

An Asset-Based Approach to Understanding and Modeling Vulnerability to and
Resilience against Acquisition for the Purposes of Human Trafficking Victimization

by

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ABSTRACT

An asset-based approach to vulnerability, as presented in *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* and *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*, provides a possible theoretical framework for understanding vulnerability to human trafficking. Case studies, field studies and narratives of human trafficking provide evidence that the assets of victims of trafficking play a significant role in human trafficking. This appears to be true both with regard to how traffickers exploit victim assets and with regard to how successful human trafficking prevention efforts are implemented. By exploring and further establishing this connection, I hope to provide evidence that a model of human trafficking acquisition incorporating elements of victim assets and the assets of communities deserves field-testing. Such field-testing will hopefully confirm the deep connection between assets and human trafficking activity and establish the necessary connections anti-trafficking activists will need to create a predictive version of the model with regard to individual vulnerability to human trafficking. Lastly, I argue that, provided the connection between human trafficking vulnerability and victim asset levels holds, an asset-based approach provides a rhetorical framework to resist policies that compromise asset levels of particularly vulnerable populations.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, my research has led me to believe that an asset-based approach to vulnerability, an approach reliant on the notion that available assets indicate the levels of one's vulnerability to and resilience against a certain event or state of being, may provide a useful perspective on human trafficking activity. Specifically, I am hopeful that it can lead to a field-test-ready framework that can help to illuminate the nuances of individual vulnerability to human trafficking. However, in order to present an asset-based approach to vulnerability in a human trafficking context and to argue for this conclusion, it is absolutely necessary to clarify what I mean by human trafficking activity. Unfortunately, the term 'human trafficking' is, in some respects, both poorly defined and poorly understood.

Among researchers, there has been significant disagreement regarding what exactly constitutes human trafficking, slavery, and/or contemporary forms of forced labor abuses (Di Nicola 2007:51). The numerous terms for human trafficking/slavery throughout media reports and academic literature demonstrate perhaps the clearest evidence of this disagreement. Among the terms that researchers commonly employ are human trafficking, modern slavery, "new" slavery, contemporary slavery, trafficking in persons, forced labor and slavery-like practices. This range of terms includes an extensive subset of terms, whereby researchers use a certain variant of their preferred term to describe a specific abuse: sex slavery, sex trafficking, labor trafficking, child slavery, etc.

Nonacademic, legal definitions of these human trafficking/slavery do not clear up the disagreement on what constitutes these abuses. Even when researchers use legal definitions of trafficking or slavery, disagreement remains concerning which individual

cases are 'acceptable self-exploitation' and which cases are trafficking (Chuang 2014:647). In addition, some researchers using antiquated legal definitions may still confuse concepts of human smuggling, irregular migration, and human trafficking (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011:6; San Miguel 2011:43; Di Nicola 2007:51). Indeed, some academic, media and political conversations conflate human trafficking with instances of human smuggling that did not result in human trafficking (San Miguel 2011:43; Wallinger 2010:16).

The lack of a consensus conceptual idea and term for human trafficking/slavery, however, can cause problems for those discussing and researching human trafficking. Beyond which specific term is to be preferred, the biggest disagreement appears to be exactly what should be considered human trafficking/slavery. While there is typically some overlap on the human rights abuses denoted by the terms, some definitions are so narrow or so broad as to be conceptually separate notions of forced labor. Some researchers will only call a particular abuse 'slavery' if it entails specific historical, social and legal components like ownership and social alienation, but other researchers consider these components to be outside of slavery's essential characteristics (Patterson 2011:6). Notions of human trafficking for one researcher may include the ideologically driven, but empirically weak, position that any type of consensual sex work or form of pornography constitutes sex trafficking (Weitzer 2007:451-452, 454-455; Chuang 2014:610-611; Patterson 2011:23). In addition, some researchers employ more rhetorical conceptions of slavery such as "wage slavery," while others utilize more literal definitions (Quirk 2011:156).

Without resolving disagreements like these, human trafficking/slavery research becomes more convoluted and ultimately inaccessible. Due to the above areas of confusion, it appears critical for all research on human trafficking/contemporary slavery to articulate its particular view of the subject matter. In particular, researchers must utilize a clear definition that is subjected to scrutiny and use the conceptual term that best captures that definition (Di Nicola 2007:50). Doing so will not only clear up the researcher's theoretical orientation toward these heinous human rights abuses, but also make it easier for others to utilize and build upon the concepts, arguments and models employed by the researcher. Therefore, in order to articulate my orientation toward human trafficking/slavery/contemporary forms of forced labor in this thesis, it is perhaps best to begin with an investigation concerning a historically rooted definition of slavery and its relationship to these modern abuses.

Background on, Definitions for, and Key Aspects of Human Trafficking/Modern Slavery/Contemporary Forms of Forced Labor Abuses

Understanding Key Aspects of Slavery and Slavery's Social Relations

Among the most celebrated works dealing with conceptions of slavery is Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death*. Patterson (1982) articulates one of the most highly regarded investigations of slavery. *Slavery and Social Death* spans ancient and modern (through the early twentieth century) forms of slavery, resulting in a definition of slavery predicated on specific abstracted practices and social relations.

Slavery is an abominable institution of violence and exploitation that has existed across multiple eras of time—premodern and modern (Patterson 1982:23). In each era, the forms of exploitation and violence in slavery varied. To develop an understanding of slavery, many have sought to look at commonalities between various instantiations of slavery across these eras. Those commonalities, while possibly having the unfortunate side effect of downplaying the horrors of individuals' experiences as victims of slavery, can be helpful for understanding the mechanisms that make slavery work (Brown 2009:1233).

In *Slavery and Social Death*, Patterson (1982:2, 13, 50) argues that slavery, at its core, is defined by social relationships and is characterized by dominance. The relationships at issue begin with the relationship between a slaveholder and an enslaved person (in Patterson's text, a master and a slave), which has three key aspects: a violent differentiation in power, the power of psychological influence, and an appeal to cultural concepts of authority that provide degrees of legitimacy and power to accomplish goals (Patterson 1982:1-2). Power, here, is an incredibly complex notion, as it both defines and is wrapped up in social relations. Relying on Weber, Patterson (1982:1) notes that power defines every relationship between humans. However, relationships exist on a spectrum of power differences; some relationships are slightly different in power, whereas others are radically and lopsidedly unequal (Patterson 1982:1). Slavery, Patterson (1982:1) claims, is characterized by the latter—a relationship of dominance.

There are perhaps many versions of dominance, however slavery, according to Patterson (1982), is unique in three ways. First, it is characterized by an extreme level of power and by extreme qualities of coercion (Patterson 1982:2). This is, in part, because,

constant violence is required to an individual to work against his or her own will for another (Patterson 1982:3). The violence must be repeated many times—the enslavement occurring over and over again—both to overcome “the low motivation of a slave to work” but also to reinforce, as a form of relationship control, the power dynamic into an enslaved person’s mind (Patterson 1982:3). As Patterson (1982:4) claims, “there is no known slaveholding society where the whip was not considered an indispensable instrument.” For Patterson (1982:4, 8), however, the coercion present at any time in slavery could be the physical whip and/or its counterpart: a sociocultural idea that held a similar coercive force against the enslaved, reinforcing the slaveholder’s mastery over the enslaved.

Slavery’s inherent coerciveness should also be understood as coercive not just on an interpersonal level, but also as coercive in its *individualized* condition (Patterson 1982:4). By this, Patterson (1982:4) means that one who is an enslaved person is in a powerless relationship position relative to another person, the master. Attached to that dynamic between the powerless enslaved person and the coercive, powerful slaveholder is the notion that the slaveholder extends his or herself through the enslaved person (Patterson 1982:4). Through that extension, an enslaved person does not exist apart from the slaveholder (Patterson 1982:4). An enslaved person becomes a labor tool to accomplish an end (Patterson 1982:5). And, should that enslaved person resist extension to accomplish the goals of the slaveholder’s power, an enslaved person is likely to experience further violence or even death (Patterson 1982:5).

Secondly, the dominance of the slaveholder over an enslaved person comes from the inhibiting or severing of the enslaved person’s relationship with the surrounding

community (Patterson 1982:5-6). While an enslaved person might have some relationships resembling those in a normalized social order, the enslaved person's status is characterized by alienation (Patterson 1982:5). This alienation includes many facets: the alienation from one's rights as a human, as well as the alienation from social help through a community, laws, and enforcers of those laws (Patterson 1982:5). "Natal alienation"—that is, the alienation of the enslaved person from all "ties of birth in both ascending and descending generations"—reinforces the enslaved person's dependence on the master (Patterson 1982:7). Instead of ties to family, community and social status, an enslaved person's relationships to the community and family become defined by the slaveholder's will (Patterson 1982:7). This makes the enslaved person into "the ultimate human tool, as imprintable and disposable as the master wished" (Patterson 1982:7).

Patterson (1982:8) refers to the undoing and redefinition of relationships as "social death." It is the denial of humanity and the denial of independent social existence (Patterson 1982:8). It is the formal rejection of existing relationships (Patterson 1982:7). It is perpetual, and, in some instances, hereditary (Patterson 1982:9). In these instances, hereditary enslavement of children was possible because the enslaved parent and the later enslaved child lacked an ability to engage the community to override the master's will and claims (Patterson 1982:10).

The third key component of the domination relationship characterizing slavery results from the first two components. Violent, reinforced coercion and alienation jointly function to ensure that persons who are victims of slavery are "always persons who had been dishonored in some way" (Patterson 1982:10). While persons who had experienced some level of dishonor might be more likely to be enslaved, what Patterson (1982:78)

refers to here is the idea that every person who is enslaved becomes dishonored. “The dishonor the slave was compelled to experience sprang... from that raw, human sense of debasement inherent in having no being except as an expression of another’s being” (Patterson 1982:78). This sociopsychological aspect of slavery establishes that the master ultimately destroys the honor of the enslaved because an enslaved person is without status, without dignity, and lacks an independent social existence, but chiefly because the enslaved person is “without power except through another” (Patterson 1982:10).

In being this “perfect human tool,” an enslaved person is the instrument of the slaveholder, who desires to achieve a specific end. While enslaved persons “have performed every known task... there was usually a primary use for which they were acquired... they might have been acquired for prestige, political, administrative, ritual, sexual, marital, or economic reasons” (Patterson 1982:173). Such uses and ends can be financially productive or financially nonproductive. In either case, the dominance over an enslaved person benefits the holder, for “slaves, because of their total flexibility, could be used as the perfect capitalistic work force as easily as they could be (and were) used as the perfect noncapitalistic retainer, concubine or soldier” (Patterson 1982:33). Whether financially productive or nonproductive, however, the labor of the enslaved toward productive and nonproductive ends alike serves to benefit the slaveholder’s conditions and well-being, whereas the labor of the enslaved toward those ends have little to no relation to the well-being of the enslaved (Patterson 1982:205). In essence, the slaveholder’s exploitation of the enslaved person’s labor power produces benefits only for the dominant individual in the relation, except perhaps to limit the violence that an enslaved person faces at the hands of the slaveholder.

Slavery as a societal institution has three relationships. The first, above, is the slaveholder-to-enslaved-person relationship. The second, also touched on above, is the enslaved-person-to-community relationship—namely the social death and its radical redefinition of the enslaved person’s relationship to others according to the slaveholder’s will (Patterson 1982:172). However, slavery cannot exist with a slaveholder-to-community relationship (Patterson 1982:35). This relationship must somehow allow or reinforce the ability of the slaveholder to maintain his or her particular relationship with the enslaved person (Patterson 1982:172). In this relationship, the slaveholder needs to maintain a level of power or influence in the community to continue his or her violent dominance over an enslaved person (Patterson 1982:173).

While Patterson wrote *Slavery and Social Death* in order to provide an understanding of the institutions of slavery through the early twentieth century, he still applies his understanding to contemporary instances of slavery. Specifically, Patterson (2011:29) believes that a domination-based forced labor abuse must feature the above components, including social death, in order to satisfy the classification elements of a slavery relationship.

Are All Contemporary Forms of Violently Coerced and Forced Labor Tantamount to Slavery? Bales' Notion of "Modern Slavery" and its Critiques

Unlike Patterson, some scholars find contemporary slavery/forced labor abuses as a unique phenomenon that can be analyzed separately from traditional slavery (Quirk, 2011:160). One such view of the distinctness of “modern slavery” comes from Kevin Bales. Bales is a widely influential and widely cited author on these particular human

rights abuses (Patterson 2011:1). Noted scholars, even those who disagree with him, may consider Bales incredibly important in modern anti-slavery activism because of this reach and because of his role in promoting abolitionist causes (Patterson 2011:1).

Throughout his many works, Bales argues for a particular conception of what he calls “modern slavery.” Bales' conception is informed by his review of particular aspects of historical forms of slavery. In *Modern Slavery*, Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:28) summarize ‘old’ slavery as having a handful of main characteristics. Slavery was legal and had a legal ownership assertion (Bales et al. 2009:28). Historical forms of slavery also featured long-term ownership of a slave (Bales et al. 2009:28-29). In addition, because there was a shortage of slaves, it was expensive to acquire a slave (Bales et al. 2009:28-29). These expenses greatly diminished the profits from slavery (Bales et al. 2009:28-29). Lastly, ‘old’ slavery was deeply connected to racial differences between owner and slave (Bales et al. 2009:28).

“Modern slavery,” according to Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:28-29), does not feature these characteristics of ‘old’ slavery. ‘New’ slavery, which denotes slavery in the latter half of the twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries, was technically illegal due to the global abolition of slavery (Bales et al. 2009:27-28). In response to this illegality, contemporary slave masters (those who control slaves) typically eschew outright ownership of slaves (Bales et al. 2009:28). Instead of legalized ownership, slave masters rely on systems of violence and coercion to achieve their exploitative purposes (Bales et al. 2009:28-29; 31). In ‘new’ slavery, a racial component of ownership and victimization is no longer critical to understand the relationship between enslaved persons and their 'owners' (Bales et al. 2009:28). Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:28-

29) calculate that slaves in the modern economy are significantly cheaper to acquire than in historical slavery. Because of this, higher profits are available to slaveholders (Bales et al. 2009:28-29). Furthermore, as the acquisition price for slaves fell, a disposable commodity model replaced the long-term ownership model (Bales et al. 2009:29). Crudely put, it has become cheap to acquire a victim for slavery and, thus, the victims are easily ‘thrown away.’

This definition from Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009) provides a wide framing of coerced, force labor abuses. This seems to fit in with a previous argument from Bales (2005:55-57) that specifically distances his views on “new slavery” from Patterson’s insistence on social death as a feature of slavery. Through that distance and in light of the above characteristics, Bales (2005:57; Bales et al. 2009:31) and his coauthors argue that one should view any forced labor that exploits an individual, that provides no significant remuneration and that is coerced through violence, threat or control is, in fact, slavery.

This perspective on the nature of “modern slavery” is not universally held, however. Rather, in the past few years, the division of slavery into ‘old’ and ‘new’ has faced significant critique. With regard to this division, noted sociologist Patterson (2011) and anti-slavery scholar Quirk (2011) have put forth some of the most incisive arguments.

Patterson (2011) and Quirk (2011) both note that that Bales' argument for his definition is imperfect on multiple grounds. The notion of ‘old’ slavery, they argue, relies too heavily on inaccurately applying particular generalizations of antebellum slavery in the United States to slavery in other regions of the world (Quirk 2011:159-160; Patterson

2011:8). ‘Old’ slavery, particularly outside of the United States, was not particularly expensive (Patterson 2011:7-8; Quirk 2011:159). A shortage of enslaved individuals did not apply to most slaveholding societies outside the United States (Patterson 2011:7-8). And, while Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:28) minimizes the importance of ethnic and racial differences in ‘new’ slavery, Patterson (2011:9) emphasizes that this component still matters in contemporary forms of slavery.

Both Patterson (2011:7) and Quirk (2011:159) concede that ‘new’ slavery often eschews legal forms of ownership. Patterson (2011:7), however, questions the usefulness of the legality distinction between historical slavery and contemporary slavery. In areas of contemporary enslavement, legal norms with regard to the abolition of slavery are often ignored or not enforced (Patterson 2011:7). Buttressing these claims is analysis by Suzanne Miers (2011:12), who has noted that it is unlikely that humans ever achieved the successful full abolition of traditional forms of slavery. On this basis of these claims, Patterson (2011:7) believes that distinguishing forms of slavery on this legalized basis may be ineffective.

Patterson (2011) and Quirk (2011) each critique the use of the term “modern slavery.” Patterson (2011:6) believes that “modern slavery” is a problematic over-expansion of the term to include all modern forms of forced labor. Working from his own definition of slavery, Patterson (2011:29) does argue that specific forms of contemporary forced labor are, in fact, slavery; specific forms of slavery achieve “social death” and other necessary “social economic, cultural and psychological attributes and consequences” to merit consideration as slavery. In particular, his analysis of contemporary forced labor abuses concludes that slavery is found

in those areas where the old institution [of slavery] never died out, whatever abolition laws may have been passed, in the worst cases of the exploitation of children and migrant domestic workers, and in the condition of women trafficked for commercial sexual purposes between and within countries. (Patterson 2011:29)

However, other contemporary abuses for forced labor are not, in his view, tantamount to slavery, “even though they may in some cases be even more brutal than some high end forms of sexual slavery” (Patterson 2011:29). In either case—strict slavery or not—Patterson (2011:29) argues that we should seek to abolish all these abusive, exploitative practices.

Quirk (2011) critiques the term “modern slavery” on slightly different grounds, arguing that the term is unclear in its relation to historical forms of abuse. As Quirk (2011:161) points out in *The Anti-Slavery Project*, “modern slavery” can be a confusing term because, while it is meant to denote instances of slavery in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, “the very concept of new (or modern) slavery can itself be traced back at least as far as the early twentieth century.”

This insight from Quirk (2011) is problematic for Bales, Trodd and Williamson’s (2009) argument for the term “modern slavery,” because that term is constructed specifically around the distinctiveness of the ‘new’ forms of exploitation versus the ‘traditional’ forms of slavery. Quirk (2011:160-1) notes this distinction is insufficient as the types of slavery “that Bales describes as ‘new’ could be regularly found alongside ‘old’ slavery for centuries.” Quirk (2011:161) rejects the idea of slavery having risen in new form, but rather links the persistence of ‘new’ forms of slavery in part due to historical decisions to not abolish these particular forms of exploitation at the time of the abolition of ‘old’ forms of slavery. “Many of the practices that have recently being [sic] described

as new were practices alongside classical slavery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the narrow terms on which legal abolition took place tended to leave them substantially intact” (Quirk 2011:161). Such practices, Quirk (2011:160) states, may include forms of debt bondage and contract slavery, which Bales (2005:58-59; Bales et al. 2009:32-34) includes in his analysis as types of slavery. Quirk (2011), in supporting this theory, points specifically to India and Pakistan. Research by Bales (2005:184-5; Bales et al. 2009:33) indicates a sizable number of enslaved persons in India and Pakistan. Quirk (2011:162) notes, however, that both of these areas were British colonies, where the British imperfectly abolished slavery and other forms of forced economic exploitation. It is not the forms of 'contemporary slavery' that are new, Quirk (2011:162) concludes. Rather, “the main thing that is new is that way in which they have come to be conceptualized and discussed” (Quirk 2011:162).

Toward a Better Term for Contemporary Forced Labor Abuses

In light of conflicting definitions presented by scholars such as Bales (2005; Bales et al. 2009), Quirk (2011), and Patterson (2011), one can see how choosing an optimal definition of human trafficking/modern slavery for research purposes is fraught with difficulty. It is not an impossible proposition, but it must be done carefully. In this regard, I find particularly instructive three points, one by each of these three authors.

First, Patterson (2011:29) notes that, while not all forms of modern forced labor are slavery, all contemporary forms of abusive forced labor practices are worthy of abolition. With this abolitionist stance in mind, I believe a wider definition of forced

labor that includes slavery but is broader than just Patterson's (1982) sociohistorical concept of slavery alone remains a valid and important concept for study.

Second, Quirk (2011:160-1) insists that contemporary forced labor abuses are, at least in part, historically connected both to this Balesian notion of 'old,' nominally abolished forms of slavery and to those exploitative forms of forced labor that survived or even thrived, as they were considered more acceptable in their time. Due to this, Bales, Trodd and Williamson's (2009) definition of the topic of study as "modern slavery" is, at the very least, confusing in a sociohistorical sense and, at worst, inaccurate. On these grounds, I do not believe 'slavery' to be a preferable term for a rigorous, accurate, communicable definition of contemporary forms of forced labor abuses.

Third, in considering the nature of this wider set of forced labor abuses, it seems excessive to discard Bales' work altogether. After removing the improper and unnecessary division between 'old' and 'new' slavery, as well as replacing the suboptimal blanket term 'slavery' for forced labor abuses, I believe his work still retains some very important theoretical points. Specifically, Bales (2005; Bales et al. 2009) has compiled an incredible amount of material summarizing various instances of abusive, forced labor throughout the world. In analyzing this information, Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:31-32) distill trends that persist throughout these abuses (emphasis on the distinctiveness of five parts is mine): "Slavery is [1] a relationship in which one person is controlled by another, [2] through violence, the threat of violence, or physical coercion, [3] has lost free will and free movement, [4] is exploited economically, [5] and is paid nothing beyond subsistence." While this summary from Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009) may not be the ideal definition for discussing each contemporary form

of forced labor abuse, these are characteristics that should be seen as desirable in, or at least deeply related to, a rigorous, scrutinized definition of such human rights abuses.

I believe that a recent consensus document, the 2000 *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, incorporates the above points by Patterson (2011) and Quirk (2011) well, while also incorporating the above elements that Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009) identify as prevalent in forced labor abuses. The Protocol (commonly referred to as the Palermo Protocol) does not define these labor abuses under the term ‘slavery,’ instead creating a broader category of abuses (United Nations 2000:2). By eschewing reliance on this term, the Palermo Protocol need not include, as mandatory, the element of social death that Patterson's intellectually rigorous analysis of historical slavery requires. Instead, in its definition of trafficking in persons, the Palermo Protocol accurately captures both “slavery or practices similar to slavery,” as well as a much wider range of forced labor abuses that Patterson (2011) argues do not amount to slavery (United Nations 2000:2). In other words, it captures the full set of violent, domination-based forced labor abuses that Patterson (2011:29) states requires our abolitionist work.

Furthermore, the definition in the Palermo Protocol, by not being limited to only slavery proper but rather a broader set of forced labor abuses, captures those unabolished historical practices of economic exploitation that are still in practice today. By including these practices without defining them as slavery, the Protocol satisfies the insistence of Quirk (2011:160-161) that conceptions of slavery not be redefined as these historically unabolished forms of exploitation. Lastly, the Palermo Protocol, in defining trafficking in persons, centers around abuses with core components of control, power, violence, and

coercion over a victim for the achievement of forced labor and exploitative purposes. This resonates with what Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:31-32) identify as core elements common throughout instances of forced labor abuses in our time.

The Palermo Protocol: A Clearer Definition of Trafficking in Persons

Article 3(a) of the United Nations (2000) *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (also known as the Palermo Protocol) states:

“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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (P. 2)

For the purposes of this thesis, I shall utilize the Palermo Protocol Article 3(a) definition, while using the terms ‘trafficking in persons’ and ‘human trafficking’ to refer to the abuses.

