



# What was the significance of Countries ratifying the UN Protocol against Human Trafficking? A research note

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## Abstract

*Human trafficking has been recognized as a global phenomenon and has been included by the United Nations as one major protocol in its war to stamp out transnational crime. This paper builds on earlier studies that have taken a global perspective in the attempt to identify the factors that predict human trafficking at the country level. In the search to determine the possible directions for future research provided by those studies, this research returned to a more basic question, namely, “What has been the effects on human trafficking for countries that have become parties to the UN’s Trafficking Protocol?” This study suggests that examining the effects of the protocol on human trafficking is best approached through the adoption of a program evaluation framework, beginning with the process evaluation phase at the country level. The conclusion is that current studies have only begun to look at results of process evaluations and studies need to build on country level evaluations in order to begin to understand the effects of the Human Trafficking Protocol on signatories.*

Key Words: Human Trafficking, UN Protocol, Global, Program Evaluation.

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper was to determine whether signing of the Global Program International Trafficking Protocol (2000) had any identifiable relationship with human trafficking activity at the country level. The paper builds upon studies by Bales (2007) and Fry (2010) which attempted to identify the factors that predicted trafficking based on the classification of countries as origin, transit, and destination sources of human trafficking. This study uses the database constructed by the Global Program against Trafficking in Human Beings (GPATHB), sponsored by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), to assess the protocol efficacy question. The paper begins by discussing the definition of human trafficking and the content of the relevant international trafficking agreement. Thereafter a brief literature review will be provided, followed by an analysis of a range of human trafficking data collection issues. A detailed description of the present study will then be set out before finally concluding with a discussion of the implications raised by the study.

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## **Defining Human Trafficking**

The most commonly used definition of human trafficking is drawn from a supplemental protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime, adopted in December 2000 (UN Protocol). In that document, human trafficking is defined as follows:

Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force, by abduction, of fraud, of deception, coercion 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 sexual exploitation, Exploitation shall include at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution or others forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (UN, 2000, p. 2).

The UN Protocol has helped to better define the problem in many ways. This is not to say that there is universal acceptance or endorsement of its content. As Oxman-Martinez et al (2001) noted, the UN Protocol does not mention borders. They see human trafficking as part of a broader picture which includes the connections of human trafficking to economic globalization and transnational crime. This paper agrees with that position and is concerned only with international trafficking, which by definition includes crossing at least one border.

## **International Agreements**

The UN General Assembly adopted two international treaties (protocols) to fight international trafficking, which supplemented the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime; one protocol dealt with trafficking (referred to here and above as the UN Protocol) and the other with smuggling. They are part of a package designed to address transnational organized crime. The Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns Report (TPGPR) (UNDOC, 2006) offered recommendations derived from those protocols in a number of areas, including prevention, prosecution, protection and intervention. The trafficking protocol is the focus here and it attempts to create a global language as the basis for subsequent legislation to define trafficking, assist victims of trafficking, and prevent trafficking in persons. The protocol also attempts to establish judicial cooperation and information exchange among countries.

As Gallagher (2002) indicates, the trafficking protocol requires countries to:

- 1) criminalize trafficking and related conduct as well as impose appropriate penalties;
- 2) facilitate and accept the return of their trafficked nationals and permanent residents with due regard for their safety;
- 3) when returning trafficked persons, to ensure that this happens with due regard both for the safety of the trafficked person and the status of any relevant legal proceedings;
- 4) exchange information aimed at identifying perpetrators or victims of trafficking, as well as methods and means employed by traffickers;
- 5) provide or strengthen training for law enforcement, immigration, and other relevant personnel aimed at preventing trafficking, and prosecuting traffickers and protecting the rights of victims;
- 6) strengthen border controls as necessary to detect and prevent trafficking;
- 7) take legislative or other appropriate measures to prevent commercial transport being used in

the trafficking process and to penalize such involvement; and 8) take steps to ensure the integrity of travel documents issued on their behalf and to prevent their fraudulent use.

