he found he was phenotypically not Norwegian, or not a white blond Norwegian. Martin also told me that when he was younger, he did not like to be with foreigners and he did not like to meet Korean adoptees, as these would remind him that he was different. Again, the difference here referred to phenotypical difference – he did not look like a Norwegian with white skin and blond hair etc. Then how about in Oslo,

where he cannot avoid meeting people who look foreign and who can remind him that he himself was different too? To my surprise, when I asked Martin where he liked living the most and where he liked the least, he answered:

> I can say the place where it is best to live. And it must be Oslo, because there are so many other ethnicities. So it becomes a little like that, there are so many people there, and then you just disappear in the crowd. It is a large city in a way, then you just disappear in the crowd, whether you're yellow or white, or whether you are from Pakistan or Somalia ... (Martin)

"To disappear in the crowd" is a common expression my informants use to describe how it was like to be in the biggest city in the country. It is not difficult to understand that when there are so many people who look different or do not look white, each single person's phenotypical difference will then be less visible. But how about racism or racist discrimination in Oslo, as is often reported in the media?

> Author: At the same time, I hear that there is more racism in Oslo than in the smaller places in Norway.

> Martin: I've never ... I've never encountered it. Because I think it has something like ... like ... I think it has something to do with upbringing or something like that. ... Now I in fact remember! He, one of my buddies, (Author: Mm.), who is a little older than me, he has always said that ... yes, he does not like foreigners or something like that. (Author: yes?) But he is always nice to me because I am Norwegian, as he says. So all my friends have always said that I am okay, and that's it, yes.

When I asked Martin about racism in Oslo, I implicitly referred to the picture sketched by adoptive mother 2 in the previous quote: that a foreign-looking adoptee can be knocked down in a backstreet in Oslo. Therefore, when I raised the topic of racism, I assumed that adoptees would be one of the target groups of racism because they have different skin colors just as the migrant minorities. My understanding of racism is in line with what is termed "the classic racism" in studies of racism (Rogstad and Midtbøen 2010: 35), which defines racism as the ideological conviction that there is a hierarchy among different human groups, based on biological difference, and which can be identified through skin color. For

example, the death of Arve Beheim Karlsen, an adoptee from India, in 1999[64] and Jack-Erik Kjuus's[65] remark that all adoptive children from abroad should be sterilized can be categorized as this type of racism, where adoptees are the direct target of the racist actions.

But is this the same racism that Martin referred to when he answered my question? While I supposed that Martin as a transnational adoptee was the target of racist actions, Martin excluded himself from the target group when answering the question, because, as he told me, "I am Norwegian" and "this has something to do with my upbringing." Also notice that when Martin talked about his upbringing in relation to Norwegianness, he made reference to "culture": "I have a Norwegian upbringing: a Norwegian culture and upbringing in me." With a reference to upbringing and culture, what Martin talked about is thus a different type of racism, which has been described as a "new racism" or "cultural racism" in which *culture* has rhetorically replaced "race" to categorize people and put them in different ranks (see e.g. Gullestad 2002, Rogstad and Midtbøen 2010). I found that it was this kind of racism that my informants tended to talk about when asked in the interviews about their experiences of racism. For example, Lisa told me of her experience with racism: when she passed a group youth in the street, they shouted that she should go back to where she was from. Yet after Lisa told them that she was adopted, the group apologized to her. Thus, in this type of racist event, adoptees are not the direct target, but may be mistaken for the targets because they share certain phenotypical features with those who are considered to be culturally different. In other words, in this type of racism, the racists target the adoptees by mistake (see also Brottveit 1996).

While I wanted to discuss how phenotypical difference is produced as a relevant difference in the process of producing "race," what Martin talked about in his answer was a process that produces "cultural" difference. Then, with reference to "culture" and "upbringing," he revised the majority-minority separation based on

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[64] Arve Beheim Karlsen (1982-1999) was a Norwegian adopted from India. He disappeared and was later found dead in a river after he was seen chased by two young gangsters shouting "Kill the negro!" The two young men were later charged under the Norwegian criminal code paragraph related to racism, but were acquitted on this count.

[65] Jack-Erik Kjuus (1927-2009) was a Norwegian far-right politician of the former White Electoral Alliance who was convicted of racism in 1997.

phenotypical difference, and placed himself in a majority position. Notice that when Martin told me that one of his friends in Oslo did not like foreigners but was always nice to him, he in fact marked two different positions based on the difference "culture" makes: a privileged majoritized "Norwegian" one in which he was placed, and a minoritized "non-Norwegian" one in which "foreigners" were placed.

8.3.2. "Culture" as the common element in remarking the majority position

Dorthe Staunæs borrows the chemistry term "saturate" to describe how the doing of one category can overshadow and drown the doing of another at the level of the subject (Staunæs 2003). For example, in her discussion of how gender and ethnicity intersect to co-constitute un/troublesome subject positions among Danish schoolchildren, she uses "ethnic saturation" to illustrate how the category of ethnicity overshadows the category of gender. In other words, the gendered aspects of the difference between the troubled and untroubled subject positions like "bad boys" and "good/normal boys" are talked about mainly as an ethnic difference – so that the subject positions constituted and occupied in these discursive practices are saturated with matters of ethnicity (ibid: 107). Similarly, when Martin spoke of himself in a legitimate majoritized "Norwegian" position, there was a *cultural saturation*. The difference between the majoritized and minoritized positions, like "Norwegian" and "foreigners/immigrants," was constructed mainly as a matter of culture. In relation to this cultural saturation, the adoption background was made constitutive to Martin's enactment of majoritized Norwegianness – "because of my Norwegian upbringing (relevance of being adopted), I am culturally Norwegian; because I am looked upon as Norwegian, I never meet racism in Oslo." In this narrative, Martin's phenotypical difference, which is related to "race," is overshadowed through a cultural saturation. That is to say, when Martin and I discuss racism in Oslo, Martin talks about the "*racial"* difference between Norwegians and "non-Norwegians" (or "immigrants") as a *cultural* difference.

As shown in my interview data, "culture" is the most common element that the informants use to mark their majority position. Like Martin, most of them referred to their upbringings in Norway to account for how they are culturally Norwegian. Lisa explains:

Lisa: I know that I was born in India, and I have the same darker skin as them [people from India], but my values and my culture are different.

Author: Values … What kind of values? Can you explain a little more?

Lisa: Maybe it was a wrong word to use here… but, mm… Anyway, I think they have a totally different cultural understanding. They look at women in a completely different way; they put people into different categories according to what they have and do not have; and… So there are a lot of things like this. I don't have the same views on human beings, because I grew up in Norway, I have gone to Norwegian schools, and I have learned how things should be. So I don't have any other cultural background than Norwegian.

To explain the "culture," Lisa mentions values and views on human beings ("menneskesyn"). Particularly, she mentions views on women. This is another common point among my informants, especially the female informants, who often turned to the Norwegian ideology of gender equality to mark their cultural majority position. For example, in chapter 5, I quoted Renate who separated herself from other Indian girls in Norway by arguing that she had more freedom. And in the previous chapter, Yvonne portrayed a gendered image of herself as a liberated and independent Norwegian woman.

In addition to values, ideologies and human views, "culture" is also explained as the kinds of cultural practices they did in daily lives. For example, Signe explained,

I look like a Korean, but I am not Korean. I don't know anything about Korea and its culture: null and nix. Of course, I can read and learn something about it. … I could do that, but that is not my culture. Mm…for example, I have learned how to make fish cakes, because this is what my mother and my grandmother do, and they can teach me. But I cannot learn how to make Kimchi[66], because this is not my culture, right? I am not brought up to do this. (Signe)

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[66] A traditional fermented Korean dish made of vegetables with a variety of seasonings.

Signe used the daily practice of food preparation to illustrate that she is culturally Norwegian. When talking about food as a cultural practice, she also referred to her adoptive genealogies, like her adoptive mother and grandmother. In this way, no matter whether referring to values, ideologies, human views, or daily practices, when "culture" was used by my informants to mark their majoritized positions, it was understood in relation to a nurturing process – that is, culture is not something one is born with. This again illustrates how my informants made meaning of their adoption background in relation to Norwegianness: being adopted is a majority position.

8.4   Strategy 2: Division of majority and minority as a matter of class

8.4.1 Christian's Oslo story: "People in Oslo have more knowledge about foreigners and people with minority backgrounds, and that's why they hardly discriminate."

To illustrate the second the strategy, I first relay Christian's Oslo story. Christian grew up in a, in his own words, "upper (-middle) class" family: his father is a doctor and his mother a high school teacher in a small town in Northern Norway. Like Martin, Christian tells me that Oslo is the place he enjoys most in Norway.

> *Author*: After living in various places in Norway, which one do you like best?

> *Christian*: I like Oslo best.

> *Author*: Ohh?! Why?

> *Christian*: I lived in Frogner

> *Christian*: I don't always feel Norwegian and this is the funny part
> *Christian*: It's very normal that adopted kids are scared to be perceived to be foreign.

> *Author*: You mean you don't always feel Norwegian?

Christian: For example, when I was a teen, since I came from an upper class family, I made sure that I was wearing expensive clothes, so I wouldn't be taken for a refugee.

Christian: And my point is that I don't always feel like a Norwegian outside, but on the inside I am.

Author: I see

Author: But I am quite surprised to hear that you like to live in Oslo, as I hear people in Oslo are not so friendly towards foreign people or people with another ethnic background.

Christian: Most foreigners live in Oslo. It is worse in the smaller cities

Author: How about in your hometown?

Christian: For adopted kids it is ok, but for regular foreigners it's probably harder. *Christian*: But I only had Norwegian friends and therefore I only hang with Norwegian kids, in my hometown as well as in Oslo *Christian*: But there are foreigners everywhere in Oslo. It depends on your class background or where you live. It doesn't have to be what skin color you are; because discrimination is everywhere in the world. It's something you can't get away from… People in Oslo have more knowledge about foreigners and people with minority backgrounds and that's why they hardly discriminate. I think that is how.

(Excerpt from CMI with Christian on MSN[67])

At the first glance, it can seem that the strategy Christian uses to enact his Norwegianness is similar to Martin's. Both separate two different positions: the

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[67] As I explained in chapter 3, when analyzing CMI (computer-mediated interview), I have paid extra attention to the unique features in its communicative form, such as turn-taking, linguistic features and the lack of audio-visual context. The above quotation from our chatting box on MSN reflects some of these features. I have taken these features into consideration in the analysis of Christian's Oslo story. Yet, in order to retain the theme of this chapter, I only present my analysis around the enactment of (majoritized) Norwegianness and meaning-making in relation to adoption.

"Norwegians" and the "foreigners" or "refugees." In the interview, Christian used "foreigner," "refugee," and "immigrant" interchangeably. Martin emphasized his inner whiteness, and Christian stressed that he was Norwegian inside. By strengthening this "inside" difference from the "foreigners," he rejected a possible "non-Norwegian" position that he could be placed in due to his phenotypical features. By rejecting this "foreigner" position, he simultaneously placed himself in a majority "Norwegian" position.

Yet, if we focus on how this majoritized Norwegianness is constituted, or what element is used to mark the majority position, Christian and Martin's strategies differ. In this excerpt, when I asked Christian why he most liked to live in Oslo, he told me several things at the same time: he lived in Frogner; he didn't always feel Norwegian, as he didn't look like a Norwegian; like many other adoptees, he worried about being perceived as a foreigner (or a refugee); most foreigners (or immigrants) live in Oslo and there are foreigners everywhere in Oslo;, and people in Oslo have more knowledge about foreigners and people with minority backgrounds.

I think that to understand how Oslo became a comfortable place for Christian, it is necessary to see how the different things he told me are connected. Christian presented himself as a somewhat snobbish, spoiled, good-looking, upper (-middle) class boy. In presenting himself as a boy from a rich family, Christian used different symbols to indicate his class background. For example, he told me that when he was in middle school he only wore Lacoste shirts and Dolce&Gabbanna or Dior trousers; he also mentioned that his father's credit card had been part of his life. In the quote above, "Frogner" became another symbol to indicate his class background, as he told me explicitly later in the interview: "Frogner is a finer and expensive residential area in Oslo West."[68] Regarding his identity as Norwegian, he said that he did not feel Norwegian outside, but inside he was. If the outside referred to his non-Norwegian phenotypical features, then what does he mean by "inside," and how does this inside define his majoritized Norwegianness?

Christian distinguished himself from foreigners, or more concretely, from refugees. As a transnational adoptee, his phenotypical features mean that he can be

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[68] "Vestkant i Oslo" in Norwegian, Oslo West is considered a residential area with people with a higher social status in terms of economic and cultural capital.

mistaken for a refugee. Christian responded to this possibility by intentionally wearing expensive clothes to mark his difference from them. By doing this, Christian tried to make his inner Norwegianness visible. In this way, we can say that what Christian referred to as the "inside" is his class status, which could distinguish him from the refugees. Then Christian also told me that, "people in Oslo have more knowledge about foreigners and people with minority backgrounds." What kind of knowledge is this? How is this knowledge related to the statement that "most foreigners live in Oslo"?

As Christian explained, "There are foreigners everywhere in Oslo. It depends on your class background or where you live. It doesn't have to be what skin color you are." Therefore, the knowledge Christian referred to was that *not everyone who look different are poor refugees*: A person with darker skin can also be rich and from the upper class. According to Christian, this is particularly the case in Frogner. Later, he explained to me (as a foreigner, or an outsider who has never lived in Oslo) that a foreign-looking man you met in Frogner can be a diplomat or a successful businessman, and teens with darker skin or other phenotypical difference can be children of prestigious ambassadors who live in this area. When Christian stated that "it is worse in smaller places," he implied that in smaller places people may not have this knowledge that people in Oslo have, consequently they often judge a person simply from skin color, or other racialized phenotypical features with the logic: if you do not look Norwegian, then you are a refugee. In short, I see that Christian liked to live in Oslo, because it was in Oslo that his skin color, or the phenotypical features connected to "race" became the least significant, while his class background was more visible and meaningful. In this way, class is the main constituting element in Christian's enactment of majoritized Norwegianness.

When I expressed my surprise over Christian's choice of Oslo as the place he liked to live, and told him that I heard there was a general hostile attitude towards foreigners in Oslo, I brought up "looking different" as a difference that can be relevant in relation to Norwegianness. By so doing, I invited Christian to tell his Oslo-story from a minoritized position. However, by talking about difference in terms of his class background, Christian altered the majority-minority division based on phenotypical differences. Then the difference between majority and minority became a matter of class. In this way, Christian demarcated a majority position in which he can be included.

8.4.2   Class, majoritized Norwegianness and the adoption background

From Christian's Oslo story, or Frogner story, we see that being Norwegian for Christian is mainly a matter of class. In the interview, Christian used both "upper class" and "upper-middle class" to describe his class background. In my analysis, I am not concerned with which class Christian in fact belongs to, nor whether or not Oslo is as separated by class as Christian describes. What I am concerned with is how class became a valid element in Christian's enactment of majoritized Norwegianness, and how this enactment through class was related to Christian's adoption background.

