



## History of Cross-Country Adoption and Fostering

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### Introduction

The movement of abandoned, neglected or surplus children from one family or group to another that has a perceived shortage is a phenomenon widely documented from many different historical periods and cultures. What is relatively new is the way children now cross international borders. Surplus children might be created by, for instance, a culture that does not permit unmarried women to bring up their “illegitimate” babies, as with the movement in the 1950s of children from Catholic Quebec in Canada to Jewish couples in the United States. The Korean War in the early 1950s gave rise to a generation of Korean American babies, many thousands of whom were placed for adoption overseas. A similar process followed the Vietnam War in the 1970s. China’s one-child policy has produced a “surplus” of girls, many thousands of whom have been adopted by North American, European, and Australian families. International adoption is controversial, because underlying the humanitarian motivation to give disadvantaged children a better life there are issues of international politics, commercialization, and commoditization. Adoption can be a profitable business, and there is an underworld of kidnapping and child trafficking. As adoptees reach adulthood there is also reflection on the psychological challenge of growing up in a new culture, often with an unknown personal history. Similar issues are often faced by transracial adoptees, and a section on transracial adoption has therefore been included. Internationally recognized and local legal frameworks, in particular *The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* (1993), represent attempts to mitigate the worst excesses of unregulated international adoptions and to ensure that the interests of the children concerned remain paramount. Such frameworks are, however, predicated on a Western notion of the individual and of the nuclear family. They do not sit well with cultural practices in which child rearing is often shared, temporary, flexible, and pragmatic. Whether due to poverty, indigenous kinship norms, or attempts to maximize a child’s opportunities, in many parts of Africa, South America, and Asia, children are frequently reared for some or all of their childhood by people other than their biological parents. When these practices are mistaken for abandonment, or when an informal foster situation is translated into permanent adoption, there is an often painful clash of cultures. Anthropological accounts have therefore been included that enable social policy research to be seen within a broader cultural context.

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### General Overviews

The books in this section reflect the scope of recent approaches to cross-cultural adoption and fostering. They include both single-authored and multi-authored texts, and they have in common an awareness of the complexity of the issues involved when children are moved across national boundaries, in what is generally also a transracial adoption. Most of the volumes in this section are also attentive to the historical and cultural factors that have informed adoption policy and practice. Contributors to Bowie 2004 largely adopt an anthropological perspective, highlighting the diversity of child-rearing practices in different parts of the world. A second overview of cultural approaches to transnational adoption is given in Volkman 2005, an edited volume that, like Bowie 2004, includes some more personal as well as analytical accounts. These two collections of essays are aimed at academics interested in kinship, childhood, and adoption, as well as practitioners and those personally affected by adoption who want to understand the cultural dimensions of the topic. Marre and Briggs 2009 is more concerned with the politics of international adoption and the inequalities of power between sending and receiving countries. Howell 2006 focuses on the movement of children from the poor South and East to North America and western Europe. O’Halloran 2009, now in its second edition, is also an excellent source of

information on the politics of international adoption, as well as law and practice. It is aimed more at practitioners, or at academics with a specific interest in international adoption. Gibbons and Rotabi 2012 is a wide-ranging collection of essays and perspectives taking up current debates among those involved in the often contentious issues concerning the ethics, legality, and probity of intercountry adoption. Jerng 2010 is a little different from the other overviews. As a professor of English at an American university, Jerng's concern is with transracial adoption and the sense of belonging or personhood of transracially adopted individuals in the United States, seen through a literary lens. A beautifully written and nuanced book, this work will be of interest to a variety of readers interested in American cultural history, adoption, and notions of personhood more generally. The only overview specifically dealing with fostering rather than adoption is Delap and Fulford 2011, a succinct but very informative booklet that gives a balanced picture of foster care internationally, with its challenges, positive outcomes, and pitfalls. The booklet is freely available online.

**Bowie, Fiona, ed. *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Adoption*. European Association of Social Anthropologists Series. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.**

This volume provides an overview of adoption and fostering, or more accurately "child circulation," in Western and non-Western societies. Most of the contributors are anthropologists, and they provide a detailed cultural perspective. Seventeen chapters cover Africa, Asia and Oceania, Central and South America, and the West, many dealing with international adoption.

**Delap, Emily, and Lousie Melville Fulford. *Fostering Better Care: Improving Foster Care Provision around the World. Positive Care Choices Working Paper 2*. London: EveryChild, 2011.**

A very useful 42-page booklet, giving an overview of foster care provision and of cultural attitudes towards foster care in different parts of the world. Numerous case studies illustrate topics such as the case for foster care; its limitations; how to provide effective, quality foster care; and its development.

**Gibbons, Judith L., and Karen Smith Rotabi, eds. *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012.**

This is a wide-ranging, up-to-date discussion of intercountry adoption, covering a multitude of issues, perspectives, and countries. The book addresses receiving and sending countries, outcomes for international adoptees, political and ethical debates, and legal and social policy issues and concerns.

**Howell, Signe. *The Kinning of Foreigners: Transnational Adoption in a Global Perspective*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn, 2006.**

Howell is concerned with the ways in which transnationally adopted children are absorbed into new families through a process of "kinning." The book combines a study of family relationships with an analysis of trends in international adoption, with a focus on Scandinavia as a destination.

**Jerng, Mark C. *Claiming Others: Transracial Adoption and National Belonging*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.**

Using scholarly and literary sources, Jerng traces the history of transracial adoption in the United States from the first adoption law in Massachusetts in 1851 to the present. His approach is cultural and deconstructive, looking at ways in which transracial adoption disrupts notions of family, nation, and race.

**O'Halloran, Kerry. *The Politics of Adoption: International Perspectives on Law, Policy and Practice*. 2d ed. Brisbane, Australia: Springer Science and Business Media BV, 2009.**

A comprehensive text covering political, legal, and cultural aspects of adoption in Western and non-Western contexts, including

Islamic contexts. The emphasis is on modern Western nations, particularly English-speaking countries, that share a common law tradition.

**Marre, Diana, and Laura Briggs, eds. *International Adoption: Global Inequalities and the Circulation of Children*. New York: University of New York Press, 2009.**

A comprehensive overview that provides perspectives from sending as well as receiving countries. Contributors attempt to show the complexities and the politics behind international adoption. Chapters include North and South American and European perspectives, and cover topics such as stranger and kin adoption, child circulation, fostering, and assisted reproductive technologies.

**Volkman, Toby Alice, ed. *Cultures of Transnational Adoption*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.**

A blend of scholarly and personal accounts of transnational adoption from and in different parts of the world. Korea, China, and North America are particularly well represented in the book's nine chapters.

