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Modern Trafficking, Slavery, and Other Forms of Servitude

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Abstract

The claim that there has been a remarkable revival of slavery, other forms of forced labor, and human trafficking in our times has inspired widespread activism and a vast body of popular and academic works. Although the conflation of terms, exaggerated empirical claims, and a shortage of evidence-based work have prompted legitimate scholarly skepticism, modern trafficking and forms of servitude do present urgent problems for researchers, lawmakers and reformers. We first clarify the most basic terms in the field—servitude, forced labor, slavery, trafficking, and smuggling—then examine all forms of servitude and evaluate the degree to which they properly amount to slavery or result from trafficking. This is followed by an examination of methodological problems in the measurement of types of servitude and a brief analysis of the factors accounting for its contemporary revival. We aim to encourage more scholarly enquiries from sociologists who are uniquely qualified to explore this problem.

A striking development over the past three decades has been activism around claims of modern slavery and the trafficking of persons into servitude. This trend has been fueled by an unusual degree of celebrity engagement, press coverage, and popular interest (Gulati 2012, Haynes 2014). A search of the English text corpus in Google Books Ngram Viewer, a tool used to chart the frequency of a term’s usage in published literature over time, shows that the use of the term “slave labor,” since its sharp surge during the American Civil War era of the 1860s, rose to another peak during the civil rights era and began to rise again in the mid-1980s. Interest in the term “forced labor” quickly picked up after the 1920s and followed a similar trend as “slave labor” since then (**Figure 1a**). **Figure 1b** indicates that references to various terms related to servitude started to take off about the early 1990s, the most significant being “human trafficking.” A recent study (Limoncelli 2017) also finds that the number of NGOs addressing the problem of trafficking globally began to grow in the mid-1980s. By one count, there are now some 2,684 antislavery organizations operating both within countries and internationally (Polaris 2017).

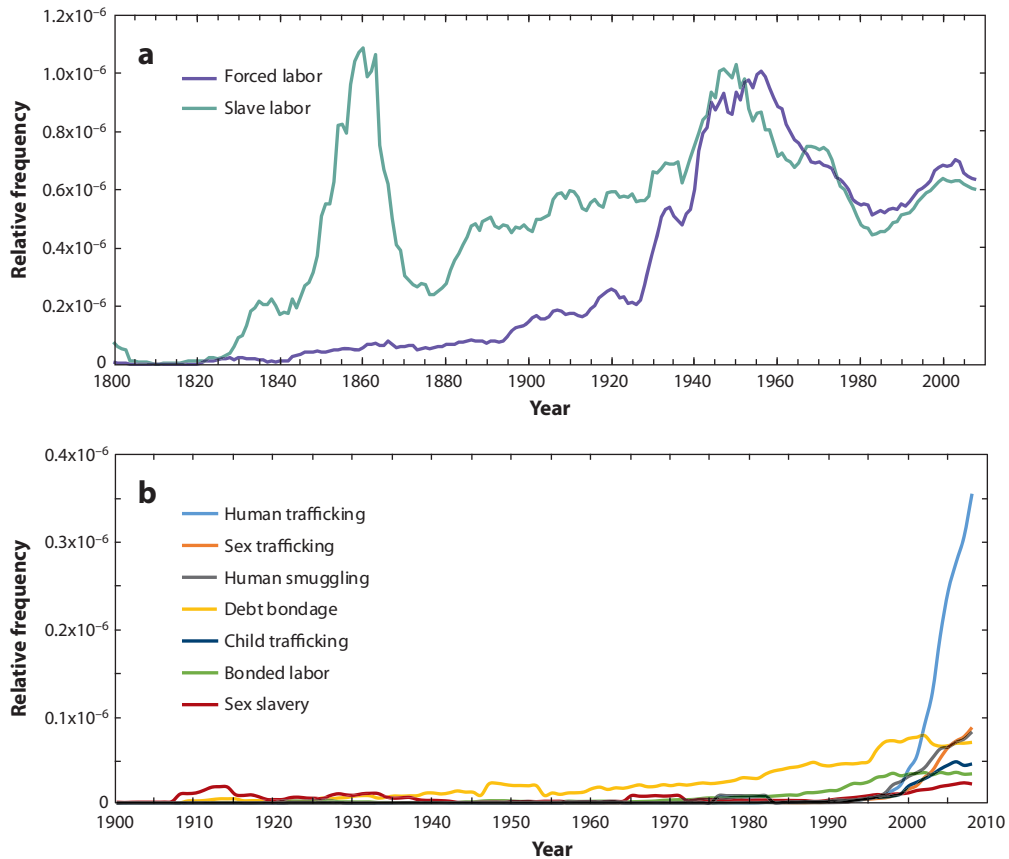


Figure 1

Google Books Ngram trends in terms used in published literature over time. (a) Search results of forced labor and slave labor, 1800–2008. (b) Search results of human trafficking, sex trafficking, human smuggling, debt bondage, child trafficking, bonded labor, and sex slavery, 1900–2008. Both figures are generated from case-insensitive searches of the respective selected terms in Google Books Ngram Viewer (<http://books.google.com/ngrams>), with smoothing parameter 3. The y-axis displays the relative frequency or percentage of the selected terms in Google’s sample of English text corpus in a given year.

We are led to inquire into the nature and extent of the phenomena that prompted this surge of interest and activism. The common conflation of all forms of forced labor with slavery and the often exaggerated claims about the number of modern slaves, such as the fallacious assertion¹ that there are more slaves today than at the height of the Atlantic slave systems in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Bales 2007, 2012; van den Anker 2004), have led to justifiable skepticism among many scholars (Bunting & Quirk 2017a). Nonetheless, servitude—including at its extreme, modern forms of slavery—is experienced by a nonnegligible proportion of the global population. The issue poses urgent challenges for leaders, policy-makers, legislators, and scholars.

There is currently a substantial and growing interdisciplinary literature on the nature, types, and extent of modern servitude (Gozdziaik & Bump 2008). We make no attempt to cover this entire literature. Instead we seek to clarify the main terms in the field and identify some of the more important substantive and methodological issues in its study. Section 1 examines the most basic terms in the field and several serious terminological and definitional questions they raise, Section 2 discusses types of servitude and the continuum of experiences associated with each type, Section 3 assesses approaches and problems in estimating the size of the populations of interest, and Section 4 briefly discusses the multilevel factors that contribute to the rise of modern slavery and other forms of servitude. A concluding section briefly assesses the effectiveness of the antitrafficking movement, indicates some of the important gaps in the field, and urges greater engagement of sociologists with the subject.

1. SERVITUDE, SLAVERY, TRAFFICKING, AND SMUGGLING

There is general agreement that the study of trafficking and modern slavery is beset by serious definitional problems. In a critique of what she calls “exploitation creep,” J.A. Chuang (2014) has noted a growing tendency to categorize all forms of exploited labor as forced labor and also to equate them with trafficking and even slavery. Muddled definitions and operationalization challenge the validity and comparability of empirical findings. This problem has been compounded by the otherwise valuable recent joint ILO et al. (2017) report on modern “slavery.” Thus we begin by making clear what we mean by the most basic terms in the field: servitude, forced labor, slavery, trafficking, and smuggling, along with what we term “abusive migration.”

1.1. Servitude: Reviving a Serviceable Old Term

Definitional problems begin with how to designate the most generic term in the field. Until 2017, the ILO (International Labour Office), the most authoritative body on the subject, had settled on the term “forced labor,” occasionally using “servitude” as a synonym. The term forced labor, whatever its limitations, had the advantage of avoiding the tendency of antitrafficking and abolitionist activists to identify all forms of exploitation as slavery. Unfortunately, in its much anticipated 2017 report on the subject, the ILO (ILO et al. 2017) changed its position to that of one of its new collaborators, the Walk Free Foundation, which advocates “modern slavery” as the umbrella term for all forms of modern exploited labor. The need for a new generic term, we suspect, was also driven by the decision, which we applaud, to include for the first time forced marriage

¹Estimates of global slavery today include bonded laborers who make up more than half the totals. Bonded laborers existed in even greater numbers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but are excluded from global estimates of slavery in these earlier periods.

as a form of servitude. This made “forced labor” as the generic term somewhat problematic since forced marriages do not necessarily entail forced labor. We agree that another inclusive term would be more appropriate, but we strongly disagree with the change to “modern slavery,” not only because it misapplies and dilutes the term “slavery” (Kurasawa 2017) but because it introduces a classificatory confusion in the analysis of a subtype of so-called slavery. The ILO divides modern slavery into forced labor and forced marriage, but one kind of forced labor is then identified as “work imposed in the context of slavery or vestiges of slavery,” making the concept of slavery a subcategory of itself (ILO et al. 2017, p. 17).

The umbrella term we propose is one that has long been used for this purpose, including by the ILO, namely, servitude (Bush 2000, pp. 3–5). Adapting and extending the earlier standard definition of forced labor, we define servitude as that condition in which the work, service or relationships of another person are not freely offered or, if voluntarily initiated, cannot be left or refused, and are maintained under the threat of physical or psychological coercion, violence or some other penalty. So defined, the term servitude embraces all known forms of exploitation or coercion, including forced labor, political imprisonment, forced marriage, sexual exploitation, and other relational or specifically degrading forms of domination not centered around labor exploitation. This definition of servitude also acknowledges an aspect of modern forms of exploitation too often neglected, that relations of domination are often fluid (Hoang & Parreñas 2014); they are, not uncommonly, initiated by the victim or agreed to by them, then later become coercive (Andrijasevic 2010, Cheng 2014). Forced labor is all those forms of servitude in which the exploitation of labor, sexual and nonsexual, for profit is the primary motivation of the exploiter. Forced marriage, the other major category of modern servitude, refers to situations where persons, regardless of their age, have been forced to marry without their consent and, even with initial consent from adults, are forced to remain in the relationship against their will.

