Vulnerabilities of Young People: Going Beyond the Public-Private Dichotomy

Brian K. Gran* and Bradley Powell**

*School of Law and Sociology Department, Case Western Reserve University. Brian.Gran@Case.Edu.
**Sociology Department, Case Western Reserve University. Bradley.Powell@Case.Edu.
Vulnerabilities of Young People: Going Beyond the Public-Private Dichotomy

Across many societies, young people spend much of their childhood within the private sphere. Considered a place of safety and security for young people, the private sphere often is a site of vulnerability. This article demonstrates that the public-private dichotomy obscures potential dangers facing young people. We propose an analytical framework consisting of public, market, social, and individual sectors that can be used to comprehend more clearly threats young people face amidst contradictions and conflicts of living in public and private spheres. We apply a multi-sector, life course framework to three types of bodily control that affect young people’s lives across eleven countries: assault, sale, and consent. After an analysis of these three types of bodily control, the article concludes by identifying questions and research areas that may lead to greater insights into vulnerabilities young people encounter in the private sphere.
Introduction

Across nearly all societies, the private sphere is a key area where a young person spends a great deal of childhood. Rather than a place of safety and security, the private sphere often is a site of vulnerability for young people. Sometimes depicted as a haven safe from the outside world, the private sphere may be a location beyond government’s reach.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how the public-private dichotomy obscures vulnerabilities affecting young people. This article presents a multi-sector, life course framework useful for studying childhood. Application of this framework demonstrates that behind the public-private dichotomy are vulnerabilities young people face as they transition through the life course. This article presents this application to three types of bodily control that affect young people’s lives: assault, sale, and consent. After an analysis of these three types of bodily control across eleven countries, the article concludes by identifying questions and research areas that may lead to greater insights into vulnerabilities young people encounter in the private sphere.

Vulnerabilities of Young People

Childhood is sometimes idealized. What is an ideal childhood? The answer depends on the place where and the time when you live. It may include safety and protection, nurturing by mothers, and education by supportive teachers (Horton 2008). An ideal childhood is a time of comfort, plenty of food, leisure and play, and a strong circle of family and friends (Honore 2009). It is intended to be a time of innocence, when a young person is protected from dangers outside the private sphere, which they increasingly face as they transition to adulthood.

One useful way for studying how individuals progress through time is the life course. The life course is a sociological perspective that considers human development as a temporal progression of transitions into (and out of) normalized age roles embedded within social
institutions and historical context (Elder, Kirkpatrick-Johnson, and Crosnoe, 2003). From this perspective much of life occurs within three socially constructed stages: training, work, and retirement. These three stages are frequently referred to as the tripartite life course or the three boxes of life (Kohli 2007). According to the dichotomous public-private model, much of childhood occurs largely within the private sphere, but this training stage may in fact include interaction with multiple sectors as individuals enter the public sector as school students or the market as paid employees.

We add a contextualization of the influence of the public-market-social-individual sectors in order to better understand the vulnerabilities young people face as they progress through the life course (please see Figure 1).
For many young people, childhood is a part of life fraught with vulnerabilities. These include physical, emotional, or social challenges. We are vulnerable to disaster, disease, economic distress, political conflict, or merely being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Arising from this shared vulnerability is a need for human rights (Turner 2006). Young people may face vulnerabilities to their bodies that stem from socially constructed power differentials, which may make it difficult to challenge an older person.

It is widely perceived that government can protect young people, but laws may exacerbate young people’s vulnerabilities. In some societies, governments will not intervene to
protect young people from vulnerabilities of physical harm. Through their infamous decision, DeShaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services (1989), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled a young person did not possess the right to government-provided social services. Government social services were not provided that could have prevented the DeShaney father from physically abusing his son to the point of permanent disability.

A case that grabbed international news arises from the death of a Polish boy in his family home. Over thirty years ago in Poland, a step mother, designated Eva T., beat her six year old step son to death. The woman’s husband, the boy’s father, did not intervene to save the boy. The woman served ten years in prison and her husband five years. Following the time she served in prison, the woman joined a convent, then left the convent to become a secondary school teacher and a Ministry of Education licensed expert. Because the woman’s criminal record was cleaned after ten years, the head master who hired the woman as a teacher did not know of her past (ITVL 2013; Dziennik.Pl. 2013). Both the DeShaney boy and the step son of Eva T. were beaten by people societies expect will protect and nurture young people. Government officials seemed incapable of intervening to protect the young men. In both of these cases, an adult trusted by the young person, as well as by other adults, at a minimum committed a criminal assault against the young person. The interests of adults may conflict with those of young people, even when those adults are designated as responsible for young people’s well being. As young people transition between public and private spheres, the roles of these adults can become less defined.