The Palermo Protocol, as Kay Warren (2007) details brilliantly in “The 2000 UN Human Trafficking Protocol: Rights, Enforcement, Vulnerabilities,” was formed through a multi-nation, multi-stakeholder, messy United Nations negotiation. The result of this process, while imperfect, has its strengths. The biggest strength of the Palermo Protocol perhaps comes through its ability to detail a broad set of practices and wide range of abuses. It may be the case that, in human trafficking research, such broad definitions are better than particularly specific definitions. Liz Kelly (2005:237), for instance, argues

that, “a wider framing might change what we think we know about the prevalence and patterns involved.” The phrase “the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability... for the purpose of exploitation” seems to demarcate this wide inclusion of possible abuses (United Nations 2000:2). The phrase “forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery,” which frames types of forced labor exploitation after acquisition, is similarly widely inclusive (United Nations 2000:2).

While broad, the Palermo Protocol does not fall into the trap of being problematically overly broad. The protocol does encompass many different abuses, yet it maintains a set of concrete elements which one may use to identify human trafficking—elements that comport with and are prevalent in other human trafficking research. Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:31-32) identify the importance of coercion, violence and force in modern labor abuses. Similarly, the Palermo Protocol definition of trafficking requires a component of force, coercion, or deception (Mishra 2013:2; Warren 2007:246). Such force, coercion or deception constitutes an override of one's consent to any action, which is an important distinction in human trafficking. Perhaps an individual consents to an initial move for a job (a common example might be migration across a border, legally or illegally, for a promised job with housing). However, when a trafficker deceives that individual about the nature of the work to which they 'consented' and proceeds to control or force that individual into that work, this can still be trafficking in persons. The initial consent aspect essentially becomes irrelevant to defining the crime; as stated in one document interpreting the Palermo Protocol, “no one can consent to a lie” (Jordan 2002:11). Such a view of consent being mitigated by deception is also a common view in human trafficking research; among others, such a view is held by Bales, Trodd and

Williamson (2009:39), Kara (2009:7-8), Sarwar and Karmaker (2013:228-229), and Shelley (2007:131).

Those who are trafficked are victims (Mishra 2013:2). The Protocol indicates, however, that trafficking victims may be victimized by multiple abusers, or at least multiple types of abusers (United Nations 2000:2). This is a very important point in human trafficking research, as human trafficking is an abuse perpetrated both by individuals and major criminal networks (United Nations 2000:2). The most obvious notion of traffickers in the Protocol is of those 'masters' who force the victim to perform certain labor tasks. However, provided that the purpose is exploitative, the Protocol's notion of traffickers also includes those acting as recruiter or abductor who take initial control over a victim, as well as those individuals who move the victims to another location. It may be that one individual performs all or only one of these steps. However, in either case, that person is a trafficker under the Palermo Protocol.

Such a division of actions is common in models of human trafficking. Specifically, models tend to feature three broad action components. Louise Shelley's (2010:94) model of human trafficking, for instance, notes that human trafficking models are composed of “recruitment, transport, and control,” with the last step acting as the key component of achieving forms of exploitation. Siddharth Kara's (2009:5-6) extensive research on sex trafficking business also results in a three-step model of trafficking: “acquisition, movement and exploitation.”

While research methods on human trafficking still feature a significant number of problems and flaws, there is significant consensus that human trafficking features at least an aspect of acquisition (wherein an individual asserts initial control over a victim) and

an aspect of forced, coerced labor abuses under the control of another. Transportation, however, while very common in human trafficking research and human trafficking cases, is not necessarily a component of all types of human trafficking. One such example is found in chattel slavery in Mauritania, wherein individuals may still be generationally 'owned' and controlled by an individual, for the purposes of forced labor exploitation (Miers 2003:419-420). While a trafficker may have initially transported a victimized family member, the next generation of victims may simply face acquisition through their birth alone (Bales et al. 2009:94-96). As such people are forced to labor where they were born, it is unclear if a functional definition of human trafficking should rely on a transportation component. Therefore, I believe the Palermo Protocol is helpful for research purposes in that it does not require transportation as an essential step of human trafficking.

Possible Flaws in the Palermo Protocol and a Suggestion for Managing Them in Research on Vulnerability to Trafficking in Persons

One flaw in the Palermo Protocol is that it places special significance on two areas: the vulnerability of women and girls, and the forced “prostitution of others or other forms of exploitative sexual trafficking” (Warren 2007:246-7). This formulation is not, perhaps, particularly surprising for human trafficking researchers—significantly more research exists concerning trafficking of women and girls, especially sex trafficking, than concerning other forms of trafficking (Goździak and Bump 2008:33, 39-40). With regard to the former, I take care to focus on the wide range of abuses that the Palermo Protocol sketches out when interpreted as broadly as possible, thereby not minimizing the many

documented instances when boys, men and transgendered persons are victims of trafficking.

With regard to the overemphasis of sex trafficking in the Palermo Protocol, it is notable that this emphasis was a matter of significant argument during the drafting of the Protocol. Some argued that all sex work, including any form of voluntary sex work, was coerced (Warren 2007:259). Others, like Ann Jordan, the head of the International Human Rights Law Group, argued that this view was incorrect (Warren 2007:260-1). Furthermore, Jordan argued the emphasis on prostitution and sex trafficking was unnecessary (Warren 2007:261). To that end, she lobbied to remove the references to prostitution and sexual exploitation in Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol, on the basis that “the rest of Article 3 adequately covered all coerced and bonded labor” (Warren 2007:261).

This is the view from which I, too, approach sex trafficking. Trafficking for sexual purposes is one of many types of trafficking in persons. Researchers should be careful to not overstate its prevalence at the expense of other forms of trafficking, nor to define it with an ideology that is clearly not empirically supported (Goździak and Bump 2008:9, 24; Weitzer 2007:451-452, 454-455; Patterson 2011:23). In response to this, I will interpret the Palermo Protocol definition of trafficking in persons as inclusive as possible of a wide range of forced labor abuses and without special emphasis on sex trafficking. As trafficking in persons includes many heinous and deplorable forced labor abuses, it would be wholly inappropriate to minimize certain sets of those abuses at the expense of an overemphasis on sex trafficking.

Another arguable flaw of the Palermo Protocol is that 'trafficking' remains a term confusing for many. As noted earlier, some individuals may conflate trafficking with smuggling. In addition, some may believe that the term 'trafficking' only conceptually focuses on issues of transportation and not any eventual exploitative abuses that follow. Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:35), in preferring their term of 'slavery,' espouse just this view. Such a view may also be held by those who prefer specific legal and term distinctions (i.e. trafficking is separate from forced labor, which are both separate from slavery) for each abuse captured by the Palermo Protocol (Chuang 2014:610-611).

While it may indeed be of great benefit in legal terms to better delineate the abuses, I am not convinced that this is particularly problematic for vulnerability research. This is, perhaps, especially true for a broad analysis of vulnerability that seeks to capture any type of trafficking. Instead of specific legal terms, I think that a careful sketch of the various components of trafficking (like in the works of Mishra (2013), Kara (2009), and Shelley (2010), as mentioned above) can clearly communicate that trafficking in persons is a set of abuses that starts with acquisition, that often includes a transportation element, and that leads to violent control of another person for forced labor abuses. (One must also hope that freedom can be included on this list, but, sadly, it is not always a reality for victims of trafficking.) Through this careful sketching, I believe that any reader of this thesis will understand the conceptual framework from which I operate. In particular, I believe the reader will understand that the definition of human trafficking/trafficking in persons at issue concerns more than just victim transportation.

Perhaps the biggest flaw in utilizing the Palermo Protocol definition for a study of vulnerability to trafficking in persons, however, is that it does a poor job of fleshing out

its conceptions of power and violence between a trafficker and the victim. Neither the Protocol nor its accompanying interpretative documents that are meant to bolster understanding of the Protocol provide significant further detail with regard to these concepts. As reliant as the institutions of trafficking in persons are upon these practices, however, it is important that these notions not go undefined in any analysis of these abuses. With the acknowledgment that these may not be ideal conceptions, I will take great care below to illuminate the notions of power and violence I employ with regard to trafficking in persons. In doing so, I hope that my theoretical approach of human trafficking as a violent exploitation of an individual and their assets is clear to the reader.

Ultimately, the Palermo Protocol definition may prove to be an imperfect tool for research. This is not entirely improbable, as our knowledge base is still being built and the multiple problems existent with regard to human trafficking research may reach resolution indicating a more useful definition. However, harkening back to Patterson's (2011:29) stance on abolishing all abusive forced labor practices, I am content in framing this thesis around the Protocol's definition for the purposes of studying vulnerability to and resiliency against attempts of acquisition for human trafficking. If nothing else, a widely defined Palermo Protocol definition of trafficking should be a valuable tool for near-term 'anti-trafficking' work, even though we may prefer other tools in the long term. As Di Nicola (2007:67-68) argues, both "rough and ready" human trafficking research for modeling is necessary, even as we strive for mature forms of human trafficking research that employ new techniques with greater objectivity and greater notation of limitations. My argument is not that the Palermo Protocol is perfect; I argue that, with a further theoretical definition of power and violence that further indicates the approach of

the researcher, the Protocol's definition is both clear enough and reflective enough of our knowledge base for utilization in a theoretical framework of human trafficking activity.

Fleshing out a Notion of Power in order to Clarify Aspects of Coercion in Human Trafficking

To paraphrase the Palermo Protocol: trafficking in persons is an interpersonal institution of unequal power, wherein a traffickers subjugates a victim to his or her will, controlling the victim's movements and actions for the end purposes of exploitation (United Nations 2000:2). Trafficking relies on various methods—"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"—for achieving such purposes (United Nations 2000:2).

In this sense, power is the superstructure of the institution, with a gross imbalance in power defining both the relationship between the trafficker and the victim, as well as the trafficker's goal. It is, however, a sense of violence—one that encompasses coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse and vulnerability—that provides the internal mechanism necessary for pursuing that end. With regard to this notion of power as a superstructure of the trafficking in persons, I believe Michael Mann's (1986) IEMP model of power from his *Sources of Social Power* series is quite useful. Mann (1986:6) argues that power is the "ability to pursue and attain goals through mastery of one's environment." Power, in this way, is not itself a resource, then, but how one pursues an end (Mann 1986:6). However, in explaining *social* power, Mann (1986:6) notes that social power deals with mastery of another in order to pursue and attain goals. Thus, while all "human beings are restless, purposive, and rational striving to increase their

enjoyment of the good things of life and capable of choosing and pursuing appropriate means for doing so,” it is possible that power is unequally distributed and that some have power over others (Mann 1986:4, 6-7).

Mann (1986) further elaborates on the sources of social power and some of their distinctions. Mann (1986:28) identifies four main sources of social power: ideological, economic, militaristic, and political. Ideological power “derives from the human need to find ultimate meaning in life, to share norms and values, and to participate in aesthetic and ritual practices with others” (Mann 2013:1). Economic power “derives from the need to extract, transform, distribute, and consume the produce of nature” (Mann 2013:2). Militaristic power is the “social organization of concentrated and lethal violence” (Mann 2013:2). Lastly, Mann (2013:2) defines political power as the “centralized and territorial regulation of social life.”

Mann (1986:28) does not view each of these sources of social power as completely independent; instead, he believes that sources of power can mix together to form a complex system of power. However, Mann (1986:30) also notes that, at any given time, one of the above four is the dominant source of power. With regard to slavery, Mann (1986:26) claims that the dominant source of power is militaristic. Positing that the dominant relationship in forms of slavery is, by definition, militaristic may seem an overly broad generalization, but I think Mann’s (1986) nuanced definition here meshes well with the violent, interpersonal relationship conceived by the Palermo Protocol, as well as by other researchers in their respective definitions of modern human trafficking.

In Mann’s (1986:26, 28) view, while slavery may be aided by ideological norms and rituals, as well as enabled by economic globalization and local political controls,

utilizing the close, direct, and often violent control over another human being to pursue and attain one's goals is reliant on militaristic type of power. Militaristic power does not require a military source; rather, militaristic power is named to reflect its characteristics: it is intensive, concentrated-coercive, and, typically, authoritative (Mann 1986:8, 10, 26). By intensive, Mann (1986:8) means that "much of the subject's life is controlled or if he or she can be pushed far without loss of compliance (ultimately to death)." Concentrated-coercive means that the power is typically in a specific social space and that the violent, lethal threat present in militaristic forms of power can force individuals to bend to the will of those monopolizing that power (Mann 1986:26). Authoritative power is Mann's (1986:10) way of discussing the organizing principles of that power; specifically, authoritative power involves the dictating of commands to a group who are expected to carry out those commands.

These aspects of Mann's (1986) conception of militaristic social power with regard to slavery largely fit together well with our Palermo Protocol conception of human trafficking. Mann's (1986) theories of social power are designed to illuminate any unequal social relationship, like trafficking in persons, by which an individual is used for the purposes of another. However, Mann's (1986:28) understanding of militaristic social power reflects the exploitation of that imbalance: the pursuit of the trafficker's will by the authoritative, close coercion of a victim. But, one must note, it is violence by which that intensive coercion is realized and through which the trafficker pursues his or her goals (Mann 1986:8, 10, 26).

Galtung's Notion of Violence: A Guide to Understanding Interpersonal and Structural Aspects of Vulnerability in the Palermo Protocol and to Defining the Two Key Aspects of Vulnerability to Human Trafficking

'Coercion through violence' seems to be a definitional standard in the previously considered definitions of slavery, human trafficking and other such labor abuses.

Throughout these various definitions, it is consistently noted as the primary means of facilitating the forced exploitation of another's labor. In fact, returning to their theories above, one can see that both Patterson (1982) and Bales (2005) reflect on how psychological and physical violence can act as methods of controlling victims. Given this commonality in human trafficking literature, I contend that, even if one disagrees on what should be included in a definition of trafficking, definitions of human trafficking must conceptually incorporate at least those references to interpersonal forms of violence contemplated by the Palermo Protocol: "threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power" (United Nations 2000:2).

However, if violence is the means by which trafficking occurs, the Palermo Protocol also indicates that a theory only employing interpersonal violence would be insufficient. The Palermo Protocol, in addition to those forms of violence above, contemplates "the abuse... of a position of vulnerability" (United Nations 2000:2). In order to fully understand violence as the mechanism through which human trafficking, as defined in the Palermo Protocol, occurs, one needs a theory of violence that not only encompasses psychological and physical violence, but encompasses the notion of violence as the abuse of vulnerability created from structural or non-interpersonal situations, as well.

Johan Galtung's (1969) theory of violence in "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" does just that. In that piece, Galtung (1969:168) explains that one can define violence as the influence over human beings "so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations." While this may seem an odd definition, it has many relevant components for human trafficking. First of all, violence deals with causes that affect potential realizations. This allows us to contextualize violence into that which is avoidable and that which is unavoidable. As Galtung (1969:168) explains:

...if a person died from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century it would be hard to conceive of this as violence since it might have been quite unavoidable, but if he dies from it today, despite all the medical resources in the world, then violence is present according to our definition.

One of the key aspects to this example is that, if resources are monopolized or not allocated justly, then one should say that violence is present in a system, as it would undoubtedly limit the potential realizations of others (Galtung 1969:169).

This claim about resource allocation is a method of incorporating structural violence into a definition of violence. However, Galtung's (1969:169-171) view of violence incorporates both structural violence and direct, interpersonal violence. Interpersonal violence is the realm of violence where the violence is inflicted upon another by a person's actions (Galtung 1969:170). Structural violence, on the other hand, is violence with no such person acting (Galtung 1969:170). Instead, structural violence is characterized by resource allocation, particularly in the outcomes of unequal power and unequal life chances (Galtung 1969:170-171). Relevant to unjust resource allocation, Galtung (1969:170-1) also points out that it is not only a 'positive' action, but also a 'negative' (a denial or destructive) action that can be violent.

Galtung (1969) focuses on violence as that which affects an individual negatively in actualization of a possible, better state. He believes this occurs both somatically and mentally (Galtung 1969:168). Somatic violence deals with the directly physical (i.e. being beaten) or the denial of that which is physiologically necessary (i.e. the denial of water or food) (Galtung 1969:174). Mental violence can include the threat of violence, or forms of violence like deception, brainwashing and indoctrination (Galtung 1969:169, 170). Galtung (1969:172) further conceives of violence as either being manifest or latent. Manifest violence is violence that is observable in some way; that is, that through direct or indirect observation, is known to have decreased actual realization of a somatic or mental state of an individual versus a potential state (Galtung 1969:172). Latent violence is violence that has not yet come into being but may easily come about (Galtung 1969:172). For instance, an egalitarian government may suddenly fall into an oppressive hierarchy (Galtung 1969:172). This possibility would be latent structural violence (Galtung 1969:172).

In describing human trafficking, it is easy to conceive of many instances of direct violence. However, structural violence is built into human trafficking practices, as well, and it is important to have this theoretical basis in mind before building a theory of vulnerability. After all, the Palermo Protocol considers a key aspect of human trafficking to be “the abuse... of a position of vulnerability” (United Nations 2000:2). I read this to indicate that, with regard to human trafficking, some vulnerabilities exist before the act of trafficking itself. Such structural violence, both manifest and latent, often operates as a hidden hand that, to a significant degree, increases vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking. In fact, this kind of violence can so greatly affect potential

victims that these affected individuals, although they still yet have some power of their own, cannot safely resist or protect against an attempt by an individual to acquire them as a victim for the purposes of human trafficking. Take for example the structural violence that Bales (2004:17-18) explains with regard to debt bondage in India:

Consider the agricultural slave in debt bondage today in India. . . When free farmers run out of money, when a crop fails or a member of the family becomes ill and needs medicine, they have few choices. Faced with a crisis, they borrow enough money from a local landowner to meet the crisis, but having no other possessions, they must use their own lives as collateral. The debt against which a person is bonded—that is, the price of a laborer—might be 500 to 1,000 rupees (about \$12 to \$23). The bond is completely open-ended; the slave must work until the slaveholder decides the debt is repaid.

Given such an example, I conclude that a useful theory of violence for discussing vulnerability to human trafficking must include both interpersonal and structural aspects of violence, as well as latent and manifest aspects of violence. An account of violence and vulnerability with regard to vulnerability human trafficking must account for indirect violence of lack of affordable health care, environmental fluctuations and poverty.

Galtung's (1969) theory of violence considers such elements, giving account for vulnerability to direct and structural violent acts that may not yet be realized, and therefore it should be a useful tool for capturing known elements of violence related to human trafficking.

As it so deftly captures aspects of violence related to human trafficking, I think that combining Galtung's (1969) theory of violence and the Palermo Protocol is useful in another manner: guiding a definitional intuition about vulnerability to human trafficking. Specifically, I believe that the combination of the two can reveal desirable elements of a theory concerned with vulnerability to human trafficking.

My reading of Galtung (1969:170, 172) is that vulnerability, created through both interpersonal and indirect (structural) means, is a very complex notion centering around two items: 1) the possibility of facing latent and manifest violence, whether direct or indirect, which will cause a decrease in actual or possible potential and well-being, and 2) the ability to prevent or resist the effects of such an event. I posit, then, that a definition of vulnerability to human trafficking that employs the Galtung (1969) notion of violence should have both these components. Furthermore, both of these components should correspond to the abuses considered by the Palermo Protocol. In such a ‘Galtung/Palermo Protocol definition of vulnerability to the violence of human trafficking,’ vulnerability is: 1) the possibility of facing an attempt of acquisition and exploitation for the various purposes of trafficking, which is a violent act that decreases one’s actual and possible well-being, and 2) an individual’s ability—created through personal decisions, interpersonal relationships and structural situations over which a person may have significant control or absolutely no control—to resist such acts of human trafficking.

In seeking to create a full model of individual vulnerability to acts of human trafficking as considered under the Palermo Protocol, these dual definitional aspects of possible violence and the ability to resist violence seem to me to be not only intuitive, but also necessary. I am optimistic that the use of an asset-based approach to vulnerability as a model for understanding individual vulnerability to human trafficking is particularly able to address and build upon both of these definitional concepts, and that it is particularly able to contemplate the complexities of possible individual resistance to an act of human trafficking.

Human Trafficking: Model Examples, Common Acquisition Methods, and Known Aspects of Vulnerability

Having fleshed out aspects of the entrenched relationship between power, violence and vulnerability in human trafficking, as well as having reached a conclusion regarding a preferred, generalized definition of trafficking in persons, I will proceed with a more detailed discussion of trafficking in persons. Through summarization of forms of trafficking, examples of acquisition, as well as a discussion of previously identified factors of vulnerability, I hope the reader can attain a deeper conception of the acts about which my asset-based model to vulnerability to human trafficking is concerned.

Model Examples of Trafficking in Persons

As one method of understanding instantiations of human trafficking, Suzanne Miers (2003:418-438), in *Slavery in the Twentieth Century*, presents seven categories of human trafficking: chattel slavery; debt-bondage; the exploitation of children; adult trafficking and forced prostitution; servile, early and forced marriage; cult or ritual slavery/trafficking; and, forced labor and sweatshops. These categories are not fully distinct, as they can overlap to some extent. This is particularly true for the exploitation of children, as it can include aspects of marriage, forced labor or prostitution. It also bears noting that these categories, in addition to overlapping, can demonstrate radical differences within themselves. The exploitation of children, for instance, includes at least the selling of children into forced labor (particularly in dangerous fields of labor), child soldiers, and sex trafficking (Miers 2003:425–431; Bales, Trodd and Williamson 2009:20). Such definitional difficulties in the distinctness of abuses is a common problem

in human trafficking literature; for instance, Kevin Bales (2004:20), who proposed three categories of contemporary slavery in *Disposable People*, noted that those three categories were “not mutually exclusive.”

Beyond the type of labor into which individuals are trafficked, it is critical to understand the variations within forms of human trafficking. As the Palermo Protocol indicates, there are many means by which traffickers force and coerce the exploitation of their victims (United Nations 2000:2). While ownership may not be asserted, violence and coercion are the main method by which traffickers control their victims (Bales 2004:17). “Of all the core characteristics, violent control is the most important: it is the foundation of all slavery” (Bales et al. 2009:30). Sometimes this violence is from the trafficker’s hand, while other times such violence may come from nearby groups, perhaps other locals or even local police (Bales 2004:5).

It is not necessary, neither as defined in the Palermo Protocol nor as observed in the real world instantiations of trafficking, that this violence that traffickers inflict upon their victims be physical. Often it involves threats, deceit, psychological coercion or even the confiscation of passports (Bales et al. 2009:30). This helps to explain how some individuals remain trapped in human trafficking, even when they might seem to have the ability to run away. “Slaves often know that their enslavement is illegal. Force and psychological coercion have convinced them to accept it, and when they begin to accept their role and identify with their master, constant physical restraint becomes unnecessary” (Bales et al. 2009:30). It is often this dynamic of violence or potential violence—“the fear of violence”—and not the legal ownership of another individual that forces an individual to continue to labor against his or her will (Bales 2007:10–11).