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## Reference Works

Books that anyone researching intercountry or cross-country adoption and fostering should have on their shelves include Selman 2000 and Gibbons and Rotabi 2012. These books cover a range of issues, countries, and views, and are set out with numerous short, easily accessed, and reliable chapters or sections of information for ease of use. Modell 1994 gives an anthropological analysis of adoption in American culture, building on and extending David Schneider's pioneering studies, particularly Schneider 1980, of the role of "blood," law, and culture in Anglo-American family formation. A critique of Schneider's approach is that he dealt with ideal symbol systems as if they were ethnographic facts. His work did, however, as with Kirk 1981, alert those interested in adoption to the inherent problems of transgressing boundaries when incorporating nonbiologically related children into a family. Laws and a culture of secrecy, and an "as if born to you" structure for adoption, were seen as a way around this symbolic and ideational problem. This has increasingly been regarded as problematic as understandings of attachment and identity, and of trust and deception, have led to more symbolically fluid and open forms of adoption. The relationship between ideology, structure, and practice is well illustrated in Boswell 1998, a monumental study on child abandonment and fosterage in medieval Europe. Although this may seem esoteric, the breadth of scholarship throws light on many current practices, such as the abandonment of children in the doors of churches or religious houses (still seen in the "baby hatches" in Germany), and as the title of Boswell's work suggests, the kindness of strangers who absorbed orphaned or abandoned children into their families, or used them as additional labor or religious oblates. This was an age when family structures were not so clearly defined by the blood relationship described by Schneider. Another important historical essay is Goody 1969, which looks at the roots of adoption and fostering, placing them within the wider context of kinship practices more generally, as revealed in ancient Western and Middle Eastern legal codes. Howell 2009, a review article on adoption, including transnational adoption, gives a wide-ranging account of the practice from the perspective of kinship studies. It will be of particular use to those wishing to follow up anthropological studies of cross-cultural adoption.

**Boswell, John. *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.**

Although not strictly about cross-cultural adoption and fostering, this is nevertheless an important, scholarly, and readable work on the relationship between family structure, institutions (particularly the church), and child abandonment. The roots of many current ideas and practices can be better understood through knowledge of their history.

**Gibbons, Judith L., and Karen Smith Rotabi, eds. *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012.**

Divided into five parts dealing with policy and regulations, sending country perspectives, outcomes for intercountry adoptees, the

debate between proponents and opponents of intercountry adoption, and what the authors call a pragmatic approach to improving the process. This is a wide-ranging collection of twenty-five essays covering many different perspectives and regions.

**Goody, Jack. "Inheritance and Descent: Adoption in Cross-Cultural Perspective." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11.1 (1969): 55–78.**

Jack Goody, a social anthropologist, gives a social and historical overview of adoption from the Babylonian code of Hammurabi, through ancient laws in China, Greece, and Rome, to contemporary Eurasian societies and Western antecedents. Adoption is placed within the study of systems of agnation and descent (kinship and marriage).

**Howell, Signe. "Adoption of the Unrelated Child: Some Challenges to the Anthropological Study of Kinship." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38 (2009): 149–166.**

Howell reviews almost one hundred works on adoption, including transnational adoption, placing it firmly within the anthropological field of kinship studies.

**Kirk, David. *Adoptive Kinship: A Modern Institution in Need of Reform*. Toronto: Butterworths, 1981.**

Kirk analyses the cultural attitudes to adoption in Anglo-American society, with its strong ideological belief in geneticism, or "blood-ties." He finds that adoption works best when its atypical nature is acknowledged and the family is seen as something that needs working at rather than a natural construct.

**Modell, Judith S. *Kinship with Strangers: Adoption and Interpretations of Kinship in American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.**

This is an influential book, written by an anthropologist who looks at adoption policy and practice in the United States from a sociocultural perspective. It is of interest to anthropologists in the field of kinship as well as those concerned with adoption.

**Schneider, David M. *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.**

Schneider, a cultural anthropologist, argues that Anglo-American kinship can be understood as a set of symbols based around "blood," "birth," and "nature." These are supported by legal structures. As adoption, particularly transcultural adoption, challenges these notions, it requires a readjustment in basic cultural notions of kinship and family. Originally published in 1968.

**Selman, Peter, ed. *Intercountry Adoption: Development, Trends and Perspectives*. London: British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2000.**

A collection of thirty essays divided into five sections, looking at receiving and sending countries, the history of intercountry adoption, research on outcomes, and personal perspectives. There is an appendix listing countries that had and had not ratified the Hague Convention at the time of publication.

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## Textbooks

One of the most comprehensive textbooks on adoption practice, specifically from a legal and policy perspective, is O'Halloran 2009, now in a second edition. It is aimed at students of social work, law, and social policy and is arranged to make it easy to find specific areas of interest. A useful single volume summary of the moral issues surrounding adoption policy and practice in both the United States and United Kingdom is Triseliotis, et al. 1997. The book is aimed at social workers, students, and other professionals in the

field of adoption, and at adoptive parents who want clarification on recent research and adoption policy. It is also intentionally international in outlook, and although not focused specifically on cross-cultural adoption or fostering, there are chapters on intercountry adoption and transracial placements. The authors include useful summaries of debates and issues as well as their own conclusions. Selman 2000 is another comprehensive text on intercountry adoption. It is aimed primarily at researchers and adoption professionals. While there is a section on worldwide perspectives, and both receiver and sending countries are dealt with, the main emphasis is on the European, and specifically the United Kingdom, experience of intercountry adoption. Gilman 1998 covers much of the same ground but addresses adoptive parents directly, guiding them through the practical, emotional, and legal issues surrounding adoption. Social workers in the adoption field in the United States would also benefit from the wealth of knowledge assembled here. A variety of disciplinary and national perspectives on adoption are covered in Wrobel and Neil 2009. Aimed primarily at scholars, this volume explores some of the recent international research on laws, attitudes, and adoption outcomes.

**Gilman, Lois. *The Adoption Resource Book*. 4th ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1998.**

Practical advice on the adoption process, including intercountry adoption, for US-based prospective and adoptive parents, with eleven chapters and three appendices, including a state by state guide to adoption agencies. Would also be a valuable resource for adoption social workers, students, and those who want to understand the adoption process.

**O'Halloran, Kerry. *The Politics of Adoption: International Perspectives on Law, Policy and Practice*. 2d ed. Brisbane, Australia: Springer Science and Business Media BV, 2009.**

The volume has an Introduction and fourteen chapters subdivided into numerous short sections, all of which are listed in the Contents for ease of use. It is aimed at students of law, politics, and social work.

**Selman, Peter, ed. *Intercountry Adoption: Development, trends and perspectives*. London: British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), 2000.**

A user-friendly textbook in five sections and thirty chapters, with an Introduction and Conclusion by Selman. The sections are on "The Development of Overseas Adoption," "Research into Outcomes of Intercountry Adoption," "Intercountry Adoption in the UK," "A Worldwide Perspective: Experience from Other Countries," and "Personal Perspectives on Intercountry Adoption."

**Triseliotis, John, Joan Shireman, and Marion Hundleby. *Adoption: Theory, Policy, and Practice*. London and Herndon, VA: Cassell, 1997.**

This volume reviews and summarizes the current state of knowledge in the field of adoption from a social work and social policy perspective. It includes chapters on intercountry and transracial placements, and draws on both UK and US policy and practice.

**Wrobel, Gretchen Miller, and Elsbeth Neil, eds. *International Advances in Adoption Research for Practice*. Chichester, UK; and Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2009.**

A compilation of thirteen papers based on presentations at the Second International Conference on Adoption Research in 2006. The book presents a wide-ranging set of articles on cross-cultural and international attitudes towards adoption from a multidisciplinary perspective. Aimed at researchers and practitioners in the field of adoption.

