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**The Adoption of Children from the Perspective
of Post-Modernity**

**Ireri Báez Chávez
PhD Student in Social Sciences
Autonomous Mexico State University
Mexico**

**Aristeo Santos López
Full-time Professor (Researcher from the National System of
Researchers, degree I)
Autonomous Mexico State University
Mexico**

**Karina Reyes Priciliano
PhD Student in Social Sciences
Autonomous Mexico State University
Mexico**

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Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209 Email: info@atiner.gr URL:
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The Adoption of Children from the Perspective of Post-Modernity

**Ileri Báez Chávez
Aristeo Santos López
Karina Reyes Priciliano**

Abstract

Among the new forms of family constitution in the world are those, there are those that choose to adopt children from their country or from abroad. A phenomenon that places human beings as merchandise. On one side there are identified exporting countries like China, or from Latin America, or those that suffer some misfortune, whether poverty, earthquake, flood or war; on the other side, there are the consumerist countries: the United States and Europe. Two polarized worlds that allow us to build multicultural families in a global world. The theoretical approach is situated in the understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of Postmodernity with authors such as Gilles Lipovetsky (2015), Mike Featherstone (1991), Baudrillard (2007), Ulrich Beck (1998) and Zygmunt Bauman (2005, 2013); the central categories that allow understanding of the phenomenon are Michel Foucault's (1967) *disciplinary power* and *heterotopia* of and Marc Augé's *No place* (2008). From reviewing cases of adoption in Mexico, ranging from *posmortem adoption* to the *adoption of hiper-spectacle*, from an ethnographic methodology, derived from postmodern anthropology (Clifford Geertz, 1973, J. Clifford, 1991), the autoethnography (Versiani, 2002) allows the rescue of the voice of the adoptive parents, as dialogic, relational and a multi-referential model (Ardoino, 1988) that describes the self experience and from other adoptive parents to bring back the construction of subjectivities of minority subjects who have experienced the adoption process. The research, as an advance of a doctoral thesis, offers elements to reflect on the essence of the human being when families are built by adoption: diverse, global, multicultural. When a minor is adopted it is worth asking if he they are seen a merchandise or if his human dignity is respected when they are taken into a new family.

Keywords: Adoption of Minors, Postmodernity, Autoethnography, Heterotopy, No place.

Introduction

The adoption of minors in Mexico is regulated by the National System for the Integral Development of the Family (SNDIF), an institution that since 1977 has focused on developing the welfare of Mexican families; although currently there are recognized both national and international adoption modalities, there is legal heterogeneity at national level, with almost 32 different criteria to adopt in Mexico and an absence of a national register of adoptions.

This situation has impacted the creation of families through adoption, where the *standards of the traditional family* were ruled by the laws for adoption, do not meet the new constructions of families; regard this problem and from an ethnographic perspective, we reflect on the role of SNDIF as a regulatory institution of the process and we present preliminary findings in which adoptive parents speak up through interviews, observations and field diaries as epistemic instruments that allow us to bring forth the sense that adoption has for each of them.

The experiences of the adopters are taken into the research through metaphors, as epistemic resource that confronts reality with known realities in other contexts; the first has to do with the justification of the research: the cases of *Angela and Aurora*.

Angela and Aurora. Where the human is not to be born, the human is the burial

Aurora is the character of the Chilean film of the same name (2014), which as a baby is found dead in a landfill¹. When, Sophia -a teacher who is in the process of adoption- finds this out, she obsessed with waging a legal battle to adopt her and then be able to give her a name and bury her, thus restoring the dignity of human being for her.

Aurora, is based on the true story of Bernarda Gallardo, a Chilean sociologist, who inspired Rodrigo Sepúlveda for the film; Bernarda is the first and only Chilean to claim the adoption of a guagua² found dead, a bold act that she has done four times in the last 12 years and has striven for "anonymous birth" and "windows of life"³, two ways to prevent infanticide that Chile is not implementing.

¹ Garbage dump

² In the Andean countries, this term refers to a newborn or toddler

³ They are also known as mailbox babies, that are boxes placed in hospitals, community centers and, in time, in churches. They are located on an outside wall of the building, and consist of soft beds, which can be closed to isolate the babies from the cold. Some have blankets made with technology that allows them to stay warm for 24 hours a day. When a child is left in one of the boxes, people from the care center are alerted to immediately go seek them and to give them the necessary attention. From: <http://www.eldefinido.cl/actualidad/pais/4406/Parto-anonimo-y-Ventanas-de-vida-Dos-formas-de-prevenir-infanticidios-que-Chile-no-esta-aplicando/>

Angela is the case of a minor found dead in a suitcase on March 3, 2015 in Mexico City; with signs of violence, a toddler of approximately 18 months old and of unknown origin. Ángela was the name that the coroners assigned to the minor who was sponsored by the president of the Superior Court of Justice of the Federal District, and demanded that her body stayed as long as necessary to find someone who could identify her. Not being so, she was buried on April 25, 2016. In order to prevent her body from ending up in the mass grave, she was assigned a place in the Memorial Park cemetery of Naucalpan de Juárez. "Angela has been very lonely and we have tried to provide her with a posthumous shelter, which she may not have had in her life," those were the words of Edgar Elias Azar. President of the Court⁴.

Recognizing that cases such as those of Angela and Aurora have been real and are only two examples of the vulnerability of unprotected childhood, justify this research; the birth of a human being, deserves family and social attention, but when this does not happen, when humans are thrown into the sewers and are literally considered a social waste, an option to find a place in society and recover the dignity of human beings, is the adoption so that they can be integrated into a family. Looking at this possibility entails the review and the analysis of "The right to be born" in postmodern times.

