



How to Bring About Normative Change in the Demand for Trafficked Persons

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Over the past decade, the supply side of human trafficking has been vigorously attacked by its greater criminalization. Yet there has been no evident diminution of the problem (Jägers and Rijken 2014). The conclusion, as expressed by this very session of the *Pontifical Academy of the Social Sciences* (PASS), is that criminalization is not enough. In fact, not only is criminalization not enough, nor is it enough merely to attack the supply side of the problem. The demand side must also be addressed. Such shift in attention toward demand was the recommendation of the *Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against the Trafficking in Persons* (ICAT 2014) in its second and most recent report. Accordingly, it was the demand side of human trafficking I was asked to examine and in particular the ways to reduce demand for human trafficking through normative change.

My charge was a tall order. As the ICAT report itself observes, not much yet has been written on this topic. Suggesting how to reduce demand for human trafficking through normative change was also a tall order for me especially, who, although I have written on collective response to such macro-moral issues as genocide and war (Porpora 1980; Malazita *et al.* 2013; Porpora *et al.* 2013); torture (Porpora *et al.* 2013); and terrorism (Porpora 2015; Patwell *et al.* 2015), have had to play catch-up on this equally unhappy subject of human trafficking.

But my charge is also a tall order because of the intrinsic complexity of the issue itself. As we know, human trafficking is a very variegated phenomenon that in the first place ranges between sexual trafficking and forced labor, and, in the second case, in relation to forced labor, extends over a range of abuses from sweatshops to servile domestic service. How people even end up in these situations varies, not just from case to case, but even within cases, over time (Jägers and Rijken 2014). One and the same person, for example, can get smuggled into a country voluntarily, only to be forced subsequently to pay back the fronted expense via threat of expulsion or physical force and, if and when those threats fail, just by having nowhere else to go.

When the conditions of force change over time, one question is what temporal part of a work relation to designate forced labor. Part of the complexity is that forced labor represents a point on a continuum, which ranges from decent work to slavery (Jägers and Rijken; Pope 2010; Skrivankova 2010). Yet, while there is almost universal public opprobrium of slavery, we as a public are much more ready to condone all manner of labor exploitation short of it (Pope 2010). In other words, what used to be called “wage slavery” bothers the global public much less as do the conditions that produce it.

That widespread acceptance of labor exploitation is part of our neoliberal era and the contemporary degradation of work (see Braverman 1998). It is one of the normative conditions I will argue that needs to change if we are to effect reduction in demand for human trafficking. It is a normative concern, however, that carries us beyond human trafficking itself to the broader nature of global capitalism. That destination should not perhaps overly surprise or disturb us. The Roman Catholic Church has long had uneasy feelings about capitalism (Finn 2013), and in this regard, the current pope seems no exception.

With exploitation, we are talking about the relationality that Pierpaolo Donati discusses both in his contribution here (Donati 2015a) and in his broader relational approach to sociology (Donati 2015b). I will build on Donati’s approach in this paper. I similarly will draw on the kindred critical realism (CR) with which Maggie Archer and I both are strongly affiliated and which emphasizes an analytical approach that Archer (2013a) has christened with the acronym SAC. SAC stands for structure, agency, and culture, which, against most dominant currents in the social sciences, CR holds to be analytically distinct and irreducible to one another.

All three, according to CR, must be considered in any concrete case. In the case of human trafficking, for example, we are typically dealing with supply chains, that is, chains of linked relations extending from

recruitment to ultimate exploitation. Each anterior position in the chain stands in relation to a posterior position as supplier of a demand – or derived demand (see ICAT 2014: 3) – issuing from that posterior place. Thus, talk of supply chains immediately introduces positionality, which in turn implies relationality, and also the agency of the actors who are the incumbents of the different positions. Insofar as the different social positions within a supply chain entail different, structured interests, the actors responding to those different interests will behave differently, although always in creative ways that cannot be captured by any kind of general laws.

The various actors will likewise be positioned differently in relation to any prevailing norms. Members of the general public, for example, who are the ultimate consumers of products of forced labor generally just want to purchase their goods at the prevailing low price to which they have become accustomed. For these consumers, low – or at least non-prohibitive – price is both an interest and a norm. To satisfy that demand, corporate suppliers have their own interest in lowered costs of production and, heretofore at least, their own prevailing norm not to ask how their suppliers down the line manage to achieve that outcome for them.

As above, for different actors along the chain, we are dealing not just with different structured interests but also with different norms. Thus, just as the phenomenon of trafficking is itself variegated, so are the matters of normativity associated with it.

We first need to ask what we even mean by normativity. At their least reflective, norms are shared, cultural expectations, the rightness of conforming to which is simply taken for granted. Sometimes such expectations are even enshrined in law. Legalization does not necessarily imply any greater moral weight. Legality and morality only overlap; they do not coincide. There are normative infractions like adultery that are highly immoral without necessarily being illegal and legal infractions like marijuana use that are widely not considered immoral. Norms also differ in depth, some being more fundamental than others, and they differ in provenance as well so that today there is a fair debate as to whether the emphasis in anti-trafficking legislation should shift from criminal to labor law (Jägers and Rijken 2014; Pope 2010).

Presumably, as well, when we speak of norms we also mean to include values, which, unlike norms, are not rules. If we are speaking about how to bring about normative change in the demand for trafficked persons, then we are speaking about changes in both values and norms. We are speaking about what Archer (1982; 1995) has termed *morphogenesis*. We need to ask then what the current norms and values are and how they need to be changed so as to reduce demand, and we need to ask how those changes are to be effected.