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## Anthologies

Anthologies in which adoptees, adoptive parents, and birth parents can find a voice and express a very personal view of adoption provide a valuable addition to the literature. While the ages of contributors vary and the political and historical contexts in which the

adoptions took place affect the adoptive experience, there are common themes and similarities in many of these accounts. Aimed primarily at readers personally affected by adoption, there is a sense, particularly among transracially and transculturally adopted individuals, of wanting those who have power (parents, social workers, politicians, policymakers) to hear what for many years adoptees could not or dared not express. In particular, there is often a sense of isolation, difference, and sadness. Having acknowledged these feelings, there is also gratitude, fortitude, and vitality in many of these stories, and a mature coming to terms with a painful personal history. Harris 2006 collects the accounts of transracially adopted individuals in the United Kingdom, and Trenka, et al. 2006 looks at individuals in the United States. In both volumes a very broad range of sending countries are represented. The voices of adoptive parents, as well as adoptees, come through in Klatzkin 1999. Rather than invite individuals to contribute to an anthology, Klatzkin trawled newsletters published by Chinese-adoption support groups in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Here the issues of concern to adoptive families or prospective adopters are aired, advice is given, and experiences shared. Kaesner and Gillespie 1997 joins words with photographs in a series of thirty-nine portraits of mixed-race families formed by birth and adoption. There are also single-parent and same-sex-parent families, as well as families with different religions and nationalities. As the title of the Afterword, "Mixed Blessings," reminds us, the labels we put on people should never become more important than our uniqueness as individuals, capable of forming families comprising all nationalities, creeds, and colors.

**Harris, Perlita, ed. *In Search of Belonging: Reflections by Transracially Adopted People*. London: British Association for Adoption and Fostering, 2006.**

This anthology contains over fifty contributions from transracially, mainly transnationally, adopted people in the United Kingdom. The pieces include poems and essays, reflections, and more analytical pieces. Many contributors express the sense of loss and isolation these adoptees sometimes experience as they come to terms with their past and present.

**Kaesner, Gigi, and Peggy Gillespie. *Of Many Colours: Portraits of Multiracial Families*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997.**

A series of black-and-white photographic portraits of mixed race birth and adoptive families in the United States, by Kaesner, with accompanying interviews by Gillespie. A fascinating, moving, and beautiful collection that strongly affirms value of families, whatever their color or ethnic background. Includes a list of resources for mixed race families.

**Klatzkin, Amy, ed. *A Passage to the Heart: Writings from Families with Children from China*. St. Paul, MN: Yeong & Yeong, 1999.**

A collection of articles from the newsletters of Chinese-adoption support groups published in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The collection reflects the wide range of issues and interests of adoptive families with children from China, including the adoption process and maintaining a sense of Chinese cultural identity.

**Trenka, Jane Jeong, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin, eds. *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006.**

A collection of personal essays, poems, and critical analysis by transracially adopted people in the United States. The contributions are diverse in style and content, providing a powerful and nonjudgmental picture of the sorrows and joys of finding oneself an "outsider within," as the title states.

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## Journals

While there are no professional journals dealing exclusively with cross-cultural adoption and fostering, there are a number of professional journals that regularly deal with aspects of this topic. Among these is the International Journal of Social Welfare, which has a focus on practice and research. A search of the journal's website using the tag "cross-cultural adoption" for instance, found

fifty-three relevant articles, and “cross-country fostering” had seventy-six hits. The International Migration Review also includes regular articles looking at adoption from the perspective of migration and demography. The search term “cross-cultural adoption” yielded 125 hits, and although adoption was not central to all of them, it is reflective of the frequency with which the topic is addressed. Children and Society, as the name suggests, publishes research on topics relating to children and young people. Themes relating to cross-cultural adoption and fostering are frequently addressed within the journal. All three journals, aimed primarily at academics, are available via the Wiley online library to individual or institutional subscribers. Adoption & Fostering is the peer-reviewed journal of the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF). Here, adoption and fostering are the main or only focus of the contributions, mainly from a UK domestic perspective, although transracial and transcultural issues are also represented. The journal is aimed at social workers, social policy professionals, and academics, and secondarily at adoptive and foster parents. Member of BAAF receive a print copy of the journal as part of their membership. It is also available online to individual and institutional subscribers. Membership organizations for international adoption generally publish journals and newsletters that also provide valuable information, aimed at those personally affected by adoption or fostering. A selection of these are reviewed in the final section, Organizations.

### **Adoption & Fostering. 1977–.**

A quarterly peer-reviewed journal published by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF). Electronic issues available from 1999. Aimed primarily at social workers and social policy professionals. The emphasis is on UK policy and practice, but there are occasional articles on intercountry adoption and fostering.

### **Children and Society. 1987–.**

A peer-reviewed English-language journal published six times a year by the National Children’s Bureau (UK). The journal is international and interdisciplinary, publishing original research and debate on all aspects of childhood and policies relating to children and young people, including cross-cultural adoption and fostering.

### **International Journal of Social Welfare. 1992–.**

A quarterly English-language applied social science journal that publishes original articles on social welfare and social work. It is interdisciplinary and comparative, and aims to discuss and disseminate knowledge relating to pressing contemporary issues, and to discuss their regional and global implications. Online archived copies from 1997 onwards.

### **International Migration Review. 1966–.**

A quarterly peer-reviewed journal published by the Center for Migration Studies of New York. Electronic editions available from 1966 onwards. Although not aimed primarily at adoption and fostering there are occasional articles on adoption and child circulation as a migratory process. Continues the *International Migration Digest* (1964–66).

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## **Legislative and Political Frameworks**

The Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Conference on Private International Law 1993) is the most important legislative framework for intercountry adoptions. It attempts to set minimum standards in both receiving and sending countries, and to ensure that children and birth parents are protected from commercial exploitation. UN conventions concerning children’s welfare and rights (United Nations 1986 and United Nations 1989) also play a part in some national adoption legislation. The Hague Convention entered into force in US law on 1 April 2008, bringing much stricter controls over the international adoption process. This was one factor leading to a reduction in the number of children adopted into the United States, which peaked at 22,884 in 2004 but dropped to 8,668 in 2012 (compared to over 50,000 domestic adoptions). The US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs has a very informative and user-friendly website that gives details of specific country regulations and procedures for international adoptions. In the United Kingdom the ratio of intercountry to domestic

adoptions is much lower than in the United States, generally under 10 percent. Absolute numbers are also small, with only 2,232 overseas adoptions into the United Kingdom of children over five between 2003 and 2008, according to the figures issued by the UK Department of Education on their website. Of these more than half, 190 out of 369 in 2005 when numbers peaked, were from China. The Canadian and Australian Governments also have websites giving details of legislative procedures relating to intercountry adoption and immigration (Citizenship and Immigration Canada; Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship), advising adoptive parents on the appropriate legal measures they need to consider when bringing a child into these countries. Most English-speaking countries apply state or provincial legislation to the process of preparing and regulating adoption, whether overseas or domestic, with the national government overseeing the citizenship or immigration process. O'Halloran 2009 gives one of the best overviews of the legislative frameworks surrounding adoption, including intercountry adoptions, in both Western and non-Western countries. This is an excellent resource for legislators, policymakers, and those directly concerned with adoption as a parent or social work professional.

**Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Fact Sheet 36: Adopting a Child from Overseas.**

The Hague Convention regulations on intercountry adoption came into force in Australia in 1998. The adoption process is managed by each state and territory according to their own legislative arrangements. Children also need to qualify for an entry visa. Adopted children of Australian citizens are granted citizenship rights.

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Adopt a Child.**

Canada became a signatory to the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption in 1996. Intercountry adoption into Canada is regulated by provincial or territorial jurisdiction. Both the adoption process and immigration or citizenship process must be completed. Which process to use depends on the adoptive parents' citizenship or permanent residency status.

**Hague Conference on Private International Law. Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. (The Hague, 29 May 1993).**

A key framework document for intercountry adoption, divided into seven chapters and forty-eight articles. The Convention recognizes the value of international adoption for some children while wishing to prevent the abduction, sale, or trafficking of children under the guise of international adoption.

