Jessaca Leinaweaver’s *Adoptive Migration* is a rich and insightful study of the complex dynamics surrounding Peruvian adoption and migration in Spain that builds upon and extends the insights from her previous book, *The Circulation of Children: Kinship, Adoption, and Morality in Andean Peru*. The novelty of Leinaweaver’s approach lies in the comparison she draws between the seemingly incongruous phenomena of international adoption and transnational migration. Through juxtaposing adoption and migration, Leinaweaver provides a fresh perspective on each process and brings disparate scholarly literatures into productive dialogue.

The first two chapters of the book analyze the challenges that Spaniards face when seeking to adopt infants from Peru, and the dilemmas that Peruvian labor migrants confront when determining whether to bring their children with them to Spain. The middle chapters focus on relatively rare, but revealing cases of mixed Spanish-Peruvian couples who adopt Peruvian children, and Spanish couples who adopt the children of Peruvian labor migrants residing in Spain. The final two substantive chapters deal with the ties that adoptive Spanish parents develop with Peruvian migrants and organizations after adopting Peruvian children, and the manner in which Peruvian adoptees negotiate their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities. The bulk of Leinaweaver’s findings derive from detailed ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews. Additionally interwoven throughout her analysis is an illuminating discussion of the regulatory regimes governing adoption, migration, and family reunification in Spain and Peru.

The principal argument advanced in the book is that substantialist understandings of national identity remain central to international adoption and migration, despite the purported erosion of the nation in an increasingly globalized and transnational world. Leinaweaver coins the term “national substance” to capture how ideologies of national identity are “racialized” and “embodied,” making them an inescapable part of life for both adoptees and migrants of Peruvian descent, as well as their respective parents. The pervasiveness of such ideologies in Spain, she argues, is critical for explaining why adoptees of Peruvian descent are treated as “foreign bodies” and constantly forced to grapple with their “Peruvianness,” despite the fact that they have been raised in culturally Spanish households and have spent little, if any, time in Peru. Essentialized conceptions of national identity are also important for understanding why Spaniards who adopt Peruvian children commonly seek opportunities to teach their children about Peruvian culture and become involved in organizations that foster feelings of connection to Peruvian society. Leinaweaver’s findings draw attention to how
the nation remains fundamental to contemporary understandings and structures of kinship, even for families that are transnational or interracial in composition.

Although Leinaweaver makes productive use of the term “national substance” to shed light on various dynamics surrounding international adoption and migration, the concept itself is not particularly novel. Scholars of nationalism and immigration have written extensively on the pervasiveness of essentialized understandings of national identity and the manner in which nationalism serves as an “ideology of difference” — a term that Leinaweaver uses at several points in the book. It is therefore not surprising that substantialist notions of national belonging inform the perspectives and actions of adoptive parents and labor migrants, as well as the legal frameworks that regulate adoption and migration. Nor is it surprising that adoptee and migrant youth with similar phenotypic traits face comparable stereotypes and discrimination, especially in a country like Spain where foreign immigration is a relatively new phenomenon.

Leinaweaver’s contribution lies more in her rich and detailed analysis of the parallel themes that emerge in the lives of adoptive and migrant parents, despite their highly distinctive socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Her discussion of how adoptive and migrant parents feel an almost ethical calling to imbue their children with a cultural upbringing suitable to their national background is particularly revealing. Equally insightful are her observations of how experiences of adoption and migration spark engagement in new forms of sociality and activism that are deeply transnational while at the same time being firmly grounded in substantialist understandings of the nation.

In conclusion, Adoptive Migration is a valuable study that adds nuance to current understandings of international adoption and transnational migration. Leinaweaver’s findings are valuable not only for academics, but also for policymakers and professionals. Given the deeply personal and engaging life stories that she relates over the course of the book, Adoptive Migration also holds interest for a more general readership.

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Dilma Rousseff’s historic victory in the 2010 presidential election depended on sweeping the Brazilian northeast. She triumphed in a region habitually de-