

CHAPTER TWO

AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE  
IN THE ERA OF REFORM:  
REVIEWING 35 YEARS OF SOCIAL WORK LITERATURE ON  
INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

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Because social work is a central profession in the practice of intercountry adoption (ICA), interfacing with children and families, the discipline's contribution to the literature offers an important perspective on the rapid changes undergoing the practice in this era of reform. To give structure to this literature review, the authors defer to Masson's<sup>1</sup> exploration of ICA and her questioning the practice as *A global problem or a global solution?* Masson identifies typologies of value-positions or perspectives on ICA: (1) *abolitionists*, (2) *pragmatists*, and (3) *promoters*. These positions may be simply described, respectively, as (1) those who demand a cessation of the practice of ICA due to ethical problems and illicit practices, (2) those who advocate for practice improvements to safeguard ICA, and (3) those who act as proponents, often with a dismissal of problems in practice with the argument that the greater good of ICA serves the most vulnerable children in the world. This latter group further argues that the problems are far outweighed by a multitude of social gains for the adoptee herself as well as the family and community in which the adoptee becomes a part of.

Rotabi and Gibbons<sup>2</sup> found that there is diversity across the disciplines actively involved in researching ICA with the majority voice of pragmatism.<sup>3</sup> Based on his examination of the adoption ethics and history of adoption in the Americas, historian Dubinsky asserts that "professional concerns about adoption practice are voiced in relative obscurity of social work journals."<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, we gather pieces of writing within a systematic literature review process and collate social work contributions on the subject of ICA, indicating a small but strong body of work providing critical discourse and recommendations for change. Generally speaking, when reviewing social work literature, the majority voice is pragmatic, and this is logical given social work's long-standing commitment to child welfare policy and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Masson, "Intercountry Adoption: A Global Problem or a Global Solution?" *Journal of International Affairs* 55, no. 1 (2001): 141–66.

<sup>2</sup> K. S. Rotabi and J. L. Gibbons, "Editorial," *International Social Work* [Special Issue: Intercountry Adoption] 52 no. 5 (2009): 571–74.

<sup>3</sup> K. S. Rotabi and J. L. Gibbons, "Does the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption Adequately Protect Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and Their Families?," *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 106–19.

<sup>4</sup> K. Dubinsky, *Babies Without Borders: Adoption and Migration Across the Americas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

## Searching the Social Work Literature

Literature addressing the role of social work is highlighted in this review, and because there is limited literature from social workers in low-resource countries, regions traditionally under-represented in publications are also given special attention. While this is a summary of the highlights of social work literature with a theme of ICA reform or having implications for human service improvement and/or reform, it is not absolutely exhaustive but is a strong representation of literature over a 35-year period. Summarized are the contributions of over 100 manuscripts, with the vast majority being peer-reviewed publications. By and large, the earliest social work reform literature dates back to the late 1970s and early 1980s as a result of the Vietnam Babylift<sup>56</sup> and cultural identity questions that were being posed about Korean adoptees.<sup>7</sup> The early 1990s mark an *era of rapid globalization* that eventually emerges into what we call the *era of reform*. Romanian adoptions were largely the focus of literature in the earliest stages of the era of globalization with a transition to other countries, such as Guatemala, and application of global social policy, practice, and values dilemmas in the era of reform,<sup>8</sup> which begins roughly around the year 2004 and onward. Adoption professionals and scholars agree that a paradigm shift has occurred, as evidenced in this book, and this particular literature review is one in which past literature is considered in the context of relatively new and emergent policy related to ICA practice reform.

In sum, we have identified three major areas in ICA for this chapter based on qualitative thematic analysis: (I) social policy, (II) exploitation, ethics, social justice and human rights, and (III) practice issues in ICA. We discuss each of these three areas here. It should be noted that our previous literature review paper<sup>9</sup> included family-child adjustment and child development as well as the use of the term ‘orphan’ and the notion of the ‘best interest of the child.’ However, due to space limitations in this chapter, we have excluded those areas and encourage the interested reader to refer to the previous article.

## Themes in the Social Work Literature

### I. Social Policy

Social policy analysis and discussion are prominent in much of the social work literature with examples and/or country case studies that are often presented to underscore issues.<sup>10</sup> For example, beginning with policy, Ryan, a social work practitioner who was involved in early ICA work, including the Vietnam Babylift, wrote about child rescue efforts. As a promoter, Ryan states that “...when increasing numbers of children are confined to refugee camps...in many cases intercountry adoption is their best hope for a chance in life, and for life itself”.<sup>11</sup> Her discussion concludes with ten recommendations, including not only government funding for research, but also the need for an “...international coordinating agency which could set standards for intercountry adoption” in addition to the need for home study authority in the placement state as well as the general development of good policy.<sup>12</sup>

Ten years later, the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect to Intercountry Adoption (henceforth simply referred to as the HCIA) was developed and established

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<sup>5</sup>. B. Joe, “In Defense of Intercountry Adoption,” *The Social Service Review* 52, no. 1 (1978): 1–20.

<sup>6</sup>. A. S. Ryan, “Intercountry Adoption and Policy Issues,” *Journal of Children in Contemporary Society* 15, no. 3 (1983): 49–60.

<sup>7</sup>. D. S. Kim, “How They Fared In American Homes: A Follow-Up Study of Adopted Korean Children,” *Children Today* 6, no. 2 (1977): 2–6.

<sup>8</sup>. M. E. Vonk, P. J. Simms, and L. Nackerud, “Political and Personal Aspects of Intercountry Adoption of Chinese Children in the United States,” *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services* 80, no. 5 (1999): 496–514.

<sup>9</sup>. K. S. Rotabi and K. M. Bunkers, “In the Era of Reform: A Review of Social Work Literature On Intercountry Adoption,” *Sage Open* (2011), <http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/11/14/2158244011428160.full#aff-1>.

<sup>10</sup>. H. Altstein and R. J. Simon, *Intercountry Adoption: A Multinational Perspective*. (New York: Praeger, 1991).

<sup>11</sup>. A. S. Ryan, “Intercountry Adoption and Policy Issues,” *Journal of Children in Contemporary Society* 15, no. 3 (1983), 49.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

requirements for governance at a central authority level, thereby meeting Ryan's<sup>13</sup> suggestion of a coordination approach. Today, more than 80 States are party to the agreement set forth to promote the best interests of the child and prevent child sales, abduction, and child trafficking, while also providing a framework for ethical adoption and inter-state cooperation (The Hague Conference on Private International Law, 1993).<sup>14</sup> This international agreement has been discussed by Bailey,<sup>15</sup> Freundlich,<sup>16</sup> Hollingsworth,<sup>17,18</sup> Howe,<sup>19</sup> Roby,<sup>20</sup> Rotabi,<sup>21</sup> Rotabi and Gibbons,<sup>22</sup> Triseliotis,<sup>23</sup> and others regarding issues of commodification of children, concerns about social justice and policy, and practice at the agency level.

The agreement requires that Party-States meet international child welfare standards not just for ICA as a single practice area, but as part of a range of care options and family support that should occur prior to any placement approval of a child in ICA. This continuum of child welfare placement options is based on the HCIA subsidiarity principle stating that biological families should first be supported before alternative care is considered for children.<sup>24</sup> Placement within an extended family system (e.g., kinship care or guardianship) should be considered next. Once kinship and other appropriate domestic care options such as domestic adoption have been explored, the child or sibling group may be deemed appropriate for consideration of placement into ICA.<sup>25</sup> Whilst social work scholars have long considered the best interests of children and a range of child welfare interventions, including adoption, there remains a lack of empirical literature on the best interests of the child subject as it relates to ICA. This is especially true in regard to the subsidiarity principle of the HCIA and care practices for orphaned and vulnerable children,<sup>26</sup> and, in particular, interventions honoring subsidiarity rather than fast-tracking "desirable" children into ICA.<sup>27</sup> As we move toward best practices in implementing the HCIA and securing the rights of children, greater clarity on these core HCIA principles is necessary.<sup>28</sup>

Bailey<sup>29</sup> carried out survey and interview research with agency personnel providing adoption and ICA services to analyze the intended and unintended consequences of the application of new HCIA-related standards of practice in the USA. Most agencies predicted the institutionalization of safer and better

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> The Hague Conference on Private International Law, *The Implementation and Operation of the 1993 Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention, Guide to Good Practice. Guide No.1* (Bristol, England: Family Law, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> J. D. Bailey, "Expectations of the Consequences of New International Adoption Policy in the US," *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* XXXVI, no. 2 (2009): 169–83.

<sup>16</sup> M. Freundlich, "Market Forces: The Issues In International Adoption," in M. Freundlich ed., *Adoption and Ethics* (Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America, 2000), 37–66.

