



# COMPETING LOGICS IN THE FIELD OF FOSTER CARE

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# FOSTER CARE AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF FAMILY MAKING

## Assisted Reproduction

- sperm/egg donation
- in vitro fertilization
- surrogacy

## Adoption

- international
- domestic
  - private
  - public



## Foster Care

- group homes
- foster homes
- foster-to-adopt homes

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**Broadly:** how do interactions with institutions shape understandings of what a “good” parent is?

**Specifically:** how do foster parents make sense of their decision to make a family through foster care, rather than by other means?

# METHODS AND ANALYSIS

- ▶ 17 interviews with Texas foster parents
  - ▶ 12 women, 3 men
  - ▶ 7 had biological children, 8 did not
- ▶ Open, inductive coding

# COMPETING LOGICS FROM THE STATE

## Reunification

- ▶ It's important for children to remain connected to their biological families; reunification should be prioritized

## Adoption

- ▶ Children should not languish in the system for years while waiting for their parents to make changes; adoption should occur after a reasonable effort has been made to reunify the original family

# LOVE DOESN'T MAKE A “GOOD” PARENT

- Past studies found adoptive parents relying on “love” narratives to make sense of their choice to adopt
- My interviewees differed: they emphasized their bureaucratic competency rather than their love for their foster children



## UNDERSTANDING HOW PEOPLE INTERACT WITH **FAMILY-MAKING INSTITUTIONS** IS IMPORTANT

- ▶ What are the implications of bureaucratic competency being connected to new modes of family making?