Context

The SNDIF, as an institution responsible of regulating the adoption process and for whom adoption is considered as "a legal figure through which the bond of a child with his biological family is ended to be transferred to the adoptive family that watches over their well-being"⁵, also, adoption is an instrument that always seeks the best interests of the minor, ie, the satisfaction of the needs of a girl, boy or teenager, and the full exercise of their rights.

In Mexico, there are two types of adoption recognized: *international adoption*, when a child habitually residing within their country of origin is moved to another host country, and *domestic adoption*, which does not involve the removal of the child to a different country. The first is ruled by the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry adoption⁶, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Inter-American Convention on conflict of laws concerning the adoption of Children, held in the city of Paz, Bolivia on May 24, 1984⁷ and the American Convention

⁴ These articles describe the event: <http://www.emol.com/noticias/Tendencias/2016/04/26/799851/Angela-la-nina-de-la-maleta-que-entristece-a-los-mexicanos.html>, http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2016/04/160425_angela_nina_maleta_mexico_morgue_an, <http://www.debate.com.mx/mexico/Piden-en-la-Catedral-por-Angela-la-nina-de-la-maleta-20160501-0070.html> Retrieved May 3, 2016.

⁵ <http://sitios.dif.gob.mx> . Retrieved May 5, 2016.

⁶ Instrument of International Law adopted in The Hague, Netherlands, on May 29, 1993, published in the Official Journal of the Federation of October 24, 1994, known as the Hague Convention.

⁷ Official Journal of the Federation of August 21, 1987.

on Human Rights "Pact of San José, Costa Rica. The National Adoption is ruled by the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, the Social Assistance Act and the General Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents, but in each state, laws and codes change according to State legislation.

National and international legislations are a product of history, so knowing the stages historically recognized internationally favor the understanding of the phenomenon today.

Stages of Child Adoption: from the Salvific Myth to the Minors International Business

The meaning of adoption has changed throughout history, and has gone from the function of maintaining an inheritance in classical antiquity, to focusing on the satisfaction of the wishes of the adopters of postmodern society, this transition is appreciated clearly in Burgaleta's (2010) study of new maternity homes in Spain, which shows three stages of adoption.

Premodern Adoption appears in the mythology of most ancient cultures⁸, following an archetypical pattern in which adoption is an essential element. Children of important parents who are abandoned for their safety in a river, forest or spot, to be found by a humble family or a wild animal, who takes care of them and helps them grow, until they become heroes, taking revenge and deciding to take their place. The examples are Sargon, founder of Babylon; Moses, in Hebrew culture; Cyrus, in the Persian culture; Perseus and Oedipus in the Greek culture, or in the legend of Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome.

In Greece, despite recognizing adoption in mythology, it was not recognized in its legislation, since it was only an Athenian who was a biological child. The fact is explained within consanguinity as a key element in the Greek way of thinking. Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* defines children as assets of the couple, "the blood of their blood" and together they form a family, the first link of the good society. Therefore, in the Aristotelian view, there is only affiliation if there is a blood relationship, denying any possibility for regulating adoption.⁹

For the Romans, on the other hand, just like the Greeks, based society on the family, the consanguinity does not have a role as determinant as law. In Rome, having biological or adoptive descendants conferred privileges to the Roman citizens. Thus, the Roman law¹⁰ has two formulas for adoption:

⁸ Some recognize that adoption has its origins in India, apparently the Hebrews learnt it from there, then they migrated to Egypt, where it later spread to Greece and finally to Rome.

⁹ We must also consider that, among the Greeks, parental authority was subordinate to the city, so that children belonged to the city. (Pérez Tejada, 2011)

¹⁰ A legal precedent appears in the Babylonian Hammurabi Code of 2285 to 2242 a. C, with regulation in a religious and legal sense, however, the Romans systematized and gave it importance, so adoption is considered of Roman origin ". (Pérez Tejada, 2011: 6)

adoption and *arrogatio*. Roman law includes the possibility that a citizen joins the family of another and submits himself to *parental authority*. This process called *adoptio* (adoption), require the consent of both the adoptive family father (*pater familias*) as the adoptee. The legal form of this family will be named *in jure cesio* (cession right). The second form of adoption is the *arrogatio* (arrogation), which will offer a family and descendants who are deprived of it. Women could not be arrogated nor adopt, as the basis of decision under any of the forms was based on the figure of the *pater familias*.

During the Middle Ages, adoption disappears, believing that children from extramarital affairs are the product of sin. In the case of orphans, they should be accepted by their closest relatives. It is up to the fifteenth century, when the first Catholic hospices emerge, based on charity, though the Germanic peoples had already introduced the idea of *perfilio*¹¹, like the Roman adoption ceremony, which will be pursued by the church to be a practical recognition of an *extra matrimonium* filiation (Otero, 2005, quoted by Burgaleta, 2010).

Although there were children's hospitals-hospices where abandoned children were cared for, as the *College of orphans* created by St. Vincent Ferrer in 1410 or the *Overe des enfants trouvés* founded by St. Vincent de Paul in 1638, is up to 1804 when it was regulated the figure of adoption in the French Civil Code (Russo, 1995, quoted by Burgaleta, 2010).

Adoption in modernity emerges with the first adoption laws appearing in the United States, being the State of Massachusetts in 1851, the first to enact a law to protect the interests of children¹². With this regulation, emerged an aspect that will mark the adoption until today: *the secret of the origin*. Two years later, the organization *Children's Aid Society* of New York, began to encourage the adoption of abandoned children and later in 1907, upper class women from Boston, launched a *campaign to rescue children*, giving rise to the foundation of homes to save abandoned children, later between 1920 and 1935, the organizations of children of the United States began to promote the adoption. In Britain, the adoption was legalized in 1926 through *English Adoption Law*, where unmarried women were forbidden to adopt children and by the time when children begin to be revalued, the requirements for adoption became stricter.

Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's it was set up a model of adoption that is now known as *traditional adoption*, whose aim is comparable to current assisted reproductive technology (ART), ie, providing offspring to those who do not could generate it by their own means. With adoption, it was intended to create the "fiction of a new birth" especially for infertile couples (Adroher and Berástegui, 2000, cited by Burgaleta, 2010).

The third stage corresponds to the **adoption in postmodernity**. After World War II the concept of the *adoptable child* began to be redefined. Adoptive parents are no longer obsessed with concealment and the public institutions

¹¹ Introduction into the genealogy

¹² This legislation was the result of a common practice since the seventeenth century, which was intended to move orphaned children, mainly boys from England, to work in the southern United States as apprentices in settler families.

became more flexible. The increasing age of adoption and the racial variety, added the possibility of adopting children with physical or psychological deficiencies, so that the spectrum of adoptability was progressively made more flexible.

Between 1946 and 1970 the adoption market in most Western countries worked relatively well. More than two million children were adopted through agencies. Although adoption records were still involved in secrecy, adoption itself was a public phenomenon, widely accepted as an ideal way to match homeless children with demanding households. But the decriminalization of abortion and the commercialization of contraceptives in the 1960s and 1970s unbalanced the equilibrium of supply and demand.

Between 1970 and 1975, the number of independent adoptions in the United States decreased dramatically, from 89,000 a year to only 50,000 (Spar, 2006: 173). For the first time after World War II the supply of available children, particularly of white and healthy babies, could not meet the persistent demand. Parents are beginning to look for new sources of supply in other countries. The first international adoptions are made by Americans who adopt orphans of the wars¹³, which broke with the traditional model of adoption, based on three circumstances:

- a) Existence of children in conditions of need,
- b) Adoptions of children of other ethnicities and of legal age, and
- c) The appearance of partnerships and campaigns for adoption that made it possible to create specialized institutions.

In Europe, international adoption begins later. In the 1970s in Sweden, couples began to independently adopt Korean children. In the UK in 1979, there are regulated adoptions through the *Adoption Assistance Act*, which requires the existence of intermediaries in all proceedings (Vallverdú, 2004). New legislation begins to occur on adoption to reach the international level in the 80s and 90s. On 25 October 1980, the first international agreement on the protection of minors was signed, the *Convention of the Hague on the Civil Aspects of international child Abduction*.

The next big wave of international adoptions begins in the 1990s, with the fall of the Berlin wall, opening the market for Romania and Russia. In 1991, China amended laws prohibiting adoption to foreigners, and in 1992, Russia established a specialized agency. In the 90s two Conventions on adoptions were signed in Hague: *the Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation on international adoption* in 1993, and *the Convention on*

¹³ German, Greek and orphaned survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were adopted. After the Korean War (1950- 1953) occurred the first major wave of international adoption of interracial character. Social discrimination and systematic neglect of the children of a Korean mother and American soldiers (especially black) led this first offer. Ten years later, a similar situation promoted the adoption of Vietnamese children, and it is estimated that between 1953 and 1962 the number of children of foreign origin, adopted in the United States, exceeded 15,000 (CARP, 1998: 34, quoted by Burgaleta, 2010).

jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition, enforcement and cooperation on parental responsibility and measures to protect children in 1996.

In 1999, about 80 agencies in the United States were engaged in adoptions from Russia, China, Vietnam, Guatemala and Peru, and offered a wide range of countries where prospective parents could choose. In 2003, more than 42,000 children were adopted internationally worldwide (Spar, 2006: 175). Although it may seem that the supply and demand are matched, the adoption market is unbalanced and the exchange is not clear, neither of the sides is identified as a *buyer or supplier*, and prices become *fees and donations*. In postmodernity, adoption of minors becomes a process subject to the laws of the free market, and children in the process of adoption in consumerism objects.

Families by Adoption in Postmodernity

The global consequences of new forms of life are reflected in the configuration of new families like the **families by adoption**. This way of constitution responds to changes related to new conceptions of family roles, where: the number of members of the family group has declined, women are incorporated into economic life and their desire for personal development is increasing, before having children. In addition, the rhythm of life, stress and the desire for a better economic situation increases, causing a decrease in fertility in couples and, while looking for a solution, they find adoption as a means of making a family (Brena, 2005).

The transformations respond to a society with high levels of poverty and lack of sex education, generating unexpected pregnancies and, consequently, situations of risk and violence for the children, producing an increase of the abandoned child population in orphanages and institutions of assistance, both public and private. The figure that responded to child abandonment was the **adoption**, recognized as a *contract*, whose main interest was in the adoptive parents, as a way to compensate them their right, because they were infertile. This contract eventually required legal authorization to sign it, turning it from a *private act* to be a *public act or institution*.

Related Studies

The studies on adoption of minors have been integrated into the following blocks:

- a) Anthropological studies (Inhorn, 1994; Castañeda Jiménez, 2005; Cardaci and Sánchez Bringas, 2007) suggesting infertility as an embarrassing condition: this explains why significations are determined by the representations and social practices given by the social value that having a biological child confers (Castañeda Jiménez, 2005).

