

A woman with a red bindi on her forehead, wearing a bright blue button-down shirt and an orange headscarf with a blue veil, stands amidst lush green tea bushes. She is holding small green leaves in her hands. The background shows a vast tea plantation on a hillside with a few distant figures and a tree trunk.

Trust and Liberation

A REPORT BY

Dr. Monti Datta,

Dr. Bob Spires,

and

Arise



ARISE

“

In my capacity as Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, I would like to congratulate the Arise Foundation on the launch of its new research report “Trust and Liberation”.

I welcome this pivotal research into the extraordinary power of trust to fight slavery. For the first time, we have research to back what we have always intuited: That local civil society groups, where embedded and trusted by their communities, possess the key to ending slavery.

The work of civil society groups against exploitation has been a persistent focus of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery. This research, by Arise and Prof Monti Datta, paves the way forward for anti-slavery work, led by the supreme wisdom, connectedness and social capital of grassroots groups. I welcome the attention and action of the international development and policy stakeholders to this report.

Mr Tomoya Obokata,

OHCHR Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	7
1. Why Study Trust?	8
1.1. Reflections from Luke de Pulford	10
1.2. Reflections from Dr. Bob Spires	11
1.3. Reflections from Prof. Monti Narayan Datta	12
2. Research Questions and Significance	14
3. Defining and Measuring Trust	16
3.1. Defining Trust	17
3.2. Measuring Trust at the Global Level	20
3.3. Measuring Trust in the United States	22
4. Defining and Measuring Human Trafficking	24
4.1. Defining Human Trafficking	25
4.2. Measuring Trafficking at the Global level	26
4.3. Trafficking in the USA	29
5. Exploring Human Trafficking and Trust at The Global Level	30
5.1. The Trafficking in Persons Report	33
5.2. The Global Slavery Index	39
5.3. WomanStats	43
6. Exploring Human Trafficking and Trust in The United States	48
6.1. The Social Capital Index Project	49
6.2. Civic Engagement and AmeriCorps	55
7. Thinking About Next Steps	60
List of Figures	
Figure 1. Trust in Government, OECD Member States, in 2020	9
Figure 2: The Elements of Trust	17
Figure 3: A Radius of Trust	18
Figure 4: The Social Capital Index, United States, in 2018	22
Figure 5: Mapping Civic Engagement, AmeriCorps Programs, 2016-2017	23
Figure 6: Map of 2019 TIP Report Rankings	26
Figure 7: 2016 Global Slavery Index Heat Map	28
Figure 8: WomanStats 2019 Global Map of Trafficking	29
Figure 9: Snapshot of Virginia in 2019, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center	30
Figure 10: Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings and Social Capital	34
Figure 11: Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings and Participation in Civil Society	34
Figure 12: Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings and Reconciliation of Past Injustices	34
Figure 13: 2016 Global Slavery Index and Social Capital	39
Figure 14: 2016 Global Slavery Index and Participation in Civil Society	40
Figure 15: 2016 Global Slavery Index and Reconciliation of Past Injustices	40
Figure 16: WomanStats and Social Capital	43
Figure 17: WomanStats and Participation in Civil Society	44
Figure 18: WomanStats and Reconciliation of Past Injustices	44
Figure 19: Total NHTRC Contacts and the Social Capital Index	50
Figure 20: Total NHTRC Trafficking Cases and the Social Capital Index	50
Figure 21: Social Capital and Human Trafficking in the USA--By Sub-Indices	55
Figure 22: Total NHTRC Contacts Made and AmericaCorps Programs, 2015-2020	56
Figure 23: Total NHTRC Cases and AmeriCorps Programs, 2015-2020	56

Executive Summary

Are we making a difference? How do we know? These two questions rightly preoccupy those working in development and human rights. Much hinges on how we understand ‘impact’.

Many civil society organisations working to confront slavery and human trafficking complain that our current understanding of impact is too narrow, and does not allow for their work to be fully captured and demonstrated.

Worse, the dominant model of impact measurement can disempower smaller organisations, which often lack the technical expertise to engage fluently with the funding community. **Some have expressed their hope that a more holistic understanding of impact will emerge - one capable of appreciating the less measurable, but profoundly important aspects of frontline work. One key aspect is trust.**

This investigation was conceived following discussions with colleagues around this tension: between what some call the *impact agenda* and the realities of work on the ground. If concepts like trust are essential to frontline workers, but fall outside of our understanding of impact, it is hard not to conclude that a realignment is needed.

Trust and Liberation is a quantitative study which explores the relationship between trust and human rights abuse, using as much relevant and robust data as we could gather, and controlling for as many variables as possible.

The overarching conclusion of this report is that trust matters. Some key findings include:

- No matter how we measure human trafficking¹, we note a similar pattern: trust is a statistically

significant predictor. **Stronger levels of trust correspond with lower incidences of slavery.**

- **A one unit increase in trust on the BTI scale² corresponds to a 0.05% decrease in enslavement.³ In Pakistan, this would translate into some one-hundred thousand people liberated, and in India, one-million people. Trust could be the key to unlocking liberation.**
- A one unit increase in trust on the BTI scale, greatly improves the odds of a state receiving a more favourable TIP⁴ report ranking. **Trust appears as a critical part of the social glue that enables greater levels of protection, prosecution, and prevention.**
- Looking at the US as a case study, we found that stronger levels of civil society⁵ predict more reports to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. **Higher levels of civil society provide more eyes and ears on the ground to help protect the vulnerable.**

Our findings are preliminary. The deeper, causal relationships between trust and human trafficking have yet to be fully illuminated. This is an essential next step in deepening a more robust research agenda on trust and anti-slavery.

We hope that this marks the beginning of a research agenda and fruitful collaboration between those working to protect human rights.

1 E.g. Using data from the United States Trafficking in Persons Report, the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index, or the think tank Woman Stats.

2 To measure trust, we use data from the Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) on a ten-point scale.

3 Analyzing these BTI data with the 2016 Global Slavery Index, we find a one-point increase in trust corresponds to an average decline in enslavement by 0.05%.

4 The data on trust from BTI also illuminates the US State Department's TIP Report rankings, on a scale from Tier 1 (meeting minimal compliance in protection, prosecution, and prevention) to Tier 3 (not meeting any of these standards). We find that a one-point increase on the BTI trust scale significantly improves the odds of receiving a more favourable TIP report ranking (e.g., moving down from Tier 2 to Tier 1).

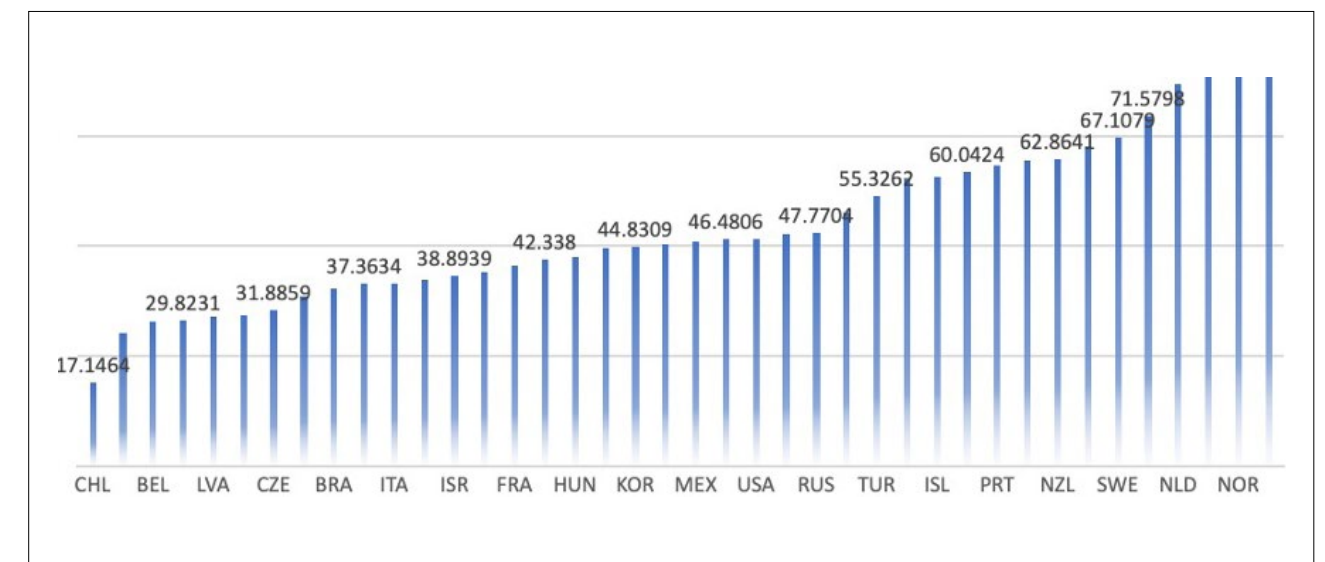
5 We obtained a measure of civil society in the United States from the AmeriCorps Program.

SECTION 1

Why Study Trust?

Trust is an oft-quoted indicator of societal cooperation and well-being. And yet, looking at the world, we note how much mistrust there is. A 2020 survey from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found that trust in government was lacking in most countries surveyed. As Figure 1 illustrates, less than half of the OECD member states had a majority of confidence in their national government.

FIGURE 1. TRUST IN GOVERNMENT, OECD MEMBER STATES, IN 2020



The reasons for a lack of trust vary. [The Pew Research Center](#) reports trust can be generational, with younger people less likely to trust others. Pew also found that those with lower levels of formal education have less confidence in public leadership. [A snapshot of data](#) from the World Values Survey found that higher levels of trust are associated with higher income levels, speaking to a potential wealth gap in trust between the haves and have-nots.

Our own experiences in the anti-slavery movement give us pause to consider the role and nature of trust in understanding human rights outcomes such as those articulated by the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). These include [target/goal 8.7](#), which tasks the international community to: “Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and

elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.”

The Principal Investigator of this report, [Dr. Monti Narayan Datta](#), and collaborators [Luke de Pulford](#) and [Dr. Bob Spires](#) share a common belief: trust matters in the success of anti-slavery interventions. Without adequate trust, anti-slavery NGOs and IGOs cannot cooperate, overcome [collective action problems](#), and find solutions to help the greater good.

Reflections from Luke de Pulford, Director of Arise

My earliest conversations with frontline anti-slavery activists were about trust. I was in Brazil among families whose children had been stolen and smuggled across the triple border to Peru. The police hadn't done much to enforce the border.

Unsurprisingly, they weren't trusted by locals. Later that week, we spoke to a young man who had made it back to Brazil. He testified about his time working without pay on a cocoa farm. He knew where the local police were but would never have sought help from them. He didn't trust them. The young man in question was helped by another local with whom he had developed a trusting friendship.

This is a pattern repeated all over the world in countless different ways. I watched in amazement in Manila as bouncers outside a brothel gladly permitted two Catholic sisters (in full garb) to enter. They were seen as performing a pastoral function. The women exploited inside welcomed them with huge hugs like long-lost friends. They were undertaking gateway outreach work at its most refined, and it was working. The women prostituted in that place *trusted the sisters*. And, in a funny way, so did the bouncers. This kind of work isn't done overnight. It takes time. And it takes almost unconditional dedication from frontline helpers who may have to knock hundreds of times before the door is opened a tiny sliver.

This all stands to reason. It is common sense that assisting someone who trusts you is much easier than assisting someone who does not. Similarly, it is common sense that trusted civil authorities stand a much better chance of protecting communities. But these critical truths have struggled to find their way into the analytical frameworks we have built up around anti-slavery work.

In my advocacy work, I have focused on coalition building. I would say that this involves developing cross-party consensus around a particular approach to an issue. That is also impossible without trust—from the political risk politicians take to become involved in a coalition to the leap of faith often required to form partnerships with ideological foes. Among coalitions of NGOs, the challenges around trust might be more related to competition, project ownership, or perception of ownership.

It would truly reflect my experience that trust is an essential component of anti-slavery work at every level, between every organization, individual, and civic institution. Anti-slavery work might be *possible* with low trust, but it works much better when people have faith in one another.

Reflections from Prof. Bob Spires, University of Richmond Virginia

As a public-school teacher in Georgia for many years, my interest in human trafficking came first from my concern for my immigrant students and their experiences of exploitation and abuse, particularly among Mexican immigrants to the Southeastern United States.

As I expanded my work to Southeast Asia with grassroots NGOs, I learned more about how organizations and activists use education to address vulnerability and exploitation. Since my dissertation research in Thailand from 2009 to 2012, I have collaborated with several grassroots anti-trafficking NGOs in [Thailand](#), [Cambodia](#), and [Hong Kong](#). I helped a small NGO school expand in Cambodia through serving on the board of [Love Without Boundaries](#). Through this work, I have observed that trust among NGOs remains a challenging barrier to collaboration and collective action. Driven by competition for limited funding and territory, trust continues to be in short supply among anti-trafficking organizations and actors. Indeed, mistrust has become a norm and characterizes how vulnerable individuals and trafficking survivors feel about NGOs. Mistrust can also describe how anti-trafficking organizations and actors feel toward one another. Given that stakeholders can fail to act in their client's best interests, skepticism has also become a norm.

At the grassroots level, NGOs have been historically disincentivized to collaborate due to the competitiveness of limited funding. When collaborations do occur, I have found that they have often been short-lived, limited in scope, and rarely extend beyond annual funding cycles. Funding is critical for collaboration, especially as many grassroots NGOs rarely have the financial means to send staff and leadership to distant meetings, conferences, and summits. This leads

to stark differences in collaboration and trust at differing scales of anti-trafficking work. Broken and incomplete social networks are the norm instead of harmonized, free-flowing, transparent information networks. Competing approaches have also undermined trust among anti-trafficking NGOs, fearing that rival NGOs might garner more attention and funding. Even national and international task forces and collaboratives are rarely able to overcome the problem of having a skeptical attitude amongst one another.

However, there are positive cases of locals taking the lead and garnering trust, which can often illuminate shared humanity. In [Western Cambodia](#), I've observed local grassroots work that has been effective and sustainable. Local staff trust one another and can therefore cooperate. I've observed that leaving on-the-ground decisions to local leaders and building reciprocal relationships with western counterparts has a long-term positive impact in rural villages otherwise [susceptible to trafficking and exploitation](#). Local villagers trust the work, partly due to the staff being Cambodian and familiar with the issues and partly due to the continued commitment to long-term engagement in the region. Trust in these settings is cultivated over time, first by showing commitment from western funders to privilege the local perspective, but then by also illustrating the goal is to continue privileging local knowledge and leadership—not just in the short term.



Tirana, Albania. Credit: SHKEJ

SECTION 1.3

Reflections from Prof. Monti Narayan Datta, University of Richmond Virginia

I've consulted and volunteered with different anti-slavery organizations in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, including [Free the Slaves](#), [Chab Dai](#), [The Walk Free Foundation](#), and United Nations University.

I've also attended a variety of anti-slavery events, workshops, and conferences in which a number of diverse stakeholders have been in the room. This includes stakeholders from foreign governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs). I've also benefitted from numerous conversations with different anti-slavery activists, survivors, and human rights activists in teaching [a year-long course on human rights and modern slavery](#) at the University of Richmond from 2013 to the present.

From all of these interactions, I've noted three key phenomena. First, it's clear that the field of anti-slavery studies, or contemporary slavery studies, is relatively young. Compared to the study of other phenomena (e.g., biology, chemistry), there is simply not as much known about how and why people are enslaved in the 21st Century. And although admirable efforts have been made to unpack slavery historically and use these insights to understand slavery today, those efforts are also just getting started.

Second, the field of contemporary slavery studies has attracted many passionate about the issue. For many stakeholders, ending slavery is even part of their spiritual calling or even a core feature of their faith. I've marveled at meeting and learning from anti-slavery activists who, based on their faith, decided to quit their jobs in the Global North and move to the Global South and fight slavery. Many of these activists have traveled to Southeast Asia, Africa, and South America, wanting to shine a light on slavery in the region and apply key tenants from their faith to end it.

Third, as a function of the first two phenomena, I've noted how many of us—myself included—can take things very personally. As a result, I've noticed how difficult it is for anti-slavery activists to trust one another. This is all exacerbated given the fact that funding is limited. Different anti-slavery activists have been forced to compete against one another, further cementing the siloes.

For me, this speaks to what I call the tragedy of anti-slavery. Enslaved persons across the globe continue to suffer enormously. Still, anti-slavery organizations, led by some of the most passionate, gifted, and courageous souls, have yet to come to the table consistently in a spirit of trust and collegiality,

brotherhood and sisterhood. I believe more trust and collegiality are needed to move forward.

Let me give an example of what I mean. I teach in the United States. Over the years, I've noticed how challenging it has become for US stakeholders to share their data and build a national clearinghouse of anti-slavery research. There is still no national data repository on human trafficking, despite multiple efforts among stakeholders to convene and envision such a repository. There are instead siloed efforts to house and collect anti-slavery data. Yet, these disparate efforts (e.g., [the National Human Trafficking Resource Center](#), and the FBI's [Uniform Crime Reporting Program](#)) preclude the creation of a more robust data set of facts and figures. Without more substantial data, scholars cannot build and test more sophisticated empirical models of the predictors of human trafficking.

A similar argument can be made about collecting and aggregating data at the global level. Despite recent efforts among stakeholders (e.g., [Delta 8.7](#)), there is still only a skeletal infrastructure of shared data on anti-slavery facts and figures. The most recent shared global dataset, although novel, has more missing observations than anything else. A lack of trust therefore hampers intellectual growth and understanding in anti-slavery work.

All of this strikes me as ironic simply because most stakeholders I have interacted with in the anti-slavery movement are remarkably compassionate, sensitive, and thoughtful. And yet, despite this wellspring of morality that drives and informs the thoughts, words, and deeds of anti-slavery activists, it is still astonishing that trust is not the norm. If anything, distrust is the dominant framework when more than a handful of anti-slavery activists gather. This is something I sincerely wish would change.

SECTION 2

Research Questions and Significance

To what extent does trust matter in understanding human trafficking? How much does trust factor in explaining cross-national variation in anti-slavery interventions over time?

More broadly, to what extent does trust play a role in human rights outcomes like [the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and outcomes like [target/goal 8.7](#) on human trafficking? These are some of the research questions that drive our study of trust and anti-slavery.

In exploring this research agenda, we note how often core values like trust are stated as integral to the philosophies of the United Nations (UN) and other post-Second World War multilateral institutions like [the European Union](#), [the African Union](#), [the Organization of American States](#), and [the Association of Southeast Asian Nations](#).