Further variations of human trafficking may come from the fact that traffickers may nominally compensate those that they exploit (International Labour Office 2005:20). In such circumstances, however, traffickers typically saddle their victims with unpayable debts (Bales 2004:41). These debts accrue from initial indebtedness and interest, as well as by charging exorbitant amounts for food, accommodations and other common and necessary goods (International Labour Office 2005:20).

Known Methods and Examples of Acquisition

There are numerous methods by which traffickers acquire—that is, assert control over—their victims. In *Sex Trafficking*, Kara (2009:6-10) lists forms of deception, abduction, sale by family and recruitment (both by traffickers and by former trafficking victims) among common methods of acquisition. In my review of the literature, these seemed to be the four most common categories of acquisition methods for the purposes of human trafficking listed by human trafficking researchers. The acquisition methods that Sarwar and Karmaker (2013: 228-229) and Shelley (2010:94-100) list, for example, easily fall into these categories. However, as generational slavery still exists in some areas, one must also include being born into trafficking as a method of acquisition (Bales 2005:60).

Another arguable category is sale of self. Sale of self is a difficult category of acquisition to describe, however, as sale of oneself into trafficking is typically done for debt purposes. When such ‘transactions’ occur, traffickers commonly deceive a victim about whether a debt still exists, how debt is to be paid back or how the contract will be

applied (Kara 2009:64-65; Bales, Trodd and Williamson 2009:33). In such cases, I believe it better to typify that acquisition method as deception.

Deception is a widespread aspect of acquisition of victims for human trafficking purposes (Bales 2007:27). In one known example wherein a trafficker employed deception to acquire individuals for the purposes of human trafficking, a woman trafficker persuaded a young Moldovan girl to take a well paying job as a nanny in Moscow (Bales et al. 2009:82). When she arrived in Moscow, however, the girl was forced into prostitution. In another example, skilled welders in India paid a headhunter to get them work in Oklahoma. When they arrived, they were not paid employees, but rather were victims of human trafficking (Scaperlanda 2004:228, 234). In yet another example, a Mexican man who paid to be smuggled into the US for work was instead transported to agricultural fields where he was sold to a 'master' and forced to labor on that master's behalf (Bowe 2008:16-19). *U.S. v. Ramiro Ramos* later demonstrated that, in addition to this man, hundreds of other individuals were deceived and then exploited in that very same manner at those same agricultural fields (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004:5-7).

Some examples, however, do not rely on such levels of deception. For example, some traffickers might obtain, through purchase or another social transaction, a child for ritual use (Miers 2003:435). In some cases, a person will sell himself into a debt-bondage in order to pay an initial debt; the traffickers only need to broker the initial deal (Narayan 2000:63). In some cases, this debt-bondage passes from generation to generation, which results in children being born into trafficking (Bales 2005:60). In other cases, some traffickers, as has been noted in cases of the trafficking of children as child soldiers and

in cases of girls kidnapped to become brides in China, abduct those they intend to traffic by force (Batstone 2007:112; Miers 2003:435).

The Critical Importance of Researching and Understanding Vulnerability to Acquisition for the Purposes of Trafficking

“The fact that trafficking is an ongoing process with several different stages underscores the need for researchers to define what phase or aspect of trafficking they investigate” (Goździak and Bump 2008:25). With regard to trafficking in persons, acquisition is the main focus of my thesis. Specifically, I seek to better understand vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of trafficking. My goal is to propose a method for capturing an understanding of vulnerability that is inclusive of much of the consensus knowledge base, and then, as Quirk (2011:229) states, “cautiously discern some overarching characteristics.” Based on these characteristics, I theorize a basic model of how acquisition for human trafficking victimization occurs. This model should enable testing of an individual’s possible vulnerability and resiliency to a human trafficking attempt, which field researchers maybe able to use to confirm or refute aspects of my proposed framework and theorized model.

Understanding and reducing vulnerability to human trafficking victimization is a common thread in human trafficking research. It is seen as a critical part of the research subject, but one that is difficult to discern. Bales (2005:10), in *Understanding Global Slavery*, writes, “vulnerability is key to slavery, but not all the vulnerable become slaves. That fact alone generates an important question: Why are some vulnerable people

enslaved and others are not?” Unlocking that answer may allow us to determine how to stop human trafficking (Bales 2005:10).

Factors Commonly Associated with Increased Vulnerability to Acquisition

The majority of human trafficking vulnerability research attempts to categorize and correlate known socioeconomic and geographic regional characteristics with known successful instances of human trafficking. In addition, significant amounts of human trafficking research, particularly those with a prescriptive policy focus, also attempt to suggest which of these aspects are more likely to result in human trafficking victimization, including which aspects may lead traffickers to target specific individuals for victimization.

When discussing how it is that individuals become ensnared in human trafficking, researchers often categorize relevant aspects into two categories: push and pull factors. Push factors are those structural factors that make human trafficking more likely at a given location (Mishra 2013:6-7). They occur at a location of origin and are rooted in a “societal way of life,” and act to increase one’s vulnerability to human trafficking (Mishra 2013:6). Known push factors include caste and class structure, gender-based discrimination, religion, tradition, as well as economic instability and impoverishment, power concentration, and environmental factors like natural disasters, war, environmental destruction, weak state delivery of services, and other dislocations of persons (Mishra 2013:7-15). Push factors also include lack of employment opportunities, political instability and conflict, gender discrimination (Shelley 2010:37).

Pull factors, on the other hand, are those factors that make it more likely a person will be trafficked to a particular location for the purposes of exploitation as a victim of human trafficking (Mishra 2013:6-7). They interact with push factors in that these pull factors exploit the vulnerability displayed in a push factor (Mishra 2013:6). These pull factors include improvements in technology and transportation, increases in industrialization and urbanization, and globalization in general (Mishra 2013:16). Pull factors also include general demand for workers, the possibility for a better life or wage and a perception that a better opportunity exists in another area (Shelley 2010:37). The pull factors are varied, but savvy individuals seeking to traffic others can make deceptive use of their knowledge of them to create an illusion of economic or other possibilities to garner the attention of a potential victim (Mishra 2013:17). With this illusion of the benefits of an inclusive globalization, a trafficker may deceive a potential victim into acquisition (Mishra 2013:17).

Push and pull factors, in general, are good examples of structural violence. For example, environmental destruction may not be interpersonal in nature, but it can massively undercut an affected person's potential (which is Galtung's (1969) focus in his definition of violence). Such environmental destruction can be particularly seen as violent in a way that structurally undercuts potential in instances when one is reliant on land for money or when one is displaced by the destruction. Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:122) note, for example, that "in the main cotton-growing Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Punjab, consecutive years of drought have prompted large-scale migrations to the cities. Ill-informed and destitute, tare easy prey for traffickers." This example helps to show that push and pull factors are not simply structural violence that negatively

affects an individual's potential and well-being; rather, push and pull factors illuminate how structural violence can empower traffickers. Mishra (2013:13, 15) further explains this by noting that displaced persons are particularly vulnerable, whether by environmental destruction or other displacement. The breakdowns in family and social structures, along with a willingness to migrate may expose refugees, displaced persons and migrants to a critical vulnerability of human trafficking attempts (Mishra 2013:13, 15, 17).

It is vital to note that while push and pull factors are elements of structural violence, we should not conflate 'structural' with 'static.' Indeed, throughout one's life, push and pull factors may change in both directions: an individual may benefit from new employment opportunities or suffer from a natural disaster. Therefore, as political, social, environmental and economic developments, events and policies fluctuate, one would expect to see increases or decreases in the strength of 'pushes' or 'pulls' that an individual experiences with respect to their particular level of vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking.

Researchers commonly link the structural violence of push and pull factors to globalization, including its associated exacerbation of political and economic imbalances (Shelley 2010:37). Globalization concerns the interconnectedness and the process of replicating specific systems. "It is described as a process of increased interaction, connectivity, and communication around the world and is achieved mainly through deregulation of trading activities" (San Miguel 2011:41). The process of globalization includes efforts toward open borders for finances, persons and products, the replication of free market systems, and the advance/spread of technology (Mishra 2013:17).

Researchers believe globalization did much to facilitate “the rise of human trafficking by marginalizing many rural communities, impoverishing women and children in many regions, and accelerating rural to urban migration” (Shelley 2010:40). With the abolition of slavery, “the demand for cheap and subservient labor” grew rapidly with globalization in the late twentieth century (Miers 2011:12). Globalization’s corresponding technological changes in the ability to move both money and people exacerbated human trafficking vulnerabilities, as traffickers gained better access to the individuals they exploit (Mishra 2013:17; Shelley 2010:37-38, 40). Globalized elements of capitalism also created global product chains, some of which seamlessly mix products made wholly or in part through exploited, trafficked victims (Bales et al. 2009:49).

Globalized replication of Western neoliberal capitalism (particularly with regard to its tenets of free markets, privatization and free trade) has been “devastating for the dignity and social well-being of vulnerable populations and territories” (Harvey 2007b:39). In addition, it has also exacerbated multiple human trafficking vulnerability push and pull factors (Mishra 2013:6). Harvey (2007a:159) connects globalized neoliberalism to, among many aspects, privatization of land, massive displacement of peoples and even to human trafficking. Harvey (2007a:76) notes that globalized neoliberalism includes projects of labor exploitation and the withdrawal of the state from welfare provision and a range of social services like health care and public education. These decisions by states to pursue neoliberal restructuring of trade policy, increase privatization, suppress labor rights and rescind elements of the welfare state, often made in hopes of achieving a ‘good business climate’ (and not running afoul of the IMF and the

World Bank), have resulted in an increase in social inequalities and the increasing marginalization of disadvantaged peoples (Harvey 2007a:116-118).

The Significant Problems Plaguing Vulnerability Research: Why a Different Approach is Needed

Despite the widespread interest in the area of study, multiple scholars have argued that vulnerability to human trafficking victimization remains poorly understood and insufficiently measured. One aspect limiting the scholarship on vulnerability comes from the fact that human trafficking is illegal and often, at least in part, a clandestine process and practice (Di Nicola 2007:53). Human trafficking, therefore, is not an easy area for research. Even when researchers can gain access for its study, there can be significant risk to both the subjects of the research and to the researchers (Di Nicola 2007:55; Goździak and Bump 2008:45). However, studying only those easily accessible victims is also problematic; failing to cover a wider range of victims can result in selection bias, skewed data and poor conclusions (Di Nicola 2007:59; Quirk 2011:228),

In handling these difficulties, some current theories and measurements of vulnerability to human trafficking rely on nation-level or region-level measures of various economic, criminal and migratory indicators. One example of this comes from Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009) in *Modern Slavery*. By matching patterns in characteristics where human trafficking was known to occur, Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:62) determine that certain national data “predict the existence of slavery in any one country.” Increases in key factors can increase the probability “that slavery will feature in several economic sectors” (Bales et al. 2009:62). Those changing

indicators are “increases in the average population and high debt, along with a high degree of trafficking and an increase in the political rights index” (Bales et al. 2009:62). Other changes to key factors increase the probability that a country lacks human trafficking altogether. Those changing indicators are “increases in the GDP per capita and the Human Development Index, and decreases in corruption levels” (Bales et al. 2009:62).

While such models represent significant strides in our understanding of human trafficking, they also have shortcomings. Nation-level and region-level data, while helping to identify data points that correlate with regions of the world known to have numerous instances of human trafficking victimization, often rely on datasets that are only updated occasionally. In addition, this manner of measuring vulnerability is incomplete given our understanding of the social interactions that drive and constitute human trafficking. Such aggregate data is simply too abstracted for discussing individual vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking. For instance, it struggles to explain which individuals among vulnerable populations are more likely to be trafficked. It cannot explain how, in areas of India and Pakistan, those with strong social ties or high positions in social hierarchies are less likely than those from lower castes to be acquired for human trafficking (Bales 2004:172-3, 202, 206). Furthermore, such a model cannot explain how, in areas where sex trafficking is prominent, women, girls, young boys and transgendered persons can be at heightened levels of risk (U.S. Department of State 2012:94, 97; Ugarte, Zarate, and Farley 2004:152-154). While one may use nation/region models to target a specific area, the models simply cannot distinguish variations in vulnerability between persons.

Another problem facing human trafficking research stems from the difficulties of access to human trafficking processes as the crimes occur. To compensate for this problem, most studies of human trafficking rely on details from narratives of human trafficking victims after they have gained their freedom, which may not comprise ideal data of study for determining vulnerability to human trafficking (Goździak and Bump 2008:56). These individualized accounts often over-summarize their narratives and portray their victims as one-dimensional, further limiting their usefulness as a source to other researchers (Goździak and Bump 2008:10).

Portraying victims as one-dimensional can be problematic on many fronts. In particular, these one-dimensional narratives may decrease the agency of victims of trafficking. As Merry (2007:195) argues concerning victims of human trafficking and other human rights violations, victimization narratives are often constructed in a way that defines victims as “helpless, powerless, unable to make choices for themselves.” Such a characterization is problematic for multiple reasons, including that it is certainly not universally accurate. Even in cases of human trafficking, not all victims are “as helpless and vulnerable as the image of victim requires... in constructing the ideal victim, it becomes necessary to subtract dimensions of choice” (Merry 2007:195). Definitions of human trafficking are also not immune from this critique, as an interpretive document of the Palermo Protocol emphasizes the helplessness of victims, particularly women and children (Warren 2007: 247).

Taking into account these arguments, it is therefore important to note that individuals who are potentially victims of human trafficking, even in the face of great socioeconomic disenfranchisement, often have power to make decisions and act on those

decisions. As I posited above in my ‘Galtung/Palermo Protocol definition of vulnerability to the violence of human trafficking,’ any theoretical definition and understanding of vulnerability to human trafficking should include considerations of an individual’s ability, however limited, to resist and prevent their own victimization. Furthermore, in the section above on the Palermo Protocol definition, as well as in the section on the known methods of acquisition, I noted that individuals who become victims of trafficking ostensibly might consent to an initial move, only later to be more clearly victimized. I believe that traffickers’ exploitation of this agency—this eroded consent—is critical to understanding individual vulnerability. Before they are victimized and controlled, these victimized individuals make decisions that affect their lives. Recalling Mann (1986:6-7) in the *Social Sources of Power*, people have varying levels of power. Individuals utilize the power through choices in pursuit of their goals (Mann 1986:4). While this may not be the case once a trafficker has asserted control over a victim, it certainly seems problematic to ignore the agency and power of an individual before they become victimized.

Accordingly, individuals, in some, but not all, situations, may be empowered to fight their potential acquisition for the purposes of exploitation in human trafficking. It therefore appears imperative that any effective model and measure of vulnerability to human trafficking victimization include how individuals may try to resist their acquisition through their decision-making and use of available resources. Vulnerability measures must not promote narrow, one-dimensional views of trafficking that ignore the agency of these victims and the resources with which one might be able to resist a human trafficking attempt, as doing so fails to account for their full humanity and possibility.

Indeed, I believe that, only by asserting victim agency and accounting for available, even if extremely limited, choices of a potential victim, can researchers approach a full understanding and measurement of vulnerability to human trafficking.

An Asset-Based Approach to Vulnerability as the Basis for a Model and Measure of
Vulnerability to and Resiliency against an Acquisition Attempt for Human Trafficking
Purposes

Facing these difficulties, I propose consideration of the World Bank's asset-based approach to vulnerability, as discussed in *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* and *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*, as a possible theoretical framework for understanding vulnerability to human trafficking. After the above discussion of the harms that neoliberal capitalism causes to individual assets, I can understand that a proposal utilizing a theory championed by the World Bank may be counterintuitive to the reader. This is certainly a concern with which I have wrestled; after all, the commitment of the World Bank to human rights and even poverty eradication is uneven (Hunt 2003:154). Furthermore, certain World Bank projects and policies are responsible for the shredding of individual assets, including job opportunities (Weaver 2010:96-97).

However, my reading of human trafficking literature indicates that case studies, field studies, and narratives of human trafficking provide evidence that human trafficking is significantly connected to the assets, as described in literature focused on asset-based approaches to vulnerability, of the victims of trafficking. This is true both with regard to how traffickers exploit a victim's asset portfolio and with regard to how successful

human trafficking prevention efforts are implemented. In my view, the linkage between asset-based vulnerability theory and human trafficking literature is so significant that an asset-based approach merits critical and careful consideration as the basis for a model for vulnerability and resistance to human trafficking acquisition. Therefore, while I am concerned about the role that the World Bank has played in the development of this asset-based approach literature (and will articulate those concerns more fully), I do believe that articulating the link between assets and vulnerability to human trafficking is a worthy project.

By establishing the connection between assets of victims and vulnerability to human trafficking, I hope to provide significant evidence my model of human trafficking acquisition incorporating elements of asset theory and victim assets deserves field-testing. Such field-testing will hopefully confirm the accuracy of the asset-based approach to vulnerability and establish the necessary connections anti-trafficking activists will need to create a predictive version of the model with regard to individual vulnerability to human trafficking. Lastly, I argue that an established connection between human trafficking vulnerability and victim asset levels reinforces the importance to monitor and fight against policy or possible events that compromise asset levels of particularly vulnerable populations.

The Beginnings of the Asset Vulnerability Framework

Caroline Moser (1998) of the World Bank synthesized the early modern form of the asset vulnerability framework. In response to the World Bank's efforts in the 1990s to make poverty reduction a central focus in development and aid analysis, she crafted her

1998 article, “The Asset Vulnerability Framework: Reassessing Urban Poverty Reduction Strategies” (Moser 1998:2). The piece, which reflects aspects of the overall World Bank platform, emphasizes the possibilities of human capital and labor to overcome vulnerability to poverty (Moser 1998:2). Such an approach was part of a three-prong method to attack poverty: 1) increase economic growth, especially through the labor of the poor; 2) invest in education and health, “to enable the poor to use their labor productively”; and 3) provide safety nets to vulnerable and extremely impoverished persons (1998:2).

Moser (1998:1, 3), by combining research from the 1980s and early 1990s on assets and vulnerability, derives a framework that identifies five categories of assets. These assets, Moser (1998:1, 3) claims, are tied to known methods of response to economic problems that can possibly help urban poor individuals to reduce their level of poverty and overcome vulnerability to poverty or poverty-related affects on their ‘well-being.’ The five categories she identifies are human capital and labor, housing and other productive assets, social and economic infrastructure, household relations, and social capital (Moser 1998:8). Using these five categories as a basic model, Moser (1998:3) argues that the erosion of assets is likely to leave an individual more vulnerable to an incident, particularly poverty, which will reduce his or her well-being.

Moser’s (1998:1) work relies on previous research establishing that poor urban individuals are capable ‘portfolio managers’ of their own assets. She argues that research on poverty and assets demonstrates that individuals utilize their assets to prevent harm to their well-being. They may, for instance, seek extra education to improve their job prospects (human capital) or have their child enter the work force to bring in an

additional wage (labor) (Moser 1998:9). Or, an individual may rely on a network of reciprocity or obtain a trust-based loan from a neighbor to pay for a needed service (social capital) (Moser 1998:13). Perhaps an individual rents out part of their home to generate additional income (Moser 1998:11). Lastly, an individual may seek to substitute private goods for other available goods, including public goods (Moser 1998:8). By pursuing methods like these, the poor are active in trying to prevent or overcome undesirable situations and harms to their well-being (Moser 1998:5, 6, 16).

Moser's (1998) work is the clear predecessor of later World Bank's asset-based approach to vulnerability in four key regards. First, it affirms that individuals control their assets to respond to "changes in economic circumstances" or other events (Moser 1998:8). Second, it moves away from a traditional focus on static understandings of an individual's vulnerability to one that embraces the dynamism of an individual's capability in responding to a threat to their well-being (Moser 1998:14). Third, it emphasizes that some assets can have negative effects on a person's vulnerability. For instance, a household relationship may be violent. In such a case, the disruption of those relations may increase a person's overall well-being (Moser 1998:16). Lastly, it emphasizes that the mobilization of particular assets can constitute a more effective response in particular situations than the mobilization of other assets: "the more assets people command in the right mix, the greater their capacity to buffer themselves against external shocks" (Moser 1998:16).

While Moser's (1998) work solidifies the basic tenets of the asset-based approach to understanding vulnerability, later research adjusted her theories slightly. For example, Moser (1998:1) believes certain assets, particularly housing, household relations and

social capital were often poorly understood as productive assets. Later drafts of asset theory overcame this notion, emphasizing that individuals could make a wide range of assets, from social capital to housing and land, productive in multiple ways (Narayan 2000:49; World Bank 2000:34). In addition, Moser (1998:14,16) only mentions social services provided by the police and government as interventionist measures. Later works on assets and capital by World Bank authors understand access to police and government services as a key relationship under social capital that often affects other types of assets (World Bank 2000:141; Narayan 2000:129, 254, 269-270; Grootaert et al. 2004:4).

Defining and Illustrating an Asset-Based Approach to Vulnerability

Narayan (2000), in *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?*, describes a version of an asset-based approach to vulnerability that was more explicitly derived from the manner in which impoverished persons describe their own situations. Narayan (2000:49) notes “the poor rarely speak about income, but they do speak extensively about assets that are important to them.” In their focus on vulnerability, Narayan (2000:64) and her collaborating researchers (Raj Patel, Kai Schafft, Anne Rademacher and Sarah Koch-Schulte) state that assets are important to the poor because the management of assets can reduce vulnerability to risks that might damage their ‘well-being,’ or even bring them additional security from a state of ‘ill-being.’ Kirby (2006:18) summarizes this view well: “the poor see a link between the lack of... assets and their vulnerabilities to risks.”

A hypothetical, but realistic, example of such an instance of an individual using assets to overcome an event that could harm their well-being might go as follows: a

family member of an individual contracts a severe illness. In response to that illness, the individual might mobilize their available assets to pay for medical care as well as to make up for any earnings lost by a lack of participation of the family member in the labor force. Overcoming this difficulty might require more than money that is available at the moment. In such a case, the individual may seek to mobilize a combination of assets. Perhaps the family asset manager sells livestock and jewelry, and borrows money from friends, as well.

This type of example demonstrates that income alone provides an incomplete understanding of a potential response to a crisis of well-being. Rather, one must appeal to a wider range of assets than just income in understanding how the poor secure their well-being. In certain circumstances, this strategic use of assets may be successful enough to maintain a baseline level of well-being, while in other circumstances it may not be (World Bank 2000:138, 145, 146). For instance, in *Disposable People*, Bales (2004:17-18) indicates that individuals with limited assets living in certain areas of India may have few available choices to overcome a crisis:

When free farmers run out of money, when a crop fails or a member of the family becomes ill and needs medicine, they have few choices. Faced with a crisis, they borrow enough money from a local landowner to meet the crisis, but having no other possessions, they must use their own lives as collateral. The debt against which a person is bonded—that is, the price of a laborer—might be 500 to 1,000 rupees (about \$12 to \$23). The bond is completely open-ended; the slave must work until the slaveholder decides the debt is repaid.

Therefore, it is possible that even strategic uses of assets lead to a crisis of well-being and even to human trafficking victimization—sometimes the assets available are simply insufficient for coping with the crisis an individual is confronting. (I ask that the reader keep this example and possibility in mind throughout the following sections, as I will

continue to draw upon it to further show nuanced areas of an asset-based approach to vulnerability and explain how individuals employ assets.)

