THE HISTORY OF THE ADOPTION MYTH:
ADOPTION POLICIES IN SASKATCHEWAN

A Thesis Submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
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for the Degree of Masters of Social Work
University of Regina

By
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ABSTRACT

This study is an exploratory examination of changes to adoption policies and practices regarding communication about adoption between adoptive children and adoptive parents in Saskatchewan from the 1960s to the present. Historically, a fantastical approach, described as the Adoption Myth, has been used to present the concept of adoption to adopted children. The Adoption Myth is the commonly accepted myth that adoption provides the ideal solution for all parties involved. Research of recent decades has emphasized the shortcomings of denying the difference between biological and non-biological parenting. This study explores whether or not adoption practices have changed in recent decades relative to the Adoption Myth. The goal is to assess if the provincial public adoption agency has self-reflexively deconstructed older mythical approaches, and is now addressing the natural genealogical, developmental and psychological issues adoptees must work through in accepting what it means to be adopted.

A review of relevant literature on adoption’s historical precursors, contemporary influences, and the developing global model is included in the study. The researcher adopted critical, comparative, historical, social-theoretical and post-positivist conceptual frameworks and acknowledged personal experience as a background for this research. The study involved interviewing participants from Saskatchewan’s public-sector adoption agency, and collecting historical and current adoption documents and data. The results of the interviews and the technical and non-technical data and literature were analyzed and considered through Strauss & Corbin's (1990) Grounded Theory approach to qualitative data analysis.

The findings indicate there have been substantive policy and practice changes within the adoption system relative to communication between adopted parents and adoptees in recent decades, but that there continue to be communication problems in some adoptive families. A return to adoption’s flexible and inclusive pre twentieth century roots was identified as a significant next step in continuing the path towards open communication in adoption policies and practices. Historically, many different methods of kin-based alternative child rearing have existed throughout the ages and these inclusive approaches offer possible archetypes for future policies. This research provides a model for professionals interested in exploring communication issues, and overall changes, in the adoption sector.
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Finally, my advisor, Mona Acker, continuously supported my efforts through belief in the research topic, many insights, and practical feedback through earlier conceptualizations and revisions in strategies. Her flexible yet firm approach provided the balance needed to push for completion of this project. I am forever grateful to Mona for her wisdom and the inspiration she provided during the many phases of this journey.
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Chapter One
AIM OF STUDY

Statement of Problem

Historically, adoption policies in Canada have focused on the needs of adoptive parents, and neglected to acknowledge or address the physiological, psychological and developmental impact of adoption on adoptees (O’Shaughnessy, 1994; Thompson, 1993; Brodzinsky, Schecter & Henig, 1992; Cole, 1991; Kirk, 1984). Attention was often given to the topic of disclosure - telling the adopted child of their origins and explaining the concept of adoption - but it was generally viewed as a static, one-time event and the long-term impact of adoption was overlooked. Research of recent decades has highlighted that accepting one’s adopted status is something adoptees often continually re-examine, as they pass through the various stages of development (Groze, 1996; Carlini, 1993; Brodzinsky, et al, 1992; Rosenberg, 1992; Lindsay & Monseratt, 1989).

In light of the transitions in types of adoptions of recent years, in that many current adoptions involve either foreign babies¹, or local, special-needs children, additional developmental variables - culture shock, racism and the challenges of being a person with a disability - have been added to the already complex triad of adoption.²

The objective of this thesis was to determine if Saskatchewan adoption processes about communication in adoptive families have changed in recent decades to better reflect the developmental, psychological and genealogical needs of adoptees. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. Data and information were gathered from Saskatchewan Social Services staff, databases, and policy and practice documents. This research is designed to provide recommendations for improvements to current adoption policies and practices.

Ultimately, the goal of this thesis is to explore whether the Adoption Myth - the commonly accepted assumption that adoption provides an 'ideal' solution for all parties involved - has been deconstructed. The research was designed to discover if new methods have been constructed, portraying a less-romanticised, more realistic portrayal of rearing a child in a genealogically dissimilar environment. This research is exploratory, as opposed to theory testing, or corroboration. The objective is to determine if the false-consciousness surrounding the Adoption Myth has been addressed, or whether it remains a
major tenet of contemporary policies and approaches regarding adoptees' developmental, physiological, psychological, and, in many cases, cultural and racial needs.

Purpose

Specifically, this thesis seeks to understand how current adoption approaches, as compared to historical methods, accommodate the natural questions, concerns and issues adoptees typically experience during the various developmental phases. Until the second half of this Century, it was assumed that by ensuring adoptees they were loved and chosen they would be less curious about their genealogical roots. (Mondell, 1994; O'Shaughnessy, 1994; Kirk, 1981; Rondell & Michaels, 1965). Adoption research of recent decades has highlighted the fallacies of that belief (Brodzinsky et al 1992; Stein & Hoopes, 1985; Lifton, 1983).

The metaphysical search for our origins, discussed at length by many philosophers, such as Nietzsche and Foucault (Cahoone, 1996; Lechte, 1994) is both universal, and natural. Assuring adoptees they are 'chosen' is not a sufficient replacement for a lack of genetic information. The researcher is interested in exploring if current adoption practices have deconstructed the false alternative that adoptees will not be curious about genealogical roots if they are assured they are chosen and loved by their adoptive parents.

The assumptions inherent in historical versus contemporary adoption policies and practices will be compared so that propositional theories can be generated regarding the existence - or absence - of differences in assumptions regarding the genealogical, psychological and developmental needs of adoptees.

Relevance and Significance

Research of recent decades has highlighted the problematic aspects of adoption: the agencies involved in adoption have historically minimized the challenges of adoption. Up until the 1960s, adoptees' genealogical needs were - at times - pathologized, based on the assumption that if a child is provided with adequate love and support in their adoptive families they will not be curious about their genealogical roots. It has now been established that it is natural and normal for adopted children, adolescents and adults to want to know more about their natural roots (Mondell, 1994; O'Shaughnessy, 1994; Brodzinsky et al, 1992; Stein & Hoopes, 1985; Lifton, 1983; Kirk, 1981). Given the growing recognition that adoption is not an ideal solution to childlessness, it should not be presented to adopted children as such. Consequently, it is important to assess the degree to which the Adoption Myth is, or is not, still present in contemporary adoption policies and practices.
The profession of social work has a long history with North American adoption. Other professions (i.e. physicians, lawyers) have roles in the adoption transaction, but social workers have generally been the primary professional contacts for relinquishing birth parents, adoptive parents, and adoptees, since the popularization of adoption in the earlier decades of this century. While the adoption-related activity social workers have performed in recent decades were based on assumptions of what was in the best interest of the child, the profession cannot ignore its shadow side. Social work was actively involved in the dismal history of adoptions with First Nations and Metis (hence forth 'Aboriginal') children during the 1950s to 1970s, when adoption agencies took part in assimilationist, genocidal, child removal policies (O’Shaughnessy, 1994, Bagley, 1991). Given that the present tends to hold traces of the past – or that the past clings to the present – comparing historical versus contemporary approaches to disclosure and dialogue with adoptees about adoption are relevant in assessing current policy approaches and future policy possibilities.

This research is significant both to the adoption sector, and to the profession of Social Work. The discipline has a significant role to play in promoting greater sensitivity to the problematic dimensions of adoption and in conceptualizing more emancipatory child sharing arrangements as our society approaches the twenty-first Century.

**Evolution of Study**

**Experiential Background**

In designing this thesis project, I drew upon personal and professional experiences. As a participant in adoption (more commonly referred to as an ‘adoptive’), I am personally and socially/politically interested in adoption processes. Throughout my life - starting in very early childhood with an adopted friend who lived across the back alley from my parent’s home - I have had countless conversations with other adoptees. Fellow participants in adoption have shared experiences with me on a variety of issues from communication on adoption with adoptive parents, to existential genealogical questions and the journey of searching for and sometimes joyfully finding their birth relatives. I have also heard stories of adoptees being unable to locate their biological families, and of meeting biological relatives only to encounter painfully disappointing outcomes. Some of the most tragic stories I have heard come from birth mothers,
who have shared with me their experiences of painfully relinquishing their babies, often under extremely stressful social conditions of the 1950s and 60s, and of continually wondering about their lost child's life.

As is the case with many adoptees, during early adolescence I began to critically question the Adoption Myth. My journey studying critical discourse has been both enlightening and heuristically valuable. The individual psychological effects of adoption, as well as the larger policy- and practice-related issues have interested me for many years, as I continually re-explore and accept what it means to be adopted.

Professionally, my experience with producing an undergraduate thesis on the psychological impact of adoption (Thompson, 1993) served to strengthen my interest in policy and practice related processes. The findings of my first thesis, relevant to this thesis, were that1:

1. The quality of communication between the adoptive parent and the adoptee is pivotal to the adoptee's ability to emotionally and intellectually understand what it means to be adopted.

2. Adolescence is a period of increased curiosity about one's biological pre-dispositions, and thus adopted adolescents have a need to learn more about the details of their adoption. If adoptive parents are unable to adjust to the adoptee's increased sense of curiosity, the developmental process and challenges of adolescence can be adversely affected; and,

3. The process of searching for birth parents often results in profound changes for an adoptee. When adoptees are unable to locate their birth parents due to the policies controlling birth records, the experience can be very frustrating and disappointing.

The undergraduate project fostered my interest in adoption policy and practice processes relevant to the aforementioned findings. In the interest of further focusing the research question for this thesis, the policy and practice issues related to disclosure and dialogue on adoption, which are connected to accepting the Adoption Myth, became the focus of the current study. My undergraduate work helped me to understand the experiential perspective of adoptees. This thesis explores the experiential perspectives of front-line workers and policy makers.

Conceptual Background

The conceptual framework for this study follows the critical, comparative, historical, theoretical and post- positivist framework set out by O' Shaughnessy (1993), a fellow participant in adoption, social worker, and social policy analyst. The goal in using O'Shaughnessy's approach is to expand beyond the positivist history of 'traditional' adoption research. This research is exploratory, as opposed to theory
testing, or corroborate; the goal is to generate theories from the data, rather than impose pre-conceived categories onto the research. Traditionally, adoption research and discourse has been non-comparative, ahistorical, atheoretical, and acrical (O'Shaughnessy, 1993). A "post-positivist" framework seeks to transcend the limitations of positivism.

Positivist epistemology permeates all levels of our society – our language, thoughts and everyday life – including social welfare, social work and adoption. Understanding post-positivism first requires an understanding the foundations of positivism. Although there are many definitions, it is generally accepted that a positivist framework assumes the following:

- All knowledge is founded in sensory experience;
- Meaning is grounded in observation;
- Concepts and generalisations only represent the particulars from which they have been abstracted; conceptual entities do not exist in themselves; and,
- Values are not facts and hence values cannot be given as such in sense-experience. Since all knowledge is based on sensory experience, value judgements cannot be accorded the status of knowledge claims. (O'Shaughnessy, 1993).

Correspondingly, a positivist assumption accepts the epistemological, theoretical and methodological unity of the scientific paradigm, and the scientific method. What is accepted "as 'knowledge' must be only those statements or 'findings' which are (ideally) universal and (at least) general laws" (O’Shaughnessy, 1994, p. 24). "Scientifically proven" universal, or general, laws are applied across societies, situations and time, excluding other forms of knowledge, understanding, wisdom and intuitions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; O’Shaughnessy, 1994; Carroll, 1992; Fay, 1987).

The main philosophical assumptions of the scientific paradigm - of a positivist approach - are empiricism, mechanism, reductionism, and, materialism. Post-positivists propose the methods of scientific inquiry are dehumanizing when applied to social science research. Traditional research, according to critics, is violent to the people/subjects/objects of inquiry by the predilection to discount individual, experiential knowledge, and to only accept what is measurable and observable (Schaef, 1992). Since the scientific method involves reducing phenomena to its smallest components for analysis, the empiricism, pragmatism and incrementalism of science results in acritical analysis (Maguire, 1987; Smith, 1987). By empirically discounting any phenomena that cannot be measured, research questions are narrowly conceived, focusing on the manipulable environment. Under the scientific paradigm, pragmatic research focuses on ameliorating the symptoms of 'problematic' individuals and/or families rather than
understanding, and attempting to change, the underlying historical and social 'causes' (O’Shaughnessy, 1994).

Empiricism and pragmatism relate to incrementalism - the process of 'normalising' the abnormal, and thus reproducing the status quo. Incrementalism limits the focus of scientific inquiry to marginal fine-tuning of social 'problems', rather than understanding the underlying antecedents. August Compte - strongly associated with the entrenchment of positivist philosophy in modern society - preached the need for 'resignation' (research concepts must be grounded in observed facts) and 'consolidation of public order' (O’Shaughnessy, 1994; Watson & Evans, 1988; Kendler, 1987). This position exemplifies incremental social engineering - the on-going reproduction of the dominant social order by adopting an acritical methodology to 'scientific' and social investigation.

While the scope of this project is to compare the Adoption Myth as used in recent decades, the exploration is conducted by recognizing adoption's long history. It is acknowledged that when we can look through time, it is clear many other forms of child sharing have been and are common to kin-based societies. The significance of a historical and cross-cultural appreciation for the many historical and contemporary forms of child-rearing cannot be underestimated in efforts to develop imaginative and inclusive social policies and practices as we approach the new millennium. Thus, this exploration strives to examine the history of the Adoption Myth in ways that are synchronic (looking at social phenomena at the same time) and diachronic (looking 'through time').

Theoretically, the study is Social-Theoretical, as opposed to Mechanical-Theoretical. Mechanism involves explaining phenomena in terms of mechanical or physiochemical processes. Assuming a mechanistic philosophy is the opposite of vitalism. Proponents of vitalism believe in determinants beyond a mechanical or physiochemical nature, such as the soul (Watson & Evans, 1988; Kendler, 1987). Accordingly, qualitative analysis was used, to bring out individual meanings of events and to develop an experiential understanding of adoption.

A post-positivist perspective involves exploring social phenomena in ways that are historically respectful, socially connected, and critically examine hegemonic discourse. Post-positivist academics propose that while causal relationships best describe human phenomena, linear causal conclusions are incomplete. Causality, in a post-positivist framework, is assumed to be complex, multiplicitic, and
interactive. "Human and social relationships are more like pretzels than single-headed arrows from A to B...more like convoluted multivariate statistical interactions than simple main effects" (Cook, cited in Green, 1990, p. 230). This study explores the 'pretzels', not the 'arrows' as they relate to the history of Saskatchewan adoption, through a critical, historical, social-theoretical and post-positivist analysis of the Adoption Myth.

Application to Research Agenda

Given the positivist past of Canadian social policy, this thesis seeks to explore how social policy has compartmentalized North American adoption. Positivistically, it has been assumed that babies only require one set of parents and that birth mothers need a complete and unambiguous break to continue with their lives. Compartmentalization in adoption has required adoptees and birth mothers to decontextualize vis-à-vis each other, and recontextualize with other families (O’Shaughnessy, 1994).

The objective of this thesis is to determine if the false-consciousness surrounding the Adoption Myth has been addressed, or whether the Myth continues to be perpetuated in contemporary policies and approaches regarding adoptees’ developmental, physiological, psychological, and, in many cases, cultural and racial needs. Based on the assumption that North American adoption has historically been misunderstood and misrepresented, the thesis seeks to build on previous critical adoption analysis.

Adoption in the 1900s has meant a complete extinction of the connection between a natural mother and her child and a complete integration into a new family. The authoritarianism of social work and related professions has resulted in a presumption that this dualistic approach is 'ideal' for all individuals involved. Accordingly, professional discourse has repressed information on the problematic aspects of adoption, and neglected, denied and marginalized the precariousness of modern Western varieties of adoption (O’Shaughnessy, 1994). The tendency is well represented in critical discourse on the adoption of thousands of Aboriginal babies in Saskatchewan (Bagley, 1991). The cultural history of adoption with this country’s indigenous peoples denounced the kin-based practices that were common prior to colonization of Canada, where child-sharing arrangements required group consensus and acceptance.

The history of adoption in Canada is much older than the European-based concepts of social welfare that permeated the country following colonization. Long before the arrival of Europeans, indigenous peoples had open, inclusive methods of child sharing that minimized the discontinuity in a
child's life. Critical social theorists in the adoption sector advocate for more openness, increased inclusive and decreased discontinuity in progressive adoption policies and practices (O’Shaughnessy, 1994; Daly & Sobel, 1993; Brodzinsky et al., 1992; Altstein & Simon, 1991). By exploring the history of the Adoption Myth with a critical, historical, social-theoretical, post-positivist perspective we can increase our chances of rising to challenges posed by the changing face of contemporary adoption. Fundamentally, the goal was to conduct research that is social-theoretical and is heuristically, morally and politically preferable to mainstream, or positivist, frameworks.

Assumptions

Historically, adoption discourse of the early twentieth Century has repressed the problematic aspects of adoption, such as disruption patterns, cross-cultural identity issues, and geological bewilderment, by adhering to an acritical, positivist paradigm. On the surface, adoption has served to decrease public expenditures for children whose parents are defined as incapable, unwilling, or unknown. At a deeper level, traditional hegemonic policies and practices have served to perpetuate white, middle-class, Christian (in other words, bourgeois) socialization by publicly defining the young (i.e. under age forty) heterosexual nuclear family, with a male wage-earner, as the most desirable form of socialization. Alternative socialization environments have been marginalized and discredited, such as female-headed families, gay couples, individuals without partners, Trans-racial couples, and communal living. Ultimately, adoption, as defined over the last fifty years, has served to socially reproduce and replenish the middle class, frequently from bloodstock seen as lower class.

It is assumed that the repression of the problematic sides of adoption has not been in the best interests of adopted children. Approaches that deny the difference between adoption and biological child rearing must be de-constructed if the developing global adoption model is to avoid the mythical mistakes of the past.

Summary

Chapter One introduced the research problem and study purpose. The significance and relevance of the problem was discussed, including the experiential and conceptual perspectives from which the research question is further explored.
The second chapter explores the historical precursors to the contemporary North American system. Chapter Three explains Strauss and Corbin’s Grounded Theory Approach to qualitative data analysis. The analysis and interpretation of the data is covered in Chapter Four. The final chapter, Chapter Five, discusses the policy, practice and research implications of this study.

Endnotes

1 The terms foreign adoptions, international adoptions and inter-country adoptions are used interchangeably; all three terms refer to adoptions of children from countries other than Canada by Saskatchewan residents.

The triad of adoption refers to the three personal sides of adoption: adoptees, birth mothers and/or parents; and adoptive parents.

2 The fallacy of a “false alternative” occurs when we fail to consider all the relevant possibilities. When we consider a hypothesis to explain why something happened we should test it against other hypotheses; when we take one side of an issue, we must be aware that (1) there are other positions and (2) consider what the other positions might be (Kelly, 1988). For example, if told “someone is not rich”, this fallacy would occur if one inferred that the person is poor. Rich and poor are the extremes of a continuous dimension with many degrees of wealth and impoverishment. This fallacy is frequency seen in the context of complex questions.

The most subtle examples of the fallacy are those in which relevant alternatives are excluded by some implicit, unspoken, and thus invisible assumption... The best safeguards against the fallacy are an open mind and a good imagination. No matter how certain we are of our conclusions and our arguments, it is always worthwhile to stop and ask: is there anything I’ve overlooked? could there be some other explanation of these facts? is there some other perspective one might take?... If we are not satisfied with any of the standard positions on a given issue, it may be because they all make some assumption that should be called into question, thus opening up other possible positions (Kelly, 1988).

With respect to this thesis, the assumption in adoption of the 1960s and 70s was that adopted children would accept their status and not be ‘overly’ curious about biology if loved and welcomed into the adoptive family. This assumption was a false alternative.

The two issues – feeling loved in an adoptive home and wondering about one’s biology – are unrelated and assuming one would replace another commits the fallacy of oversimplifying several extremely complex issues. The acceptance of this fallacy also represents the focus on the significance of nurture, as opposed to nature during the 1960s and into the 70s (Rose, Lewontin & Kamin, 1988). At that time, the major schools of psychology proposed theories about the influence of ‘nurture’ in personality development and behavior – Behaviorism, Humanism, Freudian, Jungian and Gestalt psychology and all assumed nurture was more significant than nature (Watson & Evans, 1991).

4 As with this thesis, my undergraduate research involved using Strauss & Corbin’s Grounded Theory approach to qualitative data analysis. The analytic process of the psychology thesis consisted of open coding of the data (including developing categories, properties and dimensional ranges) and then establishing theoretical propositions from the open coding - a level of analysis appropriate for an advanced undergraduate research project. Considerably more analysis was involved in this thesis as the data was also coded using axial and selective coding techniques (in addition to open coding). This study also involves
using Strauss & Corbin’s (1990) Conditional Matrix, the highest analytic tool of the Grounded Theory approach.

Some of the main philosophical assumptions of the scientific method, or ‘paradigm’ are:

a) **Empiricism**: reality is defined by that which can be observed, measured, predicted, controlled, and repeated. Anything that cannot be measured or documented by numbers does not exist and, therefore, also by definition, is not ‘true’.

b) **Mechanism**: phenomena are explainable in terms of mechanical or physiochemical processes as opposed to some other determinant beyond the mechanical nature, such as the soul (vitalism).

c) **Reductionism**: a complex idea, system, etc., can be completely understood in terms of its simpler parts or components.

d) **Materialism**: the doctrine that matter is the only reality and that the mind, the emotions, etc., are merely functions of it. Materialism reflects a rejection of any religious or supernatural account of things (Schaeff, 1992; Lather, 1991; Harding, 1987).

Studying history is not the same as being “historically respectful”, just as studying social phenomena is not necessarily socially connected. To be connected and critical means to study the past, and the present in socially connected and holistic ways that resist the tendency to break phenomena down. Rather, the objective is to understand the interconnectedness of social events. Similarly, ‘discourse-critical’, or a critical examination of discourse, involves exploring the relationship between language and ideology – between linguistic and non-linguistic activity (O’Shaughnessy, 1994).

Other ‘families’ in that the adoptee joins the adopted family and the birth mother, in most cases, is supposedly ‘free’ to go on to marry, and thus be part of another ‘family’.
Chapter Two

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The historical focus of this thesis led to an exploration of literature on the historical precursors to modern adoption policies, legislation and practices. The emphasis is on highlighting the social issues related to the contemporary adoption system. Specifically, the history of contemporary adoption is reviewed through an overview of the assumptions behind the creation of the Adoption Myth.

This chapter explores the history of adoption, including its use in ancient Greece and Rome, during the medieval years and the Renaissance. Also addressed are the precursors to contemporary policies and practices, established in the late 1800s and early twentieth century. The literature review is limited to the topics researchable within the scope of the study. It is, however, impossible to explore completely all related materials. The identified gaps in the scope of the literature review are highlighted, where appropriate.

Adoption’s Long Legal History

Adoption has existed in many forms since antiquity. Numerous ancient texts specifically refer to adoption, including the Bible and ancient Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Babylonian documents (National Committee for Adoption, 1989). In general, ancient and pre-nineteenth century adoptions – the forerunners to contemporary North American practices - were more open and inclusive, with some cultural variations. During the ancient times there were forms of legalized adoption, but the practice went underground for several centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire. The late 1800s and early 1900s saw the re-emergence of legislated adoption associated with exclusiveness and secrecy.

Ancient Adoption

Although there is no written history of adoption in pre-literate or pre-colonial times, it is probable there were few, if any, forms of formalized adoption. Gatherer-hunter societies were inclusive, open and valued a strong sense of communal belonging (Barrett, 1991; French, 1985; Roseman & Rubel, 1985). As such, kin-based legalities were probably not significant (O’Shaughnessy 1994).
It is estimated that gatherer-hunter bands roamed the earth for two to three million years prior to the development of animal husbandry and settled agriculture (French, 1985). It is probable these bands were not overly concerned about bearing and begetting children. Keeping the band to a 'feedable' size would have, presumably, been important. Anthropologists propose these bands probably existed with a strong sense of band belongingness and formal kin ties, or formal recruitment of kin, was not important (Barrett, 1991; Roseman & Rubel, 1985). Human development, of course, was not universal and there were likely a variety of kinship forms that developed, world-wise, including gather-hunters, pastoral nomads and subsistence agriculturists (O’ Shaughnessy).

