



Article

Missing Children in Italy from 2000 to 2020: A Review of the Phenomenon Reported by Newspapers

Jessica Burrai ^{*,†} , Alessandra Pizzo [†] , Beatrice Prisco, Lorenza De Filippis, Emanuela Mari ,
Alessandro Quaglieri , Anna Maria Giannini and Giulia Lausi

Department of Psychology, "Sapienza" University of Rome, 00185 Rome, Italy; alessandra.pizzo@uniroma1.it (A.P.); prisco.1909382@studenti.uniroma1.it (B.P.); defilippis.1750501@studenti.uniroma1.it (L.D.F.); e.mari@uniroma1.it (E.M.); alessandro.quaglieri@uniroma1.it (A.Q.); annamaria.giannini@uniroma1.it (A.M.G.); giulia.lausi@uniroma1.it (G.L.)

* Correspondence: jessica.burrai@uniroma1.it; Tel.: +39-06-4991-7534

† These authors contributed equally to this work.

Abstract: The disappearance of children has become a public social issue that has captured the attention of many in the last two decades, especially because there is not a worldwide consensus on the definition of "missing child". This research analyzed events of missing children from 2000 to 2020 in Italy; data were collected from the main national sources of information: the websites of two Italian press agencies (ANSA and Adnkronos) and the four main Italian newspapers (Il Messaggero, La Repubblica, Il Corriere Della Sera, La Stampa) with a double-blind procedure. Our data show that male minors disappear to a greater extent than female minors and the disappearance of Italian minors is more represented than that of foreign minors. The majority of minors are found and when they are found they are still alive often within the first week after the disappearance. Our data shows that children disappear between the ages of 0–5 more than the cases involving adolescents. Also, of 182 missing and found children, information regarding the presence of abuse was reported in only 18 cases. The data of the present study were discussed in comparison with those of the Italian Government's Extraordinary Commissioner for Missing Persons highlighting differences between the official data on missing children and those reported by newspapers; this study is intended to highlight a growing focus on the phenomenon, not only from a media perspective but also from an institutional one.

Keywords: disappearance; abuse; neglect; victims; abduction; missing adolescent



Citation: Burrai, Jessica, Alessandra Pizzo, Beatrice Prisco, Lorenza De Filippis, Emanuela Mari, Alessandro Quaglieri, Anna Maria Giannini, and Giulia Lausi. 2022. Missing Children in Italy from 2000 to 2020: A Review of the Phenomenon Reported by Newspapers. *Social Sciences* 11: 267. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11070267>

Academic Editor: Nigel Parton

Received: 5 April 2022

Accepted: 17 June 2022

Published: 21 June 2022

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The disappearance of children has become a public social issue that has captured the attention of many in the last two decades. There is no worldwide consensus on the definition of "missing child" or how to investigate missing/abducted child cases. A missing child can be defined as "any person under the age of 18 whose whereabouts are unknown" (ICMEC n.d.b). Children can go missing for a variety of reasons and it is important for countries to further define this phenomenon by categorizing disappearances according to risk and circumstances (Vermeulen 2005). Following the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC n.d.a) categories of "missing children" include, but are not limited to: endangered runaway (a child voluntarily leaves home without the permission of his/her parents or custodian for a variety of reasons); family abduction (the taking, keeping, or concealment of one or more children by a parent, other family member, custodian, or his/her agent, in derogation of the custody and/or visitation rights of another parent or family member); non-family abduction (the forcible and unauthorized taking of a child by someone other than a family member); lost, injured, or otherwise missing (a child who has disappeared under circumstances that are unknown and difficult to determine); abandoned

or unaccompanied child (a child who is not accompanied by an adult legally responsible for him/her, including those traveling alone without custody permission, those separated by an emergency, those in a refugee situation, and those who have been abandoned or otherwise left without adult care).

The number of missing children at a global, European, and national level is increasing, and while many cases have been resolved successfully, others have unfortunately had dramatic outcomes, and others remain tragically unsolved. As reported by ICMEC, the phenomenon has reached alarming dimensions all over the globe, although the lack of a common definition of “missing child” or a shared response to the problem result in few reliable statistics on the extent of the problem worldwide (ICMEC n.d.b).