An asset-based approach to vulnerability, although largely developed by researchers observing actions of the poor to understand how the poor mitigate their own vulnerability to poverty, is not only concerned with vulnerability to impoverishment. Instead, according to the *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*, this approach focuses on the broader measure of vulnerability to a decline in ‘well-being’ (World Bank 2000:20). While a primary component of this is, in fact, financial, it also includes other aspects that may reduce the general quality of life for an individual, particularly in income or health, as well as exposure to crime, violence, natural disasters and other risks to well-being (World Bank 2000:19, 136, 139).

An asset-based approach to vulnerability is characterized by the central notion that individuals use assets as mechanisms to overcome risks and shocks (World Bank 2000:139). Risks are possible and probable threats to one's well-being, and having such risks is called insecurity (World Bank 2000:139). As these risks are unwelcome, individuals will manage their assets in ways they believe will reduce their risk and best secure their well-being (World Bank 2000:140-141).

Some risks, according to the World Bank (2000:147), can be reduced or eliminated by the management of assets. Other risks can have their potential impacts mitigated through the management of assets (World Bank 2000:142-143, 147). The World Bank (2000:147) indicates that there might exist some risks, however, that cannot be reduced, eliminated, or mitigated. In that case, the risk would become realized as a “shock” (World Bank 2000:141).

Shocks are actual events, not just possible or probable events, which threaten one's well-being (World Bank 2000:139). One copes with a shock by managing one's assets to overcome or mitigate the threat (World Bank 2000:139). Depending on the risk and shock, one might utilize one's assets in the same way or in radically different ways in hoping to mitigate and eliminate its possible negative effects on one's well-being (World Bank 2000:139). Effectively coping with a shock, mitigating a risk or eliminating a risk is the elimination of vulnerability, which is also called “resilience” (World Bank 2000:139).

Risks and shocks can come from a variety of sources. The World Bank (2000:136) describes the possible event types as economic, political, environmental, natural, social or health. An economic risk might be a change in food price; domestic violence might be a social shock (World Bank 2000:136). Furthermore, risks and shocks vary in scope. An illness, which is a type of health shock, might only affect one family or person. Risks and shocks that affect only one person are known as idiosyncratic (World Bank 2000:139). A meso shock, perhaps a natural meso shock like a volcanic eruption, would affect groups of households or communities, while a macro shock, perhaps a macro political shock like a coup d'état, would affect a whole nation or region (World Bank 2000:139).

Returning to my hypothetical example, the possibility of the severe illness could be considered a risk. One might try to eliminate that risk with adequate health care, if possible, or to mitigate the potential impact of that risk by saving money when possible. However, if the severe illness occurred, this risk would now be considered a shock. In response to that shock, one might need to take other actions, such as liquidating owned

property or borrowing money from a friend, in order to procure needed health care and otherwise secure the well-being of one's family.

Livestock, jewelry and a friend's money are just a few examples of possible assets one could use when confronting a risk or shock. As assets are fluid and can easily change in daily life, the assets that are available to a person who needs to mitigate risk or cope with a shock, however, depends on the person and possibly on the day; “as with other forms of capital, levels of social capital are constantly in flux” (Narayan 2000:57). Furthermore, as shocks can occur singularly or in a cascading set of shocks, assets available to cope with a particular shock may be exhausted when a new shock arrives (World Bank 2000:138). Such a situation may render an individual or household unable to cope with a shock that perhaps they would have easily overcome days before.

Primary Asset Types in an Asset-Based Approach to Vulnerability

In order to understand how vulnerability to human trafficking interacts with assets, it is important to understand how one's assets are used to cope with risks and shocks (which, as the reader may have surmised, will include the attempt to traffic an individual) and the types of assets one might have available to use to mitigate or overcome a shock. As I will later argue, vulnerability to human trafficking interacts with the wide spectrum of assets described in literature concerned with the asset-based approach to vulnerability, including all four primary asset classifications that Narayan (2000:49) identifies: physical capital, human capital, social capital and environmental assets.

Physical capital is one's land or the set of other owned or accessible items (Narayan 2000:49). This category is traditionally summarized by money, home ownership, land ownership and access or even the ownership of livestock or equipment. However, physical capital also includes any owned good, such as jewelry or any household item, that could be sold, bartered, traded or otherwise liquidated when necessary (Narayan 2000:49; World Bank 2000:20). Debt and indebtedness, however, can limit available physical capital, making even seeming well-off persons unable to access sufficient physical capital in certain situations (Kirby 2006:56-57). In the example from the previous section concerning a sudden family illness, selling livestock and jewelry is one way to utilize and access physical capital.

In the World Bank's *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*, physical capital is divided into two categories: financial assets and physical assets (World Bank 2004:34). Financial assets concern the money an individual has or can obtain by credit, while physical assets includes property and access to infrastructure (World Bank 2000:34). In this thesis, however, I will retain Narayan's (2000:49) terminology, referring to both of these categories under the single umbrella term of 'physical capital.'

Human capital (also called human assets by the World Bank (2000:34)) is the capacity for labor and a set of resources that enable that capacity for labor (Narayan 2000:49). This category includes labor power, but also includes education and training that may enhance that power and skill. Often noted as a key element of human capital is literacy, as "illiteracy limits the ability to secure employment," while literacy can help the impoverished to manage their lives more effectively (Narayan 2000:53-54). Furthermore, researchers have classified health care as a component of human capital, due to the ability

of illness to remove an individual from the labor pool (Narayan 2000:49, 53). Lastly, while traditional notions of human capital focus on productive knowledge and skills, knowledge that is not explicitly productive also belongs to this category of assets. The World Bank (2000:20), for instance, notes that knowledge pertaining to risk-management is also a form of human capital.

Narayan (2000:55) states that social capital is the most important type of asset. Social capital “refers to the extent and nature of social networks such as kinship networks, neighbors, and associations” and how membership in those networks affects asset access (Narayan 2000:49). In many ways, this asset can be defined as one's relationships and how those relationships allow one access to other assets. Accessing social capital is usually done through reciprocal networks, typically “based on kin and place of origin” (Moser 1998:13). There are differing levels of assistance, including short-term and long-term, with trust and cooperation acting as major factors in social capital access (Moser 1998:13).

Moser (1998:13) emphasizes that social capital makes other individuals' assets communal. Narayan (2000:56) summarized that “reciprocal social relationships provide wells of financial, social or political support from which [one] can draw in times of need.” To illustrate through use of my example from the previous section about a sudden family illness: in order to borrow money from a friend, an individual utilizes the relationship that connects the individual to that friend. Borrowing money from a friend is utilizing the social capital of that shared relationship, which then allows access to that friend's money (physical capital) for dealing with the crisis of a sudden family illness.

Alternately referred to as social assets by the World Bank (2000:34), social capital in an asset-based approach to vulnerability might also be theorized more simply as “networks of contacts and reciprocal obligations that can be called on in time of need, and political influence over resources.” This includes links to networks of mutual help and participation in the social safety net (World Bank 2000:20). However, social capital is dynamic, and the exact characteristics of the social safety net are impermanent (Narayan 2000:57). Social capital is in flux because relationships between persons may change, but also because of the impermanent availability of assets that can support other individuals in one's network (Narayan 2000:57). Moser (1998:13) makes a similar point: “research results also show that the permanence of social capital cannot be taken for granted. When households are coping, they support others. But when their assets are depleted, they cease to support the community.”

One may note that there are subtle differences in how the World Bank (2000) and Narayan (2000) depict social capital/assets, especially with regard to Narayan's (2000:49) emphasis on social capital's inclusion of “the extent and nature of social networks.” Such differences are not surprising, especially as these texts were published in 2000. Grootaert, Narayan, Nyhan Jones, and Woolcock (2004:1) note that the 1990s featured a 'boom' in social capital as a research subject and research tool. Corresponding with this boom, the notion of social capital and social assets for asset-based approaches to vulnerability were both still undergoing major developments in 2000. As Kirby (2006:64) argues in his work on an asset-based approach to understand vulnerability to globalized violence, the definition used by the World Bank (2000:20) fails to incorporate significant developments in social asset research that came around in the early 2000s. Therefore,

while definitions of social capital by Narayan (2000) and the World Bank (2000) are not ideal for explicating the deeper complexities of social capital for an asset-based approach to vulnerability, other research around that time fills in that space. In capturing the fullness of what is included under the umbrella of social capital and social assets, one work is particularly helpful.

In “Measuring Social Capital: An Integrated Questionnaire,” Grootaert, Narayan, Nyhan Jones and Woolcock (2004:3) present an overview of social capital that splits existing theory into two major contemporary approaches. The first approach depicts social capital as “the resources (such as information, ideas, support) that individuals are able to procure by virtue of their relationships with other people” (Grootaert et al. 2004:3). The second approach depicts social capital as “the nature and extent of one's involvement in various informal networks and formal civic organizations” (Grootaert et al 2004:3). (Interestingly enough, Bourdieu's (1986) approach to social capital, noted by Narayan and Cassidy (2001:59) as being among the early systemic analyses of social capital, is not one of these two approaches.)

By emphasizing that there are multiple approaches to social capital, Grootaert, Narayan, Nyhan Jones and Woolcock (2004:3) argue that a single 'conceptual tradition' is not necessary to work toward a measurement of social capital. Instead, what must be recognized is its “multi-dimensionality” (Grootaert et al. 2004:3). Specifically, social capital centers on 1) the types of connections made between individuals and various types of groups for productive purposes, as well as 2) perceptions of trustworthiness, along with and norms of utilizing social capital (Grootaert et al. 2004:3).

Eschewing use of a particular theoretical approach to social capital may seem to contradict my earlier comment, inspired by Di Nicola (2007:50), that ‘anti-trafficking’ work should take care to establish clear conceptual terms and identify its theoretical approaches. However, recognizing social capital's multi-dimensionality without committing to a single theoretical formulation of social capital/assets best describes the overall approach to social capital in an asset-based approach to vulnerability. This approach utilizes intuitive understandings of social capital based on both theory and observation. Further research, including by Narayan and Cassidy (2001:90-91), has since moved toward frameworks to verify which aspects of capital best tie to societal well-being. From such measure-focused frameworks, one can focus on a verified subset of social capital in considering a household's possible responses to a crisis.

Although I think the complexity above is useful for hinting at the enormous depth of social capital literature, I believe that summarizing a more basic and workable understanding of social capital will be useful for the remaining pages of this thesis. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, I consider social capital in an asset-based approach to vulnerability as the collection of connections to other individuals and groups “that can be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and/or leveraged for material gain” (Woolcock and Narayan 2000:226). To emphasize some of the key dimensions of this broad conception of social capital: social capital concerns itself with connections to both demographically similar and demographically different persons, as well as to connections to persons in authority (Grootaert et al. 2004:4). This includes links both to networks that Moser (1998:13) states are “based on kin and place of origin,” as well as to networks of demographically dissimilar individuals based on different

criteria. These types of connections rely on trust and cooperation in order to function (Moser 1998:13). Critical to formulating an understanding of vulnerability to human trafficking or other forms of crime, social capital in an asset-based approach to vulnerability also includes the possibility of linking an individual to social services, with a particular focus in obtaining help from those in positions of government, police, banks, schools and other authorities (Grootaert et al. 2004:4). Government policy, for example, may provide assets (like social welfare) or a network by which one could obtain assets that could be helpful in coping with a shock (Kirby 2006:67-8).

The final category of assets are environmental assets (also called natural assets), which are environmental features such as grass, trees, water and “non-timber products” (Narayan 2000:49; World Bank 2000:34). It also includes natural sources of food (Narayan 2000:58). In essence, environmental assets are the ecosystem in which one lives and the resiliency of that environment to disasters and degradation, whether man-made or natural (Kirby 2006:72). Environmental assets are important in that they can provide stable assets to sustain life, economic production and well-being. When these assets are depleted, the well-being and survival of persons can be threatened (Kirby 2006:69). Without environmental assets, persons are often displaced, which can affect their other assets (Narayan 2000:57-59). For example, a displaced person may experience a shift in the social networks to which they have access, a shift in work or work availability or even the loss of physical capital, such as leaving an owned home or property behind. Sadly, such displaced persons are known to be quite vulnerable to adverse events, such as illness and malnutrition, as well as to crime, to violence and even to human trafficking. As noted by Siddharth Kara (2009:7-8), refugee camps, including those for individuals

fleeing environment disasters, are common locations for successful human trafficking acquisition.

The conditions in the camps were filthy, crowded, and depressing, and the refugees were not allowed to leave or seek employment in the host country. Because the refugees were trapped, slave traders who offered job opportunities met with high success rates in acquiring new slaves. (Kara 2009:8)

Assets Are Not Equally Useful Nor Even Always Beneficial

While assets are largely seen as beneficial and productive, it may be the case that some assets can make one more vulnerable or otherwise negatively affect one's 'well-being' (bringing about a state of 'ill-being'). Certain asset strategies may be beneficial in the short-term but harmful in the long-term, which helps Moser (1998:14) reach the critical conclusion that "nonpoor households are not necessarily the least vulnerable." Narayan's (2000:51) note on housing echoes this position: although "typically considered an asset, [housing] can also be a liability, because it can limit options and drain resources."

Certain relationships and types of social capital may also be harmful or, at least, problematic to one's well-being. For example, an individual's well-being might be harmed by obligations received because of connections to family or a membership group (Grootaert et al. 2004:4). One might find that family members' claims to assets can quickly drain one's other resources and assets (Narayan 2000:56). Dependence on an exploitative source—an occurrence often featured in human trafficking narratives—may be harmful to an individual's well-being (Narayan 2000:62-63). A violent family relationship, for example, may be a negative affect on an individual's well-being (Moser 1998:16). A lack of trust in police, as described by Moser (1998:14), may eliminate a

possible connection to help in a time of need. Corruption may also be a negative manifestation of social capital that negatively impacts income and public goods (Narayan and Cassidy 2001:60).

Furthermore, social capital access can reflect social inequalities; individuals may or may not have access to certain assets through their social networks due to social exclusion or segregation (Putnam 1993:11). Narayan (2000:49) notes that gender in particular can greatly affect access to assets, as can the power dynamics of institutional access. Narayan (1999:5) writes that “social capital can explain much social exclusion, because the same ties that bind also exclude.” Social exclusion can affect asset access due to “age, race, caste, tribe, gender, location, class or income” (Narayan 1999:5). In some societies, a girl who becomes formally educated might risk the destruction of much of her social capital simply because of her educational status (Narayan 2000:55).

Clearly, assets, particularly in social capital, are unequal in their type of benefit to one’s well-being. This is even better understood when one considers what can be done with assets. Assets are unequal in utility; certain assets have a wider range of possible uses. Perhaps a piece of land offers a wide range of options for the owner, while a piece of jewelry offers a limited range of options. In addition, the same asset (say a piece of land), may, depending on the shock faced by the individual, have particularly high or low utility. If one compared the possibility of two shocks where one negatively impacts the value of the land owned and the other does not, one can intuit that that piece of land would be a less valuable asset in responding to the first shock than in the second.

Measuring the usefulness of an asset and the amount of the asset, then, is situational and fluid. To understand this, one should imagine assets as tools. When facing

a problem, it might be possible to use the end of a wrench as a hammer, but an actual hammer would be significantly better at that job. Similarly, while each risk or shock might allow for a range of assets to be used in response, they are not necessarily equally effective. In addition, sometimes multiple tools are necessary for a task, or a tool is required to make another tool effective. This is often the relationship between assets, as a person may only be able to access finances through use of social capital, or be able to make full use of one's labor if other assets do not prevent such from occurring.

Since not all assets are equal in utility and because some assets might actually increase one's vulnerability to a decline in well-being, it is important to have the right combination of assets for the right risk or shock (Moser 1998:16). It is true that “vulnerability is perhaps best understood as a lack of key assets” (Narayan 2000:60). However, it is also the case that “families that lack certain key assets may not necessarily be poor, but nonetheless may be extremely vulnerable in times of need or crisis” (Narayan 2000:65). This distinction of having the right asset combination for a particular shock is critically important to an understanding of achieving a measurement of vulnerability in an asset-based approach to vulnerability (Moser 1998:16). In fact, it is this particular aspect of the approach that will hopefully allow my model to be used to illuminate why certain individuals who may seem generally invulnerable to a shock (with regard to this paper, a human trafficking acquisition attempt) are in fact especially vulnerable to a particular method of trafficking.

Emphasizing Gender's Impact on Asset Access in an Asset-Based Approach to Vulnerability

A basic description of an asset-based approach to vulnerability may fail to properly emphasize the importance of gender in understanding the particular vulnerabilities of an individual. Gender requires special comment with regard to asset theory because, as part of social capital, it is both an asset and shapes asset access. However, gender, and particularly gender-based discrimination, can play a particularly heightened role in determining overall assets and asset development possibilities. Women and girls, for example, may be socially dissuaded from increasing their human capital through education (Narayan 2000:54-55). Not pursuing education can limit their further asset access and human capital potential. However, pursuing an education can lead to a degree of social ostracism that also negatively affects their asset access within their community (Narayan 2000:55, 209).

Societal notions of gender, Narayan (2000:214) further argues, affect outright ownership of land and other assets. Sometimes this is an institutional lack of legal protections, while other times it is a function of societal norms (Narayan 2000:212, 214). Because of this, women may not have control over assets in times of crisis and may not be able to mobilize them in a manner necessary to mitigate a risk's probable effects or cope with a threat to their well-being (Narayan 2000:203-4, 211). As Narayan (2000:62) states, "while assets are often considered to accrue to the household as a unit, it is often the men within the household who hold exclusive decision-making power over how these assets will be used, especially in times of crisis."

Women are not the only individuals affected by gender, however. Those who do not conform to stereotypes and norms regarding gender may find themselves ostracized from social circles or institutions that ensure access to assets (Narayan 2000:179-180). Other forms of social capital, like class and caste, may operate similarly to gender in terms of access to assets. However, gender is likely the clearest and most common social aspect shaping asset access in a given society.

Benefits and Drawbacks of an Asset-Based Approach to Vulnerability

Peadar Kirby (2006), in *Vulnerability and Violence*, notes that the World Bank's asset-based approach to vulnerability could be a useful tool for understanding vulnerability to violence in the modern world. Kirby (2006:22) argues that the term is useful in its analytical precision. He also notes that the term concerns itself with both existing damage to well-being as well as risks to future well-being, focuses on coping with risks, and is not limited to just a financial notion of well-being, which are necessary elements of vulnerability (Kirby 2006:22). Kirby (2006:22) also particularly praises the asset-based approach's emphasis on the fact that coping with risks need not be simply an individual task, but can come from asset-management or planning at regional and state levels.

An asset-based approach to vulnerability is also useful in that it has the ability to note how risks or shocks might affect one's vulnerability (Kirby 2006:22). Often in life, risks or shocks are not singular events. A war might displace a family. After their displacement, that family is likely to have a different asset portfolio accompanied by increased vulnerability to multiple other risks. An asset-based approach to vulnerability

offers strength here in that it is not tied to a static measurement, but instead classifies the capability of individuals “to use their resources to reduce their vulnerability” (Moser 1998:14). By focusing on capabilities based on portfolios of available assets, it is possible to dynamically track household vulnerabilities by reevaluating their portfolio as certain risk mitigation techniques cease to be an option. It can therefore be used to track along with a set of events that strip assets.

Aside from its analytical precision, I believe that a conception of vulnerability informed by the World Bank’s asset-based approach is useful and unique as a vulnerability measure because of its reinforcement of the agency of individuals. As I presented in my view of ‘Galtung/Palermo Protocol definition of vulnerability to the violence of human trafficking,’ understanding vulnerability to human trafficking requires acknowledging that individuals may retain some ability to resist their acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking. Merry (2007:195) also holds such a view, critiquing human trafficking victimization narratives for too often inaccurately portraying victims as “helpless, powerless, unable to make choices for themselves.”

An asset-based approach to vulnerability does an exceptional job of emphasizing that individuals affected by adverse circumstances, risks and shocks are not purely passive victims. Individuals utilize their power and, to whatever degree to which they have access to assets, utilize their available assets to eliminate, mitigate, and cope with risks and shocks (Narayan 2000:49, 64-65). Furthermore, through social capital, the asset-based approach to vulnerability emphasizes the agency and assets of families, households, communities and even regions to combat a particular vulnerability (Moser 1998:14).

In addition to its strength to clearly analyze vulnerability while allowing for individual agency, the asset-based approach provides a way to address some of the stated problems in human trafficking vulnerability research. As it focuses on the individual, I am hopeful that it can overcome the common tendency of vulnerability analysis in human trafficking literature to fail to penetrate the regional level. For example, using national data, Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:62) can “predict the existence of slavery in any one country.” However, that still does not address the idiosyncrasies of trafficking within that region, nor does it answer what Bales (2005:10) considers a fundamental question to ending human trafficking: “why are some vulnerable people enslaved and others are not?” An asset-based approach to vulnerability is advantageous to researchers in that it is not the typical model that relies upon national or regional data—data that may or may not be reflective of an individual’s situation. Instead, the approach’s fundamental reliance on an evaluation of individual’s assets and the types of risks faced by that individual will provide a distinctly different, and hopefully illuminating, model of understanding individual vulnerability and resistance to human trafficking.

An asset-based approach to vulnerability, however, comes with some concerns. First, only four types of assets are described, which suggests that asset theory can only work with these types of assets. *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?*, however, refers to these four assets groups as “primary categories” (Narayan 2000:49). It would seem, then, that an asset-based approach to vulnerability is flexible enough to allow other forms of capital (Narayan 2000:49). While this thesis will only focus on the four aforementioned asset categories, it is possible that another form of capital would be a useful addition to an asset-based analysis of human trafficking.

The most likely type of capital to provide a beneficial addition to the approach would be cultural capital. Cultural capital is a term most associated with Pierre Bourdieu (1986:47), who argued for three forms of cultural capital: embodied, objectified and institutionalized. Institutionalized cultural capital is often closely related to human capital, perhaps because Bourdieu (1986:47-48, 51) emphasizes educational certification in explaining institutionalized cultural capital. The institutionalization of cultural capital, through an independent credential, establishes a level of worthiness for “the holder of a given qualification relative to other qualification holders and, by the same token, the monetary value for which it can be exchanged on the labor market” (Bourdieu 1986:51). While not a part of the traditional categories of asset-based approach to vulnerability, such a type of capital may be extremely relevant to understanding vulnerability to human trafficking. In the case of trafficked Indian welders in my subsequent narrative study, institutionalized cultural capital may be important to understanding the way in which a headhunter verified and accepted their credentials before sending the men off to an American trafficker. It may be the case that an asset-based approach is simply incomplete without this category.

It is also notable that asset-based approaches to vulnerability rely on particular interpretations of the assets they describe. Grootaert, Narayan, Nyhan Jones, and Woolcock (2004:3-4) note that there are multiple conceptions of social capital and human capital. Particular conceptions might call for placing certain assets under particular categories of assets; for example, Narayan (2000:53-54) places literacy among human capital by noting that a lack of literacy inhibits acquiring certain forms of employment. However, it may be the case that literacy is better understood as also belonging to the

social capital category of asset, as enabling a sort of orientation toward others and toward communities. Or, since literacy, as Woolcock (2001:12) indicates, seems to complement both human and social capital, perhaps literacy should be its own category of asset altogether.

