The Intercountry Adoption Debate

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Dialogues Across Disciplines

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book, and the conferences where it all started, would not have been possible without the help of many along the way.

First, our sincere thanks to the contributing authors who have shown dedication, wisdom, and love for the most vulnerable children. You all make the world a better place and we are inspired by your scholarship and visions. Thank you for being a part of this critical conversation.

For the 2010 Intercountry Adoption Summit held in Stratford, Ontario, first, thanks to *Ken Coates*, who at the time was Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo (and is now at the University of Saskatchewan) and who co-articulated this vision for bringing different voices together. *Sylvia Hannigan, Sherilee Diebold-Cooze*, and *Brandi Gillett*, all at the University of Waterloo, provided inestimable administrative support. *Diana Denton* was gracious to allow Bert Ballard time to work on this project while he was at the University of Waterloo. Also, *Tom Difilipo* and *Rebecca Harris* with the Joint Council on International Children's Services were instrumental in providing leads and contacts for the event. It is important to recognize the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* for their funding for the 2010 Summit and part of the production of this book through an Aid to Research Workshops and Conferences in Canada Grant from 2010. A special thanks goes out to *Antonia Emery* (formerly known as Agostan) for her energy, commitment, work, and passion, all because she was interested in our topic and for no other reason! And, of course, thanks to the attendees to the conference and to the contributors who stayed with the project over five long years. Your commitment to your research and intercountry adoption is exemplary. For more on the Intercountry Adoption Summit, visit http://adoptionsummit.uwaterloo.ca

Regarding the 2013 Pepperdine School of Law Nootbaar Institute Conference on Intercountry Adoption, thanks go out to all the speakers and attendees who gave of their time, hearts, and passion. Thanks to *Jim Gash* who helped plant the seed for the conference theme. A very special thanks to *Dana Hinojosa* who, with passion, devotion, and hard work,

seamlessly organized the Conference from beginning to end and helped bring this book to fruition. Additional thanks go to *David Smolin* for his help in connecting scholars who were involved in the Conference.

Also, we are grateful to the copyeditors, who put in an many hours while balancing full loads as law students at Pepperdine*: Mark Krause, Cory Baker, Andrew Wilhelm,* and *Megan Callaway*. We are also grateful to *Katelin Eastman*, who proofread the final copy, improved the quality of the document, and was also a full-time law student at Pepperdine.

The other editors would like to especially recognize the work of our "editor-in-chief," Bert Ballard, who started this project, kept it organized, and freely gave of his time, energy, and soul.

Finally, thanks to all of our families for their constant support. And to God, who has ultimately adopted us into His family.

INTRODUCTION

ROBERT L. BALLARD, PH.D.
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From 2004 to 2012, there was an estimated 60% decline in intercountry adoptions around the world (Selman, 2014[1]). This decline has coincided with a rise in critical views on intercountry adoption (ICA) practice—allegations of corruption, the widespread influence of money, and claims of long-term negative effects on the adoption triad (birth parents, child, and adoptive parents), among others, have raised concerns about the once unquestioned value of placing a child with a family of another nation. Still, supporters of intercountry adoption continue to call upon human rights, the importance of family in a child's development, and the plight of orphans to advocate for the important and necessary role of intercountry adoption in addressing the needs of children around the world.

In recent years, discussions about ICA issues have become prominent. The 2010 Intercountry Adoption Summit in Stratford, Ontario, Canada, the 3rd and 4th International Conference on Adoption Research in 2010 (Leiden, the Netherlands) and 2013 (Bilboa, Spain), and the 2013 Pepperdine University School of Law Nootbaar Institute Conference on the Intercountry Adoption Debate (Malibu, CA), among others, have created spaces for dialogue, debate, and conversation. From these gatherings, four important observations about intercountry adoption can be made.

First, the intercountry adoption dialogue is global in scope. No longer is the conversation primarily dictated by receiving countries. Today, there is recognition of the interconnectedness and interdependence between origin countries and receiving countries. Bilateral agreements between origin and receiving countries are unable to address the larger systemic issues and cultural differences plaguing ICA, and a global perspective is necessary to understand both the scope and solutions. Further, origin countries are

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[1] Selman, Peter. (2015). Global trends in intercountry adoption. This volume, Chapter I, p. 9.

gaining influence with their perspectives, viewpoints, and cultural experiences, along with the experiences of birth parents and birth families, being increasingly included and acknowledged in discussions of intercountry adoption (although more efforts need to be made).