In many countries, statistics on missing children do not even exist and, unfortunately, even available data can be inaccurate due to under-reporting or under-recognition of the phenomenon, inflation, incorrect database entry of case information, and removal of records once a case has been closed. At the European level, to achieve greater operational synergies, there is a single phone number (116000) for missing children, providing a free service for reporting cases of disappearance of underage and adolescent children, active 24 h a day, which collects reports and data to be sent to the Police Forces. In addition, on 7 January 2020, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe approved a resolution stating that states must take action to prevent cases of disappearance.

Actually, according to a study by the European Commission, about 250,000 children and adolescents go missing every year (which means that a child goes missing every 2 min) with Germany, the UK, France, and Spain being the countries with the most missing children in 2018, while Italy reports the lowest number of missing children compared to other European countries, although there were 13,527 cases of disappearance recorded by law enforcement in 2020 (Telefono Azzurro 2021).

What concerns Italy in particular, given a large number of voluntary runaways, many children are quickly found, but many others are still missing, with an alarming trend of almost one missing per hour: in 2020, 7672 children disappeared in our country, of which 5511 were foreigners (71.8%), and concerning age and gender, male adolescents between 14 and 17 years are those most at risk (AGI 2021). Thankfully, of those missing, 3332 (43.3%) have already been found.

Notwithstanding, Global Missing Children Network (GMCN n.d.) Italy reports that 30 children have already gone missing in the year March 2021–2022, although because of the obscure number the amount could be even higher.

Media portray vivid accounts of child disappearances, particularly high-profile abductions by strangers (Greer et al. 2012; van de Rijt et al. 2018). Such overrepresentation triggers fear in almost all parents, as child abduction is one of the most stressful forms of criminal victimization (Lord et al. 2001; Spilman 2006), especially when the abductor is embodied by a family member (Cole and Bradford 1992; Gandasaputra 2005; Greif and Hegar 1992; Long et al. 1991).

In 2002, the United States and some districts of Canada adopted a national alert system in cases of suspected child abductions, known as AMBER (an acronym for America’s Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) alert. This system involves regular alert messages through the radio, television, mobile phones, and electronic road signs to activate a network for the rapid circulation of useful information to make the community aware and actively participate in the search (Telefono Azzurro 2010). In March 2011, the alert system, with some variations, was also adopted by countries such as Australia (Queensland) and Malaysia, and only Netherlands, France, and Ireland in Europe, although it is a very useful and effective tool for finding missing children. As Greer and colleagues found out, the mere use of “AMBER” as a label in a missing child case increased community involvement in the search for the missing child (from 1996 to 2009, AMBER alerts helped track down 495 abducted children) (Greer et al. 2012). Italy, along with other European countries (e.g., Greece, Belgium, France, Portugal, and Romania), is now implementing a common automated alert system and participating in the ECAAS (European Child Alert Automated

System) Daphne project ([The Smile of the Child n.d.](#)). In addition, the ICAAS (Italian Child Abduction Alert System), an “early warning” system for missing children, is currently under development at a national level.

Concerning the psychological implications, except for a few studies ([Forehand et al. 1989](#); [Kennedy et al. 2021](#)), it is unclear which coping strategies are employed by parents of victims to effectively deal with the pain of abduction. Research ([Davis et al. 1996](#); [Finkelhor and Hashima 2001](#); [Finkelhor and Ormrod 2001](#)) has shown that the psychological and emotional impact of any criminal victimization can be severe, especially if the crime represents a violation of a personal relationship or is depriving victims of their sense of personal control. More specifically, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and prolonged grief reactions were identified as the most frequently reported psychological responses among relatives of missing persons ([Kennedy et al. 2019](#); [Lenferink et al. 2017, 2018](#)).

In some cases, the trauma of disappearance, albeit not as severe as physical torture, can produce similar effects, predisposing family members to the so-called “torture syndrome” ([Quirk and Casco 1994](#)).

