**Interdisciplinary Bibliography of the World’s Peer-Reviewed**

**Literature on Psychological Aspects of Placement for Adoption**

**Compiled by the International Institute for Reproductive Loss**

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1. **Aflaki, K., Ray, J., Edwards, W. et al. (2024). Maternal deaths by suicide and drug overdose in two Canadian provinces; Retrospective review. Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada. 46. 102581. 10.1016/j.jogc.2024.102581.**

The stated objective of this study was to “identify and review factors associated with maternal deaths by suicide and drug overdose” by looking at records in the Canadian Coroner and Medical Examiners Database between the years 2017 and 2019. The authors identified potential deaths related to maternity for females aged 10 to 60 years. Of the 90 deaths reviewed, it was found that 15 were the result of suicide, and 20 were caused by drug overdose. The ages for these deaths varied, and their life and pregnancy status varied. Additional findings found that 10 of the suicides were by hanging, and 15 had fentanyl in their system. The authors conclude from the totality of their conclusions that, alarmingly, maternal deaths related to suicide and overdose may be a more significant factor in the overall level of maternal deaths in Canada than was previously thought. More deaths occurred after the index pregnancy than during the pregnancy, especially after a miscarriage or induced abortion. The authors suggest that specific programs are needed to help identify the women who are at the highest risk of these mortality outcomes and provide intervention not only during pregnancy but even beyond the postpartum period.

1. **Ayers-Lopez, S. J., Henney, S. M., McRoy, R. G., Hanna, M. D., & Grotevant, H. D. (2008). Openness in adoption and the impact on birth mother plans for search and reunion. Families in Society, 89(4), 551–561.**[**https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.3815**](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1606/1044-3894.3815)

This article sought to illuminate the attitudes of birth mothers regarding their roles in the lives of their birth children 12 to 20 years after placement. The authors conducted a longitudinal study on “adoption openness”; this article stems from that study. The authors wanted to explore the experiences of 125 birth mothers who maintained direct contact with the parenting family. The personal experiences of these women were analyzed to determine if the “planned searches” were related to “age, marital status, or parenting status.” The results showed that there was a high degree of variance in the level of openness displayed by these birth mothers regarding their relationship with the parenting family. The authors provide recommendations for adopted adults and birth parents considering a reunion as well as providing recommendations for adoption agency staff.

1. **Baden, A. L., Sharma, S. M., Adams, L. M., Randall, R., Agrusti, M. L., Harrington, E. S., Kobus, A. M., Jasmin, M., Kwon, D., Nsenkyire, K., Carias, R., & Balducci, S. (2024). “How Could You Give Your Child Away?” Birth Parents’ Experiences of Microaggressions. The Counseling Psychologist, 52(6), 960-990.**

For context, the author suggests that birth parents are the most stigmatized and under-researched group within the adoption triad and that they can experience microaggressions from multiple sources. The author also cites the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization to elevate the story of their experiences and their exposure to microaggressions. The authors identified the specific microaggressions heard by birth parents. They found that the most commonly occurring included “Shameful Inadequate, Institutional Microaggressions, and Phantom Birth Parents.” The authors then provide recommendations for counseling and training counsellors working with parents in the adoption triad.

1. **Balding, C. (2010). A Modest Proposal for a Two-Sided Market Clearing Institution under Asymmetric Supply Constraints with Skewed Pricing: The Market for Adoption and Abortion in the United States. Journal of Public Economic Theory, 12, 1059-1080.**

For this study, a guide for a theoretical model is presented to match the potential supply of pregnancy terminations and the total demand for having children within certain modeling constraints in place. The market and economic incentives framework studies the demand and supply of pregnancies. It’s put forward that a model for demand for abortion needs to incorporate the entire market for adopting children. The author explains supply and demand, “producers and suppliers within the procreative goods and services market have radically different price and cost elasticity functions and unique production asymmetries that create a potential net benefit for buyer and seller alike” " a conclusion the author has made about the market is that while the abortion and adoption market seem similar and related to each other, they also happen to have what the author considers to be a “fundamental disconnect, preventing a simple exchange of goods and services,” because abortion removes some of the supply from the market. Two additional important findings were that the “producer decision to supply the good depends primarily on exogenous preference formation and not on consumer provided incentives” and that the adoption market would not benefit from using the same framework as the real estate market or similar markets.

1. **Baron, T., Svingen, E., & Leyva, R. (2024). Surrogacy and Adoption: An Empirical Investigation of Public Moral Attitudes. Journal of Bioethical Inquiry, 10.1007/s11673-024-10343-1. Advanced online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-024-10343-1**

For context, relinquishment and adoption are both subject to heavy levels of regulation domestically and internationally due to them being “family-making measures.” For this study. One thousand five hundred fifty-two individuals were surveyed to gather information on public opinion in the UK regarding the different forms of surrogacy and methods of adoption in practice. Part of the motivation for this was a recent proposal to make a legal path for “double donor” surrogacy. They not only looked for opinions on general support levels for adoption and surrogacy but also to gauge the impact on the opinions of the participants that the adoptive parent’s fertility had but also looked for similarities in how they viewed double donor adoption vs. planned private adoptions and the moral implications they had for the participants. The results showed a decent baseline of support across the board for all methods of surrogacy and adoption and also that this level of support tends to rise significantly if at least one of the adoptive parents isn’t fertile. Findings also suggested that the language used to characterize the arrangements had a larger positive impact on moral support than items such as biological relationships.

1. **Battalen, A. W., Sellers, C. M., McRoy, R., & Grotevant, H. D. (2019). Birth mothers now birth grandmothers: Intergenerational relationships in open adoptions. Adoption Quarterly, 22(1), 53–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926755.2018.1488327**

Although there has been a trend towards openness in adoption, there is not a lot of good information regarding the experiences of adoptees and their birth parents when they have their children, making them parents and their biological parents become birth grandparents. The authors of this study wanted to take a close look at these relatively new relationships in our society by analyzing interviews with 11 birthmothers who relinquished their newly parenting children 25 years ago to gain insight into how they felt about being a birth grandmother. Results of the analysis indicated that birth grandmothers felt that their relinquished child played a huge role in their contact with their birth grandchild. It was also found that technology could help overcome the geographic barriers faced when attempting to make contact.

1. **Bolsby, S., Breen, K., & Wu, H. (2024). Bringing birth fathers to the forefront: A two‐decade scoping review of birth father experiences in adoption. Journal of Family Theory & Review. Advanced online publication.** [**https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12590**](https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12590)

Part of the motivation for this article was the lack of representation of birth fathers within what the authors refer to as the “Adoption Galaxy,” or the conversation and consideration held around and given towards the adoptive process. The authors specifically aimed to gain a keen understanding of our collective current information regarding the experiences of birth fathers in adoption. A review was conducted of 100 articles that had been peer-reviewed and published between the years 2000 and 2022 on the topic of birth fathers in adoption. The authors confirmed that their quantitative analysis showed a general global lack of research on birth. Some central emergent themes on birth fathers were “a lack of openness, negative stereotypes, gatekeeping, and emotional impacts.” The authors conclude that their findings highlight the importance of considering this underrepresented group.

1. **Bornstein, M. H., & Suwalsky, J. T. D. (2021). The specificity principle in adoption. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 74, Article 101264. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2021.101264**

The authors of this study sought to utilize the “Specificity Principle” in the context of adoption because of the importance of studying the “whom, how, and when” within the adoption process. When applying the principle to adoption, there are specific conditions, specifically selected individuals, specific times, and everything is generally well specified and structured by the adoption process. Part of the reason the who, how, and when need to be looked at closely in adoption is the specificity in the process, not just because all decisions involved are critical. It is essential to know who is being adopted by whom and under what conditions to understand how adoption impacts us. They found that viewing adoption factors through this lens can allow people to refine policy and discrepancies in literature better to be cleared up if it’s more widely accepted and applied.

