

Preface

“The corruption in the adoption process has become so widespread that the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi believes that there is fraud in the overwhelming majority of cases of infants offered for international adoption.”¹

International adoption is the affair of becoming a legal parent to a child of a different nationality, and from a different country. It is the process of building a multicultural and multiracial family of children and parents who are not biologically related. International adoption most often relies on the partnership of a western and an eastern country; the western one being the adopter and the eastern being the adoptee. However consoling it is to have the notion of family growth immediately associated with international adoption, it is not the only purpose; adopting from abroad has come to be a solution for most third-world countries when faced with a large scale issue. Lately international adoption rates have skyrocketed; thousands upon thousands of children are adopted from various developing countries each year. There are three major contributors to the affair, China, Haiti, and Guatemala. This paper will explore the cases of these three countries, all of which have recently been touched by natural disasters, overpopulation, and unsteady economic and political systems. Sadly however, recent immoral activity on behalf of the adopting countries has caused their partners to shut down their international adoption gateways. Over the past few years, authorities have discovered that there has been a rapid flux in adoption numbers which has lead to devastating dilemmas such as child and baby trafficking, abusive households, unsolved medical and psychological

1 A Trail of Corruption

problems, and several other hardships for the adopted children. It has been made a fact that the receiving countries are, in some cases, doing these children more harm than good. These factors have caused many countries to close off the rights to international adoption all together. Most recently however, the Hague Adoption Convention has shut down all international adoption globally from several countries; this paper will investigate the logistics and evidence regarding their reasoning.

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Various online sources

Multiple pieces of literature

Outside sources (interviews, and other dialogue)

As well as personal meandering and theorizing

Background

International adoption is the idea of dispensing the more unfortunate children of the world into all different countries, and thereby making the world a more multicultural and multiracial place. These children are legally removed from their native country and are provided with shelter and family in a new one. International adoption began around 1945², after World War II and during the early Cold War. The struggles of contingent, orphaned children were brought to attention in the western world as they began to see the effects of war, famine, and disaster in the eastern world. It was at this point that the adoption market globalized.

International adoption is a global issue because it cannot function without the co-operation of multiple countries. Adoption as a system, works in the same manner as trade does between two countries; partnership is critical. International adoption also qualifies as a global issue on a basis of country ranking. Realistically, adoption only exists on the international level because citizens of a developed country have to opportunity to give children of underdeveloped countries a better quality of life. If there was equity in the world there would be no need for adoption, because the quality of life would be universal. However, the tremendous difference between first-world and third-world countries is what has opened the doors for adoption; this inequality is an issue in itself. Consequently, one global issue has lead to another.

² <http://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/topics/internationaladoption.htm>

Although seemingly a positive solution, international adoption is not always perfect. And in some cases, more frequently in recent studies, has a negative outcome. Adoption has resulted in baby and child trafficking, child abuse, a rise of sex offenders, and neglect to solve medical and psychological problems. It has become difficult to make the distinction between whether international adoption is helping or hindering the lives of helpless, innocent children worldwide. On the contrary, international adoption has not always been portrayed in a negative light. Adoption took off in the late 1940's when American and Canadian families sought to rescue children from devastated countries. In the early days of adoption, religious groups were the primary adopters. Catholics, Lutherans, and Adventists³ were among the first to partake and inspired others to adopt the foreign and orphaned children as. These evangelical groups formed the League for Orphaned Victims in Europe (LOVE)⁴, the first organized adoption agency. It is predictable that international adoption rates will flux when corruption or disaster occurs, leaving a third-world country more helpless than before. A perfect example of this would be the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. It is automatic that people react to world issues with the notion to help those in need; therefore, when disaster strikes, adoption rates soar. Some countries approve over 10 000 adoptions each year⁵, making the 21st

3 <http://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/topics/internationaladoption.htm>

4 http://debatepedia.idebate.org/en/index.php/Debate:_International_adoption_based_on_child_well-being

5 Adoption- The Essential Guide to Adopting Quickly and Safely, Hicks pg. 1

century a phenomenon for international adoption. Although a generous and profound act, adoption has its fall backs. When the adoption rate reaches its breach, the most reliable and well-known agencies are quickly flooded with requests and demands which they cannot meet. This creates an opportunity for fraud organizations to advertise their businesses as well. Unknowingly, people turn to these agencies and complete non-legitimate adoptions. Sometimes however, criminals seize this opportunity to adopt illegally and for wrongful purposes. These examples show just how international adoption has progressed into a full-fledged global issue.

When foreign affairs workers became aware of the terrible things that were happening to their people's children sent abroad, they immediately began intervening. The previously simple task of intercountry adoption was now developing into a cumbersome and interrogational process. Seemingly all at once, there were high costs to adopt children from third-world countries; these financial implications were ordered to separate the wealthy adopters from the poor, ensuring a better life for the exported children. As well, background checks and home inspections took place regularly. The paper work became rigorous and extremely personal, and an adopter's life was looked at from every aspect. These routines were to investigate the child's future living conditions upon which it would be decided if the applicants were virtuous or not. These rules and regulations had a relatively good effect on the process of international adoption, but still many fraud adoptions were being finalized despite them. Several third-world countries have become dependent on adoption as a solution and would definitely benefit from it today, but sadly many countries have brought international adoption to a complete halt. In February of 2010, Haiti signed with the Hague Convention and

stopped all international adoptions⁶. Also, Guatemala has been on and off with the Hague Convention as well over the past couple of years⁷, wavering between pro and anti-adoption. Most recently however, the Hague Convention has put a full stop to all international adoption in and out of over 80 countries worldwide. These cases are devastating when the light is shone on the lives of innocent children who no longer have even the slightest piece of hope to cling to for a better life. Adoption was the beacon of light in many third-world countries, but immoral and nefarious actions on behalf of the receiving countries has caused that light to burn out.

Issue Expert

Adoption Horizons Inc. is a reputable adoption agency situated in Ontario, Canada. This agency facilitates adoptions from Russia and the Russian Federation. More recently, Adoption Horizons Inc. has expanded and currently covers many adoptions from Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan as well as from the previous USSR. All of these adoptions are overseen by the company's executive director, Irina Zaretsky, an adoptee from Russia. Irina Zaretsky got involved in the adoption field in 1991⁸. Her first job was working as a translator in Moscow for the adoptive families⁹. Irina served as a bridge between the adopting family and the child during their first encounter, as well as between the parents and the government officials. After

⁶ <http://www.hagueevaluation.com/haiti>

⁷ <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/the-americas/091222/guatemala-adoptions>

⁸ http://www.canadaadopts.com/cgi-bin/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=get_topic&f=14&t=000041

her days of translating, Irina Zaretsky and her family moved to Toronto, Canada. It was during her first year there that the agency she had worked for in Russia offered her the opportunity to open up a Canadian branch for them¹⁰. Irina declined their offer, and took up her own interest in adoption alone. Eventually Zaretsky opened her own agency called Adoption Horizons Inc. and has been its representative ever since. Adoption Horizons Inc. is an impeccable example of expertise for many reasons. First and foremost, it is a non-profitable organization¹¹. This is a trust foundation. Most often fraud agencies charge large sums of money to complete an adoption- but Adoption Horizons works for free. This also shows that the individuals working for this agency are truly committed to finding better lives for the children in third-world countries as opposed to turning adoption into a financial business. Irina Zaretsky is obviously an expert on the pattern of international adoption because of the fact that she is an adoptee herself. It is her hard work and selfless dedication that Irina works hard to find better homes for other children who are growing up where she did. Overall, Irina Zaretsky is a great leader, as well as a massive contributor to the affair of international adoption.