Approximately 9,000 years ago, usufruct land usage patterns eroded and patterns of exploitation began. Patterns of animal husbandry and land ownership lead to the development of class divided societies in the Near East, Egypt, China, India and Meso-America in the fifth to second millennia BC (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994). Increases in agricultural activities resulted in an increased need for labor while the acquisition of wealth increased the need for heirs.

Legalized adoption is relatively new in terms of the long history of the human species, estimated to have come into existence somewhere between 10,000 and 3,000 BC in the Near East, China and India (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994). Ancient Greek, Roman and Near Eastern court records include written laws and court case of customary adoptions among the elite, urban classes with wealth and power (to pass on) (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994).

The development of settled agricultural and animal-husbandry societies formalized kinship relations, and transformed usufruct land-right traditions with issues of private property, and ownership. It is proposed that the increased knowledge of the male role in reproduction is related to the development of the institution of kinship (French 1985). The entrenchment of formal adoption is connected to the emergence of legalized class-divided social formations, and the subsequent expansion of patrilineal and patriarchal households (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994). In ancient Greece and Rome, and the Near East, formalized adoption, based on written laws and court cases, focused on adoption by members of the ruling or privileged class. Typically, patriarchal household heads adopted men of a similar class to continue the household name.
The Romans differentiated between closed, or full, adoptions *adrogatio* and less full adoptions, *adiptio*. In the case of the latter, the ‘adoptive’ often retained a link to their biological household. While not recorded, it is probable non-formal adoptions and/or fostering relations occurred among the less privileged ancient classes (O’ Shaughnessy 1994).

Closed adoption practices are detailed in the ancient code of Hammurabi, a text of Babylonian law. Ties between families were permanently severed in Babylonian tradition. If adoptees even as much as mentioned their biological origins out-loud, the Hammurabi code dictated their tongue be cut off and...‘blindness was the punishment for searching for birth parents’ (Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, 1993, p. 194).

It is important to understand how ancient adoption affects contemporary adoption. Ancient Roman Legal Adoption – Justinian’s Laws – were re-discovered in the twelfth century in a library, and greatly influenced both common and civil law from that time onwards, profoundly influencing Napoléon’s (1805) Code and other civil law codes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Equally as important is the recognition of how ancient Indo-European adoption influences contemporary Western practices. The ‘complete’ adoption practice common in the West during the twentieth century has its origins in ancient Indo-European traditions of continuing the name, the cult, possession of property, and establishing permanent relationships. Those ancient patterns pre-figured and legitimized modern Western formal legal adoption (found earliest in the Anglo-American-Australian jurisdictions), discouraging flexible, half way adoptions common to ancient Rome (Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, 1993).

The Dark and Middle Ages

Formalized adoption, sanctioned by written law, virtually disappeared during the Dark and Middle Ages. While popular in ancient times, formalized adoption does not appear in literature or records from around the fourth and eighth centuries CE in Western and Eastern Europe until the late eighteenth century.

Several factors are connected to the disappearance of formal adoptions. The disintegration of the centralized Roman State as the controlling organ of public transitions during the fourth and fifth centuries was a major contributor to the disappearance of formal adoption. Another significant factor was aristocratic and consanguineal ideologies during the High Middle Ages. Beliefs in the essential quality of breeding, blood and birth justified social and royal power and mobility (and justified social inequities)
(Giddens, 1987; Knuttila, 1987; French, 1985). The political, social and economic dominance of royalty contributed to the foreclosure of social, not genealogical, sonship. As well, the Catholic Church’s antipathy to heir-creation strategies further strengthened the movement away from formal adoptions during the middle ages (O’Shaughnessy, 1994).

While not common, adoption did exist in the Middle Ages. Julius Caesar, among other sonless rulers, adopted a son to ensure his name was carried on to a male heir (O’Shaughnessy, 1994). And, centuries later some remnants of Roman law on adoption were retained in some areas. In Denmark, for example, in 1683, the Code of Christian 1 made reference to adoption. Also, the disappearance of legal adoption does not mean there were not private transactions between families. Adoption might not be present in all historical records; however, it is appropriate to state that alternative forms of child rearing have existed throughout history.

On our own continent, the Inuit have always practiced a form of open adoption. When couples are childless, another couple within the kin circle gives a childless couple a child. The ‘adoption’ is open and the adoptee knows the birth parents (Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, 1993).

The Renaissance of Adoption

A revival of formalized adoptions took place in the mid-Nineteenth Century. Prior to the mid-1800s, there was little state involvement in adoptions, and it was seen mainly as a private transaction. The liberal and individualistic ideology of the nineteenth century contributed the private nature of adoption, and its omission from public laws.

Historically, court proceedings were sometimes not required in ancient Greece and Rome, and adoption was formalized through a deed “making adoption analogous to the transfer of real property” (Bremner, 1970, p. 369). Roman-influenced jurisdictions generally had a quasi adoption model of an incomplete form of adoption, or adoptio, for inheritance rights issues. Adoptio was used for special cases of the upper classes.

The social transformation towards mass democracies following the French Revolution, the emergence of Nation States, the Industrial Revolution and the growth of capitalism all contributed to the re-popularization of formalized adoption. French Emperor Napoléon greatly influenced the European renaissance of legal adoption for he was childless and adopted a son to succeed him as France’s Emperor.
The political desires of Nation states, concerned about the reproduction of citizenry, also affected adoption’s revivification of the late-nineteenth century. The concept of a paternal State ideology – that the State is a public father – led to an increased concern for the care of war orphans. Also, democratic processes forced the State to recognize, publicly, the contribution of fallen soldiers. The plight of fatherless children took on a significant social dimension and adoption moved back into the public sphere after many centuries of being a private matter, with virtually no involvement of the state.

Colonial America did not inherit a body of common law on adoption; very few federal laws pertained to adoption. Orphans often used indentures where their masters cared for apprenticed children - a practice that continued even after the Civil War. The roots of indenture lie with the Elizabethan Poor Laws, where the master provided food and shelter, accepting the obligation of teaching the child a trade (National Committee for Adoption, 1989). Some proposed that the nineteenth century revival of public, proletariat adoption grew out of the Elizabethan Poor Law tradition (Green, cited in O’ Shaughnessy, 1982).

A concern for child welfare was prominent in the resurgence of public adoption. The system where children earned their keep by learning a trade eventually gave way to the current system where children are treated as biological off-spring. The Massachusetts Adoption Law (1851) was a harbinger, providing a significantly increased role for the state compared to existing laws, both in North America and in most parts of Europe (Modell, 1994). The Massachusetts Law set a precedent for other states, British Colonies, and probably the first adoption law in Britain (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994). It was the first to require formal judicial proceedings, and was based on the concepts of “child protection”, “prevention of cruelty” and public welfare. Specifically, the Massachusetts statute pioneered changes by requiring:

1. Written consent of the birth parents.
2. Joint petition by both adoptive parents.
3. A decree of adoption by a judge.
4. Legal and complete severance with the child and the birthparents (National Committee for Adoption, 1989).

The early forms of modern legalized adoption were unlike the Roman-influenced informal adoptions. The precursors to contemporary Western adoption were closed and irrevocable; natal parents lost all rights to their child. Wardship came into existence for the thousands of lower class orphans, and
legal forms of substitute care were established. The essential concern of early approaches was to separate children from their natal parents – to sever all ties.

Wardship, like the developing forms of public adoption of the early twentieth Century, required the relinquishment of parental rights to the state, or non-government organizations acting for the state. The concept of state intervention in poor families eroded household paternal (and maternal) control. The Wardship phenomena represented a dualistic ideology, displaying a fear for the dangerous, evil class of negligent natal parents, at one end of the paradigm, and a glorification for the godly nature of the foster parents, at the other end. The ideologies behind early modern adoptions represent the entrenchment of the Adoption Myth, establishing a metaphor of children being ‘rescued’ from evil origins. Disdain was reflected for the poor, and the powerless, especially women and single women with children (Lerner, 1986; French, 1985).

The transition from private to public adoption and the paternal focus on “child protection” served to perpetuate the genocidal practices of Colonial governments. In Canada and Australia, tens of thousands of indigenous children were made wards of the State between 1880 and up until the 1960s (Bagley, 1991). “Wardship was the legal arm of the assimilative-genocidal policy of forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families and nations” (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994, p. 70).

Twentieth Century Adoption

In the late nineteenth Century, English-speaking colonial jurisdictions developed formal, legalized adoption models. Europe and North America moved to closed adoptions at different rates. Between the First and Second World Wars adoption became public and legislated. In the 1920s and 30s England and most of its remaining states, including Canada, Australia, and the majority of England’s sub-Saharan African colonies, passed adoption legislation. Atlantic Provinces were the first in Canada to legislate adoption. New Brunswick, in 1873, and Nova Scotia next in 1896. By 1930 every Canadian province and American State had an adoption law (Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, 1993). Similarly, adoption laws in were in place in most of Europe by 1930. Sweden and Norway introduced legislation in 1917, Denmark in 1923, and Finland in 1925. The USSR passed a law in 1918 prohibiting adoption, and then re-introduced the practice, rescinding the earlier law, in 1926 (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994, p. 72).
The passage of adoption laws was greatly influenced by the two World Wars, but was generally a peacetime institution. Countries that did not pass legislation prior to the Second World War passed adoption laws to provide new homes for war orphans and homeless children following the war. Yugoslavia introduced public adoption in 1950, Ireland in 1952, the Netherlands in 1956, Portugal in 1967, and Greece in 1946, and 1966 (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994). Post World War II adoptions no longer epitomized the feudal, aristocratic form of adoption, present in the nineteenth century, but rather focused on the new aristocracy of respectability and orthodoxy. Twentieth century adoptive parents “were the ideal bourgeois Christian conjugal couple, their perfection marred by an absence, a lack of children” (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994, p. 73).

In many countries, adoptions during the late 1800s and early twentieth Century did not result in adopted children having the same inheritance rights as natural children. The adoptee’s name, guardianship and custody were transferred from the natural to adoptive parents; however, the laws did not outlaw marriage between adoptive parents and adoptees. The rational for condoning sexual and marital relations in adoption was that adoptees have different bloodlines than adoptive parents and siblings (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994).

Many British countries had less exclusive forms of adoption prior to the World Wars, the most common being referred to as l’adoption simple, or adoption simple. Such forms of adoption did not necessitate a complete break with the natural families. In adoption simple the adopted person, and their identity, could straddle both families. Most of the post Second World War adoption amendments were in regards to moving from inclusive to exclusive forms of adoption, making a complete break with natural families. Prohibitions against incest and marriage between parents and children were legislated into the majority of post war adoption laws.

The Shame and Secrecy of Closed Adoptions in North America

North American adoption of the 1900s has been associated with shame, secrecy and attempts to cover-up the biological identity of the adoptee. Attitudes regarding the secret past of adoptees were fostered by societal attitudes about sexuality (Hampton, 1997; Hampton, 1987). In the late 1920s and into the 30s women who became pregnant out of wedlock were ostracized. In an effort to hide the shame of illegitimacy, adoption agencies sought to hide the past from adopted children. Many children adopted during the first decades of this Century were not even told about their adopted origins. A complete break
with the child's past was consistent with the preference of adoptive parents for a child without any ties, the desire for a child who would indeed become a member of the adoptive family, perpetuating the myths of adoption (Dukette, 1984).

Since the 1940s, there has been a movement towards disclosing some information about an adoptee's natural parents; however, attitudes of shame and secrecy prevailed until the 1970s. The consequence of adoption's shameful past reflected systemic efforts to minimize the psychological impact of adoption on adoptees. Consequently, adoption served the interests, both legally and emotionally, of adoptive parents, and nullified the trauma adoptees and birth parents experienced (Marcus, 1981). To justify these one-sided practices, myths and fantasies were created.

The Adoption Myth

To facilitate the acceptance of Adoption Myths, denying that adoption served mainly the interests of adoptive parents, the major theme of North American adoption of this century has been that adoption is an act of kindness - a benevolence designed to save children from impoverished or harmful environments (Reitz & Watson, 1992). The Adoption Myth proposed that adoption was in the best interests of the child and a secondary benefit was that it was also a perfect solution for infertility. The rescue fantasy aided in justifying the exclusiveness of modern adoption - the permanent separation of children from birth parents (Reitz & Watson, 1992). This romanticized version of adoption, referred to as the 'rescue fantasy', justified the placement of a child in a home with strangers for the fantasy led to the conclusion that closed adoption was in the best interests of everyone involved.

The 'rescue fantasy' ignored the inherent pain of adoption. The anxiety and guilt experienced by birth mothers was minimized or ignored by both adoptive parents and adoptive agencies in a collaboration to portray adoption as ideal. The Adoption Myth proposed that closed adoption offered "a chance for birth parents to go on happily with their lives, for children to grow up in trouble-free families, and for adoptive parents to fulfill themselves and find immortality through children to whom they have sole claim by virtue of adoption" (Reitz & Watson, 1992).

The fantastical nature of the Adoption Myth becomes evident upon critical examination of its premises. The harsh reality is that it is a second-best solution for everyone involved. The Adoption Myth is considered mythical because in reality being infertile - the general cause of applying for adoption - is not
ideal for adoptive parents. Similarly, being unable, either economically or socially to keep one's child is not ideal for birth mothers and/or parents. Finally, being separated from one's birth family is not ideal for an infant. Adoption is a second-best solution for all parties involved, and is not an 'ideal' solution. In an ideal world, all adults seeking to become parents could give birth to and raise their own children.

To continue the perpetuation of the Adoption Myth, assumptions were developed to maintain the belief of the ideal solution of adoption. The main mythical assumptions were:

- Adoptees' feelings of being different would be minimized if adoptees were matched with families with similar ethnic appearances, and if adoptees were placed in adoptive homes as soon as possible after birth;
- Adoption is a static event with no developmental ramifications; and,
- Denying the reality of the birth family is beneficial to the psychological well being of the adoptee (Reitz & Watson, 1992).

During the 1950s and 60s, adoptive agencies encouraged adoptive parents to treat the adoptee as though she/he were born into the family. The long-term developmental implications of adoption were viewed as inconsequential or outright denied as the 'denial of difference' ideology became embedded as a requirement of the Adoption Myth. Typically, adoptive parents were instructed to inform the child of the adoption (rather than risk the child learning it from another source), but the genetic and psychological importance of the natural parents was invalidated. Agencies counseled birth mothers to sign relinquishment forms and then to just go on with their lives. Accepted practices concealed information and forbade contact between birth parents and their children. The significance of genealogy were dishonored, in an attempt to "transform strangers into kin and kin into strangers" (O' Shaughnessy, 1994, p. 227). To explain the Adoption Myth, participants in the practice were told they were 'chosen'.

The Chosen Baby Story

The Chosen Baby Story has been well addressed in adoption research on methods of disclosure and relates to attempts to minimize the importance of the adoptee's birth parents (Reitz & Watson, 1992; Stein & Hoopes, 1985). The assumption was reflected in the professional bias of the 1940's and 1950's and proposed that an adopted child will not desire genealogical information if provided sufficient assurances of love (Lifton, 1983). Adopted children were told they were 'chosen' and somehow that myth was expected to magically act on the child's psyche and dispel all curiosity about one's birth family. "There is often no explanation as to where the baby came from - it is as if it just appeared on the earth for the sole purpose of
being chosen by them” (Lifton, 1983, p. 22). Adoptees report that the Chosen Baby Story left them feeling their birth parents had rejected or deserted them. Participants in adoption of earlier decades of this century were not told that in many cases their birth mothers/parents were simply unable to care for their children due to social and economic circumstances. This point is emphatically stated by an adoptee participating in research on the "Chosen Baby Story":

In the place of real answers to the many questions, myths are created. The most pervasive of these is the myth of the “chosen child”, as if my adoptive parents picked me from a cast of thousands rather than gratefully accepting the first child that the agency offered them (Cited in Soresky, 1987, p. 88).

The fairy-tale of being ‘chosen’ is part of the Adoption Myth. Many parents who adopted children in the 1940s to the 1960s, in particular, but not exclusively, were encouraged to use this myth to explain the origin of the adoption to the adoptee.

The Chosen Baby Story is one of the tragic consequences embedded in the heart of modern Western legal and non-relative adoption. Participants in adoption internalized the contradictions of the Adoption Myth, and, unprepared and unsupported, “were required to carry their shameful secret alone” (O’Shaughnessy, 1994, 227).

The 1980s to Present: A Developing International Model

The last twenty years has seen the beginning of the de-construction of the Adoption Myth. As psychological research has highlighted the developmental challenges adoptees face in the absence of genetic information (Gaber & Aldridge, 1994; Rosenberg, 1992; Simon & Alstein, 1992; Barth & Berry, 1988; Westhues & Cohen, 1987; Sachdev, 1984; Pringle, 1967). ‘Genealogical Bewilderment’ and other terms became common in the adoption sector, as research began to highlight the significance of what it means to be adopted (Sorosky et al. 1978). The movement towards tearing down commonly held assumptions was, to a large degree, promoted by adult adoptees who were adopted during the years of shame and secrecy (Schlesinger, 1979). Many adoption researchers are adult adoptees, who contributed significantly to raising awareness of the many different sides of modern adoptions (Hampton, 1997; O’Shaughnessy, 1994). Adoptees emphatically proposed being loved by adoptive parents did not decrease the need to search for one’s origins, highlighting how the Adoption Myth is a false alternative for genealogical information. As
well, a movement of adoptees searching for identifying information of their origins gained strength as the cohort of baby-boomer adoptees aged and collectively spoke-out about the injustices of closed adoption records. The movement advocated for an unsealing of closed adoption records, with successful outcomes in Western Canada. In the 1990s provincial governments, including Saskatchewan, made momentous changes to adoption records and now provide identifying information to participants in adoption, and maintain passive registries to facilitate reunions between birth relatives (Saskatchewan Social Services, 1994).

Some of the strongest criticisms of closed adoptions came from First Nations People who began to speak out against the abominable past of cross-cultural adoptions and residential schooling in Western Canada (Durst, 1994; Ryant, 1984; Cumming & Mickenberg, 1977). 5

Psychological and social policy research of the last twenty years has emphasized the importance of acknowledging the dissimilarity between birth and adoptive families. The adoption sector has slowly come to end the 'denial of difference' (Gaber & Aldridge, 1994; Rosenberg, 1992; Simon & Alstein, 1992; Barth & Berry, 1988). The significance of accepting the difference between biological and non-biological parenting cannot be overstated, for it represents a substantive shift from exclusive adoptions towards more inclusive approaches. The 1980s and 90s have seen a movement towards more openness in adoption through open adoptions, involving some contact with the natural parents during childhood. In many ways, the shift signifies a return to the adoption simple approach used in Europe before the World Wars. While older, closed forms of adoption suppressed and distorted biological kinship relations, the movement towards more inclusive approaches represents recognition for the significance of genealogy.

Inter-country Adoption

As we approach the twenty-first Century, a new adoptive model is emerging. While the majority of Saskatchewan adoptions have been domestic, many are now international (Appendix A). A multitude of factors are involved in the transition away from local adoptions and towards international adoptions. Changes in the availability of contraception, abortion, and the growing acceptance of single parenting have all played a role in the continual decrease in the availability of local babies available for adoption.

Inversely, the demand for adoption has increased, as many couples now postpone conception until later in life, increasing the probability of infertility. Many of the children available domestically for adoption are
older children, or special-needs children (i.e. children who have a disability, or multiple disabilities), who are often undesirable choices for parents seeking a healthy infant (Daly and Sobel, 1993). These factors have driven childless couples to search overseas for babies to adopt.

Inter-country adoption started in the 1970s in Canada, initially with adoptions from Germany, Greece and other European cultures. When those supplies dried up, efforts turned to Asia. Initial inter-country adoptions were focused (1) on Caucasian babies; and failing that (2) on babies where the differences were degree of pigmentation, such as with Asian ethnicity. The Korean War was one of the largest single-suppliers of inter-country adoptions, which lasted to the early 1980s (Triseliotis, 1993). The demand for babies in the West coincided with extreme poverty and overpopulation in Latin America and many parts of Asia. In the late 80s, when the Romanian communist regime of Nicolae Ceausescu was overthrown, media stories of tens of thousands of ‘orphans’ emerged, leading to the Canadian adoption of Romanian orphans.

Critical adoption theorists emphasize the significance of ensuring dialogue on identity avoids repeating, or re-constructing, the painful past mistakes of exclusive adoption methods, and the ‘denial of difference’ (Cohen, 1994; Gaber & Aldridge, 1994; Thurnham, 1993; Rosenberg, 1992; Simon & Alstein, 1992). Openness in inter-country adoption is difficult when children have lost their birth parents in a war, or when their (assumedly poor) parents live halfway around the world (Ames, 1997; Modell, 1994; Westheus & Cohen, 1994; Alstein & Simon 1991; McDale, 1991).

In Saskatchewan, persistent lobbying by provincial residents wanting to adopt internationally led to the development of Social Services’ International Adoption Program in 1994. The Department facilitates inter-country adoptions through a variety of responsibilities and functions such as implementing procedures and protocols to address legal, ethical and clinical issues.

The development of the International Adoption Program in 1994 coincides with the April signing that year of the Hague Convention – an inter-country agreement signed by sixty-six participating states for regulation of international adoptions between countries. Canada ratified the Hague in 1996 and Saskatchewan is among several provinces implementing the agreement. Currently, Saskatchewan is involved in adoptions from both Hague and non-Hague countries. Over 75% of Saskatchewan Social Services’ current inter-country caseload are from Eastern Europe (the former Soviet Union) or Asia.
Table 1. Countries of Interest among Current Active Saskatchewan Social Services Caseload

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hague Country</th>
<th>Non-Hague Country</th>
<th>Number of Active Applicants (Oct./97)</th>
<th>% of Total Active Applicants (Sept./97)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25.7 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>27.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Vincent</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa / Ethiopia</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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<td>United States</td>
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<td>Panama</td>
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<td>Jamaica</td>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam/Korea</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodia/Taiwan</td>
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<td>(does not equal 100% due to rounding)</td>
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Source: Saskatchewan Social Services, 1998.

The rhetoric of rescuing, and saving abandoned babies is evident in some international adoption literature (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1993). While other materials acknowledge the discoveries of critical adoption researchers and theorists (Gaber & Aldridge, 1994; Modell, 1994; Alstein & Simon, 1991). The concern among critical thinkers is that if mythical rescuing fantasies are not de-constructed, internationally adopted children may have a more difficult time adjusting to their new homelands, and homes. Often, babies adopted internationally come from war-torn countries, have lost their natural parents, and experience significant culture shock, making them susceptible for Post-Traumatic symptoms (DSM-IV, American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Furthermore, many children adopted internationally have spent considerable time in orphanages, where their nutritional and social needs have not been met. Adoptive parents receiving children from other countries must meet the challenges of parenting by understanding and embracing the child’s cultural heritage. They must be prepared to overcome the obstacles associated with racism, culture shock, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, malnutrition, and a variety of other potential health problems.

Recent scientific research highlights the limitations some adoptive parents may face. In the last decades of this century, technological advancements in neurological imaging techniques (i.e. CAT and PET scans, EEGs, and MRIs) have led to numerous new neurological discoveries in previously
undiscovered territories. Of relevance to this project is the growing awareness of the "work-in-progress" state of the human brain upon birth – of the significance of "cellular connectionism" (Guy, 1997).

A (ideally) fully developed baby enters the world with 100 billion nerve cells, called neurons, but a newborn's neurons are not connected into the intricate patterns that characterize the human brain. The neurons in a baby brain must develop so as to form the complex network of connections essential for thinking, feeling, and moving; the connections among neurons allow the neurons to communicate in controlling the body's organs, glands, and muscles (Guy, 1997).

While the process of connecting the cells – building the neural infrastructure - or "cellular connectionism" continues for about the first decade of life, much of the brain's development happens in the first 12 months of life (Guy, 1997). The "frenzy of activity" that occurs immediately following birth – enabling neurons to connect to one another and "wire" together – is not driven by heredity but by the sensory stimulation a child receives from the outside world (Guy, 1997).