Harmful effects of disappearance are also particularly present in children who have been found after their disappearance, as they represent the primary victims, especially when abuses are experienced. Several supportive interventions can be offered to victims, either as an initial intervention or as long-term support to cope with the suffering and hopefully try to move on.

Aims and Objectives

From these premises, we conducted research using newspapers to understand the phenomenon of missing children for 20 years; more specifically, the aim of the present study was:

- (1) Analyze the characteristics of missing children’s episodes reported by newspapers, from 2000 to 2020, in Italy.
- (2) Identify differences in information on missing children and their kidnappers, if any. (e.g., victim’s gender, ethnic background, presence of abuse, knowledge of the kidnapper).

2. Methods

2.1. Procedures

To conduct the research, methodological indications found in previous research in Italy were followed ([Barchielli et al. 2021](#); [Roma et al. 2012](#)).

Events of missing children from 2000 to 2020 have been collected from the main national sources of information: the websites of two Italian press agencies (ANSA and Adnkronos) and the four main Italian newspapers (Il Messaggero, La Repubblica, Il Corriere della Sera, La Stampa); local press information has been used to complete the information coming from national press agencies since, from a preliminary investigation, we realized that newspapers had more exhaustive information about the cases. A data set with the considered variables has been developed.

Two independent researchers collected the articles, through a double-blind procedure, to determine whether the recovered articles met the inclusion criteria outlined above. The full texts of the articles were independently evaluated by two reviewers. If necessary, discrepancies were resolved by an initial discussion or by a third auditor. Finally, two researchers encoded them independently.

All the articles concerning the disappearance of minors, regardless of the kind of disappearance, have been included; the missing cases considered are those that occurred between 2000 and 2020.

The data set included (a) information about sex, age, nationality, and the region of the missing children; (b) the conditions under which the minor was found; (c) the relationship between perpetrator and victim; (d) information about sex, age, nationality of

the kidnapper; (e) the days from disappearance to being found; (f) the presence of abuse if any.

2.2. Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using the software package SPSS, version 27. An analysis of descriptive statistics was conducted to illustrate the domestic violence events' demographic and other selected characteristics.

In addition, the comparison between missing male and female children was reported with crosstabs and chi-square analysis. A p -value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant and a 95% confidence interval was used.

3. Results

From the analysis of 189 newspaper articles, it emerged that 201 children went missing from 2000 to 2020 in Italy; 55% were males while 45% were female. On average, 9 children a year went missing, with a mean age of 8.39 years ($SD = 4.33$); 58.7% were Italian while 41.3% had different nationalities. Table 1 shows descriptive information about children's disappearance.

Table 1. Descriptive information about children's disappearance, by gender.

		Male	Female	Total
Victim Nationality	Italian	69	50	119
	Foreign	38	44	82
Outcome	Found	101	81	182
	Still missing	6	13	19
If found	Alive	83	68	151
	Dead	20	16	36
	Missing value	4	10	14
Motive	Non-familiar kidnapping	8	19	27
	Familiar kidnapping	17	12	29
	Escape	29	29	58
	Abandonment	1	1	2
	Disappearance	15	12	27
	Benign disappearance	37	21	58
Total		107	94	201

Regarding authors, the newspaper contained information about 61 identified perpetrators, detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive information about perpetrators, by gender.

		Male	Female	Total
Perpetrator nationality	Italian	20	8	28
	Foreign	21	12	33
Known by the victim	Yes	31	16	47
	No	10	4	14
If known	Parent	15	7	22
	Grandparent	0	4	4
	Relatives	2	3	5
	Family friends	4	0	4
	Friends	10	2	12
Total		41	20	61

Chi-Square Analysis

A chi-square analysis was performed to see if there were any gender differences in the likelihood of finding missing children and in the presence of abuse during abduction. While no gender differences were found in the event outcome ($X^2_{(1, 189)} = 2.939, p = 0.086$), the chi-square analysis showed differences in the presence of abuse ($X^2_{(4, 18)} = 2.084, p = 0.044$) (Table 3).

Table 3. Crosstab Abuse*Victim Sex.

