

What in the World Are Anti-Trafficking NGOs Doing? Findings from a Global Study

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ABSTRACT

While the academic literature on human trafficking has grown enormously in the last 20 years, few studies have been done that empirically examine the organizations taking part in anti-trafficking responses. This article reports some findings of a study of 1,861 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide that identify themselves as working on the issue of human trafficking. The findings show that anti-trafficking NGOs have a wide variety of specializations, are most prevalent in Asia and Europe, mainly target children, often focus on both labor and sex trafficking, and engage in awareness and legislative or policy advocacy more often than direct service provision. Methodological, theoretical, and applied implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Anti-trafficking responses;
international
nongovernmental
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Introduction

Contemporary human trafficking has received a great deal of attention from academics, activists, and government officials worldwide.¹ As scholars from a variety of disciplines have been working to understand more about the causes, consequences, dynamics, and extent of human trafficking in the last 20 years, activists and governmental officials have been developing numerous local, national, and transnational anti-trafficking initiatives. These efforts have been astonishing in their rapid growth and global reach. International and regional governmental organizations (IGOs), particularly the International Office for Migration (IOM), the United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU), have developed and funded national, regional, and global anti-trafficking programs, while governments have created anti-trafficking agencies and legal scaffolding to address the problem. In terms of legal responses alone, there are now 169 states that are party to the 2000 United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and more than 134 states had implemented domestic anti-trafficking legislation by 2012 (United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, 2012).²

While the responses of IGOs and governments tend to capture the attention of those in the anti-trafficking field, less often acknowledged are the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that have

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¹Human trafficking generally refers to the exploitation of people who are moved within or across borders in circumstances of force, fraud, or coercion and may take the form of sex trafficking, labor trafficking, organ trafficking, or other forms. Definitions of human trafficking vary and have resulted in some ongoing debates in the field, but the legal definition provided in the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (United Nations General Assembly, 2000), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which has been widely ratified, often serves as a guideline for defining trafficking in both academic and applied human-trafficking studies (United Nations General Assembly, 2000).

²For current parties to the protocol, see the United Nations Treaty Collection (United Nations, 2016).

played a major role in anti-trafficking efforts. As NGOs have proliferated worldwide in recent decades and have become a prevalent form of organization (neither market based nor governmental), they have been addressing all manners of social issues, human trafficking included. The involvement of NGOs in anti-trafficking efforts is not new; 140 years ago, reformers created early international and national voluntary associations to address sex trafficking and helped to build a robust response that only dissipated with the advent of WWII (Limoncelli, 2010). There were also anti-slavery societies that formed in the 1800s. A few of these original organizations are still in existence and have become part of current anti-trafficking efforts, but the majority of NGOs working on human trafficking today have emerged since the 1990s and they have multiplied so quickly that empirical analysis has not yet caught up. There is still little known about the total number of NGOs address human trafficking, their geographic distribution, or even their activities.

What in the world are anti-trafficking NGOs doing? The lack of information is troublesome for those in the anti-trafficking field, not least because we could use it to identify and critically analyze issues and difficulties in anti-trafficking responses. It is also a problem because we need information about anti-trafficking NGOs to help us to understand more about their role in national and transnational advocacy. Debates about whether and how NGOs are fostering the development of global civil society, challenging or reinforcing state power, fostering or hindering social change, and/or reinforcing or challenging inequalities within and between countries in the Global North and South are ongoing. In order to study such questions, it would be useful to have some sort of baseline understanding of the anti-trafficking field and the role of NGOs within it. This article is a first step toward that goal, providing an exploratory study of 1,861 anti-trafficking NGOs. The collection of empirical data on the characteristics of worldwide anti-trafficking efforts is intended to help us to better understand what in the world anti-trafficking NGOs are doing.

Background

The burgeoning academic and applied research literature on human trafficking is comprised of studies attempting to accurately assess the extent of human-trafficking cases so as to improve knowledge about trafficking dynamics (Batstone, 2010; Laczko, 2005; Laczko & Gramegna, 2003; Tyldum, 2010; Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005) as well as efforts to outline regional human-trafficking trends, for example, in Eastern Europe (Kligman & Limoncelli, 2005), Central Asia (Kelly, 2005), Latin America (Coffey, Phariss, & Renaud, 2004), Sub-Saharan Africa (Adepoju, 2005), or the Middle East (Mattar, 2002–2003). Scholars have also sought to understand more about human-trafficking processes and the types of traffickers that are typical (Shelley, 2003, 2010) as well as to evaluate specific anti-trafficking programs (Gallagher & Surtees, 2012) and policies (Cho, 2015; Gallagher, 2010).