Concerns were raised regarding the ill health of many of the early Romanian adoptions at the turn of the decade, and while the amount of outcomes and follow-up research is small, the accounts, thus far, indicate a higher-than-normal level of attachment and behavioral disorders and other "serious problems" (Arnes, 1997).

Adding to the complexity of international adoptions is the lack of consistency in record-keeping techniques. While Canadian adoptees have had to fight to have their adoption records unsealed, internationally adopted children, in many cases, will not have any records to unseal. The concept of 'genealogical bewilderment' takes on new proportions with respect to international adoptions. Since international adoptions are relatively new phenomena, there is not yet sufficient data to assess the effectiveness of contemporary approaches to adoption. It is important to monitor disruption rates of international adoptions. If rates are higher, overall, than domestic disruption rates additional research and policy analysis/program revision is required to minimize the problems associated with adoption as we approach the new millennium.

The future of adoption is clearly international and it is increasingly important the adoption field develops a self-reflexive approach to recognizing and responding to the changing face of Canadian
adoption. It is for this reason the focus of this thesis is on exploring how the Adoption Myth has changed in recent decades, and whether or not we are still approaching adoption from a fictitious perspective.

Summary

Chapter Two provided an overview of the historical precursors to contemporary adoption, tracing the transitions from inclusive to exclusive adoption practices. The origins of the Adoption Myth were discussed. Transitions in the adoption field of the twentieth Century were outlined, including the recent transition towards international adoptions and the importance of de-constructing, rather than preserving, the Adoption Myth. Chapter Three summarizes the methodological approaches used in data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Endnotes

1 Usufruct land-rights/values are defined as belief that land cannot be owned, but is a shared privilege that must be respected. Gathering-hunting societies strove to not damage the land they lived, gathered, or hunted on and were morally committed to leaving the land as it was found. Usufruct values are juxtaposed to Modern traditions of property ownership (Barrett. 1991; Roseman & Rubel. 1985).

2 The “Dark and Middle Ages’ describes the years prior to the fall of the Roman Empire and the birth of Christ, to the start of the Renaissance, in the mid-fifteenth century (Watson & Evans, 1991).


4 Eric Erickson proposed an epigenetic development of identity formation occurring in three stages of psychosocial development, providing the opportunity for successful resolution of identity crises (Erickson. 1968, p. 156). Enckson theorized the identity process develops simultaneously on three dimensions: psycho-biological, psychosocial, and psycho-historical (Sorosky, Baran & Pannor, 1978, p. 14). The psycho-historical dimension is significant to adoptees’ development since it deals with the part of identity relating to one’s sense of genealogy. Psycho-historical development is an existential concern that views an individual going through a cycle of life stages connected to previous and future generations through the phenomena of birth and death (Sorensky et al. 1978, p. 14). Critics of closed adoptions propose that depriving adoptees of genetic information may have a significant impact on psycho-historical development (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994). The Adoption Triangle, published in 1978 by Sorosky, Baran and Pannor (two psychiatrists and a social worker, who collaborated on a number of publications during the 1970s) introduced the concept of ‘Genealogical Bewilderment’ to audiences wider than their own professions. They held the view that adoptees, ignorant of their true background, despite a healthy nurturing relationship with their adoptive parents and normal relationships with peers and others, were handicapped in the psycho-historical dimension of identity (O’ Shaughnessy, 1994, p. 119).

5 The significance of the Federal Liberal government issuing a 1998 public apology for the treatment of Aboriginal People in residential schools cannot be overstated. Also, the publication of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) and the Federal Government’s response to the RCAP are also significant in terms of acknowledging the depth of healing required within our Aboriginal communities as a
result of this country’s genocidal past. These public admissions for past wrong doings represent a significant step in acknowledging the difficulties with cross-culture socialization and child rearing.

Referring to the Romanian children as ‘orphans’ is, in most cases, a misnomer as Ceausescu’s reign outlawed birth control and abortion which, coupled with extreme poverty, were the causal factors behind the high numbers of children in need of homes (National Committee for Adoption, 1989).

It is important to note there is a range of information provided in inter-country adoptions. Some counties, like Korea, are reported to provide detailed family history records, and offer quality foster care to children awaiting adoption, as opposed to the deprived conditions reported in, for example, Romanian adoptions of the late 1980s. While it is difficult to state what the ‘normal’ amount of information provided in inter-country adoptions, there is a significant range between some countries providing considerable information and others providing little or no background information. Advances in information technology and information systems could increase the flow of information between Saskatchewan and countries involved in foreign adoptions.

Prior to 1994, Saskatchewan residents interested in inter-country adoption pursued transactions independently. The Department of Social Services had a very limited role, but in the early 1990s a program was launched to facilitate the high numbers of Romanian adoptions. Romania ended private transactions shortly after, amid concerns about practices used in many of the adoptions.

To date the following countries have ratified the Hague Convention:

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<tr>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
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The provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island are implementing the Hague Convention (Saskatchewan Social Services, 1998).

The experiences of being separated from birth parents (and siblings and extended families), being institutionalized in an orphanage, travelling to a strange country and experiencing culture shock and possibly racism are potentially traumatic for an infant or young child. These experiences could put a young individual at risk for Post-Traumatic Shock symptoms. This possibility needs to be anticipated and monitored in inter-country adoptions.

Stimulation to the senses (sights, sounds, touches, smells and tastes) helps the brain form connections between neurons; electrical activity, triggered by sensory stimulation changes the physical structure of the brain. Adults’ interactions with the child during the first few years of life provide stimulation that will influence how the child’s brain develops. Interaction with the child allows for ‘attachment’. Providing the safety and security for the infant and child to reduce anxiety and allow the brain to take in the sensory world. Holding and cuddling a child, talking to them, playing with toys strengthens capacity to learn and cope emotionally with life’s stresses. Care and stimulation in early life offers huge rewards, developmentally (Guy, 1997).

Conversely, and not surprisingly, neglecting or abusing an infant during this critical time can produce functions and wiring patterns in the brain’s core that lead to heightened anxiety and abnormal childhood and adult behavior. Neuroscientists continue studies to explore the possible seeds to adult aggression, lack of emotional control (Guy, 1997).
Chapter Three

METHOD FOR INQUIRY

Procedure

The following chapter summarizes the four primary issues involved in the research process: method selection; data selection and collection; ethical considerations; and analysis.

Method Selection

A qualitative rather than quantitative research method was chosen in light of the research question of exploring the *Adoption Myth* – locating the phenomenon in a set of historical circumstances and events. Ultimately, the goal was to develop an understanding of the theoretical and philosophical assumptions reflected in adoption policies and practices. A purely quantitative approach was deemed an inadequate method for identifying, developing and relating essential concepts significant to emergent policy and practices approaches. Further, very little adoption-related statistical data was available, and what figures were accessible under the *Freedom of Information Act* varied between provinces, and thus were not necessarily comparable. Record keeping in Canada – and in Saskatchewan - has not been systematic throughout recent decades.

While little quantitative data on adoptions is available, there is considerable technical and nontechnical literature on adoption, both contemporarily and historically, and a small number of professionals who can provide an oral history of the topic matter. It was important to choose a method that would illuminate the complexity of the historical and contemporary components of the study (Creswell, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Hoover, 1992; Taylor, 1990; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Patton, 1987; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Strauss and Corbin’s Grounded Theory approach (1990) was chosen for its focus on generating, or grounding, theories in the data, as opposed to imposing preconceived and possibly restrictive categories onto the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Harding, 1987).

The Grounded Theory approach was also chosen because of its focus on systematically developing an inductively derived grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) given that the researcher’s experiences were dissonant with the existing literature. In approaching this topic matter, it became clear a new approach was needed to resolve the researcher's personal and professional experiences with adoption.
relevant to dominant hegemony of contemporary policy and practice methods. The process of discovery is central to Grounded Theory; the foundation of the method is to elicit - from the data - new insights into social phenomenon. Strauss & Corbin’s (1998) approach provides a strategy for using historical data in conjunction with fieldwork and interview data to, in this case, gain an understanding of the historical origins and historical continuities of the Adoption Myth.

The Grounded Theory approach leads to a theoretical formulation of a phenomenon. Concepts and relationships are not only generated but are provisionally tested, through the three stages of coding, explained more fully later in this chapter, and with greater detail in Chapter Four. Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) approach emphasizes that for emerging data to be grounded, thus valid and reliable, the analysis must follow systematic procedures just as carefully as methods governing quantitative research. In Grounded Theory, the theory evolves from the continuous interplay between the analysis and the data collection – a constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This ‘grounding’ process allows for ingenuity and aids creativity in developing a rich theoretical approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Data Selection and Collection

A triangulation approach to data collection was utilized to capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the phenomenon under study. Triangulation links data sources with the method and theory – links the data to the researcher and data type (Denzin, 1978). Researchers suggest there are two applications of triangulation. One is the metaphorical application of the technical term ‘triangulation’ where various methods are used to measure and operationalize discrete constructs (Morse, 1989). The second uses multiple strategies to attain completeness (Petrucka, 1997). The credibility of information increases using multiple data sources and types. triangulation provides contextual validation by assessing validity of a particular piece of evidence in comparison with other kinds of evidence (Petrucka, 1997; Green, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). The approach is not without its shortcomings, primarily which are related to constraints in terms of time and money that can jeopardize the effective use of triangulation (Petrucka, 1997).

The first component of data in this study came from existing technical (trend-line data) and non-technical (adoption policies and legislation) publications from Saskatchewan Social Services. The second data source involved interviews with government employees of adoption units in Saskatchewan, who spoke
about adoption policies, legislation. The final portion of data came from interviews with front-line workers in Saskatchewan, primarily Social workers, and particularly those who have worked in the field for many years. The front-line workers provided experiential analysis of historical and contemporary adoption policies and practices. Triangulation, in this case, entailed the comparison of literature with individual perceptions. The views of Saskatchewan participants were compared with research findings from National research, as well as research from other - mostly developed - countries.

Participants

The participants were selected purposefully, rather than randomly. No attempt was made to randomly select participants, as participants were sought who could best answer the research questions (Creswell, 1994). While using a randomized selection process reduces risks of data bias, the pool of appropriate adoption professionals in Saskatchewan is very small¹. Desired participants were professionals who could speak to both current and historical policies and practices. The goal was to come across participants who could share interpretations of the adoption policy and practice process, bringing time and movement to the analysis.

Participants were selected by Saskatchewan Social Services using the network technique (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). "Networking" involves developing a sample of participants based on dialogue with initial contacts. It is an effective technique when working with a small pool of potential participants. In this case, participants who were experienced, reflective, and articulate were sought. On behalf of the researcher, the Department contacted adoption professionals who fit the aforementioned criteria.² Upon verbal agreement to consider participation, potential respondents were sent a "Participant Package", containing a summary of the thesis project, a list of potential interview questions, and a copy of the "Informed Consent Form" (Appendix B). After reviewing the package, each potential participant contacted the Social Services Department contact to confirm interest in participation. Following the "confirmation call", the researcher contacted each of the ten participants to arrange an interview time, and to further discuss the research project and process.

In light of the exploratory nature of the research, and the open-ended focus of the Grounded Theory approach, it was decided that a semi-structured interview schedule would be the most appropriate research tool for collecting the interview data (Appendix Biv). An ethnographic interview style was
adopted, in accordance with the Grounded Theory approach. Three main elements determine the success of
the ethnographic interview:

1. The attitude of the interviewer.
2. The relationship between the participant and the interviewer; and.
3. The structure of the interview (Hampton, 1987).

The attitude of the interviewer was that of a learner, seeking to understand another’s experience from
their perspective. The interviewer must actively listen to the participant, without imposing subjective
interpretations on the interview.

The relationship between the participant and the observer focused on the researcher emphasizing the
position of the learner to stress the importance of discussing the participant’s unique experience. Pivotal to
this process is that a shared interpretation, or similarity of experiences, is not assumed; the researcher must
separate their own experiences from the participants’ to ensure objectivity during the interviews.

The structure of the interview was non-structured and open-ended. The interviews began with an
explanation of the purpose with an honest discussion of my experiences in adoption research and as an
adoptive. Participants were explicitly explained what was expected of them. Ethical considerations,
addressed in the following section, are an important factor in the structure of the interview.

Ethical Considerations

In light of the sensitive nature of the topic area, the ultimate concern was for the well being of the
participants during the interviews. Ethnographic research is prominent within the discipline of
Anthropology, and thus, the guidelines of the Council of the American Anthropological Association are
applicable when discussing the ethical considerations of ethnographic interviewing:

In research, an anthropologists’ paramount responsibility is to those (s)he studies. When there is a
conflict of interest, those individuals must come first. The anthropologist must do everything
within his/her power to protect their physical, social, and psychological welfare and to honor their

Accordingly, the well being of the participants takes precedence over the goals of data collection (Tri-

Ethics Approval

Ethics approval for the project was obtained from the University of Regina Ethics in Human Research
Committee (Appendix DI). The University of Regina, Faculty of Social Work, considered approval of the
study proposal by the Ethics Committee sufficient to meet Faculty requirements. Additionally, ethical approval was received from Saskatchewan Social Services, which provided historical and current adoption policy and practice documents, and facilitated the participant recruitment process (Appendix Dii).

Participants were assured that involvement was voluntary and that responses would be treated in confidence. Only non-identifying quotations were selected from the interviews for the final document. The participants, all employees in the public service sector, were asked for critical organizational analysis. Such questions pose a potential conflict of interest between the research versus professional obligations and loyalties. The interviews were structured with an acknowledgement of this potential conflict, avoiding potential professional dissonance during interviewing took precedence over the data collection objectives. While quotations from the interviews are contained in the analysis section of this thesis, all quotations are non-identifying geographically, to maintain the respect and dignity of the participants.

A signed consent form (Appendix Bv) was obtained from each participant prior to data collection. Confidentiality and reliability was subsequently reinforced with a transcript sign-off option given to participants following review of their personal interview transcripts (Appendix F). Prior to review by the participants, the transcripts were compared with the cassette recordings for transcription reliability (Appendix E).

Analysis

Coding: Theory

The initial phases of qualitative data analysis involves coding for later processes of categorization. The Grounded Theory three-staged process of coding follows the rigor of good science, reducing biases and assumptions by grounding the emerging theory in a dense, sensitive, integrative, tightly woven, explanatory theory that approximates the reality being examined. The approach involved three stages of coding: open coding; axial coding; and, selective coding. During the coding, emphasis was placed on the importance of developing theoretical sensitivity to the stages of coding, as well as on the process - the flow of events that occurs with the passage of time – and the mechanics of process. Each of these topics is discussed in the following sections.

Open Coding

Four major stages are involved in open coding:
1. Labeling phenomena
2. Discovering categories
3. Naming categories; and,
4. Developing categories in terms of properties and dimensions.

The basic analytical procedure in the first phase of coding involves asking questions about the data and comparing for similarities and differences between incidents (Srauss & Corbin, 1990). Ultimately, the similarities can be labeled and grouped to form theoretical categories.

Developing theoretical sensitivity is essential to the coding process, to stimulate the creative process, and to systematically follow the research procedures. It allows the researcher to recognize what is important in the data and to give it meaning, developing the capacity to separate the pertinent from the non-pertinent. Theoretical sensitivity also relates to the qualities the researcher brings to the analysis which include, among other attributes, the ability to experience insights and to give meaning to the data.

Sources of theoretical sensitivity include familiarity with relevant literature as well as the researcher’s professional and personal experiences, which were described in Chapter One. Such experiences allow the researcher to bring complex knowledge to the research process. Theoretical sensitivity is also acquired through the research process by continually interacting with the data, and through its analysis. By asking questions of the data, maintaining an attitude of skepticism, and focusing on validation, the researcher can find a balance between the rigor and precision of the scientific approach, and the creativity needed for the discovery process. Other specific techniques aimed at strengthening theoretical sensitivity include:

1. The flip-flop technique;
2. Systematic comparison of two or more phenomena;
3. Far-out comparisons; and,
4. Waving the red flag.

Theoretical sensitivity, and the focus on process, described later in this chapter, is pivotal to the Grounded Theory approach which seeks to capture as much of the complexity and movement in the real world that is possible. The ultimate goal of turning straw (data) into gold (theory) requires theoretical sensitivity in the initial open coding process, and throughout the analysis process.

Axial Coding

While the end result of open coding is the development of coded categories, axial coding takes the analytical process one step further by putting the data back together in new ways, making connections
between the categories. The procedures utilize a coding paradigm involving causal conditions, context, action/interactional strategies, and consequences. The coding paradigm is developed through simultaneously performing four steps:

1. Hypothetically relating categories to subcategories with statements of the relationship between them and the phenomena;
2. Verification of the hypothesis against actual data;
3. The continued search for properties of categories, and dimensions; and,
4. Exploring variations in the phenomena.

Axial coding is designed to give the data analysis density and precision. The focus in formulating the coding paradigm is on action/interaction strategies, as Grounded Theory is an action/interaction-oriented method of theory building. Action/interaction strategies explore changes over time, the processual, transactional and evolving nature of social phenomena.

Selective Coding

The final coding stage involves selective coding, the process of selecting a core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating the relationships between categories, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development. Selective coding is similar to Axial Coding, only the analysis is more abstract. There are several stages involved in selective coding:

1. Explicating the story-line;
2. Identifying the story;
3. Moving from description to conceptualization;
4. Making a choice between two or more salient phenomena;
5. Determining the properties and dimensions of the core category;
6. Relating other categories to the core; and,
7. Returning to the story.

The ultimate goal is to "arrange and re-arrange the categories in terms of the coding paradigm until they fit the story, and provide an analytical version of the story" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 127). By uncovering the patterns related to the core category, connections are systematized and solidified and categories are grouped, setting the foundation for grounding, and laying out the theoretical formulations.

Process

Another strength of Grounded Theory is its focus on process, described as the action/interaction involved in the change that occurs over time. "Process must be accounted for to the degree sufficient to give the reader a sense of the flow of events that occur with the passage of time" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). By emphasizing process, the analysis can account for and explain change. This thesis is both historical and
change-oriented, seeking to discover if adoption policies have significantly changed in orientation in recent decades. Conceptualizing the events captured by the term 'process' involves exploring the mechanics of process, or the events strong enough to bring about a change in action/interaction. Exploring process involves discovering which events are strong enough to bring about change.

Strauss & Corbin (1990) propose that process should be conceptualized as stages or phases, and can be discovered by:

1. Spelling out the conditions and corresponding actions that move the process forward;
2. Identifying turning points;
3. Exploring variation in movement through stages and phases (including instances where movement is non-progressive); and,
4. Being active, rather than passive, in expression (i.e. developing policy, rather than policy development).

Focusing on process involves linking action/interaction sequences as they evolve over time; it is about searching the data for signs indicating a change in conditions, and tracing out the corresponding action/interaction changes. A focus on the mechanics of process was paramount to this research project, given the emphasis on exploring the history of adoption policies and practices in western Canada.

The Conditional Matrix

The highest level of analysis possible under the Grounded Theory approach involves developing a conditional matrix where conditions (causal, contextual, and intervening) and consequences are tightly interwoven into analysis, consciously linking conditions to action/interaction. This final analytical step integrates the detail, procedures and operational logic that are the hallmarks of Grounded Theory – to discover a sophisticated and tightly integrated illumination of the area under study. The Conditional Matrix exemplifies the transactional nature of a Grounded Theory.

The Conditional Matrix is made up of interactive and interrelated levels of conditions under which negotiations occur both at the action/interaction level, as well as at the structural level. It can be visualized “as a set of circles, one inside the other, each [level] corresponding to different aspects of the world…In the outer rings stand those conditional features most distant to action/interaction, while the most inner rings pertain to those conditional features bearing most closely upon the action/interaction sequence” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 161). Levels of the Conditional Matrix are where negotiations of the largest sense occur - the structural level (international through natural, community, organizational and institutional, sub-
organizational and sub-institutional, group, and individual as pertaining to a phenomena). All levels have relevance to any given study. The challenge for the researcher to realize the Matrix's full potential in filling in the specific conditional features for each level. All levels are significant and relate to the chosen area of study, regardless of which particular level the study is in (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, 1990).

The Conditional Matrix helps to explain why negotiations take a variety of forms. It specifies the nature of a set of negotiations, by exploring the conditions that give rise to change, and by looking at how outcomes of past negotiations bear on present negotiations by feeding through the altering and conditional levels of the Matrix. Ultimately, the technique holistically integrates causal, contextual and intervening conditions, and traces conditional paths. The Matrix is operationalized through linking conditions and consequences with action/interaction, locating phenomenon in a set of historical circumstances and events.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodological approach of this exploratory research project. The Grounded Theory approach proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) was summarized, focusing on the open-ended, discovery-oriented focus of the analytical strategy. The ethical considerations for this study were provided including an overview of the ethical approval process. The analysis section described the three levels of coding strategies (open, axial, and selective) and provided a synopsis of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) Conditional Matrix. Chapter Four summarizes the analysis and interpretation of the data.
Endnotes

1 'Appropriate' jurisdictional participants were individuals who actually make policies (i.e. the top bureaucrat in each province). In terms of front-line workers in Saskatchewan, the goal was to interview individuals with a significant history in adoption practices in the province and could speak to the issue of change in the field over previous decades.

2 The goal, in developing a list of participants, was to interview workers from both Regina and Saskatoon, with as many as two rural participants.

3 The theoretical sensitivity enhancement techniques are:

a) The flip-flop technique allows the researcher to turn the concept upside down, and imagine the opposite scenario, to make a comparison at the extremes of one dimension. This technique allows the analyst to return to the data with a new perspective and notice possibly overlooked properties and dimensions. Flip-flopping also facilitates analytically – rather than descriptively – conceptualizing the data in terms of provisional categories and properties.

➢ It is interesting to note the flip-flop reality of the example used to explain this technique in Strauss & Corbin's 1990 publication. The example invites the researcher to imagine that IBM is no longer the leader of the computer industry, and that, instead, dominance is shared among many companies (as opposed to the near monopoly of IBM's reign at that time). While Strauss & Corbin's example of shared rather than dominant power in the information technology/systems sector was not realized, the reality today is that IBM is no longer the "industry giant" it was at the turn of the decade. The industry has experienced a "flip-flop" and Bill Gates' Microsoft Inc. is now the most dominant player in the North American computer industry.

b) Systematically comparing two or more phenomena can aid in breaking free of patterned, and possibly limited, ways of thinking. The goal is to begin with close-in comparisons between two phenomena, with an awareness of stereotypical thinking. The analyst seeks density in asking questions of the data – questions that are away from the standard ways of thinking to explore other avenues of thought. The goal of this technique is to provide new insights into the research questions.

c) Far Out comparisons help the researcher to compare with an area that is far-out to extend the properties and dimensions of the developing categories. Possibilities are opened up and the analyst can go back to the data with a greater appreciation of the parameters of the research questions.

d) Waving the red flag helps the researcher see beyond obvious – culturally based – assumptions that are especially hard to recognize. When the analyst sees/hears/reads words such as "always" and "never" a "red flag" is raised, signaling the need to take a closer look at the data since there are few absolutes in the social sciences. The researcher must not take anything for granted; taking something for granted potentially forecloses on potential answers to research questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 93).
Chapter Four

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the results of the open, axial and selective coding of the data. The analysis provides a conditional matrix to diagrammatically consider the wide range of conditions and consequences related to the research question. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the assumptions and limitations of the survey.

Fieldwork Experience

In accordance with the open-ended framework of the Grounded Theory approach, the methodology remained flexible throughout the data collection phase, to accommodate the participants and the researcher. The interviews were rich with the wealth of knowledge and experience of the participants, broadening the researcher's understanding of the topic matter and leading to additional interview questions on communication in Trans-racial adoptions and other emerging issues (Appendix C).

Application to Strauss and Corbin's Framework

Pilot Phase

The pilot phase interview fine-tuned the research instrument; however, no major changes were made to the questionnaire after piloting the instrument. The post-interview discussion with the participant confirmed the flow of the interview was appropriate. No significant recommendations stemmed from the pilot.

Piloting the questionnaire strengthened my confidence in the open-ended interview structure. The individual who took part in the pilot was encouraging, enthusiastic, thoughtful, and generally interested in the research topic.