			Male	Female	Total
Presence of abuse	Physical abuse	Count	3	1	4
		Expected	0.9	3.1	4.0
		Residual	2.1	−2.1	
	Sexual abuse	Standard residual	2.2	−1.2	
		Count	0	7	7
		Expected	1.6	5.4	7.0
	Corpse concealment	Residual	−1.6	1.6	
		Standard residual	−1.2	0.7	
		Count	1	2	3
	Attempted abuse	Expected	0.7	2.3	3.0
		Residual	0.3	−0.3	
		Standard residual	0.4	−0.2	
	Trafficking	Count	0	3	3
		Expected	0.7	2.3	3.0
		Residual	−0.7	0.7	
		Standard residual	−0.8	0.4	
		Count	0	1	1
		Expected	0.2	0.8	1.0
		Residual	−0.5	0.2	
		Standard residual	−0.5	0.3	
Total			4	14	18

A second chi-square analysis reported statistically nonsignificant differences in cases where the perpetrator knew the victim and in the event outcome (missing children found alive or dead; $X^2_{(1, 46)} = 0.001, p = 0.973$) and in the presence of abuse during the abduction ($X^2_{(3, 16)} = 7.111, p = 0.068$).

4. Discussion

With the limits of the sampling methodology, the number of cases of missing children in Italy reported in newspapers between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2020 is 202. The data reported in this study are comparable with the periodic statistical reports of the Italian Government's Extraordinary Commissioner for Missing Persons ([Ministero dell'Interno 2021](#)). The period considered in them goes from 1 January 1974 to 31 December 2020, with more in-depth investigations by macro-period. The statistics reported in the periodic reports show that the percentage of male missing persons (63%) is higher than that of female missing persons (37%). Our data, although in different percentages, confirm the national trend whereby male minors disappear to a greater extent (53.2%) than female minors. However, other countries such as the UK found the opposite, since 66% of all female missing incidents reported to the police relate to girls aged 12–17 years according to the reports ([National Crime Agency 2021](#)).

The periodic reports of the Extraordinary Commissioner of the Italian Government for Missing Persons ([Ministero dell'Interno 2021](#)) disconfirm the data on the nationality of the missing minors that, on the contrary, are reported in the newspapers analyzed in which

Italian minors who have disappeared are the majority (59.2%), unlike the reports in which foreign minors represent the majority of the total number of reports.

The periodical reports, on the other hand, confirm the data regarding the finding of the victim: the majority of minors are found (our data show 90.5%) and when they are found they are still alive (75.1%) often within the first week after the disappearance they return spontaneously after a few days due to lack of economic resources for sustenance (escape 28.9%; benign disappearance 28.9%).

Regarding the motive of disappearance, the periodic reports have highlighted, as the main motive underlying the disappearances, adolescent escape, which accounts for about 65% of the total, followed by family abduction, about 20%, and a remaining 15% of disappearances of other types (including accidental events, such as injury or sudden death). Comparative data reported in the United Kingdom estimate that one in nine children will run away from home or substitute care before their 16th birthday, and most children and youth run away from home because of family issues (Hill 2016).

The data from the present research, however, shows different results with most of the newspaper reported cases involving children who go missing between the ages of 0–5 (28.7%), while reported cases involving adolescents (aged 12–17) are 19.5%. This figure can be explained by the greater impact of news stories about the disappearance of a very young child compared with an adolescent. Missing children are often in the news because these stories trigger emotional responses to those who are seen as innocent victims. However, public interest in missing children and media coverage of their cases are very unevenly distributed. Some famous incidents receive national and even international attention for months on end, while others are completely ignored by media coverage (Liebler 2004; Wilson et al. 2005; Wanzo 2008; Min and Feaster 2010). Moreover, adolescents often field voluntary removal as a response to a real or perceived lack of well-being in the family (Biehal et al. 2003; Mitchell 2003; NSPCC 2011; Rees 2011; Rees and Lee 2005; Safe on the Streets Research Team 1999; Wade 2003; Wade and Rees 1999). Protecting missing children is not only a priority for the police but also a public health concern, in light of emerging evidence that missing children may be at heightened risk of abuse, exploitation, and harm (Sidebottom et al. 2020).