The ILO (ILO et al. 2017) estimates that on any given day in 2016 there were 40,293,000 persons in servitude,² of whom 15,975,000 were in forced nonsexual labor exploitation, 4,816,000 in forced sexual exploitation, 4,060,000 in state-imposed forced labor, and 15,442,000 in forced marriages. A quarter of all persons in servitude were children. Women and girls constituted 71% of all persons in servitude and are highly concentrated in forced marriages (84%) and commercial sexual exploitation (99%). Servitude may last from a few days or weeks to years in the case of bonded labor or forced marriages, with an average of 20 months for those in forced labor and 23 months for sexual exploitation. The great majority (62%) of people in servitude resided in the Asia Pacific region, followed by Africa (23%) and Europe and Central Asia (9%). However, in terms of prevalence per thousand persons, Africa (7.6) outnumbered the Asia-Pacific region (6.1) and Europe and Central Asia (3.9).

The ILO is a highly reputable organization on the topic of servitude and exploitation. Aside from our misgivings about its terminology, we conditionally accept these figures as the best available working estimates, subject to critical examination and continuing revision.³ In Section 3, we discuss the available approaches and their limitations in estimating the often hidden victims of servitude.

²In this article we will substitute the term “servitude” for what the ILO (ILO et al. 2017) called “slavery,” except in those extreme cases on the continuum of servitude where we deem the term slavery to be appropriate.

³The ILO (ILO et al. 2017) global estimates of modern slavery were derived from national household surveys and the IOM (International Organization for Migration) database, which is a complete shift from the capture-recapture method used in previous rounds. Details of the new method were not yet available at the time this manuscript was being prepared and require further examination.

1.2. Slavery

In *Slavery and Social Death*, Patterson (1982) argued that the widely accepted definition of slavery by the League of Nations Slavery Convention of 1926 as “the condition of a person over whom any or all the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised,” (UN OHCHR 1926, p. 1), while not inaccurate in regard to ancient Roman and modern capitalistic slave systems, is insufficient for any global consideration of slavery. Slavery was found to be a heritable condition of social death (legal, civic, and symbolic) and degradation, a permanent outsider status sanctioned by the state and institutionally reinforced by the broader culture and society. With a few notable exceptions, discussed below, slavery in this classic traditional form is largely extinct in the modern world and is formally illegal, or constitutionally prohibited, in nearly all states. However, certain extreme forms of modern servitude may be sufficiently slave-like to justify being called modern slavery.

To clarify the exact legal meaning of the term modern-day slavery, an international research network of legal and social science scholars (including one of the authors of this article) met over a period of two years and produced the *Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery* (Allain 2012, especially pp. 375–80). Using the 1926 Slavery Convention’s definition as a starting point, the group determined that its critical phrase “powers attaching to the right of ownership” should be understood, in contemporary terms, to mean power and “control over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty, with the intent of exploitation through the use, management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person” (Allain 2012, p. 376). Violence, deception, and other kinds of coercion are typical measures of control. Furthermore, the group concluded that “possession is foundational to an understanding of slavery, even when the State does not support a property right in respect of persons” (p. 376). Effective possession may take the form of physical constraints or more abstract means such as enforcing a new identity through religion or marriage (Allain 2012).

Building on the *Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines*, we define modern slavery as that condition in which one or more individuals or organizations exercise complete control and possession of a person’s body, labor, capabilities and movement through the overt or threatened use of violence or other forms of coercion. This is one extreme end on the continuum of modern servitude, and we advocate the use of the term “modern slavery” only in such instances. Moreover, slavery is not to be confused with situations where individuals are forced by extreme poverty and chronic inequality to voluntarily offer their labor in exchange for advances in income that result in exploitation such as debt bondage, if the conditions of complete control, possession, and inability to leave are unmet. This is what the World Bank calls “consensual exploitation,” which, it argues, is best addressed through social and labor law rather than the criminal justice system (Koettl 2009) (for a different view, see Kara 2014, pp. 27–37).

1.3. Trafficking

Trafficking has been formally defined and adopted by nearly all nations in the so-called Palermo Protocol of 2000:

“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. (UN OHCHR 2000, p. 42)

The protocol views the consent of the victim as irrelevant in defining trafficking where any of the specified means are used. The transportation of a child under age 18 unexceptionally qualifies as trafficking regardless of means or the agreement of the child. This definition is not without issues, such as what constitutes deception and exploitation in light of varying labor standards, and what the role of agency is in defining trafficking, particularly in the case of persons under age 18 who move in the face of brutal survival options (Davidson & Anderson 2006, Gallagher 2017, Huijsmans & Baker 2012). Forced movement, internationally or domestically, is central to what constitutes trafficking. In other words, people in forced labor without going through forced movement do not count as victims of trafficking. We consider trafficking to be a process that may lead to different outcomes, rather than an end state (Allain 2017).

While trafficking usually results in some form of exploitation tantamount to forced labor, slavery being the most extreme, it is possible for a trafficked person to end up in a situation that, although exploitative, does not amount to forced labor. For example, many of the villagers recruited by labor brokers in the Chinese construction industry end up with living conditions and wages lower than they had bargained for, but as J. Chuang (2014, p. 59) shows, “the complex relation of debt and consent” between them and their brokers, while exploitative, falls short of the definition of forced labor. The same holds for thousands of Filipina women in the Tokyo hostess industry studied by Parreñas (2011) who were declared to have been trafficked and summarily deported back home against their will to conditions that they considered much worse than their situation in Tokyo. “Soft trafficking,” according to Frederick (1998), describes a survival strategy in which rural South Asian young women trafficked by family members into urban sex work end up supporting themselves and family back in their home villages (Skrivankova 2017). Genuine trafficking may also result in servitude but not forced labor, as was true of Japanese Americans arrested, trafficked, and incarcerated in concentration camps by the US government during World War II (Herzig-Yoshinaga 2009).

Trafficking is now a global phenomenon. The UNODC (2016) recorded more than 500 detected flows of trafficking between 2012 and 2014, many of which overlap with key migration routes. Sixty percent of detected victims were moved across borders (UNODC 2016).

1.4. Smuggling

Smuggling of persons entails their illegal entry into a country, often facilitated by third parties (UNODC 2004). Like trafficking, it is a process rather than an end state, and the line between the two can sometimes be blurred. Smuggled persons voluntarily engage in the process, usually paying the smuggler and ending the transaction or relationship once the destination is reached. Smuggling always entails the illegal crossing of international borders, whereas trafficking may be domestic or involve legal crossing of borders. Human smuggling is a crime against a state or border, whereas trafficking is considered a crime against a person. Most advanced states now view the trafficked person as a victim, while the smuggled person is considered a lawbreaker, although the United Nations (UN) protocol on the practice allows for the prosecution of smugglers but explicitly excludes the prosecution of the smuggled (UNODC 2004, Article 5, p. 55).

The number of smuggled persons surged in the 1980s and 1990s following tighter border control by the destination states (Gallagher & David 2014, Kyle & Koslowski 2001). Singer & Massey (1998) found that 75% of unauthorized Mexicans entering the United States used coyotes or smugglers. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported some 2.5 to 3 million irregular migrants in Thailand, 80% of whom were smuggled (McAuliffe & Laczko 2016). In 2010 the IOM (2010, p. 29) estimated that 10–15% of the world’s then 214 million migrants were irregular, equivalent to between 20 and 30 million persons. The numbers have increased,

especially considering the European refugee crisis beginning in 2015, although no reliable estimate is currently available.

There are different kinds of smuggling. Not all unauthorized migration is criminal or profit-driven; examples include altruistic smuggling, smuggling for humanitarian reasons, and self-smuggling (McAuliffe & Laczko 2016). Experiences during or after the smuggling process also diverge. The sociologist Mandic and others (Mandic 2017; see also Ahmet & Toktas 2002) found that refugees into Europe often fear corrupt government officials and their antismuggling policies more than their smugglers, whom they view in pragmatic terms as more in line with their interests. In this case, smuggling is more accurately viewed as a transnational service industry linking smugglers as service providers with their smuggled clients (Bilger et al. 2006). At the other extreme, a smuggled person may become trafficked (Aronowitz 2009, Hum. Rights Watch 2014). In Yemen, for example, some smugglers abduct their clients after arrival, releasing them only after their families pay a hefty ransom. Sometimes debt to the smugglers, either preagreed or later unfairly enforced, results in labor exploitation during the journey or at the destination (McAuliffe & Laczko 2016). The current vast number of refugees and displaced persons due to conflicts or persecution suggests a potentially substantial overlap between trafficked persons, refugees, and smuggled migrants (UNODC 2016).

1.5. Abusive Migration

Closely related to the smuggling process is what may be called abusive migration (see Haynes 2009). It refers to the situation where a person legally enters a country with permission to work, usually under contract to a local employer, but the legitimate and mutually beneficial migrant employment subsequently transforms into one of forced labor. In some cases, deception or coercion started from the recruitment stage in the sending country (Harroff-Tavel & Nasri 2013, pp. 31–35). The *kafala* or sponsorship system of the Middle East offers a typical example. The prevalence of abusive migration, especially in Asia and the Middle East, results from both the pull by the economic opportunities in the destination countries and the push of economic insecurity and transactional migration brokers in sending states (Peng 2017). Although the sample of 354 migrant workers in the Middle East interviewed by Harroff-Tavel & Nasri (2013) was not selected at random, it is remarkable that over 75% of the interviewed were assessed to be in forced labor. Although several of the Gulf states have formally abolished the *kafala* system, observers indicate that migrants continue to be exploited (Migrant-Rights.Org 2018).