Given the success of the pilot interview, final preparation began for the data collection phase of the project.

Study Phase

The participation and support of Saskatchewan Social Services was sought through formally providing a copy of the thesis proposal, along with details regarding the expectations for the Department (Appendix
Specifically, the Department was asked to facilitate the recruitment of participants, and to provide legislative, and other adoption-related Department literature. Prior to submitting the proposal to Social Services, the researcher met with individuals in Saskatchewan’s Adoption Unit, to discuss criteria for obtaining Department support. Receiving confirmation of the Department’s support took several months, delaying the participant recruitment process.

Potential participants, who met the criteria of having several years experience in the adoption field and who could speak to process and change within the field, were contacted by Saskatchewan Social Services. After confirming interest to the Social Services representative, potential participants were faxed, by Social Services, a copy of the "recruitment package", including the semi-structured interview (Appendix B). The names of participants who verbally confirmed interest in being part of the survey were forwarded to the researcher, who then contacted them personally, via telephone, to further discuss the research process, and to arrange for an interview time.

All of the 11 adoption professionals whose names were forwarded to the researcher were contacted for an interview. All but one of the contacts resulted in an interview; one of the individuals referred by Social Services was not available for an interview during the interview process of this study. There were no ‘refusals’ to the invitation to set up an interview.

The data collection process experienced some delays, primarily because data was being collected during the summer, in June and July, while some potential participants were taking summer vacations. Despite the Department related delays, the ten interviews were conducted during a five-week interval, and all of the interviews were completed before the end of July, as originally planned.

All of the participants were enthusiastic about participating in the research project, and genuinely interested in the research question and in the researcher’s personal adoption experiences and post-adoption process. Each participant’s contribution varied; however, all participants provided thoughtful, analytical and experience-filled information during the interview process.

Collecting and Recording Data

Before conducting the interviews, I reflected on my privileged position, and considered my personal actions and involvement with some of the province’s adoption experts. Accordingly, I carefully thought
about the significance of my role, and reconsidered the ethnographic interviewing approach, discussed in
the methodology chapter.

Upon initial dialogue, and the signing of the consent form (Appendix Bv), the interview was
recorded on a mono-cassette recorder, as indicated in the methodology chapter. Each session began with
the provision of detail regarding the ethical issues of the study (i.e. how the data will be used, and
confidentiality/anonymity details).

The researcher traveled to the participants' offices during working hours, minimizing the time
requirements of the adoption professionals, and providing for constancy of conditions regarding data
collection locations. Six of the interviews were conducted in Regina (with one rural participant being
interviewed while in Regina on business). Four of the interviews took place in Saskatoon.

Following the completion of the interviews, the cassette tapes were fully transcribed, verbatim.
While, overall, the cassette tapes were distinguishable, at times the recordings were difficult to hear, and
consequently, difficult to transcribe. The reliability of the transcriptions was enhanced through a review of
the cassette tapes and transcriptions by an educational professional, trained and experienced in working
with individuals with speech and language impediments (i.e. difficult to discern dialogue) (Appendix E).

The reviewer discovered errors in phraseology in the transcripts - on average, fifteen changes per
ten-page interview. None of the suggested amendments represented substantive changes to the content of
the interview, but merely highlighted typographic and or phraseology errors.

Following the transcription process, participants were contacted, via telephone to confirm mail-out
of the sign-off package (containing the transcribed interviews, a sign-off sheet and cover letter).
Subsequently each participant was sent a copy of the entire transcription, for review. Included with the
transcript was a sign-off sheet for participants (Appendix F). Some participants signed-off the transcript,
"as is", whereas others suggested minor amendments (i.e. typographical and phraseology changes).

With the goal of respecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, quotations used
in the analysis section reflect general, non-identifiable statements by the participants, with no geographical
or other references that could identify the participant and/or her/his colleagues.
Description of Participants

The ten participants had, on average, 11 years of adoption-related Social Services experience. The range of employment with Adoption Units was from under 2 years, to over 25 years. The majority of the participants started with the Department in areas such as child protection, foster homes, income security, and other front-line roles. On average, the participants have worked for the Department for 16 years, with two participants reporting over thirty years of provincial employment. Three of the participants are also members of adoption triads - two are Trans-racial adoptive parents and one is an adoptee. As discussed in the ethics section of the methodology chapter (Chapter Three), the confidentiality of the participants is paramount. Consequently the gender of the participants is not specified. While the overall pool of potential participants in Saskatchewan is small, in general, there are very few men in the field. Thus, it is not appropriate to specify how many females versus males participated in the interviews.

Four of the participants worked in policy-oriented positions and had backgrounds in front-line service provision. Six interviewees were directly providing front-line adoption services at the time of the interviews.

While the original intent of the triangulation methodology was to compare the responses of (1) policy-makers with (2) service providers, there were no significant differences between the responses of the two groups. All of the "policy-makers" have a front-line (service provider) background and, thus, the responses were very similar from each of the two groups. Consequently, the ‘results’ of the interviews from both policy-makers and front-line staff are provided together, rather than separately. The parallelism between the two groups is considered an outcome of the research in that there is considerable cohesion between the values, beliefs and objectives of both groups.

Analysis

The analysis section provides the results of Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) three stages of coding of qualitative data. A discussion of the findings follows the coding results.

Given the triangulation approach to data collection utilized in this study, this section includes: qualitative data from the interviews; data and information from governmental publications and research reports; and, quantitative data, where available. In each of the open coding categories data from the
interviews is provided first, followed by data from the non-technical (governmental) and technical (research) literature.

Open Coding

The initial open coding of the interview data, the labeling of phenomena, resulted in 16 open coding titles, with 26 sub-titles (Appendix G). The 42 original titles were grouped into categories, which were then named and developed in terms of properties and dimensions, relative to the research question. The process of open coding involves breaking down and asking questions of the data (i.e. what is this referring to) and comparing for similarities and differences between the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The properties and dimensional ranges of the five categories are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimensional Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genes &amp; Environment</td>
<td>nurture or nature ------- non</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Myths</td>
<td>Culture/Ethnicity Race</td>
<td>insignificant ---------significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trauma - BMs and As</td>
<td>static ---------------- on-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>discouraged -------- encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policies's Preparation</td>
<td>than ------------------------- now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practices's Denial (resistance)</td>
<td>deception ------------- honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>&quot;The System&quot;</td>
<td>exclusive (AP) -----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Public</td>
<td>inclusive [A&amp;B&amp;M(F)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mythical -------------------- realistic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>intra-country's</td>
<td>challenges -------------- strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inter-country's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomorrow</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>negative ------------------ positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>reductionism------------ holism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 AP = Adoptive Parents  
A = Adoptee  
BM(F) = Birth Mother and/or Father
An independent rater – an adoption professional – was recruited to double code the reliability (Appendix E). Reliability was assessed using the following formula: \( \frac{\# \text{ of agreements}}{\# \text{ of agreements} - \text{disagreements}} \). The reliability check indicated the analysis of the data was sufficiently reliable \((r = .98)\) (Appendix K). (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 63).

**The Myths**

The first category includes information on the *Adoption Myth*, in terms of views on genetic significance, the importance of the environment, culture and ethnicity.

The section on myths included properties of genetic and environmental perceptions, as well as cultural, ethnic and racial considerations. Comments relating specifically to the myths concerning adoptees’ and birth mothers’ processing of adoption-related trauma are also included in this category.

**Genes and the Environment**

Participants spoke of contemporary adoption's history, specifically the secrecy and assumptions of the insignificance of genes and the significance of environmental influences of earlier decades. Also discussed was the zeitgeist of high levels of state involvement, emphasizing that adoption's history is intertwined with societal changes:

But, adoption, I don’t think is a trendsetter. I think adoption is very much a reflection of society. So, when you look from the 50s and the 60s and what you can talk about and what people did and how, if you knew how much your neighbor made at work... if they told you anything about being sexually abused as a child... none of those things happened. The whole society was secretive at those times.

Societal secrecy, connected to the strong post Second World War economy resulted in people being able to afford secrecy in terms of young couples having the affluence to purchase their own homes, and live away from extended families.

The adoption experts shared how, in the era of silence, adoptive parents were told to "raise the child as if it was your own", focusing on the concept of ownership. This trend is called the 'as if' approach to adoption — the adoptive parents could raise the child "as if" it was their own. The birth mother, similarly, could go on with her life "as if" she had never had a child. Societal, and scientific assumptions regarding the significance of environmental influences saw genetic make up as being insignificant, and proposed a fantasy concept of adoption as being ideal, idealizing a far-from-ideal situation.
One participant reflected on past practices, related to genetic myths, of separating siblings during adoption placements, recalling a family of nine children who were all separated. The Social Worker stated she's "never forgotten" that family, and often reflects on experiences of separating siblings from one another.

The participants all emphasized the denial-based approach of historical adoption in Saskatchewan. "Now, in retrospect, we can see the damaging consequences of traditional adoption." The participants emphasized that Social Workers did what was believed, at that time, to be in the "child's best interest".

Participants also spoke about how limited the preparation for communication with adoptees was in previous decades, noting that homestudies were not nearly as comprehensive as they are today. We talked about the weather, and said, "take this child...love her and everything will be fine". There was no assessment of self-esteem, or one's sense of self.

Through numerous professional post-adoption experiences, the participants all expressed an appreciation for the significance of genetic background. Stories were shared about similarities of appearances, personality traits, and lifestyles and how many adoptees, while being well adjusted to their homes, never felt they fitted in with a biologically dissimilar family:

I know when inquiries are made I talk about it with adoptees and adoptees will say, and probably have their freedom for the first time to say, "my family was great but they laugh at different things than I did". Or "they were all blonde and I was dark, and I wonder". That could happen biologically, but it's things like that that make them think. Or when they finally have contact, even a letter from the birth mother to find out what her hobbies are. It's like a lifting of clouds, "because I know this stuff, now I know where I got this talent, or this interest", or something.

All of the participants expressed an appreciation for the significance of providing adopted children with family histories, and communicating about the importance of genetics. Some participants expressed beliefs that genetic make-up is more significant than the environment.

Culture and Ethnicity

In terms of cultural and ethnic myths, the participants spoke about both domestic and inter-country Trans-racial adoptions. Domestically, the AIM – the Adoptee an Indian or Métis - program was sighted as a strong example of the detriments of not providing cultural information. Interview participants reported that some AIM recipient families were out-right racist, while others feebly attempted to embrace their child's cultural background:
I know a lot of other Aboriginal people adopted, and the stories are so similar - and they had the Buffy St. Marie records too. And the picture book Cree Indians of the Plains, and the Indians of North America picture book, and that really meant nothing... I think there are expectations both ways, but generally, it wasn’t thought-out as a priority. My guess would be at that time to have a child know about their culture was probably considered detrimental, “Cause they’ll just be held back, to know their culture”...to help your child get ‘ahead’...”

Historically, traditional Trans-cultural adoptions did not recognize the significance of ethnicity and race in the adoption process.

**Trauma: Birth Mothers and Adoptees**

Another historical Adoption Myth participants spoke about is the long-held notion that birth mothers and adopted children are not affected by their mutual loss. Participants emphasized how significantly they’ve been affected by witnessing the unending pain many birth mothers carried for years following the relinquishment of their babies. And, by seeing the implications of adoptees’ lack of knowledge about their origins.

**Other Sources**

Contemporary materials preparing adoptive families for communicating with their child explicitly deconstruct mythical approaches of the past, by putting forth the main myths and then providing information to nullify these main assumptions:

1. That the birth mother doesn’t care about her child or she would not give her/him away;
2. Secrecy in adoption is necessary to protect all parties;
3. Both the birth mother and birth father will forget about their unwanted child; and,
4. If the adoptee really loved his adoptive family he would not search for his birth parents (Saskatchewan Social Services).

Unlike in previous decades, contemporary documents given to adoptive families by Social Services provide overviews recognizing the importance of heredity and genetics. Also included in the materials are articles on the need to prepare the entire family – including siblings and extended family, the stages of expected development in terms of abilities to understand what adoption means, and the need for openness in the dialogue process. Adoptive parents’ need to grieve infertility and previous losses are also emphasized in the material on communication about adoption (Bagley, 1986). Adoptive families are also given information about being a healthy person, the significance of self-esteem, healthily dealing with anger, the need for social support, and extended family assessment.
The Homestudy materials provided to adoptive families by Social Services indicate a clear transcendence of the false alternatives and myths proposed to adoptees in the past.

Communication

This category focuses on openness. The concept of openness is significant to adoption in several ways. Legislative changes of the 1990s have resulted in open adoptions in that the birth family has some sort of open relationship with the adoptive family. Post-adoption records have been opened this decade, adding a second openness dimension to adoption. It is, however, a third type of openness that is the focus of this thesis. Specifically, policies and practices preparing adoptive families for openness in on-going communication are relevant to the research question of whether or not the Adoption Myth has been deconstructed.

Openness

Overwhelmingly, participants expressed that the most significant change in the adoption field in recent decades was the move towards openness. With open adoptions, where birth mothers are able to choose the adoptive parents, and there is some level of communication between the adoptive and birth families, secrecy issues are non-issues. The adoptee's origins are out in the open.

Participants emphasized that in the first half of the Century and even into the 1950s and 60s, some adoptive parents did not disclose the adoption to their child. Others disclosed based on fears that the child would learn of their adopted status from an outside source, such as an extended family member, or through attending school. Early disclosure practices did not take into account the importance of genetic makeup, or adoptees. It was assumed that healthy adjustment, on the part of adoptees, was related to not asking questions about their origins. It was assumed that children were not interested in the topic if they were not asking questions.

The Adoption Act and Regulations, passed in 1990, facilitate openness as a goal in adoptions. The transformation from exclusive to inclusive adoptions stemmed from years of advocacy of birth mothers and adoptees, who lobbied for changes in post-adoption services (including the release of identifying information). The previously held fantasy that birth parents, and adoptees, forget about their pasts and simply go on with their lives was negated as more and more participants in adoption demanded an end to the practice's secret past. The resulting acknowledgement that background information, or a lack of it,
affects a person’s life lead to changes at the "front end", namely the momentous transition to open 
adoptions. All participants expressed full support for open adoptees, and welcomed the system's changes. 

Prior to the 1990, adoption issues were addressed under the Family Services Act. There were no 
specifics in the Act on disclosure or dialogue between adoptive parents and adoptees. The Act merely dealt 
with legalities such as name changes, financial assistance available for adoption, and that accepting 
payment for an adoption is an offence (punishable by a fine up to $5,000 or one year in jail).

While the Act is not specific about communication issues, training materials for adoptive parents 
from the 1980s are, and there is clear acknowledgement of the differences between biological and non-
biological families, acknowledging the dual identities and gaps in the lives of many adopted people. There 
are, however, no specifics in the act regarding disclosure about adoption. While the current atmosphere 
and training processes emphasize openness in disclosure and on-going communication, adoptive parents are 
not legally obligated to disclose the adoption to adopted children. There are no legal implications for 
adoptive parents who renege on the verbal agreement to communication with their child about the adoption.

Open adoption, as specified under the 1990 Act and Regulations, can take several forms. Some 
adoptions are semi-open in that birth and adoptive families correspond through an agency. Other adoptive 
are completely open in that there are meetings between the birth mother/family and the adoptee. The 
process is designed, in part, to help birth mothers resolve their grief and feel they have made the right 
decision. Naturally, there are degrees of openness and some arrangements are more successful than others. 
Success depends on finding the right balance, or degree, of openness between all members of the adoption 
triad. While some adoptees are still completely closed (at the request of the birth mother), the majority 
Joy enjoy some degree of openness and the Myths, particularly in relation to heredity, are clearly no longer a 
part of adoption processes. Social service documents and preparation process address adoption disclosure 
in detail, by exploring:

- How adoption will be disclosed to the adoptee;
- Appropriate levels of understanding for the various developmental stages;
- Proactively discussing the adoption and not passively waiting for the topic to come 
  up; finding opportune times to bring up appropriate topics (without overemphasizing 
  the topic), and;
- Considering degrees of openness outside the family (adoptive parents may have been 
  conditioned, due to infertility, to reveal deeply personal matters outside of the family 
  and it is important to find appropriate boundaries in disclosing adoption to relatives, 
  friends and neighbors).
Contemporary practices exemplify how the Adoption Myth is no longer a part of modern domestic adoptions.

There have been further legislative developments since the passage of the Adoption Act (1990) most notably the Inter-country Adoption Implementation Act (1995). The Inter-country Adoption Implementation Act (1995) regulates inter-country adoptions from countries that have implemented the Hague Convention (1994). Although the (1995) Act does not address directly the type of communication encouraged or required, the Hague does establish protocols and procedures to safeguard against exploitation of all the parties to adoption, with particular emphasis on protecting the child.

A second significant change in adoption legislation was the opening of sealed adoption records in 1994. More recently, in 1998, the Adoption Amendment Act is currently awaiting proclamation. The amendments were mostly housekeeping in nature and the changes were not substantial in terms of policy issues. One important change is that the amendment clarifies the definition of a birth father. This clarification will ensure as much as possible that all birth fathers are involved in the decision to place a child for adoption.

On the topic of communication, the amendments also clarify that communication agreements are not to be identified as part of an adoption order. During the second reading of the Act Members of the Legislative discussed whether or not communication agreements in adoption should be legally binding. It was agreed that there were “damaging effects of a legally binding communication agreement” and that communication agreements should not be part of the adoption orders. Communication agreements are not enforceable and birth parents cannot make an application for access. It was also agreed that further changes to the act may be needed down the road (Hansard, April 15, 1998).

Policies and Practices

Accompanying the openness trend was recognition of adoption's on-going nature since the process of accepting and re-accepting adoption continues through the various phases of one's life. In policy and practice terms, the movement resulted in emphasizing the importance of being honest with adoptees.

While legislatively the process of being 'open' sounds simple, in practical terms it meant a considerable transition from closed and final notions of adoption, towards extending one's family to include not just a child, but an entire extended family. "With birth mothers now and birth fathers, birth
grandparents, it's actually not that you're adopting a child, you're adopting a birth family as well. And I think most couples now realize that and they are open to that."

Preparing adoptive parents for such a process involves, participants reported, addressing self-esteem and security issues, and considering the differences between parenting versus ownership, transcending previously held notions equating adoption to 'ownership' of a child:

Because out of that arises things like "you're not going to be my child anymore if you meet your birth parents" or "you're not gonna love me anymore if you meet your birth parent". And, that just has to do with self-security and self-esteem.

All participants addressed the importance of preparing adoptive families for openness, and for accepting that it's natural for children to be curious about their origins. They also talked about the deterrents of silence:

It's human nature – if there's a box in the corner and it's closed and you're told to never look in there you're going to wonder what's in there. But if it's open and you're welcome to look at it and browse through its contents, it's not going to be an issue in your life. It's just there. And that's, especially so for kids, especially children. But the problem with adoption too is that knowledge, that knowledge of birth families... Even if adoptive parents say that they're open but if they have issues around that, in their mind they're saying "you're not going to love me as much if you find your birth mother". Then the child picks that up.

Participants stressed their belief in the importance of being honest:

The most paramount thing is the truth. They have to be told the truth regardless of how awful that is – I mean it has to be done sensitively and in an age-appropriate way but it's got to be the truth... We don't attempt to minimize the adoptees' sense of loss and the whole separation issue. We don't attempt to minimize the fact that this is probably one of the biggest traumas that the birth mother will ever experience.

Current preparation processes involve a fundamental transition from the historical one-time telling process, to embracing a life-long approach, recognizing the inherent losses of adoption:

It's preparing people for the issues that they're going to encounter down the road. And that's not easy, because we live in the here and now. And to talk to somebody about how you're going to respond to an issue or what are you going to do the first time your kid says, "Well, I hate you, I wish I was with my birth mom?" Or, "I'd like to go and live with..." Those are some of the issues that we don't tend to think about. Adoption is a beautiful area, it's lovely and everyone can be happy but it's a loss. We have to remember some of those things. It's a loss for everybody.

Participants also spoke about the significance of silence:

If you don't talk to your child about adoption what are you saying to your child? That they're not worthwhile, that their background is not worthwhile? Or, they're not worthy as a person? Plus, how would that child feel if you've lied to them their whole life? They wouldn't trust you again.

Participants acknowledge that everyone is different and processes information differently; all adoptive families are different and workers strive to find a comfort level that's appropriate for each family. For many families, this involves working through their own grief issues, such as infertility.
The importance of finding age-appropriate ways to disclose information was emphasized, and for proactively pursuing opportunities to discuss adoption, beginning when the child is very young:

Our advice is to be telling them when they're very young. And if you read the literature, they're encouraging parents to use the word adoption on a regular basis so that when kids hear the word, it's a familiar word. That allows them to be able to ask questions about it as they grow. That's an important component in terms of parents feeling comfortable. Because, if you're wanting to have openness and to be able to talk to your kids about adoption when they're two, you ought to be able to do it when they're five and when they're seven. I think people have managed to be able to tell their kids they're adopted, but and you have to be able to go to the next step. And for people who have experienced infertility problems, it re-surfaced all of their issues.

Participants repeatedly emphasized the ongoing nature adoption dialogue should take:

As soon as you make a commitment in terms of openness, it's a life-long commitment to talk about it. And that again is part of the preparation we have to do in terms of preparing people and giving them ways and tools to deal with it. It's not just telling your child he or she was adopted. Because people have been doing that for a long time. I think it's [about] what we tell them, and opening the door for the continuum.

Participants shared stories about the importance of finding ways to communicate that are appropriate for a child's age. One poignant story was of a young boy, who having had many conversations about his birth mother, used to lay in bed at night, fearful his birth mother would come through the door and take him away. Such powerful examples exemplify the need to find balance in dialogue, and to ensure the process is reciprocal, exploring how the child's accepting the information, and how the details are being interpreted.

The Department's preparation process suggests a variety of ways to facilitate an ongoing conversation:

The conversation usually begins in the home study... You have a life book, and you have a baby book. The minute the baby is born you generally have pictures and whenever possible you have a meeting with the birth mom prior to the birth, and you take pictures of the birth mom and the adoptive couple. And, then you take pictures at the hospital, with the birth mom and the baby and hopefully with everybody. One of the placements I did I had all four grandparents and the adoptive couple. The grandparents were able to say to the adoptive couple, "we're so glad that you're going to be raising this child." And, so then I talk to them about continuing that photo album. And, putting it up on the shelf. It's not something you drag out for the whole world to see. This is a special book but it's the child's pictures. And it's their personal baby-book and you put it up with their bedtime stories. Then when you want to read it, you bring it down.

Interestingly, while many couples initially agree to open communication in the form of a continual exchange of pictures and letters, they often later seek closer contact with the other triad members:

And the majority would have open to them the option of ongoing contact through the department through pictures and letters. But fully 50% or more...either they asked for it to be identifying so they can continue a relationship, or either they say face-to-face they don't want it to be identifying but then move fairly quickly to the next step and say, "Can I have your phone number or address?" And people did exchange information. But you find in those relationships or the ones that I've heard about -- and we don't have research on that and we need it -- but every relationship is like every other relationship with extended family. Some are very close and constant and others are more aloof and distant. Some are talking once a year or twice a year. It's what suits those persons, not something we've determined for them.

Reciprocity in the openness process was stressed as being important to the child's development.

Participants shared stories of disappointed adoptees that send photos to birth mothers and don't receive any
in return. Again, each family’s challenge is to find a balance of openness that is appropriate for all individuals involved.

With respect to Trans-racial preparation, the process of preparing for life-long openness is considerably more complex. Preparation for an adoption of a different race involves the adoptive family embracing the culture of their new family member.

While domestic and inter-country Trans-racial adoptions share many similarities, in terms of the importance of cultural awareness of the adoptive families, there are also significant differences. There are many local resources to facilitate Aboriginal adoptions since Saskatchewan has a large Aboriginal population, whereas there is often a lack of local resources in inter-country adoptions. The two topics will be analyzed separately later in this chapter. The following are some general preparation-oriented issues relative to Trans-racial adoptions.