When telling me how he tried to avoid being perceived to be a "refugee" or "foreigner," Christian used "upper class" to describe himself. I think Christian did this mainly to underline the contrast between himself and immigrants or "refugees." Somewhere in the interview, he did explicitly mention that immigrants in Norway are often seen as "poor" or an "underclass" in the Norwegian context. I think it is exactly this "underclass" image of immigrants that enabled Christian to use "refugees" interchangeably with "foreigners" and "immigrants."   More importantly, I think this "underclass" image of refugees/immigrants reflects a self-image of Norwegians as being the global upper class (Myhre 2010), which made Christian's class background relevant and valid to the enactment of a majoritized Norwegianness. This is to say, it is in a "Norwegian" position as the global upper class that Christian enacted himself as a majority Norwegian.

However, this does not mean that Christian considered all Norwegians to be rich upper class people. When telling me why he was "snobbish," he said,

> When I went to middle school, I only wore LaCoste, Dolce or Dior trousers …
> do you understand? What I mean is that you were afraid of being taken for
> a foreigner, so you had to show more that you were from a good family
> than other children, because they were Norwegian and this was obvious.
> (Christian)

Here Christian made a comparison between himself as an adopted child and other Norwegian children in the class. He pointed out that to use his class background to enact majoritized Norwegianness was a necessary enactment for him as an adoptee. For his friends who were white and whose majority position was obvious,

it was not necessary to use class background to enact majoritized Norwegianness. They did not have to do this extra work. Christian did, because he did not look white and he had to demonstrate his belonging more explicitly. Moreover, Christian pointed out that to expose his class background was to show that "he was from a good family," which is a reminder that Christian's upper-class background was the class background of his adoptive family. To enact majoritized Norwegianness is another way for Christian to mark that "being adopted" is a majority position.

8.5   Strategy 3: Dialect that makes the difference

8.5.1 Signe's Oslo story: "Do you speak the northern dialect? How is it possible?"

In chapter 5, I told the story of Signe – the woman from Sandessjøen. When being asked "where are you really from," she simply threw the question back to the people by asking, "What do you mean?" Signe has also lived in Oslo. What was her Oslo story? How did she experience looking different in relation to Norwegianness? Here is an excerpt from our interview:

> *Author: You've lived in various places in Norway. Recently there are a lot of discussions about discrimination against foreigners or immigrants. Although transnational adoptees are not the same as immigrants, they look like immigrants. Have you experienced that you were regarded as a foreigner (Signe: No.),   and   were   discriminated   because   of   this?*

> *Signe: No, never. The only thing I have experienced and heard is when I moved to Oslo - in Oslo, there are people who have never been to Northern Norway, but in Oslo - and began to work in Oslo. And no matter where I was ...when I started to talk to people, (Author: Mm.) they looked at me and said, "Are you speaking the northern dialect? Isn't it unusual? How is it possible?"[In Oslo dialect] (Author: Yes) hehe ... They were a bit like, quite shocked that I could speak the northern dialect, because I look like a foreigner. It was like ... this sentence, I am sure that I heard it 150,000 times in the first half year that I lived in Oslo. It was like I heard it every other day, probably every day.*

Author: But why were they so shocked?

Signe: Because people in the eastern part of Norway, I think, they are a bit like … they are a little, they have never… the majority of them have never been further north than Lillehammer, right? (Author: Mm.) So they, everyone who lives in Oslo, see no difference. It is like: If you are from Oslo, either you speak an eastern dialect or a Norwegian which is not good, right? Just like that, ready, no more discussion! So when I suddenly appeared with an Asian face, speaking a pure northern dialect, they were totally, totally surprised, they were shocked. They were totally shocked. They do not know what to do or say. It was like, "Hah?! You speak the northern dialect, with this look?" (Author: Mm.) Then I used to answer, "Yes, what else do you expect? Hehe … (Author: Mm. hehe ...)

At the first glance, Signe's experience in Oslo seemed to be opposite to that of Martin and Christian. While Martin and Christian got less attention because they look different, Signe seemed to have attracted more attention, not solely because of her appearance, but in combination with her dialect. However, I think Signe's experience is consistent with Martin's description of Oslo as being the most cosmopolitan place in Norway and Christian's argument that people in Oslo have more knowledge about foreigners/immigrants. From Signe's explanation of why people in Oslo (which in this case refers to the entire eastern part of Norway) were so shocked when they heard Signe speaking a northern dialect, we can see that people in Oslo can accept that a person who looks different speaks an idiomatic and native Norwegian, in this case, the Eastern dialect, and they also accept that a foreigner speaks a "not good" Norwegian, that is with a foreign accent. On the one hand, this shows that people in Oslo are very used to foreigners, or people who simply look different. Yet on the other hand, they consider it very unusual that a "foreigner" speaks a pure northern dialect. This shows that many people in Oslo suppose that immigrants only live in the Oslo-area, but not in other parts of the country, especially not in northern parts of Norway, which is considered the most remote, rural area in contrast to the open and international Oslo. For people in Oslo, Signe's "international" face does not fit with her very local northern dialect. However, my question was about discrimination. So I continued,

Author: But you don't consider it to be discrimination?

Signe: No, I never feel discriminated. Rather I perceive it as people expecting something else from me. (Author: Mm.) And maybe it makes me even more aware of the accent. But you are a little fed up with this when you hear the phrase over and over and over again. I get tired of it. Because it was like 200 million times that people came and said, "Ah, you speak the northern dialect?" And then I could finish the sentence "Yes, I'm speaking the northern dialect and have an Asian appearance." (Author: Yes.) haha ... then they say, "Have you heard that before?" "Yes, I've probably heard it 200 million times before." Hahaha ...[Laughs]

Again, Signe confirmed that she did not consider people's comments about her dialect to be a form of discrimination. In her words, based on her face, people just expected something else from her than her northern dialect. What is the relevance of this Oslo story to my question about discrimination? If she did not consider this discriminatory, why did she tell the story? To answer this question, I have gone back to my initial question (see the first excerpt) and analyzed what I asked and how Signe understood and answered this question.

Even though my question was about whether Signe had experienced something negative because of her appearance, I did intend to explore whether through a common experience with immigrants (for example the experience of discrimination) Signe may have been placed in a non-"Norwegian" subject position. But notice how quickly Signe responded, even before I finished my question:

Author: … Have you experienced that you were regarded as a foreigner (Signe: No.), and were discriminated because of this?

Signe: No, never. …

When analyzing our interaction in asking and answering this question about discrimination, I see that Signe not only rejected a common experience of discrimination, but also rejected the possibility of her being mistaken as a foreigner or immigrant. Then the story she told me afterwards can be understood as an example of how despite her looks, she was *never* (mis)taken for being a foreigner or immigrant. She seemed to tell me, "My face may connect me to a

foreigner, or I may even be compared with a foreigner (as you did in asking the question), *but* I have never been taken for a foreigner – *because of my dialect*."

The Norwegian feminist STS scholar, Ingunn Moser uses the physical term *interference* to describe how the making or enactment of one difference can receive and disturb the making of another difference in the same moment of interaction (Moser 2006). My interaction with Signe is exactly such an interference related to the production and doing of *different* differences. Thus, our interaction can be read in this way: when I asked about Signe's experience of discrimination in a multicultural context, I in fact enacted the assumption that phenotypical difference, here related to "race", would be the relevant difference in relation to Norwegianness. However, in her response to my question, Signe not only received my enactment or making of the significance of phenotypical difference (notice that in her Oslo story, her phenotypical difference was in fact relevant), but more importantly she disturbed it by enacting another reality of difference in telling her Oslo story – namely a difference concerning her dialect. It is through enacting the difference of dialect, in combination with her phenotypical difference, that Signe enacted her majoritized Norwegianness. This is a particular and very contextual enactment in the moment of interaction in the interview.

8.5.2   Dialect, local belonging and majoritized Norwegianness

In this section, I discuss how dialect became a relevant element in marking Signe's majority position.

In the 1980s, after living in Norway for 10 years, a South African anthropologist wrote that Norwegian people's identity as "Norwegian" is defined by their origins, which are deeply anchored in a specific area with a specific dialect and local culture (Kramer 1984:91). What this foreign anthropologist wrote is not unfamiliar to me, even though 30 years have passed. For example, he gave us an example that on the Norwegian national day, Norwegian women dressed in colorful and different local "bunad" (the Norwegian national costume) to celebrate the day. This is something we can still experience today. I have also seen how proud Norwegians are to present themselves in "bunad" from their areas of origin on other important occasions and celebrations, such as college graduation party, weddings, the baptism of children, and so on. As a newcomer, I was once told how a "Hamarøybunad" (bunad from Hamarøy area in Nordland county) is different from a "Nordlandsbunad" (bunad from Nordland county), and that for a

person originally from Hamarøy it is more "correct" to wear Hamarøybunad than Nordlandsbunad. While Kramer wrote that 30 years ago, it was mostly women who wore "bunad" on the national day (ibid: 91), today I see more and more Norwegian men wearing "bunad" on important occasions.

Like the "bunad," which as a national costume is first a local costume, being Norwegian, as a national/ethnic identity, is first and foremost an identity of coming from a specific localized place, or having a strong local belonging based on origin. I have mentioned that "where are you from" is a very common question in a general Norwegian context. For adoptees and those who look different, this question is to specify whether you are Norwegian or not. For the majority, it can also specify what kind of Norwegian you are. For example, are you from Northern Norway ("nordlending"), from Trønderlag ("trønder"), from Eastern Norway ("Østlending"), Western Norway ("Vestlending"), or from Southern Norway ("Sørlending")? When a Norwegian says, "even though I live in Oslo, my family originally ('egentlig') comes from Telemark," he is specifying what kind of Norwegian he is. Such specification in turn strengthens his Norwegian identity, because Telemark is understood as a "real" and acceptable Norwegian origin. Vice versa, when a person claims to be Norwegian, s/he is also expected to have such "real" Norwegian origins. This is the dynamic between specific local origins and Norwegianness.

In chapter 5, I discussed that when answering "Where are you *really* from?" Signe would throw the question back to people, because she wanted people to understand that she was *really* from Sandessjøen, as she originally answered. With the dynamics between local belonging and Norwegianness, it is not difficult to understand why it was so important for Signe to stress that her roots are in Sandnessjøen. By stressing this, she not only rejected a collective identification people made based on her phenotypical difference and birth country, but also declared that she did have a genuine Norwegian origin. From her Oslo story, we also see that dialect becomes another important sign, in addition to a person's phenotypical features and cultural symbols like "bunad," to identify geographic belonging and roots, or where a person is *really* from. This is why Signe explained that she did not regard people's comments on her dialect and appearance as discriminatory, but that they made her even more aware of her accent and where she was really from and belonged.

The Norwegian social linguist Ellen Andenæs also points out that while a spoken Norwegian dialect is perceived as genuine native Norwegian, a spoken Norwegian with a foreign accent is interpreted as a sign of non-Norwegianness (Andenæs 2010: 212). Andenæs here suggests that for others to hear that you are Norwegian you should not only speak Norwegian, but more importantly speak a dialect. In this way, dialect becomes a powerful language that marks a favored dominant majority position. This is how Signe was able to enact her majoritized Norwegianness: She spoke a genuine "Nordlending" (the northern dialect), and she was a real "Nordlending" (northern Norwegian).

8.6   Strategy 4: Being Norwegian as a matter of being international

In all the three strategies above, the informants remarked a clear and exclusive majority position that includes them, but excludes others. In other words, when remaking the majority and minority divisions, they maintained a clear separation between themselves as majorities and the immigrants/refugees/foreigners as minorities. Yet, I now discuss a somewhat different strategy.

8.6.1 Tone's Oslo story: "I feel more relaxed in an international and multicultural setting."

In chapter 6, I told the story of Tone, who was stressed about being different in the place where she grew up. As a child, she tried hard to be the same as others and she wished that she could have a Norwegian look, but she always felt that she was different. However, Tone told me that she experienced a positive change at the age of 17, when she moved from her home place to study in an international boarding school with students from different countries. There, she gradually felt more relaxed about her phenotypical difference and she also felt more accepted by others. At the time of interview, Tone studied at a university/college in the Oslo area, where there were many international students. She told me that she felt much more at ease with her Norwegian identity than before, as she now considered herself more of an "international person" than being just Norwegian. In addition, she also thought that the category "Norwegian" had changed. She said:

In the old days, there were not so many foreigners in Norway, and people who were from other countries got very much attention and people were staring at them. When I was a child, I felt that I was one of the few in my small village who looked different from others. But now I think it is easier to cope with it, both because there are more people in Norway who have another background, and because many Norwegians today have more travelling experience, and have a better understanding of people from other countries. Before, being a Norwegian, at least as I see it, meant growing up here, having their families here, eating brown cheese, playing the violin, walking in the forest and hiking in the mountains, but nowadays I feel that to be Norwegian has been widened a little bit, as there are so many hybrid people in the south [of Norway]: it's like a mix of different cultures. I like this change. So when it comes to the Norwegian identity, I feel more relaxed. Maybe this has something to do with that I become more mature and less insecure, and I care less about what people think of me. I have also chosen international surroundings, meaning that I hang out with international people and am interested in multicultural issues. (Tone)

Though Tone did not explicitly mention Oslo, I perceived that studying in the Oslo area was a decision she made consciously to put herself in "international surroundings." Therefore, I consider the above quote to be Tone's Oslo story. In this quote, Tone talked about a positive change that she experienced, a change that had something to do with her identity in relation to Norwegianness – a change from feeling stressed about being the same to feeling relaxed. Accompanying this change, were several other changes: a change in time (from "old days" to "nowadays"), a change of place (from "home village" to "international surroundings"), and more importantly a change of the category "Norwegian" – what it means to be a "Norwegian." The central word in this narrative about changes is "international": it is more *international* "nowadays" than "in the old days"; it is more *international* in Oslo than in her home village; and the category "Norwegian" becomes more *international*. It is in an *international* setting that Tone's difference becomes insignificant, and it is in an "*international* Norwegian" position that Tone enacts herself as a Norwegian.

In his study of transnational adoptees' identities, Ånund Brottveit categorizes three types of identities in relation to transnational adoptees' ethnic and national belongings: *the Norwegian*, *the double ethnic* and *the cosmopolitan* (Brottveit

1999:45-46). According to Brottveit, this is a rough categorization that helps sort the adoptees' descriptions of what they emphasize in their personal identities at different life stages, and it is possible to identify all the three categories in one interview (ibid). Following Brottveit's categorization, it seems that Tone has changed from being "the Norwegian" to "the cosmopolitan." Tone told me that, "I feel more like an *international* person, and not so much *Norwegian*." However, what I see in Tone's Oslo story is that being *international* can in fact contribute to her enactment of Norwegianness, as for Tone, being Norwegian has become a matter of being *international*, and as an international person, she fits in well. In this way, I identify a mutual constitution in Brottveit's categories. My question is then how being international, as a somewhat alternative and juxtaposed category to the category of being Norwegian, can become constitutive to the latter, in Tone's enactment of Norwegianness. When Tone enacted her Norwegianness in an "international" position, what kind of position was it?

8.6.2   "International" as a majority-inclusive "Norwegian" position

In contrast to the first three strategies where the informants placed themselves in a clear and exclusive majority position in their Oslo stories, in Tone's Oslo story of being "international," it seemed that she enacted Norwegianness in a quite inclusive position, a position that can include those who are regarded as minorities. Thus, when Tone described herself as being "international," I tended to understand this self-presentation as Tone's acknowledgement of her foreignness, or minoritized Norwegianness. However, I soon noticed that each time I tried to bring up the word "foreign" and equate it to what she meant by "international," she would immediately correct me and then stress that she was Norwegian. Here is an example:

> Tone: I am used to presenting myself with my original name before I was adopted to Norway, mm… because it is easier for others to connect it with my face. So they think, "Oh, fine, she has a foreign background."
>
> Author: So you feel very comfortable with being foreign?
>
> Tone: No… it's often like when they talk to me, or when I contact them or something, they understand that I am Norwegian. And also I have a Norwegian surname. (Author: ok.) So, it's like this, they understand that I am Norwegian.