Second, dialogues about intercountry adoption have shifted to questioning the merits of adoption itself rather than a solution-oriented focus of improving policies, procedures, and processes. Advocates of ICA now find themselves defending the relative "good" of placing a child with a family in another country. With the pendulum shifting away from ICA as an unquestioned good to one where critics have raised difficult and unavoidable questions, the current discourse has become more complex than ever, with tensions riding high for both advocates and critics. Indeed, today's conversations often feature supporters, critics, practitioners, and researchers on panels together debating and discussing important issues and questioning its intent, ethics, and impacts. Spirited debate and passionate exchange is commonplace.

Third, the gatherings reveal how intercountry adoption is truly interdisciplinary. For a long time, intercountry adoption was dominated by a few scholarly disciplines (law, psychology, social work, anthropology, and medicine). Today, however, many disciplines contribute to research, knowledge, and discourse about intercountry adoption. Sociology, religion, history, communication and others are significant contributors, with faculty and graduate students seeing the value of different disciplinary perspectives in understanding ICA. These multiple and diverse perspectives, approaches, and foci have identified new trends, successes, problems, and complexities in intercountry adoption.

Fourth and finally, the gatherings illustrate how intercountry adoption is inter-sector. Scholars can no longer afford to research, criticize, and express positions without engaging and conversing with policymakers, government officials, adoption agencies, and even adoptees. Yet those same groups can also no longer afford to operate without the research and perspectives of scholars. These gatherings have been intentional in order to create opportunities and spaces where individuals can hear and learn from each other as well as engage in debate and the passionate presentation of perspectives.

Combined, these four themes reveal a complex, nuanced, and often charged view of intercountry adoption. To participate in the conversation

about intercountry adoption is to be engaged with a wide range of ideas and perspectives, deeply and personally held, and all with a claim of importance. Money, politics, culture, race, law, international relations, religion, policy, identity, institutionalization, nutrition, trauma, health, family, and many, many other factors are important to the discussion about placing a child for adoption with a family in another country. Discussing intercountry adoption, its merits, and its impacts requires engaging multiple and complex levels and processes across geographic borders and across different cultural beliefs and systems.

This edited volume tries to do that: To present the diversity of ideas and the complexity and nuance that is intercountry adoption. It is primarily the result of the 2010 Intercountry Adoption Summit in Canada and the 2013 Pepperdine conference and the perspectives presented at those gatherings. Its chief aim is to provide a space and forum to summarize and present research from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, to highlight current and future issues circulating in the discourse of adoption, and to find productive ways forward for scholars and practitioners.

A secondary aim of this volume is to present a wide range of views on intercountry adoption. Perspectives from practitioners who make their living through ICA, scholars both for and against the practice, and fresh perspectives from emerging disciplines and researchers are all included in this volume. Parents, policymakers, adoptees, and agency representations all provide important insights. For the first time (to our knowledge), a range of religious perspectives on intercountry adoption is given a place alongside adoption research and policy. And while not every possible perspective has made its way into the volume, what we present here represents the nuance and complexity of the discourse on intercountry adoption.

The authors who have graciously contributed to this volume are a "who's who" of intercountry adoption scholars and professionals. Leading researchers in the fields of law, medicine and health, and social work find themselves in the same volume with up-and-coming scholars who are making important contributions to the field. Practitioners and professionals who daily live and breathe intercountry adoption as they advocate for children and reform offer their first-hand experiences and perspectives. Contributors hail from around the world and from both origin and receiving countries, providing a global and broad cultural perspective on the topic.

We believe this volume can serve as a resource. Each chapter is written as an introduction to a topic or issue, and is extensively supported by research. Most of the chapters could be turned into their own books. Each chapter is also written to be accessible, so that laypeople and professionals from a wide range of disciplines can appreciate its recommendations and ideas. Those teaching an upper level undergraduate or graduate course on intercountry adoption from any disciplinary perspective will find this volume relevant for their students. And established scholars in intercountry adoption can look to this as a "handbook" that brings the issues together and provides an excellent reference for their continued study.[2]

In closing, this volume marks a significant turning point in intercountry adoption. It represents a global, interdisciplinary, inter-sector conversation that is both complex and diverse. We are in a new age of intercountry adoption, both in research and in practice. The days of intercountry adoption as an assumed good are gone. But we can pave a new path forward, one that engages the issues civilly, one that is not blind to the negative impacts of intercountry adoption, and one that seeks culturally appropriate solutions for the children who languish without a family. We hope this volume serves as a beginning point for this new path forward, one where no one is excluded from the conversation and one where wise policies will emerge that protect children, birth parents, and adoptive parents.

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[2] For those who want to go further in their study of the topic, they are encouraged to consult the footnotes in each chapter in this volume and/or consult the recent Cynthia Callahan, editor, "The Bibliographies Issue: Adoption Studies Research," *Adoption & Culture* 4, (2014). It contains many chapters with a listing of key sources for both domestic and intercountry adoption, with many of this volume's authors serving as contributors. It also goes beyond to provide more on other topics such as film, race, cultural studies, and more.