Of 182 missing and found children, information regarding the presence of abuse was reported in only 18 cases. It should be emphasized, however, that it cannot be ruled out that in many other cases there was abuse that went unreported or unremembered by the victim, and although this figure is quite small it is an important finding. Children can face significant risks to their safety when they run away or go missing from home, including physical assault, sexual exploitation, and involvement in criminal activity. A 2011 survey conducted by Rees found that one in eleven youth reported being hurt or harmed while away from home. One in six reported sleeping outdoors or being with someone they had just met. Nearly one in eight said they stole to survive and one in eleven reported begging (Rees 2011). The periodic reports of the Extraordinary Commissioner of the Italian Government for Missing Persons (Ministero dell'Interno 2021), on the other hand, did not report any data on possible abuse and/or violence the children may have undergone during the period of disappearance.

Children living with parents with drug and alcohol problems often seek help from friends and family (Bancroft 2004; Houmøller et al. 2011), and most remain living with friends and family (Rees 2011; Rees and Lee 2005; Wade and Rees 1999). However, there may still be significant risks to this group; one-sixth of youth have been physically or sexually assaulted when staying with friends and one in twenty have been assaulted when staying with relatives (Wade and Rees 1999).

There is very interesting data related to kidnappings, showing that 75.8% of cases are carried out by persons known to the minor, while in 24.2% of the cases, they are carried out by strangers. Kidnappings could be due to conflicting marital dynamics in which one of the two parents wants to deprive the other of the right to see his or her child, or, sometimes, there are circumstances in which the kidnapping of a minor is used as an instrument of

revenge against a family member. This research has also shown that in almost all cases of abduction it was possible to identify the abductor and that, consistent with the previous data, in 46.8% of cases the abductor was one of the two parents, in 8.5% a grandparent, in 10.6% a family member, and in 8.5% a family friend. These data are in line with those recorded throughout Europe by [Missing Children Europe \(2021\)](#) which reports flight and family abduction as the main reasons behind the disappearance of minors.

Although our data are not statistically significant, it emerges that among the minors found, more males (3) than females (1) had been physically abused, while only female minors (7) had been sexually abused. However, compared to the reported cases of abuse/violence, the data are positive the number of children abused or raped is small when compared to the total number of children abused or raped.

A second chi-square analysis was then performed to identify whether, in cases where the perpetrator knew the victim, there were differences in the outcome of the event (missing children found alive or dead) and in the presence of abuse during abduction. Both analyses reported statistically nonsignificant differences.

The main limitations of the present study stem from the source chosen to search the data. Searching for cases of missing children in Italy through newspaper information poses an important limitation: newspapers have a quantity and type of information that depends very much on editorial policies and therefore it must be considered that there may be a subjective narrative and a selection of details that are provided. Moreover, as reported in the result section, some expected frequencies were small, thus violating one of chi-square's assumptions, therefore, the presented results must be carefully interpreted.

Although the double-blind method was used, having analyzed several newspapers and having selected a long period (20 years), it is not possible to exclude that there was an underestimation of the frequency of the phenomenon. However, there is growing attention to the phenomenon, from a media point of view and an institutional point of view.

Furthermore, the methodology used has some bias: first, the information contained in the newspaper depends on editorial policies and focuses more on the interest of the media ([McQuail 1985](#); [Cheng et al. 2014](#)); secondly, the information is partial and speculative, especially with regard to the motivation of the kidnapper. Despite these limitations, this methodology can only understand how information about such events is disseminated to the national population. Indeed, because of the obscure number of missing children, it is not possible to obtain complete and accurate data from an unambiguous database, nor to have access to crucial information such as the gender of the child and the abductor (if present), whether the child has been found, or the occurrence of any abuse ([Sullivan 2020](#)).

5. Conclusions and Future Perspectives

In conclusion, a discrepancy between the missing children phenomenon and the news from newspaper sources highlighted a different trend in the effective number of missing children. It may be useful to train journalists to give them guidelines on the most effective ways to disclose a missing child report to assist in the investigation itself. Moreover, it could be useful to develop training programs on disseminating the news, to avoid the secondary victimization of the missing child's family members.