<sup>17</sup> L. D. Hollingsworth, "International Adoption Among Families in the United States: Considerations of Social Justice," *Social Work* 48, no. 2 (2003): 209–17.

<sup>18</sup> L. D. Hollingsworth, "Commentary: Does the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption Address the Protection of Adoptees' Cultural Identity? And Should It?," *Social Work* 53, no. 4 (2008): 377–79.

<sup>19</sup> R. W. Howe, "Adoption Laws and Practices: Serving Whose Interests?" in M. B. Goodwin ed., *Baby Markets: Money and the New Politics of Creating Families* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 86–93.

<sup>20</sup> J. L. Roby, "From Rhetoric To Best Practice: Children's Rights In Intercountry Adoption," *Children's Legal Rights Journal* 27, no. 3 (2007): 48–71.

<sup>21</sup> K. S. Rotabi, "Intercountry Adoption Baby Boom Prompts New U.S. Standards," *Immigration Law Today* 27, no. 1 (2008): 12–19.

<sup>22</sup> K. S. Rotabi and J. L. Gibbons, "Does the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption Adequately Protect Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and Their Families?" *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 106–19.

<sup>23</sup> J. Triseliotis, "Intercountry Adoption: Global Trade or Global Gift?," *Adoption & Fostering* 24, no. 2 (2000): 45–54.

<sup>24</sup> K. S. Rotabi and K. M. Bunkers, "In the Era of Reform: A Review of Social Work Literature On Intercountry Adoption," (2011),

<sup>25</sup> K. S. Rotabi, "Intercountry Adoption Baby Boom Prompts New U.S. Standards," (2008): 12–19.

<sup>26</sup> T. Abebe, "Orphanhood, poverty and the care dilemma: Review of global policy trends," *Social Work and Society* (2009), available at

<http://www.socwork.net/2009/1>

<sup>27</sup> K. S. Rotabi and J. L. Gibbons, "Does the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption Adequately Protect Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and Their Families?" *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 106–19.

<sup>28</sup> J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi, "Looking to the Future" in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 311–16.

<sup>29</sup> J. D. Bailey, "Expectations of the Consequences of New International Adoption Policy in the US," *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* XXXVI, no. 2 (2009a): 169–83.

adoption practices for families and children, such as the standardization of procedures and agency transparency for reduction of fraud and corruption. However, they expressed concerns about the increased requirements for liability insurance and record-keeping that could set unachievable standards for small agencies, particularly agencies operating on ethical grounds that may be forced out of ICA operations. These new requirements might affect families by imposing on them greater paperwork, limiting their options of agency providers, and creating more costly adoption procedures, which may also translate into longer institutional stays of legitimately adoptable children.<sup>30</sup>

Bergquist's<sup>31,32</sup> policy analysis of the HCIA focuses on its application to emergency situations including disaster and war. Reviewing the history of the Vietnam Babylift and child abduction attempts elsewhere, Bergquist makes important points about the removal of children in the context of emergency and war, including contemporary discourse on child "rescue." An important consideration is child status as "orphan" or "refugee" and the process involved in making that determination. Bergquist recognizes the HCIA as an important step forward, but ultimately concludes that it is inadequate in the context of war and disaster. Bergquist and other authors require new ways of thinking about humanitarian response morphing into a market-driven ICA system.<sup>33,34,35</sup>

This analytical thread of limited HCIA guidance is carried on in the case of disaster by Rotabi and Berquist,<sup>36</sup> focusing on a U.S.-based faith group's attempt to abduct children for adoption in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. In this case, the crime and the subsequent lack of will to ultimately prosecute the individuals involved with attempted child trafficking for adoption were explored.<sup>37,38</sup> This reality underscores, in real terms, the limited negative consequences for child abduction for adoption. In the case of Haiti, the HCIA did not apply because Haiti was not a party to the Convention at the time.<sup>39</sup> As a result, the capacity to prosecute for human trafficking was ultimately inadequate (see legal analysis by Bromfield & Rotabi, 2012).

Rotabi and Bergquist<sup>40</sup> explore the best interest of the child in relation to the Haiti disaster and elsewhere, the differences of opinion, and the dilemmas that arise when making broad generalizations about orphans and extreme poverty, especially when ICA is promoted as a dominant child welfare intervention. ICA in Guatemala became the epicenter of this debate, and there has been a small body of research on the post-conflict context and child welfare system of this particularly significant country of origin from 1999 to 2008.

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> K. J. S. Bergquist, "Operation Babylift or Babyabduction: Implications of the Hague Convention on the Humanitarian Evacuation and 'Rescue' of Children," *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 621–33.

<sup>32</sup> K. J. S. Bergquist, "Implications of the Hague Convention on the humanitarian evacuation and 'rescue' of children," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 43–54.

<sup>33</sup> P. Fronck, "Operation Babylift: Advancing intercountry adoption into Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 36, no. 4 (2012): 445–58.

<sup>34</sup> N. F. Bromfield and K. S. Rotabi, "The Haitian Child Abduction Attempt: Policy Analysis of Human Trafficking Laws and Implications for Social Workers," *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* 9, no. 1 (2012), available at <http://www.socialworker.com/jswve/spring12/spr123.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> A. Young, "A Study of Australian Intercountry Adoption: Choosing Applicants to Parent," *Australian Social Work* 65, no. 4 (2012): 490–503.

<sup>36</sup> K. S. Rotabi and K. J. S. Bergquist, "Vulnerable Children In the Aftermath of Haiti's Earthquake of 2010: A Call For Sound Policy and Processes to Prevent International Child Sales and Theft," *Journal of Global Social Work Practice* (2010), available <http://www.globalsocialwork.org/vol3no1/Rotabi.html>.

<sup>37</sup> K. J. S. Bergquist, "Operation Babylift or Babyabduction: Implications of the Hague Convention on the Humanitarian Evacuation and 'Rescue' of Children," (2009): 621–33.

<sup>38</sup> K. J. S. Bergquist, "Implications of the Hague Convention on the humanitarian evacuation and 'rescue' of children" (2012), 43–54.

<sup>39</sup> S. Balsari, J. Lemery, T. P. Williams, and B. D. Nelson, "Protecting the Children of Haiti," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 362, no. 9 (2010): e25.

<sup>40</sup> K. S. Rotabi and K. J. S. Bergquist, "Vulnerable Children In the Aftermath of Haiti's Earthquake of 2010: A Call For Sound Policy and Processes to Prevent International Child Sales and Theft," (2010).

Bunkers, Groza, and Lauer<sup>41</sup> and Bunkers and Groza<sup>42</sup> present a historical and policy analysis of Guatemala's ICA trends, illustrating how the practice became a multimillion-dollar industry. These authors argue that ICA and the financial pressures ultimately undermined the Guatemalan State's interest in developing a domestic child welfare system, and rather relied on ICA as the main response. This supplanted child welfare efforts across a continuum of care ultimately yielding to ICA because of the powerful financial influences at all levels of the system; beginning with birth mother payments. The authors asserted that this form of child sales became routine within Guatemalan adoption practices. Gresham, Nackerud, and Risler<sup>43</sup> also considered this issue and captured the worrisome human rights violations that were documented by the United Nations.<sup>44</sup>

An important report developed by a large group of human rights defenders, lawyers, and social workers entitled *Adoptions in Guatemala: Protection or Business?*<sup>45</sup> identified a clear market dynamic with at least 90% of the children, ages 0–2 years, departing Guatemala primarily bound to the United States. In an effort to assess the context and problems of Guatemalan adoptions within an ecological perspective, Rotabi, Morris, and Weil<sup>46</sup> present post-conflict social indicators with observations about the role of social workers engaged in a nation notorious for extreme violence against women, including child abduction.<sup>47,48,49</sup> These authors also pose questions about the concept of “client” and the professional role of social workers and others representing the interests of adoption agencies—frequently distorting the realities of orphaned and vulnerable children to serve the private adoption model. Changes in the Guatemalan system and radical decline in ICA have resulted in shifts in other countries as well, most notably Ethiopia.<sup>50,51,52</sup> In recent years, countries which were once very active countries of ICA origin started to decline in their practice of ICA.

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<sup>41</sup> K. M. Bunkers, V. Groza, and D. P. Lauer, “International Adoption and Child Protection in Guatemala: A Case of the Tail Wagging the Dog,” *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 649–60.

<sup>42</sup> K. M. Bunkers and V. Groza, “Intercountry adoption and child welfare in Guatemala: Lessons learned pre and post ratification of the 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption,” in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi. *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 119–31.

<sup>43</sup> K. Gresham, L. Nackerud, and E. Risler, “Intercountry Adoption From Guatemala and the United States: A Comparative Policy Analysis,” *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* 1, no. 3–4 (2004): 1–20.

<sup>44</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography: Report on the Mission to Guatemala of Ms Ofelia Calcetas-Santos* (New York, NY: United Nations, 2000).

