

The movement of children for international adoption

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Trends in receiving States and States of origin 1998 - 2004

The paper updates a previous investigation into intercountry adoption to 1998

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WEIL in “The quiet migration”

“far more data needs to be collected on a systematic worldwide basis” to show us:

- the total volume of foreign adoptees**
- how this number has changed over time**
- what countries are linked in the flows of children....”**

(Weil 1984 pp 289-90)

Content of Paper

- In this paper I review statistics on intercountry adoption between 1998 and 2004 for 20 receiving States.
- I have used the data from these States to estimate the numbers of adoptions in States of origin and the total worldwide.

The Growth of Intercountry Adoption

| | 1980-89 | 1993-97 | 1998 | 2004 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| US | 7,761 | 10,070 | 15,774 | 22,284 |
| Spain | (19) | 784 | 1,487 | 5,541 |
| France | 1,850 | 3,216 | 3,777 | 4,079 |
| Italy | 1,006 | 2,047 | 2,233 | 3,400 |
| Canada | (109) | 1,934 | 2,222 | 1,955 |
| Netherlands | 1,153 | 640 | 825 | 1,307 |
| Sweden | 1,579 | 906 | 928 | 1,109 |
| Total for 14 states (global) | 16,268 (est – 19,000) | 22,799 (23,354 - 18) | 31,034 (31,667 - 20) | 43,701 (44,860 - 20) |

Intercountry Adoption 1999-2004

| | 2004 | 2001 | 1998 | % growth |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Spain | 5,541 | 3,428 | 1,487 | +273 |
| Ireland | 398 | 179 | 147 | +171 |
| Netherlands | 1,307 | 1,122 | 825 | +58.4 |
| Italy | 3,398 | 1,797 | 2,233 | +52.2 |
| USA | 22,884 | 19,237 | 15,774 | +45.1 |
| Sweden | 1,109 | 1,044 | 928 | +19.5 |
| France | 4,079 | 3,094 | 3,777 | + 8.0 |
| Canada | 1,955 | 1,874 | 2,222 | -12.0 |
| Denmark | 527 | 631 | 624 | -16.0 |
| Total (20 States) | 44,860 | 36,068 | 31,897 | 141.7% |

What do the figures mean?

- In many countries - e.g. UK, Spain and Switzerland - “relative” and “step-parent” intercountry adoptions are included in the total
- In others – e.g. EurAdopt - statistics only non-relative adoptions are counted
- In some – e.g. Germany - relative, step-parent and non-relative adoptions are recorded separately
- In UK data relate to approved applications not to children arriving in the country

Standardisation

- In order to make comparisons between countries it is necessary to standardise the **NUMBER** of adoptions in reference to population size or the number of births
- If we do this we find that the **LEVEL** of adoption is higher in Norway and Sweden than in the USA or France which receive a higher number

Adoption Ratios: - per 1.000 births

Receiving States: 1989 - 2004

| Year> Country v | 2004 | 1998 | 1989 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|
| Norway | 12.8 | 11.2 | 11.0 |
| Spain | 12.4 | 4.2 | --- |
| Sweden | 11.7 | 10.8 | 9.4 |
| Netherlands | 6.9 | 4.6 | 3.7 |
| USA | 5.5 | 4.2 | 2.0 |
| UK | 0.5 | 0,4 | --- |

Major Sending Countries: 1980-2003

| 1980-89 | 1995 | 1998 | 2003 |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p> Korea India Colombia Brazil Sri Lanka Chile Philippines Guatemala Peru El Salvador </p> | <p> China Korea Russia Vietnam Colombia India Brazil Guatemala Romania Philippines </p> | <p> Russia China Vietnam Korea Colombia Guatemala India Romania Brazil Ethiopia </p> | <p> China Russia Guatemala Korea Ukraine Colombia India Haiti Bulgaria Vietnam </p> |