- b) Biomedical studies placed as an alternative to adopting possibility of *Assisted Reproduction Techniques (ART)*¹⁴, which are divided in *low complexity* (timed intercourse and Artificial Insemination) and *high complexity* (IVF, Egg Donation, intracytoplasmic sperm injection and Intratubular gametes transfer). The ART have affected cultural and legal forms of conjugal relationship and kinship, calling into question categories such as *maternity, paternity and filiation*. This type of study, according to Cardaci and Sánchez (2009), has followed a juridical and sociocultural approach, reinforcing traditional stereotypes of marriage, family, motherhood and heterosexual paternity. On the other hand, they question the status of the embryo, origin of life, genetic manipulation, and maternity surrogated oocyte donation¹⁵.
- c) Psychological studies. They review identity issues suffered by the person conceived and gestated through the ART (Editorial *Fem*, 1986; Sommer, 1993; Tubert, 1993). For "to have been generated through the sexual relationship between a man and a woman is (or has been up to the present) constitutive for the mind, through oedipal elaboration" (Blank Cerejeido, 1999: 261). They analyze the therapeutic process that accompanies the procedure and the role of psychologists and social workers as subjects responsible for deciding the viability of adopter.
- d) Legal studies. They address the right to continue or not a pregnancy (González, 2001), Lamas (2001) Cardaci, (2004), (Brena Sesma, 2005), post mortem fertilization, legal process to adopt, civil codes (Torreblanca Senties, 2000; Guzmán Ávalos, 2001a) and the legislations about minor custody. The main disagreements emerge when accepting or prohibiting social behaviors and non-traditional moral concepts related to the beginning of human life, the heterosexual conjugal relationship and the biological substratum of motherhood, fatherhood and filiation.
- e) Sociological studies. Latin American authors (Blank Cerejeido, 1999; Editorial *Fem*, 1986; Sommer, 1993; Tubert, 1993) reflect on the scenarios and challenges generated using complex ART. Echoing different arguments from psychoanalysis, anthropology and feminism, they emphasize that kinship is not a reflection of a supposedly *natural* essence but has a social character.
- f) Historical studies. They give an account of what has meant to be a man and be a *father* (Laqueur, 1992); the redefinition of the *maternal and paternal functions* (Editorial *Fem*, 1986; Blank Cerejeido, 1999; Tubert,

¹⁴ A couple that has infertility problems is the one that fails to get pregnant after a year of having sex on a regular basis without using birth control, in the case of couples under age 35; while older couples at that age, the considered time is 6 months. For further information see <http://www.altonivel.com.mx/33424-abc-de-la-infertilidad-en-mexico.html>

¹⁵ About the position of the Catholic Church see (Zuffa, 1991); on protection of the embryo and surrogated maternity (Ferrajoli, 2006); about heterologous fertilization (Gargallo, 1993), and on heterologous insemination (Karchmer, 1997, Martínez Romero, 2002; Moctezuma Barragan, 1998)

1993); and the regaining of women's power, in real or symbolic terms, on the reproduction of the species (Huffschmidt, 1993).

The study of the adoption of minors is Sociological and is placed in the Postmodernity, not as a historical stage, but a state of thinking. The positions involved in the theoretical discussion to understand the object under study are Mike Featherstone (1991) who refers to *postmodernism* as a culture without depth, liquefaction of signs and images and openness to the irony, intertextuality and paradoxes; Gilles Lipovetsky (2015), who recognized this stage as *hypermodernity*, and describes it as the beautification of the world, the era of the global expansion of the market economy; (Between them, the position of Baudillard (2007) appear, who refers to the *hyperreality*), Zygmunt Bauman (2005, 2013) with his *liquid modernity*, Ulrich Beck (1998) with the *second modernity* and *reflexive modernity* and Marc Augé (2008) with his notion of *no place*.

The theoretical interest lies in understanding and explaining the phenomenon from the perspective of adopters to identify the meaning and human value of those who have become parents through adoption. To bring forth the voice and experience of the adoptive parents as an object of study is theoretical importance, since it allows to explain the *notion of family, expectations of motherhood, parenting, education in the adoptee and experiences during the adoption process*, as shafts that guide the interviews with the adoptive parents and that will offer elements to understand their experiences as viewed from postmodernity.

When entering the way of life of the consumerist capitalism, industrialization or high modernity, we are talking about postmodernity, this implies looking through new cognitive frameworks that emphasize disorder, ambiguity and difference (Featherstone, 1991). The postmodern comes as a rupture and denial of the modern, order, progress and rationalization. Postmodernism is a movement towards post-industrial age and involves new forms of technology and information, blurring the discrimination between the real and the apparent¹⁶. Hypermodernity (Gilles Lipovetsky, 2015) refers to the *beautification of the world*, denoted by Burgaleta as the consumerist society, and in Lipovetsky it appears as *hyper-consumerism capitalism*. Hypermodernity is the time of artistic capitalism or transesthetic creative, which is marked by the relationship between economy and aesthetics.

Featherstone (1991), in identifying traits or characteristics of the postmodern, invites to review the changes that arise in the contemporary

¹⁶ Featherstone (1991) points out the following related terms:

Modernization. "Modern-Nation-State", alludes to the capitalist market, to the urbanization. There is a modern identity focused on self-development.

Postmodernization. It implies a new social order and epochal change. Zukin (1998a) talks about restructuring socio-spatial relations.

Modernism. Artistic movements (Kafka, Eliot, Lorca, Picasso), expressionist, Dadaist and Surrealist as expressions of self-consciousness and aesthetic reflexivity.

Postmodernism. Term used by Federico de Onis in 1930 to refer to a minor reaction to modernism.

culture, which are appreciated in artistic, intellectual and academic fields; the changes in the cultural sphere affect the production methods, consumption and circulation of symbolic goods; there are changes in practices and everyday experiences in different groups, and the culture of Western societies is undergoing transformations in terms of inter-societal, intra-societal and global processes.