Young people are not only vulnerable due to failures of institutions and actors expected to protect them. Young people are vulnerable to “private” institutions, such as the market place. Although disagreements persist over estimates of human trafficking, thousands of young people
are sold into labor and sex trafficking each year, according to the International Labour Organization (2012).

Leaders of governments have expressed concern and condemnation of trafficking. Over 160 national governments have ratified or acceded to the U.N. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC). The OPSC supplements the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child not only by offering definitions, such as sale of children, but by requiring governments that ratify or accede to the OPSC to treat sale of children as a criminal activity. Consequently, the OPSC obligates state members to punish sale of children, trafficking of children, and other activities as crimes. In addition, the OPSC articulates rights of young people against their sale, trafficking, prostitution, and exploitation. Some countries have established their own laws to contend with trafficking. For example, in 2000, the United States government passed the “Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act” (sometimes known as TVPA or TVA). In Poland, various laws, such as Penal Code Article 253, are employed to prevent trafficking, prosecute trafficking crimes, and protect trafficking victims.

Despite these international treaties and governments’ promises to implement the treaties back home, governments all over the world fail to prevent trafficking of young people into involuntary labor and prostitution. Trafficking is a problem plaguing every corner of the globe, one not limited to either developed or developing countries. Just recently in the United States more than one hundred and fifty were arrested for child sex trafficking in a major law enforcement operation (Ingram 2013). One group reports North Korean women are trafficked into China (Humantrafficking.org 2013). In Peru, government officials are investigating sex trafficking of young women from Bolivia and Peru into a small mining town (Cawley 2013). The
BBC (2013) recently reported on a trial surrounding trafficking of young people from Algeria to France. The Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2013) recently published a report that called on the Polish government to prohibit servitude expressly so that domestic Polish law clearly outlaws it. This group also recommended to the Polish government that it take further steps to identify victims, plus ensure those victims receive services.

Laws may place young people in vulnerable situations in which they are precluded from making their own private decisions. In many societies, young people cannot make decisions about their bodies until they reach a specified age; this includes decisions about medical procedures and their privacy. Until the specified age, medical providers and caretakers possess rights to make such decisions, with the implicit directive to act in the best interests of the child. This power difference, of course, makes young people vulnerable to decisions made by adults, who may not share the same perspectives and values of the young person.

These three examples of vulnerabilities facing young people share the characteristic that the vulnerability takes place in the private spheres where government is reluctant or unable to intervene. In most societies, governments are unwilling to intervene or incapable of intervening into private domains to prevent abuse, halt sales of young people, or enable young people to control their bodies.

**Going Beyond the Public-Private Dichotomy**

Among the most powerful of social constructions is the public-private dichotomy. What we typically mean by public is government, whether services are provided or financed by the government. What we mean by private is an area or an action in the market or undertaken by an individual or his or her family (Weintraub 1997: 7-10). Sometimes called “the grand
dichotomy,” contemporary notions of public and private may have a foundation in Aristotle’s notion of the state. Aristotle distinguished the state from the community from the household. For Aristotle, the state was comprised of male citizens. The state consisted of communities, which were groups of households governed by male citizens. The household consisted of a husband and wife; the husband and wife constitutionally ruled over each other. The household also included father and children; the father ruled over his children as a monarch, and the children respected him as a royal ruler. Government, consisting of male citizens, would not intervene into the family unless the head of the household, a male citizen, violated rules surrounding a household.

Romany (1994) criticizes Aristotle’s conception of the household, noting that the wife did not possess power in the household to act as a royal ruler. She also points out that government rarely intervened into the home. Consequently, rights and interests of weaker household members were ignored. Romany (1994) has expressed an important concern about human rights relevant to children. Human rights, which an individual can employ against a nation state, typically cannot be employed within the private sector, in particular the home. For many individuals, the home is not an environment where fundamental rights are observed.