SECTION 1:
FOUNDATIONAL DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

ROBERT L. BALLARD, PH.D.
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Any student or scholar of intercountry adoption will encounter the disciplines of social work, counseling, anthropology, medicine and health, and law, as these disciplines have been involved in intercountry adoption (ICA) research and practice for many years. They form the core and foundation for ICA research. This opening section provides perspectives from established scholars in these foundational fields, offering them a chance to review the literature in their disciplinary area and recommend ways forward for both research and practice.

The section begins with Peter Selman (Newcastle University, UK) and his latest research on ICA trends, "Global Trends in Intercountry Adoption: 2003-2013." Not only does Selman provide the numbers and charts to document ICA's marked decrease in the past ten years, but he also provides analyses that go beyond the numbers, giving explanations for the decline and highlighting important events, policy changes, and controversies affecting these trends. His work sets the stage for the perspectives that follow, providing both a broader context as well as an overview of major issues plaguing ICA.

This is followed by "At this Critical Juncture in the Era of Reform: Reviewing 35 years of Social Work Literature on Intercountry Adoption," a review of the literature in social work. Scholars and practitioners Karen Smith Rotabi (United Arab Emirates University), Carmen Mónico (Elon University, NC), and Kelley Bunkers (child protection consultant/researcher) discuss social policy, exploitation, ethics, social justice, human rights, and adoption practice. They suggest that ICA is currently in an era of reform, one where substantive policy changes aimed at addressing flaws in the ICA system have occurred. They call for the

social work field to move beyond a focus on adopted children after placement to a more holistic view that understands children within their cultural, social, and institutional systems and thus better incorporates the concerns and considerations of birth families. With its unique blend of practice, research, and interventions, Rotabi, Mónico, and Bunkers encourage the social work profession to consider a multitude of strategies for addressing child welfare issues, of which ICA is only one among many possible approaches.[1]

For many, counseling and ICA are inextricable. Indeed, 60 years of research on the psychological and mental health needs of the adoption triad (adoptive parents, birth parents, and adoptees) is a dominant presence in ICA literature. However in "Pre- and Post-Adoption Counseling Needs in International Adoption: Understanding the Social Ecology of Triad Members," Amanda L. Baden (Montclair State University, NJ), Judith L. Gibbons (Saint Louis University, MO), Samantha Wilson (Medical College of Wisconsin and International Adoption Clinic, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin), and Hollee McGinnis (Doctoral Candidate, Washington University in St. Louis, MO/Fullbright Scholar, Hallym University, S. Korea) argue that there is an emerging shift away from focus on individual mental health needs toward one that considers the social, historical, political, and cultural forces that influence the mental health and psychological well-being of adoption triad members. Building on the contributions of the past, the authors call for more attention to the birth and adoptive parent populations as well as early childhood vulnerabilities and adolescent identity changes.

A "Review of Medical Issues, Growth Failure and Recovery, and Development of Internationally Adopted Children" is essentially three smaller papers combined into one. It reviews the most prominent and important issues in the medical and health fields and ICA. This perspective is extremely important in ICA, going beyond the political, social, or cultural to document the biological, physiological, developmental, and medical issues pertinent to intercountry adoptees. Cecilia Baxter (University of Alberta, Canada) provides an overview of the most common infectious diseases intercountry adoptees are at risk of contracting. Dana E. Johnson (University of Minnesota) looks at growth

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[1] Another review of social work literature is by JaeRan Kim, "Social Work," in Cynthia Callahan, editor, "The Bibliographies Issue: Adoption Studies Research," *Adoption & Culture* 4 (2014): 149-158.

rates, growth failures, and long-term effects of adversity on growth and development, with special attention given to the impact of institutionalization on intercountry adoptees. Laurie C. Miller (Tufts University, MA) and Femmie Juffer (Leiden University, Netherlands) look closely at developmental issues in intercountry adoptees, from their time in orphanages to growing into their young adult years.

Drawing on their observational methods and approaches, anthropology scholars Claudia Fonseca (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil), Diana Marre (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain), and Beatriz San Román (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain) offer a critical assessment of ICA. In "Child Circulation in a Globalized Era: Anthropological Reflections," they highlight how anthropological research describes an intercountry adoption system mired in poverty, discrimination, inequality and privilege. Their reflections on culture, laws, family issues, adoption professionals, nationhood, adoptee perspectives, and special needs adoptions present a critical view of ICA. They call for a reform of ICA, one that reinvents the system by incorporating culturally situated practices, recognizing and equalizing power differences, and more direct involvement of families and individuals who are affected by intercountry adoption.[2]