In the rest of this paper, I will address both questions. The second question above – how the necessary normative changes are to be effected – is about political marketing and how messages reach a fragmented, busy, distracted public audience. The paper will end with a discussion of this topic and with what the Catholic Church might do to be effective toward the necessary changes.

I will begin, however, in the next section with where Donati's paper leaves us and with the broad critical realist approach that I will bring to the matter. Then, I will cover some good news, or at least some partially good news. The good news is that when it comes to human trafficking, quite a bit of normative change has already occurred. My own country, the United States, has been a leader in the anti-trafficking movement, and there is already quite a bit of normative change there.

The bad or at least less good news is twofold. First, although all numbers relating to trafficking may be "guesstimates" of varying probity (Archer 2013b; Androff 2010; Chapkis 2003; Gozdziaik 2008; Gozdziaik and Collett 2005), it is unclear whether the normative changes so far have produced much change in the rate of trafficking (Jägers and Rijken 2014). We need here, however, to be careful. Just as we are without solid numbers on trafficking, we are as yet also without any measure or even articulated conception of success in relation to normative change and, likewise without any measure of what impact successful normative change might be expected to have in relation to the reduction of trafficking demand. Thus, although the normative change within the United States does not so far seem to have reduced the demand there for trafficked persons, it may well be that the problem would have been worse in the absence of such change.

The other less good news about normative change in the United States is that it has been focused narrowly on sexual trafficking and women (Chapkis 2003; Gozdziaik and Collett 2005). In North America, however, according to the data, the majority of detected trafficking victims involve forced labor of a nonsexual form (UNODC 2014: 34, 72) and more than a marginal percentage of males. The fourth section of my paper will therefore examine normative change in relation to forced labor of a non-sexual nature. I will then address what I call the social creation of moral indifference and end, as I say, with what can be done to overcome it.

Given the sub-issues to be covered, this paper will range over multiple disciplines: anthropology, economics, law, social work, and sociology. The thread might therefore be difficult to follow. To counteract that problem, I always tell my students that their papers should provide a strong thesis statement. I need to heed that advice myself.

So what is the overarching thesis of this paper toward which I will be moving? It is that when it comes to the reduction of demand in human trafficking through normative change, the problem and the solution mirror each other. In both respects, we need a broader perspective beyond trafficking itself. In the end, I will argue, the demand side of human trafficking is rooted in an economically based degradation of human sexuality, the human person, and human work. To challenge that degradation in a distracted, half-attentive world, the church's counter-message must be repeated, and repeated across multiple media. But human trafficking is not the only evil against which the church is contending. Thus, so as not to lose the message on trafficking among a plethora of messages against other evils, the church needs to collect them all under a more encompassing if more abstract umbrella. What the church needs to do, I will argue, is to push for the re-sanctification of the human person, a re-sanctification of sexuality, and the re-sanctification of human work. But first, as I say, let me begin with the social relationality to which Donati directed us.

Relationality, Relational Sociology, and Material Relations

Let us begin with a case described by Bales and Soodalter (2009: 84-85), which they title "Barbie and the Gorilla Pimp". Barbie is the name eventually donned by a college student named Shamere McKenzie. Shamere begins a romantic relationship with Corey Davis, who, unknown to Shamere, is a pimp, in fact a so-called "gorilla pimp" who makes regular use of violence. When Shamere expresses the need for money, Davis convinces her to try stripping and eventually cajoles her into prostitution.

Davis continues to manipulate Shamere both physically and psychologically so that even as Shamere prostitutes herself, their romantic relationship continues, so much so that Shamere even becomes Davis's partner, managing the other prostitutes in his stable and recruiting still other women into this life. In the end, tragically, Shamere becomes both victim and victimizer.

There are multiple features of this case that warrant attention. Here, I want to focus on the element of relationality. Even with regard to relationality, there are multiple things that might be said. At bottom, however, in this case as in any case of trafficking anywhere along the supply chain between recruiter and ultimate exploiter, we are, as Donati (2015a) suggests, dealing with social relations as the basic unit of analysis. As Donati (2015a: 4) puts it, "the moral norms that regulate the social sphere are generated starting from social relations and not from individuals as such or from systems as such. Social morality is altered with the morphogenesis of relations". Morality, Donati (2015a: 6) goes on to say, "is a relational fact".

In the case offered by Bales and Soodalter described above, Shamere's personhood is degraded by what Martin Buber (1971) terms the "I-it" relation in which Davis positions her, a relation in which Shamere is objectified, reduced to an it, a means to Davis's ends. Of course, the I-it relation is an aspect of all social life. When we interact with a sales clerk or, indeed, perform our own job, we all partially treat each other as "its", that is, as means to each other's ends. What both Buber and Kant admonish is that we never approach each other exclusively in terms of I-it relations, that is, that we never treat each other exclusively as means to our own ends. Instead, both insist that in all our encounters with each other, the I-it relation always be tempered by an overriding I-thou aspect in which we approach each other as you-to-you, which in turn orients us to each other as ends in ourselves.

In the relation between Shamere and Davis, it is, in abstract terms, the failure of the I-thou to override the I-it that constitutes Shamere's degradation. If the demand for this sort of trafficking is to be reduced at its source, we are talking about transforming how end users and suppliers like Davis relate to those trafficked.

Even in the case of Davis and Shamere, the I-thou does not disappear. It remains a part of their relationship. The I-thou is central to the *sui generis* relations Donati identifies with the social, and Donati sees considerable meaning built into them. In his "Manifesto for a Critical Realist Relational Sociology", Donati (2015b) argues that this meaning exceeds just the behavioral transactions on which American relational sociology concentrates (see Emirbayer 1997). Among the other elements Donati (2015b: 9) identifies are goals, means, norms, and cultural values.