Alongside such traditional scholarly and applied research efforts have been numerous articles and books critical of anti-trafficking discourses. These usually deconstruct and critique framings of human trafficking as an issue of criminal justice and state security rather than a problem of human rights. Concern about anti-trafficking policies that impinge on the individual rights of migrants and those who engage in sex work are central themes of this literature, as is the potential for increased governmental surveillance and control over both domestic and migrant populations (see, e.g., Berman, 2010; Chuang, 1998; Kempadoo, 2005).

Studies that specifically examine anti-trafficking NGOs are less common. There are some valuable ethnographic studies of anti-trafficking efforts that include mention of particular NGOs (see, e.g., Brennan, 2014). There are also criticisms of certain anti-trafficking practices, especially raid-and-rescue strategies (see, e.g., Ahmed & Seshu, 2012). While these provide rich descriptions of anti-trafficking efforts in particular locales and may include details about the activities of specific NGOs, we do not know whether and how they are reflective of NGO activities more generally. A global lens can help provide information about anti-trafficking efforts in ways that individual case studies cannot (Kyle & Koslowski, 2001, pp. 4–5).

There have been three useful studies that have examined anti-trafficking responses, though only one focuses specifically on NGOs. Tzvetkova (2002) collected data from 147 NGOs and researched 300 others

online in an initial study focused on sex trafficking well over a decade ago. That study, part of the London-based Change program, was particularly strong in identifying European NGOs, though less comprehensive in other geographic areas. Two other studies of anti-trafficking efforts included NGOs among a variety of other organizations including government agencies and IGOs, though only if they had an online Web page with content in English (Foot, 2010; Foot, Toft, & Cesare, 2015).

All three studies examined anti-trafficking efforts by region and looked at the types of strategies used. They found that organizations in Asian countries have been primarily focused on rehabilitating trafficked persons while those in Western Europe have been most active in awareness, research, and assistance to other countries. They differed in their findings of organizational strategies in Eastern Europe, with Tzvetkova finding that many NGOs were engaged in service provision and Foot (2010) finding them to be mainly engaged in raising awareness and research; this is likely a result of funders withdrawing some support for services in Eastern Europe after the first study and before the second. The authors also differed in their assessments of NGOs in Latin American countries, with Tzvetkova finding few NGOs working on the issue of human trafficking and Foot later finding some organizations that were engaged in raising awareness. In neither case did the authors find many NGOs working on investigation or enforcement of human-trafficking cases, something Foot notes as problematic given that few cases are actually identified and prosecuted globally (United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, 2012). This had changed by 2011, as South American countries and those in the Middle East increased enforcement activities (Foot et al., 2015).

This project both updates and extends prior efforts via the collection of empirical data on the development and characteristics of anti-trafficking NGOs globally. It is broader than the early Change program's focus on sex trafficking, instead of collecting information on all types of anti-trafficking NGOs, including those that work on labor as well as forced begging or other forms of human trafficking. It also departs from the other two studies, seeking to narrow the focus to NGOs specifically, rather than include governmental agencies, IGOs, or other actors, and to include NGOs that may not have a Web presence or that may not provide Web information in English.

Methodology

The project began with an effort to identify self-described anti-trafficking NGOs, that is, NGOs that advertised themselves as such or that reported that they conducted anti-trafficking work through specific programs or projects. Because the goal was to understand more about the NGOs in the anti-trafficking field, it was important to find out which organizations considered themselves part of it rather than creating a category and having a researcher selectively include or exclude particular organizations. The self-identification strategy also limited the NGOs to those that had some ongoing presence in anti-trafficking efforts. It would not be feasible to conduct a study of all NGOs that might happen to assist a person who had been trafficked or that might take part in a human-trafficking event as part of their general day-to-day operations, nor would it help us to understand which NGOs consider themselves to be engaged in anti-trafficking efforts.