9 <http://www.adoptionhorizons.com/exec.html>

10 <http://www.adoptionhorizons.com/exec.html>

11 The Complete Book of International Adoption, Davenport, pg.384

Role of Control

In regards to a position of control in international adoption, the Hague Convention has ample amounts of power. The Hague Convention covers a magnitude of issues worldwide, but when addressing the issue of adoption specifically it is referred to as *The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoptions*¹². This

¹² The Complete Book of International Adoption, Davenport, pg.78

organization wrote a treaty which can be signed and mobilized by any adoptee country that wishes it. The treaty's purpose is to help countries regulate their foreign affairs and organize international adoptions. Although third-world countries have the freedom to implement the treaty when wanted and then disregard it when they are fending well on their own, The Hague Convention still retains power within itself. For years, the Convention has served its purpose as both a filter and a regulating system. But more currently, global issues linked with international adoptions have been dramatically increasing. The world now sees more abuse, neglect, and trafficking of orphaned children than ever before. The panic in the adoptee countries has reached high levels, and these countries are losing control over their foreign affairs. When countless child lives are at stake, along with the reputation of international adoption on a global scale, the Hague Convention assumed power and took the leadership role. As of February 2011, the Hague Convention has shut down all means of international adoption in over 80 countries¹³. Until further notice, the world is on standby as to when the borders will re-open. But until then, every country is prohibited to engage in any form of child exportation from these countries. The Hague Convention has clearly demonstrated that they are a very powerful organization which has no hesitation to seize a dictatorship role when the global department of foreign affairs loses its sense of control.

13 <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/adoption/hague.asp>

Religion and Spirituality

Although religious and spiritual views weigh in heavily on most world issues, they have been dismissed when regarding international adoption. International adoption is based on the

acceptance of others, and the disregard for individual differences in order to help the less fortunate. If prospective adoptive parents took into account the religious boundaries between parent and child, the system could not possibly succeed. Adopted children come forth from all the world's countries and therefore are of all religions; they are the world's children.

If the child's country of origin was discriminative of countries that were of a different religion, then their children would never be adopted. This situation also plays out vice versa; if the adopting country only adopted children of the same religion, then very few children would be brought across borders. It is obvious to state that the workers of the sending countries are hopeful that the child's religion will be carried on throughout their new life, but they are also aware that by allowing diverse people to become the child's legal guardians gives them the right to convert said child. In some cases, an adopted child's instilled religion is embraced and respected by their new parents, but in most cases the child is too young to have these views deeply instilled in them, and they slip easily into the family's religious or spiritual practices. International adoption could be seen as a form of globalization; bringing the world's religions together by placing advocates for each in various countries. However, there have been cases in the past in which there has been obvious religious preference. For example, when adopting a Jewish child, Jewish parents may get some privileges concerning time and other aspects of the adoption process.

Aside from religion itself, it is theorized that there are some underlying political aspects behind the process of international adoption. These aspects, however relative, are of course never mentioned out right but simply incorporated behind closed doors. Certain countries,

racism and religious groups are given privileges that the rest of the world is unaware of. These privileges are based on the status of the adopting country in combination with the adoptee country. Political status, as well as the extent of foreign affairs between the two, filters into the decisions made regarding the adoption. The epitome of this unfairness would be the relationship between Kazakhstan and Canada. The adoption process takes Canadians an average of two years to complete; this is an unusually long waiting period. Meanwhile, the same process takes an average of eight months to one year for parents from France to complete. The immense difference between the waiting periods for these two countries is due to underlying political issues. It can be assumed that it takes Canadians a longer time to adopt a child from Kazakhstan because the two countries are not international trading partners, but France and Kazakhstan are. This political preference is unfortunate, but it cannot be solved without powerful influence; and expanding the field of foreign affairs for the sole purpose of promoting the trade of children internationally is ludicrous. Outside of one-on-one political disputes, there are various unspoken rules regarding international adoption. One of the most obvious is the notion, which has more recently become an instinct, that no country will cause even the slightest hassle for the United States. It has become second nature to treat the Americans as first class citizens in the global community, and concerning foreign affairs they are constantly treated as the higher-ups. This is obviously due to the incredible amount of power which they retain, and the informal sense of control which they exert. It is factual to say that the United States has enough power to bring great damage to another country. When involved in foreign affairs with any level of dependency on the United States as a trading partner, there is always fear imposed on the weaker partner. Third world countries are especially affected by

the plague of the US. Unfortunately, America has the ability to infiltrated themselves deep into the system and then hold the country's dependency over their heads. Therefore, if an American couple is looking to adopt from one of these countries, the complicated aspects seem to sway in their favour. The waiting period is never long, and the process is surely less droning. However, easier access to these children can definitely have negative implications. These demonstrations exemplify the underlying political issues involved with international adoption.

Regardless, there are varying religious views on the subject of international adoption. The Christian view is particularly interesting and controversial. The standard take on international adoption amongst Christians is that it represents the loss of faith in God to provide one with their own biological children; therefore making adoption an act of defiance to God, and subsequently the work of the devil. This harsh and unforgiving view however, is only in regards to international adoption when conceiving biological children is an upholding option; the stature changes completely when in regards to adoption as a last resort. International adoption is revered by Christian couples who choose to adopt as a solution to infertility. This is because Christians believe that all good couples should have children, biological or adopted, in order to have the name of God transfigured within their family¹⁴. If the intent of adopting a child into a Christian family is to revere the name of God and to allow Him into their home, then the process is completely acceptable. It is believed that Christians do, in some cases, value the option of international adoption because they realize from the Holy Text that they too were adopted by God. This concept is found over and over in the Bible, that God has adopted Christians and

14 http://www.galatians4.com/robb_n_randi/Perspective.html

they are His children. Adoption is the best thing that has happened to Christians. When they were adopted, they became heirs of eternal life, and were no longer slaves to sin and subject to death. God took in those who were enslaved to sin, freed them from their debt, and adopted them into His family. This is the only way a person can have eternal life; they cannot earn it or buy it, it comes from being adopted by God. A person is adopted and becomes part of God's family, and therefore bringing a child into a Christian family is viewed as doing God's work for the greater good. It is believed by most Christians that the act of international adoption should be done for the glory of God, thus making the process justified. It is made clear that the topic is of great controversy within this religion, but highlights the cultural strength that Christianity beholds. Religion and spirituality have a great impact on world issues, and change the way in which they are viewed by different cultural groups around the world.

