I Am Going to Talk About Resilience

Resilience Against Adoption

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English version translated and adapted from the Spanish original
Text prepared for the open panel “Diferentes voces” (“Different Voices”)
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Editorial note

This document contains an English version translated and adapted from the Spanish original “Voy a hablar de resiliencia: Resiliencia frente a la adopción”. The original text was prepared as an intervention for the open panel “Diferentes voces” (“Different Voices”), scheduled from 16:00 to 17:00 within the conference “Caminos de Resiliencia” (“Paths of Resilience”), XV Anniversary of La Voz de los Adoptados, held on 20 June 2026 at the Spanish Ministry of Youth and Children, Madrid. The text is presented as personal testimony and as a critical position on adoption, identity, origin, filiation, resilience, and the abolition of adoption.

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I Am Going to Talk About Resilience

I am going to talk about resilience. And I know that speaking about resilience in a setting like this is not speaking about just any word.

Many of the people here probably see adoption as a form of protection, repair, or even resilience. Some of you work within the system that sustains it, organizes it, studies it, or accompanies it. Others have experienced adoption from different positions.

I am going to speak from another position. I am going to speak as an adopted person. And I am going to speak from a failed adoption.

For a long time, the usual narrative about adoption places the harm before adoption. First there would be a loss, a lack, a family difficulty, an earlier wound. Then adoption would arrive as a response. As repair. As opportunity. As a new beginning.

From that narrative, the adopted person would be resilient thanks to adoption.

My experience has taken me somewhere else. In my story, the fundamental harm did not remain outside adoption. It was inside adoption. It was produced, sustained, and aggravated by it. That is why, when I speak about resilience, I am not speaking about resilience thanks to adoption. I am speaking about resilience against adoption.

That difference changes everything. Because if adoption is presented as repair, the adopted person who does not fit that narrative appears as the problem.

If adoption is presented as salvation, anyone who says they were harmed by it appears ungrateful, disruptive, or incapable of recognizing what they supposedly received.

But there are adoptions that fail. There are adoptions that do not repair. There are adoptions that erase. There are adoptions that replace one identity with another. There are adoptions that organize an entire life around a fiction. I also lived inside that fiction. I also lived inside the adoptive narrative.

For almost forty years I lived inside the adoptive narrative.

And that is one of its traps: you can live an entire life inside the fog. You can study, work, love, marry, have children, divorce, and still not have reached your birth identity.

I arrived that way, after an apparently complete life, at the moment of searching for my origins.

This is a fundamental part of what I want to say. The adoptive fog can last for decades. It can be compatible with an apparently normal life. It can allow you to function, study,

work, have children… And still be living inside an identity governed by a legal fiction. That is why I speak of Stockholm syndrome.

I say this from within. I was there too. For forty years I inhabited the adoptive narrative and lived inside the structure that had replaced my birth identity.

And I firmly believe that one of my great acts of resilience is getting out of it.

Getting out of the adoptist narrative. Getting out of that fog. No longer living inside an identity that adoption had imposed over my identity by birth.

My process of resilience began when I searched for my origin and the reality that had been denied to me began to come to light. I recovered my origin through DNA. I found my father. I found my sister. And I discovered that my mother had been dead for twenty years.

I recovered a reality that had been covered up for decades. And I understood something essential: recovering my birth identity was not going to be only finding my origin, my father, my sister, or my story. It was going to be facing adoption as a system.

Recovering my birth identity brought me face to face with adoption as a system.

Because when an adopted person says, “this adoptive identity does not represent me,” it is not just one piece that shifts. Everything is set in motion. The adoptive family. The biological family. The registry. The social narrative. The comfortable idea that adoption always ends well if it is handled with affection, maturity, or good intentions.

And then violence appears. Sometimes as rejection. Sometimes as silence. Sometimes as suspicion. Sometimes as pathologization. Sometimes as the need to prove judicially something as basic as who you are.

In my case, identifying with my birth identity came to be interpreted as psychosis in an emergency consultation, and I ended up violently admitted for two days to a psychiatric hospital. That is a brutal fact.

The truth of my origin was read as delusion. Saying who I was treated as a symptom. The identity that adoption had erased had to be recovered, sustained, and defended even against those who considered it a sign of madness.

Years later, what was established and confirmed by expert assessment was not psychosis. It was chronic depression with anxiety, of exogenous origin, linked to everything I had lived through. This matters because we are not speaking about an individual fragility disconnected from the facts. We are speaking about the harm a structure can produce when it first erases an identity and then punishes, questions, or pathologizes the person who tries to recover it.