There is, unfortunately, no centralized mechanism by which to identify and count NGOs globally, no less those specifically working on the issue of human trafficking. In order to find and identify the NGOs, a four-tiered process was used. The steps, which occurred over a 3½-year period from 2011–2015, involved the following:

1. An initial search of four major anti-trafficking NGO directories produced by those working in the field. These directories were compiled by organizations that address human trafficking and each one contained hundreds of organizations purported to work on the issue.³
2. A search of general NGO directories, many with tens of thousands of NGOs, to find those that might not be listed on the anti-trafficking directories above. These general NGO directories are maintained by

³Please see the Appendix for a list of trafficking-specific directories consulted for the project.

governments, IGOs, and nonprofit organizations; they include directories with an international focus as well as some that were nationally based. Each was searched for any iteration of the term trafficking (e.g., human trafficking, sex trafficking, labor trafficking, child trafficking, woman trafficking) as well as the terms “slavery” and “forced labor.”⁴

3. To the NGOs identified through the human trafficking and general NGO directories were added any NGOs found via a review of over 100 anti-trafficking evaluations and reports conducted by academic, governmental, and policy research organizations. Often such studies are country specific and contain appendices with lists of participating NGOs.⁵
4. Additional NGOs were found via a snowballing technique. The materials (i.e., annual reports, Web sites, online profiles, and pamphlets) of identified NGOs were examined so as to find anti-trafficking networks that included additional NGOs. If an NGO advertised itself as part of an anti-trafficking network or coalition and listed partners, those NGOs were also vetted.

Once identified, each NGO was researched first by a research assistant and then cross-checked by the author to ensure that it was (or had been) an actual NGO and that it self-reported being involved in anti-trafficking work. Organizations with no evidence of anti-trafficking involvement, despite their presence on a directory or report, were dropped. For example, an NGO on an anti-trafficking directory that identified itself as a domestic-violence shelter, with no mention of a human-trafficking project or program in its annual reports or on its Web site would be culled from the list. After vetting, a total of 1,861 NGOs remained. Of these, it should be noted that 312 (17%) had no Web site in any language and were researched via profiles provided by other organizations, program evaluations, donor reports, newspaper articles, or articles and books by academics.

A variety of data specific to each NGO was also collected with the help of eight research assistants. This information included the location of the NGO, its history (date incorporated), its structure (domestic, regional, or international), its organizational focus (e.g., whether it identified itself as a specialized anti-trafficking NGO or something more broadly defined, such as a children’s, human rights, development, or women’s NGO that runs anti-trafficking programs), the types of human trafficking that the NGO addressed, the type of anti-trafficking activities in which it engaged, the populations that it addressed, the geographic areas in which it worked, and, to the extent possible, the types of funding that it received.⁶ The latter was gleaned from Web sites, annual reports, and funder reports, as available, and is by no means comprehensive. Still, the funding information does allow some analysis of whether financial resources were provided by governments, IGOs, foundations, businesses, or other NGOs, for example, and whether money from organizations outside of a particular country were being received and reported.

The large number of NGOs identified and the fact that mainly duplicate NGOs were being found toward the end of the study provide some confidence about the coverage of the anti-trafficking NGO population. The multipronged approach using triangulated data was devised with the goal of identifying and including NGOs in countries of the Global South and to avoid, as much as possible, a disproportionate focus only on NGOs that are large, well resourced, and connected to IGOs and which are thus more likely to be found on NGO directories.⁷ For example, very small religiously

⁴Please see the Appendix for a list of general NGO directories consulted.

⁵See, for example, Kameed, Hlatshwayo, Tanner, Turker, and Yang (2010) on India and Rosenberg (2003) on Indonesia.