**O'Halloran, Kerry. *The Politics of Adoption: International Perspectives on Law, Policy and Practice*. 2d ed. Brisbane, Australia: Springer Science and Business Media BV, 2009.**

O'Halloran sees all adoption practice, including international and transcultural adoption, as having a political dimension. The legal frameworks for adoption in various Western and non-Western countries, and in international conventions, are set within a wider political and cultural historical and comparative context.

**UK Department of Education. Intercountry Adoption: UK Legislation and Guidance.**

Intercountry adoptions in the United Kingdom need to comply with a number of separate regulations, both national and international. These include the Hague Convention and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**United Nations. Convention on the Rights of the Child (New York, 20 November 1989).**

Article 21 (b-e) deals with intercountry adoption and its regulation. The rights of the child to family life, health care, education, and culture (language, religion) are paramount in the CRC. All UN member states except the United States and Somalia have formally approved the Convention.

**United Nations. Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally. G.A. Res. 41/85 of 3 December 1986, 95th plenary meeting. UN Doc. A/RES/41/85.**

Articles 17–24 (out of 24) deal specifically with international adoption. The Declaration establishes the principle of the rights of the child, and endorses care of families as a way of ensuring children’s well-being. It recognizes that properly regulated international adoption may be appropriate for some children.

**US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs. Intercountry Adoption.**

The Bureau of Consular Affairs provides information concerning overseas adoptions into the US from Hague Convention countries and from those that have not signed the Hague Convention (“orphan adoptions”). State law governs procedures particularly in the latter case, where there is less federal regulation.

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## **Transracial Adoption and Fostering**

Although most if not all cross-country adoption and fostering involves children of a different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious heritage from the parents, there is a specific literature on transracial adoption and fostering, most of which makes little attempt to distinguish between children and parents born in the same country and those who are not. The emphasis is on “race,” generally a cipher for white parents adopting or, less often, fostering, nonwhite children. Most recent research, such as Triseliotis, et al. 1997 and Bagley, et al. 1993, concludes that in adoption, using measures such as rates of adoption breakdown or scales of self-esteem, race is not a salient factor. Silverman and Feigelman 1990 gives an overview of the psychological research on adjustment in interracial placements, while Rushton and Minnis 1997 provides an excellent summary of the arguments both for and against transracial placements. Versluis-den Bierman and Verhulst 1995 looks specifically at cross-country or international adoption, using a sample of over 1,500 hundred cases, and comes to similar conclusions, that race *per se* is not a predictor of psychological adjustment. All these studies, by well-respected adoption specialists, come from within a social work, social policy, and social psychology framework, and are aimed primarily at practitioners and academics working in the adoption field. The personal accounts by transracial adoptees in Harris 2006 remind the reader that the success or otherwise of an adoption cannot be measured only in term of adoption breakdown or by using standard measures of well-being and psychological adjustment. The experience of being an interracially adopted person reveals more subtle indicators of unease and discomfort, such as the awareness of looking different from one’s parents and neighbors. This anthology is aimed at adoptees and their families as well as those who want to understand on a personal level what it is like to be transracially adopted. The issue of bridging cultures is dealt with starkly in Seymour 2007, an account of an open transracial adoption in 1970s London. Jerng 2010, a very readable historical-cultural, literary approach, is also concerned less with policy and outcomes. It deals with ways in which transracial adoption has the ability to unsettle and disrupt accepted notions of nation, race, and family. It is of interest to academics and policymakers, and one would hope to see it used in social work training, since it provides a valuable historical and cultural context to debates on race and adoption.

**Bagley, Christopher, with Loretta Young and Anne Scully. *International and Transracial Adoptions*. Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1993.**

Adoptive outcomes based on measures of psychosocial development and behavior, as opposed to adoption breakdown, appear to show little difference between same-race and transracial non-infant adoptions. Satisfactory outcomes for both groups are around 70–80 percent, and depend on the quality of adoptive parenting rather than racial matching.

**Harris, Perlita, ed. *In Search of Belonging: Reflections by Transracially Adopted People*. London: British Association for Adoption and Fostering, 2006.**

These are short personal accounts, both poems and reflective prose, by transracially adopted children and adults living in the United Kingdom. They illustrate the variety and complexity of transracial adoptees experiences. A sense of isolation and loss

permeates many of the contributions, but also gratitude and courage in facing life's challenges.

**Jerng, Mark C. *Claiming Others: Transracial Adoption and National Belonging*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.**

A history of transracial adoption in the United States since the 1850s. Jerng identifies three main stages: disruption to notions of nationhood, family, and race through white/African and Native American adoptions; the intervention of the state and professionalization of adoption, and transracial adoptees claiming a voice.

**Rushton, Alan, and H. Minnis. "Annotation: Transracial Family Placements." *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 38.2 (1997): 1–13.**

The question of same-race versus transracial placements has hotly debated political as well as social and practical dimensions. Rushton and Minnis carefully review the research evidence on both sides of the argument in a balanced and thoughtful manner.

**Seymour, Natalie. *In Black and White: The Story of an Open Transracial Adoption*. London: British Association of Adoption and Fostering, 2007.**

The story of a British white couple who adopt two children of black Jamaican heritage. They decide to maintain contact with the children's birth families, and document the highs and lows of forming a family and fostering relationships that ultimately lead to the children returning to their paternal grandmother.

**Silverman, Arnold R., and William Feigelman. "Adjustment in Interracial Adoptees: An Overview." In *The Psychology of Adoption*. Edited by David M. Brodzinski and Marshall D. Schechter, 187–200. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.**

A study focusing on interracial adoption that concludes that a child's experiences pre-placement, including age, institutionalization, health, and attachment to caregivers, are more important than race in determining the outcome of placement.

**Triseliotis, John, Joan Shireman, and Marion Hundleby. *Adoption: Theory, Policy and Practice*. London and Herndon, VA: Cassell, 1997.**

This volume includes studies of outcomes for intercountry and domestic transracial and same-race placements in the United Kingdom and United States. The authors conclude that age at placement and the quality of care is more important than "race" when predicting the stability and success of an adoptive placement.

**Versluis-den Bierman, H. J., and F. C. Verhulst. "Self-Reported and Parent Reported Problems in Adolescent International Adoptees." *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines* 36.8 (1995): 1411–1428.**

A study of over 1,500 international adoptees that looked at issues of racial difference and adjustment. Authors concluded that racial difference between parents and children was not a significant factor in determining the outcome of a placement.