Gallagher (2002) also notes that the protocol contains victim protection measures. Most of these recommendations are optional but countries are supposed to do the following: 1) protect the privacy of trafficking victims and ensure they are given information on legal proceedings and facilities to present their views and concerns during criminal procedures against offenders; 2) consider implementing a range of measures to provide for the physical and psychological recovery of victims of trafficking; 3) endeavor to provide for the physical safety of trafficking victims within their territory; 4) ensure that domestic law provides victims with the possibility of obtaining compensation; 5) consider adopting legislative or other measures permitting victims of trafficking to remain in their territories temporarily or permanently in appropriate cases with consideration being given to humanitarian and compassionate factors; 6) endeavor to establish policies, programs and other measures aimed at preventing trafficking and protecting trafficked persons from re-victimization; and 7) endeavor to undertake additional measures including information campaigns and social and economic initiatives to prevent trafficking.

### **Global Approaches to the Study of Human Trafficking: The Literature**

Perhaps the most comprehensive review of the trafficking literature is found in Laczko and Gozdzik (2005). As Laczko and Gozdzik (2005) indicate in the introduction to that volume, the rapid rise in the number of publications on trafficking reflects the mounting national and international concern with anti-trafficking. They point out that since the mid-1990s, a great number of reports covering individual countries and regions have been produced. These studies have typically tried to examine the entire trafficking process, including the causes of trafficking. Studies also have attempted to describe the recruitment process, the transport of victims, as well as the exploitation of victims/survivors. These studies usually include a description of existing legal and policy frameworks in national case studies. Most reports end with a set of recommendations for further action with the objectives to both inform and contribute to the development of counter-trafficking projects and strategies.

The Laczko and Gozdzik volume (2005) includes chapters on specific regions of the world and several on issues related to trafficking research methods; the volume also includes a chapter which provides bibliographies for all of the human trafficking literature broken down by the regions of the world. All of the regional chapters included in that volume are reviewed in Fry (2009).

### **Data Collection: Issues and Obstacles**

There is general agreement that there is a lack of reliable data regarding human trafficking (Kangaspunta, 2003; Kelly, 2005; Laczko, 2005). The GPATHB Report (2006) suggests that this can be traced to a number of factors. Their list begins with the fact that many countries lack anti- trafficking legislation. Even when countries have legislation in place, laws may only define trafficking for certain practices, like sexual exploitation. In some countries trafficking applies only to the exploitation of women and children. Laws are not always enforced and victims may not be seen as victims of crime but rather as smuggled migrants. Countries lack centralized data collection systems and when data is collected, it is often provided by inter-governmental (IGOs) or non-governmental

agencies (NGOs) that assist or repatriate victims. Those numbers only represent a small portion of trafficking victims in countries.

That is not to say that data collection has only taken place at the micro level. One major research focus has been the quest to determine the scope of human trafficking world-wide. Since 2001, the U.S. State Department has published annual global human trafficking estimates in its Trafficking in Persons Reports estimates. A recent U.S. Department of State Report (2008) estimates the number of persons trafficked globally at 800,000 persons; these persons are trafficked across national borders and do not include persons trafficked within their own countries. Others are critical of these estimates and the methodological approach of not including intra-state trafficking cases (Kangaspunta, 2003; Kelly, 2005; Laczko, 2005). Kangaspunta (2003) and Laczko (2005) both used the word "guesstimates" when commenting on the efficacy of the global estimate approach.

### **Implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons**

One area that has received some attention has been the implementation of the UN Human Trafficking Protocol. For instance the UN Conference of the Parties to the Convention against Organized Crime presented a review of the Protocol's implementation. The UN (2005) produced an analysis of national legislation and measures which were relevant to the provisions of the protocol. A number of parties to the Protocol described specific difficulties which hampered the adoption of the national legislation needed to implement the provisions of the Protocol. These signatories stressed the need for technical assistance concerning issues like lack of experienced staff, enhancing local criminal justice and training for law enforcement capability and others.

Munro (2006) suggests that the ambiguities inherent in the Protocol itself can best be understood through the lens of numerous frameworks, including human rights, immigration, prostitution policy and others. Based on extensive fieldwork in Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, Munro found that the underlying tensions created by various local perspectives resulted in differential resolutions in the divergent countries included in her study. Using prostitution as an example, Munro concludes that there is the need to think more carefully about the conceptualization of trafficking that proponents support. As was the case with prostitution, she cautions that the Protocol may ultimately have produced a deceptive response that permits its provisions to be manipulated to support domestic agendas, like border integrity and suppression of vice. Munro suggests that much may be learned by focusing anti-trafficking attention on the domestic stage, specifically within the context of policy imperatives and their practical implementation.