1. **Broadhurst, K., & Mason, C. (2020). Child removal as the gateway to further adversity: Birth mother accounts of the immediate and enduring collateral consequences of child removal. Qualitative Social Work, 19(1), 15-37. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325019893412**

This article concentrates on the effect that child removal has on birthmothers from their perspective. The authors sought to understand how this event impacted these women by expanding upon previous theoretical work on the topic of the “collateral consequences of child removal,” as well as articles on women’s vulnerability to being subject to repeat family court appearances. To do this, data that was collected from interviews with 72 birthmothers from seven localized areas of authority are reexamined with a specific focus on “the immediate and longer-term effects of child removal.” All participants in the study had experienced repeat removal or were part of the child protection proceedings involving a fetus while having previously had a child removed. The reassessment results showed that birthmothers tend to recall having an immediate crisis after their child was removed, described as “psychosocial,” and that the problem also had a cumulative effect in many cases. The authors felt that by examining the accounts of these women, they were able to gain a greater understanding of the nature of the recovery challenges these women faced, particularly by being disadvantaged by their restrictive and malleable social status, compounding that in many cases was feelings of “role loss” and other consequences of removal that resulted in exclusion. The authors conclude that women in this situation need better access to protective resources and that the scale of problems faced by this group of women needs to be fully recognized by the services meant to aid them in their recovery to mitigate recurring removal proceedings.

1. **Brodzinsky, D., & Smith, S. L. (2014). Post-placement adjustment and the needs of birthmothers who place an infant for adoption. Adoption Quarterly, 17(3), 165–184.**[**https://doi.org/10.1080/10926755.2014.891551**](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1080/10926755.2014.891551)

This study sought to examine women’s emotional health after they place an infant for adoption, both during the first year after relinquishing the infant and in their lives now at the time of the study. Interviews were conducted, and data was collected from a total of 235 women, an average of 3.5 years after they had placed a child for adoption. Results showed that around 75% of women described their emotional health as being either neutral, poor, or very poor in the first year after they relinquished their child. While there was a trend for improving mental health over time, more than a third of the women surveyed reported significant problems persisting at the time of the interview. There was a positive relationship between the level of support birth mothers received as well as their satisfaction with that support and their adjustment to the stressor. Further implications of the data for helping women recover are presented in the full study.

1. **Cawayu, A., & Sacré, H.P. (2024). Can parents first speak? A Spivakean reading of first parents’ agency and resistance in transnational Adoption. Genealogy, 8(1),8. https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy8010008**

The goal of this article was to make an analysis of the search strategies birth families/parents in Bolivia used to continue contact and avoid complete separation from their biological child after they have been through the transnational adoption process. The desire for acknowledgment and visibility by these parties has been mostly ignored by adoption policy and academia, favoring support for adoptive families in other countries instead. In this article, the authors discuss strategies for searching utilized by birth families seeking contact to fill the knowledge gap in the public space. They gathered information by analyzing the ethnographic fieldwork about 14 families in Bolivia. According to the authors, these families found that the legal rights of these families had been significantly diminished through the international adoption process. Because of this, the authors conclude the act of searching for a child should be seen as a claim and request to regain consent to have contact with their birth child, as they do not have other avenues to travel to seek reunion.

1. **Chambers, L. (2010). Newborn Adoption: Birth Mothers, Genetic Fathers, and Reproductive Autonomy. Can J Fam L 26 (2) 339.**

The overwhelming majority of Canadian-born children who are relinquished for adoption were born to unmarried women. Provincial adoption acts, in situations such as illegitimacy, just the mother's consent is needed for an adoption to take place. This, of course, neglects the desires of the unmarried male placers who sometimes do not have a decision as to what happens to their child. Fortunately, provincial legislation does now recognize many unmarried men as fathers, but questions are being raised about newborn adoption. For example, one question the authors pose as extremely common is the obvious, “Whose consent is required to relinquish a child?”. This paper attempts to argue that the right of the woman should be unfettered regarding releasing a newborn for adoption and that it should be seen as essential to women’s equality and dignity. The issue with the increase in unmarried men’s involvement is that, in some situations, it is becoming similar to a custody battle. As men’s rights grew in this area, some of the women’s essential rights in decision-making shrunk. A primary example of this is a man forcing a woman to abort or retain custody of the child themselves against the mother who gave birth.

1. **Clapton, G. (2019). Against All Odds? Birth Fathers and Enduring Thoughts of the Child Lost to Adoption. Genealogy, 3(2), 13.** [**https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy3020013**](https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy3020013)

The author of this paper sought to revisit a subject that he felt wasn’t touched on enough in his earlier research, which is the concept that “grounds for fatherhood” could be established without being equipped for fatherhood through the adoption process. He explores the experiences of men who relinquish their children as babies utilizing firsthand accounts such as surveys from the US and Australia. He found out from his research and suggests that, interestingly, men who relinquish their children as babies tend to continue with fatherhood-type behavior even in the absence of the child, showing an instinct to nurture that is often overlooked in men. This sort of attachment goes directly against many of the negative connotations associated with birth fathers.

1. **Clapton, G. (2001). Birth Fathers’ Lives after Adoption. Adoption & Fostering, 25(4), 50-59.** [**https://doi.org/10.1177/030857590102500407**](https://doi.org/10.1177/030857590102500407)

Much research has been conducted on the adoption process and the experiences of mothers who relinquish their children. However, we still have a dearth of information regarding the lived experience of men who relinquish their children, as motherhood is more intuitive in our society than fatherhood. The author of this study delves into the insight from a “life course” group which consisted of men aged 35 to their late 50s. Starting from the early adoption period, the author begins noting men’s experiences of grief and that they have lost a child. A minority of participants felt indifference or other emotions such as “curiosity, concern, regret, and “connectedness.” The author concludes from his findings that they highlight an existing need for a greater focus on birth fathers for their sake, as well as potential adoptees who want to reach out to their biological fathers.

**Clapton, G. (2014). The birth certificate, ‘father unknown,’ and adoption. Adoption & Fostering, 38(3), 209-222. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308575914543231**

This study looked to shed light on the little-covered topic of the adoption of birth certificates and the implications of not having one or having one without the birth father's name. The author feels strongly that birth certificates are significant to us as a society and as individuals, and more care should be given to them in the adoption process. The author argues that it’s better to write “father unregistered” rather than “father unknown” to highlight the importance of a robust registry. Based on this belief, the author makes policy and practice suggestions that could benefit families and practitioners mindful of all participants in the adoption process.

**Clapton, G. (2024). “The Past Is Never Dead. It’s Not Even Past” (Faulkner, 1919 Requiem for a Nun p. 85): Mapping and Taking Care of the Ghosts in Adoption. Genealogy, 8(2), 37. https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy8020037**

The author of this paper purports that while the “Code of Ethics of the Association of Professional Genealogists” promotes coherent, concise, and organized information, it’s not so straightforward doing so when adoption is a factor for a family. This paper puts forward that “standard approaches” to understanding adoption family tree composition don’t provide a complete picture, including “the complexities, gaps, and challenges” that adoption entails. The author makes a case in this paper that there is a need for “family historians” to be alert to the adoption process and keep a quantitative record of those affected. A primary objective of this paper was the author's argument that some in the adoption process are essentially “erased” by it in terms of consideration for them within it. The author presents a “ghost world” where many possible “could be” lives and those disenfranchised from the adoption process exist outside public consideration. The author concludes the paper by saying, “Should genealogists overlook adoption’s ghosts, then they overlook the opportunity to professionally map a rich and varied world of family knowledge and connections.”