To use her original name was consistent with Tone's international orientation – that is, being an international person in an international setting. Through Tone's explanation of why she preferred to use her original name, I see that she would intentionally expose and emphasize her foreign background, both through her face and through her name. It was through this "foreign background" that she became an international person. Yet a paradox for Tone is that while she presented herself as an "international" person with reference to her foreign background, she also insisted that she was "Norwegian," and indeed a majority Norwegian. In other words, being an international person, she was still afraid of being placed in a minoritized position. That is why she corrected me in this excerpt: having a foreign background was not the same as being foreign. In this way, Tone separates between "international" and "foreign." Through the separation, she emphasizes that she is an *international* person, but not a *foreign* person. In my analysis, I read this separation to mean that while *foreign* marks a minoritized position, *international* is something else.

Let us go back to Tone's Oslo story to see how she was able to enact her majoritized Norwegianness through/in an "international" position. Even though the "international" position can easily be understood as a minority-inclusive "Norwegian" position, I find that it was not from a minority "Norwegian" position that Tone intended to enact her Norwegianness. On the contrary, she was able to enact her Norwegianness in an "international" position, because "international" as a valid, legitimate "Norwegian" position, included a majority position. As she said when describing how being Norwegian had changed, "(T)here are more people in Norway who have another background, and because many Norwegians today have more travelling experience, and have a better understanding of people from other countries." The important message I get here is that not only are there more foreign people in the Norway who make Norway more international, but also that the majority, white Norwegians are becoming more and more international by travelling around the world and gaining better understandings of people from other countries. So, when she said that "there are so many hybrid people (with a mix of different cultures) in the south," I think that what she referred to were not just migrant minorities, but also, or maybe more importantly, the white Norwegians, the majorities. In this way, rather than a minority-inclusive "Norwegian position," it was in a majority-inclusive "international" position that Tone's Norwegianness was enacted.

When analyzing Tone's Oslo story, I see that on the one hand Tone, like the other informants in this chapter, was afraid of being put into a minority position because of her phenotypical difference. Therefore, in her enactment of Norwegianness, she emphasised her majoritized position. On the other hand, when she enacted herself as an "international" Norwegian in an "international" setting, she explicitly expressed a hybrid Norwegianness, instead of a pure, majoritized Norwegianness. That is to say, Tone's "international" position includes a majoritized position in relation to Norwegianness, yet also exceeds the majoritized position. This is the topic I discuss in my next and last analytical chapter.

8.7   Conclusion: majority/minority as unstable positions

In this chapter I have discussed how my informants strategically deal with the minoritization process caused by "looking different" and how they enact a majoritized Norwegianness. In addition to analyzing the content of my informants' Oslo stories, I also explored the interaction between the informants and myself in the interview situations. For example I discussed how, by bringing up topics like discrimination and racism, I intended to invite them to talk about their Oslo story from a minoritized position, and how my informants told their Oslo story from a majoritized position by revising the majority/minority divisions. The informants' Oslo stories demonstrate that in a multicultural and multiethnic Norwegian context, majority and minority are no longer stable positions.

Among the four strategies I presented, the first three are about how to destabilize the majority/minority division based on phenotypical differences, and then remake the boundaries by drawing on elements like culture, class and dialect. By doing so, my informants were able to make their phenotypical differences irrelevant or insignificant to the definition of their position in relation Norwegianness. Yet, in the last strategy, the informant enacted her majoritized Norwegianness by revising the meaning of being Norwegian, from being white to being "international." In this way, the last informant did not attempt to remake the boundaries between majority and minority positions. Instead, she placed herself in an "international" position and expressed a hybrid Norwegianness. This hybrid Norwegianness indicates that when doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness, my informants did not only enact majoritized Norwegianness that

place them in a majority position, but were also forming a more generous Norwegian position that can allow them to incorporate their phenotypical differences. This is what I discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 9: Enacting hybrid Norwegianness – A more generous position for the Norwegian "we"

9.1   Introduction

As I discussed in the previous chapter, by revising the boundaries between majority and minority positions, my informants were able to enact themselves as majority Norwegians despite their phenotypical difference. This was one way for them to deal with minoritization as they do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. Yet the last Oslo story indicates that to deal with minoritization, my informants can also place themselves in a more inclusive, more generous Norwegian position rather than the clearly bordered majority one. For example, an "international" position enacts a hybrid Norwegianness. In this chapter, I further explore how my informants enact themselves as hybrid Norwegians and how by enacting a hybrid or hybridized Norwegianness, they manage to incorporate the transnational adoption-related differences in their identity work, and enact a different, more generous Norwegian "we" position.

In interviews, there were several points at which my informants expressed a hybrid Norwegianness. For example, I asked them how they would place themselves in the present "multicultural/multiethnic" Norwegian society, and whether they would consider themselves "multicultural." I also asked them at the end of the interviews about what was the most important message they would want to share with people who want to know more about transnational adoption and transnational adoptees. When answering these questions, my informants emphasized their hybrid or hybridized Norwegianness, and explained how it was important for them to include their transnational adoption-related differences in their identity work. In this chapter, I use this data to illustrate how my informants manage to include transnational adoption-related differences in enacting a hybridized Norwegianness.

In analyzing my informants' hybrid Norwegianness, I use the concept of *hybridity* as developed in postcolonial theory (Bhabha 1994, Hübinette 2007) to demonstrate that this hybrid Norwegianness is first and foremost a hybrid *whiteness* which is not based on white skin color. Additionally, by using the

concept to mean something different, something new – or "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 1994: 86) - I illustrate that this enacted hybrid Norwegianness can be understood as a real mixing or hybridizing effect in the process through which my informants negotiated and gradually included their transnational adoption-related differences in their identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

9.2 Majoritized Norwegianness as hybrid whiteness that is equally valued as 100% Norwegianness

In order to better understand the informants' hybrid Norwegianness, particularly in relation to the majoritization and minoritization process, it is necessary to reexamine how my informants enact a majoritized Norwegianness. What does it mean for them to be majority Norwegians, or why it is important for them to enact Norwegianness in a majoritized position?

In the previous chapter, I showed that my informants are able to revise the boundaries between majority/minority positions by referring to elements like culture, class, and dialect, and by doing so they remake the majority position to one in which they can be included. When my informants enacted their majoritized Norwegianness in this way, I found that such enactments were achieved during the interviews through our constant positioning and repositioning process, and were consciously performed by the informants as an embodied practice. For example, Martin implied that to make his majoritized Norwegianness visible, he mostly spent time with his Norwegian friends. Similarly, Christian told me that he only hangs out with "Norwegian kids" in his hometown and in Oslo. In addition, Christian mentioned that he used to wear expensive clothes, and he mostly stayed in the upper class area of "Oslo West" to signify his class background and his "inner" majoritized Norwegianness. That Signe spoke a Northern dialect in Oslo can also be seen as a conscious performance of her majoritized Norwegianness. In other words, the informants performed a belonging to the majority that is normally considered white. To enact a majoritized Norwegianness becomes a matter of doing whiteness. Lisa spoke about the performance aspect of doing whiteness in some detail:

> I am aware that I look Indian, but that's not what I think of when I look at myself in the mirror ... I know that skin color can make a first impression,

but most people understand that I am adopted and that I am Norwegian when I start to talk. This has also a lot with postures, or a particular body language. I have a very Norwegian posture, the way I walk. (Lisa)

Later, when I asked her whether she was perceived to be a normal Indian girl when she visited her birth country, she emphasized that,

No, because they noticed that I was not from there. They saw your postures, your way of dressing and walking. I walk like this, very upright, do you understand [with an upright posture]? That's why they understood that I was not one of them. I also had very short hair. Then I noticed that they looked at me as they looked at whites. The other Indian girls don't have such postures or the same way of walking and talking. These are very cultural things. (Lisa)

What I see in Lisa's description is a performance of whiteness through specific cultural codes like ways of walking and talking, hair style and dress. Lisa mentioned in particular that the way she walks is very Norwegian. When she explained that, "I walk like this very upright, do you understand?" she used an embodied performance to show me how she walks. Lisa also mentioned that people understood that she was "adopted and Norwegian" when she started to talk. Here, the language Lisa refers to also includes how to talk or even how to argue. She explained,

I think foreign girls are a little more suppressed in relation to men. I notice this especially when I am out in a bar or a café. For example, if we meet foreign people, mm… particularly men, and are in a discussion with them, I am more stubborn and insistent than the foreign girls. But this is not what they expect from a foreign girl. Then I notice that they have a different attitude towards me, because I refuse to give up. I am brought up to express myself freely and honestly. So when I know that they make mistakes, I say so. But the foreign girls, in many cases, they are not expected to do so in their culture. They should be more submissive, in a way. (Lisa)

Lisa illustrates two different gendered performances of how to talk properly as a woman in front of a man. By consciously speaking in a way that is "more stubborn and insistent" in front of foreign men, she signals that "I am not a foreign woman like one of you; I am a majority Norwegian woman."

Dressing is another thing Lisa mentioned when convincing me that she is perceived as white. "I dress like Norwegians" is also a common explanation I got from my informants. For example, the two youngest informants, Berit and Yvonne, were both 18 years old at the time of interview. They told me that the way they dress was very "Norwegian." When I asked them how, Berit told me that like other girls in her class, she was very obsessed with "fashion" and she always wore trendy clothes, while Yvonne told me that she only wore sport clothing since she was an active handball player on the local team. Regardless of whether they wear fashionable clothes or sporty clothes, in both cases particular ways of dressing can make the two informants identifiable as typical Norwegian high school teens. At the same time, both thus distinguished themselves from a stereotyped image of "foreign girls" wearing exotic clothes. In this way, wearing certain clothes to mark a majority position is also a conscious embodied performance of whiteness.

From this analysis, we can see that the majoritized Norwegianness my informants enacted in the interviews was accompanied with a conscious embodied performance of whiteness; a *whiteness* which is *not white*. In this way, whiteness is no longer a question of skin color, but rather a majoritized position. The Swedish adoption researcher Tobias Hübinette has also discussed transnational adoptees' whiteness in relation to their experience of (self-)racialization. Using a postcolonial perspective, particularly with reference to the work of Homi Bhabha, he theorizes the way in which adoptees procure and perform whiteness as a kind of *mimicking* (Hübinette 2007: 184). With the concept *colonial mimicry*, Bhabha refers to the desire for a reformed, recognizable "Other" as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite (Bhabha 1994: 86). I agree with Hübinette's postcolonial perspective, but I do not agree with his theorization of adoptees' whiteness as a mere mimicking. This is mainly because the way through which adoptees obtain whiteness, namely through a kinning process with Norwegian parents in the private arena of the home, is different from how colonized people enact a colonial mimicry. I argue that adoptees can perform whiteness as a natural, yet conscious embodied practice. In relation to my understanding of adoption as a kinning process in relation to Norwegianness (discussed in chapter 5), I propose to understand adoptees' performance of whiteness as *an embodiment of their specific connection to Norwegianness through a kinning process*.

However, I also find Bhabha's concept of *mimicry*/mimicking to be a good tool in my analysis, as it reminds me that my informants' whiteness, though embodied and natural, is a hybrid one – a whiteness that is not white. Or, as Bhabha writes, it is "almost the same, but not quite" (ibid: 86). In this way, it can be said that the informants' majorized Norwegianness can be understood as a hybrid whiteness. This makes hybridity, another related concept developed by Bhabha, central to my analysis. By *hybridity* or *cultural hybridity*, Bhabha intends to challenge the colonial hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or "purity" of culture (Bhabha 1994: 37). Even though my data about transnational adoptees do not concern a difference of culture, I find that when enacting a hybrid whiteness, or a non-white hybridized Norwegianness, my informants expressed a similar resistance to the norm of whiteness. For example, Signe said,

> *All children who are adopted from another country will always understand that they will never look the same as Norwegians. But inside, they are Norwegian. They see the world with Norwegian eyes. Therefore, it is important that they are allowed to be 100% Norwegian.... It is important for the young adoptees to understand that they should be proud of how they look, but also be proud of who they are and that they actually have their roots from the place where they grew up, not the place where they were born. (Signe)*

In this quote, Signe had enacted a hybridized non-white Norwegianness: a Norwegianness which never "looks the same," but is still "100% Norwegian." She even enacted this hybridized Norwegianness on behalf of all transnationally adopted children. What Signe emphasizes in this quote is that even though she, as a transnational adoptee, does not look Norwegian, or is not white, she is *not* less Norwegian because of her phenotypical difference. At the same time, Signe also explains why it is so important for her to emphasize that her roots are in the place where she grew up, not the place where she was born – exactly because she did not want to be considered as being less fully Norwegian. In this way, Signe expresses her resistance to the norm of whiteness in constructing Norwegianness. She does so by emphasizing that transnational adoptees, though not white, are 100% Norwegian, just as much as those who are white. When Signe said that the young adoptees should be proud of how they look, she also indicated that it is possible for transnational adoptees to incorporate phenotypical difference in their identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

In this analysis, I have demonstrated that the informants' emphasis on their majority position in the interviews cannot be read merely as a rejection of a minority position, but must rather be read as a resistance to certain normalized understandings of Norwegianness centered on whiteness. When they enact Norwegianness in a majoritized white position despite their phenotypical difference, they simultaneously enact a hybrid whiteness or a hybridized non-white Norwegianness. Their enactments declare that even though they are not white, they are equally valued full Norwegians. This is an important departure point from which to understand and further explore the informants' hybridized Norwegianness. My analysis also illustrates that for my informants, to enact a hybridized Norwegianness means first and foremost the possibility of incorporating their phenotypical difference in their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. What else can a hybridized Norwegianness mean for my informants?

9.3 Hybridized Norwegianness means full Norwegianness, but also something additional

To answer the question I raised at the end of previous section, I first discuss an excerpt from my interview (CMI) with Halldis:

> Halldis: Today, Korea is much a bigger part of my identity than it was when I was a teen and only wanted to be Norwegian. I have been politically active since I was 16 years old. I have always considered people to be of equal value. I felt that I didn't need to emphasize my Korean background, because everyone on the earth is the same ("da vi alle er mennesker av samme jord"). But gradually, as I become older, I wish to find out more about my background precisely because this thing with Korea is one of the first things people see when they meet me.

> Author: So you think that looking different makes a difference here?

> Halldis: Both yes and no. Mm… Let me try to explain. Because even though I perceived and experienced myself as Norwegian, I also experienced myself as different. Therefore, I gradually had a desire to know more about my roots.

Author: Can you give me one or two examples of how you feel different or not totally Norwegian?

Halldis: I feel that both Norway and Korea are mine. It's not like I don't feel totally Norwegian anymore. It's like there is something more, something in addition. For me, being Norwegian includes my Korean roots.

Here Halldis describes a process where she changed from emphasizing her majoritized Norwegianness to gradually putting an emphasis on her Korean background. Her explanation of why she considered it meaningless to emphasize her Korean background when she was younger echoes what Signe told me in the previous section – defending or emphasizing a majoritized position in the enactment of Norwegianness mainly served to underline that she was no less Norwegian than others. Again, we see that the informants' emphasis on majoritized Norwegianness contains a resistance to the norm of whiteness. This is my first point.

