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In “Plane” Sight: A Study of SFO’s Human Trafficking Intervention Sticker
A Capstone Thesis Presented to the Faculty of The College of Arts & Sciences
University of San Francisco

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN URBAN & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

by

Kendall Anderson

May 2022

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Sarah Burgess _____

Date _____

Tim Redmond _____

Date _____

Author Release Form

The University of San Francisco and the College of Arts and Sciences have permission to use my M.A. Capstone Paper project as an example of acceptable work. This permission includes the right to duplicate the manuscript and allows the project to be checked out from the College Library.

Print Name: Kendall Anderson

Signature: Kendall Anderson

Date: May 3rd, 2022

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This capstone is dedicated to anyone who spends time and effort on the fight to end human trafficking and better serve survivors.

Abstract

Human trafficking is a growing problem globally. Recent data indicates that airports are one of the few locations that victims can be identified and removed from a human trafficking situation. As a result, US airports have been working to raise awareness through public campaigns and employee trainings. The San Francisco International Airport, for example, created a campaign that directly appeals to victims in private spaces. To understand the effectiveness and implications of the campaign, I ask the following research question: how is the SFO campaign constructed to intervene in human trafficking? What are the limits and possibilities of this campaign? I argue that the campaign at SFO is victim-centered and trauma-informed, which creates a safe avenue of communication for victims to report trafficking. The possibilities of this campaign emerge from a collaboration between city officials and prominent non-profit organizations that aim not only to support and aid victims, but also to raise public awareness of the issue. I show, however, that the campaign is limited by the ways SFO carries out the intervention when victims reach out for help. By responding to human trafficking calls from the sticker with uniformed law enforcement, SFO risks traumatizing victims or causing them to be less cooperative in the investigation process. Drawing on the work of Eric Corthay, I propose several policy recommendations that might serve as a model for other airports looking to implement similar programs. This thesis project is important because it addresses the possibility of trauma-informed and victim-centered human trafficking intervention in aviation settings. Ultimately, I argue that an airport's intervention response to a victim must be in line with the victim-centered aspects of the campaign itself.

Introduction

Each person who is subjected to human trafficking has a different story, however the impact and hardship that is a consequence of being trafficked is something that victims experience universally. Fainess Lipenga grew up in an impoverished village in Malawi without water or electricity. Her life was incredibly difficult with no opportunities to make money or establish a better life for herself. That all changed when she was offered a job in the United States to work in the home of a diplomat. She was promised she would receive an education and make enough money to help her family and members of her village back home. Upon arrival, her passport was taken away, she was locked in the house, and forced to sleep on the basement floor. She was isolated in a country in which she did not speak the language with no way to seek help or return home. She was forced to work 24/7: by day caring for children of the diplomat and doing household chores, and at night cleaning office buildings for the diplomat's spouse's business. She received less than 40 cents an hour for this work (Polaris 2022). Human trafficking can also take place in the form of sex trafficking. "Darlene" a survivor in Oakland California tells another story: "Some people are standing on the corner selling fruit while other people are standing on the same corner selling a girl" (KALW Youth Radio 2011). Darlene's corner was in Oakland, California on 46th street, behind a bus stop. Darlene was also trafficked online in the personal section of Craigslist and other websites that facilitate sex trafficking. In addition to her spot on 46th street she was also "put out" on the "track," a notorious section of International Boulevard that is known as a human trafficking hot spot. In addition to the violence of being continuously raped, Darlene also faced physical violence like being shot at. While Darlene managed to escape the sex trade, the trauma remains with her. Doing something as simple as

dressing up and putting on high heels causes her to fear she will be mistaken for someone working the track (KALW Youth Radio 2011).

These stories are just two examples of the reality millions of people face while being subjected to human trafficking in the United States. The effect of human trafficking is far-reaching. While no one is immune from being trafficked, the victims¹ most commonly affected are women, children, and people from disadvantaged communities, including developing nations abroad. Human trafficking is typically considered sex trafficking which includes forced prostitution, rape, and sex tourism (Bartlett and Rhode 2010, 492). For the purposes of this capstone, I use the official definition of human trafficking as defined by The Department of Justice:

- a) Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or b) The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. (22 U.S.C. § 7102(9))

I am primarily focusing on sex trafficking² in this project; however, to sufficiently cover the extensiveness of the topic, I also reference labor trafficking through this thesis