[The UN Charter](#) tasks its member-states to (1) “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind;” (2) “reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small;” (3) “establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained;” and (4) “promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”

Likewise, the European Union seeks to protect “all minorities and vulnerable groups, and stands up for the oppressed. Regardless of a person’s nationality, gender, language group, culture, profession, disability or sexuality, the EU insists on [equal treatment for all](#).” Such themes have led to the emerging field of [human security](#), which places the dignity of every individual at its core.

A strong drumbeat of morality drives this human security agenda. In 2009, [Ban Ki-Moon](#) invoked the importance of trust in facing global existential threats like climate change. “What we need,” Secretary Ki-Moon said, “is national and international leadership from Heads of State and Government. And we need trust. Trust between developing and developed nations.”

At his swearing-in ceremony in 2017, [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#) opined, “In the end, it comes down to values, as was said so many times today. We want the world our children inherit to be defined by the values enshrined in the UN Charter: peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance, and solidarity. All major religions embrace these principles, and we strive to reflect them in our daily lives. But the threats to these values are most often based on fear. Our duty to the peoples we serve is to work together to move from fear of each other, to trust in each other. Trust in the values that bind us, and trust in the institutions that serve and protect.” In 2018, responding to a global rise in nationalism, [Kofi Annan](#) said, “the social contract between the government and the people has broken down in many countries and it has to be re-established. Trust is gone. Trust has to be re-established.”

Other global bodies have spoken about the need for core values like trust. The COVID-19 pandemic [prompted the Vatican](#) to highlight the importance of core values to facilitate effective cooperation and collective action. The Vatican proclaimed, “The basic values and principles at the foundation of almost every major religious tradition are more needed now than ever: solidarity and subsidiarity, justice and charity, love for all, and global cooperation at every level of society.”

Although many global bodies espouse global values like trust, little empirical research exists in understanding how much and in what ways it matters for peace, security, and human rights. Our study, a preliminary quantitative assessment of trust and human trafficking, takes a step forward in understanding this relationship.

SECTION 3

Defining and Measuring Trust

SECTION 3.1

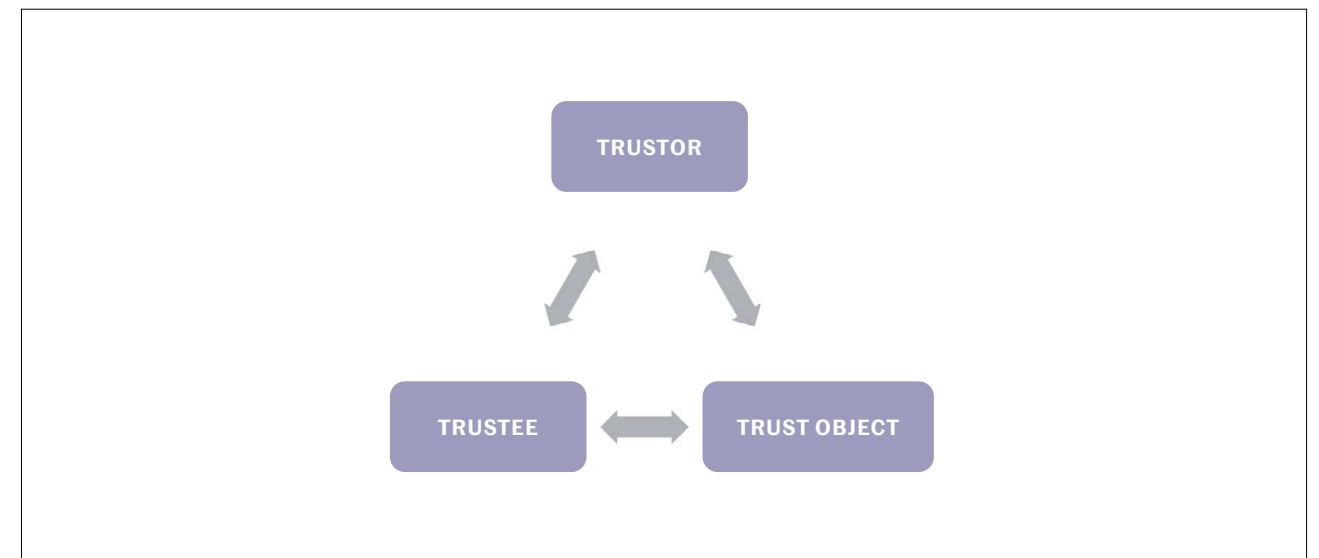
Defining Trust

There are many definitions of trust. [Gambetta \(2000, 213\)](#) suggests “trusting a person means believing that when offered the chance, he or she is not likely to behave in a way that is damaging to us.”

[Rotenberg \(2010\)](#) similarly conceives trust as the extent to which there is confidence that someone has your best interests at heart. [Kohn \(2008\)](#) argues that trust-building has several common factors, including time, mutual benefit, equality/inequality between actors, and the number and quality of mutual connections among such actors. Kohn argues that these determine whether *thin trust* (weak) or *thick trust* (strong) develops.

We appreciate all these definitions, including [Schilke et al. \(2021\)](#), who define “trust as the willingness of an entity (i.e., the trustor) to become vulnerable to another entity (i.e., the trustee)” in relation to some object of trust (material or conceptual). Figure 2 illustrates this triangular relationship.

FIGURE 2. THE ELEMENTS OF TRUST



Such relationships can also operate at multiple registers: the macro-level (i.e., among nation-states), the meso-level (i.e., among inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations), and the micro-level (i.e., among family, friends, and smaller social networks). Moreover, these registers are not mutually exclusive—trustors and trustees

can repeatedly interact across these levels. These registers may also involve thick and thin levels of trust. And with the advent of more interactive social media (e.g., the Metaverse), these relationships may develop and grow primarily in virtual spaces.

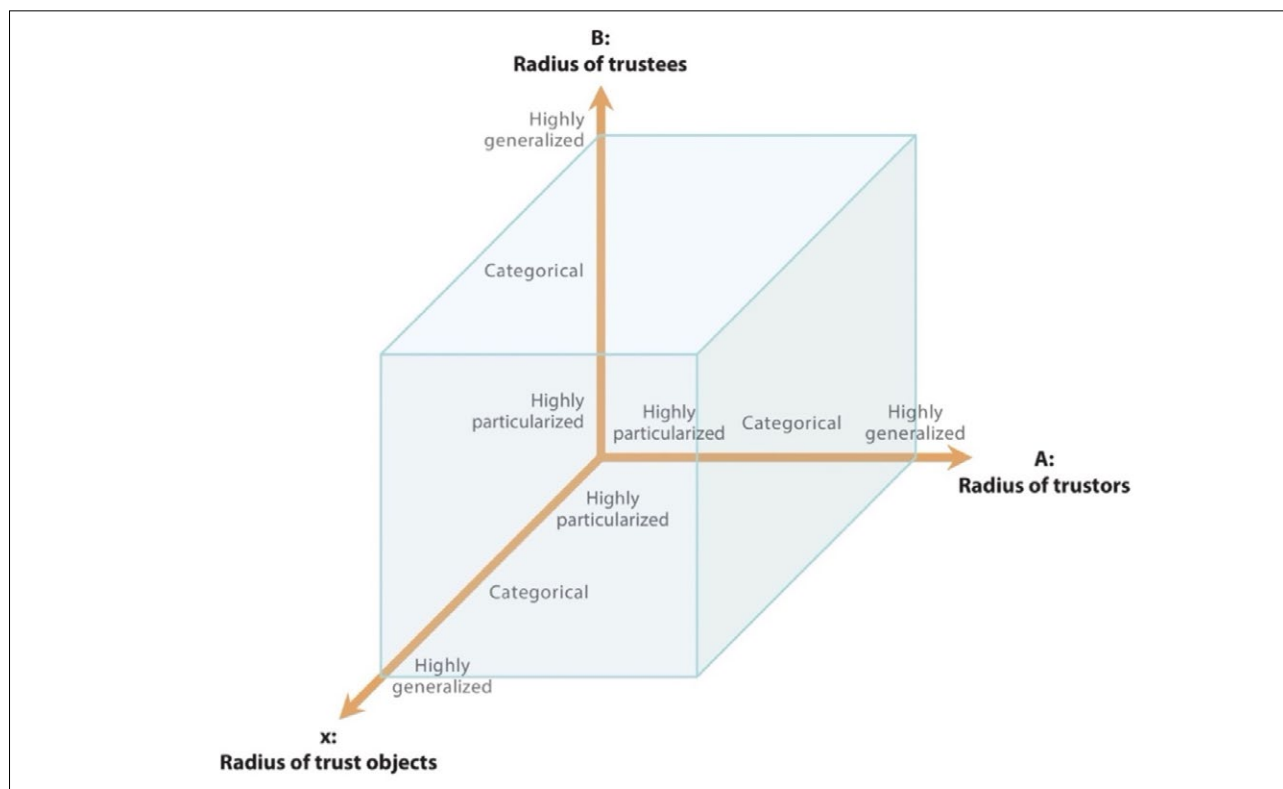


Wall mural in community centre, Tirana, Albania, 2021. Credit: SHKEJ

Trust among trustors and trustees can also be both particularized and generalized. Particularized trust, according to [Schilke et al. \(2021\)](#), involves one's "narrow circle of familiar others." In contrast, generalized trust involves one's "relatively large circle of unfamiliar others."

This relationship among trustors, trustees, their objects of trust, and the extent to which such relationships are particularized and generalized, leads to a conceptual framework recently put forth by Schilke et al. (2021) called a radius of trust, as Figure 3 illustrates.

FIGURE 3. A RADIUS OF TRUST



The Trust Conundrum

Generally speaking, trust is framed positively in the academic literature because more trust typically means more beneficial outcomes. However, in the context of human trafficking, trust can have negative connotations because it can be a tool of exploitation (e.g., [Gargiulo & Ertug 2006](#), [Neal et al. 2015](#), [Skinner et al. 2014](#)) and a lack of trust can undermine efforts to address human trafficking (e.g., [Dank, Yahner & Yu, 2017](#); [Farrell, Dank, de Vries, Kafafian, Hughes & Lockwood, 2019](#); [Mantouvalou, 2006](#); [Owens et al., 2017](#); [Viuhko, 2019](#)).

Throughout the literature on human trafficking, survivors consistently note their trust in their trafficker as a key component of their susceptibility to trafficking and continued exploitation. Trust in a trafficker and distrust of authorities have been identified as common themes in sex trafficking ([Dank, Yahner & Yu, 2017](#); [Viuhko, 2019](#)) and labor trafficking cases ([Owens et al., 2017](#)) including those focused on migrant workers ([Brennan, 2010](#)) and domestic workers ([Mantouvalou, 2006](#)). A growing body of literature has focused on how traffickers work to build and misuse trust with sex trafficking victims ([Reid, 2016](#)) and vulnerable migrant populations ([Hernandez & Rudolf, 2011](#)). Farrell, Dank, de Vries, Kafafian, Hughes, and Lockwood (2019) note distrust of the police and the

legal system as common among human trafficking survivors. [Clawson, Dutch, Solomon, and Grace \(2009\)](#) note the connections between a lack of trust in local social services providers and law enforcement. In addition, Pascual-Leone, Kim, and Morrison (2017) emphasize the crucial place of trust between survivors and clinical therapists to treat complex trauma effectively.

Trust has implications within and across anti-trafficking organizations. Foot, Sworn, and Alejano-Steele (2019), for instance, report that relationship-building and trust among anti-trafficking organizations have been key to developing and maintaining Counter-trafficking Coalitions (CTC) in the Global South. As one respondent notes in their work, "relationship building and taking that time to build up those trust relationships" is key to engaging with governments (Foot et al., 2019, p. 39). Foot, Toft, and Cesare (2015) note a substantial increase in NGO, INGO, and governmental efforts to address human trafficking over the past two decades. Trust across and between these entities is crucial for effective collaboration.



Carmelite Sisters in a residential home for at-risk children, Tagaytay, Philippines, 2015. Credit: Kadir van Lohuizen

Measuring Trust at the Global Level

Finding ways to measure trust across the globe, consistently and over time, can sometimes be like trying to find the proverbial needle in a haystack.

Some scholars (e.g., [Inglehart, 2014](#)) developed novel measures of trust based on rich survey data, but such measures often come in the form of episodic survey waves, in which detailed measures are recorded once every four years and not consistently across the same nations. This makes tools like Inglehart's groundbreaking [World Values Survey](#) useful for snapshots but not as much for ongoing annual measures, which are critical to understanding cross-national variation over time.

Other organizations collate useful longitudinal data, but such data are not publicly available in granular detail. This includes [Gallup's annual World Poll](#). Yet other measures of trust (e.g., [the Edelman Trust Barometer](#) and [the OECD's series on trust](#)) are publicly available but focus mainly on countries in the Global North for a limited number of years and not on countries in the Global South, where contemporary slavery tends to be the most prevalent. Still, other organizations (e.g., [the International Institute of Social Studies](#)) develop measures related to trust, drawing on source material from a variety of global public opinion databases (e.g., the World Values Survey, Latinobarómetro, Afrobarometer, etc.). But the International Social Development Index comes out once every five years and not consistently for its indicators, making these data untenable for a cross-sectional time-series analysis.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI)

An instrumental body of data on trust we identified is [The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index](#) (BTI), published every two years since 2006. As explained in their [methodology](#), BTI “analyzes and evaluates whether and how developing countries

and countries in transition are steering social change toward democracy and a market economy. Guided by a standardized codebook, country experts assess the extent to which a total of 17 criteria have been met for each of the 137 countries.” The scope of 137 countries is large, including many nations in the Global South.

Social Capital

[The BTI has a number of measures](#), several of which we identified as being directly or indirectly tied to the concept of trust we use for this report. The first measure asks respondents around the globe their attitudes on social capital, or relational trust, over time. More specifically, Question 5.4 from BTI asks respondents, “To what extent have social self-organization and the construction of social capital advanced?” Respondents were able to answer on a ten-point scale, from a low of 1 (i.e., “There is a very low level of trust among the population, and civic self-organization is rudimentary” to a high of 10 (i.e., “There is a very high level of trust among the population and a large number of autonomous, self-organized groups, associations and organizations.”) This gives us one tool to assess cross-national variation of trust over time.

Civil Society

Another related measure from BTI explores civil society. This is reflected in Question 16.4, which asks, “To what extent does the political leadership enable the participation of civil society in the political process.” Respondents could answer on a 10-point scale from a low of 1 (i.e., “The political leadership obstructs civil society participation. It suppresses civil society organizations and excludes

its representatives from the policy process.”) to a high of 10 (i.e., “The political leadership actively enables civil society participation. It assigns an important role to civil society actors in deliberating and determining policies.”)

Reconciliation of Past Injustices

A third measure we identified from BTI focuses on reconciling past injustices. This is reflected in Question 16.5, which asks respondents, “To what extent can the political leadership bring about

reconciliation among the victims and perpetrators of past injustices?” Respondents could answer on a 10-point scale, from a low of 1 (i.e., “There have been no major injustices committed, or reconciliation processes have been completed.”) to a high of 10 (i.e., “The political leadership achieves reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators of past injustices.”) This measure is helpful to explore: unless a citizenry feels its government can name and address collective grievances, it can be difficult to foster and sustain trust.



In Jharkhand, India, frontline workers distribute food rations during early COVID-19 lockdown. Credit: Bethany Sisters

SECTION 3.3

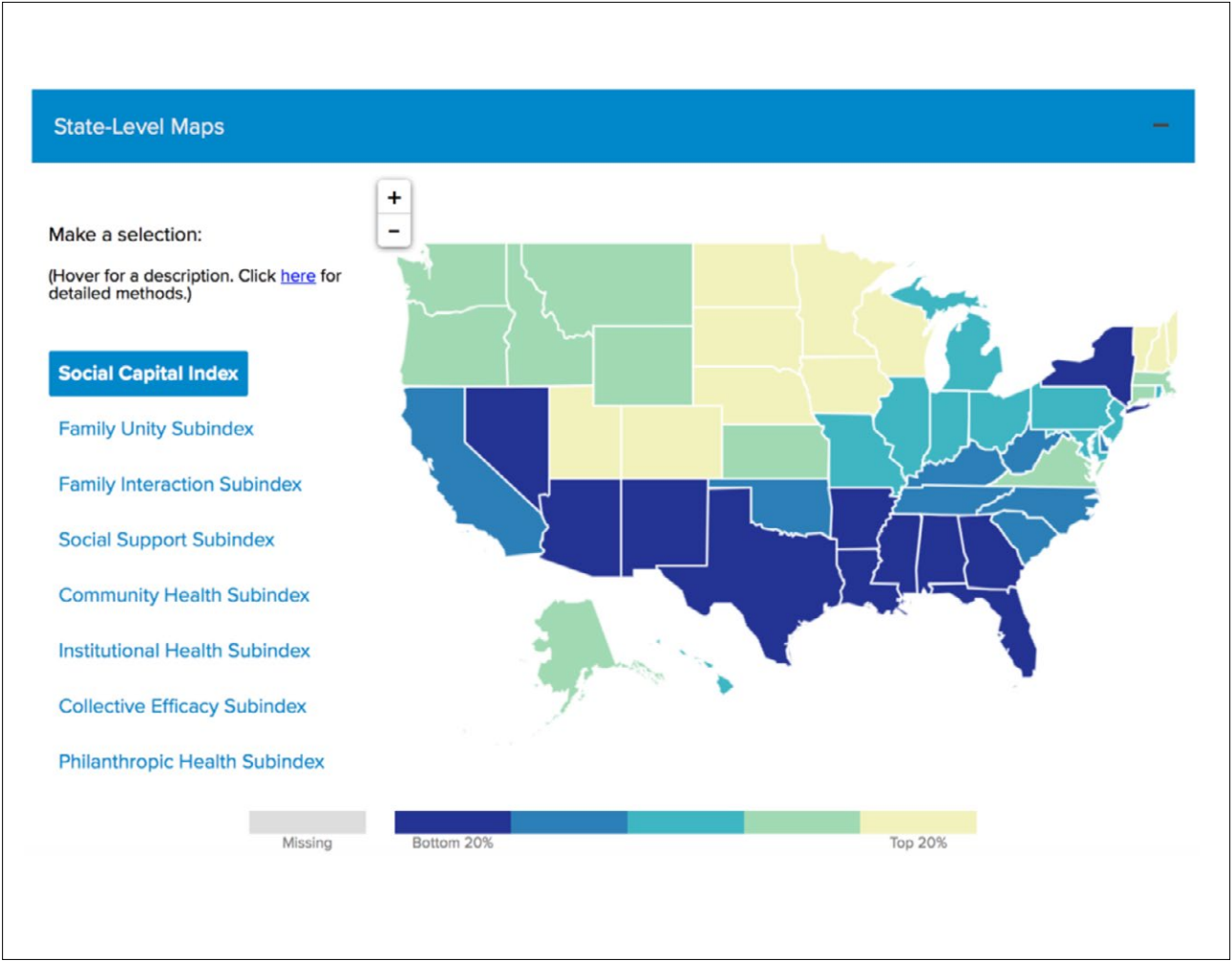
Measuring Trust in the United States

There are not many publicly available measures of trust in the United States, broken down along the 50 US states, but one measure we identified comes from [The Social Capital Index Project](#), spearheaded by United States Senator [Mike Lee](#).