The latest ILO report (ILO et al. 2017) gives no explicit estimates on trafficking and smuggling. However, it reports that a little under a quarter (23%) of all persons in servitude are exploited outside of their country of residence, and that cross-border movement is more common in exploitation for sexual purposes (74%) than in other forms of forced labor (14%) (ILO et al. 2017, pp. 29–30). These figures make clear that the great majority of persons in servitude are exploited in their own country and are not necessarily trafficked. Some, to be sure, are internally trafficked, but the common practice of attaching the term “trafficked” to all persons in forced labor is misleading.

2. FORMS OF SERVITUDE

Authorities disagree on how to classify and what to include in the typology of servitude. For instance, the UN includes illegal adoptions and organ trafficking, whereas the US State Department does not. We use the following typology: traditional and modern slavery, bonded labor, international migrant forced laborers (or simply IMFL), domestic servitude, sexual servitude, child servitude, marital servitude, and state servitude.

2.1. Traditional Slavery

Different from modern-day slavery, as defined previously, “traditional slavery” refers to those intergenerational systems that have persisted from the nineteenth century and earlier, not having been abolished in spite of laws enacted to the contrary. They are found mainly in Mauritania, Niger, Sudan, Mali, and Côte d’Ivoire. Some research suggests that, far from declining, the number of people in these systems is increasing, especially in Sudan, long in the throes of a brutal war of secession followed by civil war. In Niger, an observation- and interview-based study in 2004 identified 810,363 persons in traditional hereditary slavery in a total population of 15.2 million (Abdelkader 2004). Most experts agree that a substantial number of traditional slaves exist in Mauritania, but only one survey has been attempted, that of the Global Slavery Index (2017), which estimated that 43,000 persons were living in slavery in 2016, or 1.06% of a total population of 4 million. One estimate of the slave population of Sudan placed it at between 10,000 and 15,000 in 2000 (Jok 2001); more recently, traditional slavery has been supplemented by modern slave trafficking, the country becoming a “transit source and destination country” for modern-day slaves (US State Dep. 2017, pp. 371–73). Traditional slavery is also reliably reported to exist in Mali, especially in the north, where Tuareg masters continue to lay claim on thousands of ex-slaves in spite of the legal abolition of the institution in the 1960s (Tran 2012, US State Dep. 2017).

2.2. Bonded Labor

Bonded labor has been defined in international law as follows (ILO 2001, p. 124; see also Ruwanpura & Rai 2004, p. 5):

The status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined.

In practice, as Srivastava (2005) notes, it denies employees the right to choose their employer or to negotiate the terms and conditions of their contract.

The (ILO et al. 2017) estimates that slightly over half of all persons in forced labor (51%) are in bonded labor, which results from the traditional form of a loan or more modern means such as recruitment and agency charges. Traditional bonded labor exists mainly in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan and occurs in agriculture and a wide range of industries, especially the brick, carpet, stone breaking, tea, and shrimp industries (Kara 2014, Srivastava 2005). Its persistence is attributable to landlessness, poverty, lack of alternate economic opportunities, caste and ethnic discrimination, illiteracy, consumption spikes at rites of passage (especially weddings and religious events), corruption of officials, and failure to enforce anti-bond-labor laws (Kara 2014, Srivastava 2005). Apart from the more traditional kinds of bonded labor, which are vestiges of caste and somewhat feudal in nature and which have declined sharply in modern times, most bonded labor in South Asia, especially India, seems to rely on seasonal internal migrant labor, organized by labor recruiters. Sometimes deception regarding wages and threats of violence is used to exploit migrants, in which cases they were trafficked. And yet, in most cases the migrants, especially returnees, know exactly what to expect; it is the threat of destitution that drives them into the renewal of harsh labor contracts (Srivastava 2005).

Peonage in the United States, which ensnared blacks until the 1950s and still persists among some migrant groups in the US (Blackmon 2008, Daniel 1972) and in Central America, such as that of the *Diriomenos* of Nicaragua (Dore 2006), bears close resemblance to its Asian counterpart.

However, a more modern version of bonded servitude, what the ILO (2001, p. 2) previously labeled “forced labor in agriculture and remote rural areas,” reduces individuals to servitude through isolation and indebtedness for transportation to, and living costs in, remote areas. This kind of debt bondage is present in both agriculture and charcoal production in South American countries such as Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Brazil (Bedoya et al. 2009, ILO 2001).

Kara’s recent work has certainly demonstrated the resemblance of debt bondage in South Asia to modern slavery in terms of the economic harshness, subjection to their bondholders, degradation, isolation, and restriction on movement during the contracted period (Kara 2014). However, it is unclear how typical or long-lasting it is. Having arbitrarily defined all forms of forced labor as subcategories of slavery, Kara (2014) eschewed the potentially useful research task of determining what fraction of the total bonded population could be considered to have crossed over into genuine slavery.

2.3. International Migrant Forced Laborers

IMFL are those who end up in servitude outside of their native countries. The term “labor trafficking” is increasingly used to refer to this category, but it is misleading (Owen et al. 2014, Zhang 2012). Only a proportion of this group have been trafficked; most, in fact, end up in exploitative conditions following smuggling, including self-smuggling, or abusive migration (Doomernik 2006). As we have stated above, the ILO (ILO et al. 2017) estimates that nearly a quarter (23%) of all persons in servitude were exploited outside their country of residence. Belanger’s (2014) study of Vietnamese migrants in East Asian countries found that two-thirds experienced no form of forced labor, while the remaining one-third that did ranged on a continuum from abuse to extreme forced labor. In the United States, most persons who experience forced labor in agriculture are unauthorized migrants, but a substantial minority are authorized migrants who entered under the H-2B visa program (Bales & Soodalter 2009, Owen et al. 2014). A study of North Carolina farmworkers found that a quarter of them were trafficked, while 39% experienced other forms of abuse (Barrick et al. 2014). In San Diego, Zhang et al. (2014) identified 30% of the farmworkers as labor trafficked, and 55% suffered forms of labor abuse. In the restaurant industry, the second largest employer of immigrants, where there is widespread labor exploitation, most victims entered with lawful visas. Their exploitation results in part from harsh working conditions and in part from voluntary agreement to bonded debt with recruiters in their home country (Owen et al. 2014). In Britain, the immigration system—a complex bureaucratic arrangement which creates a hierarchy of vulnerability—can be used by employers to impose on legal migrants varying degrees of exploitation (Scullion et al. 2014). A major factor contributing to abuse and possibly forced labor throughout the world is the use of labor contractors, especially in the agricultural sector (Barrientos 2011). In the United States, these recruiters handle the recruiting, transportation, housing, and payment of farm workers, creating such great distance between grower and worker that many do not even know the name of the farm owner or farm where they work, relieving the farm owners of any responsibility for worker abuse (Barrick 2016).

Possibly the worst cases of IMFL today occur in the Thai fishing industry where trafficked, smuggled, and legal workers are subject to work conditions and personal abuse amounting to outright slavery that includes murder with impunity (Chantavanich et al. 2016, EJF 2015). One UN report found that 59% of trafficked sailors witnessed a fellow worker murdered (EJF 2015). Official corruption and widespread pirate fishing facilitate this regime of brutal labor exploitation. The Thai fishing industry, which employs over 150,000 laborers, nearly all immigrants, well illustrates the degree to which globalization links the enslavement of workers in one side of the world with household demand in America on the other side, along with other advanced countries.

The industry thrives on the demand for fish meal for pet food in the United States and generates an export value of US\$150 million per year for Thailand. Although Thailand has been singled out for the extremity and degree of forced labor found there, the abuse of workers, amounting to forced labor, is found worldwide in the offshore fisheries sector (Surtees 2012, Marschke & Vandergeest 2016).

2.4. Domestic or Household Servitude

Domestic or household servitude, in its international form, is often associated with smuggling and abusive migration, although most forms of forced household labor take place within national borders. Currently, migrants make up only 17% of the world's 67 million domestic workers. This form of forced labor is highly gendered: three quarters of domestic laborers are women (ILO et al. 2017). The IOM (2012, p. 7) singled out gender as “the most important factor shaping migrants’ experiences—more important than their country of origin or destination, their age, class, race or culture.” Domestic labor is distinctive in that it is not normally considered part of the formal economy, except for the minority who work for cleaning firms. Hence women in domestic servitude find themselves highly dependent on their employers, often other women, who do not see their homes as workplaces or their relationship with their maids as an employer-employee relationship governed by labor laws (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007). Additionally, domestic work can demand very intimate, bodily kinds of labor such as caring for the children of the household and substituting for the mother's roles in a variety of other ways, which induces a tendency toward extreme control of the person doing such work (Anderson 2000, Parreñas 2015, Tizon 2017). It is hardly surprising, then, that this form of labor often becomes not just exploitative but forced labor and, especially where labor laws are lax, enslavement (Bales & Soodalter 2009, Fernando 2013, Kara 2014, Sunderland 2006).

