

# **Gifts and Returns: Transnationalizing the Family of Transnational Adoption**

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My research over the past several years has focused on interviews and participant observation with adopted adults who have returned to their country of origin on heritage and “roots” tours that include visits to hospitals and courts, meetings with social workers and government officials, and reunions with foster families and birth families. The adoptees involved were raised in Sweden or in the United States, and were adopted from Chile, Colombia, and Ethiopia. In this talk, I examine the different ways that adults adopted as children re-establish and maintain contact with birth kin; and I address the tension between such returns and the legal fictions that surround and enable the transnational adoption of children (the freestanding child, the child as freely given, the clean break policy, the adoptive family as the only family of the child, and so forth).