To close this section and provide a transition into the next, legal scholar Elizabeth Bartholet (Harvard University, MA) provides an explanation for the recent decline in ICA and calls her audience to fight for changes for children's human rights. "The International Adoption Cliff: Do Child Human Rights Matter?" is taken from a plenary address given at Pepperdine University School of Law's 2013 gathering on intercountry adoption, religion, law, and ethics. Bartholet departs from the scholarly trend of reform and critical perspectives to passionately argue that ICA is a valuable and necessary tool in the maintenance and protection of human rights for children around the world. Since ICA provides what research has already shown – that children need homes and families to be healthy and whole – Bartholet suggests that the decline is a result of poorly crafted

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[2] For a listing of more works on adoption from an anthropological perspective, readers can consult Sarah D. Macdonald, "Sociological and Anthropological Studies of Adoption," in Cynthia Callahan, editor, "The Bibliographies Issue: Adoption Studies Research," *Adoption & Culture* 4 (2014), 170-176 and Júlia Vich-Bertran, "International Approaches to Origin Countries and Birth Parents," in Cynthia Callahan, editor, "The Bibliographies Issue: Adoption Studies Research," *Adoption & Culture* 4 (2014), 218-226 .

policy. She contends that these poorly crafted policies were created in pursuit of national interests and rejects that the downward trend in ICA is about the interests of children or the result of criticisms of ICA. She charges critics of ICA with building their arguments on the backs of children who are without a voice, essentially violating their rights rather than crafting productive change. Bartholet concludes by making a bold call for her audience to be courageous, work to re-orient U.S. policy, make the necessary changes that will open up ICA around the world, and fight on behalf of the children whose lives would be radically and positively changed through adoption. In calling for this kind of action, Bartholet's perspective segues into section 2 on law and legal scholarship and reminds us that dialogues and debates across a range of disciplines must result in some kind of transformative action.

This opening section of *The Intercountry Adoption Debate: Dialogues Across Disciplines* provides a context for the rest of the volume. It outlines the global trends and major issues in ICA and summarizes the literature and disciplinary perspectives of social work, counseling, anthropology, and the medical and health professions, ending with a transition into legal scholarship.

CHAPTER ONE

GLOBAL TRENDS IN INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION: 2003-2013[1]

PETER SELMAN, PH.D.
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY, UK[2]

Introduction

After a period of steady growth from the early 1990s, when numbers doubled from 1993 to 2004, the annual number of intercountry adoptions fell by more than half between 2004 and 2012. The aim of this chapter is to explore this decline in a global context. Data from twenty-three receiving states have been used and the analysis extends to the end of 2013, thus covering some of the most recent developments in ICA: expedited adoptions following the earthquake in Haiti; Putin's ban on all international adoptions to the United States; the changing nature of adoptions from China; new legislation in Korea heralding an end to intercountry adoption after more than fifty years; and ongoing problems surrounding other countries of origin such as Guatemala, Nepal, and Vietnam. The implications of these changes and prospects for the future

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[1.] Based on presentations at *Intercountry Adoption; Orphan rescue or Child trafficking?,* Pepperdine University 8-9 February 2013 and at the 3rd International Meet on Adoption organized by Cara, New Delhi 19-20 February 2013.
[2.] This paper updates a previous review of the global decline from 2004-2010, published in Adoption Advocate 44. P. Selman, "Global Trends in Intercountry Adoption, 2000-2010," *Adoption Advocate* 44 (2012). P. Selman, "The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st century," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi, eds. *Intercountry Adoption: Policy, Practice and Outcomes* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2012). P. Selman, "The Global Decline of Intercountry Adoption: What lies ahead?" *Social Policy and Society* 11, no. 3 (2012): 381-97. For information and datasets, the author may be contacted at pfselman@yahoo.co.uk.

will be discussed with special reference to Africa, which now accounts for more than a quarter of all international adoptions.

The chapter starts with a consideration of the sources of data used and the problems arising from these. This is followed by a brief account of the rise and fall of intercountry adoption worldwide from 1998 to 2013, with a more detailed look at trends in those countries receiving most children over this period and a comparison between countries using standardised measures allowing for variations in population size and number of births. The next section looks at patterns in countries of origin from 2003 to 2013, followed by a more detailed consideration of trends in key countries, grouped by continent to highlight the contrast of general decline with the increase in the number of adoptions from Africa. This will also provide an opportunity to look at issues arising from evidence of irregularities in procedures in countries and ethical questions over the adoptions from Haiti after the earthquake in 2010. The final part of the chapter looks at the continuing decline in numbers from 2011 to 2013 and likely future trends in intercountry adoption in the context of debates about the ethics of intercountry adoption between those calling for radical reform or an end to the practice and those arguing for a reversal of the decline to meet the needs of "orphaned" or "institutionalized" children worldwide,

