8 Abortion, Adoption and Integrity

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1 Introduction

While charges of inconsistency are frequently made against opponents of abortion in both academic work and in popular venues (op-eds, interviews, etc.), those specifically referencing adoption primarily occur in the latter and perhaps most often in-person. For example, on Students for Life of America, Lewis (2020) explains that in her article she's "going to focus on one you may have heard before. 'You aren't allowed to be pro-life unless you adopt.'" And she continues, writing, "[T]his one is interesting, because almost every single pro-lifer will immediately feel defensive on this one". In an article aimed at providing responses to common questions for those going on the March for Life, Greear (2019) addresses the question, "[A]re you willing to adopt all these unwanted kids you don't want aborted?" And Beckwith also addresses the question, "Why don't pro-lifers adopt the babies they don't want aborted?" in a post on ChristianAnswers (1995) and in *Defending Life* (2007) in a chapter titled "Popular Arguments". The force of these charges and questions rely on an intuitively compelling yet often unarticulated connection between opposition to abortion and a duty to adopt*. I will articulate and then evaluate proposals for this connection and their implications for opponents of abortion. Importantly, I will use the term adopt* (rather than the word "adopt"), which I will take to include adopting and/or fostering children, as well as concretely supporting the systems involved in facilitating adoption and foster care through financial means, volunteering, and/or advocacy.

I agree with Beckwith (2007) and Colgrove et al. (2021) that charges of inconsistency do not challenge the arguments of opponents of abortion; however, some charges, such as those that involve a failure to adopt* ought not be dismissed as merely *ad hominem* attacks. In Sections 2.1 and 2.2, I will evaluate proposals for grounding an obligation of opponents of abortion to adopt* and will ultimately argue that none of these proposals succeed and that thus opponents of abortion are not inconsistent for failing to adopt*. Then in Sections 3.1 and 3.2, I will sketch two

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important benefits resulting from opponents of abortion adopting*—decreasing future abortions and developing or maintaining integrity—and will argue that they provide compelling reasons for opponents of abortion to adopt*.

2 Obligations for Opponents of Abortion to Adopt*

2.1 Adoption as Abortion Alternative

Although explicit articulations of reasoning are difficult to find, statements like the aforementioned—"Why don't pro-lifers adopt the babies they don't want aborted?"—seem to rely on an assumption that placing a child for adoption is the main alternative to abortion and thus that there is a causal connection between opposition to abortion and the existence of children in need of adoption. The idea being that a substantial number of children exist and are in need of adoption in part due to the efforts of those who oppose abortion to restrict access to abortion, persuade people not to get abortions, etc., and that opponents of abortion thus bear some responsibility or obligation toward these children. The underlying argument might be something like the following:

1 Opponents of abortion causally contribute to fewer instances of abortion, and thus to more children being born to women who do not want to have them at that time, in those circumstances.
2 Adoption is the main alternative to abortion, and thus putting children—who are born to women who do not want to have them at that time, in those circumstances—up for adoption is the main alternative to aborting them.
3 Thus, opponents of abortion causally contribute to an increase in the number of children in need of adoption (1, 2).
4 Children in need of adoption are in the foster care system through which they often experience severe harm.
5 Much of this harm can be avoided, limited, or ameliorated by adopting these children or adopting* (more broadly).
6 One has an obligation to limit or ameliorate severe harm resulting from one's actions.
7 Thus, opponents of abortion ought to adopt*.