These social changes marked by a consumer culture, reveal postmodern economic cities like hyperrealities¹⁷, where "The hyperrealistic is now reality itself" (Baudillard¹⁸, 1983rd: p. 122). A world in which the accumulation of signs, images and simulacra, leads thanks to consumerism and television, an unstable and aesthetic hallucination of reality.

In the position of Bauman (2003), postmodernism can be considered the time of global expansion of the market economy, which he calls *liquid modernity*. It is the era of decommissioning, software capitalism and light modernity, whose obsession is to reduce, instantaneity (to annul the resistance of space and liquefy the materiality of objects.) For Bauman, the present stage is post-panoptic, since the end of the panopticon foretells the end of the era of mutual decommitment between the supervisors and the supervised. The current metaphor in Bauman's view is fluidity as the quality of liquids and gases, where fluids are not fixed to space and are not tied to time.

With Gilles Lipovetsky (2015), under his aesthetic view of the world, there is this period of global expansion of the market economy, production, distribution and consumption, which permeate the aestheticization of the economy. Aesthetics, in close relation with the economy, gives way to artistic capitalism or hyper-consumption, as a place of symbolic production and creator of a social imaginary.

Hypermodernity is the context of the hyper-spectacle society whose axes are a society of everything- screen, a deregulated and desynchronized consumption, hybrid, where hyper-sensational, three-dimensional and virtual is present. It is the way of life of super-competence and the stellarization of all activities.

Within this postmodern environment, the perspective of Michel Foucault emerges with two categories *Power* and *Heterotopia*. The first one explains the relationships among institutions (shelter, family), the agents involved in adoption (social worker, psychologist, doctor, lawyer) and their impact on the protagonists of the process: adoptees and adopters.

The second category comes from the explanation that Michel Foucault has regarding the relations of time and space, what he calls *Heterotopology*. To explain the space, he refers to the *time of space* conceived as the spaces there can show the games of power among words things and subjects. This space is

¹⁷ Baudillard called this phenomenon as hyperreality, a world in which the accumulation of signs, images and simulacra entails an unstable aesthetizer hallucination and reality, thanks to consumerism and television (Featherstone, 1991).

¹⁸ Jean Baudillard (2007) develops a theory of "commodity-sign", believing that the merchandise has become a sign whose meaning is determined by its position in a self-referential set of signifiers. (consumption not as use value but as consumption of signs).

constituted thanks to the relations of power, as the effective configuration of power.

Regarding the first category, Foucault, through his studies on the penal system, could identify the forms in which power is exercised, and found in this system the most manifest mode of power. "Prison is the only place where power can manifest itself bare in its most excessive dimensions and be justified as a moral power." What he found about power in his studies is now revealing to address the implicit or explicit power in the adoption of minors and in those who take part in it.

Just as Foucault found that in prisons power is neither concealed nor masked, which in turn is entirely "justified", he also recognized the domination of good over evil and order over disorder, elements that invite us to ask: Which ones is the "justified" power that is exercised in the adoption of minors? Who decides if the minor is fit to adopt? Who and how decides the suitability of adopters? Who and how decides that a child has their parental authority legally set in favor of the DIF? Who and how decides the election of such a child for such a family? These questions are permeated by exercises of power.

Power is not something divided among those who possess it. Power has to be analyzed as something that circulates or rather, as something that does not work but in a chain: "it is never located here or there, it is never in the hands of some, it is not an attribute like wealth or good. Power works, it is exercised through a reticular organization. Power transits transversally, it is not quiet in individuals". (Foucault, 1979: 144)

The second transversal category by Michel Foucault (1967) is the *heterotopology*, where the space for adoption is situated, so that what Foucault recognizes as *utopia*, the perfected society, the traditional family model. In contrast, the *heterotopy* appears as the spaces outside all places, although localized, these are the real places against emplacements. Foucault identifies two types of heterotopy, the *heterotopia* of deviation and *in crisis*, the latter being privileged places, sacred or forbidden, while *deviation heterotopies* are spaces where the individuals deviated from the mean or required standard are located.

In turn, deviation heterotopies can take a non-eternalizing, but a chronic way. In this research, the orphanage is considered a **chronic deviation heterotopy**. The orphanage is a *non-space*¹⁹ that is there, even legitimized by society, but it is actually a space outside society: the individuals with the possibility of adoption are there temporarily, and in the meanwhile, they have no place in society and, in many cases, they lack the identity given by a name. They are stigmatized individuals waiting for a place in society.

One way to explain the transition from **chronic deviation heterotopy** in the **society of hypermodernity** is through a process of consumerism, commercial, where the subject of adoption and potential adopters reproduce the model of selling a consumer product.

¹⁹ Category that Marc Augé takes from Foucault to raise his notion of "no place" and that explains the experiences of adoptive parents regarding the time that adopted children remain in the orphanage as a transit to his new family.

Based on the background, related studies and theoretical review about the adoption of children, the phenomenon is explained in postmodernity by the following categories of adoption, which I think, give an account of the most human act (adoption of dead babies, **post mortem adoption**) to the most superfluous and selfish (the **hyper-spectacle adoption**), where each adopter, when choosing the type of adoption and the conditions to accept a child, bring into play not only the desire to be father or mother, but even their vision of life and their degree of humanity; then it makes sense ask themselves: Adopting? What for? Where each type of adoption has a different response. This is how postmodernity looks like, diverse, where there is not just one type of adoption, but adoptions²⁰.