2.5. Sexual Trafficking and Servitude

Sexual trafficking and servitude have received the greatest attention from researchers on forced labor, both academic and nonacademic. By sexual servitude we refer to trafficked and nontrafficked cases of forced prostitution rather than to all forms of sex work. It must be emphasized that not all sexual servitude results from trafficking (Agustin 2007, Belanger 2014, Cheng 2014, Davidson & Anderson 2006). Women forced or coerced by circumstances, emotional deception, or addiction into prostitution in their own communities are not trafficked (Dewey 2014, Kennedy et al. 2007, Levitt & Venkatesh 2007). Underage California prostitutes, some as young as ten years of age, still living at home and attending school, are not strictly trafficked, although the term is increasingly being used as a synonym for being pimped. Nonetheless, they are often in complete economic, emotional, and sexual servitude to their pimps, whom they consider their boyfriends and who have psychologically entrapped them to the point where they will act only “if he lets me” (Morris 2016, pp. 96–101). It is also not necessarily the case that all women transported within or between national borders for sexual work are trafficked (Brennan 2004, Chin & Finckenauer 2012). Many do so voluntarily in attempting to improve their economic situation or to lead less oppressive or more interesting lives (Andrijasevic 2010).

There can be no doubt that the term sexual slavery applies to one subgroup of prostituted persons: namely, girls and women (and some boys) who have been trafficked or reduced to a condition of total dependence on their pimps or madams. As Patterson (2012) has argued elsewhere, their experiences draw stark parallels to traditional slaves in terms of their emotional, social, and legal isolation; their brutal seasoning into sexual work through beatings, rape, and forced addiction to drugs; their constant psychological torture, such as threats of violence to their family

and the disclosure of their degradation; and, if unauthorized migrants, disclosure to deportation authorities. Additional slave-like qualities come from the complete dependence on their pimps who often hold the power not only to sell their sexual services but to transfer possession of their bodies to other slave-holders. Such sexual enslavement has been well documented not only by researchers but in the narratives of former sexual slaves (Dank et al. 2014, Dinan 2002, Farley et al. 2004, Farr 2005, Giobbe 1993, Hussain et al. 2010, Miller 2002, WHO 2005, Williamson & Cluse-Tolar 2002). Perhaps the most egregious cases of outright sexual slavery today are girls and women captured and exploited by ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), Boko Haram, and other militant Islamist groups (Malik 2017) as well as those forced into sexual slavery during civil wars in non-Islamic Africa and other areas (Bunting 2017).

The literature on sexual servitude has attracted a range of criticisms: the disproportionate focus on sexual labor over nonsexual forced labor; an overemphasis on the social, political, cultural and moral biases of Western, especially American, societies; categorical conflation of all sex work with trafficking; the downplaying of the socioeconomic contexts within which sex work is embedded; exaggerated claims about the number of persons sexually trafficked; and shortage of evidence-based work (Andrijasevic 2010; J.A. Chuang 2010, 2014; Hoang & Parreñas 2014; Sanghera 2016; Weitzer 2007, 2011; Zhang 2009). While these criticisms are legitimate, it is also important not to go to the other extreme of underestimating the extent of sexual servitude. The ILO (ILO et al. 2017) conservatively estimates that 4.8 million persons were subject to forced commercial sexual servitude in 2016, nearly all females, and that over a million persons in sexual servitude are children under 18. Sexual servitude on average lasted 23.4 months. We should note further that the level of sexual exploitation does not end with the category of sexual servitude. The ILO (ILO et al. 2017) points out that most victims of servitude suffer multiple forms of coercion. For women, this often means sexual violence. Women's large share (63%) in the total forced labor population (ILO et al. 2017) thus leads us to reconsider whether the emphasis on sexual exploitation is really all that off the mark.

The contested nature of this literature is further fueled by a fraught debate in the field over the socioeconomic effects and ethics of commercial sex work (Dickenson 2006, Kesler 2002). On the one hand are scholars and activists who hold that all commercial sexual transactions are socioeconomically exploitative and amount to a degradation of women's bodies, in which issues of agency and a woman's right to do with her body as she pleases are irrelevant morally, legally, and socioeconomically (Bales & Soodalter 2009, Barry 1996, Farley 2004, Kara 2017, Kristof & WuDunn 2010, MacKinnon 1993). Hence, prostitution should be prohibited and criminalized. On the other hand are those who emphasize the socioeconomic circumstances that propel women into sex work, as well as their right to exercise agency in the choice of how to use their bodies, especially when few alternatives for survival exist (Bernstein 2007, Chuang 2010, Hoang 2015, Weitzer 2007, Wijers 2017). Both sides actually often agree that women are forced into prostitution but differ on the agent of their coercion: Prohibitionists emphasize the role of traffickers and pimps, whereas antiprohibitionists emphasize socioeconomic constraints. The issue of agency further complicates this neat dichotomy given the disputable degree to which women under dire circumstances can be said to exercise agency, or the fluidity between the voluntary and involuntary under such circumstances (Andrijasevic 2010, Cheng 2014, Dewey 2014, Dickenson 2006, Kropiwnicki 2011, Peters 2014, van Liempt 2006). There is growing consensus that the prohibitionists' hardline antitrafficking emphasis on prosecution and rescue-and-release strategies has often done more harm than good, sometimes worsening the condition of trafficked victims and voluntary sex workers alike (Dewey 2014, Farrag et al. 2014, Hoang 2015, Kempadoo et al. 2012, Parreñas 2011, Zheng 2014). The antiprostitution pledge of the US government, which requires nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) receiving federal anti-HIV/AIDS or antitrafficking funds to oppose all prostitution

(declared unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court in 2013 for US NGOs, although still applicable to foreign NGOs receiving funds from the US government), has inadvertently hampered public health campaigns in several countries (Hudson 2010, Weitzer 2007).

Of special interest is the unusual situation in the United States in regard to sex trafficking and sexual servitude. Unlike the other advanced countries, which are primarily destinations for women sex-trafficked from poorer nations, the United States is both the destination and the source of a large proportion of its sex workers, trafficked and nontrafficked. It is extraordinary that a large number of the migrant children trafficked into prostitution in the United States were brought into the country by their parents or by smugglers paid by relatives (Gozdziaik 2016). While none of the 140 migrant children studied by Gozdziaik (2016) were physically forced to America, they were nonetheless trafficked and, in our view, in childhood servitude.

Many of those domestically trafficked and sexually exploited are runaway minors (Dank et al. 2014). A major factor of Americans' vulnerability to sex servitude is its relatively weak welfare state and high level of inequality. Women in western Europe and other advanced economies do not face the desperate economic plight of many American working- and lower-class women, especially single mothers (Dank et al. 2014). Black and Native American women, and more recently Hispanic women, in particular, are pressured to turn to sex work for survival by ethno-racial sexual stereotypes and economic hardship (Morris 2016). America's chronic drug problem, fueled in good part by the punitive practices of the state's counterproductive war on drugs, worsens the situation (Dank et al. 2014, Hoffman 2017). The long existence of a pimp or "mack-man" and "playa" configuration within the street culture of black lower-class men cannot be discounted as a contributing factor, either (Dank et al. 2014, pp. 130–32; Giobbe 1993; Miller 2008), although recent work has documented mutual financial benefits in their relationship with mature, usually part-time sex workers (Dank et al. 2014, Levitt & Venkatesh 2007).

2.6. Child Servitude

Child servitude, considered by some as "one of the most heinous crimes of modern times," presents several conceptual issues (Craig 2010, p. 5). The line between legitimate, if hard, work and abuse can be fuzzy, especially when the children are working with their family. Variations in cultural conceptions of the nature of childhood and the starting age of adulthood complicate the discussion of agency, vulnerability, and fluidity of labor conditions (Blagbrough 2017, Huijsmans & Baker 2012, Seeberg & Gozdziaik 2016). Nonetheless we need some precision, even though arbitrary, if progress is to be made in the study and eradication of this problem. The international treaty definition (UN Gen. Assem. Resolut. 44/25 1989) of a child as any person under age eighteen, unless legally defined below this age, is now largely accepted. The ILO recognizes four broad categories of children who work: children in employment, who are those engaged in any form of work, including permitted, unpaid light work; children in child labor, who are all those employed in productive labor; children in forced labor, who are those in any form of servitude; and children in hazardous work, who are those involved in activities that are harmful to their health, safety or morals. Child servitude need not be hazardous (for example, some kinds of domestic servitude) and hazardous work is not necessarily servitude (for example, children working with their parents in hazardous occupations such as gold mining, brick-making, and some kinds of farming) (ILO 2011).

The ILO's (2017) most recent estimate shows that 152 million children, or 10% of the world's total child population, counted as child laborers. A majority of children worked with their families (69%), whereas 27% sought paid employment and 4% were self-employed. Child labor was overwhelmingly concentrated in agriculture (71%). Industry and services absorbed the remaining 12% and 17% of child labor, respectively. Some 73 million children work under hazardous conditions.

The ILO et al. (2017) report on modern servitude, however, estimated the number of forced child laborers at 4.3 million. This number is likely an underestimate, given the hidden and illicit nature of the phenomenon. In addition, 5.7 million children are in forced marriages, making up 37% of this category of servitude (ILO et al. 2017). The US Department of Labor (US Dep. Labor 2015) identified poverty, cultural traditions, political and military instability, and legal ineffectiveness as drivers of child labor. The ILO report (2017) supports this assessment. For instance, in the 5–14 age group of child laborers, 36 million children (32%) were out of school, and those in school had compromised school performance due to their work (ILO 2017). One somewhat bright side to these grim figures is that child labor has consistently declined worldwide, with a net reduction of 94 million children in child labor between 2000 and 2016. The rate of improvement, however, slowed down in the most recent four-year period (2012–2016), and in Africa, the trend of child labor actually began to climb up again (ILO 2017).