I share with Donati the emphasis on the relational and further agree and will say more about it in a moment that the relational exceeds the transactional. I likewise agree with Donati that the *sui generis* social relations he describes, serving as he puts it as social molecules, fundamentally constitute the social realm. My own work (e.g., Porpora 1993), however, has focused on relations that, although less fundamentally constitutive of the social than the *sui generis* relations Donati describes, are nonetheless also socially consequential and analytically important to the topic at hand.

The relations I have in mind are less full-bodied than the *sui generis* relations of which Donati speaks in that they have less cultural meaning built into them. They do not embody goals, norms, or values, although they do

structure interests, and in structuring interests also structure cultural and personal perspectives. Thus, without being normative themselves, such relations contribute significantly to the normative.

The relations I have in mind are those that Marx as in his *Preface to the Critique of Political Economy* referred to as material relations. They include relations like power, dependency, competition, inequality, and exploitation. Certainly, power, dependency, and inequality are all in play in the case above of Shamere and Davis. Davis's control of Shamere, is a power he exerts over her, a relative power that is itself a form of inequality, rooted in still other inequalities such as an asymmetrical dependency.

The relations above are termed material because in lacking any cultural meaning built into them, where they exist they do so with an ontological objectivity that is independent of anyone's recognition of them. Whereas a marriage relation, not being material, can exist only if both the married partners have both a concept of marriage and of their own specific involvement in one, inequality and exploitation can exist without anyone's particular notice or conceptualization. One need not know one is exploited to be so. Similarly, the power of one person over another or the dependency of one on another can also go unrecognized by those so related (Porpora 1993).

Competition might seem an exception, but that impression comes precisely from a tendency to think in individualistic, transactional or interactionist terms. We tend to think of competition principally as the reciprocal behaviors of individual competitors, as, in other words, their interaction.

From a CR perspective, such a transactional view of competition is behaviorist, surrendering thereby analytical force. On the contrary, if competitors behave competitively, it is generally because they find themselves in a competitive situation. The competitive situation precedes the competitive behavior and is itself a relation, a *situational* as opposed to a *transactional* relation. As a *situational relation*, competition can arise in various ways, as from a limited good (relative to those who want it) or from a zero-sum arrangement where one's gain is another's loss. In any case, from a CR perspective, the situational relation is the real and explanatory structure behind the actual behavior observed.

Analytically, what connects the behavior with the situational relation is the category of interests. Relational situations structure interests. Where this connection is not understood, misdiagnosis results. We find exactly such misdiagnosis in the ICAT report. As the ICAT (2014: 4) report presents it, profit maximization – or cost minimization – is conventional among capitalists. Profit maximization, however, is not a convention or norm. It is a positional interest, rooted in the situational relation of competition in which capitalist firms are embedded. In that situation, should an individual firm not maximize profit, it will not stay in business long.

It thus is not as if it is just the habitus of capitalists to maximize profit, a habitus that can be changed simply by inculcating capitalists into a new norm. Norms may play a role in such change but only indirectly. Issuing new constitutive and regulative rules can change the nature of a game, but to avoid widespread cheating, it is the players' interests that must be changed. It is the players' interests that are changed in what seems the successful approach to global warming called *Cap and Trade* (see Duggin 2015). By commodifying polluting emissions, *Cap and Trade* renders corporations an interest in reducing them. I am not saying that trafficking should similarly be commodified, only that we should not mistake interests for norms and that to reduce demand, we need to use regulative norms to target interests.

In the case of sexual trafficking, criminalization is a normative change that does try to target interests. Where procurement anywhere along the supply chain is criminalized, it is the interest in that activity that is targeted. As long, however, as a demand for trafficked persons – women, girls, or even males – remains among the end users, i.e., the men who want to have sex with those trafficked, a derived interest in trafficking among suppliers will also remain.

To attack the demand for sexual trafficking at its source, it is necessary to reduce the interest in it among its end-users, i.e., the *Johns*, as is the recommendation of the *Legislative Guide to the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol* (ICAT 2014: 5; UNODOC 2004). That effect is partially achieved by criminalizing the Johns. Criminalizing the use of prostitutes – or at least of trafficked prostitutes – or more strongly enforcing or strengthening the criminal laws that already exist operates by reducing the demand for trafficking's end product by reducing the end-user's interest in that end product.

The logic is that if Johns themselves are more often held criminally liable or more strongly criminally liable for the use of at least trafficked prostitutes, they will demand guarantees of some sort that the prostitutes they use are not in fact trafficked. Demand for such guarantee will then in turn reduce end suppliers' interest in providing Johns with trafficked prostitutes with consequent decreases in derived demand down the supply chain.

According to the report of the *Norwegian Ministry of Justice* (2004), criminalizing the use of prostitutes as in Sweden may have reduced prostitution at least at the street level, although it also might just have driven

those transactions underground (see as well DeStefano 2008: 113-114; and also Strøm *et al.* 2015). In the Netherlands, by contrast, within the confines of a legal prostitution industry, there does seem an interest among both end users and end suppliers to protect against the illegal prostitution of trafficked persons, an interest that does seem to dampen supply. Still, as the paper by Cho *et al.* (2012) suggests, the basic question is the relative strengths of the scale and substitution factors.