While achieving a maximally accurate placement of assets under asset categories is certainly important, a further concern about the asset-based approach to vulnerability is what the commonly preferred interpretations of assets might exclude on ideological grounds. For instance, absent from the discussion of social capital in the asset-based approach was the notion of social capital from Bourdieu (1986), despite the fact that Narayan and Cassidy (2001:59) consider him to be among the original pioneers of sociological investigation into the complex dimensions of social capital. World Bank formulations of an asset-based approach to vulnerability, then, seem to have narrowed the asset categories down, at least to some degree, to a preferred specific interpretation or set of interpretations.

It is certainly possible that a large degree of this theoretical narrowing was done with regard to which interpretations of these theories appeared to researchers to be the most ready for testing measurements of assets. In “Measuring Social Capital: An Integrated Questionnaire,” the authors argue that there were two dominant theories about social capital, but that the most important aspect in moving onto measurements of social capital is the universal recognition by social capital theorists on social capital’s multi-dimensional nature (Grootaert et al. 2004:3). Elsewhere, Woolcock and Narayan (2000:243) argue that despite social capital and development research being in its infancy, researchers “cannot wait until we know all there is to know about social capital

before acting. Rather, to foster further our knowledge and understanding of social capital, we should adopt a learning-by-doing stance.” Based on this theoretical narrowing and the continuing development of theories of assets, I think it remains important to note this possibility: a significant overhaul of the description of the asset categories, perhaps by relying on different understandings of capital, might improve the framework. This is not a project I wish to pursue here, although I do retain my curiosity about it.

If one were to pursue such an overhaul of an asset-based approach to vulnerability, there would certainly be conceptually rich areas to explore. For example, it seems to me that Gary Becker’s (1993) theorization of human capital seems most similar to the view of human capital utilized by the World Bank (2000). His view is that the pursuit of various levels of education and training will likely affect knowledge, health and the value of one’s labor in the labor market (Becker 1993:11). However, when using Becker’s (1993) view of human capital in an asset-based approach to vulnerability, one may, in order to fully grasp the asset portfolio of an individual as well as other elements of well-being, need to analyze more deeply other, non-wage effects consequent from formal education. Such shortcomings of the scope of human capital perhaps are best noted in this Marxian critique of human capital, which finds fault with human capital as an analytical tool to measure educational decisions and well-being:

The error in the human capital approach lies in its partial view of production and its abstraction from social reproduction. For example, the repressive nature of schooling, hardly a contribution to human welfare, is an integral part of the production of a disciplined work force and is directly related to the social relations of production. Likewise, the perpetuation of sexism, racism and elitism in our schools would not be said to be welfare-conducive or even welfare-neutral by most human capital theorists. Yet these aspects of schooling play an essential role in the reproduction of the capitalist order, a role inseparable from the capacity of schools to product “good” workers. By abstracting from the social relations of

production and the role of schooling in the reproduction of capitalism, human capital theorists have put forth a one-dimensional normative framework for the analysis of educational decisions which has no reasonable relationship to human welfare (Bowles and Gintis 1975:82).

I would also be interested in what consideration of Bourdieu's (1986) view of social capital might add to asset theory. Bourdieu (1986:51-52) has a complex consideration of the nature of social capital and how transactions of social capital occur. In addition, Bourdieu (1986:52) argues for a very particular view of how social capital reinforces a system of deeply complex class reproduction, providing uneven benefits to individuals and affirms heterogeneity of certain groups. Such a view, if incorporated into an asset-based approach to vulnerability, might well challenge assumptions or provide new insight as to the benefits or likelihood of obtaining assets to transcend certain types of shocks.

Secondly, I find the World Bank's embrace of an asset-based approach to vulnerability, which was largely developed by researchers who have worked with and for the World Bank, troubling. There is, of course, a real irony in the World Bank's assessment of vulnerability to conditions that adversely affect the well-being of an individual. This is particularly true as the World Bank's use of an asset-based approach to vulnerability fails to account for some of the radical precarity and destabilization of assets its own policies have caused for individuals throughout the world. As far back as the 1960s, the World Bank has been asked to better concern itself with the way in which it undermines human rights (Marmorstein 1978:114). Despite this long history of concern, a reputation for policies that fail to protect and respect human rights remains (Kinley and Davis 2008:36).

This continuing reputation is not unfair; rather, it is earned. In the 1980s in particular, the World Bank endorsed structural adjustment policies that failed (Weaver 2010:96-97). These policies often resulted in “social hardships due to budget cutbacks and rising unemployment” (Weaver 2010:97). In the mid-1990s, it gave full-throated endorsement to efforts to privatize particular assets and make markets ‘friendly’ to investors, which led to many state-owned assets being looted (Weaver 2010:98). More often now, the World Bank is known for providing loans for particular projects. Such actions can still attract significant criticism (Kinley and Davis 2008:36).

While the World Bank would likely argue that such criticism is misguided, the reality is that the World Bank often endorses development policies and projects that can displace vulnerable populations. For example, the Center for International Environmental Law claimed in 2000 that the World Bank’s projects in that year projected to displace more than 3.2 million individuals (CIEL 2000). Human Rights Watch (2013:1-2) recently reported that a World Bank-sponsored project in Ethiopia relocated

some 1.5 million indigenous and other marginalized people in five regions of Ethiopia to new villages where the government claimed there would be improved access to basic services and infrastructure. Human Rights Watch investigations into the first year of villagization... have found that consultation and compensation have been grossly inadequate, and relocation marred by intimidation and violence, with state security forces repeatedly threatening, assaulting, and arbitrarily arresting villagers who resist transfer. Dozens of farmers in Ethiopia’s Gambella region told Human Rights Watch they were moved from fertile areas where they survived on subsistence farming, to dry, arid areas and that the promised government services often did not exist. Human Rights Watch documented at least seven credible accounts of people dying as a result of the beatings inflicted by the military during relocations, and heard of many more deaths that could not be corroborated.

Such massive displacement would certainly harm the assets of the individuals that the projects were possibly aimed to assist. Additionally, the World Bank continues to endorse

privatizing water (Lappé 2014). The privatization of such an asset could exacerbate the vulnerabilities of populations worldwide, especially in the short term (Kinley and Davis 2008:27).

At this point, it is necessary to ask: is an asset-based approach a damaging way to analyze vulnerability? Does it reinforce unhealthy norms of and rationales for development, blaming individuals for systemic problems? Does it rely too heavily on narratives of individualism and financialization that thereby cover up problematic structural violence? Is it inextricably connected to World Bank policies that damage populations?

There are certainly strong critiques of neoliberal capitalism, as well as of formulations of human capital, that suggest that asset-based approaches, as a hyper-financialized view of individuals, is deeply flawed. In “The Problem with Human Capital Theory—A Marxian Critique,” Bowles and Gintis (1975:82) conclude that human capital

provides an elegant apology for almost any pattern of oppression or inequality... for it ultimately attributes social or personal ills either to the shortcomings of individuals or the unavoidable technical requisites of production. It provides, in short, a good ideology for the defense of the status quo.

Another Marxian critique suggests that a hyper-financialized and individualized view of labor as the key asset for individuals is problematic. Bryan, Martin and Rafferty (2009:468) argue that the appearance of labor-as-capital in a way that downplays class contradictions is “central to the neoliberal vision: that ‘we’ are all accumulators, and our individual success is entirely contingent on our own performance, not just in accumulating ‘human capital,’ but also in evaluating and managing opportunities and risk.” Essentially, Bryan, Martin and Rafferty (2009:468-471) are concerned that we overemphasize individual labor and posit blame for individual ‘failure,’ while ignoring

structural and class aspects of human outcomes, and thereby both reinforce neoliberal, hyper-financialized narratives and class relations.

The sharpest critique along those lines comes from Bourdieu (1998). In *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*, Bourdieu (1998:35) notes that the globalized, neoliberal capitalist project is mathematically gilded in a way that makes it appear as a supreme rationale. This rationale emphasizes “submission to the values of the economy” and acts to restore narratives of “a return of individualism” (Bourdieu 1998:7). Such an emphasis on individualism has a particularly nasty upshot for Bourdieu (1998:7), as it “makes it possible to ‘blame the victim,’ who is entirely responsible for his or her own misfortune, and to preach the gospel of self-help, all of this being justified by the endlessly repeated need to reduce costs for companies.”

While I would love to dismiss these critiques out of hand, I find them quite compelling. After all, the asset vulnerability framework was developed at a time when the labor of the poor was the primary consideration in eliminating individual vulnerability to poverty; Moser (1998:2) notes that asset theory was developed during a period of World Bank emphasis on increasing economic growth through the labor of the poor and finding ways “to enable the poor to use their labor productively.” I happen to find that language deeply disturbing, as, for me, it evokes a view of the poor as servants to an economic machine of structural violence that bears a tenuous relationship to their own benefit and well-being. While I do not think this is a view of impoverished persons that Moser (1998) holds, I feel it necessary to emphasize that this position of economic servitude is not a position I wish to endorse nor a position I wish to replicate. It seems necessary, therefore, to investigate the possible harm of using an asset-based approach to

model vulnerability and to address the concerns of connections to the World Bank, as well as the concerns of Bourdieu (1998) and the above Marxian critiques.

Ideological Problems Facing the Implementation of Asset-Based Approach to Vulnerability and a Plan to Mitigate Them

Asset-based approaches to vulnerability face two major critiques. First, from both Bourdieu (1998:7) and the Marxian perspective: categories of capital and assets are tied to a financialized view of the world that reinforces the neoliberal capitalist project and rhetoric (Bowles and Gintis 1975:82; Bryan, Martin and Rafferty 2009:468). This is problematic because, as mentioned earlier, globalized neoliberal capitalism relates to push and pull factors in a way that typically exacerbates vulnerability to human trafficking (Mishra 2013:6). The association of the asset-based approach to vulnerability with the World Bank exacerbates the force of this critique, as the World Bank can be an incredibly troublesome institution, especially on issues of poverty, development, privatization and aid. However, the notion of an asset-based approach to vulnerability does not have to take on aspects of World Bank policy, which, thankfully, removes a significant degree of possible harm from the approach.

In the *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*, the World Bank (2000:136, 141) first presents an asset-based approach to vulnerability as a categorization tool to identify areas of vulnerability, possibilities of events and strategies to mitigate any risk that comes from them. The tool itself does not forward global neoliberal capitalism, but rather seeks to capture areas of vulnerability to well-being and a range of possible actions to overcome these areas of vulnerability. In the text, however, the World Bank

(2000) proceeds to argue for its preferred methods of risk management. The text includes possibly problematic arguments against the need for full social safety nets and arguments for pension reform and workfare (World Bank 2000:147, 153, 156). In contrast, it argues for the utility, in some situations, of full-functioning health insurance, either publicly provided or provided through a partnership of public-private partnerships, as well as direct cash transfers to the poor (World Bank 2000:152, 158). Thus, in my view, it is not the tool, but the interpretation of its implications that carries the policies of the World Bank.

With regard to bolstering rhetorical claims for neoliberal capitalism, the fault is not with an asset-based approach, but rather with those leveraging the theory to support their own risk-mitigation techniques. There is, and should be, a disconnect between the prescription (or the prescriber) and the tool. This fundamental disconnect seems to be supported by Moser (1998:16), who notes that an asset-based approach provides a different approach to vulnerability and poverty eradication than the traditional “top-down” actions of the World Bank—namely that it was ‘pro-poor,’ designed to strengthen the poor and provide increased flexibility.

Essentially, I am comfortable using an asset-based approach because I believe there is a significant disconnect between the evaluation of asset vulnerabilities and the policy prescriptions to reduce asset vulnerabilities. The latter, in my view, is much more ideologically driven, such as the World Bank’s “top-down” arguments against certain aspects of social welfare. I will then, in this thesis, decouple the tool from an endorsement of World Bank policies. While I realize there may be a risk in promoting this tool, I am hopeful it will be used well. I suggest that, until it is better developed, an

asset-based approach and model of vulnerability should only be utilized by anti-trafficking activists. I am hopeful that those using asset-based measurements of vulnerability will be far more aware than the World Bank of the inequities of globalization and privatization and will therefore not endorse pernicious strategies or policies that could inflict harm to individual vulnerability. Provided that an asset-based approach to vulnerability is used to criticize all sources of vulnerability, including structural violence propagated by World Bank policies, I am hopeful harms stemming from the rhetoric of financialization might be mitigated to a significant extent, while, more importantly, still accurately reflecting observed realities of the methods individuals use to protect their well-being.

A second argument against an asset-based approach to vulnerability stems from the World Bank's emphasis on the labor of the poor. In its heavy focus on the labor of the poor, a framing problem with the tool arises: an asset-based approach to vulnerability overemphasizes the role and duty of individuals to save themselves, albeit with some top-down help, from situations that may be completely beyond their power through labor. Bourdieu (1998:7) and Bryan, Martin and Rafferty (2009:468) echo this critique of capital and neoliberal assessments of individual capacity.

This argument against an asset-based approach to vulnerability is warranted on two counts. First, such an approach, while it can measure the erosion of assets over a set of events, is a woefully inadequate tool for measuring the overall systems that cause the initial distribution of assets. While an asset-based tool can elucidate how an individual may be made more or less vulnerable by a specific situation, event or action, it is, alone, still inadequate for theorizing and criticizing the total initial state in which they find

themselves. Second, an asset-based tool, particularly one that emphasizes individual labor as an asset, may, as Bourdieu (1998:7) identified, unfairly attribute blame to victimized individuals.

In my view, the propensity to use an asset-based tool to assign blame to victimized persons is largely due to poor theoretical accounting for the initial distribution of assets. Moreover, an asset-based approach to vulnerability can fail to show that certain lacks of assets or the intensity of events are beyond that which, despite one's best efforts, an individual can overcome. An asset-based approach then, if not carefully used and prefaced, can indeed result in an unreasonable assumption that individuals have full control over their assets, including the ability to gain or use assets, and that individuals use these assets in response to a crisis or a risk.

Some may conclude that the results of using assets in a suboptimal fashion means that one should blame an individual for the result. As I intend to use an asset-based approach for understanding vulnerability to human trafficking, this is an area of particular concern to me. Blaming or implying an individual is to blame for being a victim of trafficking is not only absurd, it would be a heinous position that I would unequivocally denounce. However, a tension exists here because individual action and choices, like a decision to migrate, does ultimately bear some relation to vulnerability to human trafficking.

With regard to creating an asset-based approach to vulnerability to human trafficking, I think it is important to note that the victim should never be blamed nor be considered blameworthy for being a victim of trafficking. This is true even when a victim knowingly takes risks, which research indicates some individuals do with regard to

trafficking (Ray 2008:168). The blame in any and all such situations belongs to those perpetrating violence—the trafficker and any accomplices—not to the victim.

As I have stated before, there is evidence that at least some emphasis on individual action is critical to understanding vulnerability to trafficking. However, this emphasis may be too lopsided without a better account of elements of structural violence that contribute to an unequal initial distribution of assets. An asset-based approach to vulnerability can easily be constructed in a way that glosses over structural violence. For example, the World Bank's (2000:141) clearest depiction of their asset-based approach merely provided lists and evaluations of accessible assets at a specific time.

Sadly, because an asset-based approach is meant to provide an evaluation of accessible assets, it may be difficult to clarify the possibly major role of structural violence in shaping a particular evaluation of an individual's available assets at the moment of crisis. I am sensitive to this problem and have adjusted my model accordingly. To counteract this flaw, my model features a notation that initial structural violence precedes individual choices in their available assets. Admittedly, it is an imperfect solution to an important and tricky issue—one that no vulnerability measure may be able to account for—but this imperfect solution seems, to me, to be the best available.

Through my efforts to eliminate any victim-blaming in my theory but while still allowing for greater victim agency, I am trying to assert a nuanced view of assets and coping. I believe there is support in the literature for this nuance. For instance, authors of asset-based approaches to vulnerability note that the nature of some crises simply exceeds the coping abilities of an individual. In *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?*, Narayan (2000) indicated that not all individuals are capable of overcoming shocks.

Narayan (2000:66) recounts at length the economic collapse of Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union, which led to the “rapid erosion of virtually all social support systems, and... bred mass insecurity among the people of this region as they have watched their savings and accumulated assets disappear.” While Narayan (2000) goes on to describe and emphasize the coping strategies individuals take to mitigate their poverty, she certainly assigns no blame to individuals who found themselves in poverty at that time.

In *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*, the World Bank argues that individuals can be forced into bad situations. “The poor have fewer options than the wealthy for coping with shocks... if the shock is covariant and the local labor market has collapsed, migration is the only answer” (World Bank 2000:145). The World Bank notes that a major shock can “lead to severe decline in income and deplete a household’s assets” (World Bank 2000:138). In the same report, the World Bank states that repeated shocks can wipe out the possible coping mechanisms of a household, leading to terrible outcomes, like death (World Bank 2000:138). Further, the World Bank (2000:146) argues that there are “poverty traps” that can ensnare multiple generations:

When a crisis strikes and households cannot borrow or when adult unemployment is high or wages low, children are pulled out of school and sent to work. The lost schooling leads to a lifelong loss in earning ability for these children. Failures in the credit or labor markets thus transmit poverty and vulnerability across generations.

Based on statements like these, I believe that, while asset-based approaches may insufficiently critique initial unjust asset distributions and does emphasize individual action, the combination of these elements does not mean that the use of asset theory assigns blame, implicitly or explicitly, to victims coping with shocks. Asset-based

approaches to vulnerability can be implemented in a way that promotes the actions and agency of individuals to resist significant harms to well-being, but promotes it in a way that does not blame these individuals for the outcomes of the crises they try to overcome. I will be careful to implement my model of vulnerability with such an understanding, and with an understanding that the unjust distribution of initial assets affects vulnerability to trafficking. Through the careful use of an asset-based approach to vulnerability, I hope to overcome any improper implications of victim blame or blameworthiness and to avoid improper absolution of structural violence that allows the rise of any form of exploitation of vulnerable persons, including human trafficking.

The Yield of an Asset-Based Vulnerability Analysis: a Typology of Assets, Risks and Strategies

An asset-based vulnerability analysis focuses on prevention of harm to an individual's well-being. It is a way of categorizing assets available to and known risks facing an individual or household. By listing the set of assets, a list of asset management strategies can be created. Such strategies would be categorized under risk mitigation or risk reduction. Risks, based on various metrics, can be calculated as likely or unlikely, informing the importance of undertaking mitigation or reduction strategies. Should the risk become realized as a shock, one would consider the available assets to coping with that shock. If the methods for coping with a shock are insufficient to prevent a significant decline in well-being, then that person would be considered vulnerable to that shock.

In essence, an asset-based vulnerability analysis is simply a method of building, with a degree of analytical precision, a qualitative typology of risks and risk management

strategies available according to the possibilities and limits of an individual's assets. This can be a complicated process, as it requires not only listing assets to which one has access, but assets to which one has access through their social networks. One can see these basic examples of these typologies of risks and risk mitigation or shock coping techniques in *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* (World Bank 2000:136, 141).

Moser (1998:14) claims that this framework of determining vulnerability was dynamic. While such a model is indeed dynamic—it is capable of being shifted according to an individual's circumstances with ease and without national measures—it is perhaps not as dynamic as some would hope. It does not, for instance, result in an automated, shifting metric to determine an individual's vulnerability. While it does have the advantage of shifting according to events and asset fluctuations, an asset-based approach to vulnerability measurement, in its typology of available assets and strategies, is still labor intensive, often survey-based, qualitative work with some quantitative aspects. Because of this, this type of analysis is not yet perfect, especially in using its typology to develop a prediction metric.

A prediction metric is certainly the ultimate goal. As stated by the World Bank, “measuring vulnerability is particularly difficult: since the concept is dynamic, it cannot be measured merely by observing households once... the challenge is to find indicators of vulnerability that can identify at-risk households beforehand” (World Bank 2000:19). In recent years, asset-based approaches to vulnerability have made significant strides in this regard. Narayan and Cassidy (2001:90-91) provide a dimensional analysis of empirically verified uses and elements of social capital. Moser and Felton's (2009) formation of an

asset index seems particularly promising, in its novel mathematical and graphical format for showing household assets and vulnerabilities. Despite these impressive and important strides, however, asset-based approaches are still imperfect. As Moser and Felton (2009:125) note, asset-based analyses still have not provided an implementation method that moves beyond regular measurements.

While I am hopeful that a fully predictive metric could one day be created, the purpose of this thesis is not to develop that metric. Furthermore, the goal of this thesis is not even to perform specific asset-based analyses to limit the vulnerability of potentially vulnerable individuals, although I am hopeful that, too, will soon be achieved. Instead, I am suggesting that assets connect to human trafficking in such a way that the creation of a model informed by an asset-based approach to vulnerability is warranted. Such a model might provide broad descriptive power over how human trafficking occurs and how an individual is vulnerable to a trafficking attempt. Such a description should benefit anti-trafficking workers in individual analyses of vulnerability, while also substantially contributing to the pursuit of a predictive model.

To move toward justification of my descriptive model, I will next connect the aforementioned conceptions and typology of assets to descriptions of instances of human trafficking. From there, I will propose an asset-based model for how individual acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking occurs, as well as how individuals resist such victimization.

Can an Asset-Based Approach be Applied to and Aptly Describe Key Elements of Vulnerability to Human Trafficking?

To claim that an asset-based approach can inform a model of vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking, it is necessary to further establish that the approach is capable of capturing the major elements of human trafficking. In asset-based approaches to vulnerability, vulnerability frames potential declines in well-being, which is broad in definition and inclusive of many states of potential suffering. As it is so broad, however, an asset-based approach to vulnerability need not be limited to a narrow focus on poverty. In fact, it focuses on measuring risks and shocks as diverse as domestic violence, wars, crime, a crashing economy and natural disasters, as well as an individual's vulnerability or resilience to them (World Bank 2000:136).

Human trafficking, then, should easily fit within the scope of the approach. Human trafficking can certainly be described as an event that constitutes a decline in life-quality, a key notion of well-being in an asset-based approach to vulnerability (World Bank 2000:139). Further, becoming victim to acts of human trafficking by definition constitutes an exposure to crime, another element of well-being contemplated by the *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* (World Bank 2000:136). Forced labor is even briefly noted as a shock “faced by rural households in Ethiopia” in that same report (World Bank 2000:140). Furthermore, Narayan (2000:63), in a discussion of an asset-based approach to vulnerability in *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?*, describes an incident of vulnerability to contract-based human trafficking.

Returning to an earlier section on violence in human trafficking, I noted that a solid definition of vulnerability in human trafficking should correspond to the criminal

elements considered under the Palermo Protocol, as well as elements of violence and vulnerability considered by Galtung. I argued that a ‘Galtung/Palermo Protocol definition of vulnerability to the violence of human trafficking’ vulnerability must include: 1) the possibility of facing an attempt of acquisition and exploitation for the various purposes of trafficking, which is a violent act that decreases one’s actual and possible well-being, and 2) an individual’s ability—created through personal decisions, interpersonal relationships and structural situations over which a person may have significant control or absolutely no control—to resist such acts of human trafficking. Vulnerability to human trafficking under an asset-based approach captures both of these elements well.

