



# **Autonomous Motherhood?: A Socio-Legal Study** of Choice and Constraint

Susan B. Boyd, Dorothy E. Chunn, Fiona Kelly, Wanda Wiegers

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Since the end of the Second World War, increasing numbers of women have decided to become mothers without intending the biological father or a partner to participate in parenting. Many conceive via donor insemination or adopt; others become pregnant after a brief sexual relationship and decide to parent alone.

Using a feminist socio-legal framework, Autonomous Motherhood? probes fundamental assumptions within the law about the nature of family and parenting. Drawing on a range of empirical evidence, including legislative history, case studies, and interviews with single mothers, the authors conclude that while women may now have the economic and social freedom to parent alone, they must still negotiate a socio-legal framework that suggests their choice goes against the interests of society, fatherhood, and children.



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