In any case, the Catholic Church always adopts a strong deontological stance that does not permit moral utilitarian choice of a lesser over a greater evil. Thus, even if legalizing prostitution would dampen demand for human trafficking of a sexual nature, that is not an option the church will endorse. Nor for that matter will the United States, where anti-trafficking measures are likewise driven by a strong constituency that advocates the complete abolition of prostitution (DeStefano 2008; Gozdziaik and Collett 2005; Gozdziaik 2015). The problem is that where prostitution remains illegal, establishing a dichotomy between sex workers who are and who are not “deserving” of protection can end up threatening the welfare of those determined undeserving and complicating the issue of undocumented migration with which trafficking is entangled (Chapkis 2003).

In any case, criminalization of trafficking is ultimately limited because it reduces interest in trafficking's end product only by attaching a cost to its use (ICAT 2014: 9). Cost, however, is only one side of the equation. The root of the problem is the “benefit” side – in the case of sexual trafficking, the desire to use prostitutes. Altering that interest requires examination of why men employ prostitutes. Given, however, that only about 15% of men – at least in America – report ever having used a prostitute (Monto and Miltrod 2013), it is not clear how much lower the demand for prostitution can be pushed. Even if sexual congress were re-sacralized in the culture as a whole, a tall order in itself, it is doubtful how far and how strongly that effect would penetrate among men prone to the use of prostitutes. It may be that there is a lower limit to which demand can realistically be reduced.

Interests, as I say, are built into situational relations, the kinds of relations I have been calling material. As I conclude this section, it is to situational or material relations I want to return. Because material relations are not observable things, and because the social sciences and even popular culture tend to deny existence to what is unobservable, there is wide disregard of material relations. That disregard of material relations is analytically damaging not just generally but also specifically to the analysis of the demand for human trafficking. Which is why I am emphasizing them.

The disregard of material relations stems not just from the denial of existence to all that is unobservable but also from an individualist bias in human affairs that recognizes the causal intervention only of human actors and their actions. Again, that individualist bias obtains not just in popular culture but also in the social sciences. It leads to the equation of all social relations with human transactions. In the process, we lose the ability to analyze those transactions effectively. We see that very problem in the social analysis of Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman and his wife, Rose.

Smith's key insight was that both parties to an exchange can benefit and that so long as cooperation is strictly voluntary, no exchange will take place unless both parties do benefit (Friedman and Friedman 1979: 1-2).

The passage comes from the Friedmans' book, *Free to Choose*, which seeks to defend the unregulated capitalist market as the social guarantor of human freedom. Although not as popular as Milton Friedman's (2002) subsequent *Capitalism and Freedom*, *Free to Choose* was accompanied by an entire PBS television series, and the sentiments of the two are the same and still very much with us.

The problem with the neoliberal outlook the Friedman's passage commends is that in its implicit denial of what I have been calling situational or material relations, it drastically undermines our understanding of exploitative transactions. According to the passage, as long as a transaction between two parties is strictly voluntary on both sides, that transaction is beneficial to both sides.

Much depends on what the passage means by benefit and by “strictly voluntary”. Surely, if you press a gun to my chest and offer me the choice of my money or my life, it is to my benefit to choose the latter. We would not say, however, that accordingly, it is to my benefit to enter the ensuing transaction in which I hand my money over to you.

And what is meant by “strictly voluntary?” Even, in the above hold-up, as Archer (2013) observes, my agency does not disappear. I can always voluntarily refuse to hand over the money and let you take my life. Presumably, however, Friedman means to deny strict voluntariness from any transaction entered on the basis of physical force.

But there are other kinds of force that operate: Legal force; psychological force; the force of circumstance. The force of circumstance returns us to situational relations, for the disadvantaged position of one person relative to another is a situational or material relation of which the advantaged person can take advantage. When such

advantage of disadvantage is taken, the ensuing relation is not truly to the benefit of the disadvantaged party. Thus, what makes even non-physically forced prostitution still involuntary from the point of view of Catherine MacKinnon are “the conditions of sex inequality, abuse, and destitution” that drive women into it (MacKinnon 2005: 997-998; Pope 2010: 1871). That point requires a conception of material relations to see.

The weakness of Friedman’s individualist, non-relational analysis is even more pernicious in relation to forced labor of a nonsexual nature, for it represents one of the general sensibilities that allow it. On Friedman’s account, no labor transaction is exploitative that laborers choose of their own volition. It matters not how desperate their circumstances. On this account, insofar as being paid half the minimum wage is better than not being paid at all, it is to the workers’ benefit to accept the deal. So is being paid a quarter of the minimum wage and so on. The same goes for any adverse working conditions.

Thus, in the end, the individualist, transactional account expressed by Friedman impairs our ability to see exploitative labor relations, forced labor being only the most extreme form of which. True, when it comes to force, even the individualist, transactional account will balk, but countenancing all forms of labor exploitation short of force makes it more difficult to attend to the forced variety and more difficult for us to care about it. In fact, the individualist sensibility is more likely to incline us toward what psychologist Alan Ryan (1976) termed the normative tendency “to blame the victim”. We see that tendency often operative, for example, in cases of rape, and it functions as well when we blame workers for “voluntarily” entering labor transactions that are not really beneficial to them.

If we are to reduce demand for forced labor of a nonsexual nature, we must improve our sensitivity to labor exploitation of all forms. That insight is the foundational reasoning behind the suggestion in the ICAT report for “Measures and mechanisms to improve labour conditions in sectors vulnerable to the use of victims trafficked for labour exploitation, through strengthening and enforcing labour standards and regulations” (ICAT 2014: 11). In the contemporary world, however, if anything, the tendency is in the opposite direction, where, in the United States, for example, it has been a struggle even to raise an abysmally low minimum wage.

Normative Change Regarding Trafficking in the United States

I remarked earlier that we are still without clear measures or even conception of how to measure normative change in relation to trafficking or its effectiveness. The two should not be conflated. That is to say, how much normative change has been made is a variable distinct from the effectiveness of that change in solving the problem. As I observed above in relation to sexual trafficking, there may be a lower limit to demand regardless of how much normative change we effect.