Second, when telling me how her Korean background gradually became interesting or meaningful to her, Halldis points to the relevance of looking different. She said, "I wish to find out more about my background exactly because this thing with Korea is one of the first things people *see* when they meet me." Here, Halldis illustrates that it is through her interaction with others that her phenotypical difference is made relevant to her. Here, she is clearly referencing the process that I discussed in chapters 6 and 7, through which "looking different" is made relevant in relation to Norwegianness. Having already enacted one kind of difference by exploring her Korean background, Halldis also expresses a need to find a space in which she can incorporate phenotypical difference in her identity work. A rigid or clearly bordered majority position cannot provide her with such space. Furthermore, Halldis' explanation demonstrates that when phenotypical difference is incorporated into identity work in relation to Norwegianness, the birth country can also become meaningful. I explore this further below.

Third, when Halldis began to include the meaning of her birth country in her identity work, she enacted a different hybridized Norwegianness than the informants I discussed in the previous section. She moved one step further, from including the phenotypical difference in doing the identity work to including the birth country. She seemed to demonstrate a hybrid Norwegianness that was not only hybridized in terms of a non-white skin color, but also in relation to

Koreanness. What does this hybridized Norwegianness mean and how should it be understood in relation to the majoritized Norwegianness that she had emphasized when she was younger? This is the most important point I want to make here.

In the interview, when Halldis told me that her phenotypical difference made her begin to explore her Korean background, I saw it as a moment where Halldis was about to enact her Koreanness. I took it for granted that when Halldis began to enact and emphasize Koreanness, she would be less Norwegian. Therefore, when Halldis confirmed that she partially experienced herself as different in relation to Norwegianness, I assumed that this meant that she did not feel totally Norwegian in certain circumstances. That is why I asked her for examples. However, Halldis corrected me, saying that seeing herself as being different and exploring her Korean background and roots did *not* mean that she did not consider herself fully Norwegian any more. In other words, to enact Koreanness would not make her less Norwegian. On the contrary, it became something *in addition*, something that could be *added to* a full Norwegianness. In this way, Halldis outlined a different kind of hybridized Norwegianness, a Norwegianness that could include her Korean roots. By doing so, she emphasized that though her hybridized Norwegianness includes her Korean roots, it does not mean being less Norwegian. On the contrary, it means something that is additional, something extra or something more than a full Norwegianness. Halldis' hybridized Norwegianness indicates that it is possible for transnational adoptees to enact Norwegianness in a more generous Norwegian position where they can include phenotypical difference as well as other transnational adoption-related differences that are connected to the meaning of birth country.

9.4 Background in the birth country can also be meaningful to the identity work on Norwegianness

In chapters 4 and 5, I explained that the birth country might not be as meaningful to adoptees as to immigrants in terms of their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. For example, "China girl" was not interested in her birth country, while "India girl" said, "India is an exciting country, not because it is where I am from, but because it is India." Yet, by discussing how Halldis enacted her

hybridized Norwegianness we have witnessed that the birth country can suddenly become meaningful. How can we understand this inconsistence?

Deconstructing the meaning of the birth country does not mean that the birth country would not mean anything at all to a person's identity work, but that there are always processes through which the meaning is made and constructed. When telling me how she gradually had a desire to explore her roots in Korea, Halldis explained this process by saying, "because this thing with Korea is one of the first things people see when they meet me." That is to say, the birth country was inscribed with meaning through Halldis' phenotypical difference and it was made meaningful in her daily interactions with other people. Similarly, Terje told me:

> I began to explore my country, namely South Korea, because I felt that it was right since I was from there. I was reminded all the time by the racist comments that it was South Korea that I in fact was from … I was asked all the time, for example, "Have you met your parents?" or "Do you know who they are?" or "Have you been there?" and things like that. So it was all the time Korea, Korea that they talked about. Then I thought that it may be right to search back. (Terje)

When explaining how he began to explore his birth country, Terje mentioned the racist remarks. As I discussed in chapter 6, these racist remarks were mainly about certain bodily features, like eye shape, skin color and hair color. Here, Terje told me that these racist remarks were not only painful, but also kept reminding him of where he was born. In addition, Terje also mentioned people's curious questions about his biological parents. These questions may not necessarily be asked with a bad intention, but they can be regarded as a general biocentric attitude that the Norwegian people hold when thinking about adoption. From Terje's description, we see that this biocentric attitude contributes to inscribing meaning to a person's birth country. Through these curious biocentric questions, Terje gradually built a connection with his birth country.

The examples from Halldis and Terje show that the meaning of the birth country is also likely to be constructed through the informants' experience in the country where they grow up, in addition to what they experience in their birth countries. For example, as I mentioned in chapter 4, Kristin gained a close connection to her birth country through studying there for one year, while in chapter 6, Erik talked about experiencing a positive "bodily transformation" in his birth country.

However, there are also two informants, Terje and Martin, who told me that what they experienced in a third country had contributed to making their birth country (South Korea) meaningful to them in doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness. Terje told me about his experience in Japan:

> *I simply fit in, in Japan. It is really very easy. No one looked at me as different or special before they began to talk to me. I feel calm inside, a feeling of peace that people don't stare too much at you or ask you strange questions. It is a nice feeling to be one of the majority and you do not stand out. If I began to know someone, of course they asked a lot because they understood that I was not Japanese but this time actually Norwegian. (...) To keep to the topic, the trip to Japan has really boosted my identity. (…) I'm Korean: I look Korean or Japanese, as I was told in Japan. But I am also Norwegian, since I grew up here. And I'm adopted by my Norwegian parents who are my parents – not biological, but they are my real mother and father. (Terje)*

While looking different made him marked as a minority in Norway, in Japan, Terje's phenotypical features were normalized, and he became one of the majority. That is why he said that he just "simply fit in, in Japan," and he finally felt calm inside. Through this positive experience, he realized that his look and appearance was significant in defining who he was: "I am Korean: I look Korean or Japanese, as I was told in Japan." At the same time, the experience in Japan also made him even more aware of his identity as Norwegian: his Norwegianness was enacted when people started to talk to him. That is, as I explained in the previous chapter, Norwegianness is enacted through language. And finally, he explained this enactment of Norwegianness in relation to his adoption background: he was adopted by Norwegian parents, he grew up in Norway. He even emphasized that though his parents are not his biological parents, they are his real parents.

Like Terje, Martin, who was also adopted from Korea, mentioned in the interview that he had travelled to other Asian countries to explore his identity:

> *I felt good in Korea, so I thought like… "Is it because I am in an Asian country or because it is Korea?" Right? Then I wanted to find it out. So I travelled to China, and then to Japan … just to see. I felt more at home in Korea than in China and Japan. I don't know exactly why, but I also felt very good in Japan and in China. (Martin)*

Martin's question about whether the good feeling in Korea was due to it being his birth country or an Asian country suggested that to travel to Korea was closely related to his phenotypical difference which was made meaningful to him through his experience in Norway. This echoes what Halldis and Terje told me. That is to say, the Koreanness that these informants explored and enacted was first and foremost a phenotyped Asianness. This also echoes what I discussed earlier: enacting a hybridized Norwegianness means first and foremost a possibility to include phenotypical difference in doing identity work. However, through further exploration and comparison, Korea as the birth country may be inscribed with other meanings than those that relate to appearance. For example, Martin told me that even though he also felt good in Japan and China, he felt more at home in Korea.

Halldis also told me that the emotional meeting she had with her foster mother in Korea had strengthened her connection to her birth country:

> It was very moving to meet my foster mother. She had with her a picture of me and her that was taken when I lived with her. I was a small baby in the picture. It was strange but also special in a way to see "proof" about my first time in Korea which I hadn't know anything about. So it was very special for me to meet her, thinking what she had done for me when I was a baby. So today I keep in touch with her and with her family. (Halldis)

As shown from the above examples, referencing their birth country in their identity works in relation to Norwegianness was often initiated by a need to search for a space in which the informants could include their phenotypical differences in their identity work. My analysis also shows that this need for space must be understood in connection to how the informants experienced their phenotypical difference in their daily interactions with other people, primarily in Norway. Even though the birth country was very often inscribed with meaning first through the production of difference based on phenotypical difference, after the exploration of the birth country, it can also emerge with other meanings for the informants when they do identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

However, I want to add that there are big variations in my data regarding whether the informants want to involve their birth country in their identity work. In this part of discussion, the informants I quoted were all born in South Korea. However, this does not mean that they were the only group of transnational adoptees who

include the birth country in doing the identity work. Furthermore, not all the adoptees born in South Korea were interested in a connection to their birth country. For example, in addition to the informants adopted from South Korea quoted in this section, informants like Kristin and Isabel who were born in Latin American countries, also included their birth countries in doing identity work, and both enacted a hybridized Norwegianness. Signe, who was born in Korea, clearly rejected any inclusion of South Korea in her identity work in relation to Norwegianness. In my analysis, I consider these variations as different strategies to deal with minoritization, or as different ways to negotiate or cope with phenotypical difference in doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness. Yet in my interview data, I do find that the informants adopted from South Korea had more to say than other informants with regard to identity work in relation to their birth country. I think one of the reasons that can explain this is that as the first generation of transnational adoptees[69], South Korea born adoptees is the group that has been most organized. The formation of national and international communities for Korean born adoptees' and their organized trips to the birth country provide them with more possibilities to explore the meaning of the birth country in doing their identity work. In this exploration, the birth country can be made meaningful to some, yet not meaningful to others.

9.5 Hybridized Norwegianness means enacting Norwegianness beyond the adoption

As shown in chapter 5, my informants often referred to their adoption background to account for or even to "defend" their majority position. For example, when answering the question "where are you (really) from," many chose to answer, "I am *adopted* from …" We can also see from chapter 8 that when my informants remade the boundaries to define a majority position in which they can be included, this involves an active construction of the meaning of their adoption background: "I have a Norwegian upbringing and culture." "I have Norwegian

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[69] As I introduced in chapter 1, transnational adoption had existed before the systematic adoption of South Korean children to the West. However, South Korea born adoptees can be said the first generation of transnational adoptees in the contemporary transnational adoption ever since the Korean War (See also Hübinette 2007).

parents and family(name)." "I grew up in Northern Norway, and these are my roots."

Since adoptees' majority position is closely related to their adoption background, I also find that sometimes being Norwegian and being adopted become synonymous. For example, as I quoted earlier, when Lisa accounted for her majority position, she said, "most people understand that I am adopted and that I am Norwegian when I start to talk." Yet are adoptees Norwegian only because they are adopted? Here is what Terje told me,

> *I am Norwegian. My parents see me as a Norwegian, and many of my friends see me as Norwegian. ... But I also began to use my appearance to define who I am. Before I was only Norwegian-Norwegian, now it's like a little bit of both: Korean-Norwegian, Norwegian-Korean. This is also partially because I've stayed in Japan. In Japan, I was a person who looks Korean or even Japanese but speaks Norwegian. So I was born in Korea but grew up in Norway. It was like I was both Korean and Norwegian. I feel comfortable with being both. Before, if I met someone and said that I was Norwegian, I had to constantly point out that I was adopted. I feel more comfortable to be both rather than being seen as being just adopted and Norwegian, then it was ignored that I looked different. (Terje)*

Consistently with what he told me earlier, here Terje emphasized that he began to use his appearance to define who he is. This shows that to include phenotypical difference in the identity work in relation to Norwegianness, he needs space in which he can be enacted being both Norwegian and Korean. A majority position that is often synonymous with being "white" cannot provide him such space. In this way, a majority position became a limited position for him. More importantly, he also pointed out that it was a limited position for him, because he was then "just" perceived as being adopted. Terje made it clear that in enacting himself as Norwegian, he refused to be reduced to being only an "adoptee." In this way, when Terje enacted a hybridized Norwegianness hyphenated with Koreanness ("Korean-Norwegian" or "Norwegian-Korean"), he not only exceeded the limited majority position, but also went beyond the meaning of adoption.

In the previous chapter, I included an example of how Tone told her Oslo story, where she enacted a hybridized "international" Norwegianness. When Tone enacted herself as an "international" Norwegian in the interview, I noticed that

this enactment also allowed her to exceed her adoption background to define her Norwegianness. This is because when enacting herself as an "international" Norwegian, what she referred to was her "foreign background" (yet not foreign), instead of her adoption background. The "foreign background" is enough to explain why she is Norwegian but at the same time looks different. In my view, Tone's "international" position makes it possible for her to include phenotypical difference in enacting Norwegianness. At the same time, it makes her adoption background unnecessary information in her enactment of a hybridized Norwegianness. In this way, Tone is an "international" Norwegian, but not an "adopted" Norwegian.

Tone also showed how she goes beyond adoption to enact a hybridized Norwegianness in her answer to questions about where she is from. Unlike most of my informants, Tone often answered, "I was born in Vietnam." She explained,

> *I would normally not say I was adopted, because I feel this is not so important. It is like when you say you are adopted, it's like err… Then they will ask more. And it's like err…. I sometimes just don't want to talk about it or share these things with others. (Tone)*

Here Tone clearly expressed that she did not want to talk about her adoption background and share it with people whom she had just met. Other informants also told me that they understood that people were curious and wanted to know more about adoption, but for them, their adoption story was a very private issue, which was not something they would share with anyone, and especially not strangers. Kristin said,

> *I know when I told people that I was from Tromsø, people in fact thought, "Well, where are you **really** from? Were you born in Tromsø? How did you come to Norway?" But I think, they don't need to know everything at once. It is not necessary for me to tell a complicated story, right? I don't have a duty to tell. (…) But of course, if I began to know someone, and began to talk deeper, I may share more details. But it also depends on who I am talking with. It is not like I want to be so detailed with the people I don't know. (Kristin)*

Here "complicated story" refers to Kristin's adoption story – the story of why and how she came to Norway. Like Tone, Kristin expressed a discomfort in sharing her

adoption story with strangers. More importantly, both Tone and Kristin pointed out that this information on adoption was not important or necessary with regard to the question of who they are. Notice that in both quotes, the informants were doing their identity work in relation Norwegianness: Tone answered that she was *born* in Vietnam (different from "I am from Vietnam") implying that she was not Vietnamese but Norwegian; Kristin refused to answer people's question on whether she was born in Norway and how/why she came to Norway. In other words, they both tried to make adoption irrelevant to their enactment of Norwegianness.

Even though adoption can effectively defend adoptees' majority position in relation to Norwegianness, I have also found that my informants formed an alternative Norwegian position where they did not have to use their adoption background to defend their majoritized position. In other words, when enacting their hybridized Norwegianness, my informants at the same time enacted a more generous Norwegian "we" position, in which there is no need to separate who are adopted or who are not, who belong to the majority and who do not. For example, Håvard presented me a "mixture" picture of the current Norwegian society when I asked him whether he was interested in having contact with other adoptees, he answered,

> *I don't know that many adoptees. Mm… I am sure there were adoptees in the school I went to. I am sure there were. Mm… It is like this everywhere. And of course there are immigrants too. They are very mixed. It is like this in all places, including the place where I work now. I am adopted, and I am Norwegian. There are also immigrants. They are of course also Norwegian. (Håvard)*

Håvard pointed out that transnational adoptees and immigrants are very mixed and it is like this everywhere. By telling me this, Håvard described a colorful and mixed picture of Norwegian society, where it has become common to look different. He seemed to tell me that under this colorful and mixed Norwegian context, it was impossible to separate who were transnational adoptees and who were immigrants. More importantly, he also implied that it was meaningless to separate: "I am adopted and I am Norwegian. There are also immigrants. They are of course also Norwegian." In this way, Håvard had enacted a different Norwegian position: a position where there is no need to separate who are majorities and

who are minorities, and a position where those who are not white are equally Norwegian.