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## **Ethics, Politics, and Demography**

International adoption has been presented as a form of both child trafficking and cultural imperialism, and as a humanitarian venture to save endangered or abandoned children and enable them to make a new start with loving parents in a different country. Debate can become polarized, with both sides finding ample evidence to support their claims, as the chapter entitled "The Debate" in Bartholet and Smolin 2012 demonstrates. There are cases that appear to be clearly illegal, such as the baby smuggling rings

moving infants from Montreal to New York in the 1950s, described in Balcom 2007. Scholars, social workers, and policymakers faced with practical issues regarding international adoption, as well as prospective adoptive parents, will find food for thought in Dubinski 2010, an account of adoption and migration across the Americas. Dubinski reveals the political dimension of the CIA-backed "Operation Peter Pan," in which thousands of Cuban children were taken to Miami, justified by fears that the Communist rebels would forcibly enlist children in military training camps. Dubinski 2010 and Leifsen 2008 are both concerned with trafficking from the South to the North, in Dubinski's case from Guatemala, and in Leifsen's from Ecuador. Contributors to Goodwin 2010 look at adoption from the perspective of market forces, arguing that Western family formation should be seen as a commercial activity as well as, or in some cases instead of, a biological one. Jones 2010 takes a different perspective, focusing on the pros and cons of intercountry adoption as an alternative to a lack of babies available domestically, or to reproductive technologies. In an article aimed at health practitioners giving advice to prospective adopters, Jones argues that the ethical issues need to be carefully considered, and that international adoption should not be seen as a straightforward route to family formation. The perspective of a sending country is again taken up in Dickens 2002, which looks at the effects of international adoption on domestic child-welfare policies in Romania, concluding that continued dependence on international adoptions can reduce the effectiveness of domestic child-care. Peter Selman has contributed many books and articles on various aspects of international adoption, and he has regularly tracked the demographic data associated with it. While specific figures can quickly become dated, demographers and those interested in migration will find his analysis, in Selman 2002, of the trends between sending and receiving countries, and his view of adoption as a significant aspect of international migration, of interest.

**Balcom, Karen. "Phony Mothers' and Border-Crossing Adoptions: The Montreal-to-New York Black Market in Babies in the 1950s." *Journal of Women's History* 19.1 (2007): 107–116.**

Balcom tells the story of organized smuggling rings in 1950s, involving social workers, lawyers, and salesmen, in which the "surplus" children of unwed Roman Catholic French-Canadian women were sold to Jewish couples in New York. Illegal border crossings bypassed social work checks and enabled children to be registered as Jewish.

**Bartholet, Elizabeth, and David Smolin. "The Debate." In *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*. Edited by Judith L. Gibbons and Karen Smith Rotabi, 233–254. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012.**

A lawyer, adoptive parent, and well-known advocate for international adoption, Elizabeth Bartholet debates some of the ethical, moral, and political issues involved with an opponent of international adoption, David Smolin.

**Dickens, Jonathan. "The Paradox of Inter-Country Adoption: Analysing Romania's Experience as a Sending Country." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 11.1 (2002): 76–83.**

Following media scandals exposing the inadequacies of Romanian institutional care for abandoned children, the country sought to develop alternatives, including foster care and family support. International adoption continues to play a role in Romanian child welfare policies, but Dickens argues that it can be to the detriment of domestic services.

**Dubinski, Karen. *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.**

Dubinski, an adoptive mother and scholar, focuses on controversial areas involving both social and political dilemmas: The CIA-backed operation in the 1960s in which 14,000 Cuban children were transported to Miami; debates around transracial adoption in the United States and Canada, and trafficking children for adoption from Guatemala to the United States.

**Goodwin, Michele Bratcher, ed. *Baby Markets: Money and the New Politics of Creating Families*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.**

These short, readable articles give important insights into the economics of creating Western families in the context of world market forces. Commercial transactions play a part in assisted reproduction and in often unregulated or underregulated international

adoption. Four of the nineteen chapters focus specifically on adoption and issues of “race.”

**Jones, Sarah. “The Ethics of Intercountry Adoption: Why it Matters to Healthcare Providers and Bioethicists.” *Bioethics* 24.7 (2010): 358–364.**

Jones presents a brief history of intercountry adoption, and then compares intercountry adoption to the medical alternatives for couples seeking fertility treatment. The ethical concerns raised by assisted reproduction are placed alongside those raised by intercountry adoption, suggesting that it should not be automatically seen as a sound alternative.

**Leifsen, Esben. “Child Trafficking and Formalisation: The Case of International Adoption from Ecuador.” *Children & Society* 22.3 (2008): 212–222.**

Leifsen, a social anthropologist, uses case studies of irregular international adoptions from Ecuador from the 1990s onwards to argue that the links between public authorities, those facilitating international adoptions such as lawyers and adoption agencies, and profitable child traffickers are too often ignored.

**Selman, Peter. “Intercountry Adoption in the New Millennium; the ‘Quiet Migration’ Revisited.” *Population Research and Policy Review* 21 (2002): 205–225.**

In this article, Selman takes a demographic view of international adoption as a migratory process, estimating the number of intercountry adoptions worldwide in the 1990s using data recorded by eighteen receiving countries. Selman gives a global estimate of 32,000 adoptions in 1998, higher than most comparative sources.

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## Regional Studies

There is a broad division in the literature between sending and receiving countries when it comes to international adoption. Poorer countries in the South and East are generally sending countries, and those in North America and northwestern Europe are generally receiving countries, although this picture is overly simple. The United States, for instance, both sends and receives children. Historically, the United Kingdom sent so-called “orphaned” children to Canada and Australia. In addition, children circulate within as well as between countries. Where children move across international borders, then one or more countries or regions of the world are involved. For ease of reference the works in this area are divided into four broad regions, Africa, The Americas, Australia and Asia, and Europe. Some works are duplicated where they span regions, and others are placed according the main focus of their interest.

### Africa

There are fewer studies of sending than receiving countries in the literature on intercountry adoption, so Breuning and Ishiyama 2009, an analysis of the variations in attitude to overseas adoption in different sub-Saharan African countries, is particularly welcome. The authors conclude that links to the global economy are correlated with permissive attitudes to intercountry adoption. This article will be of use to all those seeking to understand the politics of intercountry adoption in Africa at a personal, policy, and academic level. It may well be that similar results would be found in other sending countries. Goody 1982 provides one of the few studies of fosterage included here. Her study of child rearing in Ghana is widely quoted by anthropologists as well as those interested in cultural understandings of adoption and fostering. It is an important study of West African cultural attitudes to bringing up children, and how they differ from Western norms and assumptions. Social workers dealing with West African children fostered in the United Kingdom or the United States, for instance, would do well to understand how and why this practice originated. Robson 2005 discusses the moral panic that is sometimes associated with the realization that West African children who are privately fostered or trafficked in the United Kingdom are generally invisible as far as the authorities are concerned, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. Distinguishing between the acceptable cultural practices described in Goody 1982, in which children are reared by people other than their parents for the sake of their education, training, or according to traditional rules of child “ownership,” and

international trade in children is a challenge for all those concerned with child welfare.

**Breuning, Marijke, and John Ishiyama. "The Politics of Intercountry Adoption: Explaining Variation in the Legal Requirements of Sub-Saharan African Countries." *Perspectives on Politics* 7.1 (2009): 89–101.**

Most sub-Saharan African adoptions take place outside the framework of the Hague Convention, and depend on political and diplomatic, and above all economic ties between sending and receiving countries. The number of orphans in a country is poorly correlated with permissive attitudes to intercountry adoption.

**Goody, Esther. *Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982.**

This is an important scholarly (anthropological) work on fosterage in Ghana in West Africa. Goody's distinction between social and biological parenthood, and observations of ways in which these tasks are commonly split between different families in many West African communities, has been influential in academic circles.

**Robson, Elsbeth. "Portraying West Africa's Children: Moral Panics, Imagined Geographies and Globalisation." In *West African Worlds: Paths Through Socio-Economic Change, Livelihoods and Development*. Edited by Reginald Cline-Cole and Elsbeth Robson, 63–86. Harlow, Essex: Pearson, 2005.**

Large numbers of unaccompanied West African children find their way to the United Kingdom each year, some to stay with family members, but many to foster care or unrelated placements, which can leave them vulnerable to exploitation. Robson gives the wider picture behind the newspaper headlines of this movement of children.