Methodology & Challenges

The data presented in this chapter are mainly based on statistics provided by the central authorities or statistical departments of receiving states. The information provided by these statistics on countries from which children had moved has been used to estimate totals for countries of origin. This technique, first used by Kane[3] in a review of international adoption in the 1980s, has many problems, but does facilitate comparison between countries of origin and trends over time. Kane's study used data from fourteen receiving countries. I have been able to extend this to twenty countries[4] and, more recently, to twenty-three.[5]

[3.] P. Kane, "The Movement of Children for International Adoption: an epidemiological perspective," *The Social Science Journal* 30, no. 4 (2009): 323-39.
[4.] P. Selman, "Intercountry Adoption in the New Millennium the silent migration revisited," *Population Research & Policy Review* 21 (2002): 205-25. P. Selman, "Trends in Intercountry Adoption: Analysis of data from 20 receiving countries," *Journal of Population Research* 23, no. 2 (2006): 183-204.
[5.] P. Selman, "The rise and fall of intercountry adoption in the 21st century," *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 1-20. P. Selman, "Global Trends in

The quality of data from these countries varies as does the basis on which statistics are collected. Some countries such as Switzerland and Germany have large numbers of step-parent and relative adoptions which are listed separately or grouped as "familial". These have been excluded from totals used in the tables presented here, but other countries such as Canada do not distinguish relative adoptions. Figures on adoptions from China in early years are inflated as many applicants had not received a child; thus, data from the UK is particularly problematic when based on approved applications (2003-9) or matches (2010-3) rather than actual adoptions. Further problems arise where governments (e.g. Germany and the UK - and Italy in 2013) do not provide data for some countries or for those sending less than five children in a year. Most countries present data by calendar year but some use fiscal year data (October to September in the United States; July to June in Australia and New Zealand).

However, a growing number of countries of origin now provide their own data. For example, more than 30 countries of origin provided data in returns to the 2010 Special Commission on the practical operation of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption. South Korea also has a record of outgoing adoptions from 1953 and India from 1988. Where appropriate, these data are included in tables. Comparison of the estimates based on receiving countries' data and data from the countries of origin suggest that the former provide a useful alternative that gives an accurate picture of trends over time and comparative levels across countries, providing that sufficient receiving countries are used.[6] Where there are major discrepancies, these may prove useful in identifying problems in the regulation of intercountry adoption.

Intercountry Adoption, 2000-2010," *Adoption Advocate* 44 (2012). P. Selman, "The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st century," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi, eds. *Intercountry Adoption: Policy, Practice and Outcomes* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2012). P. Selman, "The Global Decline of Intercountry Adoption: What lies ahead?" *Social Policy and Society* 11, no. 3 (2012): 381-97.

[6.] P. Kane, "The Movement of Children for International Adoption: an epidemiological perspective," *The Social Science Journal* 30, no. 4 (2009): 326. P. Selman, *Trends in intercountry adoption 1998-2003: A demographic analysis.* Paper presented at the First Global Conference on Adoption Research, Copenhagen (September 9-10, 2005): 18. P. Selman, "Trends in Intercountry Adoption: Analysis of data from 20 receiving countries," *Journal of Population Research* 23, no. 2 (2006): 192-94.

The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption: 1998-2013

The global number of intercountry adoptions based on data from twenty-three receiving states peaked in 2004 after a steady rise in annual numbers from the early 1990s. Since then, annual numbers have decreased to so that in 2010 the total was lower than in 1998 (see Table 1 and Figure 1). During this time, the rise and fall was evident in most regions and countries. However, in 2009, things began to change when more children went to European countries than to the United States, which had previously accounted for about half of all international adoptions since the mid-1980s. Italy also replaced France and Spain as the country receiving the most children for ICA after the United States (Table 1 and Figure 2). This pattern continued in 2011, 2012 and 2013, when the global total of children received was just over 16,000 - the lowest figure since 1992.

Figure 1: Trends in Intercountry Adoption to 23 Receiving States 2003-13
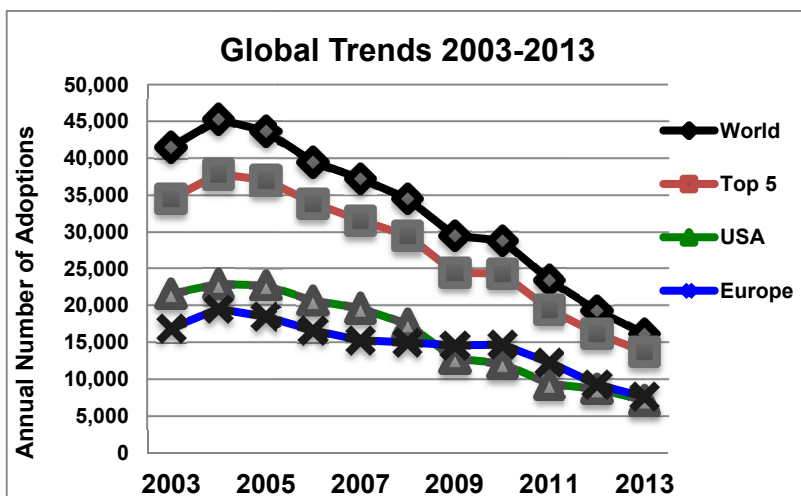
Table 1: Intercountry adoptions to twenty-three receiving countries, 1998 to 2013: top seven ranked by number of children received in 2004 with peak years in bold.