The Social Capital Index Project provides a snapshot of data for all 50 U.S. States, but only for 2018. The index consists of a composite measure of social capital (or relational trust) and disaggregated

measures based on: family unity, family interaction, social support, community health, institutional health, collective efficacy, and philanthropic health, as Figure 4 illustrates.

FIGURE 4. [The Social Capital Index](#), United States, in 2018



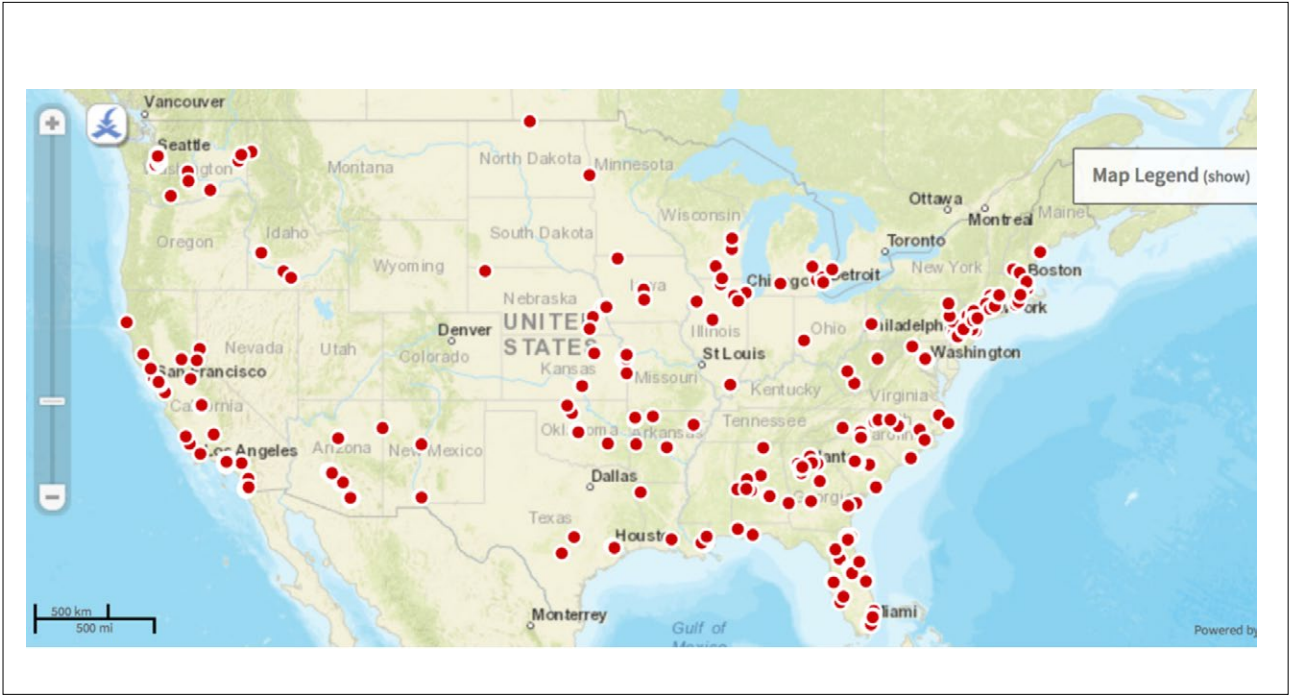
In this state-level map of the United States, we note variation in higher and lower levels of social capital. The states with the highest rankings of social capital are Utah, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Colorado. The states with the lowest rankings are Arizona, Florida, New Mexico, Nevada, and Louisiana.

Because publicly data on trust are scarce for the 50 US States, another measure we identified is civic engagement, which is a related concept. One well-known measure of civic engagement comes from the Corporation for National and Community Service, which oversees the [AmeriCorps](#) program initiated by U.S. President Bill Clinton in the mid-1990s, seeking to build upon the Peace Corps program inaugurated by President John F. Kennedy in the early 1960s. AmeriCorps “is a network of national service

programs, made up of three primary programs that take a different approach to improving lives and fostering civic engagement. Members commit their time to address critical community needs like increasing academic achievement, mentoring youth, fighting poverty, sustaining national parks, preparing for disasters, and more.”

AmeriCorps volunteers go to communities in the United States that are socioeconomically disadvantaged and seek to provide much-needed support. By doing so, AmeriCorps volunteers seek to build and establish relationships and trust in communities where trust may be needed the most. Figure 5 provides a map illustrating the spread of different AmeriCorps programs across the 50 US states over the 2016-2017 time period.

FIGURE 5. Mapping Civic Engagement, AmeriCorps Programs, 2016-2017



SECTION 4

Defining and Measuring Human Trafficking

SECTION 4.1

Defining Human Trafficking

Definitions of human trafficking in modern times start with the League of Nations' [1926 Slavery Convention](#), in which slavery was defined as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.”

The slave trade was defined as “all acts involved in the capture, acquisition or disposal of a person with intent to reduce him to slavery; all acts involved in the acquisition of a slave with a view to selling or exchanging him; all acts of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with a view to being sold or exchanged, and, in general, every act of trade or transport in slaves.”

The 1926 Slavery Convention is foundational in how we think about human trafficking. Other core

texts include the United Nations [Supplementary Convention](#) of 1956 (which added forced marriage to the conversation), the UN's [Palermo Protocol](#) in 2000 (which, for political reasons, removed forced marriage and labeled the narrative “trafficking in person”), as well as the U.S. Congress [Trafficking In Victims Protection Act](#) (TVPA) of 2000, which emphasizes trafficking is a product of “force, fraud, or coercion.”



13-year old boys working in a brick kiln, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, 2013. Credit: Pep Bonet

SECTION 4.2

Measuring Trafficking at the Global Level

The Trafficking in Persons Report

The most cited measure of human trafficking comes from the U.S. [Trafficking In Persons](#) (TIP) Report. The U.S. Department of State [explains](#), “The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is the U.S. Government’s principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. It is also the world’s most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-trafficking efforts and reflects the U.S. Government’s commitment to global leadership on this key human rights and law enforcement issue.”

Since 2000, the US. State Department has issued its TIP Report in part to assess foreign governments in their handling of human trafficking issues, typically in terms of how well a foreign government works to prevent human trafficking, protect the victims, and prosecute the offenders—or what has come to be known as the “Three P’s”: prevent, protect, and prosecute. Based on anecdotal reports, foreign diplomats at U.S. embassies across the globe assess foreign governments and ultimately assign one of four categories each year to evaluate foreign compliance with the Three P’s. As Table 1 shows,

these categories are Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 2 Watch List, and Tier 3.

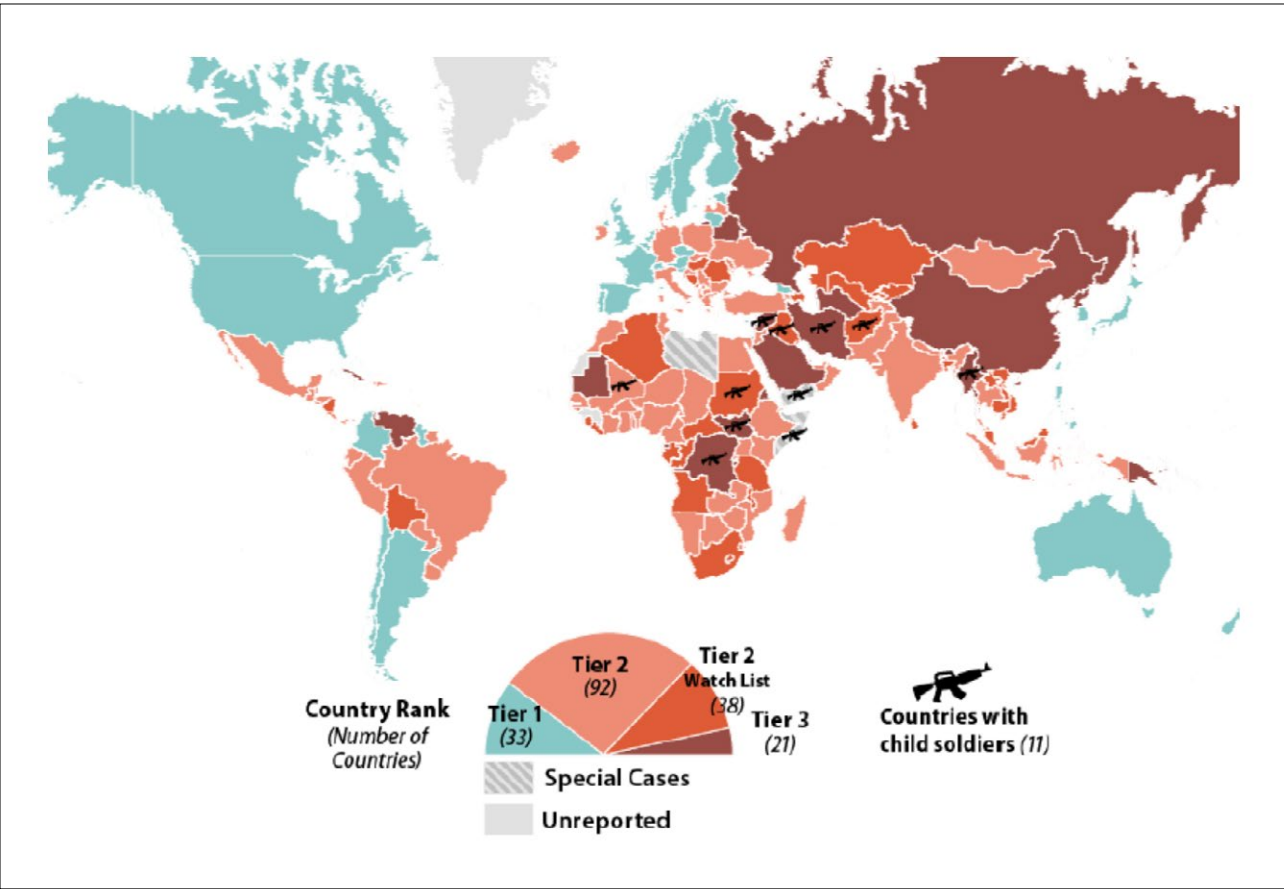
The TIP Report provides a large body of statistics for most foreign governments from 2001 to the present—roughly twenty years’ worth of information for nearly two hundred nation-states. This gives us a robust body of data to explore how trust might be a factor in understanding cross-national variation in human trafficking.

Because the TIP Report is a policy instrument of the U.S. government, however, it is not without controversy. A 2018 story from Thomas Reuters, “[Special Report: State Department watered down human trafficking report](#),” suggested systematic bias in how the United States government rewards some nations (e.g., Malaysia) with TIP report rankings higher than others. For this reason, in any empirical analysis of the TIP report, it is important to account for (i.e., empirically control for) bias on the part of the United States.

TABLE 1. The Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings

Tier 1 Countries whose governments fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.
Tier 2 Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.
Tier 2 Watch List Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards
Tier 3 Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

FIGURE 6. Map of 2019 TIP Report Rankings



The infographic in Figure 6 provides a visual map of the TIP report rankings for the year 2019. Note that the greatest number of nations are in Tier 2, with a

smaller group in the Tier 2 Watch List, followed by Tier 1 and Tier 3. We note that most countries in the Global North are Tier 1.

The Global Slavery Index (GSI)

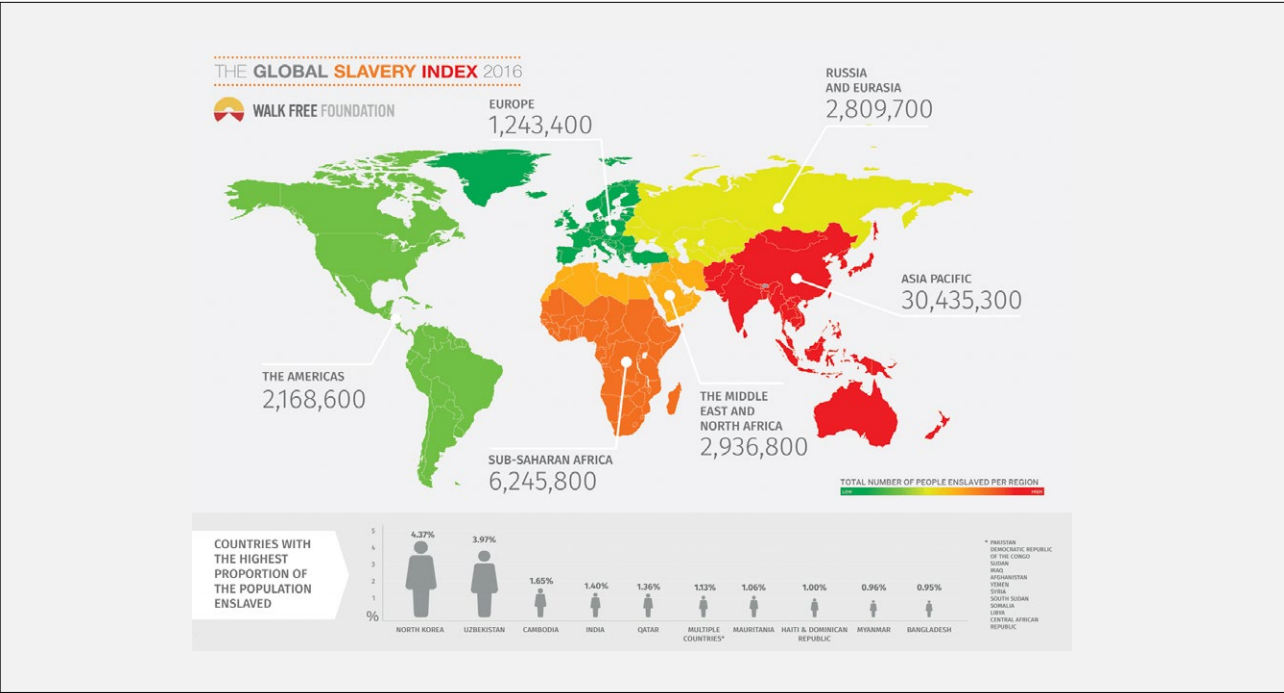
Although the TIP Report represents the most cited account of human trafficking statistics across the globe, the rankings are limited in scale and may be impacted by diplomatic and other considerations, as explained above. This has led government and non-governmental organizations to explore other ways to measure human trafficking. In 2013, the Walk Free Foundation, founded by Australian billionaire Andrew Forrest, launched its [first](#) Global Slavery Index (GSI) to estimate the prevalence of modern slavery across 167 countries.

The 2013 GSI drew worldwide attention. Its novel methodology also drew some criticism from

scholars, including sociologist [Ron Weitzer](#) and [Anne Gallagher](#). Improvements in the survey design and instrument following, leading to [the 2016 GSI](#) as a more robust instrument (e.g., [Larsen et al. 2015](#)).

The 2016 GSI, as Figure 7 illustrates, enumerates more than 40 million persons enslaved across the globe, with the preponderance of enslaved persons in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

FIGURE 7. 2016 Global Slavery Index Heat Map



WomanStats

Although the 2016 Global Slavery Index might be a reasonably good estimate of prevalence, it represents only a snapshot in time, so we would be remiss if we did not look for additional measures of contemporary slavery. Another measure we identified is from the [WomanStats](#) Project, led by a team of global researchers dedicated to “assessing the relationship between the situation and security of women, and the dynamics between security, stability, and the behavior of the state.” [Principal Investigators](#) of the WomanStats project include distinguished feminist theory and international

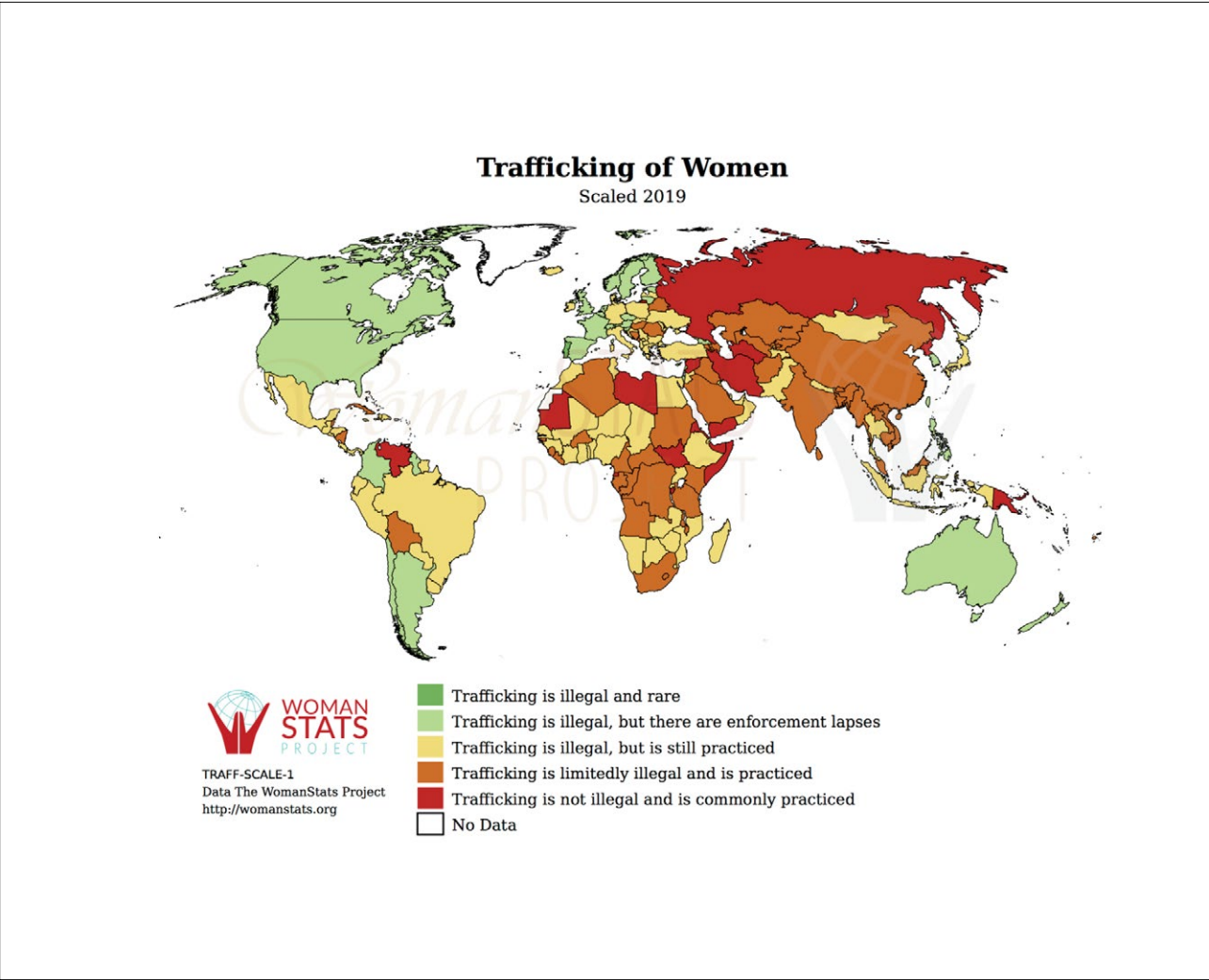
relations theory scholars, such as Rose McDermott, Allison Brysk, and Dara Kay Cohen.