(3–6)

Premises (4) and (5) are often taken for granted in this argument and the ones below, but it is worthwhile to briefly detail some of the supporting empirical research. In support of premise (4): it is well-documented that time spent in the foster care system, both institutional (i.e., in group homes) and in-home (i.e., with a "foster family"), often has harmful, long-lasting effects on youth. Youth in both institutional and in-home

foster care are particularly vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse and experience it at higher rates than the general population, and this effect is heightened in those with intellectual disabilities (Euser et al. 2013). They also experience a myriad of other negative effects, including delays in brain growth, attachment, social behavior, and cognitive development (Johnson et al. 2006). Some of the long-term ramifications of these effects can be seen in the following statistics about youth who age out of foster care (i.e., those who were not adopted by age 18): between 12% and 32% will experience post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from their experiences in foster care by the time they are 19; 50% of female foster youth will have been pregnant by the time they are 25; between 31% and 46% will have been homeless at least once since aging out, and 50% will not be gainfully employed; and 90%–97% will never earn a college degree (Davis 2006, Dworsky et al. 2013; Dworsky and Courtney 2010; George 2002; Jackson et al. 2011). Although there is a wide range of experiences among those who go through the foster care system and gathering reliable data about foster youth is difficult—these data strongly suggest that extended experiences in the foster care system often cause severe harm.

In support of premise (5): many studies demonstrate that children tend to "catch-up" to a large extent on most of the aforementioned measures once they are adopted—although the extent to which this happens diminishes the older they are when adopted and/or the more time they have spent in the foster care system. As Van IJzendoorn and Juffer (2006) explain in their meta-analysis on the effects of adoption, they found that adoptions "are effective interventions in the developmental domains of physical growth, attachment security, cognitive development and school achievement, self-esteem, and behaviour problems". General awareness of research like that previously outlined likely contributes to the widespread sense that premises (4) and (5) are quite compelling. Furthermore, the view of obligation referenced in (6)—according to which causal responsibility, in at least some cases, grounds some degree of moral responsibility, and this moral responsibility, in turn, generates an obligation toward those one has caused to suffer (Scanlon 2008)—is fairly intuitive, even more so in the case of severe suffering. Thus, when combined with the seemingly obvious premises (1)–(3), something like the above argument may lead many to think that opponents of abortion have an obligation to adopt*.

However, the argument is ultimately unsound. Empirical research strongly suggests that adoption is actually not seen as the main alternative to abortion by many women. According to a ten–year longitudinal study by Sisson et al. (2017)—for both women who sought and received an abortion and women who sought but did not receive one (because they were past the gestational limit)—parenting one's child, rather than placing it for adoption, was seen as the main alternative to abortion.

Women who sought and received an abortion self-reported a preference for parenthood if an abortion would have been impossible to obtain (and many reported that they did not even seriously consider adoption as an option). But women who were turned away from receiving an abortion are an even stronger case. They had to act on, rather than merely self-report, their preference. And, as found by Foster (2020), only 14% of this group of women were considering adoption one week after being turned away while seeking an abortion, and only 9% ended up placing their child for adoption after birth. The vast majority—91%—chose to parent. Thus, the fact that, in the largest study of its kind, adoption was not seen as the primary alternative to abortion by the vast majority of women seeking an abortion, severely weakens premise (2), and thus premise (3).

Furthermore, the connection between premises (3) and (4) relies on a conflation between "children in need of adoption" and "children in need of adoption in the foster care system". When someone voluntarily places their child for adoption—as pregnant women who are choosing it as an alternative to abortion would be doing—they would typically do so through a private adoption agency, which would then match and place the child with an adoptive family. Such agencies typically have very long waiting lists and place children quickly at or soon after birth. This means that such a child would in all likelihood never enter the foster care system, which is instead intended to take care of children who have been temporarily separated from their biological family due to abuse or neglect and ultimately reunite them.[1] Within this system, only when all other measures are exhausted (parents are given opportunities and resources to "get back on track", kin placement is investigated) are parental rights terminated, and the child then becomes eligible for adoption. Because of this, only about a third of children in foster care are eligible for adoption, and such children are much less likely to be adopted due to their age and a greater likelihood of physical and mental health concerns (UN 2009). Thus, the statistics discussed above and premises (4) and (5) only apply to those adoptable children who are in foster care, which is a different population of children from those who might be given up for adoption at birth since the latter group is frequently placed quickly with adoptive families and bypasses the foster system entirely. Thus, abortion restrictions, if increased, would simply expand the latter group, rather than the former, to whom the most disturbing statistics apply—further distancing abortion restrictions and the actions of their proponents from the aforementioned harms of the foster care system and any special obligation to ameliorate them.