### **Background of the Present Study**

This study began by taking a different perspective than that adopted by Munro (2006), by looking at several studies that have taken a global perspective on human trafficking. As will be made clear below, this research takes a step back from those earlier studies and instead adopts what can be defined as a "rollback approach". Rollback means that the investigator has to go back to a previous time and determine whether the right questions were being asked earlier in the research process. This approach thus begins by reviewing results that are questionable, perhaps because of unreliable data, or due to an underlying reliance of faulty assumptions. The basic question asked by this study is therefore: "Was

there any measurable affect on human trafficking for countries that were signatories to the UN trafficking Protocol?"

This research sequence commences with a study conducted by Bales (2007). Reacting to the lack of centralized data collection concerning global human trafficking, Bales (2007) assembled a trafficking data set with information collected on all of the world's countries. Leveraging his own database of slavery and trafficking, Bales used data from sources like Amnesty International and the UN World Statistics Pocketbook (1995) to answer two questions; 1) what are the strongest predictors of trafficking *from* a country on a global scale; and 2) what are the strongest predictors of trafficking *to* a country on the global scale?

Bales (2007) used regression analysis to identify the factors which predicted the amount of trafficking *from* and *to* a country. The analysis found six factors which predicted trafficking from a country. The most powerful predictor was government corruption, followed by the percent of the population under 14 year's old and infant mortality. In descending order, the other factors were food production, population pressure and conflict, and social unrest. Collectively, these factors explained 57 percent of the variance in trafficking from countries. The findings for trafficking *to* countries were weaker, with four factors reaching significance and explaining 15.5 percent of the variance in trafficking to countries. In order, these factors were percent of male population age 60 and over, government corruption, infant mortality, and food production.

Fry (2010) extended Bales' (2007) study by including transit countries to his analysis. He utilized the (GPATHB) database as his data source; data were collected from the appendices of the Global Program against Trafficking Report. The two studies had used data sets which included different sets of indicators, with some overlap, so it was not surprising that the predictors of trafficking to a destination country results were mixed. Both studies identified governmental corruption and the percentage of the population under 14 as the two strongest predictors of trafficking from a country. Fry identified the percentage of the population under 14 and governmental corruption as the primary predictors of trafficking through transit countries, a category not included in the Bales study. Bales (2007) notes that the proportion of the countries' population over 60 and corruption were the two strongest predictors of trafficking to a destination country. By way of contrast, Fry found that the Human Poverty Index and the total population measure were the strongest predictors.

One question arising from these earlier studies was "Is there a more effective, policy relevant, way to examine the question of identifying the factors that predict human trafficking at the country level?" Some suggestions regarding future research were also included. The Fry (2010) study pointed to the need to utilize the trafficking hotspots approach in future global human trafficking research. The second was consistent with the recommendation made by Fry (2009), namely that the need to utilize the GPATHB database in future human trafficking research was paramount because it is the most comprehensive data source available and is routinely updated; that data base is described as part of the present study below.

### **The Efficacy of Utilizing the Hotspot Approach**

As will be explained below, the Fry (2008) study assigned total trafficking scores to all of the world's countries. Based on their scores, countries were then divided into high and low volume human trafficking countries, the study's indicator for "hotspot countries."

Briefly, the findings revealed that there are significant differences when countries with a high volume of human trafficking were compared to all other countries. The bi-variant statistics revealed that four of the eight comparisons reached significance and three of them, total population, percent of the population under 14 years of age, and the Corruption Index were identified as variables that discriminated between high and low volume trafficking countries.

There was no clear answer to the basic research question arising in the context of the results presented in Fry (2008). However, there was some support for the efficacy of the trafficking hotspot designation, specifically suggesting the need to look at regional clusters of hotspot countries, but the paper also made it clear that there is much work needed to be done in the area of data collection, especially the need to supplement the GPATHB database with information readily available at the country level and to merge that database with several ongoing UN intervention projects.