The Islamic view on international adoption is also a topic of controversy. The Islam believe that adoption is perfectly acceptable within the child's country of origin, but the adoption of an Islamic child by foreigners is less so. An Islamic family network is geared completely towards kinship and unity; therefore making the necessity for adoption rare. If or when a child is orphaned, it is unlikely that prospective couples will find that the child has no other family ties whatsoever to take care of him or her- a completely abandoned child is practically unheard of. With such strong familial bonds, Islamic law would place an emphasis on locating a relative to care for the child, before allowing someone outside of the family, much less the community or country, to adopt and remove the child from his or her cultural, and religious roots. However, in the odd case that a Muslim child is adopted without prior hassle, it is not frowned upon by the Islamic people. This is due to their Holy Text which tells the people that the Prophet Muhammad was an orphan himself, and paid special attention to the care of children. He himself adopted a former slave and raised him with

the same care as if he were his own son¹⁵. Although inner country as well as international adoptions is acceptable within the Islamic religion, it is made clear that the adoptive parents have their limits. Sacred religious texts clearly state that the child's biological parents are to stay in touch with the child and the ties between the two parties are not to be severed. The Qur'an goes to great lengths to remind the adoptive parents that they are not, and will never be, the child's real parents and are serving merely as the trustees and guardians of someone else's child. This idea is proven through the section of the Qur'an which reads, *"...Nor has He made your adopted sons your biological sons. Such is only your manner of speech by your mouths. But Allah tells you the Truth, and He shows the right Way. Call them by the names of their fathers; that is juster in the sight of Allah. But if you know not their father's names, call them your brothers in faith, or your trustees. But there is no blame on you if you make a mistake therein. What counts is the intention of your hearts. And Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful."*¹⁶ This passage establishes that the biological family of the adopted child is of greater importance than the adoptive one, it also brings to their attention that the child's surname shall not be changed to match that of their new family; their original family name is to remain intact. These insights into the Islam's religious views on the case of international adoption show an interesting point of view from the third world position. It is important to consider the religious

15 <http://islam.about.com/cs/parenting/a/adoption.htm>

16 Qur'an 33:4-5

views on both ends of the spectrum in the process of international adoption; they play a vital role when making decisions that will change a child's life forever.

Clearly, religious and spiritual views have a tremendous influence on the issue of international adoption. They can sway the subject one way or the other, and can help to make pivotal decisions regarding the child as much as the hopeful parents. Religion almost always weighs in on world issues, and this statement does not shy that of adoption. It is a complicated process to begin with and the aspects religion, whether strict or lenient, does impact the final decision. Although it would seem absurd to have the views of different religions factor into an international affair, they can in fact be justified. By littering the world with the children from widespread countries, life can become somewhat of a melting pot in which all religious views can coexist in close quarters. The countries from which these children came may be fearful that their religion is weakened by the loss of their upcoming generation to the outside world; and since these less fortunate countries do not have much left to cling to but their God, religion there becomes very strong. The people want nothing more than to have their religion revered and respected by foreigners, and therefore are hesitant to let go of their younger followers. The fact that various religions take their toll on international adoption is perfectly reasonable, and the countries who insist upon it are not at fault for adoptions which cannot be completed on a religious basis.

CASE STUDY 1: CHINA

In the scheme of international adoption, China has been recognized as a leading participant. Since the dawn of intercountry adoption, Chinese children have been transported from their native country to all corners of the globe. Because the nation has been plagued by disease, poverty and overpopulation, international adoption serves as a refuge. The children of China are given a chance to thrive and prosper in developed countries and to be embraced by families who love them and who strive to give them the best future possible. This is not a fabricated truth, nor a whole-hearted lie; it is in fact a reality for a large percentage of adopted Chinese children. Unfortunately, it is not so for the remaining percent. International adoption has imposed its afflictions for China, for in a desperate nation there is bound to be complications. However, the adoption crisis in China is an exemplar of the extremities of the actions taken under the influence of ultimate desperation. Certain aspects of the hapless state of Chinese society have allowed disaster to align itself, and linearize atrocious actions to parallel the norms of everyday life. Under these circumstances, the fight for power and dominance has become a human battle to which China has proven itself to be a constant war ground. But the most obscene authenticity in this horrid scheme is the fact that children have been brought into the playing field. The actuality is that Chinese children are just another wagering factor in the global market. Chinese babies and children are bought, sold, and trafficked like any other existing material good. They are frequently abducted and then bargained off to generate a maximum profit, and are thereafter long forgotten faces of a disintegrating society. Child and baby trafficking has become a rampant issue in Chinese society, and international adoption seems to only add to the problem. The demand for Chinese children in the developed world has

allowed orphanages resemble factories, and for adoption organizations to open like fast food chains around the country. International adoption has complicated the attempts to reduce the problems concerning the transaction of Chinese children worldwide and it is concluded that, by law, the program should be permanently terminated.

Because China is one of the world's most populous nations, the economy suffers greatly. Hunger and poverty are prominent issues to this day, and the government has decided to take extreme action. In 1979, the one-child policy was implemented throughout all of China¹⁷. This policy mandated that each family was allowed to have one child and one child only. The one-child policy was effective in the economic sense, but the more focused on product of the policy was the rise in the number of orphans and of children available for adoption. These rates soared for multiple reasons. In the Chinese culture, a male child is recognized as that of higher value to his parents because he will carry on the family name, while a girl is destined to marry into another family. With the constraints of the one-child policy, families couldn't afford to have anything but a boy. Obviously there was no way to ensure that a male child would be conceived, especially in rural China where contraceptives are almost unheard of. Also, abortion is uncommon because sex-screening ultrasounds had been deemed illegal in many parts of China and are still few and far between in rural China today. However, more recently ultrasounds have become widely available in more urbanized areas and are much more popular. This technology fails to serve honourable purposes though; because of the opportunity

¹⁷ <http://www.brandeis.edu/investigate/gender/adoption/china.html>

to sex-screen, female children are aborted very frequently. Statistically, between 500 000 and 750 000 unborn Chinese girls are aborted every year after sex-screening¹⁸. The one-child policy has generated a female genocide in China, and has caused much other instability. At birth, female children are buried, drowned, or left on the streets either to be scavenged by animals or for hope that someone will take them in. Obviously, the value of a baby girl is meagre and the reality of their fate is solidified by the horrendous state that they are often found in. "They'd be wrapped in rags, filthy. ... Sometimes they'd have ants all over their face because babies have a sweet smell and the ants like them."¹⁹ In most cases infants left in the streets are picked up by blue-collar workers such as garbage men and women, or neighbours who then sell them to local orphanages. It is illegal in China to abandon a baby, even at an orphanage, so people would discard their unwanted daughters in the dark of night in cardboard boxes or bamboo baskets. If the baby was left near an orphanage, they would often light a firecracker as a signal for the staff to find the baby and bring her inside to safety²⁰. However, the orphanages are not always authentic. Child trafficking rings have been discovered in several Chinese provinces, usually revolving around an orphanage nearby. These rings include dozens of people who buy and sell any number of babies for high prices to the orphanage which then sells them across