In summary, not only does it seem to be the case that any causal connection between opponents of abortion and children in need of adoption is much weaker than presumed but also any causal connection between opponents of abortion and children in foster care—who would be those waiting for adoption rather than those being very quickly adopted

through private agencies—is even weaker. Thus, because opponents of abortion, in working to further restrict abortion, have not obviously contributed to the harms of the foster care system, they, therefore, do not have an obligation to limit or ameliorate these severe harms through adopting*, at least insofar as such an obligation would be generated by this kind of causal connection.[2,3]

2.2 Innocence and Vulnerability, and a "Future Like Ours"

The second kind of nascent argument often presumed to ground an obligation of opponents of abortion to adopt* draws on reasons why opponents of abortion think killing a fetus is wrong. First, the innocence and vulnerability of a fetus motivate some opponents of abortion. For example, Judith Jarvis Thomson (1976) characterizes the opponents of abortion's position as that it is impermissible to kill a fetus because it is "an innocent person". And take the following statements from the Catholic church: "[A]bortion, the direct killing of an innocent human being, is always gravely immoral…its victims are the most vulnerable and defenseless members of the human family" and "abortion is of overriding concern because it negates two of our most fundamental moral imperatives: respect for innocent life, and preferential concern for the weak and defenseless" (NCCB 1989). Additionally, images of fetuses used in anti-abortion campaigns are often used specifically to evoke this sense of innocence and vulnerability (McLaren 2013).

The thought here is something like the following. Because some opponents of abortion believe that fetuses ought not be killed because they are innocent and vulnerable persons, they might also believe that children, as innocent and vulnerable persons, ought not be killed or suffer severe harm. One way in which children do suffer severe harm is by being a part of the foster care system. Thus, perhaps opponents of abortion ought to believe that children ought not be a part of the foster care system due to some of the severe harms of this system addressed above. And because of this, believe that they have a pro tanto moral obligation to intervene to prevent or ameliorate this harm by adopting*. At work here is a second, and similarly intuitive, view of obligation according to which certain characteristics of persons, in this case innocence and/or vulnerability, ground obligations to protect and care for such persons (Goodin 1986).

However, although at first glance it is compelling, upon reflection, it is unclear how such an argument could generate an obligation to protect and care for innocent and/or vulnerable children, which *specifically applies to opponents of abortion*—as opposed to one that applies more generally, regardless of stance on abortion. Furthermore, it is similarly unclear how it could generate an obligation *specifically to adopt**—as opposed to an obligation to do one of a number of things, such as work against childhood poverty, hunger, or child abuse.

According to a second view, drawn from Don Marquis, fetuses ought not be killed because doing so deprives them of a "future like ours" (FLO), which is valuable insofar as it includes "the goods of consciousness…those items towards which we take a 'pro attitude'" and which make life "worth living". (2007, p. 87). Presumably, these goods would include many of those which, per the research addressed earlier, are also often severely undermined in children who spend time in the foster care system: secure attachment to family, physical health, mental and emotional stability, educational achievement, etc. Thus, opponents of abortion might believe that insofar as children are deprived of FLOs (or at the very least, many important features of FLOs), they ought not be a part of the foster care system. And then because of this, again believe that they have a pro tanto moral obligation to intervene to prevent or ameliorate this deprivation by adopting*.

The research presented, supporting claims of the deprivation of FLOs among children in foster care and indicating that adoption can help to greatly diminish some of these effects, helps motivate this argument. However, in this case, it is difficult to see how one might generate a *positive* obligation to intervene and enable children to have or maintain a FLO from a *negative* obligation to simply not deprive them of a FLO through killing them. Such a view of positive obligations would be implausible due to a large number demanding positive obligations that would be generated from negative obligations to not kill, steal, etc. And additionally, similar to the response to the previous argument, even if one could generate such a positive obligation, it remains unclear how this argument could generate an obligation specifically for opponents of abortion or an obligation specifically to adopt*, especially given the many other circumstances—such as poverty, homelessness, and mental disorder—that might deprive other children and adults of a FLO and/or important features of one.