By its construction, an asset-based approach to vulnerability is concerned with the possibility of acts that decrease one’s well-being (World Bank 2000:139). As stated in the previous paragraph, that includes acts of violence, crime and human trafficking, as well. In addition, as I explained in a previous section, an asset-based approach to vulnerability is focused on assets in order to determine the possible actions an individual can take to mitigate, reduce or overcome possible and actual declines in well-being (World Bank 2000:139). Through satisfaction of both of the critical elements of vulnerability to human trafficking as contemplated through a Galtung lens on the Palermo Protocol, I believe an asset-based approach to vulnerability contains the minimum requisite elements for consideration of individual vulnerability to human trafficking. Therefore, from both a terminological standpoint and in satisfaction of the definitional standards set for vulnerability to human trafficking under my ‘Galtung/Palermo Protocol definition,’ an asset-based approach to vulnerability appears to capture the key aspects of vulnerability to human trafficking without loss of analytical precision.

How an Asset-Based Approach to Vulnerability Includes 'Push' and 'Pull' Elements, the Dominant Discourse on Vulnerability in Human Trafficking

At this point, I have shown that the terms of assets and vulnerability are broad enough to include human trafficking vulnerability. I will now argue that it not only includes them under a broad category, but also contains the terminological framework necessary to frame the dominant discursive elements of structural vulnerability to human trafficking as well as the framework needed to discuss examples of human trafficking with regards to asset types.

First, it will be helpful going forward if I translate some of the major terminology in asset-based approaches to vulnerability into language better known to human trafficking literature. Applying the terms of asset-based approaches to the vulnerability of acquisition for human trafficking victimization, one would refer to the possibility of an attempt to acquire an individual for the purposes of trafficking as a 'risk' of trafficking victimization. A 'shock,' meanwhile, would be an actual attempt to acquire a victim for the purposes of trafficking. Mitigation would be the actions that a possible victim does to limit the risk of being acquired for human trafficking, while coping would be the resistance efforts made by a possible victim to prevent the success of the 'shock' (the attempt by a trafficker to acquire a victim). One who is able to successfully resist an attempt (cope with the shock) is 'resilient,' while one who does not or may not be able to resist a trafficking attempt is in a state of 'vulnerability.'

Perhaps to understand if a discussion of resilience and vulnerability to human trafficking can be captured in a discussion of assets and asset-based approaches to vulnerability it would be best to begin with push and pull factors, the most common way

of discussing structural elements increasing the risk of human trafficking victimization. With regard to push factors (i.e., structural factors making human trafficking more likely at a specific location), Mishra (2013:7-15) identifies caste and class structure, gender-based discrimination, religion, tradition, as well as economic instability and impoverishment, power concentration, and environmental factors like natural disasters, war, environmental destruction, weak state delivery of services, and other dislocations of persons. All of these push factors bear some relation to assets. Caste, class-structure and gender-based discrimination fall under factors affecting social capital (Narayan 1999:5). Gender-based discrimination, depending on the form, might also be tied to other assets (Narayan 2000:54-55, 209). Economic instability and impoverishment are conditions at least related to physical assets, if not other assets (Narayan 2000:60; World Bank 2000:34-35, 136-138). Power concentration is also tied to social capital (Narayan 2000:85).

The remaining push factors identified by Mishra (2013) are events or processes, not asset types. Yet, these events and processes are also connected to assets. Natural disasters, war, environmental destruction, and other dislocation of persons are all described as “main sources of risks” in *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* (World Bank 2000:136). Furthermore, state delivery of services is a clear factor “mechanisms for managing risk” listed in that same report (World Bank 2000:141). Such services, which cover infrastructure, public health, labor market policies, social assistance, cash transfers and more, clearly relate back to assets and an asset-based approach to vulnerability (World Bank 2000:141).

With regard to push factors, Shelley (2010:37) also identifies lack of employment opportunities, political instability and conflict, gender discrimination as important push factors. Employment opportunities can be affected by human capital and can clearly affect physical assets of an individual or a household. Gender discrimination, again, is a type of and shaper of social capital (Narayan 2000:54-55, 209). And, political instability is category of risk under *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*'s "main sources of risk" (World Bank 2000:136).

The pull factors, which are factors that make it more likely a person will be trafficked to a particular location for the purposes of exploitation as a slave, also relate to assets. Mishra (2013:6) states that pull factors interact with push factors. On this basis alone, they will bear at least a loose relation to assets. However, it is otherwise difficult to relate pull factors to assets without considering a very specific example. Mishra (2013:16), for example, includes improvements in technology and transportation, increases in industrialization and urbanization, and globalization in general as pull factors. Each of these can take a great number of forms and intensities, which makes it difficult to analyze them as a whole (Mishra 2013:6).

Some conceivable generalizations of these factors do relate to assets, but more specifically relate to shocks. *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* identifies "technology shock" as one of the main "main sources of risk" (World Bank 2000:136). Another World Bank text, *A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies (Volume 1)*, links transportation to the following shocks: "Vulnerability to natural and manmade disasters ... Sufficiency of transport infrastructure for access in emergency. Potential of transport infrastructure to raise vulnerability by exposing communities to risk

(for example, HIV/AIDS)” (Klugman 2002:612). That same report also states that globalization can reduce environmental assets (Klugman 2002:386).

Shelley (2010:37) notes that general demand for workers, the possibility for a better life or wage, and perceptions that a better opportunity exists in another area all constitute pull factors. Fluctuations in the job market and unemployment are part of *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*’s “main sources of risk” facing individuals (World Bank 2000:136). And, the possibility for a better life or wage is related at least to one’s existing, available asset combination. Lastly, Mishra (2013:17) argues that traffickers exploit pull factors with deception to create an illusion of economic or other possibilities to garner the attention of a potential victim. This deceptive practice would connect both to an individual’s existing asset combination as well as to a social capital connection with a trafficker.

I find it clear that push and pull factors can be framed, at least loosely, in terms of assets. In order to solidify this claim and to make clear to the reader that a wide range of human trafficking abuses can be framed around asset types, vulnerability or resilience, I will recount several examples from human trafficking literature. In reviewing multiple and varied examples of acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking victimization, I will show how the terminology of asset-based approaches to vulnerability captures the key discourse of human trafficking victimization. From these examples, I hope to demonstrate how assets deeply, clearly and inextricably connect to various examples of human trafficking literature.

However, while I am eager to substantiate the connection of assets (as considered under asset-based approaches to vulnerability) to human trafficking, I will certainly not

be the first to have done so; a previous qualitative field study that focused on migrants who became victims of human trafficking made this connection explicit. As this field study and model gives me hope for a broader model of an asset-based approach to vulnerability to human trafficking, I will describe some of its key findings on assets, human trafficking victimization, and vulnerability. After noting its limitations, I will then review other examples in human trafficking literature with the goal of substantiating a broader theoretical model of asset-based approach to vulnerability to all types of human trafficking.

How the Vital Connections Between Assets and Vulnerability to Trafficking as Established by Ray Provide Reason to Theorize a Broader Model

Perhaps the best evidence that human trafficking and conceptions of assets are linked, however, comes from Nilanjana Ray's (2008) qualitative study on human trafficking vulnerability for internal migrants in India. In her dissertation "Vulnerability to Human Trafficking: A Qualitative Study," Ray (2008) establishes the usefulness and accuracy of a framework partially informed by an asset-based approach to vulnerability.

Ray (2008:77) used a questionnaire to analyze the experiences of 32 adult women internally migrating in India. Ray (2008:82-83) researched not only the motivations for migration, but also investigated the complicated social relations, gender relations, social networks and economic status of each woman, as identified by the women themselves over interviews. These interviews lasted an hour and a half each (Ray 2008:78).

Of the 32, 15 of these women had been victims of human trafficking (Ray 2008:77). By surveying both trafficking victims and those who migrated without become

acquired for purposes of trafficking, Ray (2008:67, 76) compared the groups to establish factors that affect individual vulnerability to trafficking with regard to those migrating internally in India. Of the trafficking victims, 14 were victims of sex trafficking while one was a victim of labor trafficking (Ray 2008:100).

From the narratives, Ray (2008:146) was able to note that women's access to assets affected their choices to migrate. A shock on their general social network could lead to a migration event. One such example happened when a husband left the woman. Not only did her husband leaving affect her status and assets but also the community's reaction to her as a 'person whose husband would leave' hurt her ability to access other assets through her social networks (Ray 2008:124). The woman soon after chose to migrate to a place that she believed could provide her a better social and economic situation (Ray 2008: 125). Such a decision, however, left her "extremely vulnerable to being trafficked" (Ray 2008:125).

As discussed previously, narratives of self-experience can be flawed methods of garnering data (Goździak and Bump 2008:56). In Ray's (2008:107) interviews, for instance, no woman relied on a discussion of caste in their narratives, although such complex social statuses are likely to influence a person's access to assets. Despite this possible limitation, however, this qualitative project still yields substantial evidence establishing the importance of some factors with regard to vulnerability. Ray (2008:82) strengthened the narrative interview format by asking about demographics (household and individual), economic status, social status, and psychological profile, which includes risk-taking behavior. Multiple questions were deeply tied to the notions expressed in an asset-based approach to vulnerability, including questions about social networks,

questions of machinery ownership, landholding, education, main sources of income, gender (Ray 2008:82). Furthermore, Ray's (2008:46, 60) analysis relies on Moser's (1998) description of the asset vulnerability framework, particularly in how she understands how low human capital forces other members of the household into the workforce.

Such a dual-pronged approach allows Ray (2008:197) to better determine relevant structural vulnerabilities that would be generalizable to India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Ray (2008) concludes that numerous asset-related factors affect one's possible vulnerability to human trafficking (see Table 1 below).

Table 1

Top-Level Factors Affecting Trafficking Activity, as Identified in Ray’s (2008) “Vulnerability to Human Trafficking: A Qualitative Study”

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF FACTOR				
Narrative Commonalities among Interviewees	Economic compulsion (109)		Family relationships (109)		
Demographic	Caste/religion, particularly in its effects on land and economic opportunity (156)		Age (155)	Low level of education (156)	
Poverty	Poverty and economic marginalization (157)	Landlessness (157-8)	Poverty as destroyer of social networks (159)	Marriage to strangers, which can cause complete dependence on others (161)	Social networks as positive assets against poverty (170)
Gender Discrimination and Social Ostracism	Social ostracism as a destructive force of social networks and increaser of poverty (152, 169)		Gender discrimination (160)	Woman as head of household in areas of gender discrimination (158)	Patriarchal norms and sanctions (171)
Psychological Factors	Desperation from dealing with loss of assets and socioeconomic status (159, 164)		Risk-taking tendency, which is willingness to take calculated risks and willingness to undertake an unplanned migration event (164)		Willingness to trust possible dangerous sources for trust (164)
Shocks	External shocks, such as “death of a chief earner, loss of job, health crises or marital breakdown,” as these can cause unplanned migration events (165)				
Risk Awareness	Knowledge of trafficking, although can be a weak protective mechanism (138, 168)		Mental categorization of trafficking events in the person’s community as criminal or as something that should be blamed on the victim (140)		
Risk Mitigation	Knowledge of risk-mitigation techniques when migrating (143-145)				
Migration networks	Trusted sources of help and well established migration patterns (170)			Access to assets, including social networks, while migrating (170-171)	

Many of the factors in Table 1 above are notions explicitly contained in an asset theory and would apply to an asset-theory-informed vulnerability to human trafficking framework. Some of these factors are simply asset types themselves, such as poverty, land ownership, and human capital. “Landlessness, dependence on agricultural wage labor, gender of chief earner, and age of chief earner have emerged from the narratives as significant factors of vulnerability due to their contribution of keeping families in poverty” (Ray 2008:157-158). Still other factors listed above can play both the role of asset and/or influence access to assets, such as social networks:

Social networks do not reduce structural vulnerability of the really vulnerable group viz. the destitute because they withdraw their support to avoid the burden. Social network thrives on exchange and when the transfer of social capital becomes one-way, it is no longer considered tenable. (Ray 2008:169)

Among these asset types that are also major influencers of other assets is gender. Ray (2008:160) refers to gender discrimination due to patriarchal gender values as a “very significant structural factor of vulnerability” that affects asset access throughout her trafficked informants’ lives.

Yet another aspect listed in Table 1 above are descriptions of how one identifies and then uses assets to mitigate risk, such as accessing physical capital or not forming dangerous social relations with an individual. With regard to accessing a trusted network for jobs, for example, the difference is stark between trafficked and ‘non-trafficked’ individuals:

A concomitant role of the social network is to provide a safe channel for jobs...Social network members, with their experience and knowledge of migration and its risks, form the line of defense. As mentioned earlier, 13 of 17 of my non-trafficked informants used their social network of family and friends while 12 out of 15 trafficked informants trusted strangers and mere acquaintances. (Ray 2008:154)

There are, however, some factors listed by Ray (2008) that less clearly fall into an asset-based approach to vulnerability. Most obvious among these is the psychological risk-taking tendency. Yet, even this example bears a relation to assets, as psychological risk-taking affects assets in two clear ways. First, risk-taking in Ray's (2008:125, 164) analysis is a matter of being removed from known social networks, physical assets or labor opportunities. In this way, risk-taking centers around which assets an individual has access to by choosing to (or, being forced by circumstances to) migrate, whether planned or unplanned. Second, risk-taking in Ray's (2008:159, 164) analysis is also about desperation—desperation described as both poverty-based and based on social networks. In this way, risk-taking tendency is both related to assets and a result from existing assets. Due to this relation, I side with Ray (2008) in believing that risk-taking tendencies can safely be included in an asset-based vulnerability model, even if some may believe it to remain outside of established asset-based approaches to vulnerability.

Given its lengthy list of relevant relationships to assets, I believe “Vulnerability to Human Trafficking: A Qualitative Study” provides a strong basis for hypothesizing an asset-based approach to a broad model of vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking. In fact, Ray (2008:65, 172) provides both a hypothesized model of assets of internal migration in India and human trafficking victimization, and then provides a revised model that reflected her findings. However, I believe that there is sufficient evidence to build a model that further emphasizes assets and extends beyond that specific study in a way that will hopefully be inclusive of all types of human trafficking activity, regardless of migration status.

In order to establish the inclusivity of an asset-based model of vulnerability to acquisition for all types of human trafficking purposes, I cannot simply build a model that is exclusively reliant on evidence from Ray (2008). Ray (2008:197) explicitly notes that her findings were likely only generalizable to a specific geographical region. Furthermore, the victimization Ray (2008:100) describes was overwhelmingly of sex trafficking, which does not fully reflect human trafficking victimization trends worldwide; the International Labour Office (2012:13) estimated that only 22% of victims of human trafficking worldwide were sex trafficking victims.

To create the asset connections to human trafficking activity necessary to hypothesize a broad, an asset-based model of vulnerability to acquisition for all types of human trafficking purposes, “Vulnerability to Human Trafficking: A Qualitative Study” is clearly the correct first step. However, analysis of additional trafficking narratives and studies are necessary to capture greater aspects of human trafficking worldwide. Building upon Ray (2008), the studies I examine will be inclusive of sex trafficking, but not only focused on this area. Furthermore, these studies and narratives will be less explicitly connected to Moser (1998) and an asset-based approach to vulnerability, as well as less explicitly connected to migration, which gives me the duty to show strong evidence that assets are relevant among significantly varied human trafficking examples. I believe that, through this approach, I can establish that an asset-based model for vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of all types of human trafficking has a significant connection to elements of human trafficking as described by secondary forms of evidence. With a broader connection then established, I will propose my model that could be tested in the field for accuracy.

Narrative Examples of Human Trafficking and Assets

Earlier in the thesis, I mentioned various known ways in which individuals were acquired for purposes of human trafficking. All of these individuals were trafficked because of some degree of human capital—the ability to labor. An individual who cannot labor in any capacity is unlikely to be at risk of trafficking (at least in a manner contemplated by the Palermo Protocol). However, using an asset-based approach, one can clearly see that there are other forms of assets involved in each of those examples.

I chose the following examples for four reasons. First, the examples below represent one of each type of human trafficking I described earlier as identified by Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009), Bales (2004) and Miers (2003). Second, they are from various countries around the world, so as to not emphasize a regional practice over another. Third, each instance of trafficking below prominently features a clear example of assets affecting one's vulnerability to human trafficking. In some instances, a family relationship determines vulnerability to trafficking, while, in others, it is a lack of necessary physical capital. Fourth, these specific examples were chosen as they demonstrate an array of known trafficking acquisition methods: deception, abduction, sale by family, and self-selling/contracting.

Example 1

In Ghana, one can find instances of ritual human trafficking. According to a recent news article in Thompson-Reuters, this practice continues today (Mistiaen 2013).

Miers' (2003) *Slavery in the Twentieth Century* details this practice. In a particular region of Ghana, “virgin girls were dedicated to a shrine by their families to atone for

offenses committed by relatives. A nine-year-old, for instance, was sent to the shrine because her grandmother had stolen a pair of earrings” (Miers 2003:436). Once dedicated to the shrine, the girls performed agricultural and domestic labor, although some were forced to sleep with the priest (Miers 2003:436).

Although this example does not speak much about the risk or shock period, it does provide enough information to discuss vulnerability. In this example, the granddaughter appears to have been made vulnerable to trafficking through social capital in three different ways. First, the lack of effective societal and governmental protections is an example of a lack of institutional social capital. Second, the girl was identified as a virgin. In a society that fetishizes virgins, this affects her social capital. Specifically, it places her in a social group that individuals wish to have access to, albeit for purposes that can be very harmful to the girl’s overall well-being. Lastly, the grandmother draws on her granddaughter's social capital in a very negative way. The grandmother utilized the girl's fetishized status as well as her relationship to the girl to satisfy her own debt.

Example 2

In *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?*, Narayan (2000:63) discusses a scenario in which a worker took out a loan of 1,000 rupees for an unexpected emergency. The money-lending landowner from a dominant caste made the loan in exchange for the worker's agreement to a low contract (Narayan 2000:63). After two years of labor, the worker owed 2,500 rupees due to interest and charges for food, accommodation and other small loans (Narayan 2000:63). The worker could not leave because the

moneylender would track him down and punish him severely (Narayan 2000:63). After five years of labor, the debt had ballooned to 8,000 rupees (Narayan 2000:63).

The worker in this scenario was trafficked in debt-bondage/contract trafficking. The worker's status as a lower caste represented a lack of a potentially beneficial type of social capital. In addition, the lack of social institutions that effectively ban such contractual practices represents a lack of social capital to which the worker had access. The initial shock, however, attacked the worker's physical assets. Without the necessary funds to cover the unspecified emergency, the worker did not have the necessary assets to eliminate his vulnerability to the problem. To reduce vulnerability to the emergency, the worker approached the moneylender. The moneylender's intent to traffic represented the second shock. Sadly, the worker did not have access to the necessary assets to overcome this shock.

Example 3

In *Not For Sale*, Batstone (2007:112-114) discusses a boy named Charles in Uganda. The Lord's Resistance Army was near his town (Batstone 2007:112–114). The mother tried to hide him; she had him sleep outside of the village in the bush (Batstone 2007:112–114). After sleeping outside, he began walking to school, only to be stopped by members of the army, who carry guns and machetes (Batstone 2007:112–114). He told them he was going to school, but they did not allow it, instead forcibly recruiting the boy as a child soldier (Batstone 2007:112–114).

In this example, there was a heightened risk of human trafficking as the Lord's Resistance Army neared town. This is another instance of a lack of effective societal and

governmental protections translate to a lack of institutional social capital. The mother, in response to this risk, utilized their environmental assets (the bush outside the village) to reduce her son's vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking. However, while it may have worked for a time, it was insufficient to eliminate the risk. When the boy eventually ran into the soldiers (the shock of an acquisition attempt in this example), he had insufficient social capital to evade human trafficking as a child soldier.

Example 4

In *Slavery in the Twentieth Century*, Miers (2003:435) discusses the abduction of women to become brides in China. Such women are forcibly abducted because of the costs associated with marriage (Miers 2003:435). While there were government efforts to end such practices, these “were often thwarted by corrupt local police and officials” (Miers 2003:435).

The risk of abduction and human trafficking in the example begins not with the victim of trafficking, but with a lack of physical capital of the trafficker. Bridal prices in China can be very expensive, and not all individuals can afford such an amount. As Miers (2003:435) states, “it's cheaper to acquire a bride through force than to pay the customary price to a girl's family.” The mismatch between the physical capital of the human traffickers and the amount required by social custom likely increases risk of victimization. In this scenario, women, crudely put, retain a type of social capital that bears risk—namely, they are eligible brides and capable child-bearers. As men want wives but lack the traditionally necessary capital, the incentive for trafficking increases and the risk to the victim increases, as well. Such a statement appears to be corroborated

by data presented by Orlando Patterson (2011:12), whose analysis indicates that “the presence of bridewealth more than triples the odds of finding institutional slavery” in a particular society. Economically speaking, this finding has a certain type of crude market logic to it, as there is no clear ‘substitute good’ for a bride. For instance, the traffickers are not likely to choose a man or a very elderly woman to abduct for bridal trafficking purposes.

When the trafficking risk to the victim becomes a shock (that is, an actual attempt to acquire the victim), the victim again lacks the institutional social assets necessary to protect her. In this scenario, however, part of this is due to outright corruption.

Example 5

In *Modern Slavery*, Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:82) recount the story of a Moldovan woman named Milena. Milena was deceived by a woman named Dolina, who promised her an easy, good-paying job in Russia as a nanny (Bales et al. 2009:82). When she made it to Moscow, Dolina got Milena into a room (Bales et al. 2009:82). Soon after, five Russian men arrived and forced Milena into prostitution (Bales et al. 2009:82).

In this example, it is particularly helpful to clarify that women in Moldova are at a disadvantage in working conditions, with women comprising about 70% of all unemployed in Moldova (Bales et al. 2009:68-69). Furthermore, the Moldovan financial situation is quite unstable, so access to physical assets can be limited (Bales et al. 2009:68-69). Milena also faced the lack of institutional social capital to secure her well-being, and was presumably targeted by her traffickers because of age and sex—additional aspects of social capital. Unfortunately, Dolina was able to draw negatively on the trust

forged through a social connection with Milena. This connection and promise of a good job was the initial shock that led to her acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking.

Example 6

Michael A. Scaperlanda (2004), in “Human Trafficking in the Heartland: Greed, Visa Fraud, and the Saga of 53 Indian Nationals ‘Enslaved’ by a Tulsa Company,” recounts the claims in affidavits for trafficking victim visas by Indian welders. The welders paid a headhunter in India to get a contract job in Oklahoma (Scaperlanda 2004:228). Upon arriving in Oklahoma, however, the welders were not contract employees in the United States. Housed in cramped barracks and threatened with deportation, the welders had become trafficking victims (Scaperlanda 2004:234).

In this example, the risk begins with an unideal level of physical capital of the welders (Scaperlanda 2004:228). With a desire to earn more money, the lack of physical capital caused them to consider the headhunter's offer. However, being welders increased the risk to these individuals to become victims. The traffickers desired to control the labor of individuals with a particular set of human capital, namely the ability to weld (Scaperlanda 2004:220, 225). Again, there was insufficient institutional social capital in the U.S. and in India to secure the welders' well-being from being damaged by a shock. Signing the contract with the welder and getting on the plane are the two shocks that led to the trafficking of the welders and for which the welders lacked the proper assets to overcome.