Although the WomanStats Project does not provide an actual prevalence estimate of contemporary slavery, it provides a global measure of legal protections for victims of human trafficking on a five-point scale, similar in scope to the Trafficking in Persons Report rankings as Table 2 details and Figure 8 illustrates. Moreover, these estimates are repeated over time, giving us a broader body of data to work with than the Global Slavery Index.

TABLE 2. WomanStats Trafficking Scale

Scale Point Zero There are laws against trafficking in the country and into or from other countries.
Scale Point One There are laws against trafficking in the country and into or from other countries.
Scale Point Two There are laws against trafficking in the country.
Scale Point Three There are limited laws against trafficking in the country.
Scale Point Four There are no laws against trafficking in the country, or from or into the country.

FIGURE 8. WomanStats 2019 Global Map of Trafficking



SECTION 4.3

Trafficking in the USA

Although the United States is home to some of the best-funded anti-trafficking organizations, there has not been a sustained, coordinated effort to collect data on trafficking figures.

Instead, there are siloed efforts. The best-known is [The National Human Trafficking Resource Center](#) (NHTRC), a 24-hour emergency hotline operated by the Washington DC-based anti-trafficking NGO Polaris.

The NHTRC hotline liaises with several nationwide anti-trafficking campaigns as well as government agencies and nonprofit partnerships. As Polaris explains, the statistics are “based on aggregated information learned through signals—phone calls,

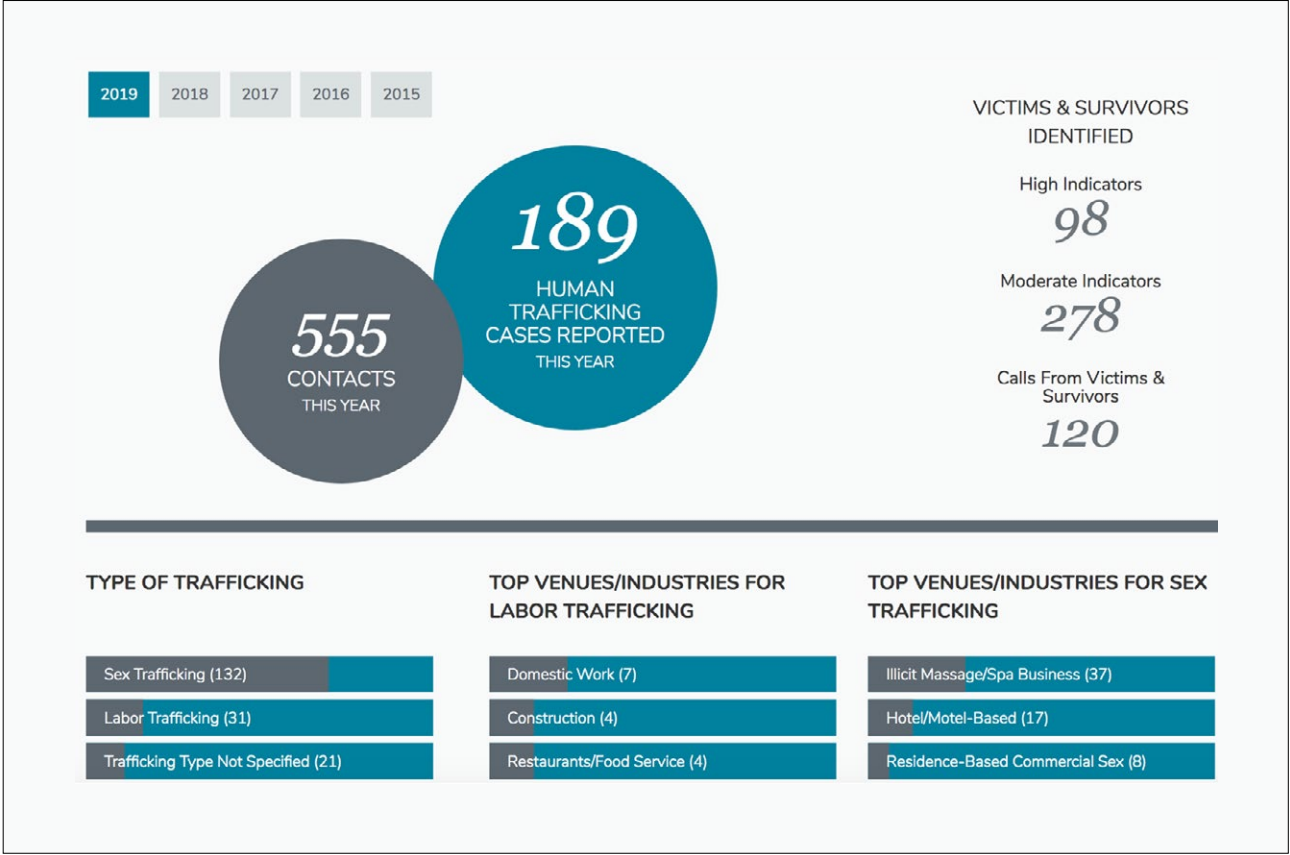
texts, online chats, emails, and online tip reports—received by the Trafficking Hotline. The data do not define the totality of human trafficking or of a trafficking network in any given area. The Trafficking Hotline uses this data to help human trafficking victims and survivors and to provide the anti-trafficking field with information to help combat all forms of human trafficking.”

To be clear, these data are not prevalence data, but simply a count of who is contacting the NHTRC to report suspected cases of trafficking.

Although data from the NHTRC are not representative of a national random sample, useful information about the lived experiences of human trafficking victims and their exploitation can be gleaned. This

includes the following variables from the hotline data: *Total Contacts* (all trafficking tips received); *Total Cases* (confirmed human trafficking cases); *Sex Trafficking Cases* (confirmed sex trafficking cases); *Labor Trafficking Cases* (confirmed labor trafficking cases); and *Calls from Victims* (confirmed calls from trafficking victims and survivors). The NHTRC data go back more than a decade, but changes in data collection and standardization methods make comparing older data with newer data untenable. We therefore limit our analysis of the NHTRC data from 2015 to 2020 for all 50 US States.

FIGURE 9. [Snapshot of Virginia](#) in 2019, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center



In Karnataka, India, frontline groups train and resource locals to run their own small businesses. Credit: Arise

SECTION 5

Exploring Human Trafficking and Trust at The Global Level

SECTION 5.1

The Trafficking in Persons Report

First, we consider the relationship between human trafficking, conceptualized by [the Trafficking in Persons Report](#), and trust, coded by [The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index \(BTI\)](#).

In Figure 10 (following page), data on trust from BTI are on the horizontal axis, and data on trafficking from the TIP Report are on the vertical axis. Recall that the TIP Report data are on a scale from 1 (Tier 1) to 2 (Tier 2), to 3 (Tier 2 Watch List) up to 4 (Tier 3), with higher Tiers associated with worse forms of human trafficking. Data on trust from BTI are on a scale of 1 (low trust) up to 10 (high trust).

Figure 10 presents a negative, downward-sloping relationship between BTI's measure of trust, called *Social Capital*, and the TIP Report rankings. Moreover, the correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) is -0.50. Higher levels of trust are associated with lower TIP Report Rankings. In other words, those countries with higher levels of trust correspond to those countries with more favorable TIP Report rankings (e.g., Tier 1 and Tier 2 compared to Tier 2 Watch List and Tier 3). Conversely, countries with lower levels of trust correspond to those with less favorable TIP Report rankings (i.e., Tier 2 Watch List and Tier 3).

We also note similar, downward-sloping relationships with two other BTI measures of interest. In Figure 11, the correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) between the TIP Report Rankings and *Participation in Civil Society* is also -0.50. The more mass publics across the globe feel the "political leadership actively enables civil society participation" and "assigns an important role to civil society actors in deliberating and determining policies," there are corresponding better TIP Report Rankings—those rankings that reflect more compliance in the "Three P's": prosecuting trafficking offenders, protecting the victims, and preventing the causes of human trafficking.

Figure 12 illuminates the relationship between the TIP Report Rankings and how mass publics around the globe feel about the extent to which their respective governments have reconciled past injustices between former victims and perpetrators. The correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) in Figure 12 is -0.48. We once again note a downward-sloping relationship. Those countries in which respondents report feelings of deeper reconciliation share a similar theme of being those countries where the TIP Report Rankings are at their most benign—Tier 1 and Tier 2. Likewise, countries with less reconciliation correspond to those countries where the TIP Report Rankings are at their most severe—Tier 2 Watch List and Tier 3.



Local groups provide human trafficking awareness and skills training programs to Albanian youth, frequently targeted by traffickers with the promise of a job in Western Europe. Credit: SHKEJ

FIGURE 10. Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings and Social Capital

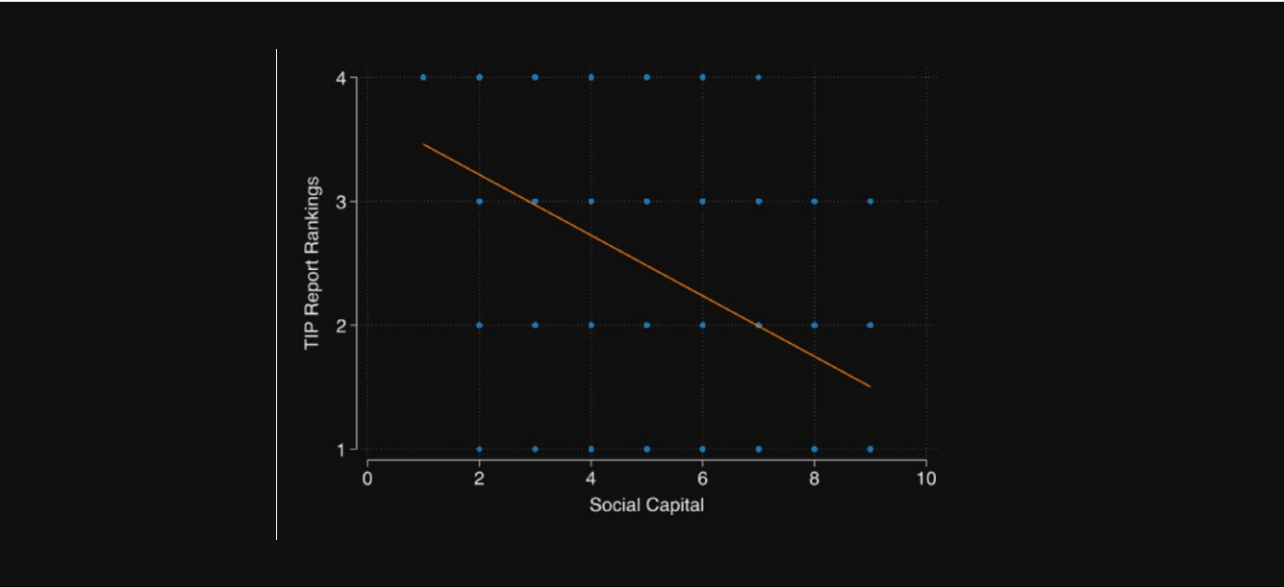


FIGURE 11. Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings and Participation in Civil Society

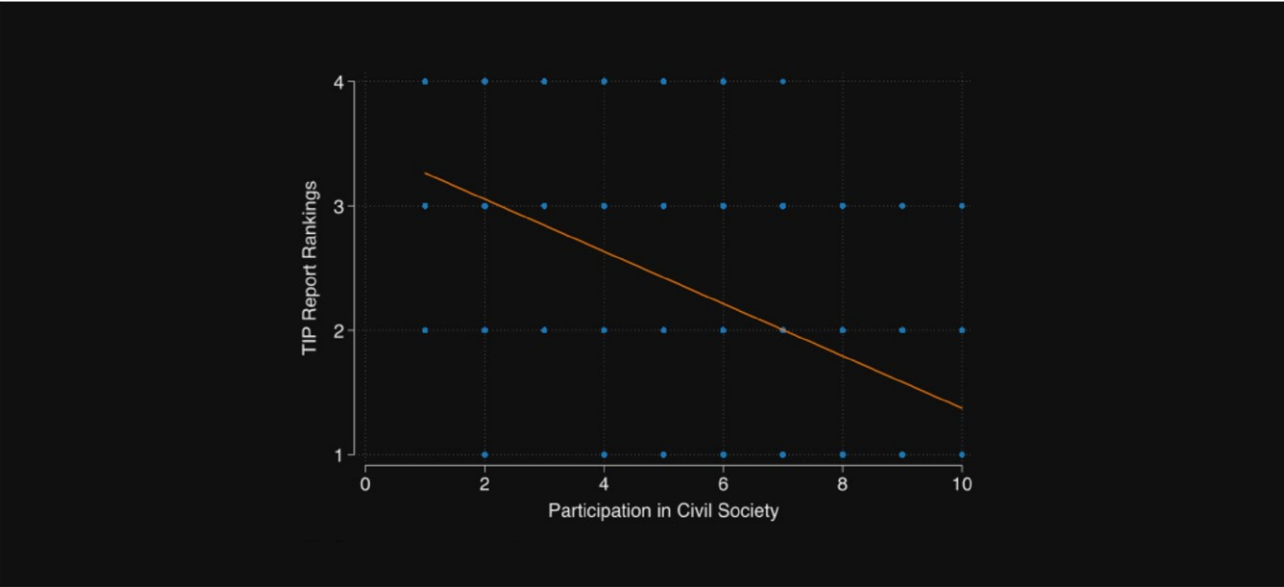
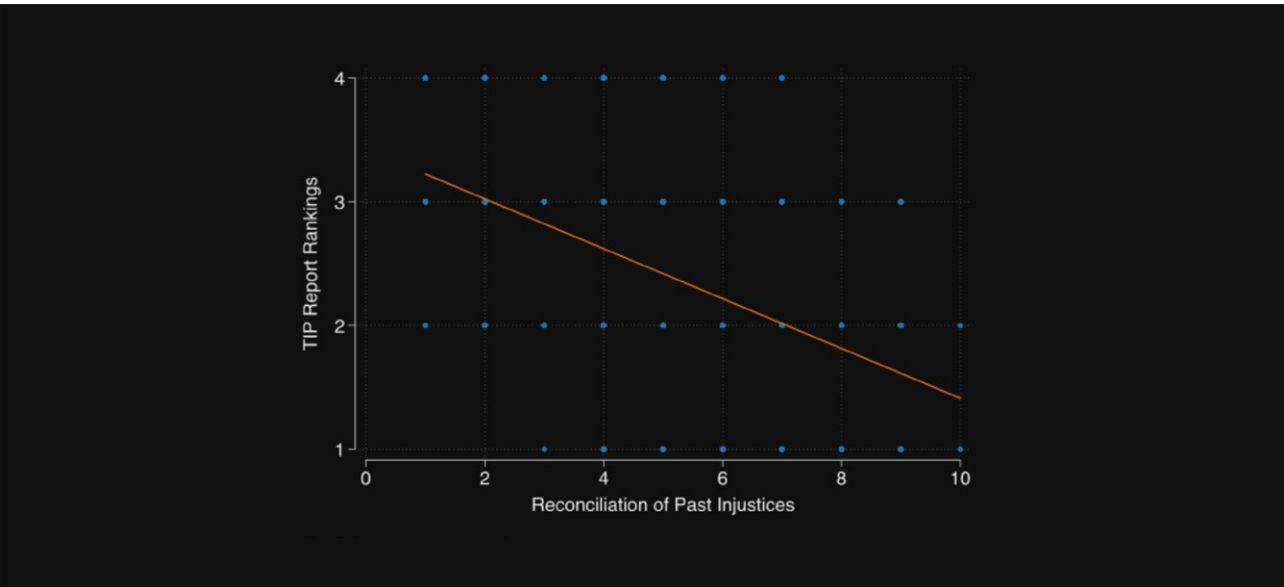


FIGURE 12. Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings and Reconciliation of Past Injustices



Hypotheses

Based on these correlations, we can put forth the following set of hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: The Social Capital Hypothesis – TIP Report
In a comparison of nation-states over time, those with stronger levels of social capital will have more favorable TIP rankings

Hypothesis 2: The Participation in Civil Society Hypothesis – TIP Report
In a comparison of nation-states over time, those in which the government enables greater participation in civil society will have more favorable TIP rankings

Hypothesis 3: The Reconciliation of Past Injustices Hypothesis – TIP Report
In a comparison of nation-states over time, those in which the political leadership has achieved reconciliation between victims and perpetrators will have more favorable TIP rankings

Control Variables

Correlation is not causation. A next step in parsing out these hypotheses is to allow for, or control, for other factors that might explain the relationship between the TIP Report Rankings and these different measures of trust and civil society. These factors are as follows.

Political Affinity

When considering the Trafficking in Persons Report, one factor for which we need to control is political affinity with the United States. Some might argue that the U.S. government rewards foreign governments with more favorable TIP Report Rankings simply due to the level of political affinity foreign governments might share with U.S. interests—not because of the human trafficking situation on the ground. Indeed, given [the controversy the Obama Administration faced](#) in giving Malaysia a Tier 2 ranking, one could make the case that the United States Department of State may play favorites.