With that said, I will cover the normative changes in the United States in an impressionistic way. Those changes include the normative engagement of the general public. When in January I started writing this paper in earnest, my own Catholic parish held a forum on trafficking on a Saturday afternoon that brought out an audience of about forty people. The following weekend, my neighbor’s mega Baptist Church held an even more expansive array of events on trafficking that included a Friday evening theatrical performance on the subject. When I tried to attend their Saturday program workshop, I was informed there was no more room.

The coincidence of these church events was no coincidence. In December 2012, President Barack Obama proclaimed January *National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month*, putting the topic of human trafficking on par with February’s *African American History* month. January 13 in particular is *Human Trafficking Awareness Day*. An associated Facebook site, frequently visited, further raises awareness.

Across the country, there very frequently are newspaper reports about trafficking. When I conducted an exploratory Lexusnexu search for 2014, hundreds of articles were elicited. On February 25, 2015, just as I came to this point in my writing, there was a news item in my hometown newspaper, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, headlined, “Ukrainian Brothers Convicted of Trafficking” (Roebock 2015). Significantly, the piece was about forced labor, and it detailed typical features of that enterprise. The operation was small scale, involving forced custodial work. Victims “were lured to the United States with promises of stable jobs” only to be treated “like slaves”. The brothers “ensured their workers’ continued labor with beatings, sexual assaults, and threats sent to family in Eastern Europe”. Significantly, the brothers were tried by a federal rather than state level jury and convicted on federal charges of racketeering, which carry heavier sentencing – already 20 years and life imprisonment for the brothers’ two other brothers previously convicted for their involvement with this crime.

Now, sometimes funded at least partially at a federal level, there are a great many organizations operating in the United States that are devoted to trafficking and its victims. At the forum held by my church, two local ones were represented: *Covenant House* and *Dawn’s Place*, which assist young females, often run-aways from American homes, who have been so victimized. Operating at the national or even international level, there are many anti-Trafficking organizations in the United States, all with their own web sites: *Innocents at Risk*; *Safe Horizon*; *Rescue: Freedom*; *Allies Against Slavery*; *Network of Human Assistance*; and so on.

The *U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops* has a web site on human trafficking as do the national organizations of other religious denominations. My own university offers a three-course certificate on the subject (Drexel 2015). Even celebrities have gotten involved as in the video campaign launched by actors Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore “Real Men Don’t Buy Girls” (Kavner 2011). American television has aired documentaries on trafficking and even episodes of routine programs – for example, a recent episode of *Madam Secretary* – that deal with trafficking. So in the United States, there has been a concerted, longstanding, multi-media campaign on this issue.

The U.S. government has actually been active on the trafficking problem for over 15 years, an interest that grew out of its more general efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to combat organized crime and which led the United States to begin drafting a number of international protocols on the trafficking of drugs and guns and on corruption and money-laundering (DeStefano 2008). After the G7 countries were first mobilized in this direction, the United Nations took the reigns toward an international convention on organized crime, which encompassed among many other specific offenses, a protocol on human trafficking. For the 1998 meetings on that matter in Vienna, drafts of the protocol were jointly submitted by the United States and Argentina.

As the proposed protocol eventually adopted by the United Nations called on signatories to pass legislation dealing with human trafficking, the Clinton administration was already pressing the United States in this direction (DeStefano 2008). Thus, coinciding with the December 2000 international signing of the *U.N. Convention on Organized Crime* in Palermo, Italy – together with its protocols on human trafficking and migrant smuggling – the Clinton administration in November 2000 signed into U.S. law *The Victims of Violence and Protection Act* (TVPA), which, *inter alia*, created the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking (TIP Office) (DeStefano 2008). The TVPA has most recently been reauthorized in 2013 by President Barack Obama.

How effective have all these normative changes been in changing the overall moral consciousness of the United States in relation to human trafficking? It is important to be realistic in our expectations. As reported by a well-known PEW (2008) study, aside from the weather, no national or international news story is closely followed by any more than a quarter of the U.S. public. Thus, despite all the effort, it is unclear how salient the issue is with Americans generally. Consulting the *Roper Archives* of national public opinion polls, I found none that asked respondents anything about human as opposed to drug trafficking. If, as seems the case, the issue is a priority for the U.S. Catholic bishops, that sense of urgency is not making its way to the parishes. The forum on trafficking held at my very socially active parish at the initiative of my very socially engaged pastor was an accident. Initially, my pastor was unaware that January was national *Trafficking Prevention Month* and, at the time, frankly, so was I.

In the United States, however, the main problem with the normative change in relation to human trafficking has been its very narrow focus on sexual trafficking. In fact, when the Bush administration reauthorized the TVPA in 2003, the legislation contained a rider precluding federal funding for any non-governmental, anti-trafficking organization that failed explicitly to state its opposition to prostitution.

That so-called “anti-prostitution pledge” was struck down as unconstitutional in 2013 by the U.S. Supreme Court, but in the interim and still today, it unleashed a controversy between those who do and do not think that the abolition of trafficking should be tied to the abolition of prostitution. It is a controversy that, with conservative faith-based organizations on the pro side, has actually split the feminist movement between those who consider prostitution intrinsically violence against women and those who, on the contrary, uphold safe and legal sex work as a valid occupation for women. Clearly in part through U.S. efforts, this controversy has also been playing out internationally.

The controversy signifies the narrow focus on sexual trafficking in the United States. Despite statistics indicating the contrary, the model victim of trafficking in the United States is the young, female, trafficked sex worker (Chapkis 2003).