<sup>45</sup> Casa Alianza, Myrna Mack Foundation, Survivors Foundation, the Social Movement for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala, and the Social Welfare Secretariat, “Adoptions in Guatemala: Protection or Business?” (2007),

<http://www.brandeis.edu/investigate/gender/adoption/docs/InformedeAdopcionesFundacionMyrnaMack.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> K. S. Rotabi, A. W. Morris, and M. O. Weil. “International Child Adoption In a Post-Conflict Society: A Multi-Systemic Assessment of Guatemala,” *Journal of Intergroup Relations* 34, no. 2 (2008): 9–41.

<sup>47</sup> K.S. Rotabi, “Guatemala City: Hunger Protests Amid Allegations of Child Kidnapping and Adoption Fraud,” *Social Work & Society News Magazine* (August 2009), <http://www.socmag.net/?p=540>.

<sup>48</sup> K. S. Rotabi, “El Uso de la Fuerza, el Fraude y la Coerción en Algunas Adopciones en Guatemala: Los Casos Graves de Secuestros que Cuestionan el Principio del ‘Interés Superior del Menor [‘Force, Fraud, and Coercion In Some Guatemalan Adoptions: High-Profile Abduction Cases Challenge the ‘Best Interests of the Child’],” *Scripta Nova*, XVII, no. 395 (2012b), <http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-395/sn-395-24.htm>.

<sup>49</sup> K. S. Rotabi, “Fraud In Intercountry Adoption: Child Sales and Abduction in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Guatemala,” in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012c): 67–76.

<sup>50</sup> P. Selman, “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 575–94.

<sup>51</sup> K.S. Rotabi and K. M. Bunkers, “Intercountry Adoption Reform Based on the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption: An Update on Guatemala in 2008,” *Social Work and Society News Magazine* (November 2008), <http://www.socmag.net/?tag=adoption>.

<sup>52</sup> K. S. Rotabi, “From Guatemala to Ethiopia: Shifts In Intercountry Adoption Leaves Ethiopia Vulnerable For Child Sales and Other Unethical Practices,” *Social Work and Society News Magazine* (June 2010), <http://www.socmag.net/?p=615>.

Subsequently, a new frontier emerged in Africa with a rise of Ethiopia most specifically and new and emergent ICA systems in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and elsewhere.<sup>5354</sup>

Bunkers, Rotabi, and Mezmur<sup>55</sup> focus on emerging concerns and problems in Ethiopia, including inadequate legal codes and processes that undermine the best interests of the child. This includes Ethiopia's failure to sign and accede to the HCIA thus far, leaving it vulnerable to unscrupulous actors not bound by international standards—identifying some of the most unethical adoption agencies moving from Guatemala to Ethiopia as the latest in a string of “adoption boom” countries. Some of the troubling activities include adoptive-birth family visits in villages and gift exchanges<sup>56</sup> intersecting with traditional childcare models such as *Gudifecha*, a centuries-old practice in which family and kin arrange informal adoption is arranged.<sup>57</sup>

Including Ethiopia as a significant country of origin, Butterfield and Alemu<sup>58</sup> and Roby and Shaw<sup>59</sup> explore some of the issues and opportunities of child adoption in their analysis of adoption practices in Africa. In this latter analysis, the authors bring the ICA discourse back to local concerns for adoption of African American children from the public child welfare system in the United States, thereby highlighting some of the challenges and contradictions of ICA. Finally, it should be noted that limited information and analysis are also found in the grey literature specifically addressing adoption trends and concerns in the African continent as a whole.

Considering children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, African scholar Maundeni<sup>60</sup> outlines the definition of “orphans” and their care in Botswana. Poverty-reduction programs, social development issues, and a brief discussion of the laws that govern the practice of childcare are presented with a child rights framework. The author reviews different forms of assistance to children and their families without any mention of ICA. Maundeni also points out that 95% of orphans are absorbed in such structures within communities—without social service intervention. He also discusses kinship care problems and the failure of the state to implement the 2008 legal code, which includes foster care and adoption.

Other countries have played a significant role in ICA, most notably China. British authors Dowling and Brown<sup>61</sup> discuss ICA changes in China in the context of globalization such as the shift towards special needs children, also briefly discussing the country's efforts toward domestic foster care and adoption. From China itself, Meng and Kai<sup>62</sup> present a historical perspective, including differing definitions of “orphan” and the one-child policy, children orphaned by AIDS, and children socially orphaned due to parental imprisonment. While noting a huge discrepancy between China's official government estimates of 573,000 orphans and UNICEF's estimates of 21 million children, the authors integrate economic realities including a discussion of privileged versus marginalized groups. These authors mention ICA briefly as an intervention, but ultimately their focal point remains domestic care models including orphanages, foster

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<sup>53</sup> P. Selman, “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” (2009): 575–94.

<sup>54</sup> P. Selman, “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Global Trends From 2001 to 2010,” in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi, eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012):7–27.

<sup>55</sup> K. M. Bunkers, K. S. Rotabi, and B. Mezmur, “Ethiopia: Intercountry Adoption Risks and Considerations for Informal Care,” in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi, eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 133–42.

<sup>56</sup> K. S. Rotabi, “From Guatemala to Ethiopia: Shifts In Intercountry Adoption Leaves Ethiopia Vulnerable For Child Sales and Other Unethical Practices,” (June 2010)

<sup>57</sup> Bunkers. “Ethiopia: Intercountry Adoption Risks and Considerations for Informal Care” (2012):133–42.

<sup>58</sup> A. K. Butterfield and T. Alemu, “Adoption in Africa,” in K. S. Stolley and V. L. Bullough, eds., *The Praeger Handbook of Adoption, Volume 1* (New York, NY: Praeger, 2006): 66–70.

<sup>59</sup> J. L. Roby and S. A. Shaw, “The African Orphan Crisis and International Adoption,” *Social Work* 51, no. 5 (2006): 199–210.

<sup>60</sup> T. Maundeni, “Care For Children in Botswana: The Social Work Role,” *Social Work and Society* 7, no. 1 (2009), [http://www.socwork.net/2009/1/special\\_issue/maundeni](http://www.socwork.net/2009/1/special_issue/maundeni).

<sup>61</sup> M. Dowling and G. Brown, “Globalization and Intercountry Adoption from China,” *Child and Family Social Work* (2009): 1–10,

<sup>62</sup> L. Meng and Z. Kai, “Orphan Care in China,” *Social Work and Society* 7, no. 1 (2009), [http://www.socwork.net/2009/1/special\\_issue/mengkai](http://www.socwork.net/2009/1/special_issue/mengkai).

care, and kinship care. New and emerging roles of social workers are discussed with the challenges related to the projected increase in HIV/AIDS orphans.

Bergquist, Vonk, Kim, and Feit<sup>63</sup> offer an extensive collection on Korean adoptions and this is notable as South Korea is an ICA paradigm establishing country given its status as the first country to consistently and persistently send adoptees abroad. From the Australian perspective, Fronek<sup>64</sup> offers a theoretical framework for understanding the "...emergence, diffusion, and continuance of South Korean intercountry adoption" (p. 22), which is largely based on policy and the global context of both the country of origin (South Korea) and receiving countries. Drawing upon previous literature on the subject, cited is Sarri, Baik, and Bombyk's<sup>65</sup> important observation that South Korea has experienced goal displacement because of the State's failure to establish adequate adoption services on a domestic level and deferring to ICA as the intervention of choice. However, Fronek points to inadequate domestic adoption systems as only one factor in the ICA equation in South Korea, one of the most prominent countries of origin in the history of ICA. Applying the Actor Network Theory, Fronek develops a framework capturing the complexity of ICA with multiple interactions in the context of globalization. More recently, Fronek and Tilse<sup>66</sup> carry forth this earlier research into an Australian-Korean case study, exploring the complexities of policy and international practice between two country systems, including a discussion of the use of the Internet in ICA.

From the United States, Roby and Matsumura's<sup>67</sup> research provides some insight into historical problems and birth mother issues in the Marshall Islands. From interviews with 73 birth mothers in 2001, it was learned that most of the mothers had other children. The reasons for relinquishment were found to be financial, specifically, no means of support to care for the child. Also, when the role of grandmothers was explored, it was found that they were often helping with childcare and ultimately added pressure on the birth mother to relinquish. Also, in a high birth rate community where abortion was not legal, problems were further complicated by the fact that temporary childcare assistance or services were not available as a government service. Roby and Matsumura also make important observations about cultural ideas related to the continuity of the parent-child relationship and that the conception of adoption does not terminate the relationship. Informal care in the Marshall Islands existed to meet the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children within the extended family and kin group. The authors found that the child was viewed as a link or bridge between two families, or a child could be given as a gift to the new family, who in turn would reciprocate with assistance to the birth family and kinship group of the child. This practice is an example of a complicated ethical dilemmas embedded in the ICA transaction, including questions of a full legal break of relationship or, alternatively, how to maintain ties, formally or informally, in the case of open adoptions. This is especially complicated given that there are such significant differences between the two families, including cultural, economic and geographic difference. These results are reinforced by a survey research study of open adoptions surveying U.S. families who have adopted from the Marshall Islands,<sup>68</sup> focusing on motivations to adopt, willingness for openness, and insights gained from their experiences. Many of those surveyed embraced openness, but recognized that contact with birth parents is difficult.