18 <http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2001/2/14/202119.shtml>

19 <http://www.allgirlsallowed.org/mom-and-pop-baby-trafficking-ring-provided-chinese-girls-adoption>

20 <http://www.allgirlsallowed.org/mom-and-pop-baby-trafficking-ring-provided-chinese-girls-adoption>

borders for an even higher profit. Baby trafficking rings are very secretive and involve many members so that local orphanages do not catch on. The members pick up abandoned children by night and then fabricate their identities so that they have the ability to sell them to the orphanages as their own children. These children are then made available for international adoption to the developed world where they will grow up not knowing anything about their history or their culture. Because the vast majority of babies that are abandoned are girls, the opportunity to adopt a Chinese boy is slim. And thus, the one-child policy has resulted in the domination of the Chinese population by the male gender. It is estimated that today there are 60 million more males than females inhabiting the nation²¹. In an overpopulated and still developing country, an imbalance such as this could be hazardous to the nation's future.

Another looming reality is the threat of family planning organizations. The family planners are groups of government authorized people who sterilize families on a routine basis. They inspect households to ensure that all families are abiding by the one-child policy. In several cases, the family planning organizations have been known to confiscate babies from families who had violated the one-child policy and then collected money by selling them for foreign adoption²². If a family was found to have more than one child, or two in selective areas, the youngest of the children was executed. First the planners requested that the father murder

21 http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5953508/ns/world_news/t/china-grapples-legacy-its-missing-girls/v

22 <http://www.allgirlsallowed.org/mom-and-pop-baby-trafficking-ring-provided-chinese-girls-adoption>

the child himself, and if he refused the planners would do so themselves. An example of this would be the case of the Huang family.

In 2001, the Huang family was discovered to have two children the oldest was a girl and the youngest an infant boy. Family planning officials ordered the father to kill the newborn baby, whom he instead tried to hide for a few months. Eventually they found the baby boy and drowned him in a rice paddy, in front of his parents²³.

The family planning organizations have an immense impact on China, and retain a lot of control. The inhumane tactics they use to enforce the policies are common, and passer-byes do not bat an eyelash. The existence of planners cannot be helped, for the government has approved their organizations and has issued their assistance with population control. This labels the Chinese government as a band of situational extremists with murderous intentions for those who disregard the law.

International adoption has created other repulsive issues in China as well. International adoption has been a source of great income for Chinese orphanages since the beginning of the trade, but it has also been a source of crime and hardship. As well as this, adoption has created nightmarish things that only the sick-minded could ever imagine; things that can only be properly described by the use of terms such as 'child laundering' and 'child transactions' come to life under the leniency of the adoption programs. Chinese orphanages do not only apply to abandoned babies and children; they also buy them from parents who are either too poor to

23 <http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2001/2/14/202119.shtml>

afford the extra mouth to feed, or who are depending on a boy but have given birth to a girl. These children are purchased by the orphanage for a sum worth around twice the annual salary for a working class family. The orphanages then sell the child for ten times what they bought them for by advertising them to the western world²⁴. Most of, if not all, of the abandoned children who are not taken in immediately by the orphanage are plucked off the streets by passer-byes or neighbours who then create a false identity which has the child perceived as their own. By selling 'their own' child to the orphanage, they are doing nothing lawless and walk away with the money in their pocket. This process of identity fraud is referred to as child laundering and is just another huge example of the dehumanization of children in China, and how international adoption is feeding into their unethical business. Besides the trafficking of abandoned children, there are thousands of cases concerning child abductions. By the Chinese government's admission, each year between 30,000 and 60,000 children go missing, most of them abducted²⁵. Orphanage directors acknowledge that they don't have the resources to make sure that babies brought in were legitimately abandoned, and they obviously have no intention to alert the authorities for fear that they could lose profit during investigation periods. But because kidnapping and child trafficking are so common in China, victimized children quickly become nothing more than a statistic; usually no police investigations are ever launched. But the fraud and other gruesome possibilities are covered up during the process of

24 <http://www.brandeis.edu/investigate/gender/adoption/china.html>

25 <http://allgirlsallowed.org>

international adoption, and pretty baby girls were yearned for by western society. Chinese girls were in demand in developed countries worldwide; adoptions grew rapidly. In 1995, China sent more than 2,500 children into foreign adoption; in 1998, that number had almost doubled to 4,855; by 2005, that number had tripled again, to more than 14,500 baby girls transported around the globe. Between 70 and 75% of these adoptions were abducted children, and nearly all of them girls.²⁶ The investigation of kidnapping cases is left to in the hands of the local police, and does not concern the federal government whatsoever. Almost all abduction cases are turned away, for the sole reason that it has become such a rampant problem in China that it is nothing out of the ordinary. Kidnapping in China is a crime that could easily be compared to vandalism in the cities of the developed world; it is a felony but is simple to turn a blind eye to. The lack of social security and strength in the authority figures has set the perfect climate for China to develop a black market. This is a system of buying and selling illicit items in violation of legal prices and tax exemptions. Because the transaction of children is illegal, baby trafficking is part of the black market. Children are bought and sold within China in spite of the government; these children are usually male and are most often purchased by families who are desperate for a boy²⁷. These children are sold like merchandise, to generate profit for the power-hungry citizens; they are looked upon as characterless freight and have lost all qualities that define them as human.

²⁶ http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/china_adoption.php

²⁷ <http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=4774224>

It can be gathered that by partaking in the affair of international adoption, the developed world is financing the criminals who buy, sell, and traffic the poor and poverty-struck children of China. International adoption promotes the transaction between the Eastern and Western world which allows for the trading of children to take place. The one-child policy, female genocide, child laundering, and child trafficking rings are all products that come from the equation of international adoption. International adoption should be permanently terminated on the basis that it is a two-way process, without the demand for Chinese babies the native orphanages would no longer have reason to abduct or collect children for the purpose of generating profit. China has accepted the fact that their children are, in a sense, a material good of high demand across international borders; and when made available for purchase have the ability to bring wealth to the country. The adoption of Chinese children has a huge impact on both the developed world and, obviously, China itself. Clearly there are countless wrongful actions which take place between point A and point D, and the developed world often fails to recognize that fact. They are either unable to comprehend the harsh reality, or prefer to turn a blind eye. Either way, the inhumane and unethical actions which take place between the transactions need to come to a halt; and the end of international adoption is a logical answer.

CASE STUDY 2: GUATEMALA

Guatemala is located below Mexico, along the coast of the North Pacific Ocean. It is amongst the world's poorest countries, and operates under a weak political system. When added together, Guatemala has the perfect climate for economic and social issues to arise. It is not uncommon for babies and children there to be sold into adoption and trafficking rings like livestock. Birth mothers' rights are

frequently abused²⁸, and children's rights completely obliterated. International adoption has a huge impact on their society, and the demand for Guatemalan children is harming their delicate system.

