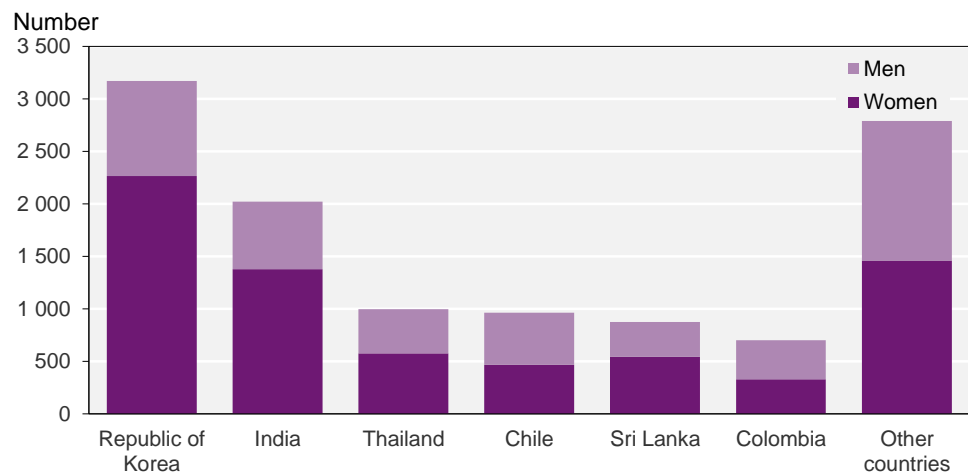


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## Intercountry adopted – a follow-up in adulthood

Sweden, in relation to its population, is one of the largest recipient countries for international adoption. Today, some 55 000 intercountry adopted persons are living in Sweden and adoption is seen as one of several ways to start a family. During the 1960s, adoptions to Sweden from abroad started to increase. The highest number of adoptions occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Earlier research on the life situations of adopted children in the new country and their new families have mainly focused on psychosocial health issues. Some results have shown that adopted persons to a larger extent than others suffer mental health problems. Research on adopted persons situation in adulthood has been mainly confined to young adults in their 20s. In this study focus is on intercountry adopted men and women born between 1970-1979, a group who at the time of study was between 33 and 42 years old. The aim of the study is to shed light on Swedish intercountry adopted persons situation in adulthood regarding education, income and family.

**Figure 1**  
**Adopted men and women in Sweden from the most common birth countries. 2012**



### Data material and method

With register data information on intercountry adopted men and women has been put in relation to a comparable group of men and women born in Sweden with biological parents. The group of intercountry adopted is limited to men and women born between 1970-1979 who at some time during their first five years of life were adopted by two Swedish-born parents. The population amounts to 11 513 individuals. The group of Swedish born were limited to men and women born during the same period as the adopted but with two biological parents born in Sweden. For this group to be comparable with the adopted study group a

sample was allocated by the adoptees sex and age distribution. The population of Swedish born amounts to a sample of 218 747 persons.

### Results

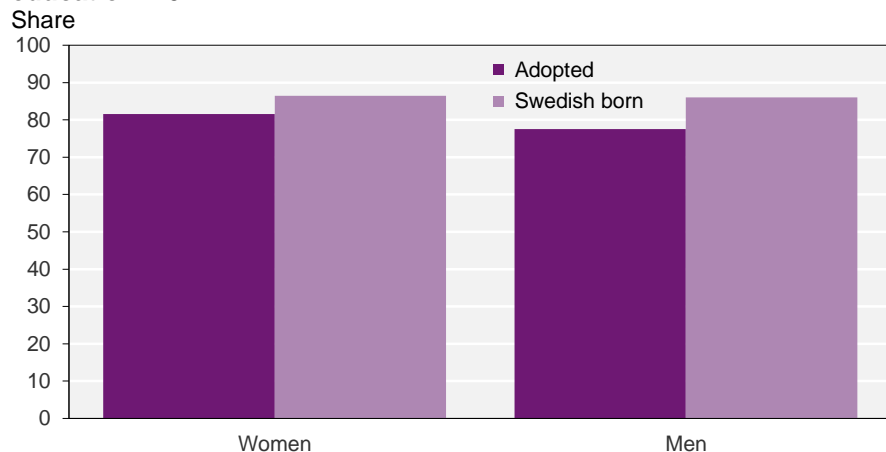
The results show that adopted men differ more from the Swedish born men than the adopted women differ from the Swedish born women. How much the groups differ varies depending on the studied areas.

The share of adopted men and women with a grade from a post-secondary education is somewhat lower than among Swedish born women and men. The share of adopted men and women with a grade is 8 and 5 percentage points below the share of Swedish born men and women respectively. Regarding the educational attainment the difference between adopted and Swedish born are larger. The share of adopted men with a long post-secondary education is 15 percentage points below the share of Swedish born men. Among the women the corresponding difference is 13 percentage points. (See figure 2 and 3.)