## The Americas

The United States and Canada both send and receive children in cross-cultural (international and transracial) adoption. The movement from South and Central America, on the other hand, is generally northwards, and not without controversy. For an overview of adoption law and its history in the United States, Grossman and Friedman 2011 is a good place to start and will be of interest to scholars and practitioners. Pertman 2000 discusses why it is that Americans adopt more children internationally than the rest of the planet combined. Stryker 2011 looks at factors that determine the outcome of international adoptions in the United States and the tensions that can exist between forming a new nuclear family and openness to adopted children's past and origins. Both Pertman and Stryker write for scholars and those involved in international adoption. Some of the issues around being a transracial family formed through international adoption are dealt with in Tessler, et al. 1999, which combines personal and analytical accounts from Chinese American families. A similar picture of adoptions from China is painted by Dorow 2006, which follows a group of families from Minnesota to China and back. These personal accounts are aimed at families thinking of adopting from China or formed through adoption from China. Both also give insights into the practical and emotional issues involved for those who support these adoptions or who have a scholarly interest in them. Dubinski 2010, like Dorow 2006 and Pertman 2000, by an adoptive parent, gives a view of cross-cultural adoption that stretches across the Americas from Canada to the United States, Cuba, and Guatemala. The differences in attitude to transracial placements historically are dealt with in Canada and the United States, and the sometimes disturbing political and economic dimensions of international adoption are clear in the case studies of Cuba and Guatemala. That international adoption is a response to market forces of supply and demand is made clear in Balcom 2007, an account of the illegal movement of children from Canada to the United States in the 1950s. The accounts of Dubinski, Balcom, and Leifsen could be seen as cautionary tales about the dangers and complexities of a poorly regulated international adoption system, and are therefore of interest to those involved in policymaking, legal issues, and the regulation of international adoption. Leinaweaver 2008 gives an account of child circulation within Peru, showing how indigenous solutions to poverty and population imbalance operate according to non-Western norms.

**Balcom, Karen. “Phony Mothers’ and Border-Crossing Adoptions: The Montreal-to-New York Black Market in Babies in the 1950s.” *Journal of Women’s History* 19.1 (2007): 107–116.**

“Phony mothers” refers to a fiction in which the children of unwed mothers in Catholic Quebec were redefined as Jewish when they crossed the Canada-US border in organized baby-smuggling rings, for adoption by Jewish couples in New York who found it difficult to access sufficient children for adoption legally.

**Dorow, Sara K. *Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2006.**

Dorow follows parents belonging to the organization Families with Children from China (FCC) from Minnesota in the United States to China to document the process of international adoption. Scholarly information and analysis are balanced with personal stories in a very readable text.

**Dubinski, Karen. *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.**

This book in three parts spans discussions of transracial adoptive placements in Canada and the United States (The Hybrid Baby), Cuba’s “Operation Peter Pan” in the 1960s (The National Baby) and the Guatemalan perspective of relinquishing or losing a baby by force or kidnapping (The Missing Baby).

**Grossman, Joanna L., and Lawrence M. Friedman. “Chosen People: Adoption and the Law.” In *Inside the Castle: Law and Family in 20th Century America*. By Joanna L. Grossman and Lawrence M. Friedman, 305–329. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011.**

A very readable account of adoption law in the United States, tracing its history from the middle of the 19th century, when legal provision for adoption was first made, to the present. Controversies, issues, and attitudes to adoption and family life in all its changing complexity are summarized adeptly.

**Leinaweaver, Jessaca B. *The Circulation of Children: Kinship, Adoption, and Morality in Andean Peru*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.**

Leinaweaver provides an ethnographic account of child circulation in the Peruvian Andes, seen in the context of poverty and cultural responses to social and political issues, including urbanization and political instability. Local practices are related to wider issues concerning international adoption and children’s rights.

**Pertman, Adam. *Adoption Nation: How the Adoption Revolution is Transforming America*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.**

Americans, we learn, adopt more children internationally than do the inhabitants of the rest of the planet combined. Pertman, a novelist and adoptive father, provides an excellent overview of contemporary American adoption, aimed particularly at adoptive parents and prospective parents, with plenty of discussion of international adoption and cultural issues.

**Stryker, Rachel. “The War at Home: Affective Economies and Transnationally Adoptive Families in the United States.” *International Migration* 49.6 (2011): 25–49.**

A study of international adoption in the United States and the most effective post-placement interventions. Stryker reveals the variance that can occur between adoptive parents trying to form a new nuclear family and adoptees seeking a wider definition of family that includes their birth family and country of origin.

**Tessler, Richard, Gail Gamache, and Liming Liu. *West Meets East: Americans Adopt Chinese Children*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1999.**

More than ten thousand Chinese children were adopted into American families between 1989 and 1997. This book, based on a survey of 526 parents with children from China, seeks to understand what it means to be a Chinese and American family. It effectively combines scholarly and personal approaches.

## Australia and Asia

Southeast Asia has been a source of internationally adopted children over the last half century, mirroring wider political events, social policies, and economic fortunes. Australia, on the other hand, is almost entirely a receiving country when it comes to international adoption, although, as with both Canada and the United States, it has a controversial record of removing Aboriginal children from their families, and of the use of British children, usually fictitiously designated as orphans, as cheap labor. Marshall and McDonald 1997 gives a useful overview of adoption, including international adoption, in Australia, including the “rescue” of mixed-race Vietnamese children, whose fathers had been US servicemen, in the 1970s. Turner 2012, a documentary film, covers the same ground in a moving portrayal by one of those Vietnamese children who seeks to understand her dual heritage and make contact with her Vietnamese family. Kim 2009 reviews two films dealing with Vietnamese and Korean adoptees made available for transracial international adoption, seen from the perspective of American-Asian politics and social construction. The one-child policy in China led to a huge surplus of girls, tens of thousands of whom have been freed for international adoption, the great majority to the United States. Dorow 2006 is one of the many adoptive parents, scholars, and adoptees who has documented this process. Her book combines ethnographic and personal data with theoretical discussions, making it accessible to a wide range of scholars, practitioners, and families with an interest in adoption from China. Klatzkin 1999 has gathered material produced by families belonging to Chinese adoptive networks in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, giving a picture of the concerns and experiences expressed in what are generally membership organization publications. Korean adoptees in the United States have come of age and become a vocal group, pioneering return trips to Korea and forging a self-conscious Korean-American adoptee identity, as discussed in Kim 2010. The Chinese women adopted by white British couples from Hong Kong orphanages in the 1960s are rather different, having mainly integrated into wider UK society, according to Feast, et al. 2013. Whether it is the smaller UK numbers involved, the wider culture or specific sociopolitical context of the adoptions, or the use of social media by Korean adoptees that makes a difference in group identity and visibility, this is a subject that deserves further research.

**Dorow, Sara K. *Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship*. New York & London: New York University Press, 2006.**

Dorow looks at the history and context of the adoption of Chinese children by US citizens, combining ethnographic data gathered in the United States and China with a theoretical perspective. An informative and approachable work for those involved in adoption, and for students of sociology, culture studies, migration, and social policy.

**Feast, Julia, Margaret Grant, Alan Rushton, John Simmonds, and Carolyn Sampeys. *Adversity, Adoption and Afterwards: A Mid-Life Follow-Up Study of Women Adopted from Hong Kong*. London: British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, 2013.**

A follow-up study of seventy-two women adopted by mainly white British couples from Hong Kong orphanages in the 1960s. Despite experiencing racism, the majority of those studied had adapted well to life in Britain and demonstrated similar levels of social and psychological well-being to a comparative UK-born group.