A useful measure of political affinity can be found in the annual Congressional report, [Voting Practices in the United Nations](#). This report records votes in the United Nations, focusing on the voting coincidence of foreign governments with the United States on issues important to the U.S. national interest

(e.g., security in the Middle East, relations with North Korea, policies toward Israel and Russia, etc.). Although the United States is a powerful nation-state, it nonetheless relies on the United Nations and the opinions of other nations. [As the United States Department of State explains](#), “The UN Security Council (UNSC) and the UN General Assembly (UNGA) are arguably the most important international bodies in the world, dealing with threats to peace and security, disarmament, development, humanitarian relief, human rights, the environment, and narcotics—all of which directly affect major U.S. interests.” Therefore, voting alignment in the United Nations is a useful measure of political affinity. By holding voting alignment constant, we can ascertain how trust, participation in civil society, and reconciliation are viable factors in explaining cross-national variation in U.S. TIP Report Rankings over time.

Trade with the United States

Another factor for which we need to control is how much a country trades with the United States. If the U.S. government benefits economically from bilateral trade with a particular nation, this too could potentially bias the TIP Report rankings. The United States might reward its more substantial trading partners with higher TIP Report rankings, regardless of how good or bad the human trafficking situation is on the ground. We therefore include a measure accounting for [the trade in goods each country shares with the United States](#). We obtain data on this measure from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Demographic Factors

Other factors might matter in understanding cross-national variation in the TIP Report Rankings over time. We can include some demographic measures such as a country’s level of human development (see, for example, [the United Nation’s Human Development Index](#)) and its [population size](#). The rationale for including such measures is that more populated and less developed countries are thought to be more prone to human trafficking (e.g., [Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy](#) by Kevin Bales). And we can also account for regional variation with measures controlling for Asia, the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA), Sub-Saharan Africa, and The Americas (leaving Europe as a baseline). Such regional control variables allow us to see further cross-national variation in the predictors of TIP Report Rankings around the globe.

Summary Statistics

The dependent variable, *TIP Report Rankings*, determines the size and scope of this dataset, as seen in Table 3. We coded all TIP Report Rankings by country, annually from 2001 to 2020. This gives us a database of human trafficking data for most of the world’s countries over roughly twenty years. This provides us with a total of some 3,199 observations in our dataset.

Note, however, the number of observations for each value of the independent variable. The variable, *Social Capital*, for instance, has 1,877 total observations. This variable was taken from [The Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index](#) (BTI). BTI codes data on social capital from 2006 onwards, but only for every other year (e.g., 2006, 2008, 2010, etc.). Given this limitation in the data, we took the liberty of interpolating measures for each inter-year period by taking the mean value of the two nearest years (e.g., computing the value for the year 2009 by taking the average of the values for 2008 and 2010). We did this to generate

more plausible data. And yet, we note that among the 1,877 total observations for the variable *Social Capital*, we still have only roughly sixty percent of the total observations for all of the countries and years listed in the TIP Report Rankings.

We highlight this discrepancy to make a point. Even using some of the best publicly available data from The Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index, we are still short of the total data points we need to have a complete dataset. We point out this deficiency to illustrate how far we have to go in the field of contemporary slavery studies in developing and testing more robust empirical models on the correlates of human trafficking. We need more comprehensive data. In moving forward, that is a challenge—to partner with more stakeholders and develop more ways to find more data to measure the correlates of slavery and trust.

Statistical Models

Table 4 demonstrates support for the first three hypotheses. In Model 1, the coefficient of the variable, *Social Capital*, is statistically significant at the .001-level. Note that *Social Capital* is on a ten-point scale, from a low of 1 (i.e., “There is a very low level of trust among the population, and civic self-organization is rudimentary”) to a high of 10 (i.e., “There is a very high level of trust among the population and a large number of autonomous, self-organized groups, associations and organizations”). Converting *Social Capital* to its corresponding odd-ratio, going up from 1 level of social capital to the next multiplies the odds of getting a better TIP Report Ranking by 0.62. That this result is at the .001-level tells us that there is only a 1 in 1,000 likelihood that such results were due to random chance.

This finding also holds while controlling for other explanations such as the presence of bias in the TIP report, as discussed earlier. Controlling for the effects of voting alignment with the United States and controlling for bilateral trade balances with the United States, the results of trust are still salient. This tells us that trust is a unique predictor of the TIP Report rankings, independent of bias there may be in how the United States government assigns these rankings.

We also see similar findings using other measures from BTI. In Model 2, the coefficient of *Participation*

in Civil Society is also statistically significant at the .001-level. We note that *Participation in Civil Society* is measured on a 10-point scale from a low of 1 (i.e., “The political leadership obstructs civil society participation. It suppresses civil society organizations and excludes its representatives from the policy process.”) to a high of 10 (i.e., “The political leadership actively enables civil society participation. It assigns an important role to civil society actors in deliberating and determining policies.”). The coefficient of *Participation in Civil Society* is -0.290. Going up one level in the measurement of participation in civil society increases the odds of receiving a better TIP Report Ranking by 0.74.

In Model 3, the coefficient of *Reconciliation of Past Injustices* is also statistically significant at the .001-level. This measure is also along a 10-point scale, from a low of 1 (i.e., “There have been no major injustices committed, or reconciliation processes have been completed.”) to a high of 10 (i.e., “The political leadership achieves reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators of past injustices.”) Model 3 indicates that, as we move up each unit in how respondents feel about the reconciliation of past injustices in their nation, the odds of receiving a better TIP Report Ranking go up by 0.69.

TABLE 3. Estimating Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings, Summary Statistics

Variable Name	Type of Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
TIP Report Rankings	Dependent	3,199	2.271	0.889	1	4
Social Capital	Independent	1,877	5.139	1.727	1	9
Participation in Civil Society	Independent	1,889	4.914	2.016	1	10
Reconciliation of Past Injustices	Independent	1,569	5.056	1.994	1	10
Population	Control	3,666	3.77E+07	1.39E+08	17,606	1.40E+09
Human Development Index	Control	3,299	0.684	0.162	0.268	0.957
Trade with the United States	Control	3,626	6,896.728	25,563.91	0	312,816.9
Voting Coincidence in the UN	Control	3,487	42.242	26.550	0	100
ASIA	Control	3,740	0.235	0.424	0	1
MENA	Control	3,740	0.106	0.309	0	1
Sub-Saharan Africa	Control	3,740	0.208	0.406	0	1
The Americas	Control	3,740	0.181	0.385	0	1



Frontline group in Assam, India generates the world’s largest dataset of domestic workers through its “Domestic Workers Union Structure” project, through which it has registered over 18,000 domestic workers in 12 cities of the region. Credit: Centre for Development Initiatives (CDI)

TABLE 4. Estimating Trafficking in Persons Report Rankings, Statistical Models

	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Social Capital</i>	-0.475*** (-5.20)		
<i>Participation in Civil Society</i>		-0.290*** (-4.29)	
<i>Reconciliation of Past Injustices</i>			-0.367*** (-5.05)
<i>Population</i>	1.85e-09 (1.43)	1.75e-09 (1.35)	1.32e-09 (0.98)
<i>Human Development Index</i>	-2.666 (-1.51)	-3.278 (-1.92)	-0.768 (-0.39)
<i>Trade with the United States</i>	-0.0000125 (-1.54)	-0.0000140 (-1.73)	-0.0000118 (-1.42)
<i>Voting Coincidence in the UN</i>	0.00801* (2.22)	0.00627 (1.76)	0.00451 (1.15)
<i>Asia</i>	0.584 (0.83)	0.902 (1.30)	1.095 (1.47)
<i>MENA</i>	2.808*** (3.87)	3.007*** (4.15)	3.516*** (4.33)
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	1.146 (1.46)	0.916 (1.17)	1.356 (1.55)
<i>The Americas</i>	1.103 (1.62)	1.101 (1.60)	1.035 (1.38)
<i>Constant</i>	4.453*** (6.16)	4.519*** (6.09)	4.737*** (5.67)
<i>N</i>	1611	1624	1347

t statistics in parentheses, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001, Ordered Logit Models

SECTION 5.2

The Global Slavery Index

Let us now turn to another measure of global slavery—the 2016 Global Slavery Index (GSI). Although the GSI is not without controversy, the 2016 GSI, in particular, is useful (e.g., see [Larsen, Bales, and Datta, 2015](#)).

First, we can correlate the BTI measures of interest with the 2016 GSI scores (normalized in terms of the proportion of the population enslaved) and obtain the following scatterplots.

In the first scatterplot below, Figure 13, data on trust from BTI are on the horizontal axis, and data on the proportion of the population estimated enslaved from the 2016 Global Slavery Index are on the vertical axis. The 2016 GSI data are on a scale from a low of 0 (zero percent of the population enslaved) to a high of 4 (four percent of the population enslaved). Data from BTI are on a scale of 1 (low trust) up to 10 (high trust).

The correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) is -0.43. And visually, inspecting Figure 13, we note those countries with lower Social Capital rankings (e.g.,

the DPRK, Uzbekistan, Libya, Syria, and Cambodia) have correspondingly higher estimates of the proportion of the population enslaved.

We note a similar relationship visually with Figure 14, looking at participation in civil society and the 2016 Global Slavery Index (Pearson's r = -0.35), as well as Figure 14, looking at the reconciliation of past injustices and the 2016 Global Slavery Index (Pearson's r = -0.37).

These initial correlations suggest a relationship between these measures of trust, civil society & reconciliation, and data on human trafficking as measured with the 2016 Global Slavery.

FIGURE 13. 2016 Global Slavery Index and Social Capital

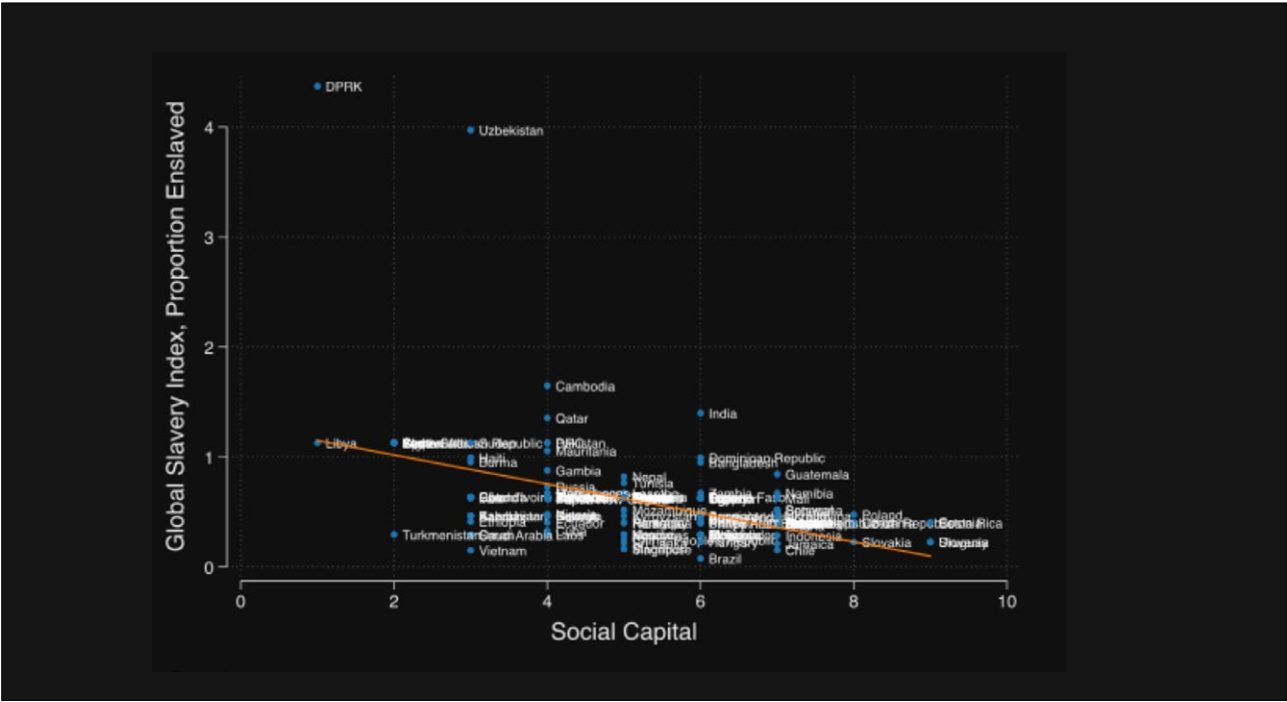


FIGURE 14. 2016 Global Slavery Index and Participation in Civil Society

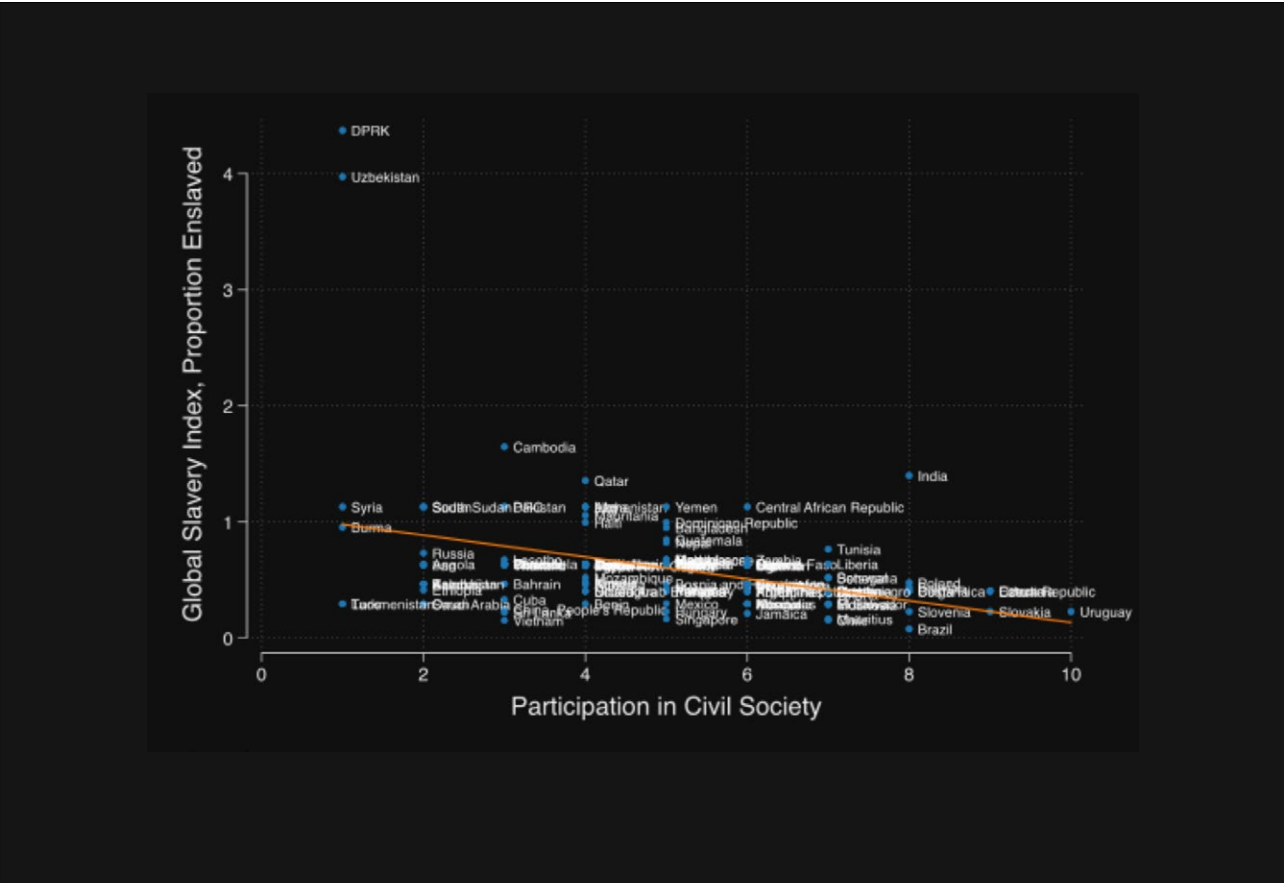
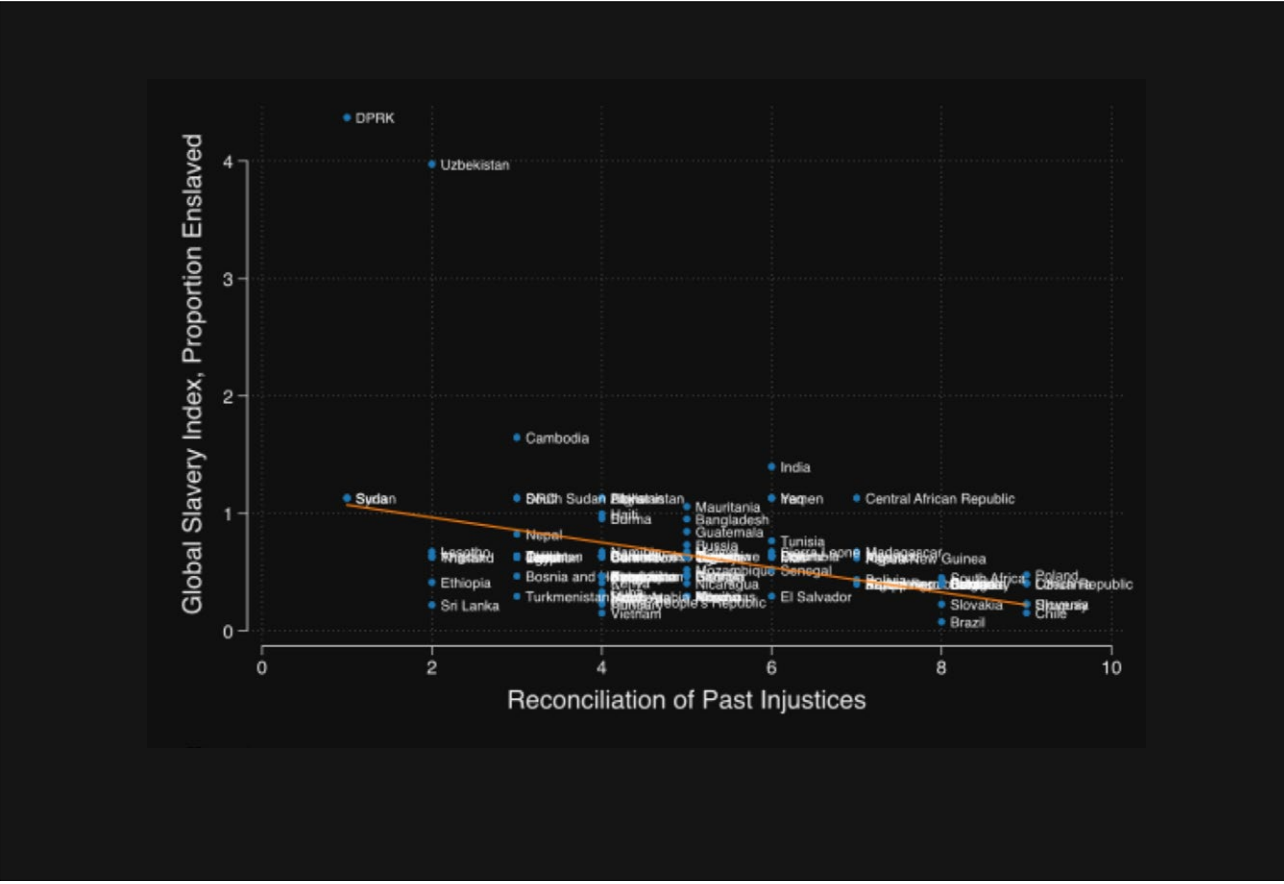


FIGURE 15. 2016 Global Slavery Index and Reconciliation of Past Injustices



Hypotheses

We can articulate the following set of core hypotheses.