This narrow national focus on sexual trafficking and the associated moral crusade against prostitution has elicited counter-charges of *moral panic* (Doezema 1999; Weitzer 2007), a term that goes back in academia to Marshall McLuhan (1994) and suggests a manipulated, implicitly unwarranted uproar over some aspect of public morality. Certainly, it is true that the U.S. government itself had to admit that its earliest figures associated with sexual trafficking were overblown (Chapkis 2003; Gozdzia 2008; DeStefano 2008), and if, as arguably is the case, only 25% of working prostitutes are trafficked, attacking prostitution as a whole may not be the most effective solution to demand reduction (DeStefano 2008: 115).

Although the broader issues of this controversy lie beyond the scope of this paper, we can at least leave this section with two pertinent observations about it. I remarked at the beginning of this paper that we are without any formal measure of successful normative change in relation to trafficking. Certainly, however, we can say that if normative change has been such as to elicit charges of moral panic, the change in or challenge to existing

norms has at least been successful at some level. The second observation is, as I have been saying, that the controversy points to an overly narrow focus. There needs to be a widening of normative reflection to forced labor beyond sexual trafficking. There is where we go in the next section.

Forced Labor of a Nonsexual Nature: What Norms Need Changing?

As Bales and Soodalter (2004: 6, 54) present it, forced labor or slavery is “capitalism at its worst”, one “end of a spectrum of labor violations” (see also Pope 2010: 1858). Gallagher (2001: 792) puts it similarly, describing trafficking as “woven deeply and inextricably into the fabric of an inequitable, unjust, and hypocritical world”.

As a material relation, inequality is central to the problem of human trafficking in terms of both supply and demand, and in fact the two are interlinked. It is the cheapness of the production input afforded by forced labor that accounts for its demand, and the destitution of the forced laborers that makes their labor so cheap. Normative changes that affect inequality thus affect simultaneously both supply and demand.

Inequality is even more acute now in our neoliberal era, with free trade agreements allowing the easy transfer of capital and commodities across borders. In the words of New York financier Robert A. Johnson, “Now Capital has wings . . . Capital can deal with twenty labor markets at once and pick and choose among them. Labor is fixed in one place. So power has shifted” (from Pope 2010: 1867).

Power indeed has shifted. It is no wonder then that workers, faced with that power shift, seek to migrate to higher wage countries, even illegally if they must. That condition in turn is precisely what makes them as undocumented workers vulnerable to forced labor in a way that is entangled with immigration. In fact, under these conditions, immigration law ends up serving as a form of labor control (Pope 2010: 1867).

Free Trade is promoted largely as reducing costs to consumers, but it cannot be forgotten that to consume, consumers also must earn. Even working at a living wage in the developed world, workers frequently are – and are encouraged by the market to be – overspent (Schor 1999). Thus, even in the developed world, consumer demand is for low prices.

In fact, let me be clearer. It is part of world-scale inequality that consumers in the developed world demand and are accustomed to getting a wide array of what they consume at prices that depend on various levels of exploited labor – from the vegetables picked by migrant labor to our smartphones – mine included – manufactured in places like China at a fraction of the wages that would be paid in developed countries.

In a sense, then, from the standpoint of inequality across the globe, what we call the developed world might better be termed *overdeveloped* (Erich and Erlich 1971), reflecting the more than its “fair share” of the world’s bounty that it consumes. The *Fair Trade* movement attempts to right that wrong, but if workers in the undeveloped world are to be paid a higher, fairer wage for what they produce, consumers in the overdeveloped world will need to downsize their consumption by adopting simpler lifestyles. That moral shift, however, conflicts with current consumer – and corporate – interests.

As it stands, the intense consumer demand for low prices is reflected backward as derived demand for low production costs among end suppliers – in many cases, large corporations. Normally, the large corporations do not themselves directly employ forced labor, but they also often do not check back to insure that the same purity is practiced by their suppliers. On the contrary, the large, corporate, end suppliers – often collectively *oligopsonies* – project the pressure for low prices back onto their suppliers. That pressure actually does encourage the smaller-scale, less formal suppliers of the corporate suppliers to employ forced labor (Pope 2010; Jägers and Rijken 2014). Thus, as where forced labor is entwined with immigration, private contractors will purchase the debt that illegal migrants owe *coyotes* thereby acquiring cheap, indentured servants (Pope 2010). The problem is compounded when the enslaved work side by side with unenslaved workers, documented and not, who experience the same working conditions and only meager pay. Then, not only is it difficult to distinguish the two categories but also not much reason to do so. The fundamental issue here is labor rights and the dignity of work.

It may be time, as both Pope (2010) and Jägers and Rijken (2014) suggest, for a new approach to anti-trafficking legislation that emphasizes labor law rather than criminal law. A basic question then is which point in the supply chain is best attacked.

Although the large corporations may not themselves be the ones actually doing the trafficking, it may well be their demand for low cost supplies that is the fulcrum of the system. That lesson is suggested by a story told by Bales and Soodalter (2010) and picked up as well by Pope (2010) about tomato workers in Immokolee, Florida. The workers, who included the indentured among their ranks, realized that trafficking and exploitative working conditions would continue as long as the big chains like *Taco Bell* demanded the lowest possible prices from the suppliers by whom the workers were actually employed. It was thus the big chains the workers targeted (Bales and Soodalter 2010: 61; Pope 2010: 1864).