Methods to increase cultural awareness include becoming part of the child’s culture, through knowing other families, living in inter-racial neighborhoods, and having other children in the family - and the adoptee - attend inter-racial schools. Other preparation possibilities include joining cultural organizations and groups of other adoptive parents in similar situations (i.e. a support group of parents of Romanian children, or SAPA, the Saskatchewan Adoptive Parents Association). Cultural camps, offered by some Aboriginal bands, were cited as another method of expanding appreciation for Saskatchewan’s indigenous cultures. The Internet was also cited as a strong resource for cultural preparation.

Cultural awareness is encouraged through having adoptive parents travel to the country they are adopting from, both to learn about the culture, and to experience being a minority. Raising awareness of the potential (or probable) racism the child will experience is a pivotal part of the Trans-racial preparation process. Participants expressed concern that some adoptive parents "have their head in the sand" about the racism their child will face in Saskatchewan. Some of the participants emphasized that merely travelling to another country is not adequate preparation.

Preparation processes can be confounded with language barriers, and inter-country adoptive families are encouraged to study the language of their child, or, at the very least, to learn some common phrases. Participants spoke about how communication between the child and the adoptive family can be strengthened by developing friendships with local residents of the adoptee’s culture.
Another practice-related topic many participants brought up was in relation to changes in access to identifying information for adoptees and birth mothers wanting to search for, and/or re-unite with lost relatives. Post-adoption services in Saskatchewan have an over 90% success rate. While openness for most parties in the triad exists in relation to post-adoption, participants expressed frustration with how birth fathers continue to be excluded from the process. Birth fathers, in Saskatchewan, do not have access to birth records of closed adoptions. Participants expressed hope that the trend toward openness will eventually extend to include birth fathers and extended birth families.

Denial

This section discusses how some adoptive families are not fully aware of or do not fully appreciate the importance of biology and background. While the 'system' is no longer "in denial", some adoptive parents are. While participants stressed that the vast majority of adoptive parents are "really excellent people, capable of dealing with emotionally charged situations in a rational way", they also noted that there are times when adoptive families are in denial about the importance of background information and openness. While the bulk of communication agreements between birth and adoptive families unfold as planned, agreements sometimes breakdown. As one participant stated, the Department's not "out of the water yet" in terms of successfully facilitating open relationships.

One participant eloquently emphasized that adoption's history of denial is often perpetuated in families where communications flounder. Participants acknowledged that some families are not honest in the homestudy process:

As workers, we can really only go on what they say. And, I'm certain that there are applicants who say the right thing, and know their plan is not to follow-up and to, basically, have a closed adoption. And, we've seen, in some of the articles that we get, the Adoption Helper and stuff, articles that deal with those kind of things. And, what is initially an open adoption is turning into a closed adoption because the parents are saying, "we don't want any communication" so that's kind of going back on the initial agreement. I know when I worked with applicants I'd explain the communication agreement. We have to tell them that it's not a legally binding document; it's a thing based on honor, you know. So I guess the main factors are security, self-esteem in adoptive applicants.

Other participants spoke about how some families might agree to conditions they do not wholeheartedly support for the purpose of 'passing' the Homestudy process:

Sometimes I get the impression what when adoptive couples fear that that if they don't want a full open adoption they won't get a placement. Therefore they're agreeing to a full open adoption when they're not at all comfortable. And I think that sets up problems in the long run where the adoptive couple, after they've agreed to a full open adoption, close the door afterwards. And, then the birth parent is left thinking "I trusted them and they basically were not honest with me".
Adoption workers expressed frustration with adoptive parents who do not follow through on openness commitments:

The one thing I really have a lot of difficulty with is adoptive parents who agree to disclose and then don’t. How is this child going to feel, say if they have open records and they come - as an adult in their own right - and we say “your parents had the opportunity to write your biological mother and chose not to?”

Adoption workers are not able to intervene when a communication agreement doesn’t work out. “Legally, there’s nothing we can do. Adoptive families can basically tell us to take a hike. And, some do. That doesn’t happen very often, though.” Some families delay disclosing the adoption to their child, holding on to yesterday’s belief that one should wait until the child is “old enough”:

Some families are saying “Yes, we’ll do that” but then they don’t do it. I spoke to a lady just the other day, and her son’s seven. She still hasn’t told him yet. And, he’s saying things like, “When I was in your tummy did I kick lots” or whatever, and so she kind of dances around the issue, saying “Well, babies kick”, or babies do whatever. So, she’s going to have a problem in telling this boy.

Denial and deception can be a two-way street; some birth parents do not live up to agreements to stay in contact with their child. “Mind you a lot of birth mothers don’t fulfil their obligations either. A lot of mothers agree to respond [but] the adoptive parents write them and they don’t respond, and I always think that’s such a tragedy for the child.”

One participant referred to a recent closed adoption where the birth mother was not interested in openness:

I think in this particular case the girl is in denial. She didn’t want to know the baby’s sex, she didn’t name it... the normal thing that can happen. But you can’t counsel her, she’s not going to be around. The worker didn’t have any choices there, either.

Workers also expressed concern how, in some families, communication might be contingent on the child’s behavior, rather than unconditionally sharing information for the child’s benefit:

And, I think so the telling depends on a child’s performance - if the child measures up to the parent’s expectations. It’s one thing if the child disappoints the parents or doesn’t meet expectations you’re going to get a different reaction or maybe a different way of talking and telling.

This quotation highlights that while the Department openly advocates for honesty and full disclosure of a child’s origins, some adoptive parents do not adhere to the Department’s suggested practices.

Post-Adoption Services

On the topic of ongoing (i.e. post-adoption) support, some participants expressed confidence that adoptive families, or birth families feel comfortable coming back to the ‘system’ for support, should communication
agreements break-down. Other participants expressed concern that there is a stigma about coming back — that it might be perceived as a 'failure' and thus adoptive families may be reluctant to return for support. Additionally, people tend to wait (not only in adoption) until the last minute to get help. Some families return if the adoptee is “acting out”. All participants discussed their goal as ensuring that people feel comfortable with returning.

Most of the participants addressed a perceived lack of on-going support. One emphatic comment was that it's ‘ludicrous’ to propose the Department provides adequate on-going support. It was noted the system is critically understaffed with respect to post-adoption services, both in terms of search and reunion processes, and in on-going support for adoption adjustment, especially in areas of ethnicity/identity. Adoption's understaffing, however, is relative to understaffing in Social Services, in general. Participants noted that it's difficult to advocate for increased post-adoption services when there are shortages in areas such as child protection, foster homes, and other more 'crisis' areas within the Department.

Group work was often cited as being beneficial for adoption adjustment. In addition, it was stressed that special post-adoption focus should be given to the development of special-needs adoptees, and inter-country adoptions, given the newness of these territories. All participants emphasized the need for additional post-adoption follow-up and support.

Other Sources
As indicated in the "Other Sources" section under the "Myths" section, Homestudy materials from Social Services attempts to provide information and raise awareness of the multitude of issues adopted children may encounter, developmentally, as they age. The difficulty, as discussed by the interview participants, is that some of the communication agreements entered into by adoptive parents are not adhered to, or adoptive parents do not understand the significance of the information/preparation they have been exposed to.

Daly & Sobel (1993) are the authors of one of Canada’s best overviews of adoption trends, data and outcomes research summaries, entitled Adoption in Canada. In relation to communication agreements about disclosure and open communication about adoption, Daly & Sobel report that verbal, informal and flexible, agreements are far more successful than inflexible, written agreements. Thirty-four percent of written communication agreements are adhered to versus fifty-nine percent of verbal agreements. In
another survey reported by Daly & Sobel (1993), social workers surveyed said openness was the most significant change in the adoption field of recent decades, particularly in relation to disclosing information, allowing for reunions between birth families and adopted adults.

**Change**

This category includes data on change in the context of: system changes; experiential changes of Social Workers; the lack of change in terms of post-adoption counselling; and, the rate of change in public opinion. Strauss and Corbin's analysis of change was used as an overarching framework for assessing the system's changes in adoption communication over previous decades:

**TABLE 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHANGE**

*What Difference Does Change Make?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>fast-----slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occurrence</td>
<td>planned-----unplanned orderlv-----random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>progressive-----non-progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>forward-----backward up-----down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>wide-----narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of impact</td>
<td>great-----small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to control</td>
<td>high-----low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change**

1. Occurs under a set of conditions; leads to or causes phenomenon under investigation;
2. Occurs when there are changes in intervening conditions; and,
3. Consequences of previous action/interaction sequence feeds back to (a) add new conditions, or (b) alter interaction among already existing conditions. If one crisis is successfully handled the experience gained affects how future crises are handled.

**Process**

- Conceptualized as (a) stages, or (b) non-progressive movement

**Source:** Strauss & Corbin (1990).
The System

Overall, participants feel very positive about adoption services, and the Department’s contribution to the field. Admittedly, there are challenges -- lessons learned from experiences and "growth opportunities" facing contemporary and future services. The key, several noted, is to remain flexible, learn as much as possible from current processes and outcomes (i.e. inter-country adoptees) and anticipate (i.e. approach proactively) future challenges.

Participants feel the Department responded quickly to the need for change, but acknowledge that adoption’s history is one of disregarding the needs of all involved parties, particularly birth mothers. Again, emphasis is given to adoption’s interconnectedness with social conditions. “A lot of societal processes don’t have regard for the well being of the people it’s there for. Adoption isn’t out there setting trends. It follows society’s trends.”

The most significant change, reported by participants, is the shift of power from the department to families affected by adoption:

Years ago it was finding a child for adoptive parents. Now, the trend is finding the best family for the child. So it just kinda reversed as we were focusing on “oh this poor family needs a child”, now “this child needs an excellent family”. So it changed that way and we’re focusing more on the child, and we brought in openness in adoption and that’s been just wonderful. A very positive experience for all parties involved. I think that was a major change in adoption.

The power shifts allowed the adoption workers to truly become part of – rather than the controller of – the process.

And I think we’re trying to create a shift in power to the point where we are a facilitator, that the power lays with the birth parents and the adoptive parent and our role is to facilitate that process...

Participants admitted the system’s change hasn’t been without some difficulty. “With increased openness the department had less control: organizations always find that difficult.”

As with system-wide change, the adoption workers have also been greatly impacted by the wide scope and quick rate of change in the adoption field. Primarily, participants spoke about recognizing that every member of the adoption triad has experienced losses. Workers have connected with birth mothers that have returned 20, 30, 40, even 50 years after relinquishing their children, still mourning the unresolved loss. Such experiences have highlighted, for the workers, the need to make sure birth mothers are fully aware of their rights, and have thought out their decision to not parent their child, and the way they feel about adoption. “I still think it’s [adoption’s] great because these kids need homes and the moms can’t
provide it. But, there's always a part of me that is saying "please don't do this - you have no idea what you're doing."

As with any social change, there was resistance to the openness trend, with both the public and potential adoptive parents and professionals' proposing the move was too 'radical'. One participant, who is now a proponent of openness, recalled her/his own reticence towards openness:

When I first saw – I saw a TV program – and I think it was the province of Nova Scotia that started open adoptions. I watched that program and was like the public: "this will never work! How can they possibly think this is gonna work?!"

Other participants could also remember not supporting openness, initially, but later considered what it really means for adoption's triad - particularly birth mothers. All participants appreciate the increased participation of birth parents as being extremely positive for everyone involved in adoption, emphasizing that historical approaches were inequitable: "I always felt birth mothers had no empowerment". The workers’ thinking shifted towards full support for the on-going connection between all families involved in adoption, established through the legislative change towards open adoption in Saskatchewan.

Participants spoke about the system shift away from 'fixing' problems to facilitating solutions - opening communication channels to allow all parties involved to find their own solutions. Healthy facilitation, participants expressed, is related to workers resolving their own grief and loss-related issues before working in adoption. "You must be self-aware to work well in adoption - this isn't necessarily taught in university, but it's important."

Participants stressed that when a worker can achieve a facilitative, as opposed to controlling or 'fixing' role, adoptive triads typically find a balance of communication that suits their communicative styles.

It’s important to note that all of the ten participants expressed a very high level of job satisfaction. Of special interest were the responses to the question, "Do you enjoy your work?" Participants, overwhelmingly, reported extremely positive experiences working in the adoption field, and highly value their jobs, and contributions to the adoption process. The personal dedication of adoption workers is evident in the reality that some provincial front-line adoption workers self fund their attendance at international conferences on inter-country adoption.
The Public

Participants addressed challenges to raising public awareness of the changing face of adoption, emphasizing that people tend to remember the negative sides of past, closed, adoptions, and seldom hear the positive sides of the story. Further, the numbers of adoptions are significantly lower compared with past decades (Appendix A). As one participant noted, the public tends not to be interested in issues unless they are directly affected, and fewer provincial residents are affected by adoption today than in the 1950s and 60s.

While the department is continually educating the public, and providing current information on changes, such as openness, public opinion of adoption exemplify yesterday's mythical approaches:

I think a lot of people still feel that this child should be grateful everlastingly because we obviously took you away from an environment that was horrid and sometimes this is the story the child gets. “Look what you came from — look at this family background — this is a horrible family background”. And I think sometimes that’s more so in some of the Aboriginal - the inter-racial - adoptions.

Public opinion of inter-country adoptions has been mixed, with support for ‘rescuing’ orphans, to resistance. The Romanian adoptions of the early 1990s met with negative public criticism of “baby snatching”, for example.

Another barrier to raising awareness to the openness of modern adoptions, is the high number of Saskatchewan residents who were participants in closed adoptions, and who had positive experiences. “It’s difficult to go back now and tell people who’ve had closed adoption that it was wrong.”

Changes to public opinion, one participant stressed, are related to larger societal issues of children’s rights. The lack of public awareness of adoption is connected to the lack of focus, in general, on children’s issues. Change will occur, the participant hypothesized, through placing more emphasis on children’s rights, and the importance of developing strong parenting skills, both individually and societally:

I think one of the most important things that’s needed is probably public education. That goes back to who’s responsible for children, ownership of children and that kind of thing. And, I think in adoption and certainly foster care, and just as in terms of children’s rights. We should be spending more time somehow teaching people about parenting... teaching people before they’re parents, maybe in secondary education, or maybe before that time. We should be talking about the responsibilities and the rights of children, and the responsibilities of adults to provide those rights. And I think the day will come. I think even children will become much more active in commanding. I think women certainly have. And women still have a long way to go. If you want to take certain groups, like the Aboriginal people in Canada, Black people in the United States... I mean once people start knowing their rights there’s really not much turning back.
Adoption materials and discussion groups are widely available through the Internet.³ Participants noted their own personal inability to change the 'system' since they are part of the system. They stressed how important it is that individuals within our communities establish networks to advocate for well-thought-out strategies to deal with today's adoption policy and practice challenges. "If we don't have that group of people that want to change public attitudes about it, I think we're going to continue to struggle along."

Participants emphasized the significance of public opinion in promoting, or inhibiting, a system's ability to change, and stressed the need to raise public opinion regarding the many changes to adoption policies and practices in the last ten to fifteen years.

Other Sources

Other surveys of service providers' perceptions of public awareness/opinion about adoption echo the sentiments expressed in this research project. In a survey by Daly & Sobel (1993), some 350 adoption service providers responded to a questionnaire mail-out. In relation to public perception/awareness of adoption, the consensus is the public still sees adoption in yesterday's closed eyes, and is not aware of the available options of openness in today's system. Respondents felt more young pregnant woman would consider adoption as an option in unplanned pregnancies if there was more awareness of newer, inclusive and open, forms of adoption now available.

Today

While Social Services has made a tremendous stride in recent decades toward more open communication in adoption, two areas where communication is confounded emerged from the data collection. As open as the 'system' is in terms of its policies and practices, openness is challenged in Trans-racial adoption. The challenges and strategies related to domestic Trans-racial adoptions and those pertaining to inter-country adoptions are addressed in this section. The two issues, domestic versus inter-country, are separated for the challenges each sector faces are dissimilar.

Domestic Adoptions

Participants expressed frustration with the challenges in finding permanency for the large number of children currently in the foster system, many who are Aboriginal. Some of the participants feel the biggest challenge facing contemporary adoption is opening the opportunity of permanency for the children in foster care.
Following the AIM program of the 1960s and 70s, Canada, along with other countries, like the United States, and the United Kingdom imposed a virtual embargo on domestic Trans-racial adoption. Consequently, there are currently several hundred Aboriginal children in care, who will not be returning to their families and who are not available for adoption. Ironically, since bands or reserves don’t have enough foster homes for these children, many of them are in Caucasian foster homes.

On the other hand, there are some five hundred approved potential adoptive parents in Saskatchewan, many who are prepared to embrace a different culture in a Trans-racial adoption. Participants noted the paradox as Saskatchewan couples, frustrated with the years-long wait for a domestic adoption, are turning to other countries for adoption: “we’re losing resources to other countries”. Adoption workers noted that while Trans-racial adoption is challenging, in general, inter-country adoptions face the added barrier of a lack of local resources. In contrast, there are a wealth of Aboriginal elders and role models in the province, providing many opportunities for teaching a Aboriginal child about her or his culture.

The complex and interconnected issues involved in the challenge of pursuing permanency are beyond the scope of this research project; however, an overview of the issues is relevant to considering the future of adoption-related communications.

Participants spoke about how the past affects the present in relation to domestic Aboriginal adoptions. They expressed an empathy for the reticence Aboriginal communities have in considering placement in non-Aboriginal homes, given the relinquishment processes connected with the AIM program when the input of Aboriginal communities was not sought:

The other concern that the Aboriginal community has is that we didn’t allow their participation in that – we told them what was good for them and what wasn’t good for them. We didn’t educate them to what their decisions were, we didn’t tell them they had any rights, or maybe didn’t even expect that they did. We didn’t believe that they were smart enough to figure it out if we would give them information. Or else, we would have done it, right?”

Concerns were expressed about a generation of children growing up in foster care as Aboriginal Bands and Social Services struggle with finding solutions. “We have to give Aboriginal children in the system the option of adoption, or else we’ll create another generation of lost souls, with no family connections over age eighteen, aside from some, probably mediocre foster homes.”
Participants also spoke about the fragmentation of the current system, which does not provide continuity of care or stability in children's lives. They discussed how a divisive approach is not in the best interest of the children the system is designed to serve:

We've got foster care, we've got adoptive homes in foster care, we've got emergency homes, we've got twenty-four hour homes, we've got temporary homes, we've got long-term homes, we've got therapists homes... everybody's got their own little specialty. And, that's worked out fine and we understand it and we know how much everybody gets paid, and the system... but are we actually responding to the needs of the child? No, we're responding to the needs of adults, to put those things into compartments.

All participants noted that strategizing towards solutions for today's domestic challenges involve working, not paternalistically, but collaboratively with Aboriginal communities and that open, honest communication is one piece in the puzzle to finding future solutions.

While it may appear as though a simple solution exists in connecting the numbers of children in care and the number of potential adoptive parents in Saskatchewan, there are no 'easy' solutions. The related issues are complex and rooted in the significant differences between the dominant culture's view of adoption, and Aboriginal traditions of alternative child-rearing practices.

The context of barriers in domestic placement are related to participants reported, cultural clashes between the dominant culture's adoptive framework of 'permanency', 'ownership' and 'relinquishment' which are incongruous with Aboriginal' communal child-rearing practices. Participants acknowledged the complexity of working with two worldviews: "There's an issue in terms of views and values about attachment and bonding versus culture... and where do you weigh in and what is the balance and who's right?"

Strategies aimed at making some movement in this area follow the Department's collaborative shift to working 'with' families, rather than 'for' in adoption planning, and respectfully working together with Aboriginal people. Aboriginal communities are establishing their own agencies, providing services for Aboriginal children. Participants also discussed how more and more Aboriginal applicants are coming forward, as well. Also, some Aboriginal birth mothers are opting out of band involvement and are placing their children in non-native homes.

One worker gave an example of a single, Caucasian man who adopted an older Aboriginal child. The worker and the applicant traveled to the band, and discussed many aspects of the placement with the Band Council for several hours. The Chief approved the placement, and afterwards he asked the worker.
"Why haven't we always done adoptions this way?" That particular adoption has worked out well and is a positive example of a contemporary Aboriginal placement in a Caucasian home.

While the goals of having Aboriginal communities developing their own alternative child-rearing arrangements are supported by all workers, there is also a recognition that the two—Aboriginal children in care and potential adoptive parents—will not fit together neatly. "Simply matching up kids in care with adoptive families won't work—we need alternative families". Workers stressed the need for a flexible approach, where alternative families can share responsibility for a child, rather than 'own' a child, but noted how incongruent this concept is with Western views of adoption:

Because when you look at adoption, and you talk about the children in foster care and adoptive parents that are sitting there and you could probably put the two together and that would be the answer, but it isn't. 'Cause people who want to be parents don't fully understand, or does the rest of the community? So, the family doesn't, you know the community they live in doesn't, the people they work with don't. They don't understand accepting responsibility for children. They understand the ownership of children, and they understand how delightful it is if you take into your 'ownership', for instance, children from another country, and what a good person you are for doing that.

While child-sharing arrangements—traditional in Native communities—may provide a workable solution to today's challenges of the high number of children in care, it's not a perfect option, either. Participants noted how having a child move back and forth between families can lead to identity conflicts and the child wanting to run away to the 'other' family during times of stress.

Participants also stressed the need to proactively pursue options in this area. "...How long do you have a child, for instance, coming into care and returned to birth parents who are unable to parent for the child before you start making some decisions in regard to that child?" The Department's transition to using Family-Centered Case Management sets out boundaries in terms of how long one waits to see if birth parents will be able to parent children into adulthood. The Family-Centered Approach attempts to clarify what "in the best interests of the child" means.

We didn't educate families and now we are, so rather than pulling back and not placing those children this is the time when we should be moving forward and placing the children in Caucasian homes. Now it would be better if we could find the Aboriginal [people] that would be... Some participants emphasized the significance of—especially in the case of older children—how a child's wishes and feelings should be paramount in the process. One worker cited an example of a child feeling he'd been kidnapped after being removed from a foster home, where he had bonded and being placed into an adoptive home.
Again, these issues are beyond the scope of this thesis, but raise serious concerns about how communication occurs with the large number of children in care, and about cultural communication that occurs in non-Aboriginal foster homes. Suffice it to say this is a challenging area for Social Services.

Other Sources

Research into specialized or customized adoptions indicates mixed results. While some unions are successful, there are reports of children being expected to care for sick and aging relatives and/or being faced with abuse issues. Regulation, screening and guidelines are needed to monitor the developments of custom adoptions, surveyed service providers propose (Daly & Sobel, 1993). Some express concern over gender issues within Band Council processes, in that a birth mother may lose her band rights if her Council rules and gives control over placement.

Self-regulation and delivery of social programs and services by Aboriginal communities is ideal, surveyed workers note, however, those very communities are facing long-term social and economic stresses, precluding the development of a stable child welfare system. Regardless of what program-related ‘solutions’ are developed, the needs of children will only be met when the wider systemic assaults on the community are addressed (Daly & Sobel, 1993).

The “best interests of the child” movement is important to the development of custom adoptions and child rearing arrangements, in that the tendency is moving towards letting children have more of a say in determining placements. Saskatchewan has historically operated in a parens patriae manner, meaning the courts have the authority to determine a child’s best interests. A child’s consent is necessary but not sufficient and is seldom the sole determinant in adoption decisions. A movement towards self-determination for children is slowly resulting in the consent of children being more determinative (Gaber & Aldridge 1994).

Some critics suggest that governments stopped domestic Trans-racial adoptions not because of moral reasons, but because it was no longer politically expedient (Simon & Alstein, 1987).

Inter-country

Inter-country adoptions also pose barriers to openness and communication in adoption. All ten participants expressed concerns over the issues related to inter-country adoption, primarily due to the total lack of information provided with some adoptions. In China, for example, babies are left outside orphanages
wearing only a diaper (often with a note containing the infant’s birth date pinned onto the diaper). Some Chinese adoptees have bond marks on their wrists and ankles. Saskatchewan has no control over the lack of information provided in Chinese adoptions, or with any other inter-country adoptions. While Social Services in this province recognize the importance of background information, other countries have different practices and beliefs. Workers express concerns about how these children are going to adjust to their status, as they age. “I still have grave concerns about how these children are going to respect us as adults, and whether or not they will see us as the great benefactor…”

Similarly, the Romanian adoptions of the early 1990s are disconcerting to workers, who note that “early Romanian adoptions were not ‘kosher’…[they were] very, very, very sketchy.” Participants spoke about how adoptive parents in Canada were not prepared for the health and psychological challenges resulting from the extreme deprivation so many Romanian children faced, living in overcrowded orphanages.