9.6 Hybridized Norwegianness exceeds categories and categorization

From the examples I presented in this chapter, I have discussed how my informants can exceed the majority position to enact a hybridized Norwegianness, a Norwegianness that can include their phenotypical difference, but at the same time be equally and fully valued. Tone's self-presentation as an "international" Norwegian, Halldis' enactment of Norwegianness that "includes her Korean roots", and Terje's "Norwegian-Korean" or "Korean-Norwegian" all illustrate this kind of hybridized Norwegianness. They produce a Norwegianness that is mixed/hybridized and includes both majoritized Norwegianness and phenotypical "non-whiteness." This implies that when the majority-minority division is destabilized, my informants can be placed in both a majority position and a minority position simultaneously. Thus enacting Norwegianness is no longer a question of being *either* majority *or* minority. This is exactly what Erik says in the following quote:

> Sometimes I think it is difficult to be adopted from another country. For instance, I do not feel that ... people really accept you. Like ... well, it is not allowed to say that you are somehow proud of your background ... because, it is typical that adoptive parents, and adoptees who have not been to Korea or who are not comfortable with that side of themselves, they say, "you feel a little Korean?" Then they say, "But you're still one of us? You're still Norwegian, aren't you? You still love your parents? You're happy for coming here?" So, they in a way raise, as I interpret it, a question about "Are you one of us or are you not? This sounds uncomfortable for me. In a way…… yes, they are not racists and they accept you, of course, as Norwegian. But once you begin to define yourself as something else, then reactions come... (Erik)

Erik expressed a frustration that he was not understood when he began to define himself as "something else," as a hybrid Norwegian more than just a Norwegian. He described a rigid division between majority and minority positions in which Norwegianness is normally constructed and understood. With this rigid division,

enacting Norwegianness becomes a question, as Erik points out, of "are you one of us or not?" In this way, Erik pointed to the biggest problem he experienced with the majority-minority division in relation to Norwegianness: that is, the question of being Norwegian is easily appropriated as a question of inclusion and exclusion, as a question of *either… or* (either *in* or *out*), or a question of black or white. As transnational adoptees, my informants' positioning as majority or minority in relation Norwegianness is rather ambivalent. Erik pointed out that such a majority-minority dichotomy is problematic, because as a transnational adoptee, he cannot be simply categorized as *either-or*.

At the same time, Erik talked about a dilemma that he as a transnational adoptee can face when the question of being Norwegian is interpreted as an *either-or* choice. As I explained in chapters 6 and 7, to experience being minoritized through a racialization process is painful. Yet, being included as "one of us" in a majority position can also be experienced as painful, because this majority position does not allow for difference. When Erik tried to include a transnational adoption-related difference such as his Korean background in his identity work, this was almost interpreted as a betrayal or ungratefulness towards his adoptive parents or the adoptive country. This again shows how a rigid division between majority and minority positions creates a limit space for adoptees to do identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

From what Erik said, we see that in his enactment of a hybridized Norwegianness, he refused to be categorized as *either-or.* Then the question is whether we can understand Erik's hybridized Norwegianness simply as *both-and*, like Terje says: "I am both Norwegian and Korean: Korean-Norwegian or Norwegian-Korean." If the answer is yes, how is Erik's hybridized Norwegianness combined and mixed? While Terje used the hyphen to combine his hybridized Norwegianness, Halldis described hers as "a Norwegianness which includes her Korean roots." What about Erik? When Erik talked about being proud of his background, was there an existing category in today's vocabulary that could describe his hybridized Norwegianness? With these questions, I asked Erik,

> *Author: When you say that you have now realized that being Korean is an important part of you, and you are proud of your Korean background, does it means that you would like to consider yourself as a Norwegian with another ethnic background, or multicultural?*

Erik: Ohh .. The terms .. they put you in boxes .. [laughter], or something black or white. Multicultural, no! Well ... no, I am a Korean adoptee. This is who I am: a Norwegian-Korean adoptee. Yes, I call myself "Korwegian." It does not mean that I will define what's what. I cannot say what is what. I am aware that I am Norwegian. But this thing about Korea ... is that I know the feeling is associated with the good feeling I had in Korea. It is a big part of me as Korean. And in this way I can never be completely Norwegian.

In this part of conversation, I asked whether Erik would like to describe himself as a "Norwegian with another ethnic background" or "multicultural." My intention in asking the question was to find out whether we can place Erik's hybridized Norwegianness in an existing category. I wanted to find out what the hybridity of his enacted Norwegianness meant. Both of the terms I provided here are taken from the government's integration politics. For example, I often read in the vacant job announcements that "persons with another ethnic background or multicultural background are particularly encouraged to apply." I wondered whether these categories that intend to integrate or include, can be used to describe the position my informants enacted in their hybridized Norwegianness. Obviously, Erik rejected these categories. For him, the categories intend to place him in a clearly cut, limit space, as being either black or white. There are two ways to interpret Erik's rejection of the categories.

First, the categories I provided from the government's integration politics are in practice minoritized categories in the Norwegian context, which I was not fully aware of at the time of the interview. Particularly, the first term, "persons with another (read: non-Norwegian) ethnic background" equates to "person with immigrant background," which refers to immigrants. To Erik, my question can therefore be interpreted as an attempt to minoritize him. Thus, when he said that "terms put you in boxes, something black or white," he implied that regardless of what fashionable terms were used, they were made within such a rigid majority-minority division or what he described as "black or white."

Second, in addition to the categories I provided in fact being associated with minoritized immigrants, Erik also pointed out that the categories did not suit him as a transnational adoptee. He particularly emphasized that he was not "multicultural" like immigrants are. This echoes what other informants emphasized: as transnational adoptees, they grow up in Norway and they only

have one cultural background, which is the Norwegian one. By coining the term "Korwegian" to describe himself, Erik declares: :Don't put me in any existing categories. I am who I am – I am not any categories." In this way, Erik not only refused to be minoritized, but also to be majoritized. He refused to be reduced to any category. In this way, "Korwegian," as an alternative Norwegian position Erik enacted, goes beyond the binary division of majority and minority. Erik's enactment of "Korwegianness" also demonstrates that within a rigid division between majority and minority positions, transnational adoptees are neither majorities nor minorities.

Other informants also expressed a desire to exceed current categories. For example, Renate told me,

> *I liked the feeling of being a little bit foreign when I was in the group [which consists of students with a foreign background]. But I was also confused and did not know whether it was right to call myself Indian, it was also wrong to call myself Norwegian. I would not describe this as an identity crisis, because I did not think very much about it. It was something that became a reality that it was wrong to be called either Indian or Norwegian. ... (Renate)*

Renate made it clear that it was wrong to call her either Norwegian or Indian. In my analysis, "Norwegian" is a majoritized position while "Indian" is a minoritized position. In this way, Renate expressed the same point as Erik: within a rigid majority-minority division, she was neither majority nor minority. No categories can describe her hybrid identity that was enacted when she was together with other students with foreign background. As she pointed out, this hybrid identity was enacted as a reality– or who she is. Similarly, Kristin said,

> *Those who asked where I was from tried in a way to classify me … in a way ... put me in a place. I do not like this. It is just like ... I cannot classify and put myself in a place. I cannot say that I am a 100% Norwegian. I am not, because I do not look Norwegian. But I'm not Colombian, either. For myself, I cannot say that I'm half Norwegian and half Colombian, because I am not. I cannot say how much is Norwegian, and how much is Colombian. I cannot separate myself. I don't want to define it. (Kristin)*

"I am who I am; I don't need any categories to define myself." This is the message I get from Kristin. Like Renate, she described that it was just a reality that she was

hybridized and could not be put in any categories. In my analysis, I consider this "reality" description as a *real effect* of how hybridized Norwegianness has been enacted through a mixing/hybridizing process that is a consequence of a systematic practice of transnational adoption. I also want to point out that this hybridizing process is not a smooth one, as it contains a constant process of negotiating. I notice that when describing this hybridized identity as a reality, both Renate and Kristin described a self-negotiation process: "Am I 100% Norwegian? No. Am I Indian/Colombian? No. Am I half-half? No. I am none of those. I am just who I am."

When Kristin told me that she did not want to define herself as "half-half," I considered this to be a refusal to define herself as something like *both-and* or *multi-*. This is similar to what Erik told me that by calling himself "Korewegian," he did not want to define what is what. "Korwegian" is neither Korean nor Norwegian; in addition, "Korwegian" is different than being both Korean and Norwegian. It is something new, or a different hybridized form. Differently from Erik who coined a new term to describe himself, what Kristin evidenced here is a refusal to be categorized at all, not even through a self-categorization. "I am who I am, I don't need to define it." In this way, what Kristin refused is not only being placed into a fixed category, but being *categorized* at all.

9.7 Conclusion: Enacting a more generous position for the Norwegian "we"

As I have discussed in this chapter, the hybrid Norwegianness my informants enact is first and foremost a hybridized whiteness, that is to say, a Norwegianness that is not white in skin color. Majoritizing this hybrid "whiteness" can be understood as my informants' resistance to the norm of whiteness in constructing Norwegianness. In other words, the informants make it clear even though they look different, they are fully Norwegian. For my informants, to enact a hybridized Norwegianness means first of all a possibility of including their phenotypical difference in doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. My data shows that when including phenotypical difference in doing the identity work, some of the informants also found that their adoption background in the birth country became meaningful to them. Therefore, the informants expressed a need

for the space to include phenotypical difference and the birth country in the exploration of their identities in relation to Norwegianness. I have also illustrated that to enact a hybridized Norwegianness opens a possibility for my informants to exceed the meaning of adoption to define and enact their Norwegianness. That is to say, to enact themselves as Norwegians, my informants do not want to be reduced to "being adopted."

Importantly, by analyzing the different forms of hybridized Norwegianness my informants enact, I demonstrate how it is possible for my informants to enact a more generous Norwegian "we" position. This more generous position exceeds the majority-minority division and produces a position where there is no need to separate majority and minority. These various enactments of hybridized Norwegianness also demonstrate how the majority-minority division has been destabilized in today's multiethnic and multicultural Norwegian context. When majority and minority positions are no longer stable categories, my informants can occupy minority and majority positions simultaneously and enact both a majoritized and a minoritized Norwegianness. At the same time, with a rigid majority-minority separation, they are neither minorities nor majorities.

When elaborating how my informants enacted a hybrid Norwegianness, I also illustrated a self-negotiation process where my informants constantly negotiated and included their transnational adoption-related differences and gradually enacted themselves as hybrids. Therefore, I argue that the hybrid Norwegianness my informants' enacted can be understood as a *real effect* of a mixing/hybridizing process that is a consequence of the systematic practice of transnational adoption.

Chapter 10: Conclusion: Transnational, transracial and a generous understanding of Norwegianness

10.1 Revisiting the findings from the empirical chapters

Through the analysis of my empirical data, I have examined how my informants negotiate and deal with their transnational adoption-related differences (looking different and being adopted) to do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. In chapter 4, I analyzed challenging interview interactions, and demonstrated my informants did not share two of the premises I held about how "being adopted" would be significant for my informants in relation to their being Norwegians. When the adoption background is significant to their Norwegianness, it is not necessarily related to the lack of biological connection in the parent-child relations and is also not necessarily related to the birth country.

In chapter 5, by analyzing how my informants interpret and answer the question "Where are you really from," I illustrated how transnational adoption-related differences are negotiated in relation to majoritizing-minoritizing processes: processes that also were part of the interview process. "Being adopted" is perceived as a majority Norwegian position. However, because they "look different" or do not look white, my informants can easily be perceived as racialized "Others" or migrant minorities. Therefore, when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness, my informants have to negotiate their phenotypical difference and deal with a minoritization process, which, as I explained in chapters 6 and 7, primarily concerns a process of doing "race," where "race" is also co-produced with gender.

Chapters 8 and 9 deal with what my informants do to negotiate "looking different" and deal with the minoritization. In chapter 8, I analyzed the content of my informants' Oslo stories as well as how they told these stories during the interviews. Through the analysis, I demonstrated that my informants strategically revise the majority-minority division so that their phenotypical difference is no longer made relevant to their positioning. Though they do not look white, they negotiate this difference (for example with me in the interviews) to enact a majoritized Norwegianness. Through the last Oslo story, I also demonstrated that when negotiating difference in doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness,

the informant enacted a majoritized Norwegianness that was also a hybridized Norwegianness. I discussed this further in chapter 9.

In order to better understand my informants' enacted hybridized Norwegianness, I first reexamined the way they enact a majoritized Norwegianness. I suggested that this should be understood as a hybridized whiteness – that is, a whiteness which does not rely on white in skin color, yet represents a complete and equally valued Norwegianness. I then showed that for my informants, enacting a hybridized Norwegianness means first and foremost to include their phenotypical difference in doing their identity work. When incorporating this difference to enact a hybridized Norwegianness, they simultaneously enact a more generous and inclusive Norwegian "we" position that exceeds majority-minority divisions. In other words, by producing a hybridized Norwegianness, they refuse to be either minoritized or majoritized. Finally, I showed that this generous Norwegian "we" position can provide the informants with more space to do identity work in which the birth country can become meaningful and in which they can go beyond adoption to enact Norwegianness.

In this chapter, I discuss my overall findings in relation to my research purpose as stated in chapter 1. I situate my research results within relevant fields of knowledge and discuss them in dialogue with other relevant studies in these fields. Additionally, I raise new questions that can lead to further studies in these fields.

10.2   The meaning of adoption for constructions of Norwegianness

In anthropological studies, adoption is understood as a means to construct families. It is therefore often studied in relation to kinship, blood ties, parenthood, family relations and so on (e.g. Goody 1969, Dalen and Sætersdal 1992, Howell 2006). However, here I examine the meaning of transnational adoption in relation to people's construction of a national identity, such as Norwegianness. This question has rarely been discussed. I believe the present study to have illuminated this question.

"Blood is thicker than water." This biocentric understanding seems to exist across different cultures.[70] It suggests that kinship based on blood ties is stronger than those that are not, for example those based on marriage or adoption. It also suggests that a group of people are naturally tied together because of a common biological origin (Melhuus and Howell 2001). Such biocentric narratives of belonging have also been part of the construction of national identities. For example, as I discussed in chapter 4, the construction of a common Chinese identity includes a reliance on metaphors of "Chinese blood" and a "Chinese heart" based on a common Ancient origin. Similarly, Norwegianness as a natural way to tie a group of people together with a common Norwegian identity is based on genealogy; a fictive common ancestry or origin. The construction of Norway as an imaginary community also relies on a metaphor of kinship (Eriksen 2000). It can therefore be asked whether adoptees, who become Norwegian through adoption, are less Norwegian than the population whose Norwegianness is naturalized through blood ties. Is there a biocentric understanding of adoption in transnational adoptees' identity work in relation to Norwegianness? Is there a biocentric understanding of kinship as it constitutes Norwegianness?