Roby and Maskew<sup>69</sup> present a timely analysis and discussion of child welfare and adoption systems reform in the Marshall Islands and Cambodia. By applying a human rights framework, a historical overview of the

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<sup>63</sup> K. J. S. Bergquist, M. E. Vonk, D. S. Kim, and M. D. Feit, *International Korean Adoption: A Fifty Year History of Policy and Practice* (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2007).

<sup>64</sup> P. Fronek, "Global Perspectives in Korean Intercountry Adoption," *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development* 16, no. 1 (2006): 21–31.

<sup>65</sup> R. Sarri, Y. Baik, and M. Bombyk, "Goal Displacement and Dependency in South-Korean- United States Intercountry Adoption," *Children and Youth Services Review* 20, no. 1/2 (1998): 87–114.

<sup>66</sup> P. Fronek and C. Tilse, "Controversy and Its Implications for the Practices of Contemporary Social Work in Intercountry Adoptions: A Korean-Australian Case Study," *Australian Social Work* 63, no. 4(2010): 445–59.

<sup>67</sup> J. L. Roby and S. Matsumura, "If I Give You My Child, Aren't We Family? A Study of Birthmothers Participating In Marshall Islands–U.S. Adoptions," *Adoption Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2002): 7–31.

<sup>68</sup> J. L. Roby, J. Wyatt, and G. Pettys, "Openness In International Adoptions: A Study of U.S. Parents Who Adopted Children From The Marshall Islands," *Adoption Quarterly* 8, no.3 (2005): 47–71.

<sup>69</sup> J. L. Roby and T. Maskew, "Human Rights Considerations in Intercountry Adoption: The Children and Families of Cambodia and Marshall Islands," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi, eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 55–66.

development of a regulatory framework is helpful when considering early stages of reform. This particular analysis further captures the nature of small and low-income countries and their adoption practices with wealthier countries, particularly the U.S. and countries of Western Europe. Also responding to the need for innovative interventions to support families, Rotabi, Pennell, Roby, and Bunkers<sup>70</sup> consider Family Group Conferencing (FGC) as a culturally adaptable intervention that has been codified into Marshall Islands law and suggest its application in Guatemala. FGC is a small group intervention that brings together a group of family members selected by the “client” to deliberate about the care of orphaned and vulnerable children and develop a care plan. In the case of many low-resource countries, FGC holds promise to prevent unnecessary separation of the child from the parents or the extended family and subsequent placement in residential care. This particular contribution to the literature exemplifies bridging from social policy analysis to social intervention with a range of child protection implications including the prevention of conditions that set forth the ICA response to orphaned and vulnerable children.<sup>71</sup>

Engel, Phillips, and DellaCava<sup>72</sup> (2010) consider cultural difference, race, and adoption policy in the United States as they look back across the history of child adoption and policy, including racial issues and inequality, as well as the HCIA. These authors call for resolution of policy and practice problems so that the “humanitarian aspect of adoption can prevail” (p. 306). They also assert a rights-based approach underscoring social justice as a guiding principle without specifically integrating precise articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and rights to identity and heritage. This is a missed opportunity to integrate international guidance for global social work practice and, further, it suggests ICA as a “humanitarian solution” whereas humanitarian practices from a developmental and capacity building framework have moved far beyond assumptions of ICA as a wide-scale intervention given the very few children assisted and, globally, the millions of orphaned and vulnerable children.

British scholar Dickens,<sup>73</sup> a social policy and child welfare expert, lays out a framework of three ideological and policy approaches of social services and ICA in receiving countries: (a) liberal or neo-liberal, (b) conservative corporatist, and (c) social democratic, approaches which he aligns to the political philosophies of libertarianism, utilitarianism, and egalitarianism, respectively. The first approach is exemplified by the United States and its private ICA system that has a service for a purchase system within a free-market approach. In this system, the state takes a minimal role in regulation and protection of the most vulnerable while the market takes the lead. Competition between and amongst all actors is fierce; for instance, prospective adoptive parents and birth families could make joint decisions about the agency to initiate the adoption process instead of relying on market-based online adoption mechanisms. This situation leads to inevitable problems and market dynamics in the private U.S. system. A number of social work scholars discuss this issue.<sup>74,75,76</sup> Related concerns about the practices involved in placement of U.S. children with foreign adopters,<sup>77</sup> and the binary between birth parent rights in the U.S. and the HCIA<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> K. S. Rotabi, J. Pennell, J. L. Roby, and K. M. Bunkers, “Family Group Conferencing as a Culturally Adaptable Intervention: Reforming Intercountry Adoption in Guatemala,” *International Social Work* (in press).

<sup>71</sup> K. S. Rotabi and J. L. Gibbons, “Does the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption Adequately Protect Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and Their Families?” (2012): 106–19.

<sup>72</sup> Engel, Madeline H. Phillips, Norma Kolko DellaCava, Frances A., “Cultural Difference and Adoption Policy in the United States: The Quest for Social Justice for Children,” *International Journal of Children's Right*, 18, no. 2 (2010): 291-308

<sup>73</sup> J. Dickens, “Social Policy Approaches to Intercountry Adoption,” *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 595–607.

<sup>74</sup> C. Carstens and M. Juliá, “Legal, Policy and Practice Issues for Intercountry Adoptions in the United States,” *Adoption & Fostering* 19, no. 4 (1994): 26–33.

<sup>75</sup> M. Freundlich, “Supply and Demand: The Forces Shaping the Future of Infant Adoption,” *Adoption Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1998): 13–46.

<sup>76</sup> M. Freundlich, “Market Forces: The Issues In International Adoption,” in M. Freundlich ed., *Adoption and Ethics* (Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America: 2000): 37–66.

<sup>77</sup> D. Naghton, “Exiting or Going Forth? An Overview of USA Outgoing Adoptions,” in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 161–71.

<sup>78</sup> V. K. Groza and K. M. Bunkers, “The USA as a Sending Country for Intercountry Adoption: Birth Parents Rights versus the 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption,” *Adoption Quarterly* (in press).

demonstrate that the challenges associated with ethical ICA occur in low, middle, and high income contexts.<sup>79 80</sup>

The other ideological stances and policy positioning are considered with examples of conservative corporatist and social democratic approaches to ICA under welfare regimes. These stand in contrast to the U.S. system and incorporate European models of ICA, including a different paradigm about family programming and global initiatives. According to Dickens,<sup>81 82</sup> France and Germany serve as typical examples of the conservative corporatist approach, and the Scandinavian countries exemplify the social democratic approach. “The conservative corporatist state places the greatest value on social cohesion and aims to mitigate the worst effects of capitalism without undermining the smooth running of the economy.”<sup>83</sup> In that state, voluntary sectors are engaged in social services to uphold traditional values, including ICA. On the other hand, “the social democratic state sets its greatest value on social equality, and aims to intervene actively in social and economic life to ensure this”,<sup>84</sup> and the government plays a significant role in family support and preventive programming to include day care and after-school programming. As such, the ICA system reflects this government orientation and policies. For example, some social democratic countries actually use tax revenues to subsidize ICAs through partial funding of adoption agencies.

In this same discourse about social policy and underlying values, Dickens presents a case example of Romania with historical analysis of the self-imposed moratorium that was a result of multiple factors, including adoption fraud and issues of goal displacement,<sup>85</sup> as well as the State’s entry into the European Union. This particular discussion is important as it highlights the contextual and political nature of ICA policy, illustrating underlying values and how international pressure affected policy, particularly resulting in an ICA moratorium.

Dickens also writes about the emergence of social workers in Romania and some of the challenges, especially in a child welfare system that still heavily relied on both institutional care and ICA.<sup>86</sup> Social workers were often drawn to determine ICA as an appropriate care option because providing family support work and keeping children in their biological families was not valued or prioritized. This is especially because it frequently involved working closely with the Roma (gypsy) population, which was seen as degrading.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, Dickens argues that social workers could focus on ICA as a way to avoid the discomfort, or “low level” work, that typifies family support work.<sup>88</sup> Referring a child to be adopted by a foreign family was a task that was clearly defined and easy, and the social worker could feel good about it. In some cases, the social worker could also receive some kind of financial inducement for the referral in a country where the average social worker’s salary was less than \$100 USD a month. Dickens illustrates how this was an understandable choice for the individual social workers involved whilst also demonstrating the “wider result in the weakening of domestic services”.<sup>89</sup> Eventually, social workers became more recognized in the child welfare system, and as other domestic family-based alternative means of care became more accessible, the legal framework changed to prioritize local care options, resulting in a child welfare system with a range of care options, including prevention.