Interviewees expressed concern that the adoption system is repeating it’s domestic, Trans-racial errors from the past, with sketchy, circumspect arrangements in inter-country negotiations. “All of those things that could be applied to the AJM program could easily be taken and applied to things like inter-country adoption.” The lack of openness in inter-country adoptions sometimes poses moral dilemmas for workers:

…and how clear that is now, to us, about adoption of 30 years ago, and yet we hope to repeat the experience [laughter] … like we’re doing it again. So, why are we doing it again? Like we just keep doing the same thing over and over; we’re not totally learning. Some people are learning, and many of these things are much more clear. I mean many people who would love to adopt, perhaps internationally, or perhaps adopt baby would not like to adopt a child that has something like attention deficit disorder, or fetal alcohol syndrome. What would they ever do with a child like that? So, if you’re talking about children in care here, you’re talking about children where we’ve had an assessment and where we believe this is the case, that kind of thing. So, people say, “well no, I couldn’t possibly cope with that kind of thing…” gee I’d rather raise a child from Russia”… Where we have no information about the parents, and who may have generations of alcoholism, but we say “no we’d much rather do this” when we have no concept of what we’re doing.

Participants spoke about how the distance between inter-racial adoptees and their homelands can hamper openness. “And it’s so much easier to deny, not with an evil intent, but to deny your child’s heritage if they’re from someplace six or eight thousand miles away, than if they’re here in your face.”

Some children of inter-country adoptions later express anger at being taken from their home:
I was at a conference once and a lady spoke up and said she'd adopted her daughter from Korea. And, there was a time when her daughter was really angry. "How dare you take me away from my people; how dare you take me away from my country?" So, they had to do quite a lot of work to resolve that. I have no idea what's going to happen with this inter-country stuff.

Another worker gave an example of a Korean boy who developed mental health problems. Part of his problems, he felt, stemmed around his lack of knowledge of his heritage. His adoptive parents embarked on a search to uncover his origins, but were unable to learn anything. The Korean youth received no satisfaction from the search process.

One worker shared an experience of a family that adopted a daughter from Bangladesh, some 30 years ago. As a young adult, in her 20s, she experienced severe mental health problems, and attempted to search for her birth family, to no avail. Her adoptive parent's efforts to alleviate her angst by travelling to her homeland, and learning more about her culture, did not alleviate their daughter's malaise. The worker described this individual as a "lost soul". And is worried more inter-country adoptees will experience similar problems as they attempt to search, generally in vain, for their origins.

Workers also noted that when some background information is provided in domestic adoptions, it might be falsified.

As noted earlier in this chapter, preparing for inter-country adoptions involves learning about the culture of the child, and integrating with the local culture. Travelling to the child's country of origin, learning the language, developing cultural networks are important components of the preparation process. Workers cited examples of Korean adoptive parent support groups, formed a dozen years ago when many babies were being adopted from Korea, worked very well for the families involved, as did locally-formed support groups of children adopted from Israel. Romanian adoptive parents are in the process of establishing similar groups. The process of connecting with other adoptive families, and families of the child's culture are paramount.

Participants stressed the need to monitor the outcomes of inter-country adoptions. Encouragingly, some countries are now requesting follow-up reports.

On a larger scale, participants emphasized the importance of international collaboration with initiatives like the Hague agreement and the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of the Child. Some participants stressed the Declaration's goal is to ensure inter-country adoption remains a last resort, secondary to finding alternative child rearing arrangements in the child's homeland.
Other Sources

The Hague Convention (a term to refer to the agreement, the Uniform Intercountry Adoption Act) establishes standards and criteria with respect to:

- Eligibility of a child for adoption,
- Reports concerning suitability of adoptive parents and their background;
- Parental consents; and,
- Reports outlining the child’s background.

Despite the ratification of the Hague Convention, the background information provided in some inter-country adoptions is minimal. Researchers emphasize the need to ensure post-placement services are provided for both parents and children, specifically the need for ongoing education and support. Peer groups are often cited as being the best format for offering community support. Training and support for service providers is also recommended, to ensure workers understand the dynamics of a Trans-racial and cross-cultural families and to sensitize workers to their own ethnoracial prejudices (Westhues & Cohen, 1994).

Tomorrow

Outcomes

The topic of assessing adoption outcomes is confounded by a lack of objective research, or research that inappropriately compares adoptees' adjustment vis-a-vis their non-adopted counterparts, posing comparative problems.

Participants noted while the AIM program posed significant problem in not preparing adoptive families for embracing Aboriginal culture, "AIM wasn't the abysmal flop we're lead to believe it was". noting the large number of successful AIM outcomes; many children reared through the AIM program are enjoying productive lives today. Outcomes of foster care, on the other hand, tend not to be as positive, overall, compared to adoptive outcomes. "Most people who grew up in foster care don't have good things to say about it." Most adoptees of the AIM program report feeling a loss, but feel they've had good lives.

The need to track the adjustment of children whose adoptions were open was stressed, repeatedly. While many adoptive families develop open communication styles, some families do not bond, and breakdowns occur, some of which can be rectified, and some which are not, resulting in a 'disruption', or an end to the adoption. Some workers reported that open adoptions are working well, and that families
keep in touch with the Department, and share stories of success. Other participants were more critical, stressing, again, the need to ensure adequate post-adoption counselling is available.

Despite the challenges of adoption, the changes the Department's made in terms of openness and the extensive preparation adoptive parents go through are seen as being extremely positive outcomes, that would be beneficial to all parents, not just people looking to adopt children. In many ways, workers propose, adoptive parents are more prepared for parenting, given the complexity of the *Homestudy* process.

I don't think many parents are really, either confident or aware enough to start talking to their children about things like loss. And, in fact there may be some adoptive parents now who are in a better position in that regard, because it's become such a real part of their life, not something they can disregard.

I don't think adoption's out there setting the trend, you know. And, in some ways I think in a situation where people have to actually verbalize and give specific consideration to certain things in their life, like "what's our marital situation really like; what are the strengths, limitations?", you know. And "how do we work things out, and how do we agree on things, and what do we do when we disagree?" Some of those people, I think, are much better off for that process than people who never had to go through it. And, that can be painful at times too, but I think adoption includes a lot of things that probably a lot of people would like to see in the rest of society sometimes. It includes some self-reflection, self-awareness; it includes some information about parenting, prior to parenting. It perhaps, if adoptive parents haven't parented before, it includes information about child development, and I think much more so now. That's probably one of the things that has changed. In the 1950s, 60s and probably halfway through the 70s we said, "just raise the child as your own"...

The participants all emphasized how significant change within the Department has been over the last ten to fifteen years in terms of recognizing that one does not just "raise a child as their own", and that adoptees have special communication needs. Acknowledgement, rather than denial, of differences and awareness of the importance of biology and genetics dominate today's practices, unlike the myths dominating preparation in the past.

Other Sources

Adoption researchers conclude there is a lack of scientifically sound *outcomes* research in inter-country adoptions. Methodological shortcomings are often cited (not longitudinal) as are biases (research funded by private agencies with implications of 'agendas') (Daly & Sobel, 1993; Alstein & Simon, 1991; Gill & Jackson, 1983).

There have been several studies published in recent years. Outcomes research is, overall, inconclusive. Some studies indicate that inter-country adoptees tend to have higher rates of behavior problems (Saetersdal & Dalen, 1991; Tizard, 1991; Kim, Hong & Kim, 1979; Rathburn, 1965). Other research suggests the behavior problems are merely adjustment-related issues that diminish over time.
(Gardell, 1979). Some research indicates inter-country adoptees function "as well" as non-adopted counterparts (Bagley, 1991), or function well (not compared to a control group) (Simon & Alstein, 1977).

While inconclusive, a consistent finding is that the older children are when adopted, the greater the adjustment and attachment disorders are (Westhues & Cohen, 1994; Simon & Alstein, 1991). Older boys tend to display delinquent behaviors and communication problems, while older girls display depressed, cruel and schizoid symptoms (Simon & Alstein, 1977). These forms of research have lead to a pronounced switch to adopting younger children (Alstein & Simon, 1991).

Hoksbergen, (1990) reports an alarming figure in that 5.7% of inter-country adoptees require residential care at some point in their lives, a rate of three times the 'regular' population.

A Canadian survey of three provinces, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec of some 500 participants (involving a relatively even distribution of adoptees, adoptive mothers, fathers and siblings whose names were obtained from government records) responded that the adoptees are doing "well" and have positive peer relations and good self esteem. Twelve percent of adoptive parents felt they did not receive enough information from their respective Social Services Department.

On one point the researchers clearly concede: in expressing concern over the development of the racial and ethnic identity of inter-country and Trans-racial adoptees. In response to ethnic identity questions, many Trans-racial adoptees perceive themselves to be 'white' in all but skin color. Many report a lack of racial emphasis in their environment. Gill & Jackson (1983) report the coping mechanisms of many inter-country adoptees are based on denying their racial backgrounds and suggest that typical "outcome" research minimizes identity confusion issues. In studies with American-raised inter-country adoptees. Gill & Jackson (1983) report that a Trans-racially placed child's sense of racial identity stops growing in an environment that is not sensitive to racial identity issues. Sixty percent of Afro-American respondents preferred dating white people, one-third did not consider themselves 'black', and Korean adoptees reported concerns over their appearance (Gill & Jackson 1983).

Canadian Trans-racial research has lead to similar findings in terms of loss of culture and ethnicity. In a Canadian survey, 10% of Trans-racial adoptees see themselves as being 'white', when they are, in fact, not Caucasian (Westhues & Cohen, 1994).
Results indicating Trans-racial adoptees do not identify with their culture highlights the need to better address the racial identity issues of adoptees. While most attended racially integrated schools, and live in integrated communities as they age and become more involved in the world, they will likely face discrimination and racism. Further, Trans-racial adoptees may not have the coping skills to deal with repeated racism – coping skills that might have been taught in a same-ethnicity family.

Given the aforementioned research results on ethnic identity, the need to ensure the ethno-racial origins of adopted children requires a re-emphasis. Acknowledging the difference between dominant and minority ethnic groups is crucial, as it is to acknowledge an adoptee’s cultural roots in addition to fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance into a new family and country (Daly & Sobel, 1993).

Follow-up of today’s inter-country adoptions is also important. Daly & Sobel (1993) estimate that of the some 2,500 inter-country adoptions per year in Canada, one-third have experienced risk factors either during pregnancy or post-partum (i.e. sensory deprivation, abuse or neglect), of which one-third will develop major cognitive, emotional or behavior disabilities.

More services are needed to respond to adoption research and to target services where most needed. Services reacting to long-term developmental needs of at-risk adoptees simply are not available and should be. Service providers repeatedly stressed the need for post-adoption counselling, and some proposed post-adoption services should be mandatory. Many wondered “will public practitioners be willing or able to respond to the future needs of inter-country adoptees?” (Daly & Sobel, 1993).

Private

Since the late 1980s, private adoption has been an option for potential adoptive parents, and birth families. While the processes of private adoptions are not formally part of this project, openness issues are equally as significant in the private realm. In Saskatchewan, there is only one private agency: Christian Counselling Services in Saskatoon. Also relevant to the topic of openness in private services are the counselling needs of people affected by other forms of adoption: independent, step parent and adult adoptions which are all private, legal agreements, not negotiated through Saskatchewan’s one private adoption agency, or Saskatchewan Social Services. These three forms involve merely legal transactions and do not involve any psychological preparation.
Some participants expressed a high level of confidence with private adoptions while others expressed concerns about the preparation provided in the private agency. One worker cited an example of two families that adopted separately, two Romanian children who had been in the same Romanian orphanage. One of the families has a photo, from the orphanage, of the two children together, and contacted the second family to see about getting together. The response to this request for openness was met with a resounding 'no', as the other adoptive family stated, "We want the child to forget where he came from; he's part of our family now". This type of attitude portrays a lack of understanding for the significance of the child's early life experiences. (And, is not necessarily attributable to the adoption occurring through the private agency in Saskatchewan, as opposed to Saskatchewan Social Services.) Again, there is a lack of comparative public/private outcomes research in adoption in Canada, including in Saskatchewan.

Other participants expressed concerns over adoptive parents' genuine interest in embracing a culture, when they adopt privately. "Some are very negative about Aboriginal kids. One family said they accept an Aboriginal child "that didn't look Indian"...we wonder". These stories, although antedotal, provide a basis for the concerns over the need to maintain provincial regulation over all adoptions in Saskatchewan.

Workers shared experiences of private adoption breaking-down and the individuals involved coming to the provincial adoption system for support. "We see the fall-out from private adoptions where the adoptive family wasn't well prepared".

Another area of concern relates to stepparent adoptions, which used to be handled by the Department, but now are mere legal agreements, between the family and a lawyer. Participants noted that although a step-parent adoption isn't as dramatic as other adoptions, workers propose that adopting step-parents should also go through counselling to prepare them for open communication with their new child.

The potential for profit making on the part of private agencies was another concern raised during the interviews. While Saskatchewan's, and other provincial, private agencies charge 'reasonable' fees, relative to private American agencies, workers are concerned about connecting fiscal issues with adoption. "These are lives we're dealing with!"
Lack of staffing, within the private system, for counselling, was another concern cited by participants.

And they don’t have the staff or the resources of a provincial organization like we do, and the knowledge base to draw from, either. And, I think they’re at a real disadvantage, through no fault of their own, but I do feel their clients are being short-changed, and particularly the children.

Workers noted that Social Services keeps files on all private adoptions for a three-year period, and receives updates on the progress of the placement on a regular basis, during that time frame, from the private agency.

Other Sources

Daly & Sobel (1993) report a lack of positive interactions between private agencies and First Nations Bands: service providers repeatedly express concern about trends towards more private adoption agencies. The concerns are related to the existence of a two-tiered system – one for wealthy families that can afford higher fees and a second, public system for those who cannot afford private fees. (It is important to note the one private agency in Saskatchewan is not-for-profit.) In addition to the profit factor, service providers report concerns about lack of pre-placement planning and availability of follow-up counselling (Daly & Sobel. 1993).

Axial Coding

After developing the five categories, their properties and dimensional ranges, the next stage of analysis involved Axial Coding which brings the coded, categorized data back together by making connections between the categories.

A coding paradigm was used to specify each category in terms of the conditions that give rise to it. Specifically, factors such as causal conditions, the context, action/interaction strategies, and intervening conditions for each of the five open coding categories were identified (Appendix I). The larger social context, accounting for the antecedent causal conditions to traditional, closed (i.e. mythical) adoption are identified using Axial coding.
Myths

Causal Conditions

The influences of paternalism and patriarchy, classism, the Church, and racism are all identified as conditions that caused, or lead to adoption's historical role in perpetuating socialization in Christian, heterosexual, middle and upper class households. State paternalism — the notion the “state knows best” is also causal. Societal assumptions were that the preferred method of child rearing was a white, Christian, heterosexual, male-headed household.

Properties & Dimensions

These causal condition gave rise to the properties of the 'Myth' category, an assumption that one's genealogy was less significant than one's environment, that ethnicity and race were insignificant as was the trauma experienced by adopted infants/children and birth mothers. The 'loss' was seen as being a static event, without significant long-term implications. These causes lead to the pervasive stigma women faced in contemplating raising a child out of wedlock, forcing birth mothers to involuntarily relinquish their children.

Context & Strategies

Traditional adoption took place in the context of the practice's popularity and in a scientific, nurture-oriented, environment.

As discussed in both the literature review and earlier in this chapter, the psychological and scientific zeitgeist of the post W.W. II to the 1960s resulted in a focus on the importance of nurture. The emphasis on environment de-emphasized the significance of heredity, genetics, culture and race. Consequently, closed adoption was seen as an acceptable and appropriate strategy to 'rescuing' fatherless children and it was assumed there would be no ill effects, psychologically, on either the child or the birth mothers. The significance of trauma only became better understood after the Korean and Vietnam wars, when the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was introduced into mainstream psychology and psychiatry.

We live in a "culture of adoption": nearly everyone knows someone, or is related to someone, who is adopted. Some 33,000 adoptions have occurred in Saskatchewan since the formal inception of the practice in the 1920s, a significant proportion of the population has been affected by adoption.
birth parents, x 2 adoptive parents = some 130,000 people directly involved in adoption triads). This
‘culture’ occurred in the context of a time when secrecy was high; the nuclear family was developing and
people had the economic means to live independently and ‘privately’.

Without revisiting a string of assimilative policies of previous governments, it’s important to
acknowledge the impact of the Residential School system, which denied a generation of Aboriginal parents
the opportunity to develop child rearing skills by forcing attendance at Residential Schools. An outcome
was a large number of Indian and Métis children in the child welfare system, and a resulting strategy was
eventual development of the A.I.M. Program.

The issue of involuntary relinquishment is critical to understanding adoption’s closed history.
While the concept of freedom, in general, is relative (are there really any free choices in life?), birth
mothers who relinquished their children in previous decades generally were not ‘free’ in determining a
course of action. They made their decisions based on a perceived lack of resources for child rearing, and
internal and external pressure from their families, churches, and other community leaders or organizations.
Traditional adoptions took place in the context of a lack of choices for birth mothers. History tends to
repeat itself, and the issue of involuntary relinquishment, while no longer an issue in domestic
Saskatchewan adoptions, is significant in today’s inter-country adoption scenario, as will be discussed later
in this chapter.

Intervening Conditions

Conditions which intervened to constrain action/interaction strategies that were more inclusive for
relinquishing mothers (and fathers) included the strength of adoptive parents’ voices, and status quo beliefs
that a traditional, patriarchal family was the only ‘acceptable’ option for child-rearing. Further, the
significance placed on finding children for infertile couples took precedence to considering the rights of the
children affected, or the needs of parents forced into a relinquishment situation. Because of the
aforementioned social forces, Saskatchewan’s origins in formal adoption, like the rest of North America,
are closed, emphasizing finality and ownership. In some cases, adoption equated to a transfer of property,
as with previous centuries. Some adopted children were not told of their adoptive status, while adoption
was communicated to other adoptees in a static one-time manner, minimizing the long-term impacts. A
well adjusted adoptee was one who accepted the adoption and did not ask too many questions. While
adoptees tongues were not cut off for talking about adoption, as in ancient times. existential discussions on the meaning of adoption were 'taboo' subjects. Consequently, traditional adoption has a mythical past.

**Communication & Change**

Strauss and Corbin's analysis of change was used as an overarching framework for assessing the system's changes in adoption communication over previous decades. The last 25 years, and particularly the last ten, have seen momentous shifts in communication in the adoption field. The two categories of 'Communication' and 'Change' are combined into one axial coding category. 'Today' and 'Tomorrow' are also combined into one category, in the following section.

**Causal Conditions**

A number of causal conditions lead to the move toward openness and inclusiveness, away from the final and exclusive practices of the past. The second wave of feminism, increased the rights and economic status of women leading to dramatic changes in women's lives. Further, access to birth control and the increased acceptance of alternative forms of families (i.e. single parenting, Trans-racial, and same sex couples). With the advancement of women's rights, specifically, and human rights, in general, the number of babies available for adoption declined, while the infertility rate and demand for babies rose. Inter-country adoption increasingly became an option as babies were available in Eastern Europe or Asia. Not only did women's rights improve, so did the rights of Aboriginal people, and of children.

Empowered birth mothers returned to the adoption system, advocating for access to information about their children. Adoptees joined in the advocacy for access to identifying information. The combined forces of birth mother and adoptees caused a shift away from yesterday's view that there are no ill effects of separating infants from their mothers (and fathers). Adoption laws with respect to accessing identifying information and adoption services changed to accommodate post-adoption processes (O' Shaughnessy, 1994).

**Properties & Dimensions**

Openness became an emphasis within adoption policies and practices. The system moved towards inclusive approaches, while public perception remains, to a large degree, mythical.

**Context & Strategies**

With a decline in the number of children available for adoption, the system underwent strategies addressing the inequity between the declining number of children and the increasing number of applicants. The reduced stigma surrounding single parenting, and access to abortion created a shift away from the
involuntary relinquishment birth mothers experienced in previous generations. The consequential shift, in policy and practice, was to work with, and listen to, birth mothers.

Increased recognition within the mental health fields of the losses inherent in adoption were facilitated by a swinging of the nature/nurture pendulum, as notions that babies are mere "blank slates" underwent a deconstruction. The move towards openness in adoption took place in the context of the popularization of genetic research and a growing appreciation of the importance of one's genetic, biological, racial and cultural heritage.

As the supply of babies domestically decreased, also affected by the end of the AIM program and a reduction in adoption of Aboriginal babies by Caucasian families, inter-country adoptions became a viable alternative for families seeking adoption.

**Intervening Conditions**

Strategically, policies and practices shifted significantly. The Department moved away from closed adoption, embraced openness and contact between birth families and adopted families, and acknowledged that adjusting to adoption is not static, but an on-going process. Preparation for adoption communication with adoptees underwent profound changes in recognizing the importance of genetics and ethnicity.

In Saskatchewan, the Adoption Act (1990) was passed and open adoptions became a legislative reality. International and private adoptions become more popular, and accepted. Social trends toward devolution and privatization lead to the acceptance of a private adoption agency in Saskatchewan.

The Hague Convention was ratified and inter-country adoptions became more accessible. The consequences for adoption communication were openness and the establishment of post-adoption services for the purposes of searching and reuniting adoptees and birth families. A new global method of adoption has developed over the last two decades of this century.

The consequences in relation to communication have been profound: adoption processes have transformed from complete exclusivity to being inclusive and open. Adoptees have a voice in negotiations about their lives. Sealed birth records of previous generations have been opened, facilitating numerous reunions.

Outcomes research of adoptions in developed countries indicated mixed results of Trans-cultural adoptions: advocates address the need for more longitudinal research.
Today & Tomorrow

While the system is open now in terms of the availability of open adoptions and open birth records, other aspects remain closed as the century comes to a close. Internationally, often there is little information available. Domestically, many children are in the foster system – temporarily housed – without opportunities for permanency planning.

Causal Conditions

Causally, infertility rates continue to increase and the numbers of available domestic babies remains low, leading to alternative forms of adoption (primarily inter-country and private). Some inter-country adoptions are considered sketchy; the kidnapping of third-world children for-profit is a reality. Yet, there remains a high number of children in care. Alternative forms of families continue to gain acceptance, including Trans-racial and same-sex families.

Properties & Dimensions

Domestic adoption rates are low; high numbers of children remain in care. There are many challenges in relation to domestic adoptions. Inter-country adoptions also face challenges. Outcomes research indicates both positive and negative results – research is inconclusive. Private adoption and private contracting of Homestudy processes continue to be strong trends.

Context & Strategies

Awareness of trauma and loss continues to grow; society becomes more open and interested in healing. Increased preparation for cultural, genetic/biological and ethnic awareness becomes part of all adoption processes. Public perception about adoption remains relatively static. The Federal government apologizes for residential schools and provides funding to Aboriginal communities for healing. Aboriginal people continue towards self-determination and self-government. Saskatchewan Social Services implements the 1990 Legislation and Hague Convention. Increasing numbers of provincial residents are involved in reunions with birth families.

Intervening Conditions

The Adoption Myths continue to be perpetuated in the general public. Involuntary relinquishment in inter-country adoptions continues (i.e. Romania, China). Policy and practice decisions are made and new forms of adoption unfold amid a lack of conclusive outcome research and a lack of post-adoption services.
The consequences on communication are that the system is ‘open’ on one side but closed on the other. The goal of this study was not to study how we are communicating with children in care, but both the literature and interviews stressed the significance of the lost lives of children in care with neither the option of returning to biological parents or being adopted. The development of child welfare services run by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people is important. However, the economic struggles of Aboriginal people will make the development of a child welfare system extremely difficult. What do we do in the meantime? Sacrifice the permanency of a generation of children while we get our politics straightened out? A culture clash exists between our traditional notion of permanent adoption versus exploring alternative child rearing practices that could provide the flexibility Aboriginal communities are seeking.