**Kim, Eleanor J. *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.**

An ethnographic account of the process by which over 200,000 children from South Korea have been adopted by families in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe since the end of the Korean War. A very readable as well as scholarly text, full of

historical facts and personal insights.

**Kim, Jodi. "An 'Orphan' with Two Mothers: Transnational and Transracial Adoption, the Cold War, and Contemporary Asian American Cultural Politics." *American Quarterly* 61.4 (2009): 855–880.**

Kim reviews two films, *First Person Plural*, an autoethnographic account of a transracial Korean adoptee, and *Daughter from Danang*, a documentary about the Vietnamese "Babylift" adoptees. She argues forcefully that through the social death of birth mothers, Asian babies were used to serve normative Western family ideals.

**Klatzkin, Amy, ed. *A Passage to the Heart: Writings from Families with Children from China*. St. Paul, MN: Yeong & Yeong, 1999.**

A fascinating collection of over one hundred articles published in support group newsletters for families with children adopted from China in the 1990s. Most children were adopted by families in the United States and Canada, with a few from the United Kingdom.

**Marshall, Audrey, and Margaret McDonald. *The Many-Sided Triangle: Adoption in Australia*. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1997.**

Provides an overview of adoption in Australia, including a chapter on intercountry adoption, which dates mainly from the airlift of Vietnamese "orphans" (most of mixed race) in 1975. The arguments for and against intercountry adoption are briefly rehearsed. The authors are social workers as well as adoptive parents.

**Turner, Cath. "So Close So Far Away." 49 mins. Al Jazeera TV, 2012.**

A moving personal film of a Vietnamese girl adopted by an Australian family in the mid-1970s. We see Turner struggling to come to terms with being different, despite having a supportive and loving adoptive family. We then travel with her to Vietnam to be reunited with her mother and family.

## Europe

There has been a wide discrepancy within Europe between eastern and central Europe as suppliers of orphaned and abandoned children, as Dickens 2002 documents, and northern and western Europe as receiving countries. Howell (Howell 2003, Howell 2004) gives some fascinating insights into the cultural and social processes that have led to Scandinavia's enthusiasm for international adoption. Despite its relatively low population, Norway, for instance, has in recent decades been a leading receiving country for overseas adoptions, with some one in ten births being accounted for by adopted children born outside the country. Howell's scholarly account is aimed at anthropologists interested in kinship as much as the adoption community. The United Kingdom, by contrast, has one of the lowest international adoption rates in northwestern Europe. Hayes 2000, attempts to analyze why this might be. It will not come as a surprise to those in the United Kingdom seeking to adopt from overseas that the attitude of local authorities, who oversee the adoption process in Britain, is a key factor in impeding the growth of international adoption. Much less regulated is international fostering in the United Kingdom, although there are recent attempts to increase and improve monitoring of children coming into the United Kingdom from overseas. Because many travel on false passports, or are simply not checked, the number of children entering the country without a parent or close relative, particularly from West Africa, is unknown. Philpot 2001 attempts to set out the legal and social framework for private fostering, with recommendations for better monitoring of the system, in a very useful, easy-to-read booklet. One of the main observers of demographic trends in international adoption is Peter Selman. In Selman 2010 he looks at the likely effect of EU enlargement on international adoptions in both sending and receiving countries. Debates concerning the ethics of intercountry adoption often focus on outcomes for adoptees in relation to the future that might have awaited them had they been left in institutional care. Feast, et al. 2013, published by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering, is a study of women adopted by British families from Hong Kong orphanages in the 1970s. Using a social-psychology framework, the authors argue that, compared to a cohort of nonadopted women, there is little difference in measures of general

well-being.

**Dickens, Jonathan. "The Paradox of Inter-Country Adoption: Analysing Romania's Experience as a Sending Country." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 11.1 (2002): 76–83.**

Dickens looks at the effects of intercountry adoption on the development of children's services within Romania. Despite attempts to develop domestic welfare alternatives to institutional care, international adoption continues to play an important and complex role in Romania's child welfare system.

**Feast, Julia, Margaret Grant, Alan Rushton, John Simmonds, and Carolyn Sampeys. *Adversity, Adoption and Afterwards: A Mid-Life Follow-Up Study of Women Adopted from Hong Kong*. London: British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, 2013.**

Around seventy women adopted by British families from Hong Kong orphanages in the 1960s were interviewed and given standard psychological tests. By comparison with UK-born adopted and non-adopted women drawn from the 1958 UK National Child Development Study, there were no statistically significant differences between these groups.

**Hayes, Peter. "Deterents to Intercountry Adoption in Britain." *Family Relations* 49.4 (2000): 465–471.**

Hayes identifies the reasons for the relatively low rates of intercountry adoption in the United Kingdom, certainly when compared to Scandinavia and the United States, for example. The barriers put up by local authorities, acting as home-study gatekeepers, is a key factor in encouraging unauthorized, unregulated, and illegal adoptions.

**Howell, Signe. "Kinning: The Creation of Life Trajectories in Transnational Adoptive Families." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9.3 (2003): 465–484.**

Howell coined the term "kinning" to describe the process of creating families with nonbiologically related children. She uses ethnographic methods to follow the emotional as well as sociological and political dimensions of intercountry, transracial adoption in Scandinavia.

**Howell, Signe. "The Backpackers That Come to Stay: New Challenges to Norwegian Transnational Adoptive Families." In *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Adoption*. Edited by Fiona Bowie, 227–241. London & New York: Routledge, 2004.**

Howell traces the history of international adoption in Norway from 1960s to the late 1990s. By the mid-1970s, domestic adoption virtually ceased and international adoption filled the gap, accounting for an increasingly significant portion of all births. Howell examines the legal, social, and emotional impact of these adoptions over time.

**Philpot, Terry. *A Very Private Practice: An Investigation into Private Fostering*. London: British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, 2001.**

The number of privately fostered children in the United Kingdom is unknown, but estimates in 2000 put the number at 8,000–10,000, the majority of whom are of West African origin. Differences in cultural attitudes and expectations can lead to difficulties, and lack of regulation leaves children vulnerable to exploitation.

**Selman, Peter. "Intercountry adoption in Europe 1998–2008: Patterns, Trends and Issues." *Adoption & Fostering* 34.1 (2010): 4–19.**

Selman provides a detailed and considered account of the impact of the enlargement of the European Union on adoption trends in

Europe in both sending and receiving countries. The article looks at the well-being of children involved in intercountry adoption and at debates on the politics of adoption within the European Parliament.

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## Personal Accounts

There are numerous books, articles, videos, and blogs giving personal accounts of cross-country adoption, some written from the perspective of the adoptive parents, and some from that of the adult child. The selections included here all add something over and above one person's story, often providing a broader cultural, historical, or political dimension to the factors behind intercountry adoption. Evans 2000, for instance, speaks as much about the situation of Chinese women forced to abandon their daughters to institutions as she does about her own adoption journey. Evans's volume is scholarly as well as personal and includes notes, a bibliography, and a list of resources. It is a compelling read for all those interested in adoption and who want to understand contemporary China. Prager 2002 is another particularly well-written account by an American woman who adopted from China. In this case the story centers on a return to China with her five-year-old daughter and the way in which the little girl is able to bridge the two cultures. Humphrey and Humphrey 1993 includes several personal accounts, as well as a chapter by a respected academic writer on adoption, of overseas adoptions into the United Kingdom. Kosack 2004 tells an unusual story of the author finding herself as a single female anthropologist working in Northern Cameroon, West Africa, who is persuaded by her hosts to rescue an orphaned baby as a way of strengthening her ties within the community. She was resistant, since she had not gone to Africa with any intention of adopting a child. In this remarkable story, Kosack tells how she took the child back to Germany, found a Swiss family to adopt the baby, and their subsequent frequent return visits to Cameroon, where both Kosack and the adoptee maintain links with her natal village. There are several anthologies with overseas adoption experiences, both from the perspective of the parents, such as Klatzkin 1999, and adoptees, such as Harris 2006. The voice of adoptees is less often heard, but many of those adopted as infants are now coming of age and telling their stories. Turner 2012 is a film about a Vietnamese adoptee in Australia, and it is a powerful example of the reflective voice of a transculturally adopted adult. While personal accounts will be of primary interest to those directly involved in the adoption process, they can and should also inform policymakers, social workers, and legislators. This is the intention behind Pertman 2000, which combines personal accounts and policy suggestions in the context of US adoption.