While some, like Simkulet, in fact do argue for a much larger set of obligations for opponents of abortion, including providing "food, shelter, and medical care to those in need" (2021, p. 2), such claims face similar problems to those I have pointed out. While this view clearly would not take the "explosion of obligations" addressed above as a disadvantage, to whatever extent these obligations are established as genuine, positive obligations, they still do not apply in a specific way to those who are opposed to abortion. And to the extent that opponents of abortion fail to meet these obligations in their most demanding form, to that extent, nearly all other groups (including proponents of abortion) will fail to meet them as well.

As an interim summary, the arguments outlined earlier (2.1 and 2.2) represent the most likely candidates for generating obligations for opponents of abortion to adopt*. However, as they stand, these arguments do not generate positive obligations to intervene in the situations described

above, specifically through adoption*, nor do they generate such obligations specifically for opponents of abortion. Although I have not exhausted all potential grounds for obligations for opponents of abortion to adopt*, those I did address—causal responsibility (in 2.1) and features of fetuses (2.2)—were the most plausible candidates for generating such obligations, thus, their failure to generate such obligations speaks against the existence of such obligations. And similarly, although I have only addressed two reasons for the wrongness of abortion (in 2.2)—the fact that fetuses are innocent and/or vulnerable and the fact that they possess a FLO—similar scope and/or specificity worries would apply to obligations generated based on other reasons as well—such as that fetuses are human organisms, rational substances, or persons. In these cases, it will be similarly difficult to generate a positive obligation for (specifically) opponents of abortion (specifically) to adopt*. Now, I will address two benefits of adopting* for opponents of abortion, which, while they don't generate obligations, do generate compelling reasons to do so.

3 Benefits of Adopting* for Opponents of Abortion

3.1 Reducing Future Abortions

The first reason for opponents of abortion to adopt* is that doing so may contribute to a reduction in future abortions. This may occur by shifting how birth mothers experience and understand adoption. The research that I addressed earlier makes it clear that adoption is not considered a viable alternative to abortion by many women making decisions about pregnancy. Interviews with women in Foster's study (2020; both those that sought and received an abortion and those that sought an abortion but were turned away) revealed frequently cited reasons for why they instead favored parenthood over adoption—and notably, these reasons were primarily negative reasons against adoption rather than positive reasons in favor of parenthood.

Many reasons involved an expectation of experiencing emotional pain resulting from placing one's child for adoption. For example, women anticipated forming a bond with the child that would make separation more painful, feelings of guilt over the decision, negative feelings resulting from a lack of knowledge and control over the child's care, fear of later confrontation by the child over abandonment, and anxiety about the judgment of others in response to her decision. And a few other reasons referenced participants' understanding of the current state of the adoptive process: they reported thinking that there were already too many children in need of homes, and they didn't want to add to the problem—for example, one participant said that she "definitely didn't want to do adoption because there are already enough kids in the foster programs…there doesn't need to be another one". The only other reason

reported by researchers was that some participants reported receiving more support from family than expected, presumably making parenthood seem more feasible.

Notably, the expectations that women had for their experience of adoption largely tracked with what women do report experiencing after placing their children for adoption. Furthermore, the small percentage who placed their child for adoption after being denied an abortion (in Foster's (2020) study) also reported experiencing guilt, anxiety, and remorse about this decision. According to Foster (2020), these women had "the highest incidence of regret and negative emotions about the pregnancy"—more than those who received an abortion and those who chose to parent their child. Five years after being turned away (and subsequently placing their child for adoption) 15% of them, as opposed to 2% of women who chose to parent, "reported that they still wished they could have had the abortion". We should be somewhat cautious when drawing conclusions from this research because as the researchers note, differences in life circumstances between those women who chose adoption and those who chose parenthood may have contributed to both the difference in choice and the difference in emotional experiences. However, these results at least help us home in on some of the anticipated and experienced emotions that seem to play an important role in decisions about abortion and adoption.