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<sup>79</sup> D. Naghton, “Exiting or Going Forth? An Overview of USA Outgoing Adoptions,” (2012), 161–71.

<sup>80</sup> V. K. Groza and K. M. Bunkers, “The USA as a Sending Country for Intercountry Adoption: Birth Parents Rights versus the 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption,” (in press).

<sup>81</sup> J. Dickens, “Social Policy Approaches to Intercountry Adoption,” *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 595–607.

<sup>82</sup> J. Dickens, “Social Policy Approaches and Social Work Dilemmas in Intercountry Adoption,” in J. L. Gibbons & K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 29–42.

<sup>83</sup> J. Dickens, “Social Policy Approaches and Social Work Dilemmas in Intercountry Adoption” (2012): 68.

<sup>84</sup> J. Dickens, “Social Policy Approaches and Social Work Dilemmas in Intercountry Adoption” (2012): 69.

<sup>85</sup> R. Sarri, Y. Baik, and M. Bombyk, “Goal Displacement and Dependency in South-Korean- United States Intercountry Adoption,” *Children and Youth Services Review* 20, no. 1/2 (1998): 87–114.

<sup>86</sup> J. Dickens, “Protecting the Rights of the Child in Romania: Children’s Rights Perspectives on Romania’s 1997 Child Care Reforms,” *European Journal of Social Work* 2 (1999): 139–50.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> J. Dickens, “Social Policy Approaches to Intercountry Adoption,” (2009): 595–607.

More recently, Nedelcu and Groza<sup>90</sup> explore the history of ICA and reform in Romania, shedding light on the significant gains in domestic adoptions and other forms of alternative care, such as foster care, in that country. In sum, the literature focused on Romania provides invaluable insight on legal reform, institutions, foster care, and ICA dating back to the earliest days of concern,<sup>91</sup> to later literature that captures social development related change.

Focusing on outside social work influence, including their own, Dickens and Groza's<sup>92</sup> historical review of child "rescue" in Romania poses important considerations for practice and empowerment. These authors present four "shortcomings" and "difficulties"<sup>93</sup> in the response to the orphan crisis in that country dating back to the early 1990s, as follows: (a) a lack of coordination of voluntary and international aid "helping" activities with Romanian authorities; (b) displacement of Romanian childcare/institutional workers with programming developed by outsiders and staffed with volunteers—often passing critical judgment on the Romanian women who had dedicated their careers to working in the institutions; (c) a failure of international organizations to recognize that institutions actually "magnified the general poverty of their local communities";<sup>94</sup> and the problem of Romanian staff becoming resentful of resource donation to "orphans" when their own children and families were without basic necessities (which reportedly led to staff theft of medicines and other donated supplies); and (d) limited training of Romanian institutional staff—much of which was targeted to bilingual staff and ultimately created tensions and an inadequate sustainability plan. These problems contributed to the collapse of the child welfare system, and with changes in the government and European Union intervention, new laws were developed—including pro-foster care legislation for the deinstitutionalization of children. This reflective piece is a summary of experiences that considers challenges and ethical issues of power and change with outsider or "expert" influence, concluding with "What is to be the proper place of international agencies, in particular those involved in inter-country adoption; and what are the respective roles and responsibilities of central and local government?".<sup>95</sup> This pointed question requires thoughtful reflection on ethical social work practice and the values underlying the profession.

## II. Exploitation, Ethics, Social Justice, and Human Rights

Social work as a professional discipline is historically rooted in human rights and social justice, as indicated by the professional commitment of developing policy and practice that provide for the welfare of all, particularly those who are most vulnerable, with special attention given to children. Oppression and empowerment are cornerstone concepts of social work, and scholarship on these areas is vast and bridges beyond philosophical discourse to practical application of social intervention at multiple levels of society.<sup>96,97</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> C. Nedelcu and V. Groza, "Child Welfare in Romania: Contexts and Processes," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 91–102.

<sup>91</sup> A. K. Johnson, R. L. Edwards, and H. Puwak, "Foster Care and Adoption Policy in Romania: Suggestions for International Intervention," *Child Welfare* LXXII, no. 5 (1993): 489–506.

<sup>92</sup> J. Dickens and V. Groza, "Empowerment in Difficulty: A Critical Appraisal of International Intervention in Child Welfare in Romania," *International Social Work* 47, no. 4 (2004): 469–87.

<sup>93</sup> J. Dickens and V. Groza, "Empowerment in Difficulty: A Critical Appraisal of International Intervention in Child Welfare in Romania," (2004): 471.

<sup>94</sup> J. Dickens and V. Groza, "Empowerment in Difficulty: A Critical Appraisal of International Intervention in Child Welfare in Romania," (2004): 472.

<sup>95</sup> J. Dickens and V. Groza, "Empowerment in Difficulty: A Critical Appraisal of International Intervention in Child Welfare in Romania," (2004): 485.

<sup>96</sup> L. M. Healy and R. J. Link eds., *Handbook of International Social Work: Human Rights, Development, and the Global Profession* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>97</sup> J. A. Rodgers, "Global Social Work Practice, Human Rights, Social Work Ethics and Human Responsibilities: The Challenge," *Journal of Global Social Work Practice* 2, no. 2 (2009), available at <http://www.globalsocialwork.org/vol2no2/RodgersEditorial.html>.

Looking back at some of the earliest considerations of social justice in social work, Altstein and Simon's<sup>98</sup> contributions to discourse in social work about adoption and ethical practices was particularly important in initiating critical thinking from multiple and global perspectives. Herrmann and Kasper<sup>99</sup> sounded one of the earliest and most alarming warnings in social work peer review literature about the imbalance of power between sending and receiving countries, focusing on the exploitation of women and families in impoverished environments of Latin America. In that region, Mónico and Rotabi<sup>100</sup> address the issues in their exploration of the children who disappeared during El Salvador's civil war, highlighting practice issues related to adoptee-birth family reunions after a child is abducted in the context of war. Rotabi<sup>101</sup> further considers these issues, adding Argentina's history and "living disappeared" children and their rights and reconciliation process in terms of social work practice.

With these human rights issues at hand, Ngabonziza<sup>102</sup> of International Social Service observed early that ICA:

...has developed because of modern means of communication, it is north-south and west-east oriented and between rich and poor countries; provides children from a surplus to a deficit area; in many instances functions like a market and according to the laws of a market; and takes place between members of an advanced and well organized society with plenty of social and legal institutions on the one hand and, on the other, *ad hoc* institutions and or isolated individuals such as lawyers, magistrates, social workers, who act as intermediaries, often motivated only by the gain.<sup>103</sup>

Ngabonziza discusses "unbearable pressure from adoptive parents and agencies" (p. 78), "child trafficking" (p. 80), and a "lack of social work tradition" (p. 79) in countries of origin. Ngabonziza uses an admonishing voice of a true abolitionist when he concludes: "...given the magnitude of problems facing relinquishing countries, intercountry adoption, even properly conducted, is meaningless. It presents an idealized life for small numbers of children as an alternative for global policy. This is a duty for international cooperation and cannot be solved by intercountry adoption" (p. 80).

From the United States, Hollingsworth<sup>104</sup> wrote about the inherent social justice and exploitation issues, presenting six distinct areas of concern:

(1) International adoption may exploit family poverty in developing countries, (2) international adoption may exploit social sanctions directed against disenfranchised children, (3) gender oppression and discrimination may be exploited for the purpose of adopting, (4) children's rights to knowledge of and access to their birth family may be placed at risk, (5) children's identification with their racial, ethnic, or national group may be interrupted, and (6) children may be secured in ways that involve abduction, sale, or trafficking.<sup>105</sup>

Hollingsworth's view of ICA appears abolitionist in approach; however, she pragmatically presents alternative perspectives and acknowledges that ICA is not bad or exploitative for *all* children and biological families. Also, Hollingsworth notes that there is an alternative view of ICA as an act of social justice itself—saving a child from extreme poverty and life in an institution. It should be noted that this view is shared by many who are promoters of ICA as a social intervention. Hollingsworth<sup>106</sup> again pragmatically

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<sup>98</sup> H. Altstein and R. J. Simon eds., *Intercountry Adoption: A Multinational Perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1991).

<sup>99</sup> K. J. Herrmann, Jr. and B. Kasper, "International Adoption: The Exploitation of Women and Children," *Affilia* 7, no. 1 (1992): 45–58.

<sup>100</sup> C. Mónico and K. S. Rotabi, "Truth, Reconciliation and Searching For the Disappeared Children of Civil War: El Salvador's Search and Reunion Model Defined," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 301–10.