Guatemala is the world's second top 'sender' country, next to China with an adoption industry valued at \$100 million dollars²⁹. The market is driven by the demand for adoptions from prospective parents in the developed world and, as so often happens when there is high demand and the potential for a profit, swindlers appear to exploit the system. Guatemala is such a popular country for international adoptions because the wait is estimated in months rather than years³⁰. It is a common sight for natives to see their streets brimming with foreign families lined up to adopt orphaned or unwanted children. The legal requirements necessary to privately adopt a Guatemalan baby are minimal- adoptive parents need a certificate from a lawyer and a short report from a social worker³¹; there is practically no state control over the origin or destination of the baby. As well as this, Guatemalan social units do not issue follow up checks to ensure that the child is in good hands. It is the lack of interrogation and the absence of rigorous and revealing record checks that allows for people to take advantage of the system. It is estimated that between 3500 and 4000 Guatemalan children are

28 <http://boingboing.net/2008/03/26/adoption-and-corrupt.html>

29 <http://boingboing.net/2008/03/26/adoption-and-corrupt.html>

30 http://insidedateline.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2008/01/14/4374375-guatemalan-adoption-has-two-sides

31 <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/guatemal.htm>

adopted each year, the majority of them infants³²; and the rate is increasing. This makes children the second most lucrative export from Guatemala, next to bananas. It is certain that a large percent of these children have been abducted, sold, or conceived under the intention to sell. Babies are big business in Guatemala, and the transaction of children has served the purpose of profit for generations.

Guatemala is governed by a presidential system³³, a political framework in which the president has the veto vote and commands society; somewhat resembling a dictatorship. As usual under this type of supremacy government, there is a large distinction between the haves and the have-nots. The majority of the Guatemalan people live in extreme poverty, and are not given the opportunity to change their social status. Under these circumstances, people will go to great lengths to obtain the financial stability needed to maintain their quality of life. Women who are part of child trafficking rings have the option to pursue a labour intensive, but a well-paying role; a number of women high enough to be brought to the attention of the western world, are working for trafficking rings as 'renters'. These women are usually suffering extreme desperation, poverty, and hunger and are willing to go to drastic measures to scrounge up any amount of money they can. In order to do so, these women rent out their wombs to members of the baby trafficking rings³⁴. They consent to bore child after child to support the baby business, and in return are paid by the piece. The women are sometimes forced to rent their wombs to the trade as a last resort; they sometimes start as young as fourteen years old by request of a

32 <http://kadnexus.wordpress.com/2010/03/25/guatemala-will-resume-adoptions-in-june-2010>

33 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guatemala>

34 <http://www.globalenvision.org/2008/05/20/international-rent-a-womb>

starving family member or by their own choice. It is a terrifying fact that the girls undergoing multiple child births are merely children themselves. There have been very few cases where women were forced into pregnancy, and therefore this issue is viewed simply as a career option. It is a horrible reality that these women struggle through the physical labour of bearing a child knowing that they will be forced to sell them into trafficking lines and eventually into adoption. If it were not for the demand for Guatemalan children, womb renting would not be a necessary career for young women in Guatemala.

With the skyrocketing numbers of Guatemalan children adopted worldwide annually, it is no coincidence that the kidnapping rates flux at the same time. Thousands of children and infants are reportedly abducted each year³⁵, with the conclusion that they have been sold into child trafficking rings. As in most other third world countries, the police force is dismal in Guatemala. In a country of approximately 13 million citizens, only 20 000 are police officers³⁶. The miniscule amount of authority and security cannot control the entity of Guatemalan society, and therefore almost all abduction cases are ignored and searches are never launched for the retrieval of lost children. However, there have been a few cases which have been brought to developed countries such as America and Canada where general investigations are initiated³⁷. Abductions are usually followed by the process of child laundering. This is the process during which the victimized child receives a new identity so that they can be passed off as a member of the abductor's family. Within days of the crime, the alleged parent then sells the

35 <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48141>

36 <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48141>

37 <http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=4787761&page=1>

baby to the nearest orphanage for large sums of money. From the orphanage, the child is put up for international adoption which generates an even larger profit to support the orphanage, and therefore supports the continuation of kidnapping. In the scheme of things, thousands of Guatemalan children lose the identities and their existence begins to seem fabricated. Children are legitimately viewed as merchandise, and society's youngest members are being sold like indistinctive freight on the global market. Guatemala has developed a fertile black market which sells their children all over the world. These are all signs of desperation, and international adoption only adds to the magnitude of the issue. To the developed world, especially to those involved with human rights, Guatemala is renowned as a 'baby factory'. This is because of the sheer number of babies adopted each year, according to statistics one in every 100 Guatemalan births is bound for a foreign country and a new family³⁸. The demeaning reputations that Guatemala received caused them to bring international adoption to a halt in June of 2007, which lasted for two years³⁹. Enough time for government officials to regain control over the system, and to investigate the widespread baby thefts around the country. When adoption resumed in the year 2009, it was laden with new rules and expectations. For example, applicants had to undergo background checks, the process became longer, and there was a significant drop in the number of children available for adoption⁴⁰. Also, children who are sold to orphanages are now required to take a DNA test along with their parents to ensure that they are being placed there by their real families⁴¹, and not through child laundering. Guatemala has been through some tremendously rough times, and has in

38 <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/the-americas/091222/guatemala-adoptions>

39 <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/the-americas/091222/guatemala-adoptions>

40 <http://www.internationaladoptionstories.com/guatemalan-adoption-laws.htm>

turn been faced with dire situations. Unfortunately, children and their ability to generate profit in the global market have been used as a solution for years.

Guatemala's adoptions trade industry is dependent on the demand for their children worldwide. From this demand, they have developed multiple aspects of the business that are nothing short of utterly terrifying. The trafficking and sales of babies and children, as well as the ever-growing rate of annual abductions are a pressing problem in Guatemalan society. Besides this there are the looming factors of child laundering, the renting of women's` wombs, and the fertile black market for the transaction of children across the globe. Obviously Guatemala has been taunted by these factors for years, and it is made clear that they are running out of solutions. But however broken a country may seem to be, the developed world must remember never to underestimate its ability to piece itself back together. It seems that through the turmoil and hardship, Guatemala is finally beginning to restore its reputation. They have gone from one of the world's worst examples of wholesome international adoption, to being lauded for the example it now sets for the rest of Latin America.

CASE STUDY 3: HAITI

Haiti is located south of Miami, and shares the island with the Dominican Republic. It is the most densely populated and poorest country in the Western hemisphere. Over the past couple of years, Haiti has been shaken by a number of earthquakes that have left the country even more devastated than before. At first, international adoption seemed like a logical solution for all the turmoil that Haiti was experiencing. But as the situation unfolds itself, it is plain to see that this is not so. Unfortunately, many prospective parents worldwide fail to comprehend that their good intentions may in fact be hindering the children of Haiti instead of helping them. It is no question that foreign aid is a necessity during these trying times, but international adoption is not the proper form. It is feared by world organizations everywhere that the rapid flux in the number of children leaving the country following the disasters may be aiding to baby trafficking rings, sex slavery, and identity fraud on an international level. Haiti is a desperate country whose strength has been shattered as a result of a series of unfortunate events, and there is a very real sense that the nation's youngest citizens are being put at risk. This hazard is only amplified by the process of rapid international adoption.