Example 7

Lastly, in *Nobodies: Modern American Slave Labor And the Dark Side of the New Global Economy*, Bowe (2008:16) discusses a man from Mexico whose son became ill with leukemia. Lacking the funds to continuing paying for treatment, the man resolved to pay a coyote to smuggle him to the United States where he could make more money (Bowe 2008:17). The man who smuggled him into the U.S. connected him with a driver who would help the man obtain work (Bowe 2008:17). However, the driver proceeded to sell him to an individual in Florida who trafficked him to agricultural fields where he was forced, like hundreds of others, to labor against his will under threat of violence (Bowe 2008:17-19; U.S. Department of Justice 2004:5-7).

In this case, the man did not have access to sufficient institutional social capital in the U.S. to prevent his vulnerability to human trafficking. However, his son's lack of human capital, namely, his poor health and lack of access to affordable healthcare, was the initial shock. That shock, by utilizing the social capital connection between father and son, drained the man's physical assets. The lack of physical assets with a continued need for pay for his son's health caused the man to contract with a coyote. Once in the U.S., he lacked social capital. Instead, when offered a job, he had complete dependence on the driver. The driver utilized that dependence to deceive him into trafficking.

Discussion of Examples 1-7

In examining the above examples, one may notice that a common thread in human trafficking acquisition by deception is the lack of physical capital and the negative draw of social capital. The negative draw of social capital in these cases typically the abuse of

a relationship, social network or someone's trust—perhaps a practice in acquisition for human trafficking that we should intuitively connect to the types of deception used to enslave Africans in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Stolz 2007:323). Sometimes the exploitative, negative draw of social capital is made more effective by the particular person doing the deceiving and the type of social connection they offer. For example, Milena was recruited by a woman, Dolina, which facilitated a feeling of safety and trust that would likely not have been apparent if men had attempted to recruit Milena (Bales et al. 2009:82). Another known example of human trafficking by deceit includes formerly trafficked persons returning home with small payments. An intermediate recruiter will use the return of these individuals as a recruiting opportunity (Bales 2005:12-13). However, it is not uncommon that subsequent recruits are not as lucky (Bales 2005:12-13).

In addition, as can be seen from the examples above, a lack of institutional social capital is very important in many cases of human trafficking acquisition. Government policy has failed to eliminate the existence of these labor abuses, which represents a lack of conferred social capital guaranteeing a degree of security (Narayan 2000:253-255). Furthermore, certain individuals are vulnerable because of corruption (Miers 2003:435; Bales et al. 2009:60-61). Others are vulnerable because existing government policy forces them to the shadows, particularly by not recognizing their nationality or failing to protect their status in the country (Scaperlanda 2004:234-235; Bales 2004:88-89).

From the above examples, one can also see two unique aspects of using an asset-based approach to vulnerability to human trafficking. An asset-based approach provides a theoretical understanding of how potential victims are targeted by traffickers. All

individuals who are trafficked are, of course, targeted for their capacity to labor (e.g., their human capital). However, some traffickers are far more specific in their targeting. The young girl in Ghana was specifically vulnerable because of the religious significance and utility of her status as a virgin. In another scenario, a transgender person may be targeted because the sex trade exploits transgendered persons, who are considered particularly valuable from a financial standpoint to traffickers (U.S. Department of State 2012:94, 97; Ugarte, Zarate, and Farley 2004:152–154). Such knowledge can be helpful in discussing how to end vulnerability to human trafficking.

Perhaps the example of the Indian welders who became trafficking victims, more than the other examples I provide, best demonstrates one of the more interesting aspects of an asset-based approach to vulnerability to human trafficking: Moser's (1998:14) point that "nonpoor households are not necessarily the least vulnerable." With some clear human capital and some physical capital, these individuals were not trafficked because they lacked social status or because a crisis of funding caused them to take on the generational debt of a debt-bonded labor victim. Instead, human traffickers targeted them as victims because they had a particular asset: skills as welders. From this, one can see both that Moser's (1998:16) claim that commanding the right mix of assets reduces vulnerability is very relevant to our discussion of eliminating vulnerability to human trafficking and that human traffickers are strategic actors who seek victims who can satisfy their particular exploitative needs.

The Need for Additional Examples Beyond Secondary Narratives

The above narrative examples verify at least a basic connection between assets and the moment of trafficking acquisition. One can identify assets that appear to be relevant to how an individual becomes trafficked. However, narrative examples like these provide poor understanding of the development of an initial structural asset vulnerability. As discussed earlier, this is a problem inherent in asset-based approaches to vulnerability, although, as Ray (2008:162-163) shows, an asset-based approach can be carefully implemented to at least capture the main structural elements at a given time. However, the lack of clarity in initial structural asset vulnerability can also be a problem for narratives in particular.

Unlike in Ray's (2008) lengthy qualitative analysis, very little assessment is done with regard to an individual's initial asset situation in the above seven narrative examples. A lack of this assessment limits our ability to discuss the complexity of systems and events that can create the structural vulnerability, which might later make one vulnerable to an acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking. While some examples are better contextualized with structural data—such as the discussion by Bales, Trodd and Williamson (2009:82) of the Moldovan woman who became a trafficking victim—some examples lack informative asset content, structural or otherwise.

As one might imagine with regard to issues of human trafficking and other forms of covert, concealed and illicit activities, it is generally difficult to gather good data and good examples on which to create and test theoretical frameworks. This is a known challenge for contemporary trafficking literature. A 2008 report on literature concerning contemporary trafficking shows that 179 of 218 journal articles on contemporary

trafficking were non-empirical (Goździak and Bump 2008:6). Furthermore, only seven of the 218 focused on quantitative models (Goździak and Bump 2008:7). The authors of the study conclude that “despite the increased interest in human trafficking, relatively little systematic, empirically grounded, and based on solid theoretical underpinnings research has been done on this issue” (Goździak and Bump 2008:9). Instead, they note that most studies are overly reliant on small sample sizes and interviews and lack participant observation (Goździak and Bump 2008:9-10).

Michel Damone (2010) found a similar problem in the literature. In particular, Damone (2010:14) notes that the main research method of human trafficking literature is “analysis from secondary sources.” More than 50% of human trafficking literature appears to use such sources (Damone 2010:14). An additional 38% of human trafficking literature uses “unknown sources” (Damone 2010:14).

The types of above narrative examples (and my use of them) are certainly subject to these critiques. They are further subject to critiques that the victim narratives are perhaps over-summarized to the point of being one-dimensional, thereby limiting their usefulness (Goździak and Bump 2008:10). However, as these types of victim narratives are the predominant form of example in contemporary human trafficking literature, I contend it is important to establish that an asset-based approach bears at least some relationship to elements expressed in these narrative forms. Meaningfully connecting to the majority (and, likely most widely read) sources of human trafficking literature might best be seen as an initial hurdle that is beneficial to clear, even if those sources are imperfect. If nothing else, it provides encouragement to establish that these connections hold in more thorough human trafficking case studies.

Encouraged by the connections to assets I have been able to show throughout these first seven examples, I will now present two case study examples of human trafficking for examination and discuss the connection to various assets. Furthermore, I will comment on how those assets seem to have played in the acquisition of individuals for the purposes of trafficking.

Example 8

The Rajmahal circus in Akola district, Maharashtra, India has been a hotbed of human trafficking of young persons, particularly children. This is, in part, due to the ban of wild animals in the circus, which, in turn, places a premium on workers who can be trained and retrained at a low cost for various and audience-attracting feats (Pardeshi 2013:316). This is not the only circus known to have human trafficking in India; a 2002 study estimated “7,200 victims of trafficking, working in 35 circus companies in India” (Pardeshi 2013:316).

The recruits for the circus largely all come from a few states in India and a particular district in Nepal (Pardeshi 2013:317). Pardeshi (2013) notes that this district and these states share a handful of characteristics that increase the likelihood of a trafficker’s success in acquiring victims in these regions:

Factors such as persistent poverty, gender discrimination, lack of employment opportunities, and low school enrolment have been identified as root cause, while illiteracy or parents, broken or dysfunctional families, children without caretakers, domestic violence, peer pressure, and indebtedness are the immediate causes that facilitate the trafficking process. (P. 317)

The traffickers use fraud, deception and payment to lure their victims into acquisition for the purposes of trafficking (Pardeshi 2013:317). “The brokers are on the

lookout for families and individuals whom they convince by promising better job opportunities in the city. The parents are asked to sign a contract and are given some money in return” (Pardeshi 2013:317). The children work against the debt of their parents, but are often unpaid (Pardeshi 2013:317). Furthermore, the parents are unaware of the exploitation post-recruitment (Pardeshi 2013:317).

A study was conducted of 20 artists rescued from the circus. Of these, 13 were minors, and 17 were females (Pardeshi 2013:320). Of the 17 females, 11 were illiterate (Pardeshi 2013:320). The parents of many of the rescued individuals could not afford to send them to school or found the school too far away. The majority of parents were illiterate, and all belonged to poor, rural households (Pardeshi 2013:320).

Example 8's Connection to Assets

This example bears significant connection to assets identified as part of an asset-based approach to vulnerability. The individuals are targeted on some complex push factors. Such factors include the likelihood of having a specific lack of assets, including lack of access to opportunities to grow human capital and a lack of physical capital. A lack of literacy and a lack of knowledge of the exploitation that results post-acquisition are also assets under an asset-based approach.

It is notable that the traffickers focus on targeting women—17 out of 20 victims were women. Pardeshi (2013:317) attributes this victimization rate as indicative of gender discrimination, in that the girls were not valued fully by their originating society. However, Pardeshi (2013:317) also attributes the victimization rate to gender discrimination by the trafficking group, in their demand for such gendered labor. Such

gender discrimination, as Ray (2008:46-48, 160) notes, is a type of social capital, and affects access to assets like social ties, access to education and more.

The traffickers employ deceit, which is a way of negatively drawing on the social capital of another. In this case, the traffickers deceive both the children and the parents about the nature of the arrangement.

Example 9

A group of researchers used a public health lens to conduct case studies of sex trafficking in Mumbai and Kolkata in 2009 (Williams et al. 2013:358-359). Research fieldwork included interviews with directors and administrators of social service organizations, doctors, government officers, researchers, social workers, mental health providers, legal professionals and nurses (Williams et al. 2013:358-359). From these interviews, the researchers were able to derive key trafficking mechanisms and determinants (Williams et al. 2013:358-359).

The analysis concluded that in both Mumbai and Kolkata “many girls and women do not enter prostitution of their own accord, but rather through an assortment of factors that often involve force, fraud and/or coercion” (Williams et al. 2013:359). Victims are often reportedly promised domestic work or marriage, only to find out that these are false promises (Williams et al. 2013:359). Sadly, it is not uncommon for family members, friends or neighbors to be complicit in selling the girl to a pimp, agent or “husband” (Williams et al. 2013:359).

When the girls make it to Kolkata or Mumbai, they are quickly sold to a ‘brothel keeper’ (Williams et al. 2013:360). There, they are sequestered with significantly

restricted movement (Williams et al. 2013:360). They are then required to work and pay back all expenses ‘incurred’ from staying in the brothel, such as “medical costs, lodging and boarding, and other utilities” (Williams et al. 2013:360).

The research team concluded that vulnerability to this form of sex trafficking comes in various forms. Poverty is the main economic factor that drives the girls into sex trafficking (Williams et al. 2013:361). In particular, “the lure of a glamorous life...couples with an absence of opportunity in desperately poor rural areas, serve to heighten a girl’s vulnerability to trafficking” (Williams et al. 2013:361).

However, family history is a major determinant in vulnerability to trafficking. Class, caste and social status, including patriarchal structures, were found to increase vulnerability of girls to sex trafficking in destination cities of Mumbai and Kolkata (Williams et al. 2013:361). Being born to a sex-worker or being abused as a child also led to an increased likelihood of being trapped in sex trafficking (Williams et al. 2013:360).

Lastly, demand for sex trafficking, particularly young women, is a major determinant in forcing women into the trade. A combination of the male-centered culture, the global recession, and a booming information-technology sector were considered factors driving the acquisition of women for the purposes of sex trafficking (Williams et al. 2013:361). Furthermore, women were transported to these two locations for sex trafficking as they were found to be the most lucrative areas for traffickers in terms of possible prices for which they could exploit the girls (Williams et al. 2013:361).

Example 9's Connection to Assets

As with the previous examples, the key determinants in discussing an individual's likelihood of being acquired for the purposes of sex trafficking in this example can be abstracted into and summarized by asset categories. Before their victimization, the women lack physical assets in the form of money, and lack human capital in terms of earning power. Furthermore, the demand for sex trafficking exploits their specific ability to, crudely put, provide a type of labor. This is also a matter of social capital relations as women—women in general in these cases, but particularly young women—have a certain social relation to others that traffickers believe to be particularly desirable for exploitation. In particular, some men fetishize very young women and those who are still virgins (Williams et al. 2013:361). Other aspects of caste, class and patriarchal structures are wrapped up in social capital in ways that greatly affect and constrain the choices and possibilities to which an individual might have access.

Lastly, the women in the example were often deceived. Deception, as discussed earlier, is an exploitative, negative draw on one's social capital. In this instance, however, such a relation of social capital is significantly clearer than between a trafficking victim and a stranger; in this instance, the deception was done with the complicity of a neighbor or family member.

Example 10: How a Known Unsuccessful Acquisition Attempt for Purposes of Human Trafficking Bears Relation to Assets

In light of both narrative and more thoroughly documented examples of human trafficking and acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking, it seems that an asset-

based approach to vulnerability relates to known factors of an individual's vulnerability to an acquisition attempt and how a trafficker targets that individual. At this point, there is some solid evidence for the suitability of an asset-based approach to vulnerability as a tool for discussing and measuring individual vulnerability to known successful acquisition for trafficking. Perhaps a next logical step, then, is to discuss how an asset-based approach to vulnerability could be used to contemplate a more hopeful example: an example where such an acquisition attempt for the purposes of human trafficking victimization was unsuccessful.

An asset-based approach, in its ability to identify vulnerability, can also explain how one can be assets connect to a shock of an acquisition attempt for the purposes of human trafficking. One particular example illustrates this point clearly. In northern India, there have been cases where a "smooth-talking" local recruiter comes into a town to convince parents to send their children to work in another state (Bales 2007:45). The recruiter promises money, a skill for the boy, and plenty to eat, while also getting the local landowner to vouch for his trustworthiness (Bales 2007:45). The parents, who lack money and food and can be very vulnerable to natural disasters, would prefer not to send their child away but yet acquiesce to the recruiter's pitch (Bales 2007:45). After the child leaves with the recruited, the child is trafficked into forced labor in a loom (Bales 2007:43).

Many of these children, although not nearly enough, have gained their freedom (Bales 2007:46). Some rescued children in this area go to Bal Vikas Ashram. Here, the children are fed, educated and rehabilitated while their parents are tracked down (Bales 2007:42). Their education includes practical matters, like reading and writing, but it also

includes human rights education and discussions of preventing the trafficking of others (Bales 2007:44).

When these children return to their home communities, they can be transformative forces for good. As they are often the only literate members of the community, they are called upon to read government notices about food and work programs (Bales 2007:45). In addition, the children act as “watchdogs, keeping recruiters out of the village and convincing parents not to send their kids away” (Bales 2007:46). Bales (2007:214) refers to this joint process of economic development, human rights and crime prevention as ‘slaveproofing.’

Connecting this example back to assets, it seems that these formerly trafficked children received a significant asset increase from their experiences and from their time in Bal Vikas Ashram. This asset increase not only benefits their own lives but the lives of those in their community. Before these children became literate, it is possible that the landowner unfairly utilized his knowledge about local government programs to his own benefit and to the detriment of the well-being of others in the community (Bales 2007:45). However, the children’s ability to gain access to this information would be an example of their human capital, and the benefits of their knowledge are transferred to the group through their social capital. The benefits to which a child could tie the community can be significant; official food programs and work programs, which are accessed through social capital, could affect the community’s physical capital and environmental assets in significant ways.

In addition, these formerly trafficked children utilize their social capital to the benefit of others by preventing recruiters from enslaving more members of the

community. From a theoretical standpoint, the recruiters operate by preying upon the targeted families' severe lack of environmental assets and physical capital. The recruiters then use a deceitful, negative draw on the social capital of the families, tricking them into a situation that exploits the human capital—the ability to work—of their children. However, with the formerly trafficked children back in the community, the children's knowledge of these tactics prevents others from this exploitation of the social capital of the community. Essentially, the social capital shared between the formerly trafficked and the community reduces the vulnerability of children in the community to trafficking to a level of near elimination.

If my notion of assets deeply connecting to vulnerability to and resilience against an acquisition attempt for the purposes of human trafficking victimization is correct, I am thankful that there are additional organizations employing such an asset-focused and asset-building model. Challenging Heights in Ghana stresses a broad combination of asset-building in the children it helps to rehabilitate from human trafficking experiences (Challenging Heights 2014). It focuses on school and literacy (human capital) and additional income opportunities for families (physical assets). In addition, it emphasizes awareness programs about human trafficking and “re-integrating survivors of child trafficking and child labor, as well as serving as a medium of mobilizing the communities to reject child trafficking” (Challenging Heights 2014). Such programs are ways of building and leveraging the social capital of individuals to create a broader network of protection from human trafficking.

Concluding Remarks on Examples

Finally, one can see that assets, as described in an asset-based approach to vulnerability, bear connection to all major categories of vulnerability identified by human trafficking literature and narratives. Poverty and physical capital, social networks and social capital, environmental assets, and human capital are all indicated as elements that, depending on the asset amount and type of risk (trafficking attempt) can make one more or less vulnerable to a trafficking attempt. Furthermore, an asset-based approach to vulnerability provides a reliable definitional standard for vulnerability to the violence of human trafficking by accounting for both the possibilities of a violent act and the abilities of an individual, however limited by circumstance, to resist that act. Given that I have now connected assets to a wide range of examples of human trafficking acquisition, connected assets to push and pull factors, presented the connections of assets to vulnerability to human trafficking as found by Ray (2008), and even shared the positive effects of assets in ‘slaveproofing’ efforts, I feel confident in concluding that assets are a qualified theoretical frame for discussing the complexities of vulnerability to human trafficking. Confident in this belief, I would now like to present my asset-based model of acquisition for human trafficking, which I am hopeful will guide anti-human-trafficking thought on how trafficking occurs and how assets can be deployed to mitigate and eliminate vulnerability to acquisition and victimization.

An Asset-Based Model for Vulnerability to and Resilience against an Acquisition
Attempt for the Purposes of Human Trafficking Victimization

With regard to vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking, factors known throughout human trafficking literature to exacerbate the risk of human trafficking victimization all seem to relate to or be a form of asset. I believe this result establishes that field-testing asset-based models of acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking is a worthwhile effort. Having spent considerable time reading about asset theory and vulnerability, I would like to propose my own model (in flowchart form) to explain the connections between assets, vulnerability, and human trafficking acquisition. I will also explain some of the minimum required elements to conduct a successful test of this model.

An asset-based model for vulnerability to and resilience against an acquisition attempt for the purposes of human trafficking victimization should reflect the strengths of an asset-based approach to vulnerability. Therefore this model, unlike some other models, emphasizes individual assets and how they may increase or decrease the likelihood or success of an acquisition attempt. This model does so by noting that initial assets are formed, in part, through structural violence and by emphasizing how assets may be shredded by events occurring before a human trafficking attempt. In addition, the model stresses the key role of assets in decreasing the likelihood of human trafficking acquisition by emphasizing that some assets may be used or accessed in resisting a trafficking attempt.

Throughout its stages the model reflects a perception of an individual's capacity for action, which I have argued is a key element in understanding vulnerability. The

model indicates that individuals responding to general shocks or general life- and/or asset-status may make decisions about using assets to cope (World Bank 2000:140-141). Individuals, for instance, may even choose to migrate as a coping mechanism (Ray 2008:165). In the model, such shocks and responses placed before the acquisition attempt to emphasize how choices made by an individual, in response to life situations or crises, may factor into narrowing the pool of available assets under one's control. The model further demonstrates that individuals take action in resisting human trafficking attempts by mobilizing assets.

Given that acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking takes on many forms, I have attempted to make this model broad enough to capture both cases of trafficking during migration and cases of trafficking that are not connected to migration. The model does incorporate the possibility of a migration event and, as Ray (2008:170-171) establishes, that such an event can affect the assets to which one has access. However, it does not require a migration event before acquisition—it can also demonstrate how one might cope with a previous shock through self-contracting into bonded human trafficking, as Narayan (2000:63) describes.

Lastly, this model emphasizes the practice of targeting by traffickers, an element that is sadly underdeveloped in other vulnerability models. Mishra (2013:17) explains that traffickers try to pick up on certain vulnerabilities of individuals and then design false promises around exploiting those vulnerabilities. And, in research by Scaperlanda (2004:22) on Indian welders trafficked to America, it is clear that the ability to perform welding made only specific individuals vulnerable to that trafficking incident. I have therefore made space in the model for the possibility of targeting preceding an acquisition

attempt of the model, thereby emphasizing the particular craftiness of traffickers in their strategic victimization of individuals.

My thinking for assembling this model, while built from scratch and focused directly on an asset-based approach to human trafficking vulnerability, was also guided by exposure to models of human trafficking found in Ray (2008:172), Mishra (2013:3) and Kara (2009:6). I believe it expands upon the “means” of Mishra’s (2013:3) figure and expands the steps of “acquisition” in Kara’s (2009:6) model to something far more detailed. Lastly, it includes aspects found in Ray’s (2008:172) model, albeit in a broader context of human trafficking activity. Aspects found in both my model and in Ray (2008:172) include an emphasis on the relevance of assets in background vulnerability, as well as the relevance of individual desires, risk-management knowledge, desperation, and migration intention.

Unique from all of these models that have influenced my thinking, however, is the application of asset-based vulnerability to traffickers’ targeting of victims and the notion of mobilizing assets to resist a human trafficking attempt. By applying an asset-based approach to human trafficking and by including these elements, I believe it is possible to craft a model that better reflects the mechanisms and interactions of human trafficking attempts and resilience. Hopefully, if this abstracted model holds, a more data-driven asset-based approach can be used to measure household, if not individual, vulnerability to attempts of acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking victimization.