⁶The various research assistants who helped with the project and I translated materials available on the Web in other languages whenever possible (i.e., from Greek, Hindi, French, and Spanish into English), but, given the scope of the project, we relied on Google Translate for those languages that we could not personally read. Thankfully, the kind of standard business language that is on most NGO sites, the large number of languages supported by the service, and the tendency for NGOs to provide at least some information in common languages and standardized templates (often due to funding requirements) meant that most sites and reports were amenable to the basic translations into English needed to collect the specific information compiled for this project. The service has become so sophisticated that even professional translators now typically rely on the rough drafts that it generates and the grammatical and lexical accuracy is only continuing to improve (Groves & Mundt, 2015). There are a number of languages not yet supported, however, which limited the ability to translate materials in some countries (e.g., Kyrgyzstan) but, in such cases, evaluation reports and directory information often helped to provide the necessary information.

based NGOs were less likely to appear on official directories and in academic and applied evaluations reports but were more likely to be found via other religious NGOs and materials from religious anti-trafficking networks.⁸ Likewise, some very small grassroots NGOs in countries of the Global South were less likely to appear on official directories but more often were found in the appendices of evaluation reports or because they were listed as partners in the materials of other NGOs.

The study could not capture NGOs if they were not part of anti-trafficking NGO networks, tied into larger donor programs, reflected in academic or applied evaluations, present on NGO directories, or mentioned in the materials of other NGOs. For this reason, some NGOs are very likely underrepresented, including some smaller NGOs, those that limit their publicly available information, or those that ceased operation prior to the project start date and left little documentation behind. Nonetheless, given the paucity of information that we have on anti-trafficking NGOs, it is helpful to examine the characteristics of those that were identified with the understanding that this study does capture an unprecedented number of NGOs presenting themselves as part of anti-trafficking efforts within and across countries.

Findings

Anti-trafficking NGOs found were quite dispersed around the world with 1,861 NGOs headquartered in 141 countries and operating in a total of 168 countries. Of the total NGOs, 1,458 (78%) were domestic NGOs, that is, they operated within the country in which they were headquartered, while 403 (22%) were INGOs that operated in at least two or more countries.

Geographic unevenness

Despite such breadth, the majority of NGOs were found headquartered mainly in Europe and Asia, with a large number in the United States as well (see [Table 1](#)). European countries accounted for 30% of the total and nearly as many NGOs (27%) were found in South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific. NGOs in North America accounted for 20% of the total with 320 found in the United States alone, but there were appreciably fewer NGOs in Sub-Saharan African countries. The lowest numbers were found in Central and South American countries and countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

This finding at the regional level conceals country variation, of course—despite the comparatively low numbers of NGOs in South America and the high numbers in Europe, Brazil had three times as many NGOs as Denmark, for example. Likewise, despite the lower numbers of NGOs in Sub-Saharan African countries, Nigeria had more than Russia. On the whole, however, Central and South American countries as well as MENA and Sub-Saharan African countries were not numerically dominant. In addition, while the Chinese government runs a series of shelters for trafficked women and children, fewer than 20 NGOs in China were found to be working on the issue of human trafficking. Because China as well as some countries in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and MENA are thought to have a good deal of internal and/or regional human trafficking, especially labor trafficking, the scarcity of anti-trafficking NGOs seems a major gap.⁹

The presence of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) within a country was also considered. Though a particular country might not have many domestic NGOs headquartered within it, there could be a large number of INGOs at work in the country, raising the overall number of NGOs addressing human trafficking. As [Table 2](#) shows, taking the presence of INGOs into account strengthened the NGO presence in Asian countries. Of the top-10 countries with the most NGOs operating in them (that is, the sum of the number of NGOs headquartered in the

⁷See Watkins et al. (2012, pp. 290–291) for more on defining and counting NGOs using NGO directories and the methodological difficulties involved.

⁸See Bush (2007) on the undercounting of religious groups, especially in the *Yearbook of International Organizations*.

Table 1. Number of NGOs Headquartered by Region and Country (n = 1,861)*.