Country	1998	2001	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013
USA (FY) [a]	15,774	19,237	**22,884**	20,679	17,438	12,149	8,668	7,094
Spain	1,487	3,428	**5,541**	4,472	3,156	2,891	1,669	1,188
France	3,777	3,094	**4,079**	3,977	3,271	3,504	1,569	1,343
Italy	2,233	1,797	3,402	3,188	3,977	**4,130**	3,106	2,825
Canada	**2,222**	1,874	1,949	1,535	1,614	1,660	1,162	1,243
Netherlands	825	1,193	**1,307**	767	682	705	588	401
Sweden	928	981	**1,109**	793	912	739	466	341
Total to all states [b]	**31,712**	**36,391**	**45,281**	**39,479**	**34,479**	**29,433**	**19,338**	**16,101** [c]
% to USA	49%	**53%**	51%	52%	50%	42%	45%	44%
% to Europe	41%	39%	43%	42%	43%	**50%**	48%	47%

a)   The U.S. Department of State publishes data each fiscal year (FY = October through September).

b)   Sixteen other countries are included in the overall totals: Australia, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, and the UK, with the addition of Andorra and Israel from 2001.

For a listing of all twenty-three countries, which is updated regularly, see http://www.hcch.net/upload/selmanstats33.pdf

c)   Total from 20 states. Data missing for Cyprus, Malta and New Zealand, which together sent 80 children in 2012

Sources: Statistics provided by Central Authorities of the twenty-three receiving countries.

The number of intercountry adoptions rose in each of the top seven receiving countries between 2001 and 2004, but since 2004 the pattern has shifted to a decline. The number of "orphan" visas granted by the U.S. fell by 69 percent between 2004 and 2013. The number of intercountry adoptions in France fell by 67 percent, despite a brief rise in 2010 due to increased adoptions from Haiti (see Table 21). In Spain, the annual total fell by 79 percent over the same period. In Italy, however, the total number of adoptions in 2010 was 20 percent higher than in 2004, although by 2012 numbers had fallen to below the level in 2006.

Figure 2 shows the contrasting trends in the four states receiving the highest numbers of children after the United States. Tables 2 and 3 examine the rise and fall in more detail.[7]

Figure 2: Five Receiving States 2003-2013
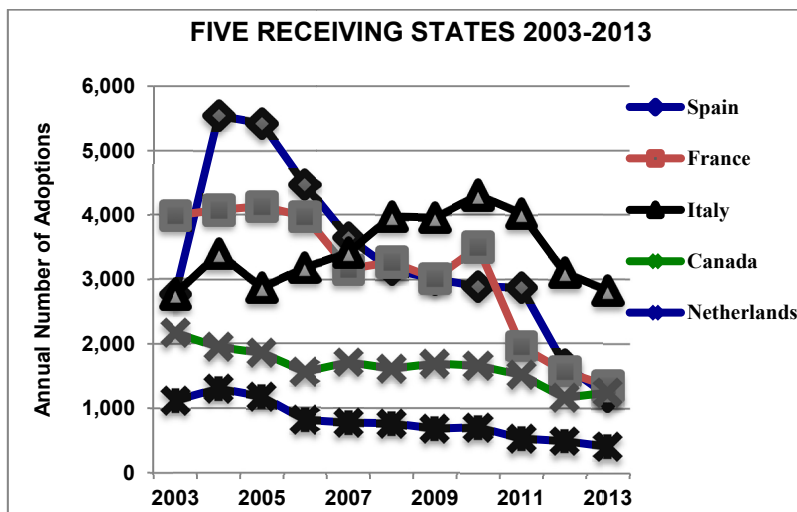
[7.] P. Selman, "The rise and fall of intercountry adoption in the 21st century," *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 1-20. P. Selman, "The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st century," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi, eds. *Intercountry Adoption: Policy, Practice and Outcomes* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2012).

Table 2 shows changes in nine countries between 1998 and 2004.[8] Eight show rising numbers, but the proportionate change is varied. The number of children entering Spain trebled and those to Ireland more than doubled, while Sweden, Norway, and France saw increases of less than 20 percent, and the number entering Canada fell.