In the end, drawing support from labor unions, students, and the general public, the workers organized a boycott against *Taco Bell*. Their goal was to get the big buyers to take responsibility for their less formal suppliers and to cease purchasing produce harvested by enslaved and exploited workers. The campaign worked – and worked not only with *Taco Bell* but also eventually with *Subway*, *McDonald's*, *Burger King*, and *Whole Foods* (Pope 2010: 1864).

In effect, through the worker and citizen pressure advocated by ICAT (2014) as well, a moral shift was effected in corporate culture. In 2010 in California at least, that kind of shift has been enshrined into law. The *California Transparency in Supply Chains Act* “requires companies over a certain size with any retail or manufacturing presence in the state of California to post on their website what, if anything, they are doing to prevent slavery and human trafficking in their supply chain” (Jägers and Rijken 2014). The law does not require the companies actually to do anything about their supply chains but only to be transparent about them. Still, it is a start and the type of legislation that can reduce the demand for trafficked persons. Similar legislation is before the U.S. Congress (Jägers and Rijken 2014: 60).

Ultimately, it is with the general public, both as citizens and consumers, that change must occur. It is the general public as citizens who must press their legislatures for the type of law enacted in California. It is as both citizens and as consumers that the public must bring pressure to bear against exploitation and slavery.

But ultimately it is as consumers that the public in the overdeveloped world must change. They must come to terms with downsized consumption. *Fair Trade* purchasing is, as noted, one action step the public can take. Another is what is called *Local Purchasing*, which emphasizes the purchase of local products and food (see Pollan 2007).

Local purchasing is urged for several reasons, including environmental sustainability. Among the reasons, however, is greater knowledge of and responsibility over supply chains. Where supply chains sprawl around the world, it is very difficult to know the conditions under which things are produced. Where goods are produced locally, it is much easier to insure that production does not depend on exploited, trafficked labor.

All such efforts, however, if successful, will result in downsized, more responsible consumption. Will the general publics in the overdeveloped world make such sacrifice? We turn now to the difficulties of effecting such normative change.

Techniques of Neutralization

Techniques of neutralization refer to psychological techniques first identified under that label by Sykes and Matza (1957) through which people neutralize their sense of responsibility for actions that harm others. Sykes and Matza identified five – denial of responsibility; denial of injury; denial of victim; condemning the condemners; and appealing to high loyalties, but there are others. Techniques of neutralization draw on norms existent in the culture but speaking of them as techniques implies personal agency, and indeed they ultimately are employed by individuals.

The theoretical point here is that individuals will take responsibility for their actions only if they resist or overcome these techniques for or tendencies toward responsibility neutralization. Not everything we will identify in this section is best described as a technique. Some, like what Latané and Darley (1970) called the *diffusion of responsibility*, are structural in nature, and some, like what I (Porpora *et al.* 2013) call the *macro-moral disconnect* are partly cultural. We see here in the span of factors from the cultural to the structural to the individual the need for what Archer calls SAC.

Who are the individuals to whom this analysis applies? In the end, all of us: traffickers, end users, and the by-standing general public whose responsibility as citizens it is to intervene. In this section, we will hardly have space to cover extensively this matter, which has been the focus of my own research. The goal instead will be to provide a sense of what is involved.

I will begin with traffickers and then proceed to widen the circle. One of the people with whom I spoke was a local prison chaplain. She told me of an encounter in the prison with a pimp, who was bragging about his enterprise. Shocked, the chaplain accosted the pimp, asking him whether any of the prostitutes in his stable included his own sisters.

The pimp, the chaplain told me, became immediately indignant, asking her in turn, “What do you think I am?”

The pimp’s reaction is interesting because indignation is a moral emotion. It reflects a sense of having been wronged. Not even the pimp then is beyond morality.

What is interesting is what the pimp is doing with morality, because it exhibits actually two techniques of neutralization that operate not just with pimps but more generally. Both operated, for example, in the Holocaust. The first is a narrowing of the universe of obligation, the universe of those to whom one feels one owes moral consideration (Fein 1979). Although the pimp's moral universe is exceedingly small, whenever our moral universe fails to encompass the whole of humanity, it is likewise too narrow.

The second technique of neutralization that may operate here is the one Hannah Arendt found in Eichmann, the compartmentalization of an entire domain of life, walling it off from moral consideration. Whenever we wall off business from morality – whenever we allow ourselves, like Mafiosi, to describe a decision as a business as opposed to a moral matter as if the two are separable – we do the same.

Copley (2014) examines other techniques of neutralization as they relate to sex traffickers, but, again, they also apply more widely. Marking the kind of contraction of the moral universe shared by the pimp above, Copley (2014: 52) reports one Czech trafficker saying that his forced laborers were “more like things that I own” than employees”. Traffickers likewise deny their injury to their victims, sometimes even acknowledging victims' vulnerability due to poverty, saying they (the traffickers) help their trafficked workers to survive and that the workers get used to their position. Traffickers also neutralize their own responsibility by citing the role of others. Thus, one Indian brothel owner “emphasized parental agency in bringing young girls into the sex trades by stating “my girls are here to earn money . . . their parents desire this” (Copley 2014: 51). Politicians likewise defer responsibility, saying, for example, “It's a cop's job, not a politician's, to root out crime and corruption” (Copley 2014: 51).

As we have noted, the same techniques of neutralization can also apply to corporate executives, who may attribute full responsibility for trafficking to their suppliers, ignoring their own complicity in the exchange. It is for that reason that legislation like California's *Transparency in Supply Chains Act* is so important. Not only does the legislation expressly make it a corporation's responsibility to vouch for its supply chain but in doing so, it helps foster a corporate culture more sensitive to the problem.