1. **Clapton, G., & Clifton, J. (2016). The birth fathers of adopted children: differences and continuities over 30 years. Adoption & Fostering, 40(2), 153-166. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308575916641616**

For context, adoption in the UK has had prominent eras before and after 1980. Before 1980, most babies were placed with couples without children. Still, after that, adoption with those seeking additional children was seen as an increasingly acceptable scenario for finding a permanent place for the many children in foster care. Birth fathers and the impact the adoption process has on them are understudied, and this paper sought to look at the changes in their experiences between these two eras. As a result of the lack of prior research on this particular group, the authors drew upon their studies on this group from each of the two eras to look for similarities and differences over time and suggest applications for what can be learned from this study for future adoptions. A few key findings were that modern birth fathers tend to be older than their predecessors, more emotionally vulnerable, and more likely to have parented the child than their predecessors. The authors suggest that although birth fathers nowadays have more legal rights and public awareness in their favor, they have more complex lives now, and services are still not fully inclusive.

1. **Claridge, A. M. (2014). Supporting birth parents in adoption: A couple treatment approach. Adoption Quarterly, 17(2), 112–133. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926755.2014.891545**

While abortion generally benefits most people involved in the adoption triad (birth parents, adoptive parents, and placed children), relinquishing a child is often a difficult loss for birth parents. Research provides some suggestions for treatment. However, there isn’t a comprehensive systemic approach to therapy in place that covers both birth parents' needs. This article proposes a “couple treatment” solution that draws from literature on birth parents and known couple therapy methods. The author's suggestions focus heavily on addressing the needs of the parents/patients by underlining the strengths of couples, empowering them, and acknowledging all that relinquishing a child encompasses.

1. **Coleman, P. K., & Garratt, D. (2016). From birth mothers to first mothers: toward a compassionate understanding of the life-long act of adoption placement. Issues in Law & Medicine, 31(2), 139–163.**

Women who relinquish a child for adoption are known to be much less well-researched than the other members of the adoption triad. These women often have psychological needs that go unmet relating to their decision to place their child with someone else and difficulty moving forward afterward. For this review, the authors attempt to describe and analyze women’s experiences with placement and professional literature and the methodological challenges researchers face. They also provide an overview of the results of a pilot study on the decision-making and adjustment of birth mothers. After going over the literature, the authors present the most pressing needs for future research on the topic of abortion placement from the mother's perspective.

1. **Cushman, L. F., Kalmuss, D., & Namerow, P. B. (1997). Openness in adoption: Experiences and social psychological outcomes among birth mothers. Marriage & Family Review, 25(1-2), 7–18.**

This research explores the relationship between adoption openness and the psychological well-being of birth mothers. Findings indicate that increased openness correlates with lower levels of unresolved grief and greater satisfaction with the adoption process, suggesting that open adoption arrangements may alleviate some maternal distress associated with relinquishment.

1. **De Simone, M. (1996). Birth mother loss: Contributing factors to unresolved grief. Clinical Social Work Journal, 24(1), 65–76. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02189942**

This study aimed to look at important social and psychological factors that may complicate or prolong the grief process for women who have given an infant for adoption. A total of 264 women above 18 participated in the study so that the author could gain insight into their grief process and what factors may be prolonging it. The author found that grief levels were higher when the birthmother felt she was coerced into relinquishment. In addition, he found that higher grief levels sometimes resulted from the woman feeling guilt or shame about giving her child for adoption.

1. **Deykin, E. Y., Campbell, L., & Patti, P. (1984). The postadoption experience of surrendering parents. The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 54(2), 271–280. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.1984.tb01494.x**

Adoption can often be life-altering for birth parents as well as the relinquished child. To gain more insight into how the process impacts birth parents, the authors of this study administered surveys to 334 people who had previously surrendered a child. After analyzing responses, the authors found that overall, the birth parents among their subject pool felt that the experience was negative for them in various ways. Among other issues, they reported issues in their marriage, problems with fertility, and parenting issues effectively. These issues should be taken into consideration when providing support for those suffering from the adverse effects of relinquishing a child.

1. **Fargas-Malet, M., & McSherry, D. (2021). The Emotional Nature of Birth Family Relationships for Care-experienced and Adopted Young People: A Longitudinal Perspective. Journal of Family Issues, 42(10), 2263-2288. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X20978439**

While there is a good bit of research on adoption relationships and children separated at young ages through the process, there has been a dearth of information regarding how those relinquished at an early infantile age are impacted emotionally and how their interactions with their kin change over time. The authors of this study sought to fill some of that gap by conducting a longitudinal study of young adoptees and, from their results, found that emergent narratives included feeling content but mixed emotions consisting of feelings like “anger, affection, loss, guilt, or worry. Interestingly, the type of placement (if they were adopted by kin, unrelated parents, etc.) did not seem to impact this study directly. Additionally, perspectives were dynamic and subject to many changes with time, which may be necessary for those involved in the integration of adoptees and their birth kin to be aware of. These findings help further future research, inform practice, and help develop theory.

1. **Farr, R. H., Vázquez, C. P., & Lapidus, E. P. (2023). Birth relatives' perspectives about same-gender parent adoptive family placements. Family Process, 62(2), 624–640.** [**https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12795**](https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12795)

A background motivating factor for this study was the limited research on the “experiences of birth relatives” connected to same-sex adoptive families. The authors looked closely at the perspectives of birth relatives, adoptive parents, and adoptees by interviewing 62 birth relatives and subsampling 24 of them for specific questions about why same-sex couple families were chosen. A specific interest was also taken in all participants' perspectives on their contact. The authors found that birth relatives of adoptees' families in same-sex households overall are satisfied with contact and desire more in the future. Same-sex couples were often selected intentionally for various reasons, and it was not just coincidental for many within the subsample. Relative to “conventional couples,” it seems that same-sex couples are at least just as well received based on the results of this study for the sample group. The authors conclude their findings provide insight into the diverse bonds and kinship formed in the adoption process.

1. **Fonseca, C. (2011). The de-kinning of birthmothers: reflections on maternity and being human. Vibrant: Virtual Brazilian Anthropology, 8, 307-339.**

In this article, the author uses different social analyses such as “the work on violence and subjectivity, legal anthropology and studies on kinship practices” to make a case for society treating the relinquishment of a child as “a form of a social suffering.” The author translates some of the knowledge about violence that is more tragic or “spectacular” into themes that relate to what they refer to as everyday violence that occurs within the adoption process. Their specific focus is the removal of feelings of kinship that occurs through “legal plenary adoption” and presenting a case for how it can be a “state-organized bureaucratic violence,” burdening the birthmothers with the experience of “de-Kinning” from their birthchild. The author also poses the question, “How is this process experienced by those most involved?” and discusses the concept of plasticity regarding being able to mend the “de-skinning.”

1. **French, C. A., Henney, S. M., Ayers-Lopez, S., McRoy, R. G., & Grotevant, H. D. (2014). Birth mothers’ perspectives on their relationship with the birth father 12 to 20 years after adoption. Journal of Family Issues, 35(5), 579–600.**[**https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X12472892**](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/0192513X12472892)

This study sought to investigate the perspectives that birth mothers hold on their relationships with the fathers of their placed children. Interviews were conducted with 125 women 12 to 20 years after placement. The interviews were part of a more extensive longitudinal study about the adoption triad and agency personnel. They were asked questions about the nature of their relationship with the father and whether they were satisfied with their contact with him to the present day and at the time of placement. Many birth mothers reported negative emotions associated with the birth father at the time of placement. Still, after 12-20 years had passed, they could feel more neutral regarding the father. Most women were still not in contact with their fathers, and those who have characterized the situation as friendly.