### **The Research Question**

The global human trafficking studies referenced above raised a more basic question, “What were the effects of signing the UN International trafficking Protocol on human trafficking activity at the country level?” Clearly that question will be difficult to answer, but the quest to provide some tentative response will begin by describing the data source used by this study.

### **The Global Program against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Database**

Launched in 1999, the stated purpose of GPATHB was to better enable governments to respond to trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants. The program aims to shed light on the causes and processes of migrant trafficking and smuggling, as well as the promotion of the development of effective responses to those problems. One strategic area is the collection and analysis of data in order to increase the global community's knowledge base, raising awareness to prevent human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

According to Kangaspunta (2003), the global database is designed to collect a wide range of open-source information on trafficking. Information may be qualitative or quantitative and come from official government statistics, reports from research institutes, or from newspaper articles and news agency bulletins. As the methodology section of the GPATHB Report (2006) explained, the database includes publicly available information from 113 different source institutions that provide data on 161 countries. The 113 source institutions produce numerous publications, reports, books, articles, journals, and newspaper articles. Besides country specific information, most of the relevant data provides details on human trafficking, routes, victim profiles, and the purposes of trafficking.

### **The Measures**

There are three different sections in the database: country reports, profiles, and trafficking routes. The country profile section includes details about the reported trafficking in countries. These reports are broken down by origin, transit, and destination and the country is ranked from 'very low' (1) to 'very high' (5) on each dimension, origin, transit, and destination. This study's volume of human trafficking variable was created in a two stage process. To begin, a total trafficking score was created by the use of a summed index calculated from those three dimensions, with a possible range of scores from 3 to 15. When the total trafficking scores were displayed, a clear break was apparent in the data.

There were 24 scores with 10 or above and 134 below. This grouping became basis for the high volume and low volume country or “hotspot” designation used in the analysis.

The country’s actions regarding the ratification and signing of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, created the measure labeled as Protocol Status. Possible outcome categories include ratification, accession, signed, not ratified and not signed. Accession is defined as the act whereby a state becomes a party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other states; it has the same legal force as ratification. As a result, response categories became 1) ratified; 2) signed, not ratified; and 3) not signed.

### Other Measures

A measure that will be used for comparative purposes, along with the total trafficking score, comes from the US State Department (2006) which produces an annual trafficking in Persons Report. Countries are placed in tiers on the following basis; 1) Tier 1 are countries whose governments fully comply with the minimum standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA); 2) Tier 2 are countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA’s minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards; 3) Tier 2 Watch List are countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA’s minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards and: a) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing; or b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous years; or c) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with minimum standards is based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year; 4) Tier 3 are countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards of the TVPA and are not making significant efforts to do so.

### The Results

The first task was to identify the 24 countries designated as high volume trafficking locations, places this study considers to be “trafficking hotspots”. These countries are listed in Figure 1, along with their ratification status in relation to the UN Trafficking Protocol. Also included in Figure 1 is the country’s UN Tier placement from the 2006 Report; that is the same year that the data used in this study was included in the GPATHB report.

Figure 1. Countries Identified as High Volume Human Trafficking (Hotspots), their Total Trafficking Scores, UN Protocol Ratification Status and US State Department Human Trafficking Tier Rating. (n=24)

Country	Trafficking Score	Protocol Ratification Status*	UN Tier Placement
Thailand	15	2	2
Albania	13	1	2
Bulgaria	13	1	2

The Philippines	13	1	2
Algeria	12	1	2 W/L
Czech Republic	12	2	2
Hungary	12	2	2
Turkey	12	1	2
Ukraine	12	1	2
Bosnia- Herzegovina	11	1	2
Myanmar	11	1	3
India	11	2	2 W/L
Romania	11	1	2
Russia	11	1	2 W/L
Kosovo	11	1	N/P
Benin	10	1	2
Hong Kong	10	3	2 W/L
China	10	3	2 W/L
Italy	10	2	1
Kazakhstan	10	3	2
Macedonia	10	1	2
Mexico	10	1	2 W/L
Nigeria	10	1	2
Serbia-Montenegro	10	1	2

1 = Protocol ratified. 2 = ratified but not signed. 3 = Not ratified, not signed.