Through my exploration I showed that based on their racialized phenotypic features, my informants can easily be minoritized as immigrants, who are usually not considered Norwegian. However, adoption can help enable their enactment of Norwegianness and strengthen this Norwegianness. That is to say, with "being adopted" in Norway meaning "growing up in Norwegian families" or "having Norwegian parents," informants find that they are majoritized as fully accepted Norwegians, in contrast to migrant minorities. In this way, adoption does not produce a significant difference for them in terms of their identity as Norwegian. When adoption is made meaningful in relation to Norwegianness, I found no "blood-is-thicker-than-water" effect, at least not in relation to the majoritizing/ minoritizing process that was enacted in the interviews.

In my analysis of the construction of the meaning of adoption in relation to Norwegianness, I have borrowed Signe Howell's concept of *kinning* (Howell 2006) to argue that through a kinning process, the adoptees become not only *kinned*

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[70] For example, in China, there is an old saying "血浓于水"; in Norway, "Blod er tykkere enn vann." Both mean that blood is thicker than water.

family members in their Norwegian families, but also *kinned* Norwegians who are legitimated as part of the Norwegian "we." By analyzing adoption in relation to this *kinning* process, we see that when my informants actively refer to adoption to account for or strengthen their majoritized Norwegianness in the interviews, adoption is used to specify the way in which they are connected to the Norwegian "we." For example, as I explained in chapters 5 and 8, my informants often refer to their *Norwegian* upbringings: growing up in a *Norwegian* family with *Norwegian* parents, to indicate how they are part of the Norwegian "we." In comparison to immigrants and to second generation immigrants, they underline that this connection through adoption or *kinning* is a unique one.

Not only is this connection a unique one, they also imply that the way in which they are connected to the Norwegian "we" is closer, or more intimate than other types of connections, for example through immigration for work, asylum or family reunion. As shown in my analysis, several of my informants referred to an intimate parent-child kinned relation to make meaning of their adoption background when doing identity work around Norwegianness. For example, they emphasized that, "I have *Norwegian* parents." Some informants when accounting for this close or intimate association to the Norwegian "we" referred to themselves as "adopted *children*" to implicitly refer to the parent-child relation and thus emphasize their kinned connection to the Norwegian "we."

To return to my question of how to understand adoption in relation to the construction of Norwegianness, I suggest that it should be understood as a specific connection to the Norwegian "we" through a kinning process. Further, from the comparisons my informants drew with immigrants in the interviews, whether explicitly or implicitly, I wonder whether there are differentiated connections to the Norwegian "we" among migrant groups, through which they do identity work in relation to Norwegianness. For example, several informants mentioned second generation immigrants, a group they both identify with and differ from. How do they do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness? And how do they build their connection to the Norwegian "we"? My study shows that kinship, even though non-biological, is significant in constructing a person's connection to the Norwegian "we." What does this mean for those who migrate to Norway for the purpose of family reunion, for example, "the Thai women"? How do they deal with the minoritization and intertwined sexualization process when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness? This study has provided a

good departure point from which to study other migrant groups' identity work in relation to Norwegianness, and thus to further explore the construction of Norwegianness in the present multicultural and multiethnic context.

10.3 Transnational adoption and scholarship on international migration and ethnic relations

When I claim that my study about transnational adoption can provide a good departure point from which to study other migrant groups in Norway, this raises the question of whether we can include the study of transnational adoption in the scholarship on international migration and ethnic relations.

In critical adoption studies, there is a trend to include transnational adoption in international migration studies. For example, Lene Myong Petersen's conceptualization of transnational adoption as "a racialized economy of intimacy" contributes to framing transnational adoption in a global economic system with other transnational movements of labor (Petersen 2009). Similarly, Tobias Hübinette studies the experience of transnational adoptees, particularly transnational adoptees from South Korea as a *diaspora* (Hübinette 2007), a term that is associated with the cross-border experiences of international migrants. However, some scholars do not agree that transnational adoption should be understood as a diaspora similar to other migrant diasporas. For example, in her ethnographic study of Norwegian transnational adoptees, Signe Howell argues that in contrast to other migrant diaspora groups, adoptees are *socially naked* in relation to their country of origin; being kinned as Norwegian, they are anomalous within the diaspora community of their birth countries (Howell 2006, 2009).

Though most of my informants differentiated themselves from immigrants during the interviews, in the Norwegian context the word "immigrant" has a different connotation than its lexical meaning (Gullestad 2002:89-90). Thus, when my informants intentionally avoided being compared with immigrants, what they aimed to avoid was being minoritized as the racialized "Other." In other words, when referring to "immigrants" my informants mostly invoked the connotations of this word rather than its literal meaning. It can also be argued that in differentiating themselves from immigrants, transnational adoptees are the

highest-ranked group among actual immigrants to Norway, as the most favored, most intimately connected immigrant group.

At the same time, my study shows that though belonging to the Norwegian majority, when doing identity work in relation to Norwegianness transnational adoptees have to deal with majority-minority relations and their unstable positioning within these relations. The unstable positioning I demonstrate in my analysis echoes what Hübinette calls "ethnic instability" – that is, transnational adoptees' "identification with and performance of whiteness is always interrupted, questioned and disturbed" (Hübinette 2007: 179). More importantly, my study demonstrates that transnational adoptees' unstable positioning in relation to Norwegianness provides us with an interesting point from which to explore the inclusion and exclusion process through which the Norwegian "we" is constructed. It creates a valuable approach to understandings of how Norwegianness has been constructed to equate to whiteness. Therefore, I believe that it is both necessary and fruitful to include transnational adoption studies into scholarship on international migration and ethnic relations.

10.4 Racialization, whiteness and othering: "Transnational" or "transracial"?

Transnational adoption is *transnational*, because the children are adopted from one country to another. As I explained, my decision to call this form of adoption *transnational* reflects my postcolonial perspective in this study. Furthermore, when scholars use the term "transnational," I see this as an intentional practice that aims to include transnational adoption studies within the transnational framework in international migration and ethnic relation studies. Yet to what extent can we call transnational adoptees transnational? How can we study transnational adoption and transnational adoptees' experiences within transnational migration studies? To what extent are the term transnationalism and its derivative terms, such as *transnational experience*, *transnational formation* and *transnational space* (see Faist 2010) useful in the study of the lived experience of transnational adoptees? These are not questions I intended to ask in this study. Nevertheless, my data do shed some light on these questions and suggest future directions for the study of transnational adoptions.

As I showed in chapter four, in the early stage of conducting this project, I considered adoptees' identity work around Norwegianness to be a "transnational" practice. This was because I took it for granted that being born in one country/nation must mean something for the transnationally adopted persons. Yet, as shown from my interview data, this perspective was not one that my informants shared. To be related or feel a belonging to a country is not an automatic result of birth or biology. In the previous part, I claim that through transnational adoption and a kinning process, my informants attain an intimate and strong connection to Norway. In contrast, their association with their birth countries can be said to be relatively weak. In this way, being born in and adopted from *one country* is not necessarily significant for them when doing their identity work in relation to Norwegianness.

While the birth country holds no apparent significance to how transnational adoption produces difference for my informants in relation to Norwegianness, "race" is significant. In other words, when *transnational* adoption is understood as something that can generate a difference in relation to Norwegianness, *transnational* primarily represents a "racial" difference. As I show in chapters 6 and 7, the minoritizing/majoritizing process as a process that produces difference in relation to Norwegianness is primarily about producing "race." Phenotype, and most prominently skin color, is thus important to whether a person is included in the Norwegian "we." In practice, being Norwegian equates to being white and blond.

Using a non-essentialist, process-oriented understanding of "race" and its complicated effects on lived experiences, I have shown that my informants' enactment of Norwegianness includes an embodied performance of whiteness. Growing up in a white context, my informants are perceived to be white despite their non-white skin color. I argue that how my informants talk and behave must be also understood as racialized phenotype markers that indicate their whiteness.

The Swedish adoption researchers Tobias Hübinette and Carina Tigervall have developed the concept of "transracial experience" to study transnational adoptees' experiences of racialization, racial identifications and relationship to their non-white bodies (Hübinette and Tigervoll 2008). From my own study of how Norwegian transnational adoptees do their identity work in relation to Norwegianness, I witness a similar "transracial experience." In looking at how

transnational adoption is significant for my informants in their enactments of Norwegianness, what the informants experience is not necessarily a *transnational* experience, but rather primarily a *transracial* experience: from being *not white* to being *white*. The informants' negotiation of transnational adoption-related difference in relation to Norwegianness is thus a question of doing and enacting whiteness. This finding echoes a main point in critical whiteness studies: whiteness is not about skin color, but "a location of structural advantage and of race privilege" (Frankenberg 1993:1). In my study, this structural advantage is a privileged Norwegian majority position that is shaped through processes of racialization.

In chapter 1, I explained that my choice of the term "transnational" in transnational adoption and transnational adoptees reflected my postcolonial perspective and focus on the examination of the relevance of "race" as a historical effect in my informants' lived experience of negotiating the difference of "looking different." Yet, my study shows that "race" is not only relevant, but also significant. Given the significance of "race" to how my informants do identity work in relation to Norwegianness, it seems that "transracial adoption" is a better term through which to highlight how transnational adoption produces difference for transnational adoptees in relation to their enactment of Norwegianness. In addition to my earlier argument that the prefix "trans-" can remind us of the direction of a global movement or circulation in a postcolonial era, "transracial" fits well within the postcolonial perspective of this study.

It is also important to note that the prefix "trans-" in "transracial" and "transnational" represents a focus on *change* through movement. As I have shown in this dissertation, the whiteness that my informants enact is a hybridized one. They are not the same as the normalized *white* whiteness. This is how my informants, though included in the white majority, cannot avoid being racialized in daily life situations. Therefore, I argue that the whiteness my informants enact in doing identity work around Norwegianness is a transracial formation. As a transracial formation, it is never the same as the racial formation of *white* whiteness.

Though transnational adoption primarily represents a "transracial experience" for adoptees in their enactment of Norwegianness, in chapter 9, I demonstrated that negotiations of phenotypical differences in some cases can lead adoptee to

engage in transnational experiences. Based on how they look, they gradually come to endow meaning to their birth country, or even birth region, and begin to explore and include it in their identity work around Norwegianness. This is particularly the case for those informants who have travelled back to their countries of birth. For example, through such transnational exploration and experience, some informants began to call themselves "Korean-Norwegian" (or "Norwegian- Korean"), "Norwegian with Korean roots", or "Korwegian." In this way, we see that not only whiteness, but also the Norwegianness that the informants enact is hybrid. This hybrid Norwegianness exceeds national borders and includes elements of birth countries, and is thus both a *transracial* and a *transnational* formation, which emerged subsequently to transnational/transracial adoption.

This suggests that when studying transnational adoption, particularly transnational adoptees' lived experience, more attention should be given to the examination of "race." "Race" does not refer to biological and physical properties, but to a social phenomenon that the transnational adoptees have to deal with in their daily lives. This is particularly challenging in Norway and in the other Scandinavian countries, because "race" is not thought to be an issue due to the ideologies about equality and a dominant public discourse of anti-racism (see also Gullestad 2002, Hübinette and Tigervoll 2008, Pettersen 2009, Berg and Kristiansen 2010). Furthermore, in order to include transnational adoption studies in the field of international migration and ethnic relations, the transracial experience is a good departure point. This perspective enables the study of transnational adoptees together with other migrant groups, and to allow for the comparison of their experiences (for example with racialization and racism).

10.5 What can transnational adoptees' identity work tell us about the current multiethnic/multicultural society?

In chapter 1, I stated that my purpose in this study was to generate a better understanding of the present multiethnic and multicultural Norwegian society. I was particularly interested in exploring how in this multiethnic and multicultural context, Norwegianness is constructed through inclusion/exclusion process. This question has already been answered in my previous discussion on racialization,

whiteness and othering processes. I have shown that the construction of Norwegianness as a privileged majority position includes a process of doing "race." In their identity work in relation to Norwegianness, transnational adoptees must first and foremost deal with the question of how to enact whiteness when their skin color is not white. At the same time, I have also illustrated that the racialization through which the majority and minority positions are mutually shaped is interwoven with a gendering process. In this way, both "race" and gender are relevant difference-making categories in the inclusion and exclusion process around Norwegianness. I have applied the concept of racialization to develop a new understanding of racism. By drawing on the informants' stories, I suggest that racism should be understood as particular hurtful and harmful effects of a racialization process that is enacted through the communication and interaction between people. My analysis shows that racism is not far removed from our daily lives. On the contrary, it contributes to shaping a privileged majority Norwegian position. My findings challenge the idealized self-image of mainstream Norwegian society as being highly equal in gender relations and "race"-free. Yet, what else can this study tell us about the present multicultural and multiethnic society?

10.5.1 Two visions that meet in this study

In this study I have provided two different perspectives on Norwegianness: the perspective of my informants (as transnational adoptees) and my own (an immigrant) perspective. My analysis of Norwegianness developed through the interactions between these two perspectives. This is also to say that my analysis, arguments and conclusions about Norwegianness all depend on a particular situational context. Consequently, I have used an interactive perspective to analyze the interview data. This means that I have chosen an analytical strategy in which I include myself in the analysis. In order to assure readers of the strength of my analysis, I have also explored my own situatedness in this study and examined how it has shaped and influenced the study (see chapter 4). The methodological finding of the study will be discussed later.

When my informants' enactments of Norwegianness were situated in the specific interaction in which we positioned ourselves in relation to each other, I found that Norwegianness became something unstable and that there was an ongoing inclusion/exclusion process during the interviews. Here my position as an

immigrant played a significant role in the interviews, which led the inclusion/exclusion process to turn into a process of majoritization and minoritization. It is precisely in the majoritization/minoritization process that our different perspectives on Norwegianness met. Furthermore, it is in relation to the majoritizing/minoritizing process that my informants negotiated difference and did identity work in relation to Norwegianness. Therefore exploring my own position in the interviews enabled me to produce a more comprehensive analysis of Norwegianness.

10.5.2 Unstable majority/minority positions and a more generous Norwegian "we

Another main point I make in this study is that majority and minority are not stable positions in the present multicultural/multiethnic and multiracial context. By analyzing how my informants narrated their Oslo stories, I show that transnational adoptees strategically destabilize and revise the majority-minority division and redefine a majority position by drawing in elements such as culture, class-background, and dialect, so that despite their phenotypical difference they can fit in. I argue that in the process of remarking the boundary between majority and minority, my informants enact a majoritized Norwegianness. In addition to elements like culture, class background and dialect, the adoption background itself functions as an efficient majoritizing element that can place the informants in a majority Norwegian position.

Avtar Brah criticizes the majority/minority dichotomy for ignoring the multidimensionality of power (Brah 2003: 620-622). A similar critique has been raised by Marianne Gullestad, who addresses majority-minority relations as intrinsically unstable power relations (Gullestad 2002, 2006). My analysis of how adoptees are positioned in relation to a majoritizing/minoritizing processes supports such critiques by empirically showing that "'minorities' are positioned in relation not only to 'majorities', but also with respect to one another" (Brah 2003: 622). As also shown in my analysis, in such an unstable division, individual subjects, such as adoptees, can in fact occupy minority and majority positions simultaneously and enact both a majoritized and a minoritized Norwegianness. At the same time, within a rigid majority-minority separation, they are neither migrant minorities nor white majorities.