Beyond their sexual exploitation, touched on earlier, we highlight two of the worst forms of child servitude which, in our view, amount to genuine slavery and a third that, while frequently called slavery, challenges the unrestrained use of this term. First are children recruited as soldiers, many of whom are brainwashed into becoming killers. This represents one of the most extreme violations of international human rights (Waschefort 2017). Child soldiers are found all over the world, including Europe (Singer 2006). The worst cases appear each year on a UN Secretary General's List of Shame, which currently includes seven countries: Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen. The Taliban in Afghanistan and ISIS in Iraq and Syria, for example, deployed children on a large scale, in some cases as suicide bombers (Child Soldiers Int. 2017, UN Secur. Council. 2016). Some children are recruited by abduction, some due to poverty and loss of family, and others to escape domestic slavery and abuse. Those who survive bear permanent psychological and physical scars (Machel 2001).

The increase in the number of child soldiers is due in large part to increased disasters and military conflicts around the world. A quarter of all children (535 million) now live in countries racked by such disasters and conflicts, and children make up over half of the 65 million persons displaced by war (ILO 2017). Two other factors often cited are the invention of lightweight small arms suitable for child use and a change in the traditional rules of war that forbade the targeting and recruiting of children (Singer 2006). These explanations have, however, been contested by Rosen (2005, 2012), who points out the extensive use of child combatants in wars of the past, most notably in the American Civil War, in which between 250,000 and 420,000 boy soldiers fought and killed, some as young as eight years of age.

Second are child slaves in the cocoa farms of West Africa, especially Côte d'Ivoire, but also Northern Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon (Bertrand et al. 2015, US Dep. Labor 2015). Seventy percent of the world's cocoa comes from West Africa, and like the fishing industry in Thailand, cocoa production is driven by a highly desired product in the advanced world, chocolate. The processing and lucrative value chains of the global chocolate industry are now dominated by eight vertically and horizontally concentrated companies. The industry is valued at over US\$101 billion, but little of the wealth goes to the world's 5–6 million cocoa farmers, who receive only 6.6% of the total value added to a ton of cocoa beans sold and earn, on average, about \$2.07 a day in Côte d'Ivoire, just above the global daily poverty rate of \$1.90 (Gayi & Tsowou 2016, pp. 13–19), but well below it in per capita terms when their dependents are taken into account. Accordingly, in spite of high adult unemployment, cocoa farmers turn to child labor on a massive scale. In Côte d'Ivoire 31.5% of children aged 5–14 in the country work full time and another 21.5% work part time (US Dep. Labor 2015). In many cocoa farms the labor condition of child workers amounts to outright slavery, with many deceptively taken from their parents in neighboring countries (Bertrand et al. 2015).

The third case of exploited child labor we highlight illustrates the common problem of conflating exploitation with slavery. We refer to the so-called *restavèks* of Haiti. These are extremely poor children sent to work as domestics in the homes of others who are often only slightly better off. Over 225,000 children are estimated to work as *restavèks*, two-thirds of whom are girls. They are present in 22% of all households in Haiti. The severe exploitation and educational deprivation of *restavèks* have been well documented (Beyond Bord. et al. 2014, Smucker et al. 2009). However, the Haitian case poses particular challenges in estimating the extent and nature of servitude in a local socioeconomic context. A recent, quite balanced, study (Sommerfelt 2015) confirms that many children aged 5–14 are indeed in domestic labor (between 233,000 and 350,000) with limited educational opportunities and heavy workloads but also observes that hard work is commonplace among all poor Haitian children and that, for many children, the system of fosterage might be a lesser evil than malnourishment and extreme deprivation with their impoverished parents. Thus, while the condition of these children can reasonably be described as servitude, only a minority at the bad end of the continuum of treatment can truly be called slaves in the Haitian socioeconomic context, activist rhetoric notwithstanding. Child domestic servitude also aptly describes the Nepalese *kamaliri* system, in which lower-caste *tharu* girls are sent to work in the homes of upper-caste urban Nepali (Giri 2010, Kara 2014). As in Haiti the harsh end of this system is certainly slave-like, but before drawing conclusions about the slave-like nature of the system, the entire local economic and cultural condition should be considered.

2.7. Marital Servitude

Marital servitude, including child marriages, is an ancient institution, but only in 1979 was it formally recognized as a form of servitude following the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (a treaty signed, but not ratified, by the United States). The ILO (ILO et al. 2017) in its most recent report has, for the first time, included forced marriage as a form of modern servitude. As noted earlier, it assesses, conservatively, that at any time in 2016, 15.4 million persons were living in forced marriages. The great majority of persons in forced marriage were females (84%), and 37% were children under 18. Child marriages in particular have adverse effects such as curtailed education for girls, if it ever began, and heightened risks of illness and death from pregnancy and childbirth. Child wives are also far more likely to experience abuse, overwork, and psychological trauma (Turner 2013, UNICEF 2014).

Two developments unique to the last third of the twentieth century further intensified the growth of modern marital servitude. In many Asian countries, particularly China, India, and South Korea, the traditional preference for boys and the availability of modern technology to determine the sex of the fetus resulted in the aborting of girls on a vast scale, also known as “gendercide” (Hvistendahl 2012). In China, the government’s one-child policy further exacerbated the gender imbalance. As a result, many areas in Asia experience a significant shortage of women of marriageable age, with a gender ratio of 130 males to every 100 women in some parts of northern India and China (The Economist 2010, Guilimoto 2007, Hvistendahl 2012, Tiefenbrun & Edwards 2008). This unmet demand for women as brides, or simply as sexual partners, has led, in turn, to a new wave of female migration and, in some cases, bridal trafficking or enslavement. A brisk smuggling of single women from Vietnam operates in parts of rural China bordering on Vietnam. Most women move voluntarily in search of Chinese husbands; others are recruited. Some find successful unions; many, however, are falsely promised traditional arranged marriages only to discover themselves trapped in abusive relationships (Son et al. 2011). In northwest India, where the problem is acute, bride buying is a huge and brutal business where many women end up as sex slaves jointly owned by several men in the same village (Raza 2014).

Child marriages or forced marriages are problems not only for developing countries. The US Census identified 57,800 Americans aged 15 to 17 reportedly being married in 2014. A search of available marriage license data in 38 US states revealed more than 167,000 instances of child marriages between 2000 and 2010 (McClendon & Sandstrom 2016). It was unclear what share of child marriages were coerced. A survey of governmental and nongovernmental agencies in the United States concluded that the agencies together encountered 3,000 known or suspected cases of forced marriage between 2009 and 2011 (Tahirih Justice Cent. 2011). The Forced Marriage Unit in the United Kingdom handled 1,428 likely forced marriage cases in 2016, of which 26% involved victims under age 18 (Forced Marriage Unit 2017). Existing evidence suggests that forced marriages in advanced countries tend to occur mainly within immigrant communities due to a strong compliance to custom, but some involve nonimmigrants. Lawrence (2017) has drawn attention to what he calls the “forced marriage paradox,” in which refugees and asylum seekers from this form of enslavement are legally obliged to use the terminology of legitimate marriage to describe the individuals and circumstances from which they are seeking protection in the petition process, thereby perpetuating the violence against the survivors.

2.8. State-Imposed Forced Labor or Compulsory Public Works

Finally, there is state-imposed forced labor or compulsory public works, in which the state exploits individuals under its control for its own gain or that of companies in the private sector. In 2012 the ILO (2012) estimated this form of forced labor at 2.2 million persons, or 10% of the global total forced labor population. By 2016 it had reached 4.1 million, or 16.3% of total forced labor. States place their citizens into servitude for a variety of reasons. In 2016, 64% of state-imposed labor was for economic development, while nearly 15% involved conscripted persons forced to do nonmilitary work, 14% compulsory prison labor, and 8% communal services beyond normal civic obligations (ILO et al. 2017). Although the 1957 Forced Labor Convention prohibits exploitation by states, this form of servitude is difficult to eliminate given the exceptions allowed by international norms.

Examples of state-imposed servitude in the not-too-distant past include the Nazi slave concentration camps, the Soviet Gulags, the Chinese *laogai* (reform through labor) and *laojiao* (re-education through labor) prison labor systems (Funakoshi 2013), and the American incarceration and reenslavement of African-American men in the Jim Crow South under spurious vagrancy charges, followed by forcing them to work in chain-gangs or renting them out to companies such as U.S. Steel (Blackmon 2008). Current US laws prevent the exploitation of prisoners who work, but with the largest prison population in the world, many located in the states of the former Confederacy, the risk of abuse is real, and several reports have emerged of supposedly rehabilitative work crossing the line into forced labor for profit (Sloan 2010). In 2016 some 24,000 prisoners in 29 prisons across the United States went on strike to protest inhumane conditions and unfair pay for work (Goard 2017). Elsewhere, one of the largest forms of modern public forced labor is the state-run harvesting of cotton in Uzbekistan (Hum. Rights Watch 2013, US State Dep. 2017).