What is relevant to this thesis is communication with respect to ethnic identity of inter-racial adoptees: some one in ten deny their ethnic origins and believe they are of the dominant culture’s ethnicity. The lack of quality research limits policy and practice decisions. There is no awareness of the impact adoption has on publicly supported mental health services, or to what degree practitioners are aware of adoption-related issues clients may present. Given that outcome research is generally inconclusive, additional research is required, as are additional post-adoption resources. Post adoption resources continue to be scarce and not specifically targeted.

It remains difficult to change public opinion about the importance of openness in adoption communication when so many provincial residents were affected by closed adoptions. For those whose lives are stable and who feel closed adoptions worked for them, proposing that closed adoption was wrong could be shattering and a difficult public relations exercise to execute.

Secrecy remains a part of the adoption story, as birth fathers are denied access to identifying records of their children, and inter-country adoptions often lack background information. Not all adoptions are truly ‘open’. It remains crucial to be reflective of not perpetuating the Adoption Myth and communicating not ‘to’ children, but ‘with’ children affected by adoption.

Selective Coding

Core Category: Openness

The main story is about how communication with adoptees has changed with respect to openness. These changes stemmed from social and human rights progressions that empowered adoptees and birth mothers to
advocate for policy and practice changes. Communication in adoption today is to be open with the recognition that accepting adoption is an on-going process for many participants in adoption.

While our society and adoption system is more open in communication, the progression is paradoxical for other doors are closed in relation to international adoption and the lack of information provided by other countries.

Similarly, much of the change in adoption is paradoxical. While a fast rate of change has occurred, much of it progressive, some changes have been non-progressive, particularly in relation to inter-country adoption (Appendix J). Some of the change has been forward (openness), but the direction has been backwards in other respects (inter-country). Nevertheless, the changes have been wide in scope – today’s adoption realities are dramatically different from recent decades. In relation to inter-country adoptions. Saskatchewan’s ability to control the changing global model is low. The political and economic issues behind high numbers of ‘orphans’ are far beyond the parameters of the provincial Adoption Unit. Adoption is affected by society’s changing face, and is not a trendsetter.

Connecting the Categories

Strauss & Corbin (1990) propose to explore Core Category according to the basic psychosocial principles used in the earlier analytic phases:

- Conditions
- Phenomenon
- Context

The five categories – The Myths, Communication, Change, Today and Tomorrow are connected accordingly:

1. Social conditions of previous decades resulted in closed adoptions, denied the inherent loss for children, and birth mothers; relinquishment was often involuntary.
2. Increased awareness of mental health issues and subsequent advocacy forced change in adoption policies and practices in terms of openness and the end of the AIM program.
3. The system undergoes a profound shift; overall, public awareness remains mythical and the general public is not aware of adoption’s widespread changes in the last fifteen years.
4. Today, much uncertainty exists; domestically, adoptions are open here but not internationally. Children continue to grow up in foster care and post-adoption support is not available even though research suggests it is needed.
5. Tomorrow will be full of challenges, domestically and inter-country, just as yesterday was. Some of the more significant challenges are: the high numbers of children without permanent homes, both abroad and in this province; the growing numbers of couples seeking to adopt; and, the stress on the adoption sector to compete for scarce resources. As well, there is a lack of outcomes research both with public and private adoptions. Many adoption professionals advocate for alternative, flexible, inclusive child rearing practices.
The Conditional Matrix

The Conditional Matrix (Figure 1) is the end result of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) Grounded Theory Approach to qualitative data analysis. The Matrix is an diagrammatic aid for considering the wide range of conditions and consequences related to change in adoption policies and practices, allowing the analyst to both distinguish between and link levels of conditions and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The factors listed in the upper left corner of the Matrix above the arrows are the historical precursors – the context – under which traditional, closed adoption emerged: marginalization in terms of gender, social class and race, as well as the church and societal secrecy. The factors listed below the arrows, on the left, represent the 'past' (i.e. the 1950s and 60s). Paternalism, the psychological focus on nurture (as opposed to nature), assimilative government policies and women's lack of access to birth control lead to a large 'supply' of children for adoption. The consequence was a culture of adoption – a culture of involuntary relinquishment and limited communication.

The second wave of feminism, the human rights movement, women's access to birth control, and the acceptance of alternate families resulted in fewer babies being available for adoption yet increasing infertility rates meant more childless couples were seeking to adoption. Intercultural adoptions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal decreased. Advocacy of birth parents, mostly mothers, and adopted adults resulted in major changes in adoption, particularly in relation to openness. Sealed adoption records were opened, and adoption communication 'opened' in that birth and adoptive families continue to communicate beyond the placement, and adoptive families were prepared to be fully open in all forms of communication with adopted children. The shortage of babies available for domestic adoption, coupled with increasing globalization and advances in the mass media, resulted in greater awareness of the availability of babies abroad. Consequently, inter-country adoptions become popularized, and ultimately the Hague Convention was signed amongst several nations, including Canada, to ensure inter-country adoption remains a last solution to rearing parentless children.

It is difficult to predict the future; adoption's fate will be affected by numerous factors. On one hand, marginalized groups are achieving more self-determination, meaning fewer women – worldwide – will be forced into involuntary relinquishment of their children. Yet, on the other hand the globalization/feminization of poverty will inevitably result in more children being available for adoption.
While the larger social and economic factors involved in adoption’s future are beyond the control of any provincial adoption services, what is feasible locally is continuing to emphasize the best interests of the children of this globe. Saskatchewan, in adopting the Hague, endorses the international intent to prevent abuses of the world’s children, and to implement safeguards to protect of our future generations. Inter-country adoption should remain, as endorsed, a last resort.

**Limitations**

As with any research endeavour, there are limitations to the approach chosen for this study. The following are the limitations of this study:

1. The results are not generalizable since part of the data analysis and interpretation were based on qualitative data.

2. Maintaining the anonymity of the participants was paramount and thus only non-identifying quotations were used from the interview participants. Therefore, it was not possible to make intra-provincial comparisons of participants’ views regarding the issues discussed in the interviews. To the extent possible, comparisons between older versus contemporary publications, legislation, and acts were conducted, although the availability of older materials is limited.

3. The small pool of potential participants within Saskatchewan was another limiting factor.

4. Another limitation stems from having accepted a particular theoretical and philosophical framework. Other frameworks – other paradigms – which could be useful, might be excluded, thus limiting the analysis and interpretations of the data.

5. As the research project progressed, I continued to read additional materials which poses the risk of experiencing a shift in my own paradigmatic framework. For I was continually exposed to new concepts and theories. This process may possibly affect the consistency of the research; however, an open-ended approach is consistent with a post-positivist framework. The ongoing developmental nature of the research does not mean the boundaries for the study were not well established. Rather, it allowed for my own exploration to respond, reflect and expand on the emerging data. An open-ended perspective is consistent with the Grounded Theory approach to analysis used in this thesis.

6. Special-needs adoptions, as with Trans-racial adoptions, are complex and require specific attention. The focus of this thesis related to deconstructing the cultural and genetic myths about the unimportance of biology and the significance of environment (and thus Trans-racial adoptions were studied). Including an emphasis on special-needs adoptions in this research would have added several additional variables to the already complex analysis, and, consequently, special focus was not given to this subject area.
Summary

The focus of this research was to examine how adoption policies and practices have changed over recent decades in relation to supporting communication about adoption in adoptive families. In the early decades of this century, adoption practices were closed. Some adoptees were not even told of their origins, and others were given a one-time conversation. The long-term developmental implications were not explored, and for this reason, closed, traditional adoption is considered mythical.

Significant change occurred starting in the 1960s and gaining momentum in the 1980s, as birth mothers and baby boomer adoptees gathered together, empowered one another, and fought for system-wide change in relation to accessing identifying information from sealed adoption records.

Advocacy of birth mothers and adopted adults also resulted in changes at the front-end of adoption. Legislation of the 1990s, encouraging openness, has increased degrees of openness and communication between adoptees, birth families and adoptive families. However, the state has no formal power to ensure on-going communication and openness and consequently the degree of openness achieved is still at the discretion of the adoptive parents.

Overall, communication on adoption has vastly improved – there has been significant change over time. The Adoption Myth has clearly been deconstructed and a realistic portrayal of the genealogical, psychological, and developmental needs of participants in adoption has been constructed. While yesterday’s Myth is gone, new challenges have emerged with respect to inter-country adoptions. Concern among adoption professionals, researchers, and policy theorists exists over the ethnic identity of Trans-racial adoptees, the lack of information provided in some inter-country adoptions, the lack of follow-up services, and the lack of regulation of private adoption services.
Chapter Five

IMPLICATIONS

Overview

This chapter discusses the implications of this study in relation to adoption practices, policies and research.

A perspective on the value of this study for future purposes is included.

Implications

For programs

The implications of fully appreciating adopted peoples' needs in relation to communication about heredity, genealogy, the circumstances of the adoption, and culture/race/ethnicity are significant with respect to the types of services provided to members of the adoption triad. While current methods address these issues in the preparation of adoptive families, there are no follow-up methods, nor are there any 'legal' obligations for adoptive parents to communicate any information about the adoption to adopted children. While research results on adoption outcomes are not conclusive, strong evidence exists for special foci with regards to adoptees' cultural identity.

Strategic follow-up services should be available, but not necessarily provided through Social Services. Adoption workers report that few adoptive families return to the department for 'assistance' in adoption-related issues, although some families do keep in touch throughout the years, almost always with positive 'progress' reports. Adoptive parents may be reluctant to return to the department, even if strategic programs were available, for fear of any 'problems' being recorded on their 'record'. Social Services may be the last place adoptive parents would want to take their problems; it is important that community-based, non-government follow-up services be available. This could be achieved through both educating existing mental health and education professionals and through the employment of professional adoption workers. Openness should be incorporated, legally, into negotiated agreements around milestone occasions (i.e. 5th, 10th, and 15th birthdays, educational progress, medical information, important events).

There needs to be a process for identifying circumstances where communication around adoption is problematic or has broken down altogether. For example, if, at a child's fifth birthday, she/he has not been told about the adoption, the family may require some assistance in opening the channels of communication. While some families say they want to wait until the child is "old enough" to disclose the adoption, the consensus is there are no benefits to delaying
disclosure about the adoption. Mechanisms are needed for resolving breakdowns in communication agreements, and relying on the existing (adversarial) legal system to provide this mechanism is simply not reasonable.

Services should be provided to adoptive families, not just adopted children; a systems approach is needed. In cases of Trans-racial adoptions – either domestically or internationally – parents should be involved in support groups of similar families in order to develop friendships with members of the adoptee’s country of origin. These strategies can allow adoptive families to recognize the racism in our schools, neighborhoods, and systemically in our institutions. A minority child has to learn to live in both a majority and a minority culture. Trans-racial adoptive parents must commit to a minority ideology and culture – an entirely new way of life. Awareness must be raised that (a) racism has a profound affect on an individual’s psyche (by undermining self-esteem and mental health); and (2) that minority families and cultures may have coping mechanisms against racism, coping mechanisms adoptive parents may not fully understand.

Service providers should receive a range of training about different cultures, religions, social mores, and also be sensitized to their own ethno-racial prejudices. Education, not only about adoption and Trans-racial families, but also about racism is needed. Standards should be set in our schools so perpetrators of racial slurs are challenged and reprimanded appropriately. Developing a societal intolerance for racism, of course, has benefits far beyond the adoption community.

For policies and planning

From a policy and planning perspective regarding inter-country adoptions, it is important, firstly, that Canada continue its commitment to Third World development, through education in both those countries and our own. Improving social conditions, freedoms, and choices in general and particularly for women is pivotal so birth parents are not faced with involuntary abandonment choices. Inter-country adoption should remain a last choice, and Canada should continue to question whether our inter-country adoptions are humanitarian efforts or simply exploitation. The ecumenical altruism of inter-country adoption represents the continual exploitation of the poorer by richer nations. It also detours from the real issues of third world needs.

At the same time, the question “are we helping, or hurting?” is asked in the context of high numbers of ‘orphaned’ children living in deprived conditions in various parts of the world where disaster, severe poverty and/or civil-unrest have wrecked havoc. Sacrificing the lives of an existing generation of children (both domestically and internationally) while we strive for larger economic improvements, or while we get our politics together, is
 unacceptable. The alternatives to not proceeding with inter-country adoptions are total misery and eventual death for many of this globe’s parentless. When we do enter into international adoptions, it is important to work with the countries of origin to raise awareness of the importance of background information. Information about the child’s life prior to an adoption can be immensely beneficial, particularly details of the types of trauma a child may have experienced.

In terms of domestic adoptions, the impasse in permanency planning for children in care can be overcome by moving beyond the antiquated concept of finality. Inclusive and flexible forms of child rearing can be developed if we learn to transcend the dualistic, final, ownership-focus of adoption, as we have known it. But, we have to begin thinking “outside the box”. This is particularly important with respect to Aboriginal children where our government programs and services could collaborate better with Bands and Councils to facilitate the placement of more Aboriginal children, ideally in Aboriginal homes. But, yesterday’s concept of ‘relinquishment’, and ‘ownership’ of a child will not work with our existing situation. Custom arrangements should be recognized and supported as legitimate means of family formation. Supporting alternative arrangements should be followed-up as, for example, milestone birthdays to identify areas where support would be helpful.

For government and policy makers

Social Services departments are in a paradoxical position with respect to domestic adoptions, performing an incongruous two-fold role of (1) keeping families together; and, (2) being an agent of separation. There may be a further conflict of interest for birth mothers on social assistance contemplating adoption: the Department is in a position of power with respect to welfare payments, jeopardizing the openness, collaboration and equal-power-base needed for successful dialogue on adoption. Birth mothers may be reluctant to approach public agencies, especially if they have had past experiences with child welfare. If adoption was seen less as relinquishment and finality and more as sharing and continuity, perhaps an environment of mutually beneficial agreement development could emerge.

Another commonly raised concern, both in the literature and with the participants in this study, is concern over the various directions public adoption agencies may be travelling. The need for regulation and consistency were repeatedly highlighted. In light of these concerns, and also the adversarial and contradictory nature of Social Services’ roles, private and public adoption services should be put under one non-government, not-for-profit umbrella. Such an organization could mediate less adversarial relationships with parents to allow all parties involved to make their own agreements. Such an umbrella organization would, naturally, operate according to provincial legislation and would be
accountable to government, as any organization is responsible to its funding bodies. The public adoption of children should occur under the auspices of a publicly financed unit not associated with welfare and protection. A not-for-profit sliding fee schedule (to ensure service costs are not prohibitive for lower income families) could augment public funding.

For research

While Canadian researchers have compiled meritorious studies of trends and outcomes in adoption practices, considerably more objective and longitudinal research is needed. Today's policy decisions are being made in the absence of conclusive research into the outcomes of previous adoptions. The adage that "today's solutions are tomorrow's problems" is particularly true when policy decisions are not based on solid research.

A national research strategy is required to assess the long-term consequences of major emerging trends in adoption practice. Research results should be disseminated broadly, and also communicated in ways that could affect public opinion and awareness of adoption. International collaborations should occur, so researchers from similar countries can develop standardized methodologies and comparative, longitudinal research projects.

For theory development

Facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of how different people experience adoption can expand our awareness of personality development with respect to self-identity, particularly with Trans-racial adoptions. Furthermore, with a variety of alternative reproductive choices available to Canadians, a new generation of semi- and non-biological children is growing into adulthood (i.e. artificial insemination, surrogate mothers). As inconsistent as an adopted person's life may feel, their conception occurred as a result of a normal, physical act between two people. As unnatural as adoption may be, it is more natural than being conceived by science, not sex. It is important to research, work with, and theorize about the implications of advancements in reproductive technologies on the children affected. This is particularly important in relation to recent scientific advancements in areas such as genetic cloning. The rights of children must always take precedence and deserve careful consideration in future 'scientific', and moral, explorations.

For the researcher

This pursuit of the discussed research issues is promising for future policy and practice processes. I look forward to remaining an active partner in the pursuit of improved recognition, intervention, and planning in the communities with whom I share experiences and aspirations.
Chapter Six

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Medical Research Council of Canada.


Chapter Seven

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Adoption Trends

Table 4. Number of Applicants and Placements in Domestic Adoption Program
June 1997 – Saskatchewan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage in Process</th>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved*</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Study</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting List*</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>486</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Approved = Homestudy completed and waiting for a placement.
* Waiting List = waiting to be released for Homestudy process to begin.

Explanatory Note:
Data includes only applicants to Social Services, and does not include applications to Saskatchewan’s private agency.

Table 5. Number of Domestic Adoption Placements: 1990 – 1997 – Saskatchewan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Infants</th>
<th>Older Child</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89-90</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>116</td>
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<td>90-91</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>123</td>
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<tr>
<td>91-92</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92-93</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>93-94</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>94-95*</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>96-97*</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55</td>
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</table>

*95-96 not available

Table 6. Adoption Statistics: 1985 – 1997 – Saskatchewan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Total Adoptions</th>
<th>Finalized</th>
<th>Independent*</th>
<th>Agency*</th>
<th>Step-Parent</th>
<th>Inter-Country</th>
<th>Adult</th>
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<tr>
<td>85-86</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>318</td>
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<tr>
<td>86-87</td>
<td>488</td>
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<td>148</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>87-88</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>173</td>
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<td>88-89</td>
<td>503</td>
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<td>281</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes only inter-country adoptions finalized in Saskatchewan, or those that Saskatchewan Social Services facilitated or was aware of. May exclude private international adoptions with no involvement of Social Services that were finalized in another country.

*Independent refers to adoptions arranged independently (i.e. through a lawyer)
*Agency refers to adoptions arranged through Saskatchewan’s private agency.
*Ward refers to adoptions arranged through Saskatchewan Social Services.
### Table 7
**A.I.M. Program Placements: 1967 – 1975 – Saskatchewan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of A.I.M. Placements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68-69</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-75</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8
**Adoptions: 1968 – 1986 – Saskatchewan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Children Placed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68-69</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-70</td>
<td>604</td>
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<td>409</td>
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<td>83-84~</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-86~</td>
<td>552</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *79-80 not available
  *84-95 not available
  
**Explanatory Note:**
Data refers to the number of children placed for adoption, not the number of finalized adoptions.

### Table 9
**Children in Care: 1973 – 1991 – Saskatchewan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Children in Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>2.119</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
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<td>1981-82</td>
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<td>1984-85</td>
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<td>1990-91</td>
<td>2.546</td>
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Appendix B

Master of Social Work Thesis Project

THE HISTORY OF THE ADOPTION MYTH

Participant Recruitment

Thesis Supervisor

Mona Acker
Faculty of Social Work

Committee Member
Dr. Mary Hampton
Department of Psychology

Kathleen Thompson
January, 1998
Appendix Bi

Introductory Letter to Participant

The History of the Adoption Myth:
A Master of Social Work Thesis Project

January 1998

To participant:

Thank you for considering participation in a Master of Social Work thesis project on adoption policies in Western Canada. My name is Kathleen Thompson, and I am a student at the University of Regina. As part of my studies, I will be conducting a series of interviews with adoption professionals about perceptions regarding provincial adoption policies and practices.

I have gained approval for my project from Saskatchewan Social Services, as well as from the University of Regina. Your name was suggested by Saskatchewan Social Services, and they have arranged for this thesis summary and interview outline to be sent to you, for your review.

Your participation is voluntary. If you agree to be interviewed, your commitment will be approximately 30 to 45 minutes of your time for a personal interview to be conducted by myself. In addition, it is possible that, at a later date, a brief interview may be requested to clarify the information gathered. The information provided would only be used by myself for research purposes, and your identity will remain anonymous. All of the original tapes and transcriptions will be kept in a locked location during the research. The cassette tapes will be destroyed immediately following transcription, and the transcripts of the interviews will be destroyed upon completion of the thesis.

A final copy of the thesis will be available to you through the Resource Centre at Saskatchewan Social Services. If you are willing to participate, please indicate your interest to Saskatchewan Social Services, and I will then contact you, via telephone, to arrange an interview time.

Do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions, or are interested in further discussing this research project. You can reach me during office hours at (306) 787-3165, or on e-mail, via the Internet at: kthompson@health.gov.sk.ca

Your participation will provide valuable information. Please accept my appreciation, in advance, for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Thompson
Enclosed

---

1 Originally, the study was going to compare and contrast policy and practices approaches between the four western provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba), and also was to involve an interview from Canada's National Adoption Desk in Ottawa. The research strategy was later changed to focus on only Saskatchewan (for the sake of data collection consistency, and also due to time and fiscal restrictions). The original documents shared with potential participants have remained unaltered, that the appendix contains copies identical to what the participants received, aside from this footnote.
Appendix Bii

Thesis Summary

The goal of this thesis project is to determine how, or if, adoption policies and practices in Western Canada have changed in the last 50 years in relation to addressing the developmental, psychological, and genealogical needs of adoptees.

Specifically, the project will explore whether the policies and practices related to how adopted children are told about being adopted have changed, and if current policies/practices better reflect adoptees' developmental needs, compared to the exclusive and secretive methods common in recent decades.

The rationale for this project is as follows:

- Historically, the topic of 'disclosure' - telling an adopted child of their origins and explaining the concept of adoption - was generally viewed as a one-time event, and the long-term developmental and psychological impact of adoption was not addressed;

- Traditionally, 'disclosure' took a mythical approach in that the adoption was explained as being an 'ideal' solution, and adoptees were told they were 'chosen';

- Many adopted adults participating in adoption research report the "chosen baby story" backfired, for as they aged they began to understand that adoption was not an 'ideal' solution, but rather a second-best solution;

- Research of recent decades has highlighted that accepting one's adopted status is something adoptees often continually re-examine, as they pass through the various stages of childhood;

- Adoption research indicates that as adopted children age, and develop cognitively, intellectually, and spiritually, it is natural for the adoptee to be curious about their origins, and the circumstances surrounding their adoption;

- Previous adoption research conducted by the researcher indicates that if adoptive parents are unable to accept and adjust to their adopted child's increased sense of genealogical curiosity, the child's ability to emotionally and intellectually understand what it means to be adopted may be adversely affected2;

- Given that a larger proportion of current adoptions involve either international adoptions, or special-needs children, factors such as culture shock, racism and the challenges of living with a handicap have been added to developmental needs of adoptees; and.

- In light of the changing face of adoption, it is increasingly important the developmental and psychological needs of adopted children are acknowledged in current policies and practices.

This thesis is designed to provide analysis and interpretation of Western Canadian adoption policies and processes in relation to the historical myths of North American adoption, and to provide recommendations for adoption-related policies and practices.

---

2 Thompson, K. (1993). "The psychological impact of adoption on adopted women". A Thesis presented to the Department of Psychology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts Honours, University of Regina. Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Mary Hampton, Luther College, University of Regina.
Appendix Biii

Scope and Methodology

The research question, whether adoption policies and practices in the four Western provinces have changed to better reflect adoptees' needs, will be explored through a triangulation approach to data collection, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

A triangulation approach combines methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. It involves using multiple data sources to attain completeness. The approach strives to "capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study".

Data will be gathered from the following sources:

- Historical and current adoption policy and practice documents, and where available, trend-line data, will be gathered from the four Western provincial Social Services Departments;
- Provincial directors and/or policy analysts of public adoption services in each of the western provinces, and one representative from Canada's National Adoption Office in Ottawa, will be interviewed to provide an overview of jurisdictional services, policies, developments and challenges; and,
- Front-line workers in Saskatchewan will be interviewed to provide experiential analysis of historical and contemporary adoption policies and practices.

The qualitative data will be analysed using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) Grounded Theory Approach. The objective of the Grounded Theory Approach is to 'ground' one's theory to the data – to generate theories from the data – rather than impose restrictive, preconceived categories onto the data.

Participants will have access to the thesis, through the Resource Centre at Saskatchewan Social Services.

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4 Initially, the research strategy was to collect and analyze data: interviews from all four prairie provinces; however, due to data collection: consistency issues between provincial jurisdictions, the strategy was revised to comparing just Saskatchewan's historical versus contemporary processes.
Appendix Biv

Thesis Questions

Are "adoption myths" still used in disclosing adoption to adopted children?