Using the postcolonial concept of *hybridity*, I have re-examined the informants' majoritized Norwegianness and suggested that it should be understood as a hybridized whiteness, which does not depend on a white skin color and yet is an equally valued and complete Norwegianness. To enact this kind of hybrid whiteness primarily means that transnational adoptees have the option to be 100% Norwegian and at the same time incorporate phenotypical difference in their identity work in relation to Norwegianness. In this way, the Norwegianness they enact is also one that is hybridized. I used the informants' explanations of their hybridized Norwegianness to show that it is possible to exceed the majority-minority dichotomy and enact a more generous and more inclusive Norwegian "we" in today's multicultural and multiethnic Norwegian society.

Though I have applied hybridity from postcolonial theories to understand my informants' hybridized whiteness and Norwegianness, I see the kinning process through which transnational adoptees become white to be different from the colonial mimicry discussed in postcolonial theories (Bhabha 1994, Hübinette 2007). I therefore suggest understanding the informants' hybrid whiteness and Norwegianness as a new form of hybridization that results from the systematic transnational/ transracial adoptions taking place in today's globalizing world.

10.6 The implications of the study for sociology

In chapter 1, I stated that this dissertation is written in the discipline of sociology. It is thus important to discuss the study's implications for sociology. Here, I discuss two implications. The first is the thematic implication: what my study can contribute to sociological questions about identity. The second implication is methodological, focused on how my study can be regarded as an example of reflexive sociology in empirical studies.

10.6.1 The sociological question of identity

As an empirical sociological study of identity, I have mainly applied a constructionist/ interactionist approach to understand identity as something that is always in an ongoing process of doing and performing in concrete situational interactions (Goffman 1971, Lawler 2008). In my application of this approach, I draw on the feminist concept of performativity (Butler 1993, 1999) to be able to

examine the embodied aspect of identity as a process of performance. In addition, I have tried to combine the traditional Goffmanian performative understanding of identity with ANT-inspired concepts like act/enact (Latour 2005) and thus study identity as concrete *enactments*. I emphasize, first, that identity as performance is not only the action of one actor who performs, but the result of a set of interactions between two or several actors who are also positioning themselves in relation to each other. For example, I have shown that my informants' enactment of Norwegianness was produced in a situational context in which my participation as an immigrant researcher was significant.

Secondly, when a performance through interactions is accomplished, the identity produced in this performance has a *real* effect. I find enactment to be a better concept than performance to indicate the performative approach to identity, because performance is conventionally understood as "playing a part: a 'false' expression, denying, negating or concealing 'who we are really'" (Lawer 2008: 101). Through the negotiation of the meaning of the birth country, and through the mutual positioning and repositioning in the interviews, my perception of who my informants are, and even who I am, has changed. For example, I perceived "China girl" differently before and after the interview. Before I conducted this study, I always called and introduced myself as "a foreign student" and I avoided using "immigrant" to describe myself – was this also a strategy to avoid minoritization? Subsequent to this study, I realized I am normally perceived as an immigrant regardless of how I introduce myself. Now I am more willing to call myself an immigrant, because I am convinced that it is possible to place myself within a more generous and inclusive "we" in Norwegian society. I therefore want to emphasize that when a more generous Norwegian "we" - such as "international Norwegian," "Norwegian with other roots," "Norwegian-Korean" etc. has been enacted, it does have real effects.

Third, when a particular identity is performed in relation to Norwegianness, there is no universal or singular Norwegianness that has been enacted; on the contrary, it has been creatively enacted in multiple interacting practices. The concept of *enactment* stresses precisely the notion of multiplicity and non-convergence to a singularity of realities (Mol 2002, Law 2004). In this analysis, I have illustrated how my informants have variously enacted their majoritized Norwegianness and hybridized Norwegianness. We can then ask what the Norwegian identity is and what it means to be Norwegian. My informants' multiple enactments of

Norwegianness indicate that we should have more generous understanding of Norwegianness so that the various enactments are accepted.

By combining traditional sociological theory such as a Goffmanian approach with the newer approach such as ANT, I show that to study identity as concrete enactments does not only follow the traditional interactionist/performative understanding of identity, but also opens new analytical possibilities in empirical studies to examine the real effects of the identity constructions and to study creative enactments of identity.

Another important aspect of my study in relation to the question of identity concerns how to deal with difference. Earlier empirical studies about (transnational) adoptees' identity have studied identity making processes in relation to (transnational) adoption-related differences (Kirk 1964, Sætersdal and Dalen 1999, Botvar 1999, Brottveit 1999). However, all these scholars appear to have simply assumed difference. They only focus on how the differences can be rejected, acknowledged or stressed (e.g. Kirk 1964, Sætersdal and Dalen 1999), but fail to see that the differences can also be negotiated, and that what we might consider a relevant difference can be made irrelevant through a negotiation process. As an empirical study of transnational adoptees' identity, my study illuminates how transnational adoption-related differences can be negotiated in concrete interactions through which they can be made both relevant and irrelevant.

10.6.2 Practicing reflexive sociology in empirical studies

This study also has methodological implications. As I explained in chapter 4, during the interview process, I gradually found that my own positioning and situatedness was significant to my research practice. Therefore, in order to document the validity of the research result and to argue for the strength of the study, I have explored my own situatedness in this study and examined its implications for my research practice. I have applied feminist theories such as feminist standpoint theories (Harding 1986, Collins 2004) and Donna Haraway's "situated knowledges" (1999). By examining my situatedness, I was able to discover my cultural blindness and engage with my informants' standpoint to develop the analysis. I demonstrated that two of my assumptions about how transnational adoption would produce differences in relation to Norwegianness

were not consistent with my informants' experiences. This finding was important for me in the development of my analytical focus and strategy in the later analysis.

Though this methodological finding is developed from my application of feminist theories, it does concern a more general methodological question about the researcher's scientific reflexivity over his or her research practice. In sociology, Pierre Bourdieu has argued for a reflexive sociology that requires the exercise of what he calls "participant objectivation" (1992, 2003). By *reflexive sociology*, or as Bourdieu says, "the sociology of sociology – and of the sociologist" (Bourdieu 1992: 259), he points to the importance of examining how the researcher has "created" problems worthy of researching (ibid). By *participant objectivation*, Bourdieu argues that the researcher's idiosyncratic personal experience and academic pre-understandings of the research field are "methodologically subjected to sociological control" and constitute "irreplaceable analytic resources" which can and do "produce epistemic as well as existential benefits" (Bourdieu 2003: 281).

Though Bourdieu mainly talks about the sociologist or the researcher's relation to the research object and the research field, I think in many ways it concerns the same question about the researcher's location and situatedness in knowledge production that is discussed in feminist epistemological theories. Therefore, my study is not only a practice of feminist "situated knowledges," but can also be regarded as an example of how to conduct a reflexive sociology in empirical studies. For example, I have illustrated how, by examining my own assumption or pre-understanding of the researched phenomenon, I have been able to discover my cultural and analytical blindness. This in turn enabled me to make use of "unsuccessful" data to conduct a fruitful analysis. I showed that to include myself in the analysis enabled me to develop a more comprehensive analysis of the interview data. In this way, my study provides a good departure point from which to discuss what a reflexive sociology means when doing an empirical study.

Though my study illustrates the usefulness of conducting a reflexive sociology, I have also learned a lesson. If I had a chance to conduct this study again, I would have examined my pre-understanding of the research object and my situatedness and positioning before I conducted the interviews, instead of during and after this process. I would certainly have benefited from having done so in the process of collecting data. For example, when creating the interview guide, I could have

designed more targeted interview questions. In this way, I could have gained wider access to the data, as well as avoided certain awkward moments during the interviews.

10.7 Closing remarks

In sum, this study explores whether and how transnational adoption in the present globalizing context produces a difference for transnational adoptees in relation to their identity of being Norwegian, and what they do with the difference when doing identity work in relation Norwegianness. It builds up links between transnational adoption and constructions of Norwegianness in today's Norwegian society which is more and more multicultural/multiethnic, and as I also show, multiracial. By doing so, it provides a different perspective from which to understand transnational adoption. It also provides a different perspective from which to explore Norwegian society and Norwegianness: What does it mean to be Norwegian? What kinds of differences are appropriated to include and exclude in relation to Norwegianness? Last but not least, what can people do with these differences when the differences are made relevant for them? My study highlights that differences can always be negotiated and what is normally considered a relevant difference can be made irrelevant through a process of negotiation. By demonstrating how transnational adoptees negotiate difference in relation to Norwegianness, my study shows that it is possible to exceed the majority-minority dichotomy and enact a hybridized Norwegianness in a more generous and inclusive Norwegian "we" position in the present multicultural and multiracial Norwegian society. With the emergence of a more inclusive "we" position, what is also needed is also a more generous understanding of Norwegianness.

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Appendix 1: The advertisement of an invitation for transnational adoptees' participation in the project, published on the websites of the Norwegian adoption associations: "Verdensbarn" and "adopsjonsforum"

En Invitasjon til deltakelse i forskning om utenlandskadopsjon:

Kan du tenke deg å skrive din historie (Autobiografi) eller bli min intervjuinformant?

Jeg heter Zhao Yan, og er PhD stipendiat ved Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap, Høgskolen i Bodø. Mitt pågående PhD prosjekt handler om utenlandsadopsjon. Prosjektet oppstartet i august 2008 og skal ferdigstilles i august 2011. Prosjektet er en empirisk studie basert på kvalitative forskningsmetoder, dvs. tekstanalyse, intervju og autobiografi.

I de senere årene har det skjedd en økning i antall barn adoptert fra utlandet til Norge. Både media og forskning har satt søkelys på utenlandsadopsjon og dermed er interessen for utenlandsadopterte økende. Hva som bør gjøres med utenlandsadopsjon videre, dvs. hva bør forbedres og hva bør forhindres er viktig for aktører i både adopterende land og opprinnelsesland. For å svare på slik spørsmål trenger vi mer forskning. Samtidig for meg, som selv ikke er etnisk norsk, men bor i det norske samfunnet, ser jeg på utenlandsadopsjon som et fenomen knyttet til globalisering. Gjennom mitt prosjekt ønsker jeg å fremskaffe en bedre forståelse av utenlandsadopsjon i dagens multietniske norske samfunn.

For å gjennomføre dette prosjektet, trenger jeg informasjon, dvs. kvalitative data. Som forsker er jeg interessert i dine opplevelser som utenlandsadoptert som har vokst opp og bor i Norge. Jeg spør: hva betyr det for deg å være adoptert fra utlandet? Hvordan opplever du å bo i det norsk samfunn med en annerledes utseende? I hvilken grad syns du at din ukjente fortid har påvirket/påvirker ditt liv? Har du noen ganger tenkt at livet ditt kunne være annerledes om du ikke ble adoptert? Disse spørsmålene vil jeg gjerne få svar på fra deg. Du skal være 18 år eller eldre. Det spiller ingen rolle om du er kvinne eller mann, og hvilket land du er født i. Men siden jeg er interessert i å undersøke hvordan annerledeshet i

utseende kan påvirke ens opplevelse av det norsk samfunnet, vil jeg helst at du skiller deg ut i utseende fra flertallet i befolkingen. Du kan enten skrive dine historier eller autobiografi til meg (yan.zhao@hibo.no) eller du kan stille deg til rådighet som informant for intervju med meg. Lydopptak er ønsket å benyttes under intervjuene.

All informasjon som du gir til meg vil bli behandlet med full diskresjon. Alle personopplysninger vil bli anonymiserte og din identitet skal ikke kunne gjenkjennes i min doktorgradsavhandling. Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet og det betyr at etter du har gitt samtykke for deltakelse kan du når som helst trekke deg fra prosjektet uten at det får noen konsekvenser. Etter prosjektslutt vil alt lydopptak til intervjuene og navneliste til datamaterialet slettes.

Om du er interessert i å delta i denne forskningen eller har spørsmål knyttet til mitt prosjekt, er det bare å ta kontakt med meg.

Vennlig hilsen,

Zhao Yan (Stipendiat i sosiologi, Høgskolen i Bodø)

E-post: yan.zhao@hibo.no

Tlf: 7551 7438

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Adresse: Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap, Høgskolen i Bodø, 8049 Bodø

Appendix 2: Informasjonsskriv om forskningsprosjektet:

"A passage to Norway – Transnational adoption and identity work"

Litt presentasjon av meg selv:

Jeg heter Zhao Yan, er 30 år og doktorgradsstipendiat i sosiologi ved Fakultetet for Samfunnsvitenskap, Høgskolen i Bodø. Jeg er Kinesisk, men har studert og bodd i Norge siden 2003.

Min bakgrunn for valg av tema for forskningsprosjektet:

Jeg er ikke adoptert selv, men jeg er fra et land som har adoptert mange barn til vesten, bl.a. Norge. Gjennom et språkkurs der jeg var lærer, har jeg blitt kjent med flere norske familier som har adoptert barn fra Kina. Senere ble jeg også invitert til adopsjonskaffe, seminar og sosial aktiviteter arrangert av den lokale adopsjonsforeningen. Fra min kontakt med adopsjonsmiljøet i Bodø og norsk literrattur om utenlandsadopsjon, innser jeg at utenlandsadopsjon er blitt en vanlig fenomen i det norske samfunnet og det utfordrer ikke bare den tradisjonell forståelse av familien, men berører også temaet som identiteten og etniske relasjoner i den globaliserende kontekst. Men sammenlignet med andre land i Europa, er det fremdeles mangel på kunnskap om utenlandsadopsjon i Norge. Når jeg bestemte å ta doktorgrad i sosiologi, valgt jeg utenlandsadopsjon som temaet i mitt prosjekt.

Litt om prosjektet:

Kort sagt, handler prosjektet om utenlandsadoptertes identitet. I motsetninger til tidligere forskninger om identiteter, hvor identiteten forstås som noe man kan oppnå og ha, forstår jeg identiteten som en stadig forgående prosess hvor man forholder seg til forskjellige situasjoner i sin identifikasjon med andre – en identifikasjonsprosess. Formålet til prosjektet er å få en bedre forståelse av utenlandsadopsjon, samt dagens multietniske norske samfunn.

Prosjektet oppstartet i august 2008 og skal ferdigstilles i august 2011, da som en doktorgradsavhandling. Denne vil bli tilgjengelig for allmennheten. Jeg står selv som ansvarlig for gjennomføringen av prosjektet, med pro. Anne-Jorunn Berg ved Fakultetet for samfunnsvitenskap, Høgskolen i Bodø som veileder. Prosjektet er registrert og godkjent av NSD (Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Tjeneste).

Datainnsamlingen og din deltakelse:

Prosjektet er en empirisk studie basert på kvalitative forskningsmetoder, dvs. tekstanalyse, intervju og autobiografi. Datainnsamlingen er planlagt å gjøres i løp av høsten 2009. Som informant skal du være 18 år eller eldre. Det spiller ingen rolle om du er kvinne eller mann, og hvilket land du er født i. Men siden jeg er interessert i å undersøke hvordan annerledeshet i utseende kan påvirke ens opplevelse av det norsk samfunnet, vil jeg helst at du skiller deg ut i utseende fra flertallet i befolkingen. Din deltakelse innbærer å stille deg til rådighet ved å møte til et intervju med meg. Lydopptak er ønsket å benyttes under intervjuet.