Table 2: The rise in numbers: 1998-2004

	1998	2001	2004	% change
Spain	1,487	3,428	5,541	+ 273
Ireland	147	179	398	+ 171
Netherlands	825	1,722	1,307	+ 58
Italy	2,233	1,797	3,402	+ 52
USA	18,774	19,237	22,884	+ 45
22 States	31,710	36,391	45,281	+ 42%
Sweden	928	1,044	1,109	+ 19
Norway	643	713	706	+ 10
France	3,777	3,094	4,079	+ 8
Canada	2,222	1,874	1,949	- 12

Global numbers fell by 48 percent between 2004 and 2011. Table 3 shows the change in the nine countries listed in Table 2, seven of which also saw a reduction in numbers. Canada and Italy saw an increase by 2009, which in the case of Italy continued through 2011, but was reversed in 2012, when the annual total was 3,106. Numbers rose in France in 2010 due in large part to a rise in adoptions from Vietnam (see Table 13) and Haiti (see Table 20). In 2011, however, the total of adoptions in France fell to 1,995. The overall pattern was a decline from 2004 to 2011, with most major receiving countries experiencing a decline of over 50%, the major exception being Italy where numbers rose by 18%. In 2013, numbers have fallen further in all countries for which data were available at the time of writing (see Table 28).

[8.] P. Selman, "Trends in Intercountry Adoption: Analysis of data from 20 receiving countries," *Journal of Population Research* 23, no. 2 (2006): 183-204.

Table 3: Change in numbers: Selected Countries 2004-2012

	2004	2010	2011	% change	2012
Netherlands	1,307	697	528	- 60	488
USA – FY	22,824	12,149	9,320	- 59	8,688
Norway	706	343	304	- 57	239
Spain	5,541	2,891	2,573	- 54	1,669
Ireland	398	201	188	- 52	117
23 States	45,299	28,814	23,413	- 48%	19,338
France	4,079	3,504	1,995	- 51	1,569
Sweden	1,109	729	(538) [a]	- 51	(466) [a]
Belgium	470	388	354	- 25	260
Canada	1,949	1,660	1,514	- 22	1,162
Italy	3,402	4,130	4,022	+ 18	3,106

a)   Bracketed figures are for agency adoptions only

Standardized Rates

Comparing receiving countries by the total number of adoptions can be misleading as they vary so much in population size and annual number of births (Table 4). Thus, providing standardized rates and ratios provides a common basis for comparison. Although the United States receives the largest number of intercountry adoptees, several other countries have a higher rate per 100,000 members of the population or per 1,000 births. In 2004, the highest **rates** were found in Norway (15.4), Spain (13.0), and Sweden (12.3). The lowest rates were in Australia (1.9), Germany (0.8), and the UK (0.6). In 2010, the highest **rate** for countries taking more than 100 children a year was found in the three Scandinavian countries (7.8 in Sweden; 7.5 in Denmark; and 7.0 in Norway), closely followed by Italy with a rate of 6.8. The highest **ratio** (per 1,000 births) in 2010 was in Italy due its lower birth rate.

Table 4: Intercountry adoptions per 100,000 population (crude adoption rate) and per 1,000 live births (adoption ratio) 2004 and 2008.

Country	2004			2008		
	Number of Adoptions	Adoptions per 100,000 population	Adoptions per 1,000 live births	Number of Adoptions	Adoptions per 100,000 population	Adoptions per 1,000 live births
Norway	706	15.4	**12.8**	304	6.4	**5.2**
Spain	5,541	13.0	**12.4**	3,156	7.1	**6.4**
Sweden	1,109	12.3	**11.7**	793	8.6	**7.4**
Netherlands	1,307	8.1	**6.9**	767	4.6	**4.1**
Italy	3,402	5.9	**6.4**	3,977	6.7	**7.3**
Canada	1,949	6.1	**5.5**	1,614	4.8	**4.6**
USA	22,884	7.8	**5.5**	17,438	5.6	**4.0**
France	4,079	6.8	**5.4**	3,271	5.3	**4.3**
Australia	370	1.9	**1.5**	270	1.3	**1.0**
Germany	506	0.6	**0.7**	664	0.8	**1.0**
UK	333	0.5	**0.5**	225	0.4	**0.3**

Table 4 shows the number of adoptions per 100,000 population and per 1,000 live births in 11 receiving states in 2004 (the peak year for many countries) and 2008. A rate of more than 10 per 100,000 was found in two smaller countries - Malta and Andorra - which received 50 and 10 children, respectively, in 2010.

Countries of Origin

Many countries have been involved in intercountry adoption. Those sending the highest numbers of children have changed over time. Korea has the longest sequence of official statistics available, from 1953-2010, with a total of 165,000+ children adopted by 2013. Between 1992 and 2013, nearly 140,000 children were adopted from China and more than 110,000 from Russia.