This review of Aristotle’s conception suggests a closer look at the contemporary public-private dichotomy may be fruitful. An examination of the private aspect, in particular, not only may reveal a lack of clarity, it may reveal hidden dangers. It is easy to think of relationships and situations that muddy the public-private distinction (Lane 1985, 10-18; Kvist 1997, 21-22). In some societies, nonprofit organizations cannot function and provide services without government support. Governments regulate actors and institutions that make up markets, encouraging individuals and institutions to contract and trade with confidence. Governments often draw lines around individuals’ privacy interests and rights. In many contemporary societies, government
rarely is out of the picture. A government’s policies may impinge on individual actors at any point between birth and death (Leisering 2003). When government is not involved, it is reasonable to consider Romany’s concern about governments’ reluctance to intervene in private activities. For these reasons and others, the public-private dichotomy has been designated a “false dichotomy.” On the one hand, many social concerns are not exclusively public or private. Human rights are considered a public concern, yet frequently are crucial to individuals living at home or working in the market place. The line separating public and private often is fuzzy. On the other hand, the private label hides vastly different social undertakings, ranging from individual efforts to market exchanges to collaborations. The public-private dichotomy at a minimum may be inadequate for studying social life.

An alternate conception of the public-private dichotomy may provide insights into potential vulnerabilities young people face. Employment of four sectors, public, market, social, and individual, may provide superior insights into how young people fare. The public sector typically is the state. Many states employ the welfare state to distribute goods and services (Briggs 1961; Amenta 1993: 750). The second sector is the market sector (Gran 2003), which is where an actor is paid or pays for an objective. The defining characteristic of the market sector is that it revolves around a contract, through which a good or service is purchased. The third sector is the social sector (Gran 2003; Evers 1990: 18). The social sector is an arena outside of the state or employment relationship where individuals cooperate. Through their cooperation, they may provide goods and services, including meals and housing (cf. Fraser 1989: 147, 156; Wuthnow 1991: 7). The family as well as a nonprofit organization may belong in the social sector.

The social sector conceptually is separate from the state and market because it is where collective efforts are undertaken, such as by nonprofit organizations and families. The social
sector also is distinct from where an individual pursues objectives (Gran 2003; Calhoun 1998: 26). When considering young people, separate consideration of the social sector is useful because of the historical precedent of relying on the family to care for young people and their interests. Delineating the social sector is important when political leaders and analysts call for shifting former government responsibilities to the private sector, but have in mind collective undertakings, including ones conducted by religious organizations and families, rather than the market.

The fourth sector is the individual sector (Gran 2003; Rein 1995). This is the sector where an individual is responsible for his or her own welfare and rights (Graetz 1988: 109). Individuals’ rights and interests are often depicted as private. On the one hand, a child living in a family home will probably rely on parents or caretakers to implement his or her rights. On the other hand, a child in state care will likely depend on government officials to implement his or her rights. A child living on his or her own, however, must exert and implement rights on his or her own. Attention to the individual sector highlights fundamental differences for young people who live in different circumstances.

This four-sector conception allows collaboration among sectors. Such collaboration may not be intentional, but better captures social reality that can be hidden behind public and private labels.

Case Selection and Data

Eleven countries were selected for analysis. Two countries were selected from each of the World Bank regions (World Bank 2013). For the African region, the Republic of Congo and South Africa were selected. Japan and North Korea were selected from Asian countries. Poland and Uzbekistan were selected from the European and Central Asia region. From the Latin
America and Caribbean region, Costa Rica and Peru were selected. Algeria and Jordan were selected from the Middle East and North Africa region. The United States was also included.

Data for corporal punishment come from the Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children (endcorporalpunishment.org). As its name suggests, the Global Initiative seeks to encourage governments to ban physical punishment of young people. Information about assault laws is country specific. Information about trafficking is from the U.S. State Department 2013 Trafficking in Persons Reports. Evidence on age of consent to participate in sexual activity comes from sources specific to the eleven examined countries. Information about age at which a young person can obtain a legal abortion is from the United Nations. Finally, age at which a young person may perform military service is from the U.S. C.I.A. World Factbook.