<sup>101</sup> K. S. Rotabi, "Child Adoption and War: 'Living Disappeared' Children and the Social Worker's Post-Conflict Role in El Salvador and Argentina," *International Social Work* 56, no. 2 (2012a): 1–17.

<sup>102</sup> D. Ngabonziza, "Moral and Political Issues Facing Relinquishing Countries," *Adoption and Fostering* 15, no. 4 (1991): 75–80.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 100

<sup>104</sup> L. D. Hollingsworth, "International Adoption Among Families in the United States: Considerations of Social Justice," *Social Work* 48, no. 2 (2003): 209–17.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, at 2011.

<sup>106</sup> L. D. Hollingsworth, "Commentary: Does the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption Address the Protection of Adoptees' Cultural Identity? And Should It?" *Social Work* 53, no. 4 (2008): 377–79.

follows up on these ideas in a later commentary on the HCIA and its implications for cultural identity, posing critical questions about the just how protective the agreement can be for this important human rights consideration.

From Britain, Triseliotis<sup>107</sup> challenged the conceptions of ICA as a humanitarian good with his discussion titled “Intercountry Adoption: Global Trade or Global Gift?” Exploring the problematic dimensions of ICA, he ultimately offers pragmatic and regulatory recommendations for the ways to “achieve greater legitimacy” (p. 45): (a) a rights-based approach to children, (b) full international regulation, and (c) the practice of adoption as a global gift. Regulatory controls such as the removal of financial incentives are discussed, and in conclusion, Triseliotis critiques the HCIA as it “seems to have had little impact ...in stemming the trafficking in children...because its articles are insufficient or weak or both” (p. 53).

Turning to the idea of an “ethical base” of practice as discussed by Triseliotis,<sup>108</sup> one cannot begin a discussion about adoption ethics and social work without consideration of Madeleine Freundlich’s seminal contributions, including conceptions of *supply and demand*, *beneficence*, and *self-determination*.<sup>109110111</sup> In the year 2000, Freundlich’s book, *Adoption and Ethics: The Market Forces in Adoption*, was the most comprehensive social work summary of the issues at hand, posing critical questions about rights and responsibilities of all involved in ICA while remaining practical and pragmatic in stance. Freundlich encourages the removal of money from the system and a more transparent process in terms of the financial transactions as well as a more accountability for adoption agencies and professionals involved in poor and illicit practices.

Drawing upon ethics and human rights, including Freundlich’s contributions, Roby and White’s<sup>112</sup> call for regulation of adoption activities on the Internet highlights examples of adoption fraud and technology as applied to domestic and foreign adoptions. This is an important contribution because it highlights the use of technology for global transactions in the ICA equation, including use of the Internet as a medium for marketing of both services and children, some of which crosses the line into unethical and fraudulent practices.

Roby’s 2007 article, *From Rhetoric to Best Practice: Children’s Rights in Intercountry Adoption*,<sup>113</sup> pulls together many concepts in this critically important analysis of the human rights dimensions of ICA, providing a holistic overview of the continuum of rights with ICA as an important intervention. This includes concepts of rights prior to adoption such as the right to a determination of adoptability and a child’s right to be placed with a family that has received appropriate pre-placement training and preparation. Also, full family membership is presented as an adoptee’s right of social acceptance in addition to the rights of access to birth and identity records. Importantly, Roby also discusses the child’s right not to become a commodity while being mindful of conditions of poverty and birth family rights, including adoption into the extended family and/or non-relative adoption within the nation. Roby’s analysis is consistent with the HCIA and concepts of the best interests of the child. This discourse is continued in Roby and Ife’s<sup>114</sup> consideration of human rights and reform and their presentation of a bottom-up approach to change, including birth families.

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<sup>107</sup>. J. Triseliotis, “Intercountry Adoption: Global Trade or Global Gift?” *Adoption & Fostering* 24, no. 2 (2000): 45–54.

<sup>108</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>. M. Freundlich, “Supply and Demand: The Forces Shaping the Future of Infant Adoption,” (1998): 13–46.

<sup>110</sup>. M. Freundlich, “Market Forces: The Issues In International Adoption,” 37–66.

<sup>111</sup>. M. Freundlich and R. Phillips, “Ethical Issues In Adoption,” *Adoption & Fostering Journal* 24, no. 4 (2000): 7–17.

<sup>112</sup>. J. L. Roby and H. White, “Adoption Activities On the Internet: A Call For Regulation,” *Social Work* 55, no. 3 (2010): 203–12.

<sup>113</sup>. J. L. Roby, “From Rhetoric To Best Practice: Children’s Rights In Intercountry Adoption,” *Children’s Legal Rights Journal* 27, no. 3 (2007): 48–71.

<sup>114</sup>. J. L. Roby and J. Ife, “Human Rights, Politics, and Intercountry Adoption: An Examination of Two Sending Countries,” *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 661–71.

Another body of literature is related to the adult adoptee movement for rights. In the case of Korean adoptees, McGinnis<sup>115</sup> historically outlines the gains made in securing legal rights in Korea itself, through community organizing and policy advocacy. This particular author's contribution is written from a Korean adoptee's insight and participation perspective.

### III. Practice Issues in Intercountry Adoption

Responding to issues of culture, identity, and family adjustment, U.S. scholar Bailey<sup>116</sup> pragmatically identifies social workers as critical resources in minimizing the risk of children losing their ethnic heritage in the ICA transition. A practice model is presented to protect ethnic identity while facilitating family formation grounded in the Social Identity Theory. Bailey's model "promotes assessment of parents' cultural understanding, education of children's identity needs, and provision of resources and support for their education of the child's birth culture" (p. 7). She identifies four principles: (a) knowledgeable and culturally competent adoption agency staff who (b) consistently deliver culturally competent adoption services, and provide (c) support for parents as "cultural vanguards for their internationally adopted children" (p. 7), and (d) ethical manner that promotes the best interest of the child.

Britain's child re-adoption policy is the focus of Gibb's<sup>117,118</sup> analysis. The author's position is that the re-adoption policy, upon the family's return to the UK, is an undue burden that causes additional family stress. The *child's best interests* principle is offered to frame the argument, advocating for the adoptive family rights. British and U.S. authors Selinske, Naughton, Flanagan, Fry, & Pickles<sup>119</sup> shed some light on home study practices and the best interests of the child in their analysis. They present case studies that serve as examples of adoption disruptions and dissolutions in which home studies were prepared by a U.K.-based individual who claimed social work training and then later was found to be operating as an independent provider without appropriate social work credentials. Because a U.S.-citizen infant was inappropriately placed with a British family that resulted in adoption disruption/dissolution ending with repatriation of the infant back to the U.S., this case example is provocative. Ultimately, home study policy changes resulted and the U.K. government banned independent contractor assessments and instead local social service authorities (where the family resides) are now responsible for home studies. Removing private provider recommendations from the ICA process addresses issues of pay-for-service/private adoption assessments.

In an analysis of home study regulation, Crea<sup>120,121</sup> explores the application of the HCIA to home study consistency in the U.S. and identifies past problems (e.g., notorious Russian cases) to illustrate the need for greater oversight of home studies. Reporting on the variability in home study assessment practices, the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) is presented as a promising "means of standardizing the quality of assessments" (p. 675). A high degree of practitioner satisfaction is reported, as identified in previous studies.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>. H. McGinnis, "All Grown Up: Rise of the Korean Adult Adoptee Movement and Implications For Practice," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 293–300.

<sup>116</sup>. J. D. Bailey, "A Practice Model to Protect Ethnic Identity of International Adoptees," *Journal of Family Social Work* 10, no. 3 (2006): 1–11.

<sup>117</sup>. A. Gibbs, "Going to Court Twice: A Critical Appraisal of the UK's Policy of Re-Adoption for Intercountry Adoption," *Children and Society* 25 (2011a): 482–88.

<sup>118</sup>. A. Gibbs, "Having to Adopt Children Twice Is Not In Children's 'Best Interests': A Reflective Case Study of Intercountry Adoption Policy In the UK," *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* 33, no. 3 (2011b): 267–77.

<sup>119</sup>. J. Selinske, D. Naughton, K. Flanagan, P. Fry, and A. Pickles, "Ensuring the Best Interests of the Child in Intercountry Adoption Practice: Case Studies From the United Kingdom and the United States," *Child Welfare*, LXXX, no. 5 (2001): 656–67.

<sup>120</sup>. T. Crea, "Intercountry adoptions and domestic home study practices: SAFE and the Hague Adoption Convention," *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 673–78.

<sup>121</sup>. T. Crea, "Intercountry Adoptions and Home Study Assessments: The Need for Uniformed Practices," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 265–72.