States of Origin 2003

| Worldwide (20 countries) | | USA (Fiscal Year) | | Europe (16 countries) | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Country | Adoptions | Country | Adoptions | Country | Adoptions |
| China | 11,231 | China | 6,859 | China | 3,206 |
| Russia | 7,659 | Russia | 5,209 | Russia | 2,321 |
| Guatemala | 2,661 | Guatemala | 2,328 | Colombia | 1,432 |
| S. Korea | 2,306 | S. Korea | 1,790 | Ukraine | 1,234 |
| Ukraine | 1,951 | Kazakhstan | 825 | Bulgaria | 752 |
| Colombia | 1,749 | Ukraine | 702 | Haiti | 644 |
| India | 1,170 | India | 472 | Ethiopia | 582 |
| Haiti | 1,055 | Vietnam | 382 | India | 579 |
| ALL | 41,229 | ALL | 21,616 | ALL | 16,877 |

Major Sending Countries 2004

| USA | Spain | France | Italy |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>China Russia Guatemala Korea Kazakhstan</p> <p>Ukraine India Haiti Ethiopia Colombia</p> | <p>China Russia Ukraine Colombia Ethiopia</p> <p>India Bolivia Nepal Bulgaria Romania</p> | <p>Haiti China Russia Ethiopia Vietnam</p> <p>Colombia Madagascar Ukraine, Latvia Brazil</p> | <p>Russia Ukraine Colombia Belarus Brazil</p> <p>Poland Ethiopia Romania Bulgaria India</p> |

Adoption Ratios in States of Origin

- As with receiving States, if we are to make comparisons between States of origin, it is necessary to relate the NUMBER of adoptions the number of births or under 5 population.
- If we do this we find that in 2003 the adoption RATE or RATIO was higher in Bulgaria or Belarus than in China which sent the most children for intercountry adoption

Major Sending Countries 2004

| Country | Adoptions 2003 | Ratio 2003 | Ratio 1989 |
|-------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Bulgaria | 950 | 15.3 | --- |
| Belarus | 637 | 7.2 | --- |
| Guatemala | 2,656 | 6.3 | 0.8 |
| Russia | 7,632 | 6.2 | --- |
| Ukraine | 1,951 | 4.8 | --- |
| Korea | 2,306 | 4.1 | 5.4 |
| Colombia | 1,721 | 1.8 | 2.5 |
| China | 11,230 | 0.6 | <0.1 |
| Philippines | 397 | 0.19 | 0.4 |
| India | 1,118 | 0.04 | <0.1 |

Additional Details of Interest

- **Gender**
 - **Age**
 - **Special Needs**
 - **Status – abandoned; orphaned**
- Etc. etc.**

Gender of Children Adopted

| | | EurAdopt 2004 | | | USA 2002/3 | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------------|------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--|
| | Female | Male | Ratio | Female | Male | Ratio | |
| China | 1,612 | 96 | 94% | 5,545 | 314 | 95% | |
| India | 138 | 76 | 65% | 336 | 127 | 73% | |
| Vietnam | 11 | 2 | 85% | 382 | 136 | 64% | |
| Korea | 102 | 156 | 40% | 759 | 1,028 | 42% | |

Age of Children Adopted

| | | USA 2002/3 | | | France 2004 | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Under 1 | 1-4 | 5+ | Under 1 | 1-4 | 5+ |
| Korea | 94.3 | 5.1 | 0.5 | 97.3 | 2.7 | 0 |
| Vietnam | 76.4 | 17.1 | 6.6 | 77.5 | 22.6 | 0 |
| China | 43.3 | 54.2 | 2.5 | 13.4 | 86.4 | 0.2 |
| Brazil | 3.8 | 30.7 | 65.4 | 2.2 | 27.2 | 70.7 |

Characteristics of States of Origin

- **The States of origin sending most children are not all high birth rate countries facing Malthusian population growth, but include countries with total fertility rates below that of the major receiving states.**
- **Likewise they are not the poorest – and at least one (South Korea) is now seen as a developed country with a thriving economy**

Top 5 Receiving States – Demographic Data 2003

| Country | Adoptions 2003 | GNI per capita -2003 | Fertility (TFR-2003) | Mortality (IMR -2003) |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| United States | 21,616 | 37,610 | 2.1 | 7 |
| France | 3,995 | 24,770 | 1.9 | 4 |
| Spain | 3,951 | 16,990 | 1.2 | 4 |
| Italy | 2,772 | 21,560 | 1.2 | 4 |
| Canada | 2,222 | 23,930 | 1.5 | 5 |