We should note a few things about this study. First, the motivations for favoring parenthood that were tied to the foster care system largely derive from the same misunderstanding addressed earlier that placing one's child for adoption means that they will be in the foster care system. And second, the majority of the rest of the reasons given by women for favoring parenthood over adoption involves anticipating and experiencing negative emotions, which are likely informed by and responsive to changes in the adoption system and outcomes of individual adoptions. One large shift in the adoption system currently taking place is from primarily closed adoptions, in which birth parents have no contact with or information about their child after adoption—to primarily open adoptions, in which birth parents have the option of (often regular) contact with both their child and their adoptive families after adoption. Previously, closed adoptions were favored—for both domestic and international adoptions—and thus largely made up individual experiences of adoptions and colored understanding of the process. However, although the majority of international adoptions remain closed, an ever-increasing majority of domestic adoptions currently occurring in the United States—estimates range between 60% and 95%—are open (CWIG 2013; Siegel and Smith 2012). This can contribute to a relevant shift in experiences and understanding of adoption because open adoptions have many positive effects for the birth mother, many of which seem to directly speak to the negative experiences that women expected to have

if they participated in adoption (and that some did have). For example, research by Krahn and Sullivan (2015) indicates that birth mothers in Canada who participate in open adoptions experience less grief, loss, and sense of guilt—and increased comfort, peace, and meaning through continued involvement in the life of their child and being kept informed about their well-being.

Thus, I would argue that opponents of abortion, by adopting*—and specifically, participating in and/or supporting open adoptions in which the birth mother (as well as her child and adoptive family) has more of these positive experiences—could contribute to a shift in the understanding of adoption to one that is a more positive option for birth mothers. And this then may in turn contribute to adoption being seen as a more viable option for women who are making pregnancy-related decisions, specifically those who are considering abortion. Additionally, these purposes may be further served by specifically adopting girls from foster care, in light of the statistics cited earlier regarding the high rate of pregnancy among women foster youth (more than double the rate in the rest of the population) and the fact that youth in foster care would be especially likely (demographically speaking) to seek out an abortion. This argument—in favor of opponents of abortion adopting* due to its potential downstream effect on decreasing the number of future abortions—does not claim that opponents of abortion are obligated to adopt*, but rather that there are compelling reasons for them to do so, based on an admittedly more indirect, yet empirically supported, potential causal connection.

3.2 Displaced Costs and Integrity

A second reason for opponents of abortion to adopt* is that doing so is a particularly powerful way for them to "live out" their commitments with integrity. I will argue (1) that opposition to abortion is a particularly "costly" position, and these costs are largely displaced; (2) that this fact results in more demanding requirements for people to oppose abortion with integrity; and (3) that adopting* is a uniquely powerful way for opponents of abortion to satisfy these requirements. When I say that opposition to abortion is *costly*, I am referring specifically to the weighty costs that it imposes on others. For example, the votes, donations, and advocacy of opponents of abortion can play a role in increasing restrictions on and thus decreasing access to abortion—and this then results in—among other things—women being legally required to bear, deliver, and either place for adoption or parent a child that they otherwise would not have been legally required to. In other words, it results in them having to pay a steep cost they would have otherwise not paid. This cost is particularly steep because it comes in the form of a positive (to bear a child) rather than merely a negative obligation (to refrain from getting an

abortion). Of course, from the perspective of opponents of abortion, this cost is well worth it and replaces the larger moral costs of people carrying out and receiving abortions.