For what it is worth, North Korea is ranked by the Global Slavery Index (2017) as the country with the highest number of slaves in the world, nearly all slaves of the state. The US Trafficking in Persons Report (US State Dep. 2017) found that the “government sponsored human trafficking through its use of forced labor in prison camps and labor training centers, facilitation of forced labor of students, and its provision of forced labor to foreign companies through bilateral contracts” (p. 234). There are an estimated 80,000 to 120,000 persons in political prison camps and labor training centers. Defectors report that trafficking victims forcibly repatriated from China are sent to prison camps, tortured, and sometimes executed. School children over 14 years of age are forced to work without pay for up to a month twice yearly and are also exploited by school principals

and teachers (Hum. Rights Watch 2017, US State Dep. 2017). People are enslaved for crimes committed in their effort to ward off starvation, including privately producing food, stealing food, and acts of desperation such as cannibalism, and for political crimes as well as common criminal acts (Howard-Hassmann 2017).

3. MEASURING SERVITUDE

Measuring the extent of slavery and other forms of forced labor is an important first step in understanding the phenomena and designing effective policy. However, the illicit nature of trafficking activity, social isolation of victims, and inconsistent definitions have made it a challenging task. There are also special ethical and methodological issues posed by the illicit and often migratory nature of these activities (Vargas-Silva 2012). Few empirical studies in trafficking conduct original systematic data collection. Most publications restate commonly cited figures from a few established reports, which are themselves questionable (Zhang 2009). The paucity of reliable data has prompted some scholars to forgo systematic estimation on the macro level in favor of microlevel field studies (Weitzer 2014, 2015; Zhang 2009).

We acknowledge the limitations in existing macrolevel estimates, but we also recognize their value in guiding future research and policy, and the research community is making constant efforts to improve estimates of the population under servitude. It is, van Dijk & Campistol (2017) note, a work in progress. In this section we examine current estimation methods and their applications (see summary in **Table 1**). Like most estimates in this literature, the numbers we present here are prone to biases. They nonetheless provide a useful overview of the severity of servitude and exploitation worldwide.

One common data source for servitude and trafficking comes from the official administrative records of national authorities, such as the criminal justice system and immigration services, as well as international organizations and NGOs. Counting officially detected victims and offenders has revealed useful patterns of servitude and related activities. However, the information is limited in that the conviction rate for trafficking remains low, and cross-national or temporal trends may be inaccurate, reflecting differences in definitions and prosecution rather than real changes in trafficking flows. Drawing from government law enforcement data, the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report (US State Dep. 2017) identified 14,897 cases of prosecutions, a smaller number of convictions (9,071), and 66,520 officially detected trafficking victims in 2016, about a quarter of whom were subject to labor trafficking. The yearly counts display an overall rising trend in the number of victims from 2009 to 2016, but a breakdown by region reveals diverse trajectories. For instance, the number of victims of trafficking identified in Europe stabilized around 11,000 between 2011 and 2016, whereas the East Asia and Pacific region and the South and Central Asia region both observed an unusual surge in 2015, followed by a sharp drop in 2016. These fluctuations are likely in part due to changing law enforcement efforts and inconsistent reporting. The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (2016) provides further details about patterns of trafficking in terms of both victims and offenders. The differentiation between countries of origin and countries of destination, in particular, allows for the distinction between internal trafficking and trafficking across borders and the identification of flows of movement.

Local-level analysis of administrative records also exists. The Eurostat Report on Trafficking in Human Beings (Eurostat 2015) reported 8,805 prosecutions of human trafficking cases associated with 30,146 victims in the European Union (EU) member states over 2010–2012. In the United States, an estimate of 11.4 million unauthorized immigrants in January 2012 was derived by subtracting the number of legal permanent residents recorded by the US Department of Homeland Security from the size of the foreign-born population provided by the American Community Survey from the US Census Bureau (Baker & Rytina 2012).

Table 1 Estimation methods and applications

Method	Examples of applications	
	Global level	Local/national level
Administrative records	US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report (US State Dep. 2017), UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (UNODC 2016)	Eurostat Report on Trafficking in Human Beings (Eurostat 2015), unauthorized immigrants in the United States (Baker & Rytina 2012)
Direct counting		Sex workers in Cambodia (Steinfatt 2011, 2015)
Multiplier method	ILO global estimates of forced labor (ILO 2012, ILO et al. 2017)	Sex trafficking victims in Texas (Busch-Armendariz et al. 2016), slaves in Europe (Datta & Bales 2013)
Surveys		Child domestic servants in Latin America (Levison & Langer 2010), Haitian child domestic labor (Sommerfelt 2015), national data used in global estimates of child labor (ILO 2017), child marriage (UNICEF 2014), migrant workers (ILO 2015), modern slavery (ILO et al. 2017)
Capture-recapture	ILO (2012) global estimates of forced labor	Commercially sexually exploited children in New York City (Curtis et al. 2008), street sex workers in Oslo, Norway (Brunovskis & Tyldum 2004)
Multiple systems estimation (variant of capture-recapture)		Modern slavery in the United Kingdom (Bales et al. 2015), trafficking in the Netherlands (van Dijk & van der Heijden 2016)
Respondent-driven sampling (network-based method)		Migrant farm workers in San Diego (Zhang 2012), commercially sexually exploited children in New York City (Curtis et al. 2008)
Geomapping		Migrant farm workers in North Carolina (Barrick et al. 2015)
Internet advertisement data		Sex trafficking in Hawaii (Ibanez & Suthers 2014), sex workers in Oslo, Norway (Brunovskis & Tyldum 2004)
Underground economy size		Underground commercial sex economy in eight US cities (Dank et al. 2014)
Mixed methods	ILO (2017) global estimates of child labor, ILO (2015) global estimates of migrant workers, Global Slavery Index (Walk Free Found. 2016), ILO (2012) and ILO et al. (2017) global estimates of forced labor and modern slavery	Sex workers in Oslo, Norway (Brunovskis & Tyldum 2004), commercially sexually exploited children in New York City (Curtis et al. 2008), Haitian child domestic labor (Sommerfelt 2015)

Abbreviation: ILO, International Labour Office.

Also applying the counting method, Steinfatt (2011, 2015) relied on taxi drivers to map sex venues, directly counted active sex workers, and surmised trafficked victims in Cambodia. Calculation based on the empirical counts then yielded an estimate of 27,925 sex workers in Cambodia in 2008, among whom 1,058 were trafficked.⁴

The multiplier method relies on a known population size and the ratio between it and the size of the population of interest, with the ratio often derived from representative surveys or secondary

⁴See Steinfatt (2011) and Weitzer (2015) for detailed discussion of the Cambodian sex worker estimation methodology.

sources. For example, a study in Texas multiplies the community size by the victimization rate to derive the number of sex trafficking victims (Busch-Armendariz et al. 2016). Knowing the number of reported victims and the ratio of the reported cases relative to undetected cases can yield an estimate of the total population. This approach was used to estimate the number of slaves in Europe (Datta & Bales 2013) and was also part of the ILO's (2012) methodology for the 2012 global estimates of forced labor. The accuracy of the population ratio, particularly in the case of hidden and illicit activities like trafficking and slavery, is critical for the validity of such estimates.

Survey research has been increasingly adopted to make global or regional estimates of forced labor and migrants, although we think great caution should be exercised in the application of nationally representative surveys to the study of all types of servitude, given the rare, illicit, and stigmatized nature of these activities. Levison & Langer (2010) estimated the trends in child domestic servants in six Latin American countries between 1960 and 2002 from micro census data. The aforementioned study of Haitian child domestic labor (Sommerfelt 2015), also utilizing nationwide household surveys, further demonstrates how estimates can vary considerably depending on the definition of the population under study.

Nationally representative surveys have proven useful in the monitoring of global and regional trends in child marriage (UNICEF 2014), child labor (ILO 2017), and migrants (ILO 2015). A large component of data for the latest ILO et al. (2017) global estimates of modern servitude come from national surveys as well. In the absence of systematic data collection, the survey of a convenience sample of migrants and refugees en route in the Mediterranean offered a timely, if tentative, understanding of human trafficking and exploitation in the region (IOM 2016).

Another common estimation method, originating in ecology, is capture-recapture, which is used to estimate the size of animal populations (ILO 2012, van der Heijden et al. 2015). Researchers first draw a sample from the population, then mark and release it. They then draw another independent sample from the same pool and count the number of marked individuals from the first sample that are recaptured. Since the proportion of marked individuals in the second sample should equal the proportion of marked individuals in the total population, dividing the size of the first marked sample by the proportion of marked individuals in the second sample returns an estimate of the total population size. More formally, if the first sample size is A , the second sample size B , and the overlapped or recaptured size C , the formula for estimating the total population is $A \times B/C$. In studies of human populations, recording individuals who have come in contact with certain institutions or services is viewed as the equivalent of marking captured individuals. Variations of this methodology utilize a single sample or more than two samples (van der Heijden et al. 2015). The widely cited ILO (2012) estimates of forced labor worldwide used the capture-recapture method. In this context, the unit being counted was a reported case of forced labor from secondary sources, ranging from media reports, official sources, and NGOs to academic reports. The research team compiled a single list of reported cases, recorded the frequency of each case appearing in the list and estimated the total number of reported cases of forced labor. This quantity, divided by the proportion of reported cases in total forced labor obtained from surveys, then yielded the estimate of total forced labor, both reported and unreported (ILO 2012).⁵

A variant of capture-recapture, the multiple systems estimation method, uses more than two samples and relaxes the assumption of independence among samples.⁶ A UK study compiled

⁵See van der Heijden et al. (2015) for a detailed discussion of assumptions, variations, and applications of capture-recapture methodology and its application in the ILO (2012) global estimates of forced labor.