**Evans, Karin. *The Lost Daughters of China: Abandoned Girls, Their Journey to America, and the Search for a Missing Past*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2000.**

A personal account of an American woman's journey to China to adopt her Chinese daughter. Unlike most such accounts, much of the book is devoted to understanding why so many Chinese women give up their children for adoption. A compelling story of individual and of a country.

**Harris, Perlita, ed. *In Search of Belonging: Reflections by Transracially Adopted People*. London: British Association for Adoption and Fostering, 2006.**

Over fifty short pieces, both poems and essays, by transracially adopted people living in the United Kingdom. Experiences of adoption and of growing up in a predominantly white society are both positive and negative. A sense of separation and loss, as well as of opportunity, run through many of the contributions.

**Humphrey, Michael, and Heather Humphrey. *Inter-Country Adoption: Practical Experiences*. London and New York: Tavistock/Routledge, 1993.**

Personal accounts by parents in the United Kingdom who adopted children from overseas, primarily Asia and South America, in the 1980s. There is also chapter by John Triseliotis examining arguments for and against intercountry adoption and putting it in its historical context.

**Klatzkin, Amy, ed. *A Passage to the Heart: Writings from Families with Children from China*. St. Paul, MN: Yeong & Yeong, 1999.**

Over one hundred articles gathered from the newsletters of Chinese-adoption support groups in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Topics cover the waiting and planning involved, health issues, language, identity and culture, special needs, birth parents, and return to China. An informative and often moving resource for adopters.

**Kosack, Godula. "Adopting a Native Child: An Anthropologist's Personal Involvement in the Field." In *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Adoption*. Edited by Fiona Bowie, 21–29. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.**

A moving and intriguing account of a German anthropologist's involvement with a people, the Mafa, in northern Cameroon, which led to them seeking to place a motherless native child in her care. The girl was subsequently adopted by a Swiss-French couple, and she eventually returned to Cameroon to meet her relatives.

**Pertman, Adam. *Adoption Nation: How the Adoption Revolution is Transforming America*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.**

In this volume Adam Pertman, executive director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute in the United States, combines personal stories with insights and information concerning the adoption process, and suggestions for improving the US adoption system. Pertman suggests reasons for the popularity of intercountry adoption in the United States.

**Prager, Emily. *Wuhu Diary: The Mystery of My Daughter LuLu*. London: Vintage, 2002.**

The American novelist Emily Prager adopted a seven-month-old baby girl from Wuhu in southern China in 1994. Five years later, Emily and LuLu returned to Wuhu, with anti-American feeling running high, and LuLu was able to act as a bridge between people and cultures, as told in this moving, evocative account.

**Turner, Cath. "So Close So Far Away." 49 mins. Al Jazeera TV, 2012.**

Cath Turner documents her personal story as a Vietnamese "orphan" sent to Australia in 1973 as part of "Operation Babylift," when over 3,000 orphaned and mixed race children were airlifted to the United States and Australia. Although of poor technical quality, it is of particular social and historical value.

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## Organizations

There are three main types of organization providing information on and services related to international adoption, although the boundary between them is often fluid in character and function. There are organizations, often national, engaged in producing educational and training materials, reliable information, support, and legal advice. These organizations often serve as lobbying groups influencing legislation on adoption. The Adoption Council of Canada, the British Association for Adoption and Fostering, and the Evan B. Donaldson Institute in the United States take this role. They are concerned with all aspects of adoption and fostering, including but not exclusively intercountry adoption. Organizations that are basically networks providing access to information, much of it online, include Adopting.org in the United States, and, specializing in intercountry adoption, the Australian Intercountry Adoption Network. These are excellent places to start researching cross-country adoption and fostering. Also valuable, but for members only, are Children Adopted from China (CACH) in the United Kingdom, which is active in promoting regional and national reunions in which Chinese language and culture feature prominently; OASIS in the United Kingdom; and Adoptive Parents China in the United States. Member-only organizations for those actively engaged in adopting from overseas, or from China, or who have done so, allow those personally involved to share information, meet face to face, support one another, and discuss issues in relative privacy. There are numerous small-scale parent-to-parent membership organizations, particularly in the United States, for those who have adopted or who are seeking to adopt from a particular country. There are also many adoption support groups, both

local and national, such as Adoption UK, which give advice and support related to intercountry adoption while serving the wider adoption and fostering constituency. All produce a variety of literature, from online leaflets, blogs, and links to publications, to their own often quite professional publications, both in print and online. It is often in these parent-to-parent and membership-only groups that the concerns and voices of adoptive families are most forcefully aired. As such, they are an invaluable resource for those involved in adoption and for researchers and policymakers who want to hear firsthand from the adoption “experts.”

#### **Adopting.org.**

A comprehensive US website covering all aspects of adoption, with many useful links. There are sections for adopters, professionals, adoptees, and birth parents, as well as blogs, book reviews, and articles. A good place to start for anyone personally touched by or researching adoption in the United States.

#### **Adoption Council of Canada.**

The ACC is Canada’s only national umbrella adoption organization. It aims to support all those involved in adoption, by providing information, education, and training, and by promoting the interests of adoptive families. It is also a resource for current Canadian adoption news, publications, educational resources, events, and provincial adoption links.

#### **Adoptive Parents China.**

A US-based membership Yahoo group for families who have adopted from China. In 2013 there were just under 18,000 members.

#### **Australian InterCountry Adoption Network.**

A national network of NGOs involved in international adoption. AICAN was founded in 1990. The website includes articles, blogs, links to other organizations and PDF reports on various topics.

#### **British Association for Adoption and Fostering.**

UK-based professional organization concerned with policy, education, research, and training. The BAAF has been influential in producing the various assessment forms used by local authorities to recruit adoptive parents. It publishes a number of books and a quarterly journal, *Adoption & Fostering*. Members include local authorities, researchers, and adoptive parents.

#### **Children Adopted from China.**

A members-only organization for UK families who have adopted or intend to adopt a child from China. In 2013 there were around 1,000 families in CACH, each of whom receive a quarterly newsletter and access to the members’ area of the website.

#### **Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute.**

A US-based group dedicated to promoting and supporting adoption as a response to the institutionalization and abandonment of children through education, advocacy, and legal reform. The publications section of the website has a useful set of links to books and reports on intercountry adoption.

#### **OASIS: Overseas Adoption Support and Information Service.**

A UK based parent-to-parent membership organization for people who are thinking of or have adopted children from overseas. In addition to the website, the organization publishes a journal, *Mosaic*. In 2013 there are over 1,000 members.

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