Second, this cost is largely *displaced* in that others, rather than opponents of abortion, disproportionately bear this cost. This is because for a significant portion of opponents of abortion, including all men, it is extremely unlikely if not impossible that they will ever be in a position in which they seriously consider getting an abortion. And the impression of this split—between those who oppose abortion and those who are likely to ever consider an abortion—is further heightened because there are clear demographic differences between the latter, women who tend to seek and get abortions—and thus who must fulfill this positive obligation and are most affected by changes in restrictions in abortion, and a subset of the former, many of the most visible opponents of abortion—those whose position results in legal requirements to fulfill this positive obligation.

Specifically, the majority of women who get abortions are young (72% in their teens or 20s) and of lower socioeconomic status (75% are poor or low income), and these women are also disproportionately non-white, specifically black (28% are black compared to 14% of the US population; Jerman et al. 2016). Furthermore, when abortion restrictions are increased, poorer women are most likely to "bear the brunt" of these changes because in addition to being more likely to seek out an abortion anyways and to cite a lack of financial resources as one of if not the main reason for getting an abortion (Chae et al. 2017; Finer et al. 2005), they are also less likely to have the resources to pursue it if they live in an area with more restricted access. In contrast, many of the most visible opponents of abortion tend to be older, wealthier, whiter men (politicians, pundits, pastors and priests, academics, etc.). To be clear, this is likely in part due to the gender makeup of many of these institutions more generally: politi-cians (especially more conservative ones) are more likely to be men, as are political pundits (again, especially more conservative ones), as are pas-tors—89% are men (Masci 2014)—again, especially more conservative ones, and priests.

To be clear, this is not to deny that a much more diverse group of people oppose abortion, nor is it to deny that many, including of course opponents of abortion, must often make pregnancy-related decisions and bear heavy costs of those decisions. However, this disparity—between those who vocally advocate for the restriction of abortion and those who tend to bear the costs of these restrictions, especially those costs that are bodily, financial, psychological, etc.—is present and apparent. Furthermore, this disparity is an important feature of academic and public discourse surrounding abortion, which, in turn, likely increases the salience of this disparity. As just one example, take multiple recent articles like the following in which researchers address their observations that at the many antiabortion protests they observed there were "speaking men and observing

women". While male protesters typically take on the task of sermonizing or preaching, women are often given tasks such as sign-holding, pamphlet distribution, and "sidewalk counseling" (Lentjes et al. 2020, p. 430). And there has been a proliferation of popular articles like the following from the *Guardian* that calls attention to this discrepancy: "*These 25 Republicans—all white men—just voted to ban abortion in Alabama*" (Durkin and Benwell 2019). And one from *the Rolling Stone* proclaiming more restrictive abortion laws: "[T]he (mostly) men behind the bills, are making a point about where women stand in relation to men, and moreover, where white men stand in relation to everyone else…rich white men win when abortion restrictions become law" (Smith 2019).

I will not critique or evaluate claims like those above about the demographic differences between those most likely to, especially visibly, oppose abortion and those most likely to bear the heaviest costs resulting from this opposition—or about the salience and potential implications of such differences. Instead, I merely note that these differences exist on some level and that perceptions of these differences may be heightened and that this leads to displaced costs (and indeed awareness of these displaced costs) for opponents of abortion. I claim that these displaced costs and their heightened salience lead to higher demands for integrity for opponents of abortion. By *integrity* I mean, roughly, the alignment of one's beliefs and one's related actions aimed at a moral purpose. As Halfron writes, persons with integrity

> embrace a moral point of view that urges them to be conceptually clear, logically consistent, apprised of relevant empirical evidence, and careful about acknowledging as well as weighing relevant moral considerations. Persons of integrity impose these restrictions on themselves since they are concerned, not simply with taking any moral position, but with pursuing a commitment to do what is best. (1989, p. 37)

The latter claim is further echoed by McFall who explains, "A person of integrity is willing to bear the consequences of her convictions when this is difficult" (1987, p. 9). In the first part of Halfron's definition, it is clear that integrity seems to require consistency, or the alignment between one's beliefs and relevant actions, which is how I will understand it. And in the second part of this account of integrity, which I will also adopt, it is clear that it goes beyond mere consistency, requiring further that one bear weighty costs of one's moral convictions, going beyond one's mere obligations. This aligns with the fact that we tend to think of a person with integrity as someone who "puts their money where their mouth is", so to speak. Thus, I will take it that in order to have integrity, someone must be consistent (in the ways specified above) and must be willing to bear the cost of her convictions, perhaps especially when it is difficult to do so.