⁶The independent assumption between samples is often violated in studies of human populations. Suppose we apply the capture-recapture method to a list of trafficked victims identified by the police and a list identified by service providers to derive the total number of trafficked victims. The agencies are likely to refer the victims to one another, and the inclusion in

multiple lists from authorities, nongovernment agencies, and the public and estimated that the number of victims of modern slavery in the country was between 10,951 and 11,418, which included 2,744 known cases, or about a quarter of all cases (Bales et al. 2015). Applying the same methodology, van Dijk & van der Heijden (2016) estimated a total of 17,800 trafficked victims in the Netherlands, with only 10% of the victims detected. The multiple systems estimation method can be implemented in many other countries and provides valuable data sources for global and regional estimates in addition to nationally representative surveys, which may perform poorly in situations with low victimization rates (van Dijk & van der Heijden 2016). When using this method, consistency in the definition of the populations being studied is of special importance in choosing comparable lists.

Besides the conventional methods, researchers have devised novel methodologies to study servitude, although with a focus on microlevel contexts. For instance, network-based methods are suitable for trafficked populations with a certain degree of social connectivity, such as street sex workers and trafficked laborers. As in snowball sampling, with respondent-driven sampling (RDS), existing study subjects are each offered incentives to recruit a certain number of members from their personal contacts. The recruitment with RDS continues until the targeted population is saturated or the desired sample size achieved. A weighting scheme is also applied to correct biases and make inferences about the whole population beyond the snowball sample (Heckathorn 1997). Zhang (2012) implemented RDS to estimate the prevalence of trafficking among unauthorized migrant workers in San Diego. Based on interviews with 826 participants, he concluded that 58% of authorized migrant laborers experienced at least one form of trafficking violence or abusive treatment. The degree of trafficking violation varied significantly by occupation, from 35% found in construction to 16% in agriculture.

RDS has also been used to study sex exploitation. In addition to estimating the composition and characteristics of the population, as in Zhang's (2012) application, the New York City study of commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) measured the population size (Curtis et al. 2008) using the capture-recapture method with the RDS sample and the official arrest statistics. It further validated the capture-recapture estimate with a network estimation approach based on personal network sizes and the number of recruitment coupons circulated. The two methods generated comparable estimates for the population size of the CSEC population in New York City—3,946 and 3,796, respectively. Despite the advantages and potential of network-based methods, the researchers caution that this study is likely to miss subjects who lack physical mobility or network ties.

The Internet and digital technology are now included in researchers' repertoire in studying servitude. One study of labor trafficking developed a sampling frame of potential victims by identifying geographical areas with labor-intensive farming practices and enumerating dwellings in the selected areas using digital images and Global Positioning System coordinates (Barrick et al. 2015). In regard to sexual servitude, while the Internet and online advertisements have facilitated the sale of sex and related exploitation, they also offer digital footprints for law enforcement and researchers to uncover the activities. An analysis of online advertisements for adult services on Backpage Hawaii, for example, revealed common sex trafficking indicators in the advertisements, as well as movement patterns of potential victims (Ibanez & Suthers 2014). Recognizing the different ways in which women in prostitution contact clients, Brunovskis & Tyldum (2004) generated a roster for telephone surveys from print media and online advertisements to study female prostitutes who contact clients through advertisements in Oslo, Norway, complementing

one list is likely dependent on the inclusion in another. Therefore, the multiple systems estimation method, which relaxes the independence assumption, is valuable.

the capture-recapture method with repeated field visits used to derive the number of street sex workers.

Finally, diverging from the literature that focuses on population size, the Urban Institute estimated the size of the underground economy (Dank et al. 2014). It measured the total size of the underground economy in eight American cities by the amount of currency in circulation. It then used relative information about the underground commercial sex, drug, and weapons markets to obtain the size of each market in absolute terms. In 2007, the underground commercial sex economy in the cities under study was estimated to range in value from US\$39.9 million in Denver to US\$302 million in Miami.

Many empirical studies adopt mixed methods to improve estimates or develop a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Some employ both quantitative and qualitative methods (e.g., Sommerfelt 2015). Other studies apply multiple estimation methods to derive or validate the same quantity. As national datasets are lacking in certain countries, mixed methods of data gathering and extrapolation or imputation fill in the missing data and pave the way for global aggregate measures, as in the case of the ILO global estimates of child labor (ILO 2017) and migrant workers (ILO 2015). The Global Slavery Index developed by the Walk Free Foundation (Walk Free Found. 2016) combines direct estimation from nationally representative surveys (25 countries), multiple systems estimation (2 countries), and extrapolation based on equivalent country risk profiles (139 countries).⁷ As noted earlier, in its most recent global estimates of modern servitude, the ILO collaborated with the Walk Free Foundation and the International Organization for Migration. It abandoned the capture-recapture method used in the previous rounds and instead estimated the population size for forced labor in the private economy, as well as forced marriage, using nationally representative household surveys in 48 countries and aggregating national results to global or regional estimates with sampling weight adjustments. The low report rate of forced sexual exploitation and child labor in the surveys led to the use of the multiplier method, drawing on the number of forced labor from survey data, and the odds ratio of sexual exploitation or child labor relative to forced adult labor from the IOM database. However, forced labor imposed by the state was estimated based on secondary data sources. The implication of this methodological discontinuity for the estimates deserves further examination.⁸ Moreover, as multiple estimates over the same geographical areas become available, it is important to compare across estimates and assess the impact of different definitions, operationalization procedures, and estimation methodologies on the estimates.

4. EXPLAINING THE RISE OF MODERN SERVITUDE

What accounts for this extraordinary increase in the number of persons held in servitude over recent decades? A full explanation would require another article. Here we tentatively suggest the conjunction of six broad sets of macro, meso and micro socioeconomic and cultural factors (see Aronowitz 2009, Bales 2012, Cameron & Newman 2008, ILO 2005, Shelley 2010, Tiefenbrun & Edwards 2008, van den Anker 2004): global economic and political changes, domestic economic changes, sociological developments, politico-legal changes, the growth of gender imbalance due to a combination of medical and political changes, and personal factors.

⁷ See Gallagher (2014), Guth et al. (2014), and Weitzer (2015) for critical discussion of the methodology of the Global Slavery Index.

⁸ Detailed methodology of the ILO et al. (2017) report on modern servitude was unavailable at the time this manuscript was prepared.

The ILO (2005, p. 63) has called forced labor “the underside of globalization.” The intensification of globalization in the last half of the twentieth century set in motion several factors that facilitated both the demand for, and supply of, forced labor. The postwar economic boom in the West and later in parts of Asia, and more broadly, the growing integration of the world’s economies, in its first phase greatly increased the demand for cheap labor. This occurred both in the advanced economies where they functioned as a distinct category of powerless, easily controlled labor in the tertiary sector, and in the secondary sector of the developing countries with their growing demand for both external and internal migrant labor (Sassen 1988, Sharapov 2017).

This first phase of postwar global capitalist consolidation ended around the mid-1980s, at which time barriers to immigration emerged in the advanced economies. However, by then the process had greatly disrupted traditional patterns of employment in the less developed world, which, along with rapidly growing populations partly due to the globalization of modern medical and public health practices, and the sudden entry of three of the world’s largest population blocs into the capitalist system, led to a great surge in the global supply of labor. Between 1980 and 2005, there was a quadrupling of the global labor force (IMF 2007). Indeed, between 1990 and 1995 there was a remarkable “great doubling” of the global labor market, from 1.46 to 2.93 billion, with the entry of China, India and the former Soviet Bloc countries in the capitalist system (Freeman 2008). Beginning about this time supply would appear to generate demand, especially in the service, including sex work, sector (Anderson & Davidson 2003). Simultaneously there was a steep decline in labor income shares across the world, a deeper disruption of traditional means of employment and sources of security, a rapid rise in global value share participation, and an even greater increase in the movement of workers both internally and internationally (IMF 2017). All this happened just as the advanced economies were placing severe limits on labor immigration. It is striking, and perhaps not coincidental, that at precisely this time, there was a sudden escalation in reports on, and activism around, the issue of labor and sexual trafficking, smuggling, and abusive migration (see **Figure 1**; see also Limoncelli 2017, figure 1).

One way of demonstrating the link between globalization and the growth of forced labor, including slavery, is to track the value chain between industries in the advanced world and exploited labor in poor and developing countries following this massive expansion of the global labor force. For example, the auto and other industries of the advanced world depend heavily on imported steel, which requires the transformation of iron into steel, which, in turn, requires the production of vast quantities of charcoal, usually using exploited labor verging on or passing into outright slavery, as in the case of Brazil (Hale 2012). Kara (2014) documents in some detail bond labor supply chains between South Asia and the Western economies in the frozen shrimp and carpet weaving industries. Similarly, as indicated earlier, the large growth of demand for chocolate, and cheap fish for pet food, in the advanced world has been directly linked to child and sea slavery, respectively. Globalization also led to much greater and cheaper means of transportation and communication, facilitating the work of human smugglers and traffickers, and especially of international criminal organizations, what Doomernik (2006) calls the “globalization, migration and trafficking nexus.”

Globalization, market privatization, and economic growth also greatly increased inequality both within and between nations (IMF 2017). At the same time, the massive increase in channels of communication made people aware of their relative impoverishment and of opportunities elsewhere, spurring their desire to migrate, sometimes under circumstances that made them vulnerable to exploitation (Liang & Ye 2001).

The commercial sex industry was transformed by the Internet in both positive and negative ways (The Economist 2014, Pettinger 2014). It made it easier for sex workers to get in touch with their clients, thereby reducing the dangers of relying on street prostitution and on pimps; at

the same time, pimps and traffickers have used it to facilitate both the domestic and international buying and selling of sex and the exploitation of women.