<sup>122</sup>. T. Crea, R. P. Barth, and L. Chintapalli, "Home Study Methods for Evaluating Prospective Resource Families: History, Current Challenges, and Promising Approaches," *Child Welfare* 86, no. 2 (2007): 141–59.

In a qualitative study sampling adoption professionals as well as prospective intercountry adoptive parents and support organizations, Young<sup>123</sup> investigates the factors influencing the assessment process and identified three types of prospective intercountry adoptive parents: embracers (those who used the assessment process for personal development and growth), acceptors (those linking their family life experience with parenting the adopted child), and pragmatists (those recognizing the assessment process as a necessary step in child adoption). The study found that “while embracers and acceptors engaged more fully with the process, the pragmatists felt most powerless in relation to the process and were more focused on the outcome rather than on the learning opportunities it afforded” (p.500). Emerging themes included the long adoption process and related frustrations, as well as the concerns raised by parents such as anxiety and uncertainty. Findings include varying degrees of prospective parent engagement in adoption education. Discussion includes suggestions for improving ICA practices in education and assessment of prospective adoptive families. In a related paper, Young<sup>124</sup> explores motivations to adopt. Young’s contribution to the literature is notable as there are assumptions about motive, but ICA literature lacks in evidence of these motives. Using the National Survey of Adoptive Parents, Vonk, Lee, and Crolley-Simic<sup>125</sup> studied the participation of adoptive families in post-adoption support groups, education, and online resources. They found that practices of adoptive parents’ multicultural planning and cultural socialization, such as participation in ethnic holidays and multicultural entertainment, were significantly associated with international transracial adoptive parent’s perceptions of closeness with their child and satisfaction with adoption; however, these practices required limited engagement with people of the children’s race/ethnicity. Findings also indicate a connection between these activities and parental perception of parent-child closeness.

In a small but rich qualitative research sample, Johnstone and Gibbs<sup>126</sup> report on how families that adopt from Russia interact with their newly adopted children. Their research explores parent-child attachment and experiences, with the earliest interactions studied while in Russia and at the institutional setting. They also look at family and other sources of support for parent-child adjustment. These authors offer families and social workers a narrative of the attachment experience, considering resilience, family strengths, and parenting.

Turning to practices in countries of origin, Schmidt,<sup>127</sup> based in the Czech Republic, discusses orphan care in Russia, which has historically been one of the most frequent countries of origin of children for ICA in the world.<sup>128</sup> Schmidt outlines three critical child welfare tasks: (a) prevention of orphanhood through support mechanisms targeting biological families, (b) development of family placement or kinship care, and (c) “humanization of institutions,” which she defines as providing dignified and child rights–based care while de-stigmatizing institutionalized children. An important discussion concerns research on Russian views of adopting children from institutions, including a desire for young children and barriers in the decision to actually adopt. Schmidt concludes with a discussion about the role of social workers, whom she identifies as key actors in child rights, empowerment practices, and social planning for family support and transformation of child welfare systems in general.

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<sup>123</sup>. A. Young, “A Study of Australian Intercountry Adoption: Choosing Applicants to Parent,” *Australian Social Work* 65, no. 4 (2012): 490–503.

<sup>124</sup>. A. Young, “Choosing Intercountry Adoption: An Australian Study of Motivations and Attitudes of Intending and Recent Adoptive Parents,” *Australian Journal of Social Work* 47, no. 2 (2012): 221–41.

<sup>125</sup>. M. E. Vonk, J. Lee, J. Crolley-Simic, “Cultural Socialization Practices in Domestic and International Transracial Adoption,” *Adoption Quarterly* 13 (2010): 227–47.

<sup>126</sup>. J. Johnstone and A. Gibbs, “‘Love Them to Bits; Spend Time With Them’: New Zealand Parents’ Views of Building Attachments With Their Newly Adopted Russian Children,” *Journal of Social Work* 12, no. 3 (2010): 225–45.

<sup>127</sup>. V. Schmidt, “Orphan care in Russia,” *Social Work and Society* (2009), available at [http://www.socwork.net/2009/1/special\\_issue/schmidt](http://www.socwork.net/2009/1/special_issue/schmidt).

<sup>128</sup>. K. S. Rotabi and T. M. Heine, “Commentary on Russian Child Adoption Incidents: Implications for Global Policy and Practice,” *Journal of Global Social Work Practice* (2010), available at <http://www.globalsocialwork.org/vol3no2/Rotabi.html>.

Another important research manuscript focused on alternative care practice in countries of origin. Written by Gibbons, Wilson, and Schnell,<sup>129</sup> this research focuses on foster parents in the pre-reform Guatemalan adoption system. This qualitative research study, in which researchers interviewed Guatemalan foster mothers, found that these intermediate families, bridging the time span between child relinquishment and ICA with family-based care, were “critical links” in the adoption process. Findings help us better understand the role of foster families in the child development outcomes of the Guatemalan adoptees who benefited from this private care strategy during the height of the ICA years. Other findings in this study included the report by foster mothers that poverty was the main reason for birth mother relinquishment. This study is an example of interdisciplinary collaboration between two psychologists and a social worker.

## Conclusion

ICA challenges us with the privilege versus poverty paradox, which includes social and environmental problems such as war, natural disaster, and health epidemics like HIV/AIDS, in the context of globalization. Overlying social justice, human rights, and social work ethics, the debates about how to proceed in a conscientious manner, both personally and politically,<sup>130</sup> are multidimensional and endless. This is especially true when considering the conditions and cultures of each country of origin on a case-by-case basis.

Because ICA has been a highly unregulated and multimillion-dollar industry over the past 60 years,<sup>131132133</sup> it is our position that a new dawn has arrived with the requirements of the HCIA. Social work has a great deal of insight to offer to prevent commodification of children not just philosophically but also practically with a craftsman’s knowledge of child welfare, social justice, human rights, social policy, and agency administrative practices in combination with the capacity to approach ICA problems with empirical rigor and a commitment to the ethical practices.

While we have presented a largely pragmatic position of social workers, it should be noted that British social work scholar Dickens,<sup>134</sup> who has made significant contributions to ICA literature, takes a radical position and challenges the status quo. The author argues that “even though ICA may offer immediate benefits for some children, it is essential to end it in the longer-term interests of all children” (p. 605). Since demand for ICA continues to be high, banning ICA does not seem feasible; thus, it “should be seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for a more equitable globalization for children and families around the world” (p. 605).

This position, in addition to the radical decline in ICA,<sup>135</sup> places further urgency on the need for policy and practice research. Fronck and Cuthbert<sup>136</sup> suggest an alternative paradigm using a public health prevention perspective that views children as “at risk” rather than “available” for ICA (p. 6). Just as Roby, these authors look at the continuum of care as primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention—that is, securing child and family rights before, during, and after ICA. This continuum illustrates that changing notions about ICA that require new lenses and an orientation towards biological family support. This is especially true as we consider the factors underlying adoption, including structural and gender inequality.

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<sup>129</sup> J. L. Gibbons, S. L. Wilson, and A. M. Schnell, “Foster Parents As a Critical Link and Resource In International Adoptions From Guatemala,” *Adoption Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (2009): 59–77.

<sup>130</sup> M. E. Vonk, P. J. Simms, and L. Nackerud, “Political and Personal Aspects of Intercountry Adoption of Chinese Children in the United States,” *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services* 80, no. 5 (1999): 496–514.

<sup>131</sup> M. Freundlich, “Supply and Demand: The Forces Shaping the Future of Infant Adoption,” (1998): 13–46.

<sup>132</sup> M. Freundlich, “Market Forces: The Issues In International Adoption” (2000), 37–66.

<sup>133</sup> **M. Riben, *The Stork Market: America’s Multi-Billion Dollar Unregulated Adoption Industry* (Dayton, NJ: Advocate, 2007).**

<sup>134</sup> J. Dickens, “Social Policy Approaches to Intercountry Adoption,” (2009): 595–607.

<sup>135</sup> P. Selman, “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 575–94.

<sup>136</sup> P. Fronck and D. Cuthbert, “The Future of Inter-Country Adoption: A Paradigm Shift For This Century,” *International Journal of Social Welfare* (2011): 1–10.

As authors, we agree with Fronek and Cuthbert's<sup>137</sup> and Roby's<sup>138</sup> holistic approach as well as Triseliotis,<sup>139</sup> who asserts that decisions about the best interests of children are being made without adequate empirical evidence. Over a decade ago he called for rigorous monitoring and evaluation of projects related to ICA, and this recommendation continues to stand true today. This is ultimately a call to action for social work researchers who are committed to meeting standards of rigor and inquiry about interventions across the continuum of child welfare and family support, especially in low-resource nations that are typically countries of origin for children being placed into ICA.