1. **Ge, X., Natsuaki, M. N., Martin, D. M., Leve, L. D., Neiderhiser, J. M., Shaw, D. S., Villareal, G., Scaramella, L., Reid, J. B., & Reiss, D. (2008). Bridging the divide: openness in adoption and postadoption psychosocial adjustment among birth and adoptive parents. Journal of Family Psychology: JFP: Journal of the Division of Family Psychology of the American Psychological Association (Division 43), 22(4), 529–540. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012817**

For this study, a pool of 323 matched parties consisting of birth mothers and adoptive parents was examined for the association between openness in the adoption and both parties' levels of adjustment not long after placement (6-9 months). With birth father data collected from 112 birth fathers, an admittedly understudied sample, both in this study and in academics worldwide, openness was accessed from both gender roles and both roles in the adoption. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between adoption relationship openness and healthy adjustment post-placement. This trend was determined not only from the participants' self-reporting but also from the interviewer's opinion. For birth fathers, there was a positive association between satisfaction with their experience of the adoption process and healthy adjustment after placement.

1. **Geddes, E. (2022). “Some days, it’s like she has died.” A qualitative exploration of first mothers’ utilization of artifacts associated with now-adopted children in coping with grief and loss. Qualitative Social Work, 21(5), 811-832.**[**https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211039008**](https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211039008)

This article's author critically approaches the issue of the marginalization of grief experienced by birth mothers who do not consent to giving up their child for adoption and are forced to due to their life circumstances. The author suggests that while welfare services are intended to provide support to the disadvantaged, the families that are the worst off have been curtailed. For this study and interview process, the author drew upon the known literature on bereavement and presented her findings from interviews with 17 first-time mothers. She had them sort through items such as toys, blankets, clothing, and other keepsakes that were associated with their adopted children and reflect on the meaning they took on in their lives. The accounts of these respondents revealed that there was a high-value psychological investment in these items and that they would stimulate memories of the time they spent with their children to tend to their needs. They would often comfort the mothers and activate their sensory memories relating to the smell and feel of their relinquished child. They were also found to help mothers feel maternal and stood as symbols of injustice and oppression to many of the mothers, which could lead to feelings of anger towards those involved in their child’s adoption.

1. **Goldberg, A. E., & Brodzinsky, D. M. (2024). Thinking about the birth father: Loss, longing, ambivalence, and indifference among adopted adolescents with lesbian mothers. Infant and Child Development, Article e2561. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2561**

Adoptees of their birth family usually hold some amount of knowledge, but often there is no knowledge of birth fathers and their family. This study aimed to explore “ideas, feelings, and questions” that adopted youth have regarding their birth fathers among youth who have two lesbian mothers who adopted. A total of 25 adopted youths between the ages of 13-19 were interviewed. It was found that among some respondents, interest or information regarding their birth father was limited. Among other respondents was “ambivalence and uncertainty,” and others stated a strong interest and curiosity regarding their birth fathers. It was also found that a few respondents felt a sense of absence and/or longing for the presence of a father.

1. **Grotevant, H. D., McRoy, R. G., Wrobel, G. M., & Ayers-Lopez, S. (2013). Contact Between Adoptive and Birth Families: Perspectives from the Minnesota Texas Adoption Research Project. Child Development Perspectives, 7(3), 193–198. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12039**

The number of adoptive families that maintain contact with their child’s adoptive birth family has been on the rise. The consequences of different levels of maintained contact were examined more closely by The Minnesota/Texas Adoption Research Project by studying the relationship dynamics in family systems that possess varying degrees of open adoption. It was found through the data gathered in this project that those who had maintained contact were, in fact, more satisfied with the arrangement than those in a closed adoption arrangement. Adolescents' and emerging adults' satisfaction with contact in their open adoptions predicted a more optimal adjustment. Communication about adoption was also a predictor of better-identified development in this age range. Regarding birth mothers, it was found that for those who were satisfied with their contact arrangements, there was less grief persisting 12-20 years after they relinquished the child. The authors conclude the following are highly important: “flexibility, strong interpersonal skills, and commitment to the relationship” regarding healthy adjustment. They also mention that these skills can be learned.

1. **Gulzar, A., & Safdar, F. (2023). Experiences of Mothers Who Relinquished Their Child for Adoption in Pakistan: A Qualitative Study. Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, 47(2), 350–371. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-022-09773-6**

Regarding supportiveness towards birthmothers, after they give up a child, the literature indicates that there can be long-term serious consequences for those who don’t experience adequate support. Despite this work being done, comprehensive information about the experiences of women who relinquish their children for adoption in the country of Pakistan is not available. So, the purpose of this study was to look at the experiences of mothers in Pakistan who had gone through this experience through what the authors call a “phenomenological research design.” Interviews were conducted with five women, and protocols were in place. The interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed and analyzed, and data verification was done via peer scrutiny. Four main themes emerged from the data. They were “Reasons to Relinquish, Psychological Distress, Coping Strategies, and Disenfranchised Grief.” This study presents that experiences with relinquishment tend to negatively impact the placer, highlighting the need for proper regulation of the process, such as the involvement of psychologists.

1. **Gupta, A., & Featherstone, B. (2020). On hope, loss, anger, and the spaces in between: Reflections on living with/in adoption and the social worker's role. Child & Family Social Work, 25(1), 165–172.** [**https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12674**](https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12674)

This article aimed to delve deep into a previous study on the topic of “the role of the social worker in adoption with a focus on ethics, concentrating on the perspectives of adopted people, birth parents, and adoptive parents.”. The study's authors, who were examined for this article, pushed back on policy framed as being about “new beginnings” for adoptees. They felt that “hope inevitably coexists with anger and loss” and that ethical “trespasses” inevitably entail harm. The authors conclude from reviewing the prior study that the frequency of these trespasses could be reduced by social work that encompasses “humility, honesty, and reflexivity.”

1. **Henney, S. M., Ayers-Lopez, S., McRoy, R. G., & Grotevant, H. D. (2007). Evolution and resolution: Birthmothers' experience of grief and loss at different levels of adoption openness. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 24(6), 875–889.**[**https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407507084188**](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/0265407507084188)

This study aimed to delve into birthmothers' experiences with feelings of grief and loss over time during an open adoption. To gain this insight, structured interviews were conducted during two time periods after relinquishment and placement. A total of 169 birthmothers participated in the initial interviews 4-12 years after placement, and 127 women participated in a second wave of interviews 12-20 years after placement. It was found that during the first round of interviews, the birthmothers were, on average, having “moderate to high degrees of grief.” Surprisingly, during the second round of interviews, most women reported “some to no feelings of grief” relative to that of confidential adoptions. The authors conclude that their results indicate an appropriate amount of openness and that the right degree may change with time.

1. **Huseby-Lie, I. (2023). Children’s perspectives on contact with birth parents: a mixed-methods systematic review. European Journal of Social Work, 27(3), 519–533.** [**https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2023.2235090**](https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2023.2235090)

The goal of this review was to pose the question, “What is known about children’s perspectives on contact with birth parents when in out-of-home care?”. To gain insight into the answers to this question, the authors coded 37 studies to identify the experiences and thoughts of children regarding contact with their birth families. Results showed that children have much to say regarding their thoughts and opinions on the process and their contact. However, most children were found to want more contact with their birth parents when they viewed that contact as positive. The behavior of birth parents plays a major role, and perhaps because of that, contact should always be done in a way that fosters positive relationships and experiences for the children.