Closely linked to these broader macroeconomic changes have been several sociological developments that facilitated the growth of migration, smuggling, and trafficking. In many areas, the condition of women has been relatively worsened initially by modernization. While development in the long run, and often in the medium run, does lead to improvement in women's lives, the initial effects are often negative or mixed in many parts of the world. Not only have their roles in traditional economic systems been disrupted, leading to the disproportionate rise of female unemployment in rural areas, but often the worst jobs in the service sector and new labor-intensive industries fall into their hands (Farr 2005, Mammen & Paxson 2000, Oishi 2005, Shah 2017). Women move within their countries to engage in exploitative work in domestic service and sweatshop operations, and they make up the majority of the millions of international migrants across the globe, a significant number of whom end up in forced labor situations. One striking gendered aspect of migration in the vast Asian region, documented by Oishi (2005) is that women migrate from the more developed of the sending countries (the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia), whereas men migrate from the least developed economies (Bangladesh, Pakistan). One reason for this was a major new feature of the sociology of globalization earlier identified by Parreñas (2015) in her seminal study of Filipina domestic-labor migrants: the international division of reproductive labor, in which women of the advanced economies come to rely on educated women from the less developed world to perform their child-caring services.

Traditional racial or ethnic discrimination also greatly contributes to trafficking and modern servitude. Indeed, contrary to what some have claimed, modern trafficking and servitude are as racial and ethnic in their causes and impact as ancient and traditional slavery (Bedoya et al. 2009, Dank et al. 2014, Kara 2014).

Several major political and regional changes during the last third of the twentieth century also facilitated the growth of forced labor. The most dramatic of these has been the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the post-Soviet successor states (Wylie & McRedmond 2010), which ushered in a new era of economic and social insecurity. It is no accident that a substantial proportion of trafficked prostitutes in Turkey and western Europe come from these states (Farr 2005, Kligman & Limoncelli 2005). The other major political development enabling trafficking and smuggling was the emergence of the EU, which removed border controls within the Union and thereby made it much easier to move persons within the Union and from eastern Europe and the less-developed world (UNODC 2016).

In addition to changes in eastern Europe, we have also seen the proliferation of civil wars across the world. These wars, especially in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, have attained extraordinary levels of savagery and violence, forcing the movement of vast numbers of people as refugees. Women and children have been especially vulnerable to statelessness and warfare (UN Secur. Council. 2016, Bunting 2017).

Personal factors account for the seeming ease with which women have been deceived into accompanying their traffickers across borders. One is simply the desire for a better life. A second factor is the desire to escape abuse, especially from traditional households where they are oppressed by patriarchal older men or sexually abused. A third personal factor is that many trafficked women have been betrayed by relatives and friends who are paid by traffickers. In America a large number of teenagers and young women are forced into homelessness and sex work in order to escape dysfunctional families, or are lured into prostitution, sometimes resulting in slavery, by relatives and friends, as is the case with some men who become pimps.

5. CONCLUSION

As noted earlier, trafficking and servitude in the modern world have generated considerable interest and a vigorous antitrafficking and antislavery movement encompassing some 2,684 organizations that operate both within countries and internationally (Polaris 2017). Most countries of the world have now signed on to the Palermo Protocol and other decrees calling for measures to reduce and ultimately eliminate modern trafficking and servitude (see Gallagher 2017, ILO et al. 2017). Among the advanced nations, the United States has taken the lead, with its State Department's annual TIP Report and its Labor Department's Worst Cases of Child Labor Report, in promoting awareness of the problem and encouraging countries to take action against it. The EU and the major global institutions, most notably the UN, have been active in documenting and promoting similar programs against the problem (e.g., UNODC 2013). Indeed, the eradication of trafficking and forced labor has been formally adopted by the UN as one of the major goals of its 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Encouraging as these movements have been, the fact is that they have so far had relatively little impact on the growth and persistence of modern trafficking and servitude. For example, although there are estimated millions of victims across the world, only a few thousand trafficking cases have been indicted, and even fewer have been successfully prosecuted. Across the world, the UNODC (2016, p. 50) has found that the criminal justice system "appears to be stagnating at a low level." Prosecutions for violations of laws against forced labor are also rare, even in blatantly visible cases such as bonded labor in South Asia. The main reasons for this failure have been, on the one hand, the lack of commitment of states and their prosecutors to pursue trafficking and labor violation cases and, on the other hand, the enormous profits to be made from modern trafficking and forms of forced labor. According to the ILO (2014) report on the economics of forced labor, "modern-day slavery" is a US\$150 billion a year industry, with the sex servitude sector being the most profitable, generating average profit of US\$21,800 per year per victim (see also Kara 2017).

In many countries, corruption and conflicts of interest prevent effective action. Even in the United States, where the government has expressed genuine commitment to fighting trafficking and forced labor, the number of convictions of traffickers each year has been strikingly small. Between 2000, when the first major antitrafficking law was passed (TVPA 2000–2013, or the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, reauthorized in 2003, 2005, and 2013; see also the FOSTA, or Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2018) and 2015, by which time all 50 states as well as the federal government had antitrafficking laws, only 1,876 suspects had been prosecuted by the federal government for antitrafficking crimes, and only 450 had been prosecuted at the state level (see also Peters 2018). The failure to convict anyone on criminal charges for the clear enslavement of 400 Thai farm workers in Hawaii between 2004 and 2005, which the Federal Bureau of Investigation called the largest human trafficking case in US history, is a telling example of the ineffectiveness of the antitrafficking laws (a civil action by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission eventually succeeded after 8 years) (Heller 2014). If America, for all its commitment to the antitrafficking and modern antiservitude cause, can perform so poorly in bringing violators to justice, in spite of the thousands of reported victims, it is hardly remarkable that other countries have been so ineffective. The EU, we should note, has a somewhat better, though hardly impressive, record.

Nonetheless, social scientists, and especially sociologists, should be careful not to become too skeptical about the entire movement and the serious problems it addresses. It has now been reasonably estimated that more than 40 million persons are presently in servitude around the world, some in genuine modern slavery. Indeed, if we are to take marital servitude seriously, as we should, this is likely a conservative estimate. From the conceptual muddles have emerged valuable models of forced labor and other forms of servitude that we have drawn on and sought to clarify in

this review. From the admittedly hegemonic scrutiny of the US State and Labor Departments and their European counterparts, as well as from transnational and domestic advocacy networks, have emerged clearly defined and legally binding international and domestic norms prompting forceful local activism that have placed the plight of the forgotten dispossessed on the agenda of national and global consciousness, even if real changes are yet to materialize. To measure the effectiveness of the antitrafficking and antiservitude movement purely in terms of number of convictions per country is to embrace the very “criminal justice paradigm” for which J.A. Chuang (2014) has rightly criticized American state authorities as well as some fellow scholars. If exaggerated outrage over sexual trafficking has spilled over to long overdue awareness and indignation about the oppression of laborers and women in forced marriage throughout the world, that is all for the good.

Understudied types of forced labor and their mechanisms call for further research. One area that urgently needs further study, noted recently by Parreñas (2015), is domestic servitude, especially among female migrant workers. In view of the aging population in the advanced world, not only its children but also its elderly will be turning to the women of the less developed world for care. The “international division of reproductive labor” (Parreñas 2015) is likely to become the international division of dependent care, and this increases the possibility of growing abuse as more restrictions are placed on these migrants in the interest of controlling them. The number of children in sexual servitude in the advanced world, especially America; child labor in agriculture; and the use of children in the military are all in need of more scholarly research. More work is also needed on bonded labor, the most widespread form of forced labor in the world. Kara’s (2014) recent study provides a valuable point of departure; what is badly needed now is an approach that does not prejudge the issue of slavery but attempts to estimate the differences between voluntarily initiated, though exploitative, relationships on the one hand and the cross-over to genuine slavery on the other.

For sociologists particularly, antitrafficking activism presents the exciting case of a global social movement potentially on a par with its nineteenth-century abolitionist counterpart. Like that and all subsequent social movements, antitrafficking activism has deployed the strategies of awakening, exposing and shaming, metaphoric extension, numeric exaggeration, heartrending narratives, and cognitive reframing (see DeStefano 2007, Doorninck 2017), in order to fracture and reshape our views of taken-for-granted evils around the world. It has already served the three purposes which Risse & Sikink (1999, p. 5) consider “necessary conditions for sustainable domestic change in the human rights area”: it has exposed norm-violating states to the full glare of the international community, empowered and legitimated domestic activists and provided them some measure of protection from repression, and created “a transnational structure pressuring such regimes simultaneously ‘from above’ and ‘from below.’” To cite a dramatic recent example, gender-equality and anti–forced marriage advocates can take much credit for the recent landmark ruling of the Indian Supreme Court that sex with a wife under 18 years of age constitutes rape, a decision handed down, significantly, on October 11, 2017, the International Day of the Girl Child (Meixler 2017).

The movement is crying out for more studies that go beyond critical evaluations of its discursive strategies and moral crusading. Limoncelli’s (2017) recent study is an admirable move in this direction, demonstrating its substantive importance as a major case of a transnational social movement, and its theoretical significance in the way its non-Western origins and partly bottom-up development challenge some of the predictions of both world polity and state-centered or coercion studies concerning the Western sources of issue-based advocacy and the institutionalization of global norms.

Both the messengers and their message, then—global servitude, the subterranean suffering of those whom Fanon called the wretched of the earth—should animate the sociological imagination and rouse it from its sometimes too-myopic focus on the visible problems of the advanced world.

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