That is why I say that my story is a story of resilience against adoption.

My resilience did not consist in adapting better to the adoptive narrative. It consisted in getting out of it.

It consisted in leaving behind the grip of adoption. It consisted in recovering my birth identity. It consisted in bringing it before the courts. It consisted in obtaining recognition of my birth, or biological, filiation.

It consisted in achieving dual filiation: because my adoption still exists, but my biological filiation is now recognized with full legal effects.

It also consisted in being recognized by the Ministry of Democratic Memory as a victim within the framework of Francoism. It consisted in being able to say that I was trafficked. And it still consists in continuing to demand the annulment of my adoption.

All this is the fruit of my resilience.

It is not a gentle word. It is not a beautiful idea. It is not a comfortable category for a conference. It is a concrete struggle to recover what was mine.

It is also a struggle with scars. Because today, leaving the adoptive narrative does not mean leaving intact. It means leaving marked. With broken bonds. With damaged health. With years of wear. Leaving at an enormous cost to my life.

And above all it means being able to say: this is my natural identity. This is my story. These were my parents, and these are my surnames.

This is my reality.

And I speak from there.

I do not speak from a theory. I do not speak from a hypothesis. I speak from a failed adoption and from the process of having survived it.

That is why I find it difficult to accept that resilience is spoken of as if adoption were, in itself, good or healthy. From my point of view, adoption often produces something else. It produces a form of emotional, symbolic, and narrative dependence on the structure that has organized your life.

It produces the need to defend what has given you belonging, even if that belonging required erasing your origin. It produces fear of looking at adoption as harm, because doing so can put at risk the entire narrative about one's own life.

I call that Stockholm syndrome.

I know it sounds harsh. But it is harsher to demand that an adopted person be grateful to the structure that replaced their identity. It is harsher to ask them to call family, luck, or salvation what perhaps prevented them from knowing who they were.

It is harsher that whoever breaks that narrative is marked as ungrateful, troublemaking, unstable, or excessive.

And this does not affect only me. My story is mine, but it is not isolated. There are many failed adoptions. There are many adopted people who do not find a place inside the happy narrative of adoption. There are many adopted people who have suffered far more than I have. And some have not survived.

This cannot remain outside the conversation.

Because if an institution produces a significant number of broken lives, it is not enough to say that other people did well. If an institution needs to hide its failures in order to keep appearing good, that institution must be looked at honestly. And if an institution turns the erasure of origin into a normalized mechanism of “protection,” we must ask what kind of protection that is.

For me, the question is no longer how to improve adoption. The question is why we continue to call protection an institution that can erase identity, replace filiation, impose belonging, and then punish the adopted person who tries to recover their reality.

A society that wants to protect minors needs to do it in another way. It needs to protect without erasing. It needs to care without replacing identity. It needs to guarantee rights without fabricating family fictions. It needs to build stable forms of foster care, permanence, care, and protection that do not force the minor to stop being who they are in order to be loved, cared for, or recognized.

I defend a strong, reformed system of permanent foster care, with real rights, with stability, with sufficient material and legal protection. And without erasure of identity, without artificial rupture from origin.

Without the fantasy that the minor arrives empty. Without turning the adults who care into symbolic owners of a new identity. Because the problem of adoption is not only in its abuses. It is in its structure. It is in substitution. It is in erasure.

It is in the fiction that one identity can be replaced by another and that this, if done legally, becomes repair.

My case shows something else.

First, I recovered my birth identity. Then I obtained recognition of my biological filiation in court. Then I obtained recognition as a victim within the framework of Francoism. And I

am still demanding the annulment of my adoption because I consider that I was trafficked.

But there is one objective fact: legally, I am still an adopted person. The fact that I was trafficked did not make me any less adopted.

I am only an example of the consequence: an adopted person who does not know their origin still does not know whether they too were trafficked. And that question should matter to us much more.

This entire story is contained in my book. Not as a story of overcoming. Not as a reconciliation with adoption. But as the account of a failed adoption, of a recovered identity, of a dual filiation recognized judicially, of sustained violence, and of a resilience built against adoption. The book exists because I needed to leave a record. Silence would have meant continuing to collaborate with the silence that sustains adoption.

Because what is not named is lost. Because what is not documented is denied. Because for too long adoption has counted on the silence of those who could not speak without paying an enormous price.

I have paid that price.

And still, I am here.

My resilience has led me to this conclusion: I believe adoption must be abolished.

And I am not the only one.