

## **Child Trafficking for Adoption Purposes: A Study into the Criminogenic Factors of the German Intercountry Adoption System**

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**Abstract :** In Western countries, the demand for adoptable children, especially healthy babies, has been considerably high for several years. Rising infertility rates, liberal abortion politics, the widespread use of contraception, and the increasing acceptance of unmarried motherhood are factors that have decreased the number of infants available for domestic adoption in the U.S. and Europe. As a consequence, many involuntarily childless couples turn to intercountry adoption as a viable alternative to have a child of their own. However, the demand for children far outpaces the supply of orphans with the desired characteristics. The imbalance between the number of prospective adopters and the children available for intercountry adoption results in long waiting lists and high prices. The inordinate sums of money involved in the international adoption system have created a commercial 'underbelly' where unethical and illicit practices are employed to provide the adoption market with adoptable children. Children are being purchased or abducted from their families, hospitals or child care institutions and then trafficked to receiving countries as 'orphans'. This paper aims to uncover and explain the factors of the German adoption system that are conducive to child trafficking for adoption purposes. It explains that the tension between money and integrity as experienced by German adoption agencies, blind trust in the authorities in the sending countries as well as a lenient control system encourage and facilitate the trafficking in children to Germany.

**Keywords :** child trafficking, intercountry adoption, market in adoptable babies, German adoption system

**Conference Title :** ICHT 2017 : International Conference on Human Trafficking

**Conference Location :** Prague, Czechia

**Conference Dates :** March 23-24, 2017