The earthquakes that struck Haiti on two separate occasions left the country grovelling on its knees, desperate for assistance from across international borders. Funding and other financial assistance was provided, but both Haiti and the developed world were concerned about the fate of the victimized children. Without end, couples

from all corners of the globe were flying into Haiti; applications, records, and funds in hand. At that point UNICEF had estimated there were 380,000 orphans in Haiti after the earthquakes, in a population of only 9 million⁴². This caused the process of adoption to pick up incredible speed in efforts to get the devastated children out of the country. However, it is a major concern that these children were deported far too quickly. Haitians fear that the organizations have possibly legalized hundreds of adoptions of children who may not be legitimate orphans. There is a panic that the parental figures of victimized Haitian children may not have died in the earthquake, but are currently missing. Meanwhile their children are being sold into the adoption trade as 'orphans'. The fact that biological parents are only being considered at this stage, and as merely an afterthought at that, is despicable and shows the ignorance of international adoption. Besides the thought of selling children with the possibility of surviving kin, international adoption poses other complications as well. The rate of adoption during this difficult time is soaring, and because of this there is high demand for children and low regulation of standard procedures. This makes it simple for traffickers to exploit the organizations, and baby and child trafficking rings are formed. It is not uncommon for parents to sell their child in exchange for financial assistance in trying times, for fear that they become the reason for their child's death; parents would rather know that their children are in good hands across seas than to have them die in their homeland. However, it is not difficult for traffickers to take advantage of these desperate parents and sell the babies

42 <http://abcnews.go.com/WN/HaitiEarthquake/haiti-earthquake-devastates-lives-orphans/story?id=9552538>

into trafficking rings, and never delivering the financial assistance promised to the family⁴³. Although already horrible, the situation in Haiti does worsen. Though most infrastructure was demolished in either one earthquake or the other, there were still a handful of medical buildings available for use. One hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital was populated majorly by child casualties. In a matter of days UNICEF had caught wind of over 15 cases of children gone missing from the hospital, it is probable that they were abducted by traffickers⁴⁴. It is for these horrific reasons that Save the Children, World Vision and the British Red Cross have called for an immediate halt to adoptions of Haitian children which were not approved before the earthquake⁴⁵ as they know from experience that trafficking happens in the chaos that usually follows emergencies. It is not consoling knowing that in their time of need, a country is exploited and taken advantage of by countries that are far better off. International adoption has posed countless problems for Haiti, most of which would be unthinkable concepts in the developed world.

Issues concerning aspects of society such as orphanage rates and child trafficking did not materialize with the occurrence of the earthquakes. Before the natural disaster

43 <http://www.laurachristianson.com/laura/adoption-fraud-child-trafficking-in-haiti-guatemala/>

44 http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article6999280.ece

45 http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article6999280.ece

Haiti was no stranger to these disheartening concepts. There are so many unwanted, abandoned, or orphaned children in Haiti that over 200 orphanages exist in the capital city alone⁴⁶; this means that there are hundreds more scattered across the country. The immense amount of institutes for these children is a necessity since the number of orphans in Haiti was estimated at approximately 380 000 prior to the earthquake⁴⁷, and the number had obviously increased drastically afterwards. The incredible number of wandering children is tied to the statistic that 48% of Haiti's population is made up of children under the age of eighteen⁴⁸. Although helpful in most aspects, the magnitude of orphanages presents hindering aspects as well. The institutes have become the ideal frontier for child traffickers to generate business. Children are vulnerable and often unsupervised, making them easy targets to pluck off the streets and sell into the adoption trade. "UNICEF has been working in Haiti for many years and we knew the problem with the trade of children in Haiti which existed before, and unfortunately many of these trade networks have links with the international adoption 'market'."⁴⁹

46 http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article6999280.ece

47 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/adoption-agencies-warned-off-haitis-orphans-1871972.html>

48 <http://www.globalissues.org/news/2010/01/23/4290>

49 Jean Luc Legrand

This quote solidifies the fact that the exploitation of children was already a previous rampant issue, but also that international adoption has endorsed its progression. As well as child and baby trafficking, international adoption almost promotes the continuing oppression by international sex traffickers of children. Although not idealistic choices, neighboring countries provide refuge for Haitian children. After the earthquake, children were sent in stock both to Mexico and the Dominican Republic where they were promised temporary shelter in the orphanages and other institutes there until they could either be adopted or sent back home. Instead, these bands of children were separated and sent into trafficking rings all over the two countries. The case of the Dominican Republic is interesting however. It is recognized now throughout the developed world that Haiti and the Dominican Republic do not share a healthy relationship. Haitian children were regularly sent to the Dominican Republic to work in sex tourism or as merely a short cut to be shipped off like cargo to international traffickers⁵⁰. Clearly international adoption is not revered in Haiti for completely understandable reasons, and it is impacting Haitian society in an awful way. In order to lighten the burden of their extreme social issues, international adoption from Haiti should be halted.

The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoptions composed a treaty which can be signed and mobilized by any adoptee country that wishes it for the purpose of shutting down their trade of children

50 <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world>

with other countries around the world. When this treaty is signed, international adoption comes to a grinding halt and the country's foreign affairs begin to be regulated. Haiti is amongst the 83 countries that have signed with the Hague Convention this year⁵¹. International adoption was officially terminated in Haiti as of March 2nd, 2011⁵², and is expected to re-open in a maximum of 2 years. It is depressing that the influence of the developed world has been so negative on Haiti that they no longer trust that their children are safe in the alleged structured countries. If it were not for the ignorance that makes people think that they are any better than others and that vulnerability is the incentive to take advantage of something for personal benefit, international adoption would still be viewed as a solution rather than a confinement. Haiti should have been able to trust the developed world and look to it for guidance and support, especially with the lives of their children. The termination of international adoption may have very well discouraged Haiti from partaking in any foreign affairs at all with a select few countries; and this lack of communication will affect the process of globalization. The Hague Convention will help to prevent the issues of international exploitation and trafficking, but is less effective in the field of inner country issues.

International adoption has generated many incredibly large problems for Haiti, and has quite possibly left the nation in greater devastation than before. The developed

51 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hague_Adoption_Convention

52 <http://www.haitiadopt.org>

world came to the country with the intention to provide any kind of aid within some stretch of the imagination; but all progress made was trumped by the hindrance they created in the process. The adoption of children whose biological parents may still be alive, the selling of children into local trafficking rings for financial assistance, and the abduction of casualty children are all unethical actions promoted by the demand for Haitian children in the developed world. Issues such as trafficking and kidnapping are made to seem like simple crimes to commit within one's country in relation to the rate at which they are being committed on the world scale. The mere fact that children have become a focal point in the wealth of the global market is appalling, and for the sake of Haiti's young population-as well as that of the world, international adoption should cease to exist as a trade.