Analysis

Corporal punishment of young people

One instance that highlights young people’s vulnerability hidden behind the public-private dichotomy is bodily control. Across most countries, the act of an assault, which can be defined as “[i]ntentionally putting another person in reasonable apprehension of an imminent harmful or offensive contact,” as well as the act of battery, actual physical contact, is illegal when one person assaults or batters another. In some situations, when the subject of the assault or battery is a young person, the assailant will not be held responsible. We first focus on physical punishment of young people in three domains: penal institutions, schools, and family homes (please see table 1).

Table 1: Bans on corporal punishment of young people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ban: penal institution</th>
<th>Ban: school</th>
<th>Ban: Home</th>
<th>Does law on assault or</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Battery</th>
<th>Preclude</th>
<th>Physical harm?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Congo</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Varies by state</td>
<td>Varies by state</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that a penal institution typically is regulated, managed, and financed by government, we usually think of it as a public institution. As a public institution, a penal institution can forbid entry to outsiders. A review of the eleven countries indicates that only three countries do not prohibit corporal punishment of young people in institutions imprisoning young people: Japan, Algeria, and the United States (it is important to note that U.S. state governments can forbid corporal punishment of young people in penal institutions). In this public institution, across most of the examined countries, young people are not vulnerable to corporal punishment.
Schools typically are government controlled, managed, and financed, but have less control over young people. For instance, young people leave school each day, but young people imprisoned in penal institutions cannot leave. Parents may also give input into their child’s education. Schools, it turns out, are environments where young people are vulnerable to legally-sanctioned physical assault. Of the eleven countries this study closely compares, only North Korea does not prohibit physical punishment of young people in schools. In addition, across the United States, nineteen states permit corporal punishment, meaning that young people are vulnerable to assault in many schools (The Center for Effective Discipline 2013). During the 2005-2006 school year, more than 200,000 American children were subjected to corporal punishment at school.

As a social institution, the family home in many countries continues to resemble Aristotle’s concept of the home; government often seems incapable of intervening into a family home to prevent an assault of a young person. Of the eleven examined countries, eight national governments have not banned assault of young people in the family home, including the United States. Only the Republic of Congo, Poland, and Costa Rica have banned corporal punishment of young people at home. In contrast, when we ask whether governments have banned assaults, we find that among the eleven countries, nearly all governments prohibit one individual from inflicting injury on another individual. While governments prohibit assault outside the family home, inside the home many governments are reluctant to prevent an assault against a family member.

When considering the bans of corporal punishment across penal institutions, schools, and family homes, Aristotle’s conception continues to depict contemporary societies. Society members are prohibited from assaulting other members in penal institutions, but in some
countries are permitted to assault members in schools. In many countries, members are vulnerable to assault in the family home. Romany (1994) is right about Aristotle’s conception of the family home: it is a site where rights do not seem to apply.

**Trafficking in young people**

Trafficking of young people unfortunately is a common activity. Trafficking is defined as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation” (UN 2013). So defined, trafficking of young people is a market activity that governments are expected to regulate. Of the eleven studied countries, ten have ratified or acceded to the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC). Ratification follows signature of the treaty and is an effort by which a government promises to implement the OPSC; accession is similar, but was not preceded by signature (UNICEF 2013). Of the eleven, only North Korea has not acceded to or ratified the OPSC (see table 2).

**Table 2: Trafficking of young people**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ratification or accession of OPSC</th>
<th>Effort at reducing and preventing trafficking: U.S. State Department tiers</th>
<th>Market in trafficking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republic of</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arrests: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arreets: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arreets: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arreets: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arreets: unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arreets: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arreets: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Arrests</td>
<td>Convictions</td>
<td>Penalties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Penalties: mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Penalties: adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Penalties: adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Penalties: adequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The U.S. State Department conducts annual reviews of trafficking, placing countries on three tiers. Tier 1 is where countries are placed that are considered “fully complying with the ‘minimum standards for the elimination of severe forms of trafficking’ set out in the TVA.” A Tier 2 designation is given to a country that is taking step to comply with minimum standards, but is not in full compliance. Tier 3 indicates a country that is neither in minimum compliance nor is making efforts to do so. Of the eleven countries in our analysis, three countries are considered Tier 3, neither in minimum compliance nor trying to do so: Algeria, North Korea and Uzbekistan. On the other hand, only two countries are designated Tier 1, Poland and the United States, which are in compliance with minimum standards.