Africa and the Middle East (n = 281)		Americas (n = 448)		Europe and Central Asia (n = 624)		South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific (n = 508)	
<i>Middle East & North Africa</i>		<i>North & Central America & the Caribbean</i>		<i>Western & Central Europe</i>		<i>East Asia & the Pacific</i>	
Bahrain	2	Canada	33	Albania	14	Australia	17
Egypt	9	Costa Rica	8	Austria	4	Cambodia	51
Iran	1	Dominican Rep.	4	Belgium	15	China	3
Iraq	5	El Salvador	3	Bosnia & Herz.	11	Fiji	1
Israel	10	Guatemala	1	Bulgaria	22	Hong Kong	2
Jordan	4	Haiti	3	Croatia	8	Indonesia	29
Kuwait	1	Honduras	1	Cyprus	3	Japan	16
Lebanon	2	Jamaica	1	Czech Republic	3	Lao PDR	2
Morocco	1	Mexico	14	Denmark	8	Malaysia	8
Qatar	2	Nicaragua	3	Estonia	7	Mongolia	4
UAE	2	Panama	1	Finland	6	Myanmar	5
Yemen	2	Trinidad & Tobago	1	France	21	New Zealand	7
Total	41	United States	320	Germany	27	Philippines	33
		Total	393	Greece	10	Singapore	5
				Hungary	4	South Korea	12
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>		<i>South America</i>		Iceland	3	Taiwan	4
Benin	3	Argentina	8	Ireland	9	Thailand	34
Botswana	1	Bolivia	2	Italy	34	Timor-Leste	2
Burkina Faso	2	Brazil	24	Kosovo	6	Vietnam	11
Cameroon	11	Chile	4	Latvia	3	Total	246
Central African Rep.	1	Colombia	7	Lithuania	9		
Chad	1	Ecuador	1	Luxembourg	1	<i>South Asia</i>	
Côte d'Ivoire	5	Guyana	2	Macedonia	9	Afghanistan	3
Dem. Rep. Congo	12	Paraguay	1	Malta	2	Bangladesh	38
Ethiopia	5	Peru	4	Montenegro	2	India	140
Gabon	2	Uruguay	1	Netherlands	19	Nepal	46
The Gambia	4	Venezuela	1	Norway	13	Pakistan	29
Ghana	34	Total	55	Poland	7	Sri Lanka	6
Guinea	2			Portugal	4	Total	262
Kenya	16			Romania	22		
Lesotho	1			Serbia	19		
Liberia	6			Slovak Republic	5		
Malawi	3			Slovenia	4		
Mali	8			Spain	19		
Mauritania	2			Sweden	10		
Mozambique	4			Switzerland	25		
Niger	3			Turkey	5		
Nigeria	42			United Kingdom	71		
Rwanda	1			Total	464		
Senegal	6						
Sierra Leone	5			<i>Eastern Europe & Central Asia</i>			
South Africa	32			Armenia	4		
Togo	5			Azerbaijan	9		
Tanzania	9			Belarus	4		
Uganda	10			Georgia	8		
Zambia	2			Kazakhstan	14		
Zimbabwe	2			Kyrgyz Republic	7		
Total	240			Moldova	11		
				Russia	55		
				Tajikistan	5		
				Ukraine	38		
				Uzbekistan	5		
				Total	160		

*This table reflects the geographic categorizations used by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UNGIFT) global reports on trafficking in persons.

Table 2. Top 10 Countries with the Highest Number of Anti-Human-Trafficking NGOs.

	Country	# NGOs Headquartered or Working in the Country
1.	United States	361
2.	India	228
3.	Cambodia	109
4.	Nepal	98
5.	United Kingdom	94
6.	Bangladesh	88
7.	Thailand	84
8.	Ukraine	83
9.	Nigeria	83
10.	Russia	70

country plus the number of INGOs headquartered elsewhere that have reported operating in that country), five were Asian countries, three were European countries, and the remaining two were Nigeria and the United States. While not reflected in the table, it is important to note that INGOs headquarters were most likely to be in European countries and the United States. This means that anti-trafficking NGOs in regions outside of Europe and North America are more likely to be focused domestically.

Trafficking focus

NGOs reported working on sex trafficking, labor trafficking, forced or child marriage, trafficking children for adoption, organ trafficking, forced begging, child soldiers, and child camel jockeys. Many reported working on more than one type of human trafficking, though some did not specify a particular form and only described human trafficking in general terms.

Seventy percent ($n = 1,309$) of the total NGOs addressed sex trafficking, reflecting the dominance of this issue in anti-trafficking efforts thus far. Under half of these NGOs ($n = 607$) addressed sex trafficking alone, while over half ($n = 702$) also addressed at least one other form of human trafficking in addition to sex trafficking. While many of these NGOs were focused particularly on child sex trafficking, a number of them were also working on the issue of child marriage, which they also identified as a type of trafficking of girls. This was particularly true of NGOs in parts of India and in some Sub-Saharan African countries. Forced begging was a concern of only a small portion of the total NGOs (3%), mainly in India, Sub-Saharan African countries, and Europe. Even fewer of the total NGOs identified child soldiers or trafficking for adoption as an issue that they addressed (2% and 1%, respectively).