Suggested Interview Questions

Policy Makers

Demographic Information:
- Position;
- Term;
- Previous adoption-related positions(s), education, and/or training; and,
- Other adoption-related experience.

What are some of the major changes that have occurred in recent years to adoption policy and practice processes in Saskatchewan?

Are current policies and practices more realistic in terms of addressing the genealogical and developmental needs of adopted children?

What suggestions can you offer for improvements to current adoption policies?

Front-line Adoption Service Providers

Demographic Information:
- Position,
- Term,
- Previous adoption-related positions(s), education, and/or training; and,
- Other adoption-related experience.

What are some of the major changes that have occurred in recent years to adoption therapy methods and approaches?

Are current methods more realistic in terms of addressing the genealogical and developmental needs of adopted children?

What suggestions can you offer for improvements to current adoption counselling methods?

Do you have any other comments or input?
Appendix Bv

The History of the Adoption Myth

A Master of Social Work Thesis Project

Informed Consent Form

Researcher: Kathleen Thompson
Supervisor: Professor Mona Acker
Faculty of Social Work

I, _____________________________ have received a copy of this consent form and agree to participate in this thesis project. I understand that my participation, which will involve participating in a thirty to forty-five minute interview, is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. It has been clearly explained to me that I can refuse to answer any questions that I feel uncomfortable with and that I can discontinue the interview at any time.

I understand that by participating in this research project, I am consenting to having portions of the interview, in the form of quotations, used in the final thesis document.

Should any questions arise following the interview, the researcher, Kathleen Thompson, can be contacted during office hours at (306) 787-3165, or at home at (306) 569-1299. Also, the supervisor, Mona Acker, can be contacted through the Faculty of Social Work at 585-4520.

This project was approved by the Human Subjects Ethics Committee, University of Regina. If participants have any questions or concerns about their rights or treatment as research participants, they may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at 585-4461.

_____________________________
Date

_____________________________
Signature of Participant
Appendix C

Thesis Question
Are "adoption myths" still used in disclosing adoption to adopted children?

Revised Interview Questions

Policy Analysts/Directors of Adoption Branches/
Units in Provincial Social Services Departments

Demographic Information:
- Position;
- Term;
- Previous adoption-related positions(s), education, and/or training; and,
- Other adoption-related experience.

➢ What are some of the major changes that have occurred in recent years to adoption policy and practice processes in Saskatchewan?
➢ Are current policies and practices more realistic in terms of addressing the genealogical and developmental needs of adopted children?*
➢ What suggestions can you offer for improvements to current adoption policies?

Front-line Adoption Service Providers

Demographic Information:
- Position;
- Term;
- Previous adoption-related positions(s), education, and/or training; and,
- Other adoption-related experience.

➢ What are some of the major changes that have occurred in recent years to adoption therapy methods and approaches?
➢ Are current methods more realistic in terms of addressing the genealogical and developmental needs of adopted children?*
➢ What suggestions can you offer for improvements to current adoption counselling methods?

Additional Questions:
- How are we preparing parents – helping them get ready?
- What about with inter-country preparation, specifically?
- With the AIM (Adopt and Indian or Métis) program, what are the lessons we’ve learned from the past that can help us with future decisions/choices?
- Has your thinking around adoption changed? (i.e. more empathy towards the birth mother than in recent decades?)
- What do you feel the biggest present/future biggest challenges/issues in relation to communication are?

Do you have any other comments or input?
Appendix Di

HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Application for Approval of Research Procedures

Section I: Identification and Purposes

1. **Date:**
   May 20, 1997

   **Name of Applicant(s):**
   Kathleen Thompson

   **Address:**
   #5-2127 Retallack Street, Regina, Sk. S4T 2K5
   Phone: (306) 787-3165 (work); (306) 569-1299 (home)

   **Title of Research:**
   Adoption Policies in Western Canada: The History of the Adoption Myth

2. **If the project will be part of a thesis, or class requirement, give the name of the supervisor:**
   Mona Acker

   **Department of Faculty:**
   Social Work

3. **Purpose.** Give a brief outline of the main features and variables of the research problem. Include a brief statement which describes the significance and potential benefits of the study.

   This project will compare historical and current adoption policies, practices and trends to explore whether contemporary approaches address the developmental and genealogical needs of adoptees. This research is significant because a significant proportion of modern adoptions are international, which adds culture shock, and racism to the already complex genealogical and developmental needs of adoptees. The participants will all be professionals, working either as policy makers in jurisdictional Social Service departments, or front-line workers facilitating adoptions. This research will benefit participants, and individuals involved in adoptions, by providing provincial and historical comparisons of western Canadian adoption policies and methods, and policy and practice recommendations based on the findings of the research.
Section II: Subjects

1. Briefly describe the number and kind of subjects required for data collection. Two groups of participants will be involved in the research: (1) directors and/or policy analysts in the four western Canadian provincial Social Service departments - a minimum of one to a maximum of two from each jurisdiction, and a representative from Canada's National Adoption Desk, in Ottawa to provide national and international perspectives - for a total of five to nine interviews, and, (2) front-line workers in Saskatchewan, four to six in total. The entire sample size will consist of nine (9) to fifteen (15) adoption-related professionals. The department policy makers will be interviewed regarding historical and current policy processes, while the front-line workers will be interviewed to provide experiential data about historical and current practices and methods used in counselling adoptees, adoptive parents and birth parents.

2. What kind of information about the research problem and their role in the project will potential subjects be given? All participants will be fully informed for the research problem, and will be given a copy of the semi-structured research questions prior to the interview (see Appendix B). Participants are expected to answer the interview questions; however, participating in this research project is completely voluntary, and all participants are free to decline to answer any questions they may feel uncomfortable with, and the voluntary nature of this research will be fully explained to participants. Participants will be explained that the data will be used in this Master's thesis, in the form of non-identifying quotations. Participants will have access to a copy of the final document.

3. How will the consent of the subjects be obtained? Please indicate whether a consent form will be used and how consent will be obtained (e.g. who will approach the subject? How will the name/address/phone numbers of potential participants be obtained? What will potential participants be told when they are presented with a consent form?). A consent form will be used with all participants, after initial dialogue clearly explaining the purpose and goals of the project (see Appendix C). Confidentiality is pivotal in all adoption research and participants will not be asked any questions regarding specifics of individual cases, or regarding any identifying information which could compromise the integrity of individuals in Saskatchewan affected by adoption. Names and addresses of potential participants will be obtained through Saskatchewan Social Services. Participants, both provincially and interprovincially, will initially be contacted through the Adoption Program, Saskatchewan Social Services and then names of willing participants will be passed onto the researcher.

4. What will the subjects be required to do in the course of the project? The participants will be interviewed for approximately thirty to sixty minutes. To minimize the risk of any negative consequences regarding the final presentation of opinions of adoption processes, both Saskatchewan Social Services, and the researcher will fully inform participants that quotations from the interviews will be included in the final document, and that the thesis will be publicly accessible. Participants who express an interest in the analysis of the data will be invited to participate in a reliability check, to check the reliability of the coding of the qualitative data.
5. **What assurances will the subjects be given and what precautions will be taken regarding the confidentiality of the data or information which they provide in the study?**

The data gathered in this project will be neither private or personal as the interviews will focus on general, abstract, policy-related and practice-related concepts and approaches, and will not involve any discussion of specific cases, or confidential data. The interviews are geared around public issues, such as public policy and practice documents to reduce the confidentiality-related concerns typical of adoption-related research (i.e. historical and current policy documents and methods manuals). Participants will be fully informed that non-identifying quotations from the interviews will be selected from the raw data and used in the final document, which will be accessible to all participants, individuals involved in the defence of this thesis, and the public through Saskatchewan Social Services, or the University of Regina. Although the quotations selected for the thesis may indicate where a respond works, geographically, (i.e. references to specifics regarding provincial policies or processes) the quotations will be non-identifying as the names of the participants will not be used in the thesis.

6. **Will children be used as a source of data?**

Yes  
No  
X

If Yes, indicate how consent will be obtained on their behalf.

7. **Will the researcher or any member of the research team be in a position of power or authority in relation to the subjects? (For example: A teacher doing research and using a class as subjects or a counsellor collecting research data from clients).**

Yes  
No  
X

If Yes, indicate how coercion of subjects will be avoided.

8. **Will deception of any kind be necessary in the project?**

Yes  
No  
X

If Yes, explain why and indicate how subjects will be debriefed after the study.
Section III: Access to Data and Findings

1. **Who will have access to the original data of the study**

   The data required for this thesis is of two types: (1) historical and current policy documents, and quantitative data will be gathered from across Canada through provincial/territorial Social Service departments; and, (2) qualitative data will be gathered by interviewing professionals involved in adoption processes. Data for the first component of the study will all be public data. The data for the second component of the research will be provided by participants and will consist of audio cassettes, which only the researcher will have access to. Transcriptions of portions of the interviews will be used in the analysis and will only be accessible to the researcher and participants who willingly offer to be involved in a reliability check of the coding of the qualitative data. While the research results may be shared with the adoption research community, pending the approval of all participants, the raw data will not be shared with any other researchers and will remain the sole possession of the researcher.

2. **Will subjects have some access to the findings of the study?**

   All participants will be provided with a summary of the research findings, and a copy of the full thesis will be available through the Resource Centre at Saskatchewan Social Services, and the University of Regina Library.

3. **What will be the final disposition of the original data after the study is completed? (Data must be archived for a minimum of 3 years.)**

   The raw data will be kept in a locked file-cabinet in the researchers home for three years, at which time the transcribed interviews will be shredded, and the audio tapes will be erased.

   Signature of Applicant(s):
   
   Signature of Advisor or Instructor:

   c:\ethic\applc\doc\mm(03/97)
Appendix Dii

5-2127 Retallack Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4T 2K5

January 16, 1998

Lynn Allan
Acting Director
Child Welfare
Family and Youth Services Division
Saskatchewan Social Services
1920 Broad Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V3

Dear Lynn Allen:

RE: Participant Recruitment for M.S.W. Thesis Project - Adoption Policies in Western Canada

Further to discussions with you and David Rosenbluth in the summer of 1997, attached is a Participant Recruitment package for potential participants of my Master of Social Work Thesis project. Again, thank you for your offer to facilitate the recruitment of participants for my thesis survey.

Further to our last correspondence, I have received approval of my thesis proposal from the University of Regina. The ethical approval form is attached. It is my understanding that an approval letter from Saskatchewan Social Services is also forthcoming, as David Rosenbluth has approved my research pending final approval by the University Ethics Committee.

The next phase of the research project is preparation for data collection and I am requesting your assistance with this important step of the process, as discussed during our meeting in the summer of 1997. The enclosed package contains the information you require for recruiting participants, and, aside from this cover letter, is to be provided to participants, following an initial telephone conversation with someone from your Department. The package is also designed to guide your conversation with potential participants.

Specifically, the enclosed package includes:

- an introductory letter to potential participants, outlining the interview process, and expectations of participants;
- a summary of the research project and overview of the methodological approach that will be taken to data analysis;
- the list of suggested research questions for the open-ended interviews;
- the consent form, which must be signed prior to the interview; and,
- Ethical Approval for this project from the University of Regina.
As noted, a letter from David Rosenbluth is forthcoming. If you feel it is appropriate, you could also include the Social Services Approval Letter in the Participant Recruitment package.

In terms of the participants required, I am interested in interviewing approximately 10 adoption professionals, with the following distribution:

- One director and/or policy & program consultant from each of the western provinces (i.e. British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) for a total of four (4);
- One representative from Canada's National Adoption Office, in Ottawa; and
- Four (4) to (6) provincial front-line Social Workers providing counseling to Saskatchewan residents affected by adoption. It would be useful to have two (2) to (3) interviews with urban professionals, and two (2) to three (3) interviews with rural professionals, hopefully, including at least one interview with a professional working in Northern Saskatchewan.

Time-wise, my deadline for completing the thesis is December 31, 1998. Ideally, it would be useful to have the participant list by the end of February 1998, so that I can proceed with the other phases of this project and meet the University's year-end deadline.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you feel the enclosed package requires any amendments, prior to your department contacting potential participants. You can reach me during office hours at 787-3165, or at home at 569-1299. Alternatively, you can e-mail me either through GEMS, the government e-mail system or via the Internet at: kthompson@health.gov.sk.ca

As indicated in enclosed Introductory Letter to Participant, once you have compiled a list of interested adoption professionals, I will follow-up by contacting individuals on the list to arrange for interview times.

Again, I am most appreciative for your support of this project. It is, as discussed, my objective to provide to you, in return for your consideration, some useful analysis and recommendations for Western Canadian adoption policies and practices, so that this endeavor is mutually beneficial.

Thank you, in advance, for supplying me with a list of potential participants for my MSW thesis project.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Thompson

Enclosures (4)

cc: David Rosenbluth, SS
    Sheila Owens, SS
    Richard Hazel, SS
Appendix E

The History of the Adoption Myth

A Master of Social Work Thesis Project

Confidentiality Form

Researcher: Kathleen Thompson

Supervisor: Professor Mona Acker
Faculty of Social Work

I, __________________________, agree to assist Kathleen Thompson in this Master of Social Work Thesis Project. My involvement consists of assisting in the transcription/coding of the qualitative interview data to ensure reliability of the coding procedure. I understand my participation in this project involves a commitment to confidentiality due to the nature of the topic matter. All of the information which I am privy to will remain completely confidential.

This project was approved by the Human Subjects Ethics Committee, University of Regina. If participants have any questions or concerns about their rights or treatment as research participants, they may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at 585-4461.

__________________________
Date

__________________________
Signature of Participant
Appendix F

Interview Sign-Off Sheet

Name ____________________________
(please print)

This is to confirm that I have read the transcription of my interview and agree to:

I. ________ sign-off the interview as it is; or.

II. ________ sign-off the interview pending the following changes.

- Required Changes
  ➢ you can make changes directly to the transcription, or list the necessary changes below (by referring to the transcription "line number", as indicated in the left margin of your transcription)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

- Additional comments

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

_________________________  __________________________
Date                             Signature
Appendix G

Open Coding

1. Search
   • Process
   • Reunions
2. Family
   • Birth mothers (fathers)
   • Adoptive parents (and potential AP)
   • Adoptees
   • Children's rights – societal responsibilities
3. Legislation
4. Exchange
5. Openness
6. Prepare
   • Before
   • Ongoing
7. Myths/communication
   • Process (timing)
   • Honesty
   • Holism
8. Problems/challenges
   • Foreign (no information)
   • Domestic
   • Trauma
   • First Nations
   • Deception
9. Change
   • Societal
10. Culture
    • Racism/colonization/genocide
    • The culture of adoption
11. Genes
    • Nature/nurture
    • Genealogical bewilderment
12. Outcome
    • For adoptees
    • For wards
13. Private (agencies)
14. Public (education)
15. Waiting
16. Social Services
    • Shifts in department
    • Shifts in workers
    • Resources
## Appendix H

### Categories – Properties - Dimensional Ranges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimensional Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Myths</td>
<td>Genes &amp; Environment</td>
<td>nurture or nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture/Ethnicity/Race</td>
<td>insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trauma - BMs and As</td>
<td>static on-going</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Communication             | Openness                          | discouraged encouraged      |
|                           | Preparation                       |                              |
|                           | Policies                           | then now                    |
|                           | Practices                          | deception honesty           |

| Change                    | "The System"                      | exclusive (AP)              |
|                           |                                   | inclusive [A&B,M(F)]        |
|                           | The Public                         | mythical realistic          |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Today (Today’s Solutions are...)</th>
<th>Intra-country</th>
<th>challenges strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Tomorrow (…Tomorrow’s Challenges) | Outcomes                             | negative positive          |
|                                   | Private                              | reductionism holism        |

---

1. AP = Adoptive Parents  
   A = Adoptee  
   BM(F) = Birth Mother and/or Father
Appendix II

AXIAL CODING

The Paradigm Model

Myths

| (a) causal conditions ⇐ | (b) phenomenon ⇐ |
| (c) context ⇐ | (d) intervening conditions ⇐ |
| (e) strategies ⇐ | action/interaction |
| (f) consequences |

Causal Condition {phenomenon}

- Paternalism & Patriarchy
- the state knew best – lack of individual participation
- Racism – Assimilative Policies– Residential schools
- Classism
- Properties
  - Genes and environment
  - Culture/ethnicity/race
  - Trauma - BMs and A
- Dimensions
  - or --------------------- and
  - insignificant ---- significant
  - static ----------- on-going

- Context
  - Popularity of A: 33,000 x2 x2 “A Culture of Adoption”
  - Science
  - nature/nurture = focus on nurture
  - Denial of Trauma
  - BM goes on with life – don’t ‘complain’ (pain minimized)]
  - Secrecy in society – nuclear family – economic independence
  - Capitalism

- Strategies
  - “closed’, some didn’t even disclose
  - AIM: narrow cultural identity (books, no contact)
  - “raise child as your own”
  - minimized impact of loss

- Intervening Conditions²
  - AP strongest voices: “find kids for these poor childless couples”
  - Christianity, heterosexual bias (status quo the only ‘acceptable’ option)
  - children’s’ rights (or lack of)

- Consequences (Outcomes) Traditional Adoption
  - of a/i, or no action (stagnation creates its own chaos)

² Influencing a/i - can either facilitate or constrain a/i strategies within a context. Can be space, time culture, economic status, history, etc.
Appendix III

**AXIAL CODING**

*The Paradigm Model*

*Communication & Change (1980s to 1990s)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) causal conditions</th>
<th>(b) phenomenon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(c) context</td>
<td>(d) intervening conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) strategies</td>
<td>action/interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h)</td>
<td>consequences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Causal Condition** *(phenomenon)*

- Women's rights - economic improvements = choices for women
- Birth control, alternative socialization forms (single-parenting, "non-traditional" families)
- Children's Rights - Human Rights
- 1st Nations empowerment
- Advocacy of BMs and As: pain - loss - searching -
  - changes in post-adoption services
- Shift in Trauma awareness: PTSD
- Decline in number of babies available; continued demand
- Availability of inter-country adoptions
- N/N shift - societal secrecy - genetic research (pendulum swing)

**Properties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Context**

- Social and system shifts
  - participatory approaches: doing 'with' rather than 'for'
  - openness and inclusiveness (end of societal secrecy - > awareness of mental health issues)
  - devolution and privatization of government services
- End of the AIM Program
- Increased infertility
- Changes in the family structure (acceptance of alternative forms of socialization)
- Patriarchy, classism

**Strategies**

- Legislation - 1990
- Openness, better preparation (acknowledging culture and genes; SS facilitation not control)
- Working with Birth Mothers, First Nations Bands (collaboration)
- UN - Hague - International Collaboration: Private adoptions

**Intervening Conditions**

- Public denial, deception, opposition, resistance, skepticism
- Residential school and AIM backlash
- Inter-country availability: idealism and new myths
- Lack of research, on-going support

**Consequences (Outcomes)**

- Openness - with fragments - tomorrow's problems

- Action/Interaction
- Or no action for stagnation creates its own chaos

---

1 Intervening conditions influencing action/interaction (a/i):
- can either facilitate or constrain a/i strategies within a context
- Can be space, time culture, economic status, history, etc.
Appendix liii

AXIAL CODING

The Paradigm Model
Today & Tomorrow (Solutions and Challenges)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>causal conditions ⇐</th>
<th>(b) phenomenon ⇐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>context ⇐</td>
<td>(d) intervening conditions ⇐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>strategies ⇐</td>
<td>action/interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j)</td>
<td></td>
<td>consequences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Causal Condition [phenomenon]
- > healing, < denial
- > acceptance of Trans-racial families, and alternative socialization
- > infertility and > availability of inter-country adoption + private adoption
- high number of children in care (domestically + in foreign countries)

Properties | Dimensions
-------------|-------------
Domestic ADF
International
Outcomes
Private

Context
- Societal openness; interests in healing
- 1st Nations – federal government apologizing for residential schools
- recognition of long-term care challenges
- inter-country trends; racism, class exploitation, child kidnapping
- public myths perpetuated (little change in public awareness of openness)

Strategies
- First Nations agencies – self-determination
- Adjusting to Legislative changes – post-adoption services (for reunions)
- Increased preparation, recognition of genetic and cultural significance

Intervening Conditions
- Culture clash – larger economic challenges facing First Nations communities
- lack of post-adoption resources, very little targeted developmental services
- lack of awareness of adoption’s impacts in publicly supported MH services
- continued secrecy – BFs still denied ability to search for children
- difficulties in changing public opinion: how do we say to the public “closed adoption was wrong” when many people feel it worked for them: shatter their lives?
- uncertainty of outcomes – lack of research (objective longitudinal outcomes research)

Consequences (Outcomes)
- action/interaction
- or no action for stagnation creates its own chaos (children in care; inter-country adoptees thinking they’re white)

---

4 Intervening conditions influencing action/interaction (a/i):
- can either facilitate or constrain a/i strategies within a context
- Can be space, time culture, economic status, history, etc.
Appendix J
SELECTIVE CODING

The Paradigm Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) causal conditions ⇒</th>
<th>(b) phenomenon ⇒</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(c) context ⇒</td>
<td>(d) intervening conditions ⇒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k) strategies ⇒</td>
<td>action/interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l)</td>
<td>consequences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Causal Condition {phenomenon} Openness

- > advocacy
- > understanding of MH issues (PTSD, etc.); no more denying biological heritage
- Human Rights
  - Women’s Rights
  - First Nations Rights the end of AIm
  - Children’s Rights
- > demand, < supply of babies for adoption
- inter-country

Properties Dimensions
- Policies
- Practices
- Trans-Racial inclusive ------ exclusive
- Deception & Resistance
- Public

Context
- Patriarchy, capitalism (and classism), Racism
- Shift in the State’s role
- Shift in concepts of ‘ownership’
- Adoption Displacements (high expectations or lack of preparation)

Strategies
- Legislation. UN. Hague
- Privatization
- Voluntary relinquishment

Intervening Conditions
- Culture clash (need a different kind of system which allows families to share child rearing)
- Closed Inter-country adoptions; cultural differences; economic differences
- Birth Fathers’ continued exclusion
- Public’s lack of awareness, or interest (perpetuation of myths)
- Private Adoptions
- Removal of counselling for relative adoptions (merely legal)

Consequences (Outcomes)
- action/interaction
- or no action for stagnation creates its own chaos
- Children’s rights continue to be ignored...
- Openness is very good for many, but non-progressive in other ways...

---

5 Intervening conditions influencing action/interaction (a/i):
- can either facilitate or constrain a/i strategies within a context
- Can be space, time culture, economic status, history, etc.
### Appendix K

**Categories - Properties - Dimensional Ranges**

#### Reliability Check

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimensional Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Myths</td>
<td>0.80 Genes &amp; Environment</td>
<td>nurture or nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$r = 39/43 = 0.91$ 0.92 Culture/Ethnicity/Race</td>
<td>insignificant -- significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00 Trauma - BMs and As</td>
<td>static -- on-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>0.95 Openness</td>
<td>discouraged -- encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation 0.93 Policies</td>
<td>then -- now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practices $r = 75.5/78 = 0.97$ 1.00 Denial (resistance)</td>
<td>deception -- honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>1.00 &quot;The System&quot; exclusive (AP)</td>
<td>inclusive [A&amp;B(M,F)]$^6$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$r = 65/65 = 1.00$ 1.00 The Public</td>
<td>mythical -- realistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00 Intra-country</td>
<td>challenges -- strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$r = 86/86 = 1.00$ 1.00 Inter-country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomorrow</td>
<td>1.00 Outcomes</td>
<td>negative -- positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$r = 54/54 = 1.00$ 1.00 Private</td>
<td>reductionism -- holism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$r = \#\text{ of agreements/ total }\#\text{ of agreements + disagreements}$

$r = 39 + 75.7 + 65 + 86 + 54/43 + 78 + 65 + 86 + 54$

$r = 319.5/326$ or $0.98$

---

$^6$ AP = Adoptive Parents  
A = Adoptee  
BM(F) = Birth Mother and/or Father