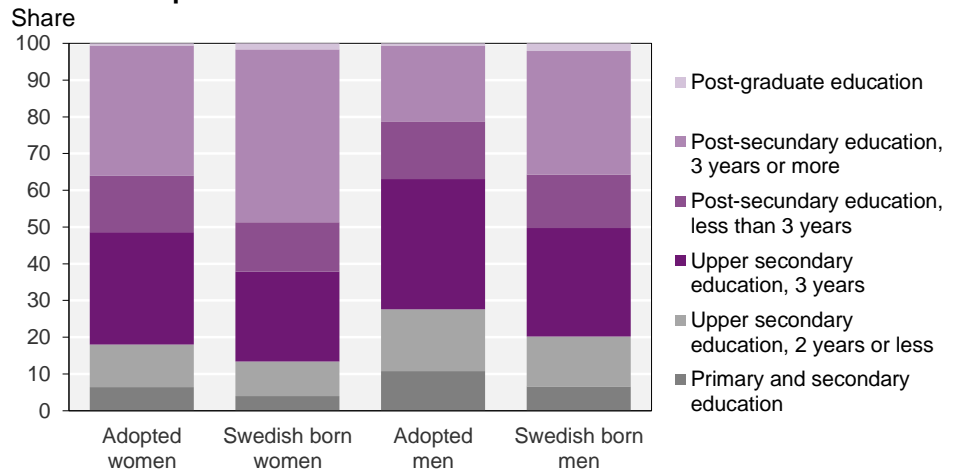
The trend with larger differences between adopted and Swedish born men than between adopted and Swedish born women also shows when income was studied. 68 percent of the Swedish born men had a yearly income over 300 000 while the corresponding share of adopted men was 48 percent. The share among women was 38 and 30 percent among Swedish born and adopted respectively. (See figure 4.) Part of the difference can be explained by the fact that a larger share of the adopted does not work in the same extent as do Swedish born but instead has an income that consists of for example compensation for sickness. Even when this is compensated for a difference still exists between adopted and Swedish born.

There is also a difference to what extent men and women in the studied groups have become parents. The share of adopted men who have become fathers is 16 percentage points below the share of Swedish born men. Among the women the corresponding difference is 10 percentage points. (See figure 5.)

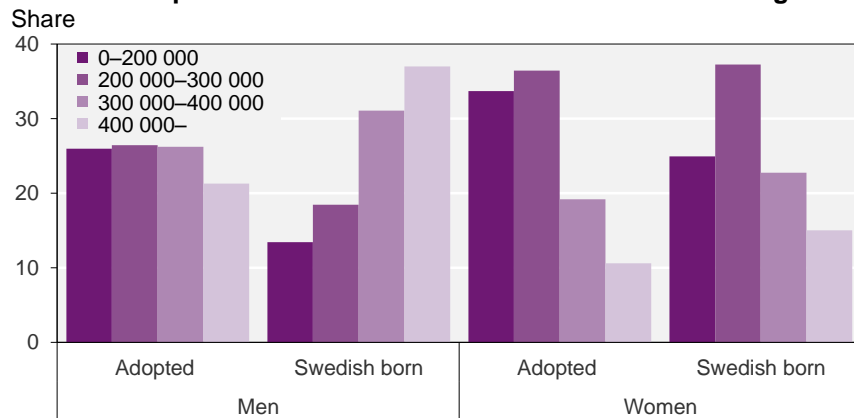
**Figure 2**  
**Share of adopted and Swedish born with a grade from a post-secondary education. 2012.**



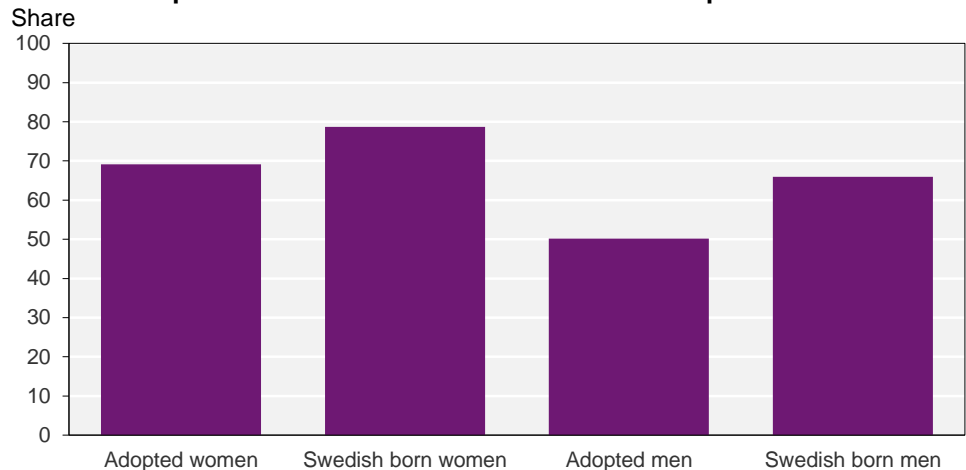
**Figure 3**  
Share of adopted and Swedish born with different levels of education. 2012



**Figure 4**  
Share of adopted and Swedish born in different income categories. 2011



**Figure 5**  
Share of adopted and Swedish born that have become parents. 2012



**Conclusion**

How to explain the differences seen between adopted and Swedish born is rather difficult. Earlier research has speculated that adopted persons could be more vulnerable than others partly because of circumstances before the adoption took place. This is however hard to control for as information from the time before adoption is unknown. Other explanations that earlier research has speculated in is if discrimination of adopted persons occurs because of their many times non-Nordic appearance. But this is also often hard to control for in a study like this. What future studies can do is to study families with both biological as well as adopted children that has grown up together and compare the outcome between the siblings.