More surprising was the finding that 889 of the 1,861 NGOs (48%) indicated that they address labor trafficking. Of these NGOs, more than a quarter (27%) focused on labor trafficking alone, while the other 73% indicated that they worked on labor trafficking in addition to at least one other form of human trafficking, most often sex trafficking. This finding did vary according to region, with Sub-Saharan African countries having the highest proportion of NGOs addressing labor trafficking, followed by Asian countries and countries in Central and South America. The lowest proportion of NGOs dealing with labor trafficking were found in Europe and North America.

We might expect this finding given the growth of sex trafficking of women and girls from, to, and through Eastern Europe postsocialism, a trend that was salient beginning in the 1990s. However, Western European countries and the United States are also destination countries for labor trafficking

⁹Mapping the number of anti-human-trafficking NGOs in a particular country is only one step in a much more detailed assessment that would need to happen in order to evaluate the adequacy of anti-human-trafficking efforts. Many factors, including population size, political openness, the availability of resources, the presence and activities of other anti-trafficking actors such as governmental agencies and IGOs, and, most importantly, the types and prevalence of human-trafficking incidences need to be considered. For example, some countries may have small numbers of NGOs because they have less incidences of human trafficking or because governmental agencies are the main actors directly administering programs or services.

and the NGO field does not reflect this. While other regions are focusing on labor trafficking, Western Europe and the United States are not, and this cannot be because of an absence of the problem of labor trafficking in these areas.

Populations

Children comprised one population addressed by the majority of the NGOs. Seventy-two percent ($n = 1,341$) of the 1,861 NGOs focused on children. Of these, 41% addressed this population only, while the remaining 59% addressed both children and at least one additional population (nearly always women). Women were also a population of interest (1,197 or 64% of the total NGOs address women, but only one quarter of them addressed women alone). Men, in contrast, were mentioned by only 15% of the total NGOs and migrants were specifically mentioned by only 17% of them. Clearly, the majority of the NGOs see human trafficking as an issue affecting children and women and are not addressing the trafficking of men and/or migrants specifically.

The focus on children and women is prevalent despite the wide variety of NGOs that have identified themselves as part of anti-trafficking efforts. Women's NGOs addressing human trafficking, child NGOs addressing human trafficking, and specialized anti-trafficking NGOs (i.e., those that identified themselves as dedicated solely to the issue of human trafficking) were the most numerous types found overall. Together, they accounted for about half (48%) of the total NGOs. The other half of the NGOs addressed a wide variety of issues, such as human rights, development, criminal justice and/or victim services, migration, humanitarian aid/relief, health education and/or services, legal services, research, social services, sex worker support, community action, or labor issues, in addition to human trafficking.

Certain types of NGOs were more prevalent in different countries and regions. For example, in Australia, nearly half of the NGOs identified themselves as specialized anti-trafficking NGOs and in the United States, such NGOs accounted for one third of the total. Children's NGOs were 30% of those identified in Sub-Saharan Africa and women's NGOs were about one quarter of the total NGOs working on human trafficking in both Europe and MENA countries. However, most regions had a wide variety of NGOs working on the issue of human trafficking.

Types of NGO activities

The type of activity that NGOs engaged in most often was public education and awareness. The next most prevalent activity was advocacy, typically related to advocating for particular domestic laws and anti-trafficking policies (see [Table 3](#)).

Rehabilitation services, including counseling, shelter, and legal assistance, were reported by only 27–29% of the 1,861 NGOs, despite the continued calls for such services over the last 20 years by

Table 3. Activities of Anti-Trafficking NGOs*.

Type Activity	% NGOs Reporting Activity
Public Education/Awareness	43
Legislative or Policy Advocacy	38
Legal Services	29
Counseling	29
Shelter/Housing	27
Education	23
Health Education or Services	20
Employment or Vocational Training	18
Trainings of Law Enforcement or Other Professionals	15
Rescue	7

*NGOs could report multiple activities.

both activists and academics. Comparatively, fewer NGOs reported providing education, employment services, or vocational training.