Furthermore, together with the ICAAS, the adoption of recent biometric technology, face recognition, etc., could be useful. Indeed, face recognition is perhaps the most promising biometric technology for recovering missing children, since parents and relatives are more likely to have a photograph of their lost child's face rather than their fingerprint or iris ([Deb et al. 2021](#)).

Future research might also focus on children who go missing repeatedly versus children who go missing once and whether this information is picked up and disseminated by newspapers. As [Bezczky and Wilkins \(2022\)](#) pointed out, their results showed that around 40 percent of children in their sample were reported missing more than once during the study period. Children reported missing repeatedly were more likely to be White and live in residential care.

Last but not least, it is important to consider aspects of the emotional and psychological experience of missing children. It is of utmost importance to investigate how children deal with the enormous distress they face during their disappearance and how they cope with this traumatic experience. It would be useful to provide psychological support to the parents during/after the child's disappearance, and in cases where the child is found, to provide psychological support to the child as well.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, J.B., A.P. and G.L.; methodology, J.B., A.P., B.P., L.D.F. and G.L.; formal analysis, G.L.; resources, B.P. and L.D.F.; data curation, J.B. and G.L.; writing—original draft preparation, J.B., A.P. and G.L.; writing—review and editing, B.P., L.D.F., E.M., A.Q. and A.M.G.; supervision, A.M.G. and G.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy considerations.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- AGI. 2021. Allarme per i Minori Scomparsi: 7.672 Nel 2020, Quasi Uno Ogni Ora. Available online: <https://www.agi.it/cronaca/news/2021-05-23/minori-bambini-scomparsi-dati-italia-12648059/> (accessed on 3 March 2022).
- Bancroft, Angus. 2004. *Parental Drug and Alcohol Misuse: Resilience and Transition among Young People*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Barchielli, Benedetta, Michela Baldi, Elena Paoli, Paolo Roma, Stefano Ferracuti, Christian Napoli, Anna Maria Giannini, and Giulia Lausi. 2021. When “Stay at Home” Can Be Dangerous: Data on Domestic Violence in Italy during COVID-19 Lockdown. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18: 8948. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Bezeczyk, Zoe, and David Wilkins. 2022. Repeat Missing Child Reports: Prevalence, Timing, and Risk Factors. *Children and Youth Services Review* 136: 106454. [CrossRef]
- Biehal, Nina, Fiona Mitchell, and Jim Wade. 2003. *Lost from View: Missing Persons in the UK*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Cheng, Lifan, Juan José Iguarta, Elena Palacios, Tania Acosta, and Socorro Palito. 2014. Framing Immigration News in the Spanish Regional Press. *International Migration* 6: 197–215. [CrossRef]
- Cole, W. A., and J. M. Bradford. 1992. Abduction during Custody and Access Disputes. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 37: 264–66. [CrossRef]
- Davis, Robert C., Bruce Taylor, and Arthur J. Lurigio. 1996. Adjusting to Criminal Victimization: The Correlates of Postcrime Distress. *Violence and Victims* 11: 21–38. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Deb, Debayan, Divyansh Aggarwal, and Anil K. Jain. 2021. Identifying Missing Children: Face Age-Progression via Deep Feature Aging. Paper presented at 2020 25th International Conference on Pattern Recognition (ICPR), Milan, Italy, January 10–15.
- Finkelhor, David, and Patricia Y. Hashima. 2001. The Victimization of Children and Youth. In *Handbook of Youth and Justice*. Edited by Susan O. White. Boston: Springer, pp. 49–78. [CrossRef]
- Finkelhor, David, and Richard K. Ormrod. 2001. Factors in the Underreporting of Crimes against Juveniles. *Child Maltreatment* 6: 219–29. [CrossRef]
- Forehand, Rex, Nicholas Long, Carolyn Zogg, and Elizabeth Parrish. 1989. Child Abduction: Parent and Child Functioning Following Return. *Clinical Pediatrics* 28: 311–16. [CrossRef]
- Gandasaputra, Ira. 2005. *Stressors, Coping, and Adaptation in Families of Runaway and Family-Abducted Children: A Repeated Measures Analysis*. San Antonio: St. Mary's University (Texas).
- GMCN. n.d. Global Missing Children Network. Available online: <https://find.globalmissingkids.org/> (accessed on 3 March 2022).
- Greer, Jennifer D., Po-Lin Pan, David Flores, and Marti Cecilia Collins. 2012. Priming and Source Credibility Effects on Individual Responses to AMBER and Other Mediated Missing Child Alerts. *The Social Science Journal* 49: 295–303. [CrossRef]
- Greif, Geoffrey L., and Rebecca L. Hegar. 1992. Impact on Children of Abduction by a Parent: A Review of the Literature. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 62: 599–604. [CrossRef]
- Hill, A. 2016. SlutWalk as Perifeminist Response to Rape Logic: The Politics of Reclaiming a Name. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 13: 23–39. [CrossRef]
- Houmøller, Kathrin, Sarah Bernays, Sarah Wilson, and Tim Rhodes. 2011. Juggling Harms: Coping with Parental Substance Misuse. Available online: <https://www.ucviden.dk/en/publications/juggling-harms-coping-with-parental-substance-misuse> (accessed on 5 January 2022).