Methodology

The methodological approach of this study is relational and multi-referential²¹, from an anthropological view, is transiting ethnography, autoethnography and orality, for the construction of instruments as epistemic elements and based on the *theoretical categories*, product of the theoretical description elected: within the *empirical categories*, derived from the explanation resulting from the empirical data, and the *analytical categories* designed for data interpretation, we obtain the elements to elaborate an epistemic construct, as proposed in this research.

Anthropological Look

The Anthropological look in the research involves a systematic methodological approach in three stages: *defining the object*, *the object delimitation and contextualization of the object*.

The epistemic elements used have their starting point the object of study of this research: *the adoption of children*, where the *matrix concept* becomes a central axis to establish the categories network from which the theoretical categories of the research derive.

The instruments used are epistemic elements that put into play the theoretical categories network by integrating their design, retrieving the

²⁰ According to Featherstone (1991), when referring to poly-culturalism he notes that "today there is fashion, there are only fashions". Thus, I think that in post-modern times there is no adoption, there are adoptions.

²¹ The multi-referentiality should not be confused with multidimensionality or multifactoriality; the last two words (Ardoino 1988), preserve homogeneity. So, the methodological approach is in the "science comprehension" or as Ardoino says, "Science implication", recalling the etymology of the Latin term PLICAKE = to fold. "That unfolds, inflates, exposes throughout, is brought into view, in view of the transparency and work decomposition, reduction of simpler elements through analysis, and which necessarily remains bended". The relational methodological procedure then involves three stages: Construction (the given), Deconstruction (analysis) and Reconstruction (Synthesis).

empirical categories, which interact with the analytical categories used at the time of interpretation and analysis.

Ethnography and Autoethnography

Following the anthropological perspective proposed by Malinowski, we respected the regular use of scientific terminology for **ethnography**, intended "for empirical and descriptive results of the science of man" (Malinowski, 1975, p 26). Since the research collects empirical data from the adopters, ethnography opens the possibility to describe the reality of the microcosm.

For Geertz (1973), ethnography is not a question of methods, what defines it is not the application of techniques and procedures²², "is a kind of intellectual effort: a speculation made in terms of "thick description"²³. Ethnography is what has been used in this work to also recognize that studies derived from ethnography are no longer limited exclusively to anthropology and as André (2005) refers, it has advanced to other areas of the Social sciences such as Health, Psychology and Education.

Geertz (1973) points out that the analysis is to unravel the structures of meaning, "what Ryle called established codes." Thick description is facing the ethnographer a "multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of which are superimposed or intertwined with each other, structures that are at once strange, irregular, not explicit, and which the ethnographer must devise to grasp them first and explain later" (p. 24). This *thick description*, is the recovering of the adoptive parents, where from an interview script, or observation, we have been careful to observe minutely the value and meaning that respondents give their experience on adoption and realize their concept of *adoption or family for adoption* from reality.

Ethnographic position was considered appropriate to the object under study is called *postmodern ethnography*²⁴, whose origins date back to the eighties with the written publication *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Clifford (1986), where the personal experience and inter-subjectivity established between ethnographer and ethnographed, as a construct from ethnography itself, in a dialogical and polyphonic sense, as allegory meeting subjectivity of different recognized cultures and where the concept

²² How to establish relationships, selecting informants, transcribing texts, genealogies, map, maps of the area, journaling, etc.

²³ Geertz goes to the concept of Gilbert Ryle, when referring to the thick description, ie "thinking and reflecting" and "thinking thoughts".

²⁴ One of the topics of postmodern anthropological practice is viewed from the angle of writing ethnography, finding three lines of work:

1. Meta ethnography or meta anthropology, by James Clifford, Fischer, Clifford Geertz and Paul Rabinow, who has tried to place the discussion no longer around texts, but around the institutions that promote writing, making an anthropology from the anthropology
2. Experimental ethnography, by Crapanzano, Paul Rabinow. called dialogue ethnography, based on the dialogue between the ethnographer and ethnographed. In the dialogue ethnography, the monologue is dominant, the dialogue as a dynamic and postmodern process. Stephen Tyler, refers to it as dialogical, polyphonic, using heteroglossy.
3. Postmodern Vanguard. represented by Stephen Tyler and Michel Taussing.

of *autoethnography* appears as a starting point for reading autobiographical texts gathered in a collective identity (Versiani, 2002). In the context of postmodern ethnography, the **autoethnography** is a methodological alternative autobiographical discourse attributed to a political value, visibility of subjectivities associated with minority groups; it is presented as the construction of marginal subjectivity.

Versiani (2002) recognizes as an antecedent of this methodological proposal, the essay *Toward and Metaphysics of autobiography*, Julia Watson (1993), who proposes a break of metaphysical, univocal and stable illusionist mode from the autobiography eighteenth century concept and seeks to transfer the criticism of construction of the subject, establishing an alternative model of autobiography built as dialogic model. So, autoethnography is presented as the construction of anti-metaphysical subjectivities.

The autoethnography concept is productive for reading subjects/authors who reflect their own social, historical and identity integration, especially subjectivities linked to minority groups, whose aim is to conquer political visibility. This option is recovered in research to give voice to the adoptive parents in relation to other subjects involved in the adoption process.

In this possibility, the narrative strategies as metaphor, not temporary lines, abysmal constructions, collage and labyrinthic texts are possibilities of expression. In the case of this research, we used the *metaphor* to give an account of autoethnography.

Orality

Oral language waits to speak, to be written by someone who also knows what it says²⁵. "The word instituted in place of the other and intended to be understood in a different way from he that speaks" is how De Certeau (1985) explains the operation of the word writing societies. Writing becomes a figure of modernity and acquires an epistemological relevance, because it becomes an instrument of double work, on the one hand the relationship of the man who says and another man he plays.