1. **Jo Carr, M. (2000). Birthmothers and Subsequent Children: The Role of Personality Traits and Attachment History1. Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness, 9(4), 339–348. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009445911090**

For this study, a total of 87 women were studied: 55 women who had relinquished their child for adoption and then later had additional children, and 32 women who had given up their first child and did not go on to have subsequent children. They all participated in taking the “Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R)” and the “Attachment History Questionnaire.” The author looked to gain insight into the roles personality traits play in attachment and measured differences between the experiences of attachment that women who do not go on to have more children have compared to women who do. Results indicated that women with more children after relinquishing their first child had much higher scores on the “Extroversion scale” section of the NEO-PI-R. On the other hand, women who did not continue giving birth not only fared worse on this scale, but they were also more likely not to get married, and when they did get married, they were more likely to divorce than their counterparts. Not surprisingly, women who continued to have children reported more pressure to relinquish the first child than their counterparts in this study. An important finding from the questionnaire was that women without subsequent children tended to view their friends as supporting them more often than their counterparts.

1. **Jones, C. (2016). Openness in adoption: Challenging the narrative of historical progress. Child & Family Social Work, 21(1), 85–93. https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12113**

For context, a recent change in adoption has been a gradually decades-long movement away from an expectation of confidentiality in the adoption process and towards one of more openness, and the author suggests that a narrative has formed around openness in adoption that it is a sign of progress. The author argues that the reality of adoption is not as straightforward as the narrative formed due to this slow shift suggests. They describe this period as “a state of enduring ambiguity regarding the nature of post-adoption relationships.” The author highlights the consequences for the adoptive family of having their lifestyle overlooked at times due to attempting to facilitate openness.

1. **Jones, C., & Hackett, S. (2012). Redefining Family Relationships Following Adoption: Adoptive Parents’ Perspectives on the Changing Nature of Kinship between Adoptees and Birth Relatives. The British Journal of Social Work, 42(2), 283–299. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43771635**

In modern-day adoption in the US and UK, a concept of “extended kindship” has developed and expanded to include not just adoptees and adoptive parents but also birth parents and relatives, whereas, in the past, it was primarily looked at as a way of substituting an entire family unit separately. The authors note that this change raises questions about how those in the process feel about this newer form of adoption kinship and how the change impacts all those involved. The authors provide detailed insight into the process that determines if a biological member of a family is made kin or rendered marginal. Learning more about this shift in adoption and its consequences can help revise policy and practice.

1. **Kearney, K. & Bailey, L. (2004). An adoptive mother's reflections on mothering and grief: Another voice from inside the adoption triad. Journal of the Motherhood Initiative, 1 (2), 150-164.**

This article is self-described by the two authors as a feminist narrative that focuses on a series of letters that the main author had written to her adopted daughter beginning from the day that she and her husband were put in contact with a woman whose child they would adopt until the time they child first met their birth mother. The authors consider the perspective that the distance of 6 years provides and how the significance of this encounter complicates the literature and practices surrounding the issue. They suggest that both placers and parents face inscribed ideology about motherhood, which paints their experiences and choices as sometimes being lesser, or the women may feel that not being the biological parent makes them less suited for the role at times. Women are often seen as selfish when relinquishing a child, but the reality is much different and often filled with profound grief. To the birth mother and the adoptive mother described in this article, the most important thing that they shared together was the child, despite learning many other things about each other that were relatable in terms of their concept of motherhood.

1. **Kim, H. (2015). The Biopolitics of Transnational Adoption in South Korea: Preemption and the Governance of Single Birthmothers. Body & Society, 21(1), 58-89.**[**https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X14533596**](https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X14533596)

The focus of this article was to closely look at maternity homes in South Korea that are specifically for unwed mothers to gain insight into the reasons why single mothers so often relinquish their babies for adoption and to look at the normalization of it in society there and the possible reasons for that. The author draws on “Foucault’s concept of biopolitics “to describe maternity homes as “an institution of biopolitical welfare,” highlighting two important features of social governing the maternity homes provide. The author argues that this technically non-governmental social service also serves as a hub for technology because of the multiple political forces working together to ebb the flow of single motherhood by promoting adoption. The other highlighted feature from the author is that by attending to the complicated dynamics that exist in maternity homes, he observed different ways in which women end up following the path of being a birth mother.

1. **Krahn, L., & Sullivan, R. (2015). Grief & loss resolution among birth mothers in open adoption. Canadian Social Work Review / Revue Canadienne de Service Social, 32(1/2), 27–48. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44387618**

For context, a fair amount of research has been done exploring the grief and feelings of loss. However, the authors of this study note that the ways birth parents experience their grief and loss in open adoption, in particular, have not been well looked at. Plenty of research notes the positives of having an open adoption for each party but lacks information on the grief for all parties. Because of this gap in knowledge, for this study, the authors explored birthparent experiences in current-day open adoptions to try to understand not only their grief but also how they navigate and seek to resolve that grief and the results they achieve. The study found that while grief is very commonplace for birth parents, open adoption does seem to mitigate these feelings. They felt “meaning, comfort, and peace” by at least knowing that their child was safe and that they could be known to them. The authors conclude that this study backs up their consideration that open adoption can open new avenues for thinking about the meaning adoption holds for its participants.

1. **Landers, A. L., Danes, S. M., Carrese, D. H., Mpras, E., Campbell, A. R., & White Hawk, S. (2023). I can still hear my baby crying: The ambiguous loss of American Indian/Alaska Native birthmothers. Family Process, 62(2), 702–721. https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12815**

This study aimed to capture the experiences of birthmothers of American Indian/Alaska Native descent who had gone through relinquishing a child and also to examine the impact of the loss on their physical and psychological well-being. Proportionally, not many studies explore the loss of these women even though these groups have a higher probability of going through the experience. The author suggests the needs of these groups can be unique to those of other races due to factors such as their experience with intergenerational and historic loss. Interview data from 8 women of this descent was analyzed, and five themes emerged. The first theme was the unique context that the relinquishing a child holds socially for this group. The second was the “ambiguous nature” the women described the loss as having. The third was the unique spectrum of grief reactions that these women would have. The fourth theme was the impact of the loss on this group's well-being, and the last theme was attempting to create resiliency over the situation. From the findings, the author suggests that American Indian/Alaska Native women experience ambiguous loss, often not fully understood and seen, and that they have elevated mental health problems and substance abuse issues following the relinquishing of a child.

1. **Lapidus, E. P., Watkins, C. L., & Farr, R. H. (2023). Birth mothers' experiences of support before, during, and after adoptive placement. The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 93(6), 543–556. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000701**

The authors of this study suggest that women who relinquish a child for adoption are an understudied and often stigmatized segment of the population. Prior academic literature has indicated that having protective factors, such as various forms of support like peers and information, helps promote healthy adjustment. For this study, they explored women's experiences and outlooks both during and after placement. The subject pool consisted of 51 birth mothers who had children adopted as infants in private adoptions in the US from 8 months to 50 years before when they collected the data. The average time from the adoption for these women was 15.39 years. Theme analysis of the interviews conducted produced six overarching themes. The first is the impact of these women’s living circumstances. The second theme was the high degree of importance appropriate early support holds. The third theme identified was that it was an emotionally complex process. The fourth theme was that it was pertinent to have access to timely information. The fifth theme was the importance of feeling ready to utilize resources, and the final theme was coping with adjustment needs. Policy implications based on the information gained are presented.