Hypothesis 4: The Social Capital Hypothesis - GSI
In comparison of nation-states, those with stronger levels of social capital will have a smaller proportion of the population enslaved

Hypothesis 5: The Participation in Civil Society Hypothesis - GSI
In a comparison of nation-states, those in which the government enables participation in civil society will have a smaller proportion of the population enslaved

Hypothesis 6: The Reconciliation of Past Injustices Hypothesis - GSI
In a comparison of nation-states, those in which the political leadership has achieved reconciliation between victims and perpetrators will have a smaller proportion of the population enslaved

Control Variables

In estimating the relationship between enslavement, as documented by the 2016 Global Slavery Index, and these different measures of trust from The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, it is also important to control for at least a few other factors that might account for variation on the dependent variable. [Similar to Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3](#), we control for cross-national variation in

the Human Development Index, which might also help explain variation in the dependent variable. And because the dependent variable, *Proportion Enslaved*, already allows for the proportion of the population enslaved, we need not include another population control variable in these models. We also include regional dichotomous control variables accounting for variation across Asia, the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA), Sub-Saharan Africa, and The Americas, with Europe as a baseline.

Summary Statistics

The summary statistics presented in Table 5 are important to consider and illustrate the limitations of using data from the Global Slavery Index. The dependent variable, *Proportion Enslaved*, has 161 country observations, but only for 2016. Of course, in some sense, that is a very significant body of data to work with—161 country-year observations provide a good snapshot of data for the year 2016. And yet, because we have much more comprehensive longitudinal data for the various independent variables we consider (e.g., some 1,877 observations for the variable *Social Capital*), we see that there is only so much we can do in testing Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6.

TABLE 5. Estimating the 2016 Global Slavery Index, Summary Statistics

Variable Name	Type of Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Proportion Enslaved</i>	Dependent	161	.53	.51	.0018	4.37
<i>Social Capital</i>	Independent	1,877	5.13	1.72	1	9
<i>Participation in Civil Society</i>	Independent	1,889	4.91	2.01	1	10
<i>Reconciliation of Past Injustices</i>	Independent	1,569	5.05	1.99	1	10
<i>Human Development Index</i>	Control	3,299	.68	.16	.26	.95
<i>Asia</i>	Control	3,740	.23	.42	0	1
<i>MENA</i>	Control	3,740	.10	.30	0	1
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	Control	3,740	.20	.40	0	1
<i>The Americas</i>	Control	3,740	.18	.38	0	1

Statistical Models

Table 6 considers three empirical models, each regressing data from the 2016 Global Slavery Index on measures of trust, participation in civil society, and reconciliation of past injustices, respectively, from The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index. In Model 4, using linear regression analysis, the coefficient of *Social Capital* is -0.0526 and is nearly statistically significant at the 0.05-level. This tells us that a one-unit increase in social capital leads to a decline in the proportion of the population enslaved by 0.05%. Thus, a five-unit increase in trust would lead to an estimated decrease of nearly 0.25%, about a quarter percent. Note that the population enslaved in 2016 ranged from a low of 0.018% (Switzerland) to a high of 4% (North Korea). This tells us that trust is again a significant predictor. So far, it would appear that trust, as measured by BTI, applies to slavery as measured by the Trafficking in

Persons Report and to slavery as measured with the Global Slavery Index.

We note a similar theme in Model 5, looking at *Participation in Civil Society* as the independent variable. The coefficient is -0.0421, statistically significant at the 0.05-level. Recall that *Participation in Civil Society* from BTI gauges how respondents evaluate the statement, "The political leadership actively enables civil society participation. It assigns an important role to civil society actors in deliberating and determining policies." For every unit increase in agreement of this statement, there is roughly a corresponding 0.04% decrease in the proportion of the population estimated enslaved. Thus, a five-unit increase in agreement corresponds to a 0.20% decrease in enslavement, other things being equal.

TABLE 6. Estimating the 2016 Global Slavery Index, Statistical Models

	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Social Capital</i>	-0.0526 (-1.97)		
<i>Participation in Civil Society</i>		-0.0421* (-2.16)	
<i>Reconciliation of Past Injustices</i>			-0.0387 (-1.69)
Human Development Index	-1.45*** (-3.45)	-1.639*** (-4.37)	-1.789*** (-3.93)
Asia	-0.210 (-2.29)	-0.221 (-1.85)	-0.232 (-1.67)
MENA	-0.087 (-0.65)	-0.0706 (-0.55)	-0.0782 (-0.54)
Sub-Saharan Africa	-0.412** (-2.68)	-0.461** (-3.09)	-0.513** (-2.92)
The Americas	-0.229 (-1.95)	-0.236* (-2.03)	-0.273* (-2.00)
Constant	2.057*** (6.64)	2.132*** (6.94)	2.239*** (6.11)
N	120	121	103
R ²	0.24	0.24	0.24
t statistics in parentheses, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001, Linear Regression Models			

SECTION 5.3

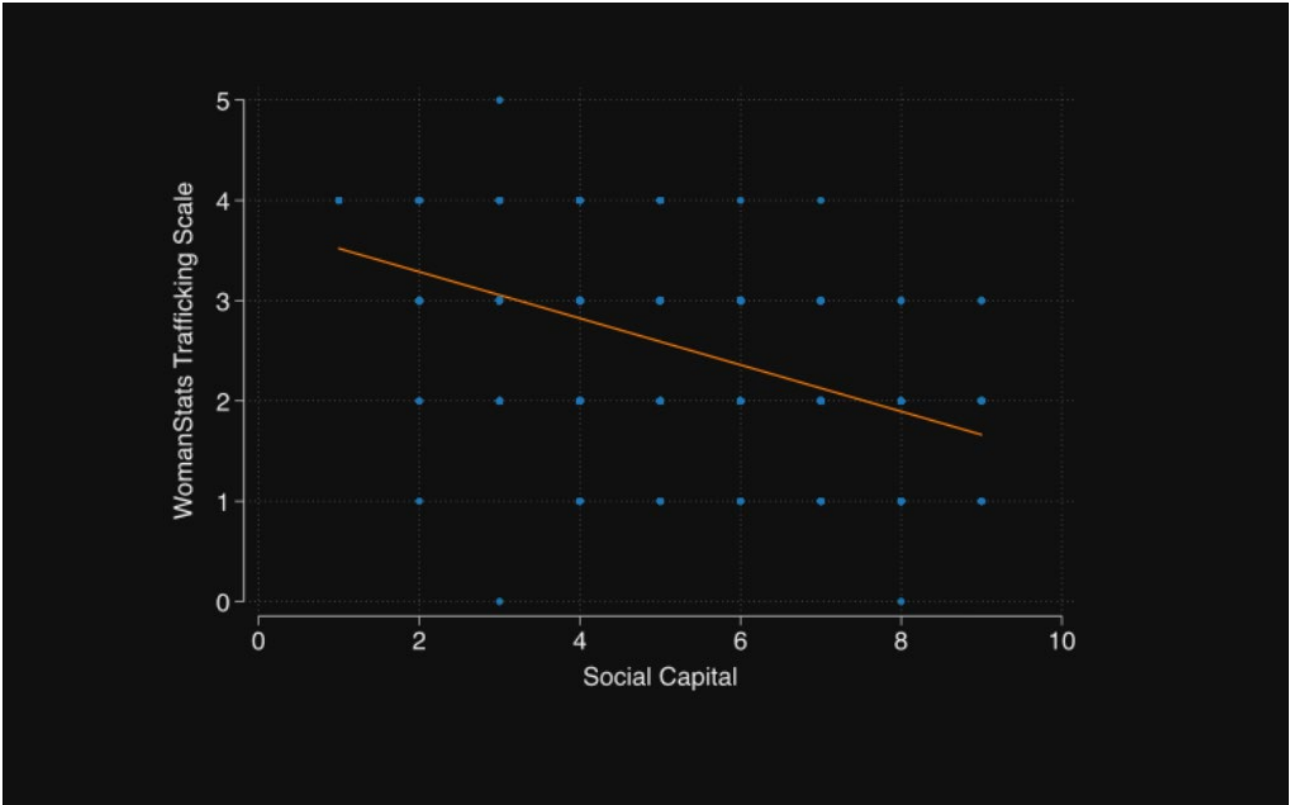
WomanStats

The third measure of human trafficking we can consider is from [WomanStats](#). Although this measure is similar to the Trafficking in Persons Report rankings, coders at WomanStats include other elements, including a consideration of the legal framework the country has to combat trafficking, the enforcement of those laws, and the success of that enforcement in curbing trafficking. We can correlate data on WomanStats for 2007, 2009, 2011, 2015, and 2019 with data from The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index.

In the scatterplot below, Figure 16, data on trust from BTI are on the horizontal axis, and data on trafficking from WomanStats are on the vertical axis. On the y-axis, [the WomanStats data are on a five-point scale](#). On the x-axis, data on trust from BTI are on a scale of 1 (low trust) up to a scale of 10 (high

trust). We note a downward-sloping relationship in which higher levels of trust are associated with better scores on the WomanStats trafficking scale (Pearson's r = -0.49).

FIGURE 16. WomanStats and Social Capital



Figures 17 and 18 illustrate a similar picture as well. Figure 17 also notes a downward-sloping relationship between the WomanStats trafficking measure and *Participation in Civil Society* (Pearson's $r = -0.49$).

FIGURE 17. WomanStats and Participation in Civil Society

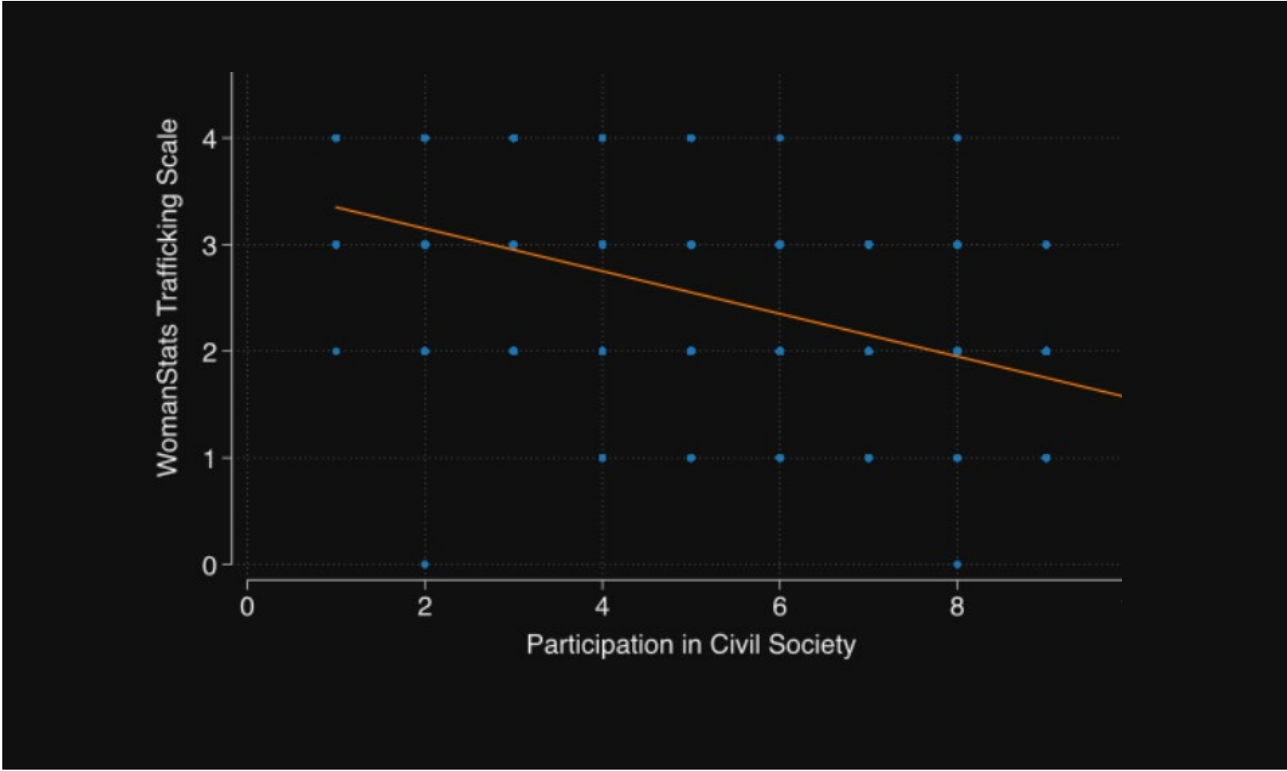
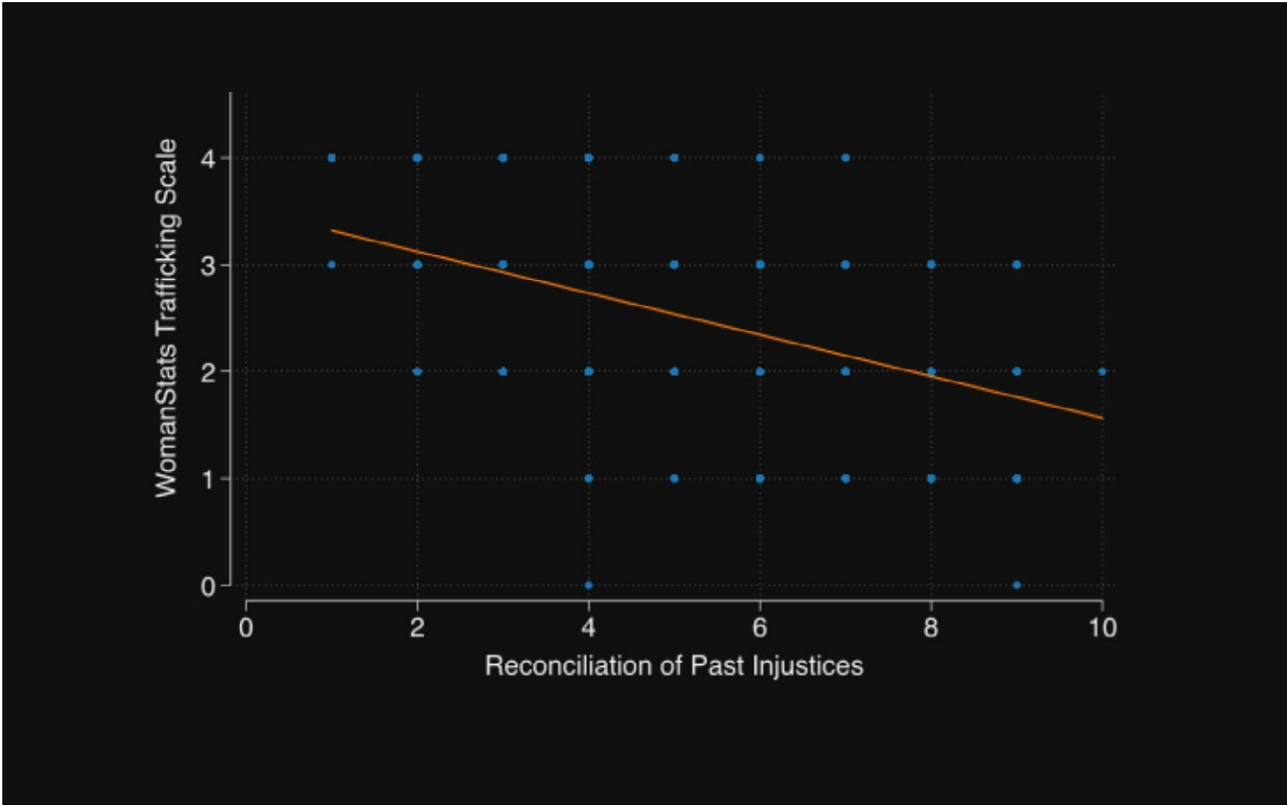


FIGURE 18. WomanStats and Reconciliation of Past Injustices



In Figure 18, we likewise note a downward-sloping relationship between the WomanStats trafficking measure and the other independent variable, *Reconciliation of Past Injustices* (Pearson's $r = -0.48$).

Hypotheses

We can articulate the following set of core hypotheses.

Hypothesis 7: The Social Capital Hypothesis – WomanStats

In a comparison of nation-states over time, those with stronger levels of social capital will have greater legal protections for victims of human trafficking

Hypothesis 8: The Participation in Civil Society Hypothesis - WomanStats

In comparison of nation-states over time, those in which the government enables participation in civil society will have greater legal protections for victims of human trafficking

Hypothesis 9: The Reconciliation of Past Injustices Hypothesis - WomanStats

In a comparison of nation-states over time, those in which the political leadership has achieved reconciliation between victims and perpetrators will have greater legal protections for victims of human trafficking

Control Variables

In developing a series of empirical models to test the relationship between human trafficking, as measured by WomanStats, and the BTI measures, we can include similar control variables as our prior models. These control variables would include a country's population size, its human development index, as well as regional dichotomous variables for Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Sub-Saharan Africa, and The Americas.

Summary Statistics

Table 7 provides summary statistics. We note that for the variable *WomanStats*, there are 836 observations. This is a marked improvement upon the relatively limited data from the 2016 Global Slavery Index (161 observations) but much less than the larger body of data for the Trafficking in Persons Report (3,199 observations).