The tables below are based on statistical returns to the 2010 Hague Special Commission and on estimates from data from receiving states. Table 4 shows the changes in top states of origin between 1989 and 20130 based on data from receiving states.[9]

Table 5: Top Seven Countries of Origin: 1980-2013

1980-89	1998	2004	2010	2013
KOREA INDIA COLOMBIA BRAZIL SRI LANKA CHILE PHILIPPINES	CHINA RUSSIA VIETNAM KOREA COLOMBIA GUATEMALA INDIA	CHINA RUSSIA GUATEMALA KOREA UKRAINE COLOMBIA ETHIOPIA	CHINA ETHIOPIA RUSSIA HAITI COLOMBIA VIETNAM KOREA	CHINA ETHIOPIA RUSSIA UKRAINE CONGO DRC COLOMBIA PHILIPPINES

[9]. P. Kane, "The Movement of Children for International Adoption: an epidemiological perspective," *The Social Science Journal* 30, no. 4 (2009): 323-39. Selman, "Intercountry Adoption in the New Millennium the silent migration revisited," *Population Research & Policy Review* 21 (2002): 205-25. P. Selman, "Trends in Intercountry Adoption: Analysis of data from 20 receiving countries," *Journal of Population Research* 23, no. 2 (2006): 183-204. P. Selman, "The rise and fall of intercountry adoption in the 21st century," *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 1-20. P. Selman, "Global Trends in Intercountry Adoption, 2000-2010," *Adoption Advocate* 44 (2012).

In 2012 and 2013, the number of adoptions from Vietnam fell sharply (Table 15) and the The Democratic Republic of the Congo (Table 22) replaced it in the top seven countries of origin.

The top countries differ for the four major receiving countries – see Table 6, which lists the top six states of origin in 2009.

Table 6: Top Ten States of origin in 4 major receiving States in 2009

All States	USA	Spain	Italy	France
China	China	Russia	Russia	Haiti
Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ukraine	Ethiopia
Russia	Russia	China	Colombia	Vietnam
Ukraine	Korea	Ukraine	Ethiopia	Russia
Vietnam	Guatemala	Colombia	Brazil	Colombia
Colombia	Ukraine	Kazakhstan	Poland	Mali
Korea	Vietnam	Vietnam	Vietnam	China
Haiti	Haiti	Philippines	India	Cameroon
Guatemala	India	Mali	Bulgaria	Brazil
India	Kazakhstan	India	Hungary	Ukraine

The global top ten are inevitably similar to the United States, which accounted for 43 percent of all adoptions in 2009, but Guatemala was only of importance in the USA. All four top receiving countries had at least one state of origin of special importance to them alone: Kazakhstan and the Philippines for Spain; Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland for Italy; and Cameroon for France.

Table 7 shows the course of intercountry adoption from 2004 to 2013 for the ten countries sending most children in 2009, which are also the countries with most adoptions recorded for the whole period 2004-2013.

Figure 3 below charts the changes in four key states of origin between 2003 and 2013. These are the four countries sending the highest number of children to the twenty-three receiving states in this period.

Table 7: Ten countries ^a sending most children for intercountry adoption, 2004-2013. Peak years in bold.

	2004	2005	2007	2009	2010	2013	2004-13
China	13,415	**14,483**	8,748	5,012	5,429	13,415	**75,632**
Russia	**9,384**	7,492	4,881	4,003	3,360	1,767	**47,667**
Ethiopia	1,524	1,789	3,036	**4,553**	4,385	2,025	**29,638**
Guatemala	3,427	3,873	**4,854**	785	58	26	**21,493**
Colombia	1,714	1,472	1,634	1,407	**1,785**	566	**14,318**
South Korea ^b	**2,242 ^c**	2,121	1,226	1,396	1,122	221	**13,276**
Ukraine	**2,019**	1,989	1,614	1,505	1,096	645	**13,267**
Viet Nam	486	1,198	**1,698**	1,504	1,266	293	**10,454**
Haiti	1,159	956	786	1,195	**2,564 ^d**	472	**9,984**
India	**1,079**	875	1,013	722	606	350	**7,273**

Sources: The figures presented are based on data provided by the Central Authorities of twenty-three receiving states.

- a. Data on the top 15 states of origin for all years from 2003 to 2013 can be found at http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=publications.details& pid=5891&dtid=32
- b. Data on Korean adoptions from their Ministry of Health and Welfare give a lower figure which would place Korea below Ukraine for the period 2003-2013
- c. Korea has much higher levels of adoption in earlier decades (Table 14)
- d. 2010 total for Haiti includes estimated 62 to Germany and 1,010 humanitarian visas to the USA