International Organizations

UNICEF plays the leading role in the process of international adoption. This organization operates under the United Nations, and works to bring justice to the children who are bound for new families in new countries. UNICEF believes that all decisions relating to children, including adoptions, should be made with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration. This government organization ensures fairness to the child, and protects his or her rights in any situation. UNICEF is based on the idea that every child deserves a structured family life, and to be surrounded by the family of their native origin. These rights are only passed over when the child's family is unable or unwilling to care for them, at which point, alternate means of caring for the child will be considered. UNICEF's provisions are meant first and foremost to protect children, but also have the positive effect of providing assurance to prospective adoptive parents that their child has not been the subject of illegal and detrimental practices⁵³.

Convention on Rights of the Child is a treaty under the order of the United Nations. It is among the most substantial of all the Human Rights treaties. The Convention on Rights of the Child expands on the fundamental rights of all children, and all governments who accept it work to fulfill its goals. The aim of the Convention is to set standards for the defence of children against the neglect and abuse they face in differing degrees as well as in differing countries. The rights which are conveyed in the Convention can be put into three groups; provision, protection, and participation. Provision is the child's right to possess or have access to certain material things as well as services. Protection is the child's right to be protected from harm, things like

53 http://www.unicef.org/media/media_41118.html

sexual exploitation, separation, and so on. Participation is the child's right to have a voice in decisions made concerning his or her life. It is also the right to be a part of society in order to be prepared for adult life⁵⁴.

The Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption is a non-government organization (NGO) and plays the most vital role in the program of international adoption. The Convention's provisions are to enforce the standards of the Rights of the Child, and ensure that international adoption is not pushing the boundaries of child rights. As most related organizations, the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption considers the best interests of the child and protects them from any form of exploitation. The Hague Convention differs greatly from most other organizations concerning adoption because it retains real power and authority when activated. When a country signs with the Convention, they surrender the majority of their control over all foreign affairs involving the trade of children. By joining with the Hague Convention, the opportunity to adopt a child from said country becomes non-existent. The Convention has the power to shut down international adoption on the basis that its purposes are being abused and the system is being exploited. However, implementation of the Hague Convention can also be used to simply regulate the flow of children leaving the country. Participation in the Convention is growing to be more popular among problematic countries, in 2011 alone 83 countries⁵⁵ signed with the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption for realization that the rights of their children are being abused after they have been sold into international adoption. Some of these

54 <http://www.hrea.org/feature-events/simplified-crc.html>

55 <http://adoption.about.com/od/international/a/conventioncount.htm>

countries include: Haiti, Russia, and Vietnam⁵⁶. The use of the Hague Convention as a tool in international adoption has proven to be successful. Countries that had previously been faced with worst-case scenarios concerning the well-being of their children now experience regulated affairs or, in several cases, no longer have the demand for exportation of their people. The Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption is, by far, the most effective international system used to develop solutions.

Save the Children is another non-government organization which operates to maintain rights for children, and to protect them from the horrifying possibilities that come with international adoption. Save the Children is an independent and globalized organization that lends a powerful voice in the campaign for change. Save the Children provides immediate short-term support to improve the lives of children across the globe, but ultimately it is an organization known to fight for long-term change for the same cause. "Many children's lives are marred because the adults around them do not take children's rights seriously. Save the Children works to protect and respond to all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children."⁵⁷ This is a quote used by Save the Children to express their perception of child protection. The organization recognizes the realities that children living in impoverished countries are faced with on a day-to-day basis, and work to install a branch of social security geared

56 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hague_Adoption_Convention

57 http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/what_we_do/child_protection/index.html

towards children. Save the Children acknowledges the presence of abduction, trafficking, abuse, and exploitation of minors in developing countries and has become an advocate for child rights. In fact, the foundation for this company is that of the Convention on Rights of the Child, another organization striving to achieve children's rights. Save the Children is an effective NGO that advocates for children worldwide who have no voice, and are incapable of standing up for themselves when it comes to their role in the international adoption trade.

All of these international organizations have a significant impact on the process of international adoption worldwide. It is unfortunate that they have become necessities, but at the same time it is a comfort to know that there are large scale organizations that devote themselves to advocating for children's rights and protection if need be. UNICEF, the Convention on Rights of the Child, The Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, and the Save the Children Foundation are the most recognized organizations throughout world when speaking about international adoption. These organizations have brought aid to the children who have been made victims by the global marketing of the world's young people, and have prevented future cases and similar issues from arising.

Prevalence in Canada

Obviously, Canada is a member of the developed world and is renowned as a first world country. In the world of international adoption, Canada takes the role of the adopting country, bringing children across borders to provide them with a more ideal quality of life. However, Canada also has a hand in the misfortunes of these foreign children and makes some contribution to the unethical decision making that remains behind the scenes for the most part.

Besides being one of the top destination countries for adopted children; Canada's involvement in international adoption is slight. Canada operates under a strict set of adoption laws. Like all other adopting countries, Canada's role in international adoptions is guided by the principles of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and the *Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*⁵⁸. These international conventions are intended to protect children's rights, to provide safeguards to ensure that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interests of the child, and to

⁵⁸http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/community_partnerships/international_adoption/publications/2006/canadian_issues.shtml

establish a system of cooperation among states to prevent the abduction, and the sale or trafficking of children. As well as the implementation of these conventions, Canada has its own branch of government to deal with the issues concerning international adoptions. Human Resource and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) is the federal branch responsible for international adoption issues at both the national and international levels⁵⁹. HRSDC retains control over the general movement and placement of children from their country of origin and into Canada. The branch which deals with international adoption on the provincial level is referred to as Intercountry Adoption Services (IAS)⁶⁰. This unit operates within HRSDC, playing the role of the advocate for information and guidance for prospective parents in Canada. However, IAS is responsible for more than just leadership; this branch develops Canadian responses to adoption issues such as baby trafficking and abduction. Intercountry Adoption Services also regulates communications between the receiving and sending countries, and establishes healthy relationships between the two. Without IAS, the link between provincial, federal, and foreign counterparts would suffer greatly; Intercountry Adoption Services helps to maintain Canada's relations with the world's adoptee countries.