TABLE 7. Estimating WomanStats, Summary Statistics

Variable Name	Type of Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>WomanStats</i>	Dependent	836	2.37	.89	0	5
<i>Social Capital</i>	Independent	1,877	5.13	1.72	1	9
<i>Participation in Civil Society</i>	Independent	1,889	4.91	2.01	1	10
<i>Reconciliation of Past Injustices</i>	Independent	1,569	5.05	1.99	1	10
<i>Population</i>	Control	3,666	3.77E+07	1.39E+08	17,606	1.40E+09
<i>Human Development Index</i>	Control	3,299	.68	.16	.26	.95
<i>Asia</i>	Control	3,740	.23	.42	0	1
<i>MENA</i>	Control	3,740	.10	.30	0	1
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	Control	3,740	.20	.40	0	1
<i>The Americas</i>	Control	3,740	.18	.38	0	1

Statistical Models

Table 8 provides the results of our next set of empirical models, this time using data from [WomanStats](#) for the dependent variable. Model 7, the BTI measure of trust is statistically significant, in this case at the .001-level. The coefficient is -0.531. This tells us the odds of receiving a lower WomanStats ranking are significantly lower for a one-unit increase in trust as measured by BTI. We note similar statistically significant results for Model 8 (looking at participation in civil society) and Model 9 (looking at the reconciliation of past injustices).

Admittedly, we are still a long way from having the best measures on human trafficking across the globe. However, regardless of how we measure trafficking (e.g., the TIP Report, the Global Slavery Index, or WomanStats), we note a pattern: **trust appears to matter in predicting human trafficking outcomes.** Of course, these are still only preliminary findings. But they give us pause to consider the extent to which trust matters in understanding and ending slavery.

TABLE 8. Estimating WomanStats, Statistical Models

	(7)	(8)	(9)
<i>Social Capital</i>	-0.531*** (-4.91)		
<i>Participation in Civil Society</i>		-0.397*** (-4.76)	
<i>Reconciliation of Past Injustices</i>			-0.447*** (-4.75)
Population	1.50e-09 (1.47)	1.33e-09 (1.33)	1.14e-09 (1.05)
Human Development Index	-4.369* (-2.47)	-5.352** (-3.23)	-4.452* (-2.30)
Asia	0.559 (0.93)	0.795 (1.39)	0.762 (1.19)
MENA	2.368*** (3.77)	2.422*** (3.94)	2.840*** (4.03)
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.257 (0.36)	-0.0211 (-0.03)	0.271 (0.35)
The Americas	0.379 (0.67)	0.316 (0.58)	0.380 (0.62)
Constant	2.475*** (4.58)	2.300*** (4.43)	2.490*** (4.02)
N	595	600	490

t statistics in parentheses, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.00, Ordered Logit Models



In Manila, Filipino civil society groups increase resilience to human trafficking among the youth. Credit: Kadir Van Lohuizen, NOOR Images

SECTION 6

Exploring Human Trafficking and Trust in The United States

A global analysis on trust and anti-slavery can be daunting. It requires finding enough data at the macro-level, country-by-country, and finding reliable and valid data. Although in Section 5 of this report we note that trust appears to be a statistically significant predictor in understanding global trafficking and that the finding seems to be robust, regardless of which measure of trafficking we employ, we are mindful that there is only so much one can do at the macro-level of analysis. Accordingly, in this section, we pause and pivot toward a deeper dive in looking at trust and anti-slavery in the author's home country: The United States. Here, we assess how trust matters in understanding human trafficking across the US.

SECTION 6.1

The Social Capital Index Project

[As we explored earlier in this report](#), there are not many publicly available measures of trust in the United States, broken down along the 50 US states, but one measure comes from [The Social Capital Index Project](#), spearheaded by United States Senator [Mike Lee](#). According to its [website](#), “The Social Capital Project has been gathering county- and state-level data on a range of social, economic, demographic, health, religious, and other indicators. Broadly speaking, we looked for indicators related to family structure and stability, family interaction and investment, civil society, trust and confidence in institutions, community cohesion, institutions, volunteerism, and social organization.”

The Social Capital Project has an index that measures trust across the United States, but so far for only one year in time—2018.

We can correlate data from the Social Capital Index Project with data on human trafficking in the United States from [the National Human Trafficking Resource Center](#) (NHTRC). Data from the NHTRC reflect the total number of suspected cases of trafficking its hotline receives. Persons from across the United States may call the hotline to report any tips on suspected trafficking. Then, the NHTRC identifies cases of trafficking and groups them into different categories, including sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and calls directly from victims and survivors. These identified categories give us unique data with which to work in correlating the relationship between social capital and human trafficking in the United States. Importantly, we note that the NHTRC data are not true prevalence data. Indeed, there has never been a national prevalence estimate of human trafficking in the United States to the best of our knowledge. Instead, these NHTRC

data are a useful but imperfect measure of trafficking in the USA.

We begin by looking at some scatterplots with the NHTRC and the Social Capital Project data. Figure 19 plots the relationship between total NHTRC contacts made in 2018 on the y-axis and data from the Social Capital Project on the x-axis. We note a downward-sloping relationship (Pearson's $r = -0.32$), suggesting that as levels of social capital improve across the 50 US States, there is a corresponding decrease in those cases reported to the NHTRC hotline. In other words, in those parts of the United States where there appear to be higher levels of trust, there are less reports of trafficking. Similarly, Figure 20 plots the relationship between confirmed instances of human trafficking cases, as reported to the NHTRC, and corresponding values on the Social Capital Index. We note a downward-sloping relationship (Pearson's $r = -0.38$).

FIGURE 19. Total NHTRC Contacts and the Social Capital Index

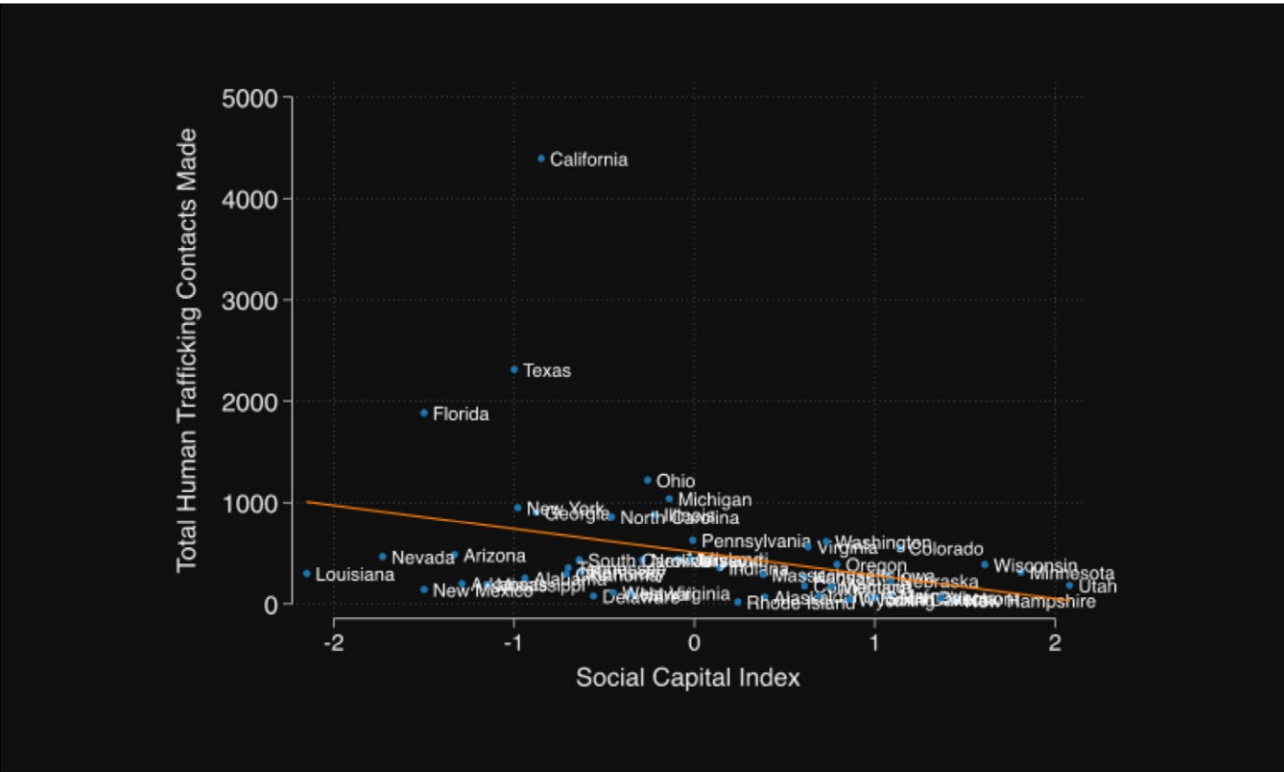
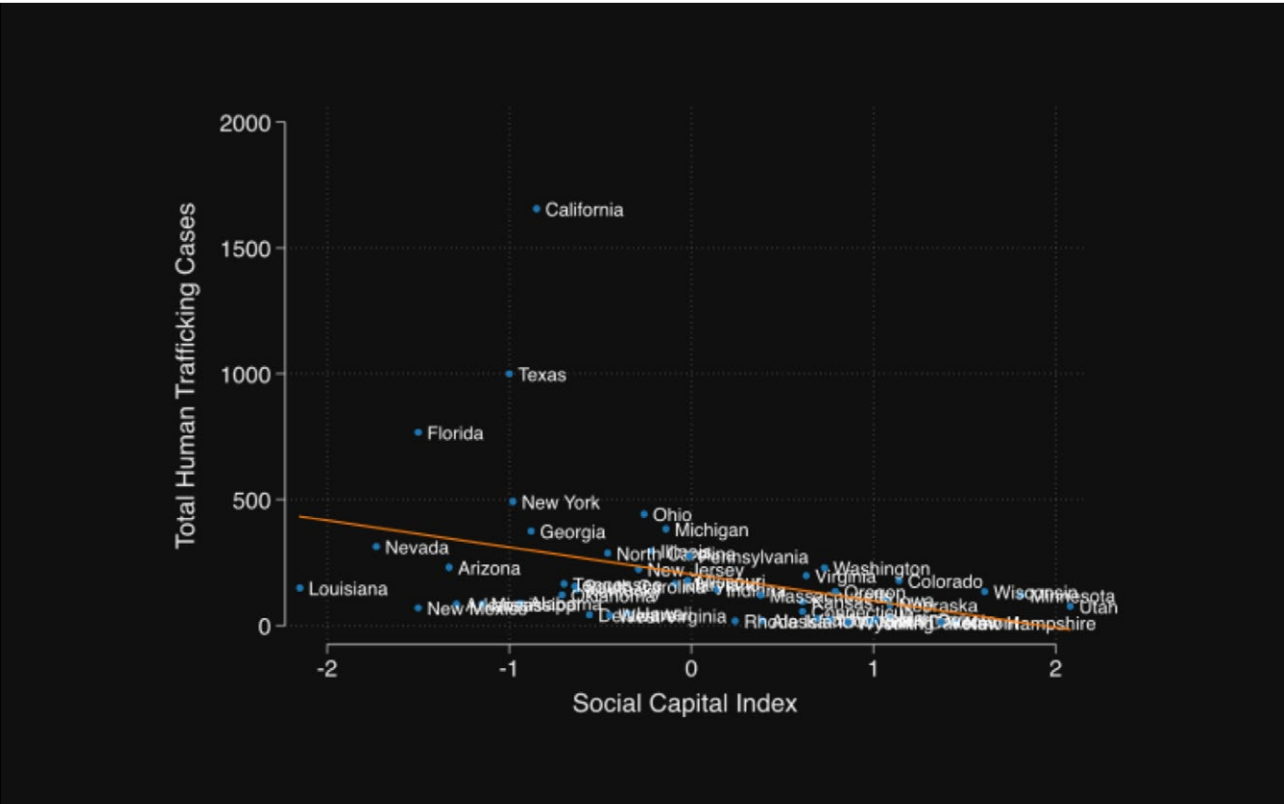


FIGURE 20. Total NHTRC Trafficking Cases and the Social Capital Index



Hypotheses

These data from the NHTRC are illuminating. We can identify cases not only of total contacts made and confirmed cases of human trafficking but also of breakdowns in terms of sex trafficking cases and labor trafficking cases and calls directly from victims of trafficking.

Hypothesis 10: The Total Contacts Hypothesis
In a comparison of the 50 US States, those with higher social capital levels will have lower incidences of total contacts reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Hypothesis 11: The Human Trafficking Cases Hypothesis
In a comparison of the 50 US States, those with higher social capital levels will have lower incidences of human trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Hypothesis 12: The Sex Trafficking Cases Hypothesis
In a comparison of the 50 US States, those with higher social capital levels will have lower incidences of sex trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Hypothesis 13: The Labor Trafficking Cases Hypothesis
In a comparison of the 50 US States, those with higher social capital levels will have lower incidences of labor trafficking cases to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Hypothesis 14: The Calls from Victims and Survivors Hypothesis
In a comparison of the 50 US States, those with higher levels of social capital will have lower incidences of direct calls from victims and survivors to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Control Variables

In testing these hypotheses, it's important to control for other factors that might also explain the prevalence of human trafficking across the 50 US States. We know from the literature that there are a number of predictors of human trafficking (e.g., [Twis 2020](#), [Mostajabian, Santa Maria, Wiemann, Newlin and Bocchini 2019](#), [Ottisova, Hemmings, Howard, Zimmerman and Oram 2016](#), and [Fedina, Williamson and Perdue 2019](#)). This literature tells us that human

trafficking in America can depend on sexual assault/abuse, mental health concerns, drug/alcohol abuse, poverty, and education rates (e.g., [McCoy 2019](#), [Schwarz et al. 2018](#)). Thus, based on these insights, in the empirical models to follow, we include the following control variables:

High School Graduation
From the US Department of Justice, [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#), this measure includes “the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade.” We expect states with higher high school graduation rates to have lower levels of human trafficking, other things being equal.

Sexual Assault
From the FBI's [Uniform Crime Reporting \(UCR\) Program](#), this measure includes the number of sexual assaults per 100,000 inhabitants. The FBI's definition of rape is “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim. Attempts or assaults to commit rape are also included in the statistics presented here; however, statutory rape and incest are excluded.” Although some human rights NGOs have criticized these figures as an undercount, we use these data as they are the only source of annual data for sexual assault in the United States that we could identify. We expect to see a positive correlation between cases of sexual assault and human trafficking in the United States.

Homeless Youth
From the [US Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), this measure identifies the number of homeless youth age 18 or younger, “not in the physical custody or care of a parent or legal guardian,” and “lacking a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence.” We expect to see more cases of homeless youth predict more cases of trafficking.

Migrant Arrests
From the [US Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#), this measure is the percent of total “interior arrests,” i.e., those made by ICE officials within the United States, but not including arrests at the border. We include this measure to capture the phenomena of vulnerable, undocumented

migrants who seek to come to the United States to seek a better opportunity. We expect to see higher arrest rates of migrants correspond to higher levels of human trafficking.

Substance Abuse

From [the Centers for Disease Control](#), this measure records overall drug mortality by state in terms of the number of deaths per 100,000 members of the total population. We expect to see a positive correlation between states with higher substance abuse levels and reported incidences of human trafficking.

Youth Mental Health

From [Mental Health America](#), this measure is an aggregated index of seven measures that make up a young person’s mental health. This includes: (1) Youth with At Least One Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the Past Year; (2) Youth with substance use disorder in the past year; (3) Youth with severe MDE; (4) Youth with MDE who did not receive mental health services; (5) Youth with severe MDE who received some consistent treatment; (6) Children with private insurance that did not cover mental or emotional problems; and (7) Students identified with emotional disturbance for an individualized education program. We expect to see a relationship between states with higher rankings mental health rankings and incidences of trafficking.

Poverty

Lastly, this measure, from [the United States Department of Commerce](#), includes the percentage of people in poverty, by state, using a 2-3-year average. We expect to see a positive correlation between increased poverty rates and trafficking. Mississippi had the highest poverty rates in our dataset from 2015 to 2018.

Summary Statistics

Table 9 provides summary statistics exploring the relationship between human trafficking and social capital in the United States. It’s important to note the relative lack of data for the independent variable, *Social Capital Index*. There are only 50 observations for this variable, given that we are limited to data only from 2018. This is a significant limitation. Given that for each dependent variable of interest there are roughly 300 observations, we would ideally have a corresponding independent variable with nearly as many observations.

Statistical Models

Table 10 provides data for our hypotheses of interest in looking at the relationship between social capital and human trafficking in the United States.

These results look at different measures of human trafficking in the United States based on data collected by the NHTRC. Model 10 examines all contacts collected by the NHTRC. Model 11 looks at total human trafficking cases documented, Model 12 focuses on sex trafficking cases, Model 13 examines labor trafficking cases, and Model 14 looks at calls from victims. The coefficient of the *Social Capital Index* is statistically significant in four out of five of these models. In Model 10, for instance, the coefficient is -0.449, significant at the 0.05-level. This tells us that a one-unit increase in social capital predicts a 45% decrease in the total number of contacts received by the NHTRC in 2018. In Model 11, the coefficient is -0.623, and in Model 12, it’s -0.660, both significant at the 0.01-level. With respect to total documented instances of human trafficking and sex trafficking, a one-unit increase in social capital predicts roughly a 62% to 66% decrease in cases, respectively, other things being equal. In Model 13 (*Labor Trafficking*), the coefficient is -0.494, significant at the 0.05 level. **This tells us that a one-unit increase in social capital corresponds to a 49% decline in labor trafficking cases.** We note, however, that in Model 14 (*Calls from Victims*), the coefficient is in the same direction but only significant at the .10-level.

Based on these five models, we have preliminary evidence that social capital is a meaningful factor in understanding human trafficking in the United States. However, we also note that these models are based on a snapshot in time for data on social capital in 2018.