Figure 1. A Hypothesized Asset-Based Model for Vulnerability to and Resilience against an Acquisition Attempt for the Purposes of Human Trafficking Victimization, Part I

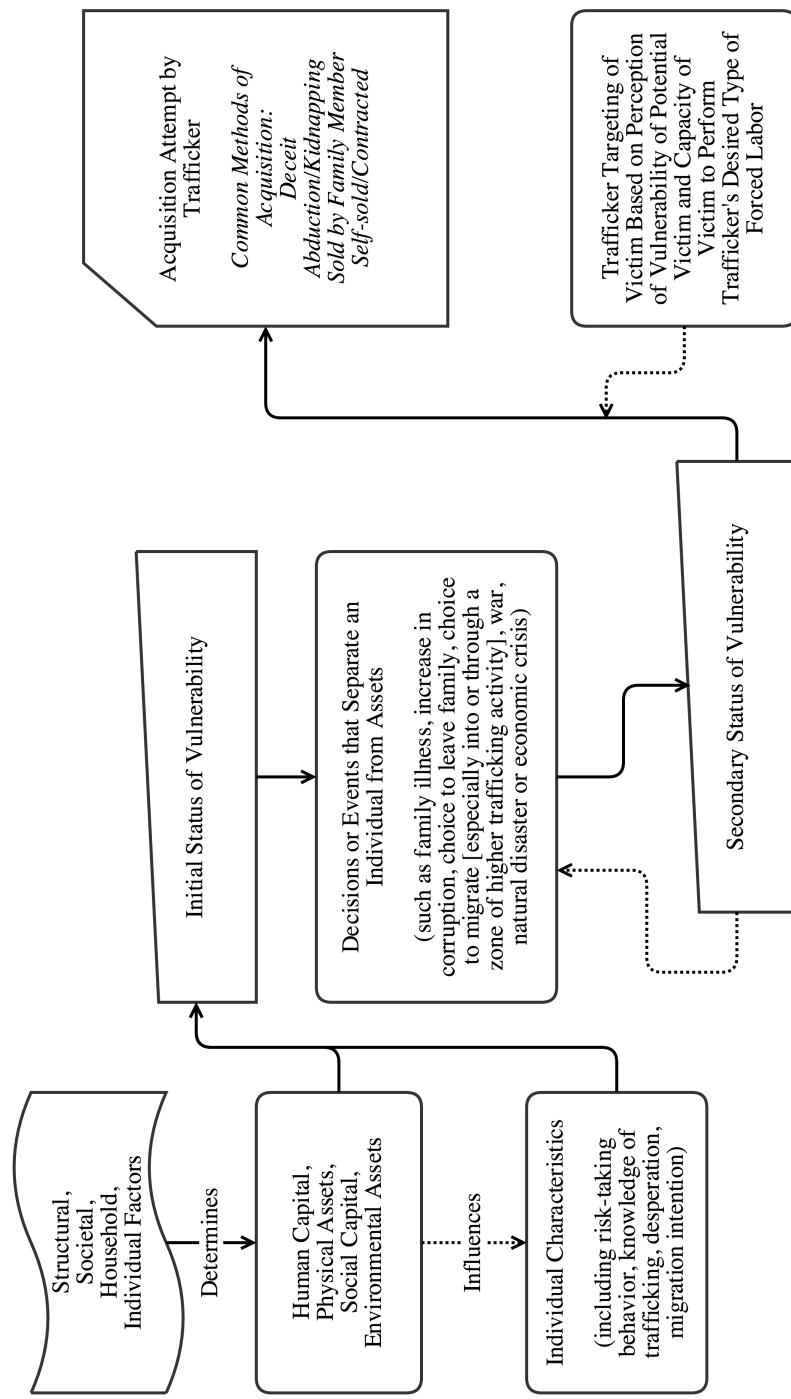
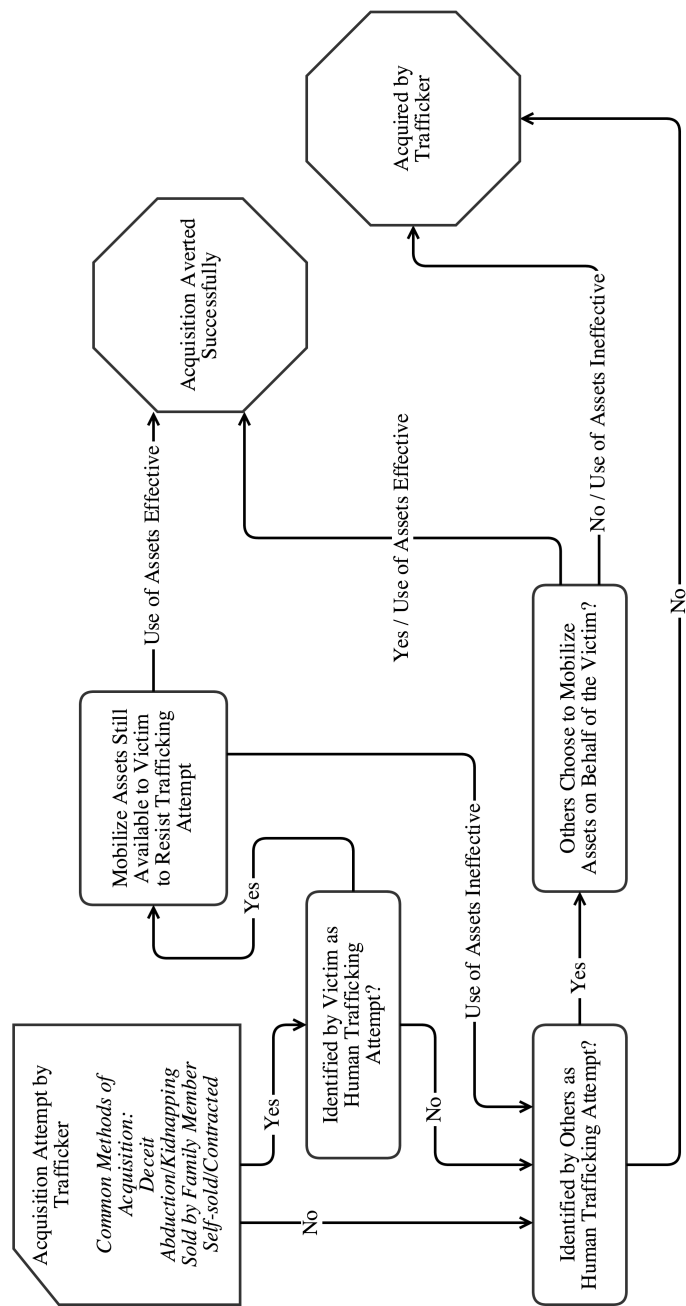


Figure 2. A Hypothesized Asset-Based Model for Vulnerability to and Resilience against an Acquisition Attempt for the Purposes of Human Trafficking Victimization, Part 2



Explanation of Model Flow

This model begins with a note that initial structural factors, individual factors and household factors determine one's access to assets. These factors can be beneficial to one's well-being and access to assets, they can be neutral, or they can be structurally violent in a way that reduces one's well-being or asset portfolio.

From these factors, one retains a set of available assets. These assets are the various types listed in asset-based approaches to vulnerability (although others types of assets could be incorporated into this model). Assets shape vulnerability, in addition to, as Ray (2008:159, 164) argues, shaping individual characteristics, like economic desperation and willingness to migrate. Other individual factors, like knowledge of trafficking and willingness to take-risks, also act to shape vulnerability.

This first box of vulnerability in the model is a measure of pre-shock assets. This is a measure of assets and characteristics before one has to cope with a shock of possible trafficking. While there could be any number of shocks before a human trafficking attempt, the main emphasis of this box is this: as shocks are often covariate and/or happen in succession, it is vital to denote a measurement of assets and exposure before one has to cope with a life event that may raise vulnerability to trafficking.

The next step on the model is the possibility of an event (like a natural disaster or war) or a decision (like unplanned migration or taking a new job) that can affect assets. This step on the model will affect assets in a way that establishes the next level of vulnerability. These two steps, I must note, are not mandatory on the model. However, given that multiple shocks and coping decisions can happen in a row, this part of the model is also possibly expanded to any number of shocks and decisions. This is why the

plural form of ‘decisions or events’ is used in the box. This is also a time of possible risk-reduction or mitigation by a potential victim. Should they perceive possible risks, they may make decisions, if assets are available, to limit the possible impact of those risks if they were to become shocks.

The next step on the model indicates targeting of a victim by a trafficker. This targeting occurs through a perceived vulnerability (Mishra 2013:17). Conversely, targeting can occur when a trafficker seeks out a person seen as capable of being forced into a particular task—like the recruitment of the Indian welders or the recruitment of a transgender teen into sex trafficking (Scaperlanda 2004:220, 225; Ugarte, Zarate, and Farley 2004:152-154).

The next event is an acquisition attempt. This can occur in many ways. The commonly identified base forms (of which there are many, many variations) are deceit, abduction/kidnapping, sale by family member, and self-sale/contract labor (Kara 2009:6-10). As the acquisition attempt happens, though, the next stage of vulnerability to human trafficking begins: resistance.

Resistance is no longer about risk mitigation or risk reduction. It is a stage of coping with an actualized shock of an acquisition attempt to human trafficking. However, sometimes deceit can hide a human trafficking attempt from a victim’s view until after the trafficker successfully acquires the victim. When this is the case, the victim would lack awareness that resistance to trafficking would be necessary until a trafficker has fully asserted violent control over a victim. In such cases, the only way that trafficking is likely to be prevented would be through the identification of a human trafficking attempt

by others. Those people could then mobilize their assets to prevent the complete and successful acquisition of a victim.

One such instance of others preventing human trafficking when the potential victims did not recognize their trafficker's attempt to acquire them for human trafficking happened in the United States. Two girls who were traveling from Russia on a travel exchange program to the United States (Coppins 2010). The work they were promised was nonexistent, but they were encouraged to travel from Washington, D.C. to New York City to work as hostesses in a lounge (Coppins 2010).

The girls had an American friend who had met them once in Russia (MetaFilter 2010). As he began to hear these details about the Washington, D.C. job disappearing and the suggested transition to New York City, he begged his friends to remain in Washington, D.C. (Coppins 2010). However, the girls thought the friend was overreacting (MetaFilter 2010). The friend, under duress, explained the situation through a post on the website MetaFilter and asked other users on the website (Coppins 2010). Users on MetaFilter began accessing various local police and human trafficking resources to prevent the acquisition of the women into an instance of human trafficking (Coppins 2010). Their efforts were successful; the assets they mobilized were enough to prevent the women from taking the hostess jobs at a place that was a likely hotbed for forced sex work (Coppins 2010).

So, even though the women were not aware of their need for intervention or aware of the acquisition attempt, assets were mobilized on their behalf to prevent their acquisition. My model is designed to emphasize that assets can be mobilized in such a way that the mobilization of helpful and/or necessary assets is completely out of that

person's control. It is, however, possible that a person recognizes an acquisition attempt and uses their available assets to resist that attempt. My model therefore also reflects this distinct possibility, as well as a combination of the two.

Requisites for a Test of this Model

Ray (2008) provides guidance on the initial requirements for a successful field test. One should find an area in which trafficking occurs and conduct qualitative field interviews with persons in those areas who have survived trafficking or who have not been trafficked at all (Ray 2008:77). The responses of those persons should be compared to look for relevant trends. The qualitative approach should be in-depth interviews with subjects that concern the experiences of a person in a given area (Ray 2008:85). At the end of that interview, one would then ask questions about assets that were held or accessible to that person before that period of time began (Ray 2008:83-84). Ray (2008:83-84) notes that surveying assets at the end of the interview was more effective.

However, while Ray (2008) conducted fieldwork in a specific area and focused on migration, testing this generalized model for how acquisition to human trafficking occurs and confirming elements of vulnerability to acquisition would require a significantly more diverse field test. Ray (2008:197) states her model was appropriate for three countries. Trafficking, however, occurs all over the world. It will therefore be necessary to research areas of varying types of labor in human trafficking and in varying regions. Perhaps most importantly, I imagine that conducting these interviews in areas in which trafficking regularly occurs but does not occur to all possibly affected individuals will yield the most meaningful comments on the accuracy or usefulness of the model. Places

like Challenging Heights in Ghana and towns on the Mexico-US border may provide a good starting point to compare my model with Ray's (2008) findings and her model of which assets factor into vulnerability to human trafficking. Child labor and forced agricultural labor may provide an interesting contrast to Ray's (2008) study, which largely interviewed individuals forced into sex trafficking. It may also be useful to interview, if possible, individuals convicted of human trafficking, as they may be able to shed light on how they chose and acquired their victims.

Probable Benefits of the Model in Explaining Observed Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, Suggested Model Applications

One clear benefit of this asset-based model to understanding acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking victimization is that it is designed to capture observed knowledge that structural violence increases vulnerability to human trafficking and that other events can become crises that also increase vulnerability to human trafficking. Other vulnerability measures, reliant on regional data, may capture parts of this, but usually a) fail to account for the heterogeneous manner in which households cope with shocks, b) fail to meaningfully capture the changes in vulnerability, including both the increased likelihood of trafficking activity and the decreased resistance ability to trafficking, across multiple shocks, and/or c) fail to capture how a single shocks or multiple shocks may act to exhaust the coping mechanisms of a household. I think this benefit is best described through example.

A single crisis event can deplete major capital types in a community, leaving its population vulnerable. Overfishing in Lake Volta, Ghana depleted the natural fish stocks,

which were environmental assets of the community (Bales 2007:47). With the amount of money available from fishing dwindling with the disappearing fish stocks, traffickers turned to trafficking children (Bales 2007:47). Children in the area became vulnerable from the single shock. In the model, we would note that this crisis not only added in a heightened risk of possible trafficking activity, but that it exhausted the common environmental and physical assets that a family would use to cope with a possible instance of human trafficking. Instead of a vulnerability measure that simply notes that a community is at risk after an environmental crisis, an asset-based approach to vulnerability allows us to discuss the key mechanisms that give rise to additional trafficking activity and how each household may vary in their resistance ability after the crisis.

Perhaps my favorite aspect of an asset-based approach to vulnerability is the manner in which it captures our thinking about fluctuating levels vulnerability over a set of risks and shocks in one's life. Such an example is particularly clear in the case of the man from Mexico whose son had cancer (Bowe 2008:16-19). As the assets to which the man had access dwindled, the risk of trafficking increased as his available assets left him less able to respond effectively to shocks. When his physical assets ran too low and he contracted with a coyote to help him cross in the U.S., the risk of human trafficking increased significantly. Such an increase came from the lack of social capital for those crossing the U.S. border, as well as his dependence on an exploitative source (Narayan 2000:62). When he then met the driver, the shock of an acquisition attempt occurred. At this point, the man had become very vulnerable to trafficking, whereas perhaps just months before he would have lacked any significant vulnerability. If his son had never

been ill (or if the family had access to affordable health care), for instance, perhaps the man would never have needed to cross the border to the United States. Without crossing, he would have retained access to his traditional social capital in his community and he would not likely have had to trust an individual who was so bent on exploiting his trust and his labor. In such a case, an asset-based approach to vulnerability can be used to emphasize note that his vulnerability shifted radically.

This ability to track vulnerability with regard to both a specific shock and across a set of risks and shocks represents the possibility of a major step forward in vulnerability measurement. If this tool were to be used by local communities and anti-trafficking activists as a measurement of the asset-driven capabilities of individuals within that community, I believe it would be possible to capture areas of clear risk exposure and vulnerability for not yet existent threats of human trafficking attempts. By addressing these areas of vulnerability (which may mean diversifying community income sources, running awareness campaigns, increasing literacy to encourage access to government programs), I think one could approach a holistic asset-building model of ‘slaveproofing.’

In fact, were I to be able to field test the model myself, I would want to work with local anti-trafficking activists to apply my asset-based view of acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking victimization to the asset-building models of Challenging Heights and Bal Vikas Ashram. Given the success they have had in reducing vulnerability, it would be fascinating to compare their available assets before the program and after, and to see what assets are indicated as resistance measures to specific local crises or human trafficking attempts.

Ultimately, I believe this model to be the basis for a local tool that will incorporate regional and individual data, as well as general stockpiles of trafficking knowledge. While still nascent in state and in need of a better quantitative method for incorporating vulnerability data, I am hopeful that strides in quantifying and indexing household asset vulnerabilities, such as those by Moser and Felton (2009), will make this possible in the coming years. Furthermore, by using this model to consider vulnerability at the community level, I am hopeful that anti-trafficking activists will have a rigorous framework that indicates local vulnerabilities, including possible areas of oversight or fluctuations of vulnerability within their community.

I also think that the model should be applied above the local level, however. Given that meso and macro policies of nations, states, corporations and international organizations, like the World Bank and the IMF, can both positively and negatively affect the assets of the poor, region level analysis of shocks to assets is also desirable. In this way, the vulnerability tool could be turned on the World Bank and other major decision-makers that are probably necessary stakeholders in the short-term: “much of what needs to be done to end slavery, and demolish the poverty and corruption that support it, can be done more easily with the support of [the World Bank and the World Trade Organization]” (Bales 2007:164). Perhaps activists could use some of the dominant, technocratic language of neoliberal capitalism and investment to criticize the harmful actions of states and these major organizations. Such technocratic language, which is certainly a part of an asset-based approach to vulnerability, may resonate better among their decision makers and prompt action that benefits vulnerable populations. I am hopeful that, if applied in this way, the model can become an active monitoring

mechanism and check on national and international policy that may adversely affect the assets of the most vulnerable populations.

Likely Implications for Policy if, through Field-Testing, Assets are Confirmed to Imply Levels of Vulnerability to Human Trafficking

If the model and main contention of this thesis is proven reasonably accurate by the results of field-testing, this emphasizes the need to promote asset-increasing policy. Specifically, policy should be crafted to build those assets that researchers, anti-trafficking activists, and potentially vulnerable individuals themselves conclude would benefit potentially vulnerable individuals, households, communities, and/or regions. A positive field-test result for the model should also provide encouragement for anti-trafficking workers to continue to work on issues of poverty, government responsiveness and gender inequality. In addition, if reasonably accurate, a positive field-test emphasizes the importance of resisting and fighting policies that shred the assets of individuals and vulnerable persons. Recalling Moser (1998:16), “the more assets people command in the right mix, the greater their capacity to buffer themselves against external shock.” With this understanding, an asset-based approach to understanding vulnerability to human trafficking should be used to resist policies negatively affecting the assets available to individuals, as it may reduce their ability to cope with an acquisition attempt or shocks that may precede such an attempt.

As mentioned previously, development policies with an overemphasis on neoliberal capitalism, privatization, and free markets can harm vulnerable individuals. Harvey (2007b:39), for instance, argues that the strategies of neoliberal capitalism and its

financial flows from the poor to the rich have been “devastating for the dignity and social well-being of vulnerable populations and territories.” Some would argue, and I would generally disagree with, that the later benefits of privatization outweigh the initial costs. However, even if one supposes that a well-considered policy of privatization of a certain state asset can realize an eventual societal asset gain for vulnerable individuals, it remains true that vulnerable persons can be harmed in the short term of such privatization policies (Kinley and Davis 2008:27).

Privatization policies of public assets often result in increased vulnerability for the poor. Clyde Woods (2009:772, 775-76) argued, for instance, that the planned neoliberal privatization of assets (“asset stripping”) drastically undermined the infrastructure available to the poor of Louisiana both before and after Hurricane Katrina. Ironically with regard to its interest in vulnerability and impoverishment, the World Bank has committed to significant top-down privatization and embrace of free markets (Weaver 2010:98). In the model I have proposed, which is based on a theory endorsed by the World Bank, one should not be surprised if it indicates that such top-down privatization policies from the World Bank increase vulnerability to acquisition for the purposes of human trafficking.

Furthermore, asset theory might help us to focus analysis on heretofore-overlooked factors, including, for example, the degree to which climate change can harm vulnerable individuals. While environmental factors, such as disasters and drought, are often linked to human trafficking vulnerability, human trafficking literature does not always connect environmental shocks to climate change. This is a significant shortcoming, as climate change’s relation to an increase in volatile natural disasters projects to inflict disproportionate harm on impoverished persons. A recent report by the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group (IPCC) II emphasized the vulnerability of individuals and assets to impending climate change:

Human security will be progressively threatened as the climate changes (robust evidence, high agreement). Human insecurity almost never has single causes, but instead emerges from the interaction of multiple factors. Climate change is an important factor in threats to human security through (i) undermining livelihoods, (ii) compromising culture and identity, (iii) increasing migration that people would rather have avoided, and (iv) challenging the ability of states to provide the conditions necessary for human security.” (Field et al. 2014:72)

The IPCC II predicts that the decline in human security brought about by climate change will test and exploit the vulnerabilities of the assets of many groups, including men, but especially those of women, the poor, ethnic minorities, children, and the elderly (Field et al. 2014:50; 65). It will lead to forced, unwanted migration (Field et al. 2014:73). The IPCC II also predicts that climate change will significantly affect environmental assets, which will harm the communities dependent on these assets (Field et al. 2014:50).

If climate change indeed brings this sort of instability to the lives of individuals, it is likely to affect their ability to achieve and maintain proper asset mixtures for responding to a risk or shock of human trafficking. Therefore, an asset-based approach to understanding vulnerability to human trafficking should spur human trafficking activists to work for better climate change policy, especially if that policy can protect the assets of those already identified as vulnerable to human trafficking.

An asset-based approach to understanding vulnerability to human trafficking is also likely to yield the need for anti-trafficking advocates to critique capitalism in general. The destabilizing force of capitalistic crises can greatly impact the assets of vulnerable individuals. In the *Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism*, Harvey (2011) recounts the geographic spread of the economic crisis that began in 2006 in the

United States. Within two years, the crisis had spread to the Britain and the European Union (Harvey 2011:5). Iceland went bankrupt (Harvey 2011:6). By 2009, unemployment had jumped to intense levels: “Some 20 million people were suddenly unemployed in China and troubling reports of unrest surfaced. In the United States the ranks of the unemployed increased by over 5 million in a few months” (Harvey 2011:6). In addition, Spain’s unemployment rate quickly jumped to over 17 percent (Harvey 2011:6).

Such widespread economic disruption, in addition to affecting banks, is sure to affect the assets of millions of individuals. Over time, it affected the physical assets of many in that it affected the credit available to persons in times of need (Harvey 2011:5). It affected physical capital and human capital in that people became unemployed. In addition, it affected the health care access of entire nations.

Greece was one such nation that instituted major shifts in health care as a response to the crisis: mental health services were severely constrained, infant mortality jumped 43% between 2008 and 2010, and locally transmitted malaria returned for the first time in 40 years (Kentikelenis et al. 2014:748-751). In addition, 800,000 in Greece still remain without access to health care (Kentikelenis et al. 2014:749).

The increased instability of assets due to a crisis in capitalism can drastically alter one’s ability to maintain the right mixture of assets needed to respond a risk or a shock, thereby making one more vulnerable. This is a well-established conclusion in the literature. The World Bank lists multiple economic crises under “main sources of risk” in the *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* (World Bank 2000:136). Included among them are “growth collapse, hyperinflation, financial crisis, currency

crisis” (World Bank 2000:136). Clearly, the shocks of capitalism can affect asset ownership and access. However, it has also been linked to human trafficking outright: Shelley (2010:196) noted that the global recession of 2008 led to increased instances of forced labor for migrants in Central Asian economies, particularly for Tajiks, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks.

If my connection between assets and human trafficking vulnerability is confirmed through field-testing, I believe a major policy implication will be a renewed and robust emphasis on the imperative for anti-trafficking activists to battle not only against human traffickers. Rather, activists must also combat those major structural elements, like impoverishment, privatization, climate change and crises-riddled capitalism, which can create vulnerability to human trafficking through the destabilization and destruction of assets for vulnerable populations. If we hope to achieve the idealistic, Balesian notion of ‘slaveproofing,’ the scope of abolition must rightfully include not only the gross and inhuman acts of human trafficking abuses, but all elements known to exacerbate vulnerability to human trafficking, as well.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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