In this literature review, it became obvious that the main thrust of research on ICA focused on the child only *after* adoptive family placement in receiving countries.<sup>140</sup> This view is limited and even underscores a social justice dimension in the kinds of research questions being posed. It may be said that international adoptees are one of the most over-researched small groups in the world and conclusions about developmental gains in family context post-institutional care are not particularly surprising. While the evidence about attachment disorders and other problems related to institutional experiences has been important,<sup>141</sup> much of this research ultimately ignores millions of children left behind in institutions, on the streets, or in fragile circumstances with older adults or child-headed households.<sup>142</sup> In addition, important elements of the child's *entire* life, which most likely were of great significance in the overall development and related outcomes of the child, are often treated superficially. We recommend that research provide a more holistic view of the child. This means more research needs to focus on children in their countries of origin, which requires international research collaboration and strengthening schools of social work and other social sciences in countries of origin to develop the capacity of researchers outside of North America and Western Europe. Strengthening capacity at this level is not only right for many reasons, but it will support research *prior* to child placement into ICA.

The literature review identified a significant lack of social work literature on birth families, especially for ICA, which has led Wiley and Baden<sup>143</sup> to acknowledge that birth mothers are "permanently invisible and silent" (p. 14) — with some exceptions.<sup>144</sup> In the case of women who have reported their children abducted into adoption, with the exception of a Guatemalan case study<sup>145</sup> as well as other historical documentation,<sup>146,147</sup> social work has largely been silent on this human rights abuse. This is particularly unfortunate given social work's commitment to vulnerable populations, violence against women, and social justice. Also lacking in the literature are studies that sample alternative caregivers such as foster parents. Social workers, who have engaged in ICA in countries of origin such as Russian or Chinese nationals, have also been silent. And then there are the adoption agencies and social workers engaged in ICA daily; their

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<sup>137</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup>. J. L. Roby, "From Rhetoric To Best Practice: Children's Rights In Intercountry Adoption," (2007): 48–71.

<sup>139</sup>. J. Triseliotis, "Intercountry Adoption: Global Trade or Global Gift?" (2000): 45–54.

<sup>140</sup>. See J. A. Welsh, A. G. Viana, S. A. Petrill, and M. D. Mathias, "Interventions for Internationally Adopted Children and Families: A Review of the Literature," *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* 24, no. 3 (2007): 285–311.

<sup>141</sup>. K. Roberson, "Attachment and Caregiving Behavioral Systems In Intercountry Adoption: A Review of the Literature," *Children and Youth Services Review* 28, no. 7 (2006): 727–40.

<sup>142</sup>. J.D. Bailey, "Orphan Care: An introduction," *Social Work and Society* (2009b), available at <http://www.socwork.net/2009/1>

<sup>143</sup>. M. O. Wiley and A. L. Baden, "Birth Parents in Adoption: Research, Practice, and Counseling Psychology," *The Counseling Psychologist* 33, no. 1 (2005): 13–50.

<sup>144</sup>. E.g., J. L. Roby and S. Matsumura, "If I Give You My Child, Aren't We Family? A Study of Birthmothers Participating In Marshall Islands–U.S. Adoptions," *Adoption Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2002): 7–31.

<sup>145</sup>. C. Mónico, *Implications of Child Abduction for Human Rights and Child Welfare Systems: A Constructivist Inquiry of the Lived Experience of Guatemalan Mothers Publically Reporting Child Abduction for Intercountry Adoption* (Ph.D diss. 2013), VCU Digital Archives, Electronic Theses and Dissertations, <http://hdl.handle.net/10156/4373>.

<sup>146</sup>. K. S. Rotabi, "El Uso de la Fuerza, el Fraude y la Coerción en Algunas Adopciones en Guatemala: Los Casos Graves de Secuestros que Cuestionan el Principio del 'Interés Superior del Menor' (2012b)

<sup>147</sup>. K. S. Rotabi, "Fraud In Intercountry Adoption: Child Sales and Abduction in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Guatemala," (2012c): 67–76.

perspectives and challenges are important to consider.<sup>148</sup> They all undoubtedly have important practice insights to share.

Because supporting birth families/kinship and domestic adoption is critically important, we are left with some important questions. For kinship groups, especially in traditional societies, how may they be supported to retain guardianship of children so that the children may be afforded the opportunity and the right to remain in their families of origin? This question is particularly relevant to grandparent care or sibling care, especially in contexts with high prevalence of HIV/AIDS.<sup>149</sup><sup>150</sup><sup>151</sup><sup>152</sup> What are the perceptions about domestic adoption and how may we strengthen such an approach, especially in frequent countries of origin such as Russia, China, and Ethiopia? Are traditional care practices like Ethiopia<sup>153</sup> being disparaged because they are considered informal? How might large-scale institutions become a model of the past in favor of small-group care models in Botswana or foster care in Romania? In countries with unique dynamics, like South Korea's use of birth mother homes and the shame of illegitimacy, how do particular interventions support or hinder ethical ICA practice? In relation to open adoptions, how may we continue to define this concept as a preference indicated by families in the Marshall Islands? Also, how is the important social intervention of Family Group Conferencing (FGC) affecting practice in the Marshall Islands?<sup>154</sup><sup>155</sup> Is this intervention adaptable to other contexts? In regards to the Hague Convention, can FGC protect children and the families who gave birth to them?<sup>156</sup> Finally, there is an absolute lack of literature on the causes of and practice response to adoption disruption, even though social workers are most likely the first responders to the family-child crisis.

These are just a few of the pressing concerns for social workers around the globe. A multidisciplinary road map for research must be developed. Specifically, research targeting the many aspects of the best interest principle in all stages of the ICA process across the continuum of childcare and family support is highly recommended given the very limited research available on this most fundamental of child welfare conceptions related to ICA. To integrate these ideas, a stretching of concepts and research boundary spanning is necessary, including both greater interdisciplinary collaboration and openness to indigenous social workers and child rights advocates engaged in practice, and deeper analysis that must be holistic with practical considerations for the continuum of care.<sup>157</sup><sup>158</sup>

We agree with Fronek and Cuthbert's<sup>159</sup> assertion that to truly implement social interventions oriented toward social justice and human rights, we must move from a child being "at risk" for market-based ICA

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<sup>148</sup>. M. K. O'Connor and K. S. Rotabi, "Perspectives on Child Welfare: Ways of Understanding Roles and Actions of Current USA Adoption Agencies Involved In Intercountry Adoptions," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012),:77–88.

<sup>149</sup>. E. Lightfoot and E. Kalomo, "The Interplay of Population Aging and HIV/AIDS On Social Development in Southern Africa: The Case of Namibia," *Social Development Issues* 32, no. 1 (2010): 1–15.

<sup>150</sup>. T. Maundeni, "Care For Children in Botswana: The Social Work Role," *Social Work and Society* 7, no. 1 (2009), available at [http://www.socwork.net/2009/1/special\\_issue/maundeni](http://www.socwork.net/2009/1/special_issue/maundeni).

<sup>151</sup>. J. L. Roby and S. A. Shaw, "The African Orphan Crisis and International Adoption," *Social Work* 51, no. 5 (2006): 199–210.

<sup>152</sup>. J.D. Bailey, "Orphan Care: An introduction," (2009b)

<sup>153</sup>. K. M. Bunkers, K. S. Rotabi, and B. Mezmur, "Ethiopia: Intercountry Adoption Risks and Considerations for Informal Care," in J. L. Gibbons and K. S. Rotabi eds., *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Press, 2012): 133–42.

<sup>154</sup>. J. L. Roby and J. Ife, "**Human Rights, Politics, and Intercountry Adoption: An Examination of Two Sending Countries,**" *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 661–71.

<sup>155</sup>. K. S. Rotabi and J. L. Gibbons, "Does the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption Adequately Protect Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and Their Families?" *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 106–19.

<sup>156</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup>. P. Fronek and D. Cuthbert, "The Future of Inter-Country Adoption: A Paradigm Shift For This Century," *International Journal of Social Welfare* (2011): 1–10.

<sup>158</sup>. J. L. Roby, "From Rhetoric To Best Practice: Children's Rights In Intercountry Adoption," *Children's Legal Rights Journal* 27, no. 3 (2007): 48–71.

<sup>159</sup>. P. Fronek and D. Cuthbert, "The Future of Inter-Country Adoption: A Paradigm Shift For This Century," (2011): 1–10.

practices to a child legitimately “available” for ICA. Looking toward the future, this lens, within an interdisciplinary framework, has the potential for redefining ICA as a truly alternative care option, consistent with the HCIA principles. Ultimately, this could result in the emergence of more viable child welfare strategies in which social workers take leadership in significant change in ICA practices (Roby, Rotabi & Bunkers, in press).<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup>. J. L. Roby K.S. Rotabi, and K. M. Bunkers, “Social Justice and Intercountry Adoptions: The Role of the U.S. Social Work Community,” *Social Work* (in press).