Some other variables in Table 10 are noteworthy. *Migrant Arrests* measures the total percent of arrests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (with a minimum of 0.001%arrests and a maximum of 27% in 2018). This variable is statistically significant for all the models in Table 10, at either the 0.05 or 0.001-level. With regard to Model 12, for instance, the coefficient of *Migrant Arrests* is 0.0904. A one-percent increase in ICE arrests corresponds to a

TABLE 9. Social Capital and Trafficking in the USA, Summary Statistics

Variable Name	Type of Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Total Contacts	Dependent	300	532.9	763.52	20	4,970
Total Cases	Dependent	300	164.34	239.66	4	1,656
Sex Trafficking	Dependent	298	122.40	180.30	2	1,226
Labor Trafficking	Dependent	291	22.32	29.96	2	170
Calls from Victims	Dependent	299	137.42	233.10	0	1,884
Social Capital Index	Independent	50	.014	1.00	-2.15	2.08
High School Graduation	Control	250	84.60	4.44	69	92
Sexual Assault	Control	250	45.45	18.59	15.3	161.6
Homeless Youth	Control	250	82.72	188.40	0	1,495
Migrant Arrests	Control	200	1.98	4.19	.0099	27.60
Substance Abuse	Control	250	21.18	9.56	6.4	57.8
Youth Mental Health	Control	250	25.5	14.45	1	50
Poverty Rate	Control	300	12.19	3.15	5.3	21.8

TABLE 10. Social Capital and Human Trafficking in the USA, Statistical Models

	Total Contacts	Total Cases	Sex Trafficking	Labor Trafficking	Calls from Victims
	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Social Capital Index	-0.449* (-2.48)	-0.623** (-3.27)	-0.660** (-3.27)	-0.494* (-2.32)	-0.322 (-1.68)
High School Graduation	-0.0000362 (-0.00)	-0.00491 (-0.16)	-0.00112 (-0.03)	-0.0155 (-0.53)	-0.0322 (-0.98)
Sexual Assault	-0.00745 (-1.93)	-0.00870* (-2.12)	-0.00763 (-1.91)	-0.0124* (-2.70)	-0.00510 (-1.07)
Homeless Youth	0.00139* (2.55)	0.00129* (2.31)	0.00135* (2.33)	0.000922 (1.60)	0.00150* (2.51)
Migrant Arrests	0.0917** (3.54)	0.0931*** (3.57)	0.0904** (3.39)	0.1000** (3.11)	0.108*** (3.76)
Substance Abuse	-0.00976 (-0.63)	-0.00555 (-0.35)	-0.00596 (-0.36)	-0.0107 (-0.68)	-0.00379 (-0.21)
Youth Mental Health	-0.00151 (-0.15)	0.000353 (0.03)	0.00146 (0.13)	-0.00232 (-0.26)	0.00662 (0.58)
Poverty Rate	-0.0779 (-1.41)	-0.104 (-2.00)	-0.108* (-2.02)	-0.0904 (-1.25)	-0.0865 (-1.34)
Constant	6.888* (2.42)	6.583* (2.24)	5.885 (1.90)	5.691 (2.00)	7.759* (2.67)
R ²	0.48	0.54	0.53	0.52	0.46
N	50	50	50	49	50
t statistics in parentheses, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001; Linear Regression Models. Dependent variables are log-transformed					

9% increase in documented sex trafficking calls to the NHTRC. The other models yield similar results. There's a strong relationship between ICE arrests and reports to the NHTRC. Both variables reflect vulnerable populations and the reality that some trafficking victims are undocumented persons from abroad.

We also note that the variable *Homeless Youth* is positive and statistically significant in four of the five models. In Model 14, for instance, which looks at calls received from victims and survivors of human trafficking, the coefficient of *Homeless Youth* is 0.00150, significant at the 0.05-level. This tells us that for every additional homeless youth in the United States, there's a 0.15% increase in trafficking cases. This is a sobering finding as homeless youth are a preventable form of structural violence in the United States.

Some of the other variables in this table achieve statistical significance but not in a consistent manner across all five models, so it would be wise to interpret these other variables with caution. Curiously, for instance, the variable *Sexual Assault* is statistically significant, but in only two of the models. Moreover, the direction of this variable is the opposite as expected. This might be a sign that the raw data for measuring sexual assault on an annual basis from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program may indeed be problematic, an undercount, or an imprecise accounting of the phenomena, as some critics have suggested.

Because the Social Capital Project Index is a composite measure that aggregates different sub-indices, we next explore what these data reveal by each sub-index. The following table provides the results of a second series of empirical models. We examine the relationship between the NHTRC data and these different sub-indices for 2018. These sub-indices measure the following: family unity, family interaction, social support, community health, institutional health, collective efficacy, and philanthropic health.

The table on the following page focuses on the coefficients of each of these sub-indices in terms of how well they explain variation in human trafficking data as collected by the NHTRC. We find mixed results. On the one hand, the sub-indices focusing on family unity, institutional health, and philanthropic have null results and demonstrate any lack of explanatory power in terms of social capital and human trafficking. On the other hand, the indices focusing on family interaction, social support, community health, and collective efficacy achieve statistical significance for most empirical models tested. The only consistent exception where only one of the models achieves statistical significance is for the model looking at calls from human trafficking victims and survivors. Only one of the sub-indices, collective efficacy, achieves statistical significance in explaining calls from victims and survivors.



Albanian youth groups raise awareness about forced and exploitative labor in factories in Tirana. Credit: Different and Equal

FIGURE 21. Social Capital and Human Trafficking in the USA--By Sub-Indices

	(10) Total Contacts	(11) Total Cases	(12) Sex Trafficking	(13) Labor Trafficking	(14) Calls from Victims
<i>Family Unity Sub-index</i>	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
<i>Family Interaction Sub-Index</i>	Sig**	Sig***	Sig***	Sig**	NS
<i>Social Support Sub-Index</i>	Sig**	Sig**	Sig**	Sig**	NS
<i>Community Health Sub-Index</i>	Sig**	Sig***	Sig***	Sig***	NS
<i>Institutional Health Sub-Index</i>	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
<i>Collective Efficacy Sub-Index</i>	Sig**	Sig**	Sig**	Sig**	Sig**
<i>Philanthropic Health Sub-Index</i>	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

SECTION 6.2

Civic Engagement and AmeriCorps

Thus far, the social capital hypothesis has some merit—at least for 2018—but we require a longitudinal model to tease the relationship further. Obtaining data on social capital is a challenge, so we turn to related data to continue the analysis. [The Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#) sponsors AmeriCorps and SeniorCorps service projects across the United States, capturing a relevant element of social capital-civic engagement.

We begin by correlating data from the CNCS with data from the NHTRC. Figure 21 looks at the relationship between AmeriCorps programs total contacts made to the NHTRC from 2015 to 2020.

We note the positive correlation (Pearson's $r = 0.87$) between the number of AmeriCorps programs on the ground over this time period and reports of trafficking cases to the hotline.

FIGURE 22. Total NHTRC Contacts Made and AmeriCorps Programs, 2015-2020

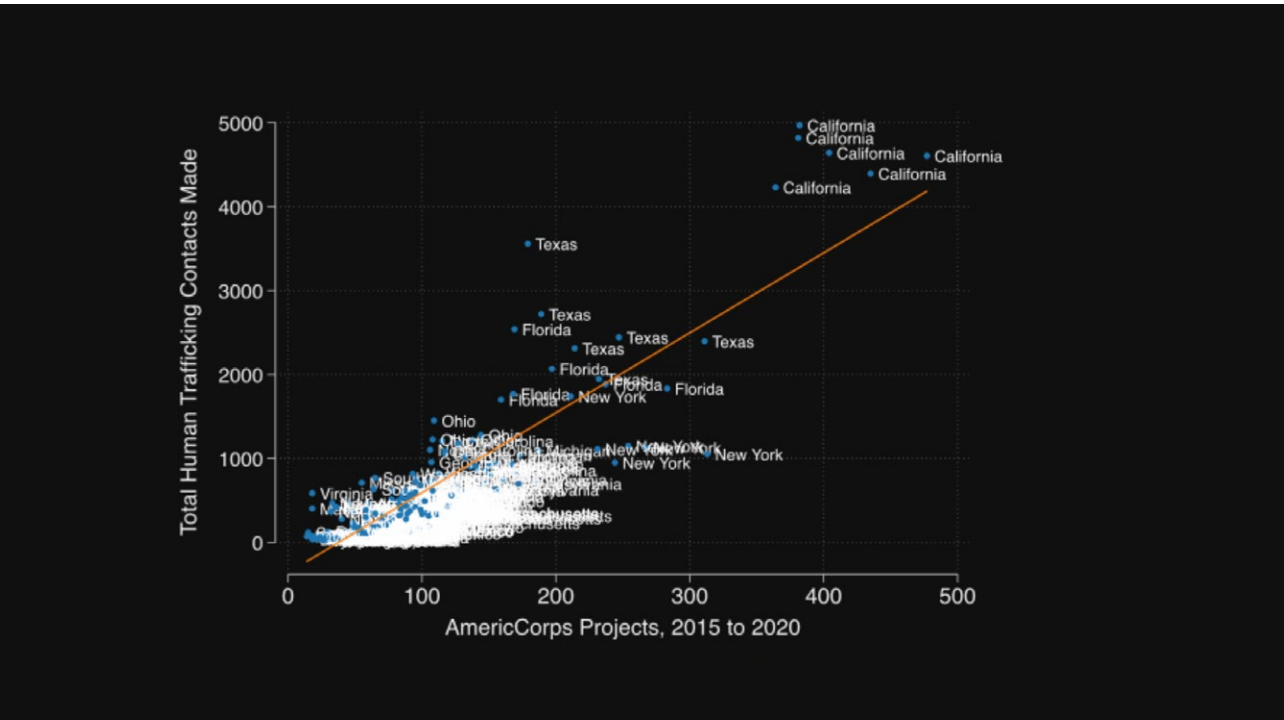
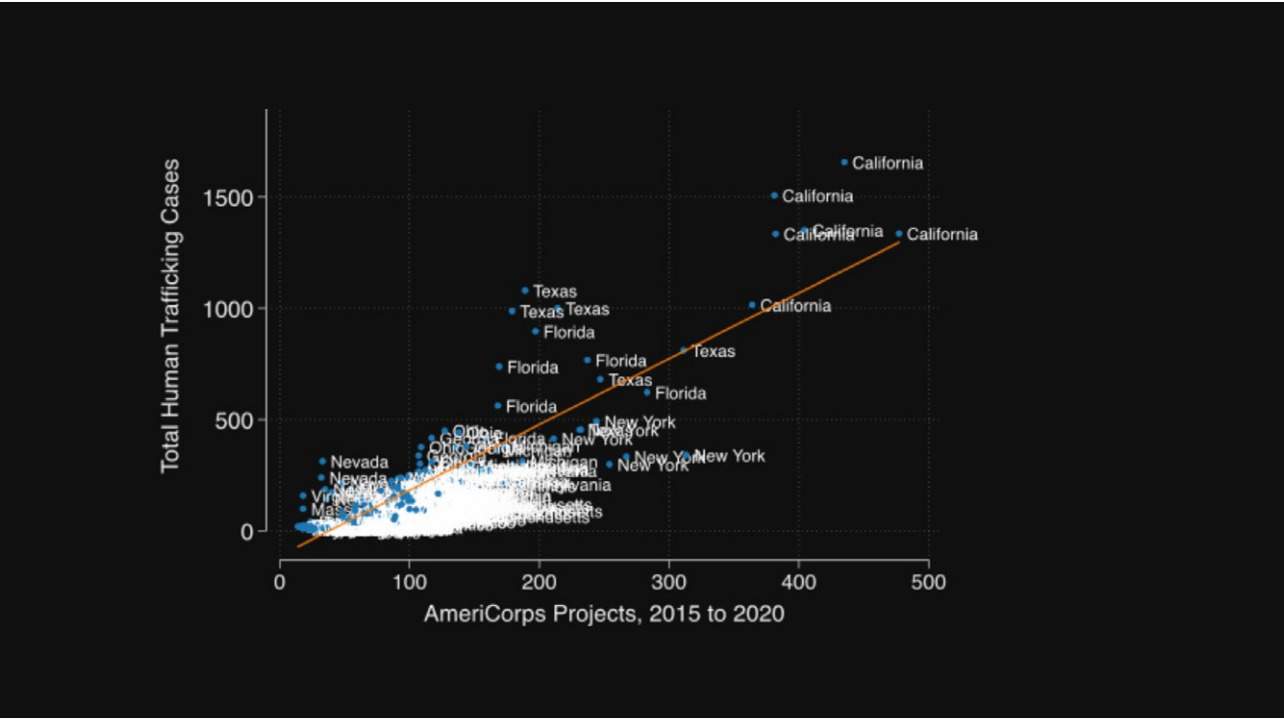


FIGURE 23. Total NHTRC Cases and AmeriCorps Programs, 2015-2020



In some sense, this is a curious finding—more trafficking contacts are associated with more AmeriCorps projects on the ground. One may think that the presence of AmeriCorps programs might give rise to more suspected trafficking cases. However, if we consider that the purpose of AmeriCorps is to serve the local community, we can begin to see

that with more volunteers on the ground, the more eyes and ears there are to report trafficking cases. We also note a similar pattern in Figure 23, with a positive relationship between human trafficking cases documented by the NHTRC and AmeriCorps programs over time (Pearson's $r = 0.86$).

Hypotheses

Following the hypotheses in Section 6.1, we can continue to explore data from the NHTRC and its relationship with AmeriCorps programs across the United States over time. This gives us the following series of hypotheses.

Hypothesis 15: The Total Contacts Hypothesis—AmeriCorps

In a comparison of the 50 US States over time, those with higher civic engagement levels will have higher incidences of total contacts reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Hypothesis 16: The Human Trafficking Cases Hypothesis—AmeriCorps

In a comparison of the 50 US States over time, those with higher levels of civic engagement will have higher incidences of human trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Hypothesis 17: The Sex Trafficking Cases Hypothesis—AmeriCorps

In a comparison of the 50 US States over time, those with higher levels of civic engagement will have higher incidences of sex trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Hypothesis 18: The Labor Trafficking Cases Hypothesis—AmeriCorps

In a comparison of the 50 US States over time, those with higher levels of civic engagement will have higher incidences of labor trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Hypothesis 19: The Calls from Victims and Survivors Hypothesis—AmeriCorps

In a comparison of the 50 US States over time, those with higher levels of civic engagement will have higher incidences of direct calls from victims and survivors reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Control Variables

Control variables would be the same as in Section 6.1

Summary Statistics

Summary statistics would be the same as in Section 6.1, along with the following summary data on AmeriCorps programs over time. There are a total of 300 observations for AmeriCorps. The state with the least number of AmeriCorps programs was North Dakota in 2016 (14 programs), and the state with the larger number of AmeriCorps programs was California in 2017 (477 programs).

Statistical Models

Table 11 provides results looking at the relationship between civic engagement and human trafficking in the United States. There is a positive and statistically significant relationship in each instance of human trafficking measured from the NHTRC. For example, in Model 16, the coefficient for Civic Engagement is 0.00505, significant at the 0.001-level. This tells us that for every additional service project via AmeriCorps, there is about a 0.5-percent increase in cases reported to the NHTRC. For every ten additional service projects, there is a corresponding 5% increase, other things being equal. We note comparable coefficients of Civic Engagement for the other models listed in the table—sex trafficking cases, labor trafficking cases, and calls from victims of trafficking. The more service projects there are, the more eyes and ears are on the ground to report concerns to outlets like the trafficking hotline. Although civic engagement is not an exact measure of social capital, it does contain its associational element. It suggests that community civic-mindedness is a correlated factor in understanding who calls the trafficking hotline.

TABLE 11. Civic Engagement and Human Trafficking in America, 2015-2020

	Total Contacts	Total Cases	Sex Trafficking	Labor Trafficking	Calls from Victims
	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)
<i>Civic Engagement</i>	0.00288** (3.00)	0.00505*** (3.77)	0.00522*** (3.88)	0.00622*** (3.50)	0.00823*** (4.47)
Education	0.00221* (2.17)	0.00528 (1.94)	0.00509 (1.55)	0.00350* (2.31)	0.00479 (1.87)
Sexual Assault	0.00158 (0.41)	0.00873 (1.74)	0.00599 (1.46)	0.000349 (0.07)	0.00663 (1.43)
Homeless Youth	0.000379* (2.45)	0.000230 (0.70)	0.000226 (0.62)	0.000142 (0.40)	0.000630 (1.00)
Uprooted Migrants	0.108*** (3.55)	0.116** (3.05)	0.112** (2.94)	0.0896** (2.83)	0.0577* (2.41)
Substance Abuse	0.00470 (0.75)	0.0214** (2.88)	0.0159* (2.17)	0.0185* (2.08)	0.00483 (0.44)
Youth Mental Health	-0.00120 (-0.48)	0.00655* (2.35)	0.00747* (2.31)	0.00525 (1.24)	0.00109 (0.21)
Poverty Rate	-0.00988 (-0.52)	-0.0855*** (-3.71)	-0.0705** (-3.22)	-0.0609* (-2.28)	0.00339 (0.13)
Constant	4.871*** (9.55)	3.230*** (5.12)	2.936*** (4.83)	1.620** (2.92)	2.074** (2.84)
R ²	0.49	0.39	0.42	0.49	0.53
N	200	200	198	195	199

t statistics in parentheses, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; Linear Regression Models.
Dependent variables are log-transformed



Sr Arpan Carvahlo, Arise India Coordinator, visits tea garden transformation projects in Silchar, run by local groups.
Credit: Arise

SECTION 7

Thinking About Next Steps

In some sense, we see this report as the first step in a broader and deeper research agenda, exploring the relationship between core values, like trust, and critical human security issues, like those embodied in the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). The SDGs look at a variety of human security issues. In this report, we examined just one of these issues—the plight of modern-day slavery, as embodied in [SDG Target 8.7](#).

The correlations in this report and the statistical models presented suggest trust is a consistent predictor of modern slavery. Macro-level data from the Global Slavery Index shows a clear connection to trust. The rankings from the Trafficking in Persons Report over time show a correlation to trust as well. More specific indicators from WomanStats show that trafficking and trust are also related. Looking at data in the United States, human trafficking and social capital appear connected.

Although we have strong correlational findings, the causal relationships between trust and human trafficking have yet to be fully illuminated. This is an essential next step in deepening a research agenda on trust and anti-slavery.

In exploring this research agenda, we would invite collaboration with other stakeholders to develop more robust quantitative and qualitative indicators. Quantitatively, we would benefit from more

measures of trust—not only at the macro (nation-state) level but also at the mezzo (societal) and micro (individual) levels. Qualitatively, we benefit from in-depth one-on-one interviews and focus groups with individuals from the counter-trafficking community. Ideally, such interviews and focus groups could include a wide cross-section of organizations, including local NGOs, regional organizations, and global anti-trafficking NGOs. Such conversations would include survivors and non-survivors.

If we could obtain such additional data at the quantitative and qualitative levels, we could establish a fuller causal connection between trust and counter-trafficking. We would also then be better positioned to explore how other related core values, such as compassion or perhaps even love, might matter in helping the global community realize the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

We look forward to continuing the conversation.

“

Some have expressed their hope that a more holistic understanding of impact will emerge - one capable of appreciating the less measurable, but profoundly important aspects of frontline work. One key aspect is trust.

”

Sustainable income generation facilitated by civil society in Jharkhand, India, 2021.
Credit: Arise