Roughly, I claim that there are more demanding requirements that an opponent of abortion must fulfill in order to have integrity in light of the fact that their position generates the displaced costs addressed earlier. The following from Simulket speaks to these greater requirements and the apparent failure of opponents of abortion to adopt which he believes

> illustrates an apparent hypocrisy in the antiabortion position; that they are asking others to do things that they are unwilling to do themselves. In a sense, many antiabortion theorists talk as though they are merely fair-weather defenders of life, willing to do whatever it takes to defend life…as long as it does not require a financial or parental commitment on their part.
>
> (2020, p. 5)

And furthermore, I claim that it is more difficult for opponents of abortion to meet these more demanding requirements because of a relative lack of directly connected *costly signals* available to them—in other words, actions which are valuable precisely insofar as they are costly and thus able to clearly speak to one's commitment to their convictions on this matter. Pastor and theologian David Barnhart speaks to this issue in the following quote,

> The "unborn" are a convenient group of people to advocate for. They never make demands of you; they are morally uncomplicated, unlike the incarcerated, addicted, or the chronically poor…they allow you to feel good about yourself without any work at creating or maintaining relationships; and when they are born, you can forget about them, because they cease to be unborn.… You can love the unborn and advocate for them without substantially challenging your own wealth, power, or privilege, without re–imagining social structures, apologizing, or making reparations to anyone.
>
> (2018)

Barnhart here claims that one can oppose abortion, in a *minimally consistent* way, without making any apparent demanding personal sacrifices—at least demanding relative to the sacrifices seemingly required by other moral commitments. However, he also appears to imply that opposing abortion when done in this minimally consistent way, in some sense, is morally inferior—I would claim because such a person *lacks integrity*. This feature of opposition to abortion seems relatively unique—for example, we don't typically think opponents of murder must make attendant costly personal sacrifice—e.g., working to protect those who might be murdered, supporting the family members of those who had been murdered—to have integrity. Again, I think that this unique feature of

opposition to abortion is at least partially due to the aforementioned displaced costs of the position.

This is where adopting* comes in—as a particularly powerful way to oppose abortion with integrity. First, adopting* is appropriately responsive to the displaced costliness of one's position—insofar as it is costly to adopt, foster, etc., and through doing so, opponents of abortion support those who tend to bear the brunt of these displaced costs—namely, birth parents, especially birth mothers. And second, adopting* aligns with the values motivating many peoples' opposition to abortion (e.g. protecting the innocent and/or vulnerable, preserving those that have "futures like ours"). Although, as I argued in 2.2 these values don't ground an obligation for opponents of abortion to adopt*, they can be a means of alignment between the beliefs and actions of opponents of abortion. Thus, adopting* is a particularly powerful way for opponents of abortion to act with integrity.

Additionally, adopting* also has benefits for perceptions of integrity or credibility. First, through adopting*, opponents of abortion enact and demonstrate their care for birth mothers and children (after birth), which counters other popular charges against opponents of abortion: that they simply see birth mothers as a "vessel" and are too focused on punishing those (women) who get abortions and that they are merely "pro-birth" rather than "pro-life" insofar as they only care about children before birth., etc. Second, although as I addressed in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 opponents of abortion are not obligated to adopt*, it is clear that there is a fairly strong *presumption* of this obligation—thus, adopting* may also diminish a perceived lack of integrity. And third, through this care for birth parents, especially birth mothers, and children after birth, opponents of abortion enact and demonstrate their care for persons that their opponents agree are of great moral value. This is in contrast to other issues that are only pressing for opponents of abortion, like spontaneous abortion or cryopreserved embryos, because they, unlike most of their opponents, think that they involve persons. Both of these benefits are important for continued engagement around the issue of abortion. Because adoption* is unique in these ways in which it relates to issues surrounding abortion, not only does adopting* contribute to the integrity of opponents of abortion but also failing to do so may undermine it.