Om du ikke ønsker eller har ikke mulighet til å møte til intervju, kan du også sende inn din livshistorie (eller autobiografi) til meg enten pr. post eller e-post. Det er ganske fleksibelt om hva du kan skrive om, men som forsker er jeg interessert i din opplevelse som utenlandsadoptert som har vokst opp og bor i Norge. Du kan f. eks. skrive **rundt** (**ikke** svare kort og konsist på) disse spørsmål: hvordan du opplever ditt hverdagsliv som utenlandsadoptert: kanskje du syns det er helt vanlig eller det kanskje er noe som gjør det litt spesielt eller annerledes? Hva betyr det for deg å være adoptert fra utlandet? Hvordan syns du at din ukjente fortid har påvirket/påvirker ditt liv? Har du noen ganger tenkt at livet ditt kunne være annerledes (lettere eller vanskeligere) om du ikke ble adoptert? Når du skriver rundt disse spørsmålene vil jeg gjerne at du kan fortelle meg noen konkrete hendelser eller episoder i ditt hverdagsliv som eksampler.

Behandling av datamaterial:

All informasjon som du gir til meg vil bli behandlet med full diskresjon. Mens prosjektarbeid pågår vil datamaterialet bli lagret i samsvar med Norsk Samfunnsvitenskaplig Datatjenestes regler. Alle personopplysninger vil bli anonymiserte og din identitet skal ikke kunne gjenkjennes i min doktorgradsavhandling. Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet og det betyr at etter du har gitt samtykke for deltakelse kan du når som helst trekke deg fra prosjektet

uten at det får noen konsekvenser. Det skal opprettes en "koblingsnøkkel" (navneliste) under prosjektperioden slik at navn og kontaktopplysninger ikke oppbevares sammen med resten av datamaterialet. Etter prosjektslutt vil denne navnelisten, samt lydopptak til intervjuet slettes, og resten av datamaterialet anonymiseres. Rådataene skal ikke oppbevares videre hverken med navn eller indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger knyttet til seg.

Dersom du kan tenke deg å være med på dette prosjektet ønsker jeg en foreløpig tilbakemelding så snart som mulig. Om du har flere spørsmål om mitt prosjekt eller din deltakelse i prosjektet, er det bare å ta kontakt med meg, pr. e-post eller telefon.

Vennlig hilsen,

Zhao Yan

(Stipendiat i sosiologi, Høgskolen i Bodø)

E-post: yan.zhao@hibo.no

Tlf: 7551 7438

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Høgskolen i Bodø, 8049 Bodø

Appendix 3: Interview guide

Innledning:

• Forklarer kort hensikten med intervju. (ref. informasjonsskrivet) *Tusen takk for du tar din tid å stille opp i intervju. Du har sikkert lest informasjonsskrivet som jeg sendte til deg tidligere. Har du noe spørsmål som du vil avklare før vi starter intervjuet.*

• Bruk av lydopptaker

Spør om tillatelse: *Er det greit jeg tar opp intervjuet på bånd? For meg er det særlig viktig siden jeg ikke har norsk som morsmål. Det blir vanskelig for meg å notere alt du sier mens jeg må konsentrere meg å holde tråen i samtalen.*

Anonymitetsbeskyttelse

• *Selv om jeg allerede har skrevet i informasjonsbrevet, vil jeg likevel å presisere en gang til at all informasjon som du gir til meg vil bli behandlet med full diskresjon. Alle personopplysninger vil bli anonymiserte og din identitet skal ikke kunne gjenkjennes i min doktorgradsavhandling.*

• *Ingen andre personer vil få lytte til opptakelse av intervju.*

Intervjuspørsmål

1. *Hvis du i dag skal presentere deg til noen som ikke kjenner deg, hva vil du si da?*

Alder (fødselsår)

I arbeid (hvilket yrke) eller utdanning (hvilket fag, hvilken studielinje)

Hvor fra (fødeland eller landsdel i Norge)

Sivilstand (gift/registrert partner, enslig, separert, skilt, forlovet, samboer; antall barn)

Familie (søsken, foreldre)

Adoptert?

Andre info:

(*Hvis informanten syns det er vanskelig å besvare spørsmål, gi en konkret situasjon: for eksempel til meg, til nye kollega på din først arbeidsdag, eller til ny medstudent på din først skoledag, eller i en privat selskap*.)

Hvordan vil du beskrive deg selv til noen som ikke kjenner deg, f. eks. meg?

2. **Tilhørighet**

   o ***Om informanten ikke sier noe om hvor han/hun er fra i spørsmål 1:***

   ➢ Hvis den personen (som ikke kjenner deg) vil spørre deg, "hvor er du fra?" hva vil du svare?

   ➢ Og hva vil du tro han mener eller antar når han stiller dette spørsmål?

   o ***Om informanten nevner han/hun er fra <u>en landsdel</u> i Norge:***

   ➢ Hvordan er denne informasjon viktig i din presentasjon?

   ➢ På hvilken måte syns du at du er knyttet til_____?

   ➢ Hvorfor vil du ikke oppgi den informasjonen at du er adoptert fra _____? Tror du at den personen vil forstå at du er adoptert etter du sier at du er fra _____?

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➢ Fins det andre anledninger der du kanskje vil oppgi informasjonen at du er adoptert fra _____? (Hvis JA), hva slags anledninger? Hvorfor det?

➢ Har du opplevde slik situasjon: etter du presenterte at du er fra …, sa noen, "Ahh, du er fra …. Jeg trodde du var fra utlandet?"

  -JA -> Skjedde det mange ganger, eller? Hva skjedde? (Hvordan skjedde det, kan du fortelle meg en episode som du husker godt?

  -NEI -> Om du treffer slik kommentar, hvordan vil du reagere?

  o ***Om informanten nevner han/hun er fra <u>sitt fødeland</u>:***

➢ Du sa at "du er fra _____" Er denne informasjonen viktig for deg? Hvordan det? (*Eller* syns du at det å informere om din bakgrunn som utenlandsadoptert er noe viktig for deg for å fortelle/definere hvem du er?)

➢ Hvorfor sa du ikke du er fra _____(der du vokste opp)?

➢ Er det bestandig du sier at du er fra _____? Fins det andre anledninger der du kanskje ikke vil oppgi denne informasjonen? For eksampel(hvis svar er JA)? Hvorfor er det slikt?

3. **Adopsjonsbakgrunn and dens betydning**

Hvor mye vet du om din adopsjonsbakgrunn? (biologisk foreldre, søsken eller slekter, barnehjem, hvor gammel var du når du ble adoptert til Norge, osv.)

Hvordan fikk du disse informasjon?

Er du interessert i å vite mer om den? Hva er det som du spesielt vil vite? Hvorfor er denne informasjon viktig for deg? (betydning av disse informasjon)

Opplever du at dine foreldre gjerne vil snakker med deg om din bakgrunn som adoptert? Husker du en episode av det at du og dine foreldre snakket sammen

om den? Hvordan kommet dere til dette tema? Hva spurt du, og hva de forteller deg, eller hvordan svart de på deg?

Dine venner eller medelever på skoler (kollega, medstudenter) sikkert vet at du er adoptert(?)

Hvordan fikk de vite det?

Har du noen ganger fått nysgjerrig spørsmål fra dem om din bakgrunn som er adoptert?

Hva spør de om?

Hva svarer du?

Hvordan syns du om disse spørsmål? (er det bare morsomt eller vanskelig?)

Har du noen ganger tatt initiativ å snakke med en av dine gode venner om din livshistorie som adoptert? Hvorfor gjorde du det? Hva fortalt du om? (Er det ofte du gjør det? Eller er det kun til dem alle beste venner (Venninner)?)

Hva med kjæresten (mannen, kona, samboeren) din? Er han/hun nysgjerrig om din bakgrunn som adoptert?

Husker du den først gangen dere snakket sammen om din bakgrunn som adoptert?

Hvordan kom dere til dette tema?

Hvordan forløp samtalen?

Og hva syns han/hun om denne bakgrunnen din?

Har du barn? Har de spurt deg om mamma eller pappas bakgrunn som adoptert? Hvordan forklarer du til ham/henne/dem? Hvordan reagerer han/hun/de på den?

Hvis du ser tilbake i oppveksten din, syns du at du har fått litt ekstra oppmerksomhet på grunn av din adopsjonsbakgrunn? Hva syns du om denne oppmerksomheten? (Ut av god vilje? Positive eller negativ? Nødvendig?

(Ekstra oppmerksomhet: mener jeg også det å bli forskjellig behandlet av voksne, for eksempel lærere, barnehagen tanter, sosiale arbeidere og foreldre til medelever osv.)

Hvordan ble denne oppmerksomheten uttrykket, kan du gi meg et eksempel?

Hvordan taklet/benyttet du den?

Har du (hadde du) kontakt med andre utenlandsadopterte? Hvordan vil du beskrive ditt forhold til dem sammenlignet med dine andre venner? (Er det noe spesielt i ditt forhold med dem?)

Har du en eller flere god(e) venn(er) som også er adoptert? Hva syns du som har gjort dere til å bli beste venner? (Er det fordi dere begge er adoptert eller noe annet?)

Syns du at det er viktig å holde kontakten med dem? Hvorfor er det (ikke) viktig?

4. **Phenotype**

Skjer det noen ganger at de som ikke kjenner deg oppfatter og behandler deg som innvandrer eller innvandrers barn?

–*JA.* -> Hvordan skjedde det? Kan du fortelle meg en episode?

➔ Hvordan opplevdes det?

➔ Oppfatter du det som en type diskriminering eller? (*relevant til spørsmål om diskriminering*)

- *Nei.* -> Tror du at de likevel skjønt at du er adoptert, selv om de ikke kjent deg?

-> Hva slags faktor, tror du, som gjorde dem skjønne at du er adoptert, eller du ikke er innvandrer eller barnet til innvandrere?

-> Hvis du det skjer at noen oppfatter og behandler deg som innvandrere eller ikke-norsk på grunn av ditt utenlandske utseende, hvordan vil du reagere?

Nå er det flere og flere adopterte som skriver om adopsjon eller uttrykker sine meninger i offentlig rom. De snakker åpent bl.a. om diskriminering mot utenlandskadopterte på grunnlag av hudfarge eller rase. Har du opplevd noe lignende?

Kan du forteller meg en episode? (hvordan handterte du på slik diskriminering eller plaging?)

Hva syns du om denne type diskriminering?

Har du noen innvandrere venner? (hvis nei) Kjenner du noen innvandrere?

Har du noen ganger følt en identifikasjon eller en nær relasjon med innvandrere, særlig med dem som er fra ditt fødeland? *(ja)-* Hva syns du som fører til at du føler slikt? (utseende, eller noe annet); *(nei)-* Hva føler du hvis du treffer en innvandre som er fra ditt fødeland? Hva vil du prate om med denne personen?

Det er for tiden mye debatt som pågår på TV, internett og aviser om innvandring mht til Valg 2009? Er du opptatt av dette tema når du skal stemme? Hva er din mening i denne debatt?

(Dette spørsmål er også relevant i kategorien 6. <u>Identiteten</u>)

Nå snakker det mye om etnisk mangfold på arbeidsplassen, særlig i offentlig sektor. F. eks. på opplysninger av ledig stillinger i offentlig sektor, fins det ofte en paragraf, der sies, ”*Den statlige (eller kommunal) arbeidsstyrken skal i størst mulig grad gjenspeile mangfoldet i befolkningen. Og vi oppfordrer kvalifiserte personer, uavhengig av etnisk bakgrunn eller personer med flerkulturell bakgrunn til å søke stillingen*”. Hvis du skal søke på slik jobb og når du leser her, tror du at det er noe relevant for deg? Hva syns du om denne rekrutteringspolitikken? (Nødvendig? Hjelper det med integrering? Fungere det i virkelighet?)

6.   **Identitet**

Leser du om litteratur om adopsjon eller utenlandskadopsjon? Hva syns du om denne litteraturen og identiteten til utenlandsadopert som beskrives i den? (Sætersdal & Dalen, Geir Follevåg, Ane Ramn…)

Det tales ofte at ungdomstiden er en krise tid for en ungdom å utvikle sin identitet. Og noen forskere påstår at det kan være enda vanskeligere for utenlandsadopterte ungdommer å gå gjennom denne identitetskrise på grunn av adopsjon. Hva tror du om det? Hvordan er det med deg?

Du er jo norsk, men samtidig ser du annerledes ut fra de flest nordmenn og du ikke er født i Norge. Eller på forskeres ord, du skiller deg ut. Har du noen ganger følt deg selv som ikke-norsk? (Eller har du noen ganger satt spørsmålstegn på din norske identitet?)

(ja) -> Under hvilke situasjoner?

➔ Hvordan opplever du din annerledeshet? (annerledeshet i utseende eller annerledeshet i adopsjonsbakgrunn, eller begge to)

➔ Hva betyr det for deg å være "norsk"?

(nei) -> Betyr det at du ikke oppfatter deg selv som annerledes, eller?

   -> Hva innbærer det å være "norsk"? Under hvilke situasjoner kommer denne norske identiteten sterkest hos deg?

Har du problemer med identiteten din som påstod av samfunnet og mange forskere? Eller syns du at samfunnet har mast for mye om deres identitet? Hva vil du si om dette?

5.   **Tilknytning til Fødeland og dets kultur (Se også punkt 2)**

Har du vært i ditt fødeland etter du var adoptert?

Om svaret er JA:

Hva er hensiktet til reisen?

Hvordan opplevde du fødelandet ditt og folk der?

- Når du gikk på gatene der, Hva følte du? (fremmed, eller hjemme følelse, eller begge deler?)

- Hva slags følelser hadde du når du traff folk and kommuniserte med dem?

- Har du blitt antatt som en vanlig (*koreansk, colombiansk, indisk … osv*.) av folk der (en av dem)?

- Hva føles det at du og de andre der har veldig lik utseende men har forskjellig språk og væremåte?

Er det en episode/eller person som du husker spesielt godt i fødelandet ditt?

Har denne reisen skapt noen betydning for deg? Hva er den?

Forandret du oppfatningen din om ditt fødeland etter denne reisen? Hvordan oppfattet du landet før og hvordan oppfatter du nå?

Vil du reise ditt igjen?

*Om svaret er **NEI**:*

Har du lyst til å besøke fødelandet? Tror du at denne reisen vil være viktig for deg? Vil det bety noe for deg?

Hva som interesserer deg best fra ditt fødeland? Hvorfor er du spesielt interessert i …?

Har du noe spesielt følelse i hjerte når du leser eller lære noe fra fødelandet ditt?

Hvordan vil du forklære denne følelsen?

7. **Litt Generell reflektering over utenlandsadopsjon**

Som jeg sa tidligere at det er nå flere adopterte som skriver om utenlandsadopsjon, ikke bare i Norge, men også i andre land i Europa og Nord-

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Amerika. Noen er sterkt imot utenlandsadopsjon, mens noen ikke. Hva mener du om det?

Har du noen ganger tenkt "livet kan kanskje ha vært lettere eller vanskeligere hvis jeg ikke ble adoptert?"

Har du noen ganger forestilt deg om hvordan livet kunne bli om du ikke ble adoptert?

(Som en voksen utenlandsadoptert, hvordan vil du beskrive den generelle holdning det norsk samfunn har til utenlandsadopsjon og adopterte?)

Hva slags budskap vil du formidle gjennom mitt prosjekt til de andre som er interessert i å vite mer om utenlandsadopterte?

Er det noe du syns jeg har glemt å spørre om? Eller noe du har tenkt å fortelle meg men jeg ikke har spurt om?

Tusen takk for din deltakelse!