Only a very small number of NGOs were engaged in attempts to rescue trafficked women and children. Approximately 7% of the NGOs identified themselves as doing such work and the majority of them were in Asia (particularly India and Nepal), followed by the United States and countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (particularly Ghana). An even smaller percentage were involved in either investigating human-trafficking cases or in carrying out vigilance activities such as the formation of committees to look for signs of human trafficking in red-light districts, border areas, or rural villages (2% each). Investigation, vigilance, and rescue activities comprise a very small portion of NGO anti-trafficking activities globally.

Regional variations in strategies were evident. A higher proportion of the NGOs in MENA countries were engaged in legislative and policy advocacy efforts compared to NGOs in other regions; a larger percentage of NGOs in European countries were providing counseling to those who have experienced trafficking; and the highest proportions of NGOs providing employment and vocational training assistance were in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Prevention activities were most common in Central and South American countries and least common in MENA countries. Very few NGOs explicitly mentioned working on repatriation in any region, and this type of activity was least common of all in Central and South American countries.

Funding

Most NGOs reported receiving funding from a variety of organizations, both public and private. It was common to have received funding from both domestic and foreign sources as well. Of the total NGOs in the study, 18% reported having received funds from domestic sources only (i.e., local or national governmental agencies or NGOs, foundations, unions, universities, or businesses headquartered within the country), while 43% reported that they had received funds from both domestic and foreign sources. The remaining 39% reported receiving funding from foreign sources only.

Some nationalization may be occurring as less funding for anti-trafficking work has recently been coming from international organizations and some national governments have restricted funding from outside of their countries (Hoff, 2014). However, the EU, the IOM, and various UN agencies have been common sources of foreign funding to combat human trafficking, as have individual European governments, the U.S. government, and large foundations and INGOs in these areas, as well some in Asia.

Discussion

This study provides a global picture of anti-trafficking NGOs, one that raises some questions about current anti-trafficking efforts and that can serve as a starting point for further scholarly inquiry. I discuss the methodological, theoretical, and applied implications of the project in turn.

Methodological implications

In terms of methodology, this study affirms the importance of multitiered approaches in the study of NGOs. While new technology is making NGO information increasingly accessible within and across countries, there are, as yet, still no central worldwide lists of NGOs. Moreover, the major NGOs directories available are problematic for a variety of reasons including spotty coverage, errors, duplication, misinformation, and outdated information as NGOs and projects close or merge. By triangulating NGO directory data with scholarly and applied evaluation reports and by researching the materials of each NGO individually, scholars can gain a more accurate picture of NGOs in a given field.

A multitiered and triangulated strategy still presents multiple limitations, however. It is time consuming, labor intensive, and difficult to replicate. Here it would be helpful to have improved data-collection mechanisms fostered by governments and IGOs to provide more comprehensive and ongoing information about anti-trafficking NGOs. An additional problem is that much of the information about NGOs is supplied by the NGOs themselves, and self-reporting may or may not reflect what is actually happening on the ground. Those studying NGOs qualitatively, through interviewing and participant observation, are vital in helping us to ascertain the validity of self-reported NGO activities.

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study affirm the diversity and breadth of anti-trafficking NGOs. They are found around the world, include NGOs both small and large, domestic and international, and they have a variety of specializations. Despite this diversity, funding is often coming from countries in the Global North and anti-trafficking INGOs based in the north are often working in countries of the Global South. For scholars interested in studying the role of NGOs in national and transnational advocacy networks, the findings point to a variety of avenues for fruitful investigation. One might study whether and how certain types of NGOs dominate anti-trafficking efforts in a particular locale, how smaller domestic anti-trafficking NGOs and large INGOs interact, the ways in which funding flows from north to south may be shaping anti-trafficking efforts in specific countries or regions, or the degree to which domestic NGOs are able to navigate with autonomy from donors and/or other actors involved in anti-trafficking responses. The findings also point to a more complicated relationship between states and NGOs than is commonly recognized by scholars. Given that many domestic NGOs are providing services to trafficked persons and partnering with states, while others are pushing against current state practices or policies that either overlook or are harmful to those who have experienced human trafficking, the relationships between states and anti-trafficking NGOs need further analysis.