In this effort to recognize the other, it implies to recognize them *as another*, in their nature, to identify their culture as ordering and once achieved it, to think about the subject in relation to a multitude of objects that give meaning to their way of life. The risk of wanting to see the other as an equal is to eliminate their otherness, wanting to see the familiar, what is ours, which is legitimated by the way of seeing life interpreter. That is the great challenge of orality, to give voice to the other in their own context, where as De Certeau (1985, p. 222) says that "the other is the extension, where the understanding distinguishes its objects".

But the voice becomes a word, and it is desirable is that voice is an *erotized word*²⁶, in which the erotization of voice, Certeau says, (1985) shows

²⁵ And also hopes to become writing, then making history. (Writing makes history, because it is an archive).

²⁶ According to De Certeau, 1985, understood as life - giving word

that the figure of the other, again another form, slipping through the margins of a known knowledge. During recovery of the voice of the other, via the orality, it is necessary to avoid it *in audito*, what Certeau (1985) referred to as "thief text" what is stolen, *what is heard, but not understood* and therefore it is taken, the act of speaking without knowing.

Tools and Techniques as Epistemic Elements

The instruments used to retrieve empirical data were the *interview, participant observation and field diary*, the cases considered to be observed and/or interviewed met the following conditions:

Applicants (Adoptive Parents).				
They were not accepted or have been rejected. (Non viable)	In initial stages. (Viable)	They have given up during the process.	They have completed the adoption process	
			(1 to 3 years ago)	(Over five years)

The Interview

We proceeded to design the interview script, as *logic of deconstructive argument* in three stages. The first, descriptive, which was based on a central question regarding the subject of investigation: *how do I build?* and identify a matrix concept²⁷, then to establish a category network, from theoretical categories (*Postmodernism, Heterotopy, no place, disciplinary power*). Secondly, to get the empirical data to explain the microcosm of the interviewee through empirical categories (*notion of family, foster child, maternity and paternity, education of the adoptee and experiences and standards through the adoption process*). Thirdly, through analytical categories (linked to a metaphor²⁸ it explains the process of making minor in relation to purification process following the sewage to become purified water: *Collection, chlorination, flocculation, sedimentation, dam sludge and filtration*), to end up at the interpretation of empirical data previously collected, and proceed to argue what was found in a text²⁹.

²⁷ Adoption of minors.

²⁸ The metaphor is "from the cloacal fluid to luxury that quenches thirst" and explains the transition of children who are deprived of parents and thrown into social drainage, to reach and even to become luxury items desired for infertile families or desiring parenting for various reasons.

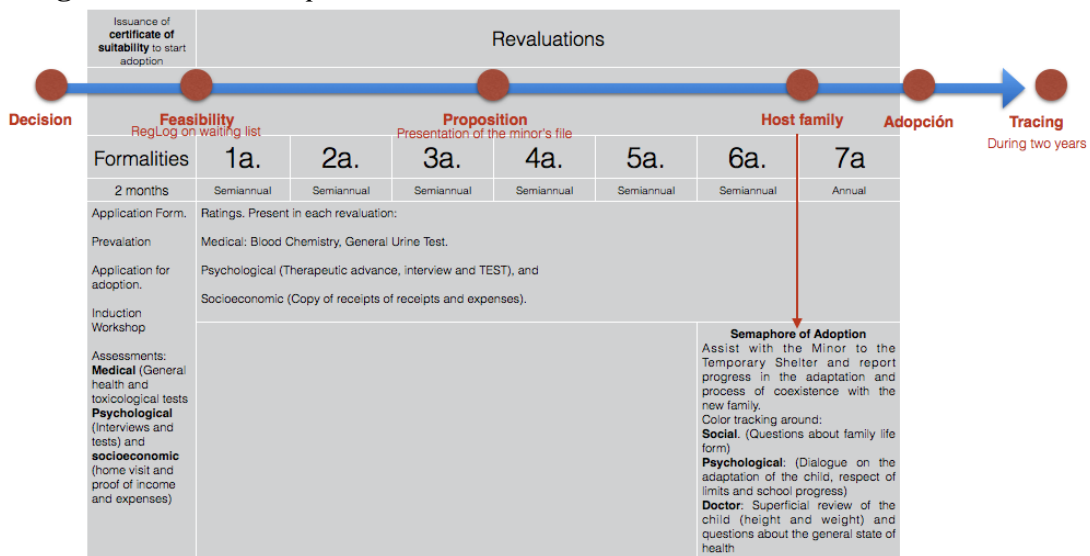
²⁹ Text understood as a system of meanings that is not exhausted by the word.

Participant Observation

In the words of Malinowski (1975), "The behavior is a fact", so that both the observations made directly during the process and those that accompany and complement the interviews, are brought back in the research to understand better and accurately the data surrounding the phenomenon of child adoption. The details and tone of behavior become important facts relevant to the understanding of what is said³⁰.

Observations began on January 28, 2013, with the presentation of the researcher with the Department of Assessments and Studies Biopsychosocial Adoption and Family Support in the DIF, State of Mexico. From there, the conditions under which the observations were made were: as an adapter, and therefore direct participant in the adoption process; then the process became a diary field, to support this research and as shown in figure 1, the transit point for adoption of a child begins with a personal decision or partner, which stages from feasibility, proposal, foster family, adoption and post-adoption follow-up, making the process a long, bureaucratic and complex task.

Figure 1. *How to adopt in Mexico State*



Field Diary

Another research resource was a field diary, where experiences are transformed into narratives (Clifford, 1991). The texts are transformed into evidence of an enveloping context of a cultural reality, the reality of the adoption of which is to give an account. The field diary was an anthropological information retrieval tool. In it the events and daily activities were recorded researcher developed. It is the space where the reflections of the researcher

³⁰ Idea that confirms the position of Geertz (1973), saying that human behavior is seen as a symbolic action. (p. 24).

noted, trying to be as objective as possible and managing to establish a distance from the object of study.