It is worth noting, notwithstanding the charges of inconsistency or lack of integrity on this front, many opponents of abortion—individually and collectively—do put enormous effort toward adopting*. For example, according to the Barna Group (2013), Christians (many of whom oppose abortion), are twice as likely to adopt children as the general US population. Furthermore, "pro-life" organizations and institutions (many of them religious) are some of the most impactful working on behalf of issues involved in adopting*. As just one example, take the Christian Alliance for Orphans, which is a network of 200+ organizations, the

majority of which are explicitly—and many of which are implicitly—motivated by their opposition to abortion. These organizations focus on things including recruiting, training, and supporting foster and adoptive parents; providing direct support to those who have "aged out" of foster care; providing resources and grants for families that adopt children with special needs; and developing software that shares requests from child welfare officials with local churches, including those for clothing, tutors, rides, and temporary housing. Of course, this does not mean that many opponents of abortion—both individually and communally—fail to be similarly committed to adoption*. However, it is worth noting that the popular narratives about opponents of abortion are somewhat inaccurate and misleading on this front.

In summary, I have argued that ultimately, many of the connections thought to generate obligations for opponents of abortion to adopt* are much weaker than many tend to assume and fail to do so (2.1, 2.2). However, there are more indirect and nuanced versions of these connections, which, I argue, generate compelling reasons for opponents of abortion to adopt* (3.1, 3.2). So, although opponents of abortion may not be inconsistent for failing to adopt*, they may nevertheless be failing to fully appreciate the importance of doing so in light of its potential to diminish future abortions and its implications for their integrity. These latter reasons are not intended to provide the only or even the main reasons for opponents of abortion to adopt* but rather, when combined with other independent reasons for doing so, contribute to making a compelling case for opponents of abortion to more seriously consider and ultimately choose to adopt*.

Notes

1 One might try to make the argument that children whose parents originally wanted to abort them are more likely to end up in the foster care system due to neglect, abuse, and/or socioeconomic factors (a majority of women who get an abortion are low income, and financial concerns are often important factors in abortion decisions); however, there is currently no empirical support for such claims.

2 What about the following response: *were all abortions stopped and instead those children placed for adoption, wouldn't the number of children quickly outstrip the number of potential adoptive families and then, wouldn't the remaining children then end up in the foster care system? Thus, although opponents of abortion may not currently contribute to the harms of the foster care system, that is simply a feature of the fact that they have not been able to achieve their goals to a greater extent—and if they did, they then would be contributing to these harms*. Let's briefly look at the relevant numbers. By most estimates, after 2015, there have been between 800,000 and 900,000 abortions (Guttermacher, 2019) and around 64,000 adoptions (that are not step- or co-parent adoptions) per year in the United States (USCB, 2020). And in the United States, there are currently two million couples waiting to adopt. Thus, it appears as if within a couple of years, if the majority of abortions stopped and the resulting children were placed for adoption, the number of

children eligible for adoption would outstrip the number of couples currently interested in adopting (in the United States). One thing worth noting is that, according to some estimates, at least 24% of adults in the United States have seriously considered adopting through either private adoption agencies or from foster care (Harris 2017), thus adding at least 25 million potential adoptive parents (including couples and singles) would significantly change the aforementioned circumstances. However, while not dismissing the possibility that in such a case, the number of those interested in adoption might increase, the argument I outline and critique here would be much more compelling in such circumstances because then opponents of abortion would be much more directly contributing to the harms of foster care and thus perhaps have a stronger obligation to ameliorate it through adopting*.

3 However, it is worth noting that the aforementioned research on the effects of foster care and adoption may plausibly still contribute to compelling independent (from a commitment to opposition to abortion) reasons and potentially even obligations to adopt* (Rulli 2016).

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