1. **Lo, A. Y. H., Grotevant, H. D., & Wrobel, G. M. (2023). Birth Family Contact from Childhood to Adulthood: Adjustment and Adoption Outcomes in Adopted Young Adults. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 47(4), 283–293. https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254231165839**

Contact between adopted children and their birth family is something that should be made with consideration due to the psychological implications it has for the adopted child or person's adjustment. This study utilized four adoption contact trajectory groups, which ranged from middle childhood to young adulthood, and it incorporated three aspects of contact with the birth families to predict levels of psychological adjustment and other outcomes in young adults being raised by an adoptive family. Young adults who sustained high levels of long contact with their birth family reported being more satisfied with their contact. Extended contact like this also resulted in less psychological turmoil and better overall psychological well-being. Conversely, those with limited contact time fared worse and were less satisfied. No-contact individuals and stopped-contact individuals interestingly did not differ much from the group that had adequate time with their adoptive family. Findings are discussed in detail within the context of policy implications.

1. **Madden, E. E., Ryan, S., Aguiniga, D. M., Killian, M., & Romanchik, B. (2018). The relationship between time and birth mother satisfaction with relinquishment. Families in Society, 99(2), 170–183. https://doi.org/10.1177/1044389418768489**

For this study, data was used from an online survey of 223 birthmothers who had given an infant for adoption within the last 25 years of the study being conducted. The authors sought to examine the impact that time elapsed since relinquishment has on the levels of satisfaction birthmothers feel with their decision for placement. Findings indicated that an inverse relationship existed between time elapsed, the mother's age, education level of the mother, and income, and their level of satisfaction with their earlier decision. The authors write that these findings highlight the need for agencies and professionals in the adoption field to make sure birthmothers have adequate access to support services.

1. **March K. (2014). Birth mother grief and the challenge of adoption reunion contact. The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 84(4), 409–419. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000013**

While a large body of academic work exists on the subject of grief expressed by birth mothers over the loss of their children via adoption, not as much is known about the grief that surfaces when these birth parents are contacted by adopted adult children later on in life. Interviews were conducted with 33 reunited mother-child pairs. The author dictates that the interview results suggested that more attention be paid to “social psychological processes” relevant during this potentially traumatic moment of first-time bonding. Further implications are also explored in full in the article.

1. **McLaughlin, A. M., Feehan, R., Coleman, H., & Reynolds, K. (2013). A qualitative study of adoptive parents' experience of contact in open adoption. Canadian Social Work Review/Revue Canadienne De Service Social, 5-23.**

Adoption openness has been studied extensively in the US and UK. However, Canada does not have as much national literature on the subject. According to the authors, openness in adoption is considered standard these days. However, not much data has been collected regarding the process that the two parties engage in to negotiate the level of openness from the perspective of the adopting parents. This paper examines qualitative research on the subject within Canada, and the authors found that a large portion of participants in previous studies experienced apprehension and feelings of doubt regarding the involvement of birth parents in their lives. Further, findings indicated that openness should be an ongoing and sometimes changing negotiated process. A third party may also need support from all members involved in the adoption triad.

1. **Medoff, M.H. (2008), The effect of abortion costs on adoption in the USA. International Journal of Social Economics, 35 (3), 188-201.**

This paper’s stated purpose was to. “Empirically estimate the effect the costs of an abortion have on the supply of infants relinquished for adoption in the USA.” A cross-sectional study used state data from 1982, 1992, and 2000 for methodology. The “rational choice model of fertility” created a supply equation. Results indicated that increased prices and enforcement of a Parental Involvement Law decreased the supply of infants available to adopt. Additionally, states that didn’t pay for Medicaid abortions were not found to have higher rates of infant relinquishment. An implication from the findings the authors bring forward is that having an abortion or giving away an infant shouldn’t be considered a substitute for women with unwanted pregnancies or poor women with unwanted pregnancies. Raising an infant was found to be preferable to relinquishing one. The authors note at the end that if society aims to increase the number of adoptable infants available, this paper can be used as a resource for suggestions for accomplishing that goal.

1. **Memarnia, N., Nolte, L., Norris, C., & Harborne, A. (2015). ‘It felt like it was night all the time’: listening to the experiences of birth mothers whose children have been taken into care or adopted. Adoption & Fostering, 39(4), 303-317. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308575915611516**

Based on the literature surrounding childcare, there seems to be a consistent message of a lack of support for birthmothers after the relinquishment of a child, despite it being known that there are often negative consequences for them. This study aimed to examine the effects that separation, sense of identity, and levels of support through the process have on these women. Seven mothers were interviewed, and the interviews were transcribed. They were recruited from support groups, and the authors used their answers to identify four primary themes. They included “no one in my corner” (feeling alone), being disconnected from their emotions, feeling like they are trying to renegotiate their identity, and feeling that their children were both gone but still present in a way. These findings supported and contributed to previous findings about the experience of birthmothers.

1. **Mergl, R., Quaatz, S. M., Edeler, L. M., & Allgaier, A. K. (2022). Grief in women with previous miscarriage or stillbirth: a systematic review of cross-sectional and longitudinal prospective studies. European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 13(2), 2108578. https://doi.org/10.1080/20008066.2022.2108578**

For context, it’s known that women who have experienced stillbirths and miscarriages are at high risk for experiencing enduring grief as a result. The objective of this study was to evaluate the “intensity of grief” and the course women take as a result of it following the unexpected death of their child, as well as the frequency at which they experience this grief. The authors also compared different miscarriage subgroups against stillbirths and also compared recurrent and one-time pregnancy loss. The authors systematically searched three large literature databases to consider all relevant studies published between 2000 and 2022 in either English or German. They looked for studies on grief intensity and prevalence and closely examined 21 studies, 13 being cross-sectional and eight being longitudinal. Results showed that from self-reporting, 17 of the 21 studies supported the notion that grief was notably higher among women after miscarriage and stillbirths. Most of them suggested a decrease in grief levels with the passage of significant time. The authors conclude that pronounced grief can be commonly found among women who have not had successful births. They also note that more longitudinal studies are needed to draw more concrete conclusions and to help identify women who are prone to develop “prolonged grief disorder, depression, or other mental health problems.”

1. **Miall, C. E., & March, K. (2005). Community Attitudes Toward Birth Fathers' Motives for Adoption Placement and Single Parenting. Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies, 54(4), 535–546.** [**https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2005.00341.x**](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2005.00341.x)

The authors of this study wanted to gain insight into the attitudes of the general community toward birth fathers, particularly their motivations for adopting. To do this, they looked at 82 interviews and 706 respondents to survey answers to gain insight from the community firsthand. The authors found that generally, participants regarded the choice of adoption as being not responsible or caring. Men found them to be often too young for their ambition and not able to provide in a way the birth mother would want adequately. These findings serve practical implications for service providers, and the authors also offer suggestions for further research in this domain.

1. **Morgan, H., Nolte, L., Rishworth, B., & Stevens, C. (2019). ‘My children are my world’: Raising the voices of birth mothers with substantial experience in counseling following the loss of their children to adoption or foster care. Adoption & Fostering, 43, 137-154. 10.1177/0308575919848906.**

For context, the authors of this study refer to a lack of literature on the topic of what is effective in terms of support for birthmothers after they compulsorily relinquish a child via adoption or foster care. This article aimed to amplify the voices of birthmothers by interviewing five women regarding their experiences with a counseling service for birth families after losing a child. By asking specific questions about their experiences, three “master themes” emerged from the data. They included “feeling alone, judged and let down,” “feeling part of a special relationship,” and “my children are my world.” The implications for these identified themes are discussed in detail.