Although there are many great aspects of Canada's participation in international adoption, the nation also partakes in making the issues more prevalent. Canada's involvement in international adoption introduces the horrors of unethical practices to the country. There is an estimated total of 250 000 adoptions per year, and approximately 2000 of these children are

59 http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/community_partnerships/international_adoption/index.shtml

60 http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/community_partnerships/international_adoption/index.shtml

destined to continue their lives in Canada⁶¹. It is no stretch of the truth to say that a large percent of these children have either been placed in child or baby trafficking rings in their native country and then sold into international adoption, or abducted and laundered before they reached the orphanage from which Canadian families have adopted them. The fact that a percent of Canada's non-native population is made up of trafficked or itemized children is frightening. However, the demand for foreign children has not shown signs of dwindling in the past few years, and it is apparent that there is still a growing rate of prospective parents within the nation. And although these people are generally of good intentions, they do not realize that they are hindering the business of international adoption by fueling the reasons for such crimes with their demand for foreign babies.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (the RCMP) have expanded their field in order to help counter the problem of international adoption. Within the crisis, third world countries have made a spectacle of Canada; it has become a jumping point for foreign peoples, including children, to escape their mother country and flee to the United States. This strategy is more prevalent in the issue of illegal immigration, but also exists regarding international adoption. Vancouver, Canada has been singled out as one of the most popular places for organized criminal groups to traffic human beings mainly women and children. Canada now has a global reputation as a major transit point and destination for human trafficking. Crime groups are thought to target Vancouver in particular for its lax immigration laws, benefits available to immigrants, and the proximity to the U.S. border⁶². The RCMP have made attempts to reduce

61 <http://www.familyhelper.net/news/100811stats.html>

62 <http://www.amren.com/news/news04/02/27/canadasmuggling.html>

the number of illegal immigrant children by taking part in the homeland security program in the United States, which involves the inspection of each and every person crossing US borders and the search of all boats entering US ports; especially those arriving from Canada. As well, RCMP members have been stationed at the ports of foreign countries that have been problematic in this issue. By doing so, Canadian authorities retain a decent amount of control over the foreign sea ports, making the issue of illegal immigration more manageable. The RCMP has provided one of Canada's only solutions to the international adoption crisis, and should be recognized on a larger scale. However, the government should be doing more in terms of controlling the allowance of foreigners across the borders; especially in Vancouver.

In most situations, Canada plays the mediator; this pretense does not apply to the issues of international adoption. Currently, Canada can be grouped with all other developed countries that accept the laws of adoption, but do not go to any great lengths to lessen their impact on the demand rates for foreign children. As a solution, Canada should assume the role of the peacekeeper and limit their contribution to the global marketing and trade of human beings by placing a maximum number of children that can be adopted by Canadians each year. Although Canada is not making any large scale effort to decrease the amount of crime against humanity that ties into international adoption, they do not impact the business with any great negativity either. Canada seems to be a fairly peaceful and moderate player in the scheme of things, but this may be merely a result of ignorance on their behalf.

Solutions

The international adoption crisis can, at times, seem far too immense to ever be resolved. The fact of the matter is that when human beings are brought into an issue, the issue becomes more complex. When dealing with the lives of so many people, and children at that, there is more to be considered than straight forward solutions. The complications of the subject make it completely human, and something that people everywhere can relate to. The issue of international adoption can easily brought to home base, and this makes creating a suitable solution tremendously difficult.

It is made quite obvious that international adoption is an issue that has risen from financial greed. This issue can be referred to as a money issue; if money were not involved, then it would not be an issue. It is not realistic however to remove money from the picture, removing the costs of international adoption would only send the numbers skyrocketing. The exemption from paying for the adoption process would mean that the children would be traded for free around the globe; this would be utterly ridiculous. So clearly, the solution would not be to remove the fees of international

adoption. But to counter this idea, a brilliant plan would not be to lower the costs but to increase them. By upping the cost of adoption a child, the world would be doing them a favour. If the worst case countries were to send their prices through the roof, it would definitely discourage many people from considering them as a possibility. Thus, the lower demand for children would slow the rate of abductions, as well as decrease the number of children affected by traffickers. Though only theoretical, this would be a positive solution to the international adoption crisis.

Another ideal solution in resolution to international adoption would be to enforce inner country releasing. This is the process by which federal authority figures are stationed at the country's borders to check all flights, freight, and boats departing from the country before they cross the border. By doing so, they could eliminate the problem for ever leaving the country in which it began; they would be able to stop it at the source. In country releasing would allow for more jobs in the security branch, as well as more protection of children and their families. By regaining possession of the children before they leave the country authorities would, in theory, be able to trace their footsteps back to the criminals who have been endangering the lives of so many helpless people. This solution would be suitable for the international adoption crisis because it promotes control over one's own nation. It doesn't invite the aid of other countries, and makes the problematic one appear to be rising up to face their challenges. It would give pride to the country's people to be handling the situation on their own, and standing up for what they believe in. The importance of children in these

societies would be shown through the effort taken to keep them within the borders, and to protect them from harm.

Although international adoption is the epitome of acceptance of others and is structured around the notion that discrimination should be non-existent, one of the most powerful and effective solutions to solve the issue would be to enforce discrimination. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the option of international adoption should be limited to a select few members of society. By only allowing certain people to adopt under strict circumstances, most of the major problems could be avoided. If international adoption was only available to those with a legitimate reason to resort to adoption, then the issue would instantly become less prominent. Those eligible for adoption would include: couples who have tried to have their own biological children and have discovered infertility, as well as gay or lesbian couples. These two groups of people have justified reasons to adopt. By limiting the means of adoption, the demand for children would decrease at an amazing rate. Although this solution may seem to counter the structure of the issue, it would not by any means be counterproductive towards its resolution.

The development of technology has proven to be both a positive and a negative feature regarding most world issues. When discussing the issue of international adoption however, technology is not often a focal point. This is an underestimation of what the developmental stages of technology can really do for the world. If technology were to expand to the point where human beings could be cloned, where infertility

could be solved, or where a partner is not needed to conceive a child, the issue of international adoption would become less rampant. These theoretical forms of technology would allow unfortunate couples or individuals to have children without having to go across borders and adopt. The true power of technology is often underestimated, but the international adoption crisis would benefit from the development of new inventions with the potential to open new doors and provide more options for prospective parents.

And finally the promotion of public awareness on the subject of international adoption would be the most obvious and simple solution to the issue. The more the public knows, the more they will strive to do their part in bringing justice to the victimized children. The most efficient way of alerting the public of the issues behind what seems to be a worthy cause would be to present the issues to a target audience of people who could relate to it. Family communities and neighbourhoods would be the ideal place to start, but the arousal of awareness would also have to expand to an international level. The only way to begin solving an issue so massive is to start out small and then use the accumulating voices to have an affect on the issue globally. The number of righteous people overrides the number of criminals within the adoption crisis, the awareness and fight for justice alone would intimidate them. It is to be remembered that the small things, like public education on an issue, can make the biggest difference.

It is concluded that the most favourable solution would be to limit the availability of international adoption to a select few groups of people. This solution provides the most positive outcome, as well as the fewest negative aspects. This kind of discrimination is perfectly acceptable, seeing how it is intended for the greater good of children around the world. The issue of international adoption cannot possibly be solved by one singular idea, but this theory could have a very positive effect on its gradual journey to resolution. These children deserve to be served justice for the crimes committed towards them, and in consolation for having their lives put in jeopardy. Placing limits on the types of individuals who are allowed to extract them from their country, culture, and family is not unreasonable whatsoever. Considering the amount of harm done on a global level, it would be completely justified to use this idea as a possible solution.

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