\* 2 W/L =Tier 2 watch list, N/P = No Tier Placement

The country list in Figure 1 immediately suggests the need to look at regional clusters of high volume trafficking counties, especially the Balkans, and to a lesser degree in South East Asia. By way of contrast, only a single country from the Western Hemisphere, Mexico, appears on the “trafficking hotspot” country list. The ratification list shows that more than half, 16 of 24, countries on the list had ratified the Protocol by 2006. Only three countries, Benin, China and the latter’s territory, Hong Kong, had not signed the protocol. Almost all of the countries on the “hotspot” list were rated Tier 2 by the US State Department. Six countries or territories, Algeria, India, Mexico, Russia, China and Hong Kong appeared on the Tier 2 Watch List, and only a single country, Myanmar, appeared on the Tier 3 list. These results will be addressed in the discussion.

The next task was to look at the way high volume trafficking countries compared to all other countries when their ratification status was broken down by their trafficking scores, high and lower volume. Those results appear in Table 1.

Table 1. High Volume (N=24) Versus All other Countries (N=134) that Received Total Trafficking Scores Cross Tabulated by Their 2006 Un Protocol Ratification Status.

Countries	Ratified N (%)	Signed, not ratified N (%)	Not signed N (%)	Total N (%)
High Volume (hotspot)	16(67.6)	5 (20.8)	3 (12.5)	24
All other countries	73 (54.5)	29 (21.6)	32 (23.9)	134
Total	89 (56.3)	34 (21.5)	35 (22.2)	158

Chi-square 2df 1.73 .421

Table 1 revealed no significant difference between the ratification status of countries that received the hotspot designation (n=24) and all of the other countries that received total trafficking scores (n=134); the chi-square p value for table 1 was 1.73 and the P value was .42 In fact more hotspot countries had ratified the Protocol by 2006 than the remainder of the countries, 67.7 percent compared to 54.5 percent. The percentages of countries that had signed but not ratified the Protocol were almost identical, 20.8 percent compared to 21.6 percent, and 12.5 percent of the hotspot countries compared to 23.9 percent of the other countries had not signed the Protocol by 2006.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The UN monitoring reports and status updates were designed to assess the effects of signing the Protocol on countries. Countries would receive technical assistance regarding generating appropriate laws, policing and immigration related intervention strategies as well as assistance designed to improve victim services. This process was to be monitored over time, with ultimate outcomes to result in the prevention and suppression of human trafficking as well as the development of appropriate treatment for victims and the protection of their human rights. Before we look at that process, especially the monitoring phase, there are some basic questions that need to be addressed.

One question to be answered is how to account for the results presented above. To begin, a basic question is “Why did countries sign and ratify the UN Protocol?” One might assume that the countries with more severe trafficking problems might be reluctant to sign and ratify the protocol. The opposite might also be true. Signing and ratifying the Protocol might provide cover for the worst offenders, in the sense that “we are doing everything we can to combat human trafficking.” By inspection, the latter point of view gained some support; 18 of the 21 (85.7 percent) “hotspot” countries that eventually would sign the treaty had done so by 2002, 15 (68.2 percent) had signed by 2000, compared to 65 (48.5 percent) of the other countries. At last count, 3 “hotspot” countries still had not signed the Protocol.

Another important question is generated by noting the discrepancy between the list of what we define as “trafficking hotspots” and the way those countries were rated on the UN Tier system. (Note in Figure 1, only one of the top nine hotspot countries was on the Tier 2 Watch List and all of the others were listed as Tier 2 countries; none were listed as a Tier 3 country.) The answer to that question could fall under the heading of “bureaucracy or even as cover for the worst trafficking offender countries”. One cynical answer to that question is that these countries played the game and cooperated with the Protocol’s mandated procedures, beginning with the receipt of technical assistance and so forth. The most important implication of those discrepancies is that they point to the lack of progress in the assessment of the Trafficking Protocol.

