# Twitter Thread by Máiréad Enright



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## Ok so, the NI #motherandbabyhomes report and its ROI counterpart are not directly comparable for many reasons. However, the NI report models some best practice that deserves to be highlighted/praised.

> With @seanoco78853943 and @LiviDeeHistory and John Privilege it's been a long road but very glad to see this report published today https://t.co/MpPPkmepxi
>
> — Leanne McCormick (@Leannemcck) January 26, 2021

I (obviously) haven't had time to read the whole thing yet. (But at a first glance, it strikes me as well-written, so I have it on my list).

Like the ROI Commissioners, the academic authors here have huge power over the story. They carefully make themselves accountable for their scholarship and its effects. So here are some good things:

1) The Report attributes its origins to recommendations of UN Treaty bodies. It doesn't engage in sustained human-rights-based analysis, but doesn't ignore it either.

2) The researchers behind the report were appointed following a competitive tendering process.

3) The report is frank and open (pp. 7 and 8) about the challenges in accessing records held by religious orgs. and carefully points out the harms to survivors associated with an ethos of secrecy.

4) The report is clear on its methodology (and especially on its approach to oral history pp.8-18) including being open about places where it was more difficult to access and engage survivors.

4) Rather than suggest that trauma undermines witnessing, it directly addresses issues of collective memory and authenticity p. 18. This is discussed in detail again in the Appendices in respectful terms.

4) Testimonies are reproduced at some length in Chapter 4 & Appendix 2. They are anonymised, and direct quotes are held together with researchers' commentary. They present as coherent, important narratives.

5) There is some substantial effort to test how the adoption law applied in practice - to the extent that this was possible given limited records. It acknowledges that the legality of adoptions cannot be taken for granted and further research is needed.

5) It is willing to stay with the patchiness of the available information on the complexities of cross-border adoption practices. Gaps and contradications do not mean that there is 'nothing to see here'.

6) It is willing to point to places where its findings clash with the HIAI's (eg p. 35)

7) It is willing to note that, although the laundries may not have made substantial profits, profits are not the whole story - p. 37

8) It takes all aspects of women's agency seriously. For instance, it discusses running away as an exit path - p. 39

9) It engages directly with academic and activist criticisms of the McAleese Report, and with relevant academic literature. This demonstrates rigour, and responsiveness to the wider context.

Again, this isn't the end of this process or this story. This is a report that flags concerns and complexities - that was the job. But I think it's a really intriguing start.