Experts and media often speak about a “market” in trafficking. The Polaris Project states that “human trafficking is a market-driven criminal industry that is based on the principles of supply and demand.” The Polaris Project emphasizes that if human trafficking is to cease, not only should we focus on the supply of trafficking victims, including young people, but we must concentrate efforts on eliminating demand. The U.S. State Department highlights weaknesses in government’s efforts in reducing demand: are governments arresting people who buy trafficking victims? Are they arresting the people who force victims into trafficking? Do governments’ penalties sufficiently deter trafficking? Based on U.S. State Department reports, a common problem is that penalties are inadequate. Even in Peru and Uzbekistan where government officials make arrests and convictions, with adequate penalties, the U.S. State Department reports government officials are complicit in some forms of trafficking. Across all eleven countries, substantial work remains to reduce the market in trafficking.

Government fails young people who are vulnerable to trafficking, young people who are trafficked to a country and trafficked within a country. Many governments seem to take a laissez
faire approach to the market place of trafficked young people. Yet trafficking represents an instance when the private label hides the possibility that a young person cannot exercise rights to bodily control. Compared to physical assault of corporal punishment in the home, trafficking is conducted in the market place. The U.S. State Department indicates governments of most examined countries are making efforts to prosecute and prevent trafficking. Governments nevertheless fail to protect young people who are vulnerable to adult control in the market place.

The third empirical instance of young people’s vulnerability concerns limitations on their individual decisions over bodily control. Decisions over sexual activity, obtaining a legal abortion, and military service are three important areas in which young people are vulnerable to inabilities to control their bodies (see table 3).

**Table 3: Consent of young people**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Age of sexual consent</th>
<th>Age of parental consent to obtain abortion</th>
<th>Age of military service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Congo</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18 (but parental consent not required)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Restricted (and parental consent)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In some countries, such as the United States, the decision to participate in sexual activity is considered a private decision belonging to the individual. Across the eleven countries, however, a young person cannot make this individual decision without government approval until he or she reaches a minimum age. For the eleven examined countries, those ages range between 14 and 18.

Surprisingly, compared to the ages at which a young person can consent to sexual activity, nearly all of the eleven countries impose severe restrictions on obtaining an abortion. Indeed, despite government not interfering with the ability to participate in sexual activity, government imposes restrictions on a young woman’s bodily control in seven of the eleven countries.

In contrast to abortion, the age at which a young person can first legally serve in the military varies between 16 and 18. Only in Jordan and some of the U.S. states does government restrict a young person’s bodily control in participating in sexual activity more severely than military service. In the other nine countries, a young person can exert bodily control when he

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Age at Consent</th>
<th>Restrictions</th>
<th>Minimum Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Varies between age 16 and age 18</td>
<td>Varies with restrictions</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
participates in sexual activity at a younger age compared to the age at which he can legally serve in the military.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This article demonstrates that the public-private dichotomy not only is inadequate for describing vulnerabilities young people face, it is a false dichotomy. Many vulnerabilities facing young people cannot be clearly defined as either public or private. Instead, government has a hand in many vulnerabilities affecting young people. The private label hides more than it reveals.

Identifying four sectors allows us to see diversity of vulnerabilities young people face. Through employment of four sectors, our analysis indicates that young people face vulnerabilities in the social sector, the market sector, and the individual sector. The social sector can be a place where a young person encounters physical punishment that, outside the family home, would be considered an assault or battery. Young people are vulnerable to being sold and trafficked in the market, as involuntary laborers or prostitutes. Many governments struggle to regulate the market of trafficked young people. Even in the individual sector, laws may foster vulnerabilities of young people as they seek to control their bodies. The use of the four sectors permits acknowledgement of failures of governments to intervene to prevent vulnerabilities, as well as fostering vulnerabilities of young people through laws and policies.

It is hoped that this article is a step forward in demonstrating how the public-private dichotomy may hide vulnerabilities affecting young people. Use of the four-sector framework may reveal other threats to which young people are exposed. These four sectors often seem to conflict with one another, creating tensions between actors and social institutions that lead to dangers for young people. Future research may provide evidence of significant consequences of vulnerabilities facing young people that are hidden behind the public-private dichotomy.
References


Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children endcorporalpunishment.org


Legal case


Legislation


Congo, Republic of.


North Korea.

Peru.