The personal experience in the adoption process was documented from the beginning in a documentary record and retrieves the experience around:

- Moments that are transited during the adoption process.
- Literature review.
- Review and analysis of films for adoptive parents and adopted children.
- Children's Stories.
- Experience in psychotherapy.
- Direct and indirect observations of the process.

Preliminary Findings

The research results show that there is an interest remaining to adopt in Mexico, although the process is complex and difficult to regulate because of the psychological, legal implications, health and education.

In numerical terms, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE), Mexico is part of the *Convention of The Hague of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*, so participating as a country that emits children in chance of being adopted, and though one of the national problem is the absence of a national registry on the number of adoptions, the data that the SNDIF nationally presented with cut to 16 June 2014 are as follows:

From 2006 to 2014, 261 children were given up for adoption, which in total represents 49.9% girls 50.1% boys. According to age, 58.2% are children between 4 and 9 years old, and the main destination for children was Spain (24.9%), followed by France (19.5%) and the US (19.2%).

The institutions with which Mexico has an agreement for international adoptions of Mexican children are:

Spain: Profilia

United States: Carolina Adoption Services, International Child Foundation Inc., Across the World Adoption, MLJ Adoption INC, Adoption Related Services INC, Alls God's Children, International Adoption Net, The Open Door Adoption Agency, The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Hans Across the water, Children's House International Adoptions, INC CASI Foundation for Children, Children's Home Society of Minnesota.

France: AYUDA, AFA.

Italy: SOS Bambino International Adoption, ONLUS, AVSI, AIPA, NOVA and Amici del Bambini.

According to report statistics adoption of DIF: 2012 (2011 data)³¹, in 2010, 1989 applications for adoption were received and in 2011, 805 (decreased by 40.58%), 429 correspond to completed processes. The states with the greatest number of applications were Sinaloa (280 requests) and Mexico State (102). Regarding adoption of children with disabilities, there were 54 candidates for adoption..

The above data shows that with respect to international adoption children given up for adoption according to the sex of children are proportionally distributed to 50% between men and women; that the highest percentage are children age 4 to 9 years and the largest recipient country is Italy, followed by Spain.

In another vein, the empirical categories found show an imprecision in the **notion of family** by parents who refer to it as "union, commitment, sharing, creating ties", "a link between two people", "a relationship that grows". There is clarity about the **family by adoption**, which is recognized as a family equal to one formed by blood, adopters express feel greater commitment to family for adoption by the responsibility of training and the fact to risk "with someone who does not have your genes," so in this form of family, there is more awareness and responsibility to train someone else.

Expectations around **motherhood and fatherhood** reveal feeling to help other and mutual assistance between adopter and adopted the ability to "grow as a person" but also appear the idea that in the future their child will take care of them when they're old". There is the recognition that "parenting is not easy" and "that a child has to move more things" referring to the importance of children in life a sense of personal transcendence.

A common comment between the adoptive parents or adoption process is upset by excessive times the process involves and bureaucratization that dehumanizes the process, violation of privacy³², the adopters "feel used" when the process is not completed and are very affected emotionally when they do not get the viability permission repeatedly.

In educational expectations, the adopters expressed ideals to offer "the best education" to the adopted child, even when they accept public institutions, they have the idea of "complement" education with private lessons evening; this idea leads to think of parents as those who want to play their best role, as super powered parents, in line with Postmodernism, to live the **hyper-paternity**³³.

The adoption process puts into play the perspectives of life, so that adopters can choose from an **adoption post-mortem** as the case of Angela and Aurora or **adoption of hyper-spectacle**, just as some celebrities who have with multi-racial adoptions, and it only makes us wonder: To adopt? Why?

³¹ Data taken from: <http://www.marthadebayle.com/sitio/md/radio/adopcion-una-realidad/> consulted on 07 October 2015 (corresponding to radio broadcast on August 20, 2014).

³² Having to account for the personal life in the psychological, medical and socioeconomic, sexual behavior even before the doctor, social worker and psychologist DIF.

³³ They are overwhelmed parents to meet their super - maximum sons, who sadly rather than help their good development, so children with zero tolerance insatiable. The hyper mothers and fathers are seeking to prepare their children for the future, inscribing them in the best schools, giving the most expensive toys and taking them to all sorts of extracurricular activities.

Postmodernism as a state of thought invites us to think rupture and negation of modernity, but also about the order, progress and rationalization. Rethinking about the human *right to be born* and the *right to have a family*.

Final Thoughts

Adoption in these times, questions the true nature of being human, sensitivity and true love, and if you really love. The mirror of the adoption process is naked to the man, because it reflects a cautious being, full of fears, fear of loving others, questions him a maternity and paternity built socially, imposed and if he does not comply, he declares sterile, incomplete and dysfunctional.

Nonetheless, it offers him the possibility via rehabilitation of that loss of turning him into a father as long as the adoption process continues. Institutional narcissism is present and shares it with the future adopter who contributes its history. The ideal family is placed institutionally. As long as he finds it, the institution is not capable of being a family. Institutions are in crisis and revealing their conflicts is to exhibit a system that does not know how to love either. Keeping them in search of the best family ages them and hides the secrets of the origins and when you want to show them the makeup so that they look less damaged.

The truth is that there is still a lot to discover in times of postmodernity where the questioning of the capacity to adopt is according to taste, money and wills and above all to acquire with adoption the vulnerability of knowing how to become a citizen.

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