- ICMEC. n.d.a. One Missing Child Is One Too Many. Available online: <https://www.icmec.org/missing-children-statistics/> (accessed on 7 February 2022).
- ICMEC. n.d.b. The Definition of “Missing”. A Missing Child Is a Vulnerable Child. Available online: <https://www.icmec.org/global-missing-childrens-center/the-definition-of-missing/> (accessed on 7 February 2022).
- Kennedy, Cecilia, Frank P. Deane, and Amy Y. C. Chan. 2019. In Limbo: A Systematic Review of Psychological Responses and Coping among People with a Missing Loved One. *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 75: 1544–71. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Kennedy, Cecilia, Frank P. Deane, and Amy Y. C. Chan. 2021. “What Might Have Been...”: Counterfactual Thinking, Psychological Symptoms and Posttraumatic Growth When a Loved One Is Missing. *Cognitive Therapy and Research* 45: 322–32. [CrossRef]
- Lenferink, Lonke I. M., Jos de Keijser, Ineke Wessel, and Paul A. Boelen. 2018. Cognitive-Behavioral Correlates of Psychological Symptoms Among Relatives of Missing Persons. *International Journal of Cognitive Therapy* 11: 311–24. [CrossRef]
- Lenferink, Lonke I. M., Maarten C. Eisma, Jos de Keijser, and Paul A. Boelen. 2017. Grief Rumination Mediates the Association between Self-Compassion and Psychopathology in Relatives of Missing Persons. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 8: 1378052. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Liebler, C. 2004. When Missing Girls Are (n’t) News. In *Class and News*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 199–212.
- Long, Nicholas, Rex Forehand, and Carolyn Zogg. 1991. Preventing Parental Child Abduction: Analysis of a National Project. *Clinical Pediatrics* 30: 549–54. [CrossRef]
- Lord, Wayne D., Monique C. Boudreaux, and Kenneth V. Lanning. 2001. Investigating Potential Child Abduction Cases: A Developmental Perspective. *FBI L. Enforcement Bulletin* 70: 1.
- McQuail, Denis. 1985. Sociology of Mass Communication. *Annual Review of Sociology* 11: 93–111. [CrossRef]
- Min, Seong-Jae, and John C. Feaster. 2010. Missing Children in National News Coverage: Racial and Gender Representations of Missing Children Cases. *Communication Research Reports* 27: 207–16. [CrossRef]
- Ministero dell’Interno. 2021. Relazioni Periodiche Del Commissario Straordinario Del Governo per Le Persone Scomparse. Available online: <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/stampa-e-comunicazione/dati-e-statistiche/relazioni-periodiche-commissario-straordinario-governo-persone-scomparse> (accessed on 5 January 2022).
- Missing Children Europe. 2021. Figures and Trends 2020. From Hotlines for Missing Children and Cross-Border Family Mediators. Available online: <https://missingchildreneurope.eu/?wpdmdl=2558> (accessed on 5 January 2022).
- Mitchell, Fiona. 2003. “Can I Come Home?” The Experiences of Young Runaways Contacting the Message Home Helpline. *Child & Family Social Work* 8: 3–11.
- National Crime Agency. 2021. UK Missing Persons Unit. Data Report 2019/20. Available online: <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/501-uk-missing-persons-unit-data-report-2019-2020/file> (accessed on 15 December 2021).