Top 6 States of Origin Demographic Data 2003

| Country | Adoptions 2003 | GNI per capita -2003 | Fertility (TFR-2003) | Mortality (IMR -2003) |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| China | 11,230 | 1,100 | 1.8 | 30 |
| Russia | 7,632 | 2,610 | 1.1 | 16 |
| Guatemala | 2,656 | 1,910 | 4.4 | 35 |
| Korea | 2,306 | 12,030 | 1.4 | 5 |
| Ukraine | 1,951 | 970 | 1.2 | 15 |
| Colombia | 1,721 | 1,810 | 2.6 | 18 |

Profiles of States of Origin

- The current analysis allows a detailed picture of states of origin over the seven year period 1998-2004. This is of great value in identifying trends – e.g. very rapid growth in a newcomer or patterns of decline in states with problems where governments of the state of origin or some receiving states have suspended adoptions

CHINA 1998-2004

| Country V | 1998 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 1998- 2004 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| US | 4,206 | 5,053 | 6,859 | 7,044 | 36,997 |
| Spain | 196 | 1,427 | 1,043 | 2,389 | 6,732 |
| Canada | 901 | 771 | 1,108 | 1,001 | 5,700 |
| NL | 210 | 510 | 566 | 644 | 3,103 |
| Sweden | 123 | 316 | 373 | 497 | 1,817 |
| TOTAL | 6,115 | 9,135 | 11,203 | 13,258 | 60,810 |

ETHIOPIA 2001-2005

| | 2001 | 2003 | 2004 | <i>% increase</i> | 2005 |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| France | 234 | 217 | 390 | + 67% | 397 |
| USA | 158 | 135 | 289 | + 83% | 441 |
| Spain | 0 | 107 | 220 | -- | 227 |
| Italy | 79 | 47 | 192 | + 143% | 211 |
| NL | 25 | 39 | 72 | +188% | 59 |
| TOTAL | 728 | 847 | 1,484 | +103% | (1,535) |

CAMBODIA 1998-2003

| | 1998 | 2000 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| USA | 249 | 402 | 254 | 124 |
| France | 95 | 169 | 328 | 60 |
| Italy | 0 | 0 | 14 | 29 |
| Canada | 0 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| UK | 2 | 1 | 6 | 40 |
| 5 States | 346 | 593 | 624 | 276 |
| 20 States | 347 | 596 | 626 | 286 |

Adoption from Guatemala

There have been claims that many international adoptions in Guatemala involve a variety of criminal offences including the buying and selling of children, and the falsifying of documents – **many receiving States now require DNA tests of child and birth mother giving consent.** Guatemala's ratification of the Hague Convention has been challenged by the UK and other States.

Guatemala + other States 2003

| | All | China | Guatemala | Cambodia | India |
|-----------|--------|--------|-----------|----------|-------|
| USA | 21,616 | 6,859 | 2,328 | 124 | 472 |
| France | 3,995 | 360 | 247 | 60 | 23 |
| Spain | 3,951 | 1,043 | 8 | 0 | 100 |
| Italy | 2,772 | 0 | 8 | 29 | 121 |
| Canada | 2,181 | 1,108 | 0 | 23 | 70 |
| UK | 300 | 108 | 28 | 40 | 24 |
| 6 States | 34,815 | 9,478 | 2,619 | 276 | 810 |
| 20 States | 40,791 | 11,230 | 2,656 | 286 | 1,106 |

Conclusions

- **Number of ICAs continues to rise – very rapidly in the case of some sending and receiving States**
- **The level varies widely between States – WHY?**
- **The source of children has changed over time – what determines the rise and fall in numbers sent?**
- **The characteristics of children sent by different states vary – by age, gender, special needs etc**
- **Is ICA at risk of becoming a trade in children?**

**Rene Hoksbergen (1991)
expressed the hope that:**

“culture and economic circumstances in all Third-World countries change to the extent that it will be the exception when a child’s only chance for a satisfactory upbringing exists with a family thousands of miles from its birthplace”.

David Smolin (2004) fears that

“...the recurrent cycle of scandal, excuse, and ineffective “reform” will probably continue until intercountry adoption is finally abolished, with history labelling the entire enterprise as a neo-colonialist mistake. It does not have to be this way, but it will take more than legal fictions and illusory restrictions on child trafficking to prevent the ultimate demise of the intercountry adoption system”

To Adopted Children Everywhere



We Wish
you well