Aside from furthering our understanding of NGOs in national and transnational advocacy networks and global governance, scholars specializing in the study of particular countries or regions may use the findings of this exploratory study to investigate the populations of anti-trafficking NGOs in their areas. Examining whether or not they mirror the overall findings and researching the reasons why they do or do not could help us to better understand important factors in the development and efficacy of anti-trafficking efforts. For example, the focus mainly on children may be a response to state or donor-driven agendas or NGO perceptions that children are an unambiguously vulnerable population compared to others. Comparative studies would be particularly useful.

Applied implications

This study also has several implications for applied anti-trafficking efforts. First, further assessment of anti-trafficking efforts and the role of NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South America, and MENA is warranted. While there has been a growth in the number of NGOs addressing human trafficking in these regions, they still have comparatively small numbers. This is a problem in countries within these regions where state responses have been limited, IGOs have not been active, and NGOs may be the main anti-trafficking actors.

Second, those populations that are currently affected by human trafficking but that are being overlooked need to be given greater priority. NGOs have been and remain focused on sex trafficking, and they target children more often than women, while men are virtually ignored; this is particularly true of NGOs in the United States and Europe. The focus on child sex trafficking, while important, needs to occur along with, rather than instead of, the provision of programs, resources, and services for other populations. Men and women in labor-trafficking situations, in particular, remain

underserved populations and great attention needs to be paid to the gender dimensions of human trafficking as well as anti-trafficking responses (see, e.g., Surtees, 2008).

Third, service provision needs to be a larger component of anti-trafficking efforts and should include longer term and coordinated strategies. NGOs engaged in direct service provision are outnumbered by those engaged in public awareness and legislative or policy advocacy. Moreover, the services that NGOs most commonly provide (e.g., shelter and counseling) are typically useful in the short term with few providing employment, vocational training, educational, or other services aimed at improving the long-term outcomes and opportunities of those who have experienced trafficking.

Last, it is important for governments and donors in the Global North to collaborate with and be sensitive to the specific circumstances of NGOs in particular locales, the different forms of human trafficking that may be occurring, and both short-term and long-term strategies for addressing it. Given that so much NGO funding has come from north to south, care must be taken to avoid top-down processes that could result in programs and projects that fail to respond to local conditions or to address relevant populations.

The study of anti-trafficking efforts is nascent, but we are beginning to gain a more thorough understanding of the many different actors in the field (Foot et al., 2015). Focusing on NGOs provides one avenue for furthering this inquiry. As scholars continue to use innovative methods for studying anti-trafficking NGOs in global as well as local contexts, we will be better able to understand their role in anti-trafficking efforts and to assess anti-trafficking responses.

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Appendix

Directories consulted during the course of the project included (but were not limited to):

Trafficking-Specific Directories:

The Change Anti-Trafficking Program's *Combating Trafficking in Persons: A Directory of Organisations*: http://www.antislavery.org/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/d/dstrafficking1.PDF

NGOs listed as members of the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW): <http://www.gaatw.org/>

NGOs listed on www.humantrafficking.org

The Global Modern Slavery Directory coordinated by the Polaris Project: <http://www.globalmodernslavery.org/>

General NGO Directories:

Directory of Development Organizations (n = 63,350): <http://www.devdir.org/>

Gale Encyclopedia of Associations: International Organizations (n = 29,000)

UN NGO Branch Civil Society Organizations Database (n = 24,000): <http://esango.un.org/civilsociety/login.do>

UN Directory of NGOs engaged in partnership with the Division for Social Policy and Development (n = 420)

UN Office on Drugs and Crimes NGO Database (n = 2954): <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/ngos/NGO-Database.html>

The World Association of NGOs (WANGO) Worldwide NGO Directory (n = 51,970): <http://www.wango.org/>

The Union of International Associations (UIA) Yearbook of International Organizations (n = 65,589)

Country-Specific NGO Directories, e.g.:

The Planning Commission of the Government of India (www.ngo.india.gov.in)

The NGO China Development Brief (www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn).

Volunteer Websites:

Idealist.org (n = 96,000+)

Wiser.org (n = 112,000+)

Note: These websites allow NGOs to set up profiles and ask for funding or volunteer support. Wiser.org closed during the course of the project.