- NSPCC. 2011. *Child Cruelty in the UK 2011: An NSPCC Study into Childhood Abuse and Neglect Over the Past 30 Years*. London: NSPCC.
- Quirk, Gregory J., and Leonel Casco. 1994. Stress Disorders of Families of the Disappeared: A Controlled Study in Honduras. *Social Science & Medicine* 39: 1675–79. [CrossRef]
- Rees, Gwyther. 2011. *Still Running 3*. London: The Children’s Society.
- Rees, Gwyther, and Jenny Lee. 2005. *Still Running II: Findings from the Second National Survey of Young Runaways*. London: The Children’s Society.
- Roma, Paolo, Antonella Spacca, Maurizio Pompili, David Lester, Roberto Tatarelli, Paolo Girardi, and Stefano Ferracuti. 2012. The Epidemiology of Homicide–Suicide in Italy: A Newspaper Study from 1985 to 2008. *Forensic Science International* 214: e1–e5. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Safe on the Streets Research Team. 1999. Still Running: Children on the Streets in the UK. *Urban Studies* 38: 1197.
- Sidebottom, Aiden, Laura Boulton, Ella Cockbain, Eric Halford, and Jessica Phoenix. 2020. Missing Children: Risks, Repeats and Responses. *Policing and Society* 30: 1157–70. [CrossRef]
- Spilman, Sarah K. 2006. Child Abduction, Parents’ Distress, and Social Support. *Violence and Victims* 21: 149–65. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Sullivan, Teresa A. 2020. Who’s Missing? Undercounting and Underreporting. In *Census 2020*. Edited by Teresa A. Sullivan. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 33–47. [CrossRef]
- Telefono Azzurro. 2010. Minori Scomparsi. Telefono Azzurro Promuove l’implementazione Del CHILD ALERT. Available online: <http://116-000.it/stampa/minori-scomparsi-telefono-azzurro-promuove-l%E2%80%99implementazione-del-child-alert/> (accessed on 4 February 2022).
- Telefono Azzurro. 2021. Non Può Scomparire la Speranza. Available online: <https://azzurro.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Dossier-NUOVO.pdf> (accessed on 4 February 2022).
- The Smile of the Child. n.d. European Child Alert Automated System (ECAAS). Available online: <https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/collaborations/european-child-alert-automated-system-ecaas/> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- van de Rijt, Arnout, Hyang-Gi Song, Eran Shor, and Rebekah Burroway. 2018. Racial and Gender Differences in Missing Children’s Recovery Chances. Edited by Kimmo Eriksson. *PLoS ONE* 13: e0207742. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Vermeulen, Gert. 2005. *Missing and Sexually Exploited Children in the Enlarged EU: Epidemiological Data in the New Member States*. Amsterdam: Maklu, vol. 4.
- Wade, Jim. 2003. Children on the Edge—Patterns of Running Away in the UK. *Child & Fam. LQ* 15: 343.
- Wade, Jim, and Gwyther Rees. 1999. *Missing out: Young Runaways in Scotland*. York: University of York.

Wanzo, Rebecca. 2008. The Era of Lost (White) Girls: On Body and Event. *Differences* 19: 99–126. [[CrossRef](#)]

Wilson, Barbara J., Nicole Martins, and Amy L. Marske. 2005. Children's and Parents' Fright Reactions to Kidnapping Stories in the News. *Communication Monographs* 72: 46–70. [[CrossRef](#)]