This suggests that there is the need to reframe the protocol assessment problem using the program evaluation framework concerned with orderly policy development and implementation, Freeman (1977) noted that program evaluation asks two fundamental questions that need to be answered when conducting evaluation research. The first is whether or not a particular program, intervention, or treatment was implemented according to its stated guidelines. The second question is whether or not a program made a difference. The first question is concerned with process evaluation and the evaluation research field stresses that many programs are not implemented and executed in the way the program was originally designed. The final phase is called the impact evaluation and is concerned with the extent to which the program effected a change in the desired direction.

The Munro (2006) paper discussed earlier becomes quite timely when the objective is to focus attention on the program evaluation approach, especially the process evaluation phase. She conducted process evaluations in the five countries where she did fieldwork. Munro’s findings provided assessments of the implementation process in all the countries she studied and her conclusions were very important because she reported that human trafficking programs were being implemented according to national priorities as opposed to Protocol guideline standards in all five countries that she studied. Munro’s research

provides a preliminary answer to one major question, namely her study showed that the Protocol was not being implemented according to its stated guidelines. Her research provides some baseline for future research and suggests that the process evaluation approach should be extended to all of the countries that are parties to the UN Trafficking Protocol.

That is not the monumental task that it seems at first glance. Numerous individual country reports are available and the UN documents its technical assistance on a country by country basis. These reports include assessments of the country's implementation status regarding the Human Trafficking Protocol. Several UN human anti-trafficking Programs are immediate sources for assessments of individual countries. The first of these is the UNDOC's Anti-Corruption Program which also provides assessments for individual countries. Nine of the 24 countries identified as "trafficking hotspot countries" have National Anti-trafficking Agencies affiliated with UNODC.

More than half of all the countries identified as "trafficking hotspots" are located in the Balkans. This region has received a great deal of attention from international agencies attempting to track human trafficking activity and to enumerate the number of victims of trafficking located in the Balkans region. For instance, Laczko and Gremegna (2003) describe the International Organization for Migration database on Trafficking in Southeastern Europe that was implemented in the Balkans in 2002 and provided the list of countries and provinces where data was collected, all located within the Balkans region. Farquet et al (2005) included a section on South-East Europe and the Balkans in their bibliography by region and UNICEF had produced an inventory of the situation and responses to human trafficking in the Balkans (Gronow, 2000). The point is that there are numerous anti-trafficking programs currently in the Balkans and elsewhere that can provide the type of information needed to begin to evaluate the effects of the Trafficking Protocol.

The questions to be answered are "How do we pull all of this information together and what will we do to analyze that data?" What is being recommended here is that we build upon what has been done in the past and then develop mid-range research designs which can assess that information regarding the policy implications of the Human Trafficking Protocol. This process must be inductive; building on data collected on program implementation reports at the country or at best the regional level. Program outcome measures must be devised in the same manner, because it should be noted at this point, outcome objectives have not been mentioned. This is because there are no known quantitative measures developed to assess the effects of the Protocol. To date, the only known quantitative data collected in attempting to monitor the effects of implementing the Protocol has been the number of prosecutions for trafficking offenses in individual countries.

Collectively, the accumulation of country level process evaluation reports will provide the means to begin to develop outcome measures. These indicators will emerge from the process evaluation database and research strategies will also evolve once all of the information on individual countries is available in one place and quantified. It will become possible to develop research designs to test for program effects based on country level comparisons. These studies would proceed in a deductive manner, building upon each other until global policy level findings would eventually be generated. This quest would begin when a central depository for data storage has been identified, with UNDOC's Human Trafficking and /or Anti-corruption programs the likely candidates.

In conclusion, this paper has suggested that research designed to assess the effects of the ratification of the Human Trafficking Protocol on countries take a radically different approach from those studies that have previously adopted a global perspective. Those studies have used databases which contain information about all of the countries in the world, but lack information regarding the implementation of the Trafficking Protocol at the country level. Adopting a program evaluation perspective, research would build on individual country reports and generate research findings which provide policy level assessments at the individual country, regional and eventually the global perspective regarding the effects of the Human Trafficking Protocol. The ultimate objective would be to assess attainment of the Protocol's stated mission, namely to prevent, suppress, prosecute offenders and provide services for victims of human trafficking on a global scale.

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