It is also the end users, however, who engage in techniques of neutralization, and often the same ones. Apparently common among Johns, for example, is a hyper-commodification that makes them feel entitled, once they pay their money, to demand whatever they want from prostitutes. They expect “customer care” (Farley *et al.* 2009). For many, the most intimate I-thou relation is reduced to an I-it. As one patron put it, “We're living in the age of instant coffee, instant food. This is instant sex” (Farley *et al.* 2009: 7). For many, engaging a prostitute is a normal part of men's coming of age. Many blame the victim, subscribing to a stereotypical Madonna-whore dichotomy. Thus, one man says, “I wouldn't go out on a date or be in a relationship with one of them. I don't see myself going out with someone who has been paid for sex. I'm an old fashioned person, Roman Catholic” (Farley . 2009: 15).

Ultimately, if there is to be movement against trafficking in all its forms, it is the general public itself that must be moved. It must be moved to take action as a citizenry to demand more from its governments, and it must be moved as blocs of consumers to repudiate goods and services founded on exploited labor.

The barriers to such public movement are many. Pope Francis spoke of the “globalization of indifference” (Allen Jr. 2013), and the social creation of moral indifference – or what looks like indifference – has occupied a good deal of my own work.

Sometimes, it is not that the public is actually indifferent but uninformed. The job then is to better inform them. Sometimes, however, the problem goes beyond a lack of information to general mindset. Just as buying sex appears normal to many Johns, a market place built on exploited labor appears normal to many ordinary consumers. In such context, it is not the purchase of such goods and services that appears deviant but its repudiation.

Just as in a world that commodifies everything, Johns come to think of sex just that way, so do consumers in general come so to think of all labor just as a commodity. The sanctity of labor needs to be reclaimed.

Just as Johns blame the prostitutes they use for the pass to which they have come, so too in an individualistic world without relationality can consumers in general think it is exploited workers who are to blame for the business arrangements they have accepted. The general public must be brought out of its individualism to view of themselves as what Archer and Donati (2015) call relational subjects, each connected ontologically to all.

Even when the general public comes to see the problem, there still can be what is called a “value-action gap” (Blake 1999), a failure of members of the public to act on the values they have. Sometimes, as in the case of the diffusion of responsibility, each one sees the initiative as always someone else's to take. The need is to organize responsibility.

Sometimes even when the public comes to see the problem, there remains what I have called a *macro-moral disconnect*, a failure of the public to see that morality entails not just what each does alone within the sphere of one's private life but also how all act together as a collective in public space. There is a need for the Church to emphasize sins of omission as well as commission and once again, like the Liberation Theologians of the 1980s, to speak of collective as well as of individual sin.

Sometimes, finally, even when the public comes to see the problem and even when it comes to own its responsibility to redress it, members of the public can find themselves morally saturated: So many separate problems; how can any one person address them all? What is needed is for the church to find the common core to these problems and thereby bring them all within the compass of a common agenda. How to do that? We come to the paper's final section.

What Can the Church Do?

How do we bring about normative change in the demand for trafficked persons? That was the question I was asked to address. To answer it, I first needed to clarify it. Normative change could imply change exclusively in moral sensibility, but, although it ultimately is moral sensibility that needs to change, moral norms are not the only norms that need to change. As demand is ultimately driven by interests, we need regulations, not necessarily moral, that reduce the interests that drive the demand for trafficked persons. Interests in turn are rooted in relations and so we had along the way to come to a better understanding of relationality.

Taking a relational view involves seeing things from a larger, relational perspective. In this case, the relational view zooms us out from looking at trafficking directly to the larger, structural forces behind it. I cited global inequality as a primary motor for trafficking in its impact on both supply and demand. On the demand side, I cited the condition of overconsumption, that is, our allowing ourselves to consume goods and services that depend on the exploitation – sexual or otherwise – of labor. What frees our consciences to so utilize exploited labor is the now global reign of a market mentality that renders it normative to commodify everything, including sex, including persons, including labor.

If the normalcy of untempered commodification is the ultimate problem on the demand side, then it is that normalcy that needs to be challenged, and it needs to be challenged by calling on the general public to challenge it.

How to do that? As I suggested, the solution mirrors the problem. To reach a half-attentive, over-saturated public, messages have to be repeated. On one estimate, to move “audiences from unawareness to action requires anywhere from 7 to 15 exposures – and sometimes more” (Phillips 2013: 22). The repetition needs to be across multiple media and it needs to be consistent. The problem for the church is that it has many issues to which it wants the public – or at least its own members – to respond. The problem is that each such call eclipses the others, and all together drown the audience in conflicting, competing messages.

But just as the problem comes to head in commodification, so can the solution. If on the demand side the ultimate problem is the complete reduction of sex, persons, and labor to commodities, then it is the sanctity of each that needs to be reclaimed.

As sanctity is abstract and therefore encompassing, the message can be repeated and repeated without being repetitive. It need not be repetitive because each individual message can speak of sanctification in relation to a different object – sexuality, persons, labor – and in relation to different aspects. In terms of different aspects, consider how tied up trafficking now is with immigration and immigration with global inequality. The messages can thus be combined under an encompassing commitment that makes sense and that has emotional draw.

What I am suggesting was done in 1983, when U.S. Cardinal Joseph Bernardin popularized the term *seamless garment*. It was a sound bite and an effective one. It collected under one overarching notion “that issues such as abortion, capital punishment, militarism, euthanasia, social injustice, and economic injustice all demand a consistent application of moral principles that value the sacredness of human life” (Wikipedia 2015). The seamless garment was a piece of political marketing. If the church is to have an effect on the demand side of human trafficking, it is to political marketing it must turn. The place of that turn, however, must be broader than human trafficking itself.

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