1. **Namerow, P. B., Kalmuss, D., & Cushman, L. F. (1997). The Consequences of Placing versus Parenting Among Young Unmarried Women. Marriage & Family Review, 25(3–4), 175–197. https://doi.org/10.1300/J002v25n03\_04**

The objective of this paper was to examine and compare the consequences for young women of placing versus parenting among those who experienced a teenage pregnancy outside of marriage. The authors examined how “placers” fare relative to parents four years after they give birth. Findings indicated that adolescent pregnancies resulting in adoption tend to be a positive choice for the placer in that it results in better sociodemographic and psychological outcomes for them. The authors also note that on a bivariate level, placers were in a better position than parents in nearly every outcome except feelings regarding their pregnancy resolution decision. The authors concluded from their findings that the differences in experiences by placers versus parents seem to be explained by “varying marital, fertility, and welfare experiences since the birth of the index child.”

1. **Norwood, K. M., & Baxter, L. A. (2011). “Dear birth mother”: Addressivity and meaning-making in online adoption-seeking letters. Journal of Family Communication, 11(3), 198–217. https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2011.554751**

This study was meant to serve as an investigation into letters written online from birth mothers to parents seeking adoption. The authors utilized the framing strategy of “Relational Dialectics Theory” and identified four struggles that highlight what domestic adoption means to those involved. They were “adoption as gain versus adoption as loss; adoption as desirable parenting versus parenting as a last resort; the birth mother as a good parent versus bad parent; and birth mother autonomy versus interdependence in the adoption triad.” Findings for the first three were obtained by weighing positive discourse over negative discourse. The last finding was obtained through a focus on mother autonomy.

1. **Philip, G., Youansamouth, L., Broadhurst, K., Clifton, J., Bedston, S., Hu, Y., & Brandon, M. (2024). ‘When they were taken it is like grieving’: Understanding and responding to the emotional impact of repeat care proceedings on fathers. Child & Family Social Work, 29(1), 185–194.** [**https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.13061**](https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.13061)

An increasing proportion of the public around the world understands how costly it is for parents to appear multiple times, and this UK-based study sought to review findings from a previously conducted unique survey on the experiences of fathers with “recurrent care proceedings” to help ascertain how to reduce recurring instances better. They found two primary negative emotions occurring: anger and shame. The authors suggest that there is a link between shame and complex forms of trauma in men and that there is much value in reducing shame. The authors feel strongly that interventions are as necessary for men as they are for women in the areas of grief relating to their specific struggles. In this case, they need it to lessen the financial burden on institutions and their mental health.

1. **Rizzo Weller, M., & Hosek, A. M. (2020). Birth mothers’ experiences of privacy turbulence about closed adoption information. Journal of Family Communication, 20(3), 250–264.**[**https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2020.1761807**](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1080/15267431.2020.1761807)

For context, private adoption information, such as any identifying information, is kept secret from birthmothers in instances of closed adoption to preserve the privacy of the adoptive family and adoptee. The authors utilize “communication privacy management theory” (CPM) to assess how birthmothers who participated in this study’s questionnaire and were part of a closed adoption experienced difficulties when trying to be included within their birthchild’s privacy boundaries; a total of 31 women participated in an online questionnaire on their experience with privacy problems and their expectations that they had concerning private adoption information. The authors looked specifically at their “experiences of turbulence.” The emerging themes included “inaccurate notions about perceived shared co-ownership rights, regret about the limited primary control of adoption information, and a desire for turbulence, allowing further expansion of co-ownership and control.” Results showed how some birthmothers may grow to regret the terms of the adoption of their birthchild and lack of control in their biological child’s life. However, many birthmothers also seem appreciative or optimistic regarding recent changes that have allowed for more turbulence and discussion around negotiation. The authors note that these results demonstrate that privacy rules for birthmothers continue to change with time.

1. **Salvo Agoglia, I., & Herrera, F. (2021). “I assumed he didn’t exist”: The birth father is the invisible member of the adoption kinship network. Journal of Family Issues, 42(5), 984–1006. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X20984509**

The authors of this study, being aware of the lack of representation of birth fathers in study data about adoption, wanted to fill some of this gap by understanding the narratives surrounding birth fathers in Chile. Birth fathers, especially in Chile, tend to be stereotyped in various ways and are overlooked. Through the interviews they conducted with adoptees, they learned that most of their participants did not think that their birth father still existed or was alive. That information about the birth father is generally given to them by birth mothers, or was they otherwise provided with the information secondhand? It was also found that when adoptees were aware of the present biological father, they generally disregarded them as someone with whom they share genetics, or they depersonalized them.

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1. **Samuels, E. J. (2013). Surrender and subordination: Birth mothers and adoption law reform, 20 Mich. Journal of Gender & Law. 33.**

For context, the author briefly goes over the background and history of adoption reform in the context of advocates pushing adoptees to have the right to view their original birth certificate as an adult. Between 1930 and 1990, the right to see their birth certificate was a casualty of the adoption system in all but two states due to strong opposition to keeping records sealed. Even in recent years, only eight states have changed to allowing adult adoptees the legal right to their original certificate of birth. The author puts forward that birth mothers are often their own fiercest advocates. Advocate birth mothers have reported that when they gave up their children against their will, they felt as if they had lost their voice and that their wishes were not recognized. These birth mothers have been making a push for adoptees to have access to their records so that if a reunion is desired, the adoptees can attempt to initiate it themselves when they feel it is appropriate. Those who advocate against adoptee rights are generally doing so because they believe that expanding the rights of adoptees infringes on the rights of birthmothers and their expectancy for privacy at the time of the arrangement. It could expose births that they do not want their family to know and potentially ruin relationships and lives they argue. Proponents of expanding adoptee rights counterargue that they never agreed to lifelong adoption privacy when relinquishing their child and were not promised it legally. In contrast, the children, on the other hand, have the right (and should have the legal right) to see their birth certificate once they are adults. Studies also show that the majority of birth mothers are open to contact. The author reviewed many documents about the surrendering of children through adoption over the last century and found that the information compiled supports the opinion of the birthmothers who are in favor of increasing the rights of adoptees to include being able to seek their original birth certificate.

1. **Shields, D. E., & Nicholl, P. (2024). An analysis of reunifications between adopted adults and their birth relatives. Child Care in Practice. Advanced online publication.** [**https://doi.org/10.1080/13575279.2024.2359939**](https://doi.org/10.1080/13575279.2024.2359939)

For context, the nature of adoption reunification (the fragile relationships established with difficulty) emphasizes the role of adoption agencies in providing comprehensive services accessible to everyone. For this study, the authors analyzed 15 case files selected from between the years 2009 and 2018 to gain a further understanding of the reunification process between adults who had been adopted as children and their birth relatives. The authors found from their analysis that there was diversity among their sample pool, even with their motivations and reasons for restricting their involvement time. Levels of social work involvement were much higher pre-contact, further highlighting the need for guidance provided by adoption agencies to continue their participation and support to a greater degree.

1. **Seek, A. (2022). The Open Adoption Alternative, A Birthmother's Perspective. Adoption & Culture 10(2), 210-213.** [**https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/ado.2022.0018**](https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/ado.2022.0018)**.**

The purpose of this author's essay was to shed light on the life-changing impact that adoption can have on a woman based on her own firsthand experience. She explains that when she had relinquished her son, she didn’t have the means or desire to get married, but despite this, as her son grew into adulthood, they became closer with a strong bond, even going for bicycle rides together. Although much of his childhood was characterized by negative feelings for her, she began to see her role as unique and filled with purpose as her son became more involved in her life. She experienced another pregnancy in her 40s but sadly lost that baby and found much comfort in her bond with her first biological child in the wake of that loss.

1. **Sisson G. (2022). Who are the women who relinquish infants for adoption? Domestic adoption and contemporary birth motherhood in the United States. Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 54(2), 46–53. https://doi.org/10.1363/psrh.12193**

The social context surrounding the decision-making process that pregnancy forces on a woman has evolved, but not much work has been done to look into how exactly changes that have occurred manifest themselves during infant adoption. For methodology, the author analyzed demographic data from six agencies that provided information on 8658 private adoptions in 2011-2020. Results from this sample indicated that today’s birth mothers tend to be older and more racially diverse than previous generations of women. In addition, they reported living on lower incomes on average; most of these women had other children, and surprisingly, a large amount of these women even had children at the time they gave one up for adoption. There is often an issue of not having timely access to information or making contact too late. A group subgroup identified that needs further study is the women who relinquished more than one child. The authors conclude that with the given shift in demographics for women who give up infants for adoption, more research is needed so that the proper updates to services can be made and that professionals can better understand women’s decision-making.

1. **Smith, D. W. (2006). The impact of adoption on birth parents. Adoption Quarterly, 10(1), 1–25.**

Smith (2006) explores the long-term psychological effects of adoption on birth parents, with a focus on birth mothers. The study highlights enduring grief, feelings of loss, identity challenges, and struggles with self-esteem that many birth mothers experience after placing a child for adoption. These emotions often persist over time, influencing relationships and mental health. Smith emphasizes that societal stigma and limited support exacerbate these challenges. The article calls for enhanced post-adoption services, including counseling and support groups, to help birth parents navigate their grief and adjust to life after adoption, ultimately improving their psychological well-being and coping strategies.

1. **Suwalsky, J. T., Cote, L. R., Bornstein, M. H., Hendricks, C., Haynes, O. M., & Bakeman, R. (2012). Mother-infant socioemotional contingent responding in families by adoption and birth. Infant behavior & development, 35(3), 499–508.** [**https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2012.04.006**](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2012.04.006)

For this study, the authors looked at the contingencies of 5 different socioemotional behaviors (3 maternal and two infantile) that are described as being “universal components of mother-infant interaction” around the 5-month point in motherhood among a subject pool of 62 women, a total of 31 of whom adopted and 31 that gave birth as well as the first children of these mothers (16 miles per group). It was found that there were differences in how the two groups of mothers responded to signals from their infants, but the response patterns were typically much the same. There were differences between how mothers and infants responded to each other, such as the finding that the mothers picked up quicker in vocal and social interactions. In contrast, their infants were better at responding to instances of “maternal speech-infant attention.”

1. **Theron, L.C., & Dunn, N. (2006). Coping strategies for adolescent birth mothers who return to school following adoption. South African Journal of Education, 26, 491-499.**

For this article, the authors review and report their findings on a study regarding the effects that adoption has on the performance level of birthmothers (adolescents) in school. This study reported on findings from five adolescent birthmothers and compiled information regarding factors that may influence school performance. The authors identified relevant factors from a previous literature study that could have been used. They correlated those factors with the information gathered from the five birthmothers to provide an understanding of those factors that negatively impacted birthmothers, particularly their schoolwork. Recommendations are made for developing better guidelines for assisting birthmothers to deal with their trauma when returning to school.

1. **Verrier, N.M. (1987). The Primal Wound: A Preliminary Investigation into the Effects of Separation from the Birth Mother on Adopted Children. Pre- and Peri-natal Psychology Journal, 2, 75.**

Adoption is considered by many to be the best solution to the issue of relinquished children, but a growing number of adoptees are searching for their birth parents. The author suggests that the advent of prenatal and perinatal psychology and subsequent learnings indicate that the solution to adoption isn’t always as simple as once thought. This paper attempts to examine the problems adoptees go through to adjust to living with people with whom they have no biological relation. The concept of the loss of the “ideal self” emerged as a possible result of premature separation from the biological mother, leading to an assumption of the “false self” as a way of coping with the fear of rejection and abandonment. Compounding that issue, the relationship with many adoptive mothers can be conflictual and ambivalent.

1. **Wallace, C. (2022). Permitting the Compensation of Birth Mothers for Adoption Expenses and its Impact on Adoptions. The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy, 22(3), 573-600. https://doi.org/10.1515/bejeap-2022-0010**

Over the last 70 years, many states have passed laws to regulate money movement throughout the adoption process through practices such as barring them or enabling potential adoptive parents to adopt. In the 40s, no state codes with provisions for compensation for adoption existed. Around the mid-1980s, almost half of US states had legislation for adoption compensation. The trend has continued to progress, and 45 states currently have laws regarding adoption compensation. The author of this study sought to gain insight from these changes to estimate how the new compensation laws or compensation, in general, impact how many infants are housed. His research indicated that, in most cases, people's level of concern and the uncertainties about how well they would be matched were more of a factor than compensation. These results suggest that financial compensation may not be as important as some think, given the increased compensation over the years.

1. **Wexler, J. H., Cai, J., McKee, K. D., Blankenau, A., Lee, H., Kim, O. M., Kim, A. Y., & Lee, R. M. (2023). Understanding adoption as a reproductive justice issue. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 47(4), 510–527.**[**https://doi.org/10.1177/03616843231166376**](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/03616843231166376)

Adoption is generally viewed as a net social good. Something that is uncomplicatedly beneficial to the adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents. In addition, it undeniably can cause women to avoid an abortion as a solution. Due to the political weaponization of the issue, the author suggests psychologists need to recognize adoption as a clear “key reproductive justice issue” with long-lasting repercussions for all parties. Applying information from critical adoption studies to create a framework, the authors put forward that psychologists “must” understand how adoption can be sustained by reinforcing structural inequality and reproductive injustice. With backgrounds in research, clinical psychology, medicine, and many other relevant areas, researchers examined adoption ties to colonialism, racism, and other factors that would disproportionally impact specific groups of women. Then, the information is summarized for clinical consideration and use, and recommendations are given to future researchers.

1. **Wiley, M. O. (2017). Adoption research, practice, and societal trends: Ten years of progress. American Psychologist, 72(9), 985–995.**[**https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000218**](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/amp0000218)

For this review, the author discusses changes in research relating to adoption over the last ten years. Research pertaining to adoption has gotten much broader over the last decade and has provided more solutions in terms of policy and practice. Also, there is a growing understanding of the adoption triad and the kinship relations between these groups. This article summarizes social trends that impact increased awareness and methodology used more frequently. The author also mentions the increased social awareness of the situations of people from different backgrounds and how that affects their abortion experience. Some notable social trends included “increased knowledge related to Internet accessibility, genetic information, continued focus on openness, and viewing adoption through a more critical lens.” Implications for program development for the enhancement of competence for professionals are provided.

1. **Wiley, M. O., & Baden, A. L. (2005). Birth Parents in Adoption: Research, Practice, and Counseling Psychology. The Counseling Psychologist, 33(1), 13–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000004265961**

This article addressed birth parents by reviewing literature from many disciplines using practice case studies. The authors review literature on the decision to give up a child, literature about the period of adjustment after, and the lifelong effects associated with such an event. Clinical symptoms identified through this literature review included “unresolved grief, isolation, difficulty with future relationships, and trauma.” Interestingly, more recent research has indicated that adoption placers fare similarly to women who do not relinquish based on external criteria. There seems to be a long-lasting psychological impact on mothers who abandon their children, which appears to be present across most literature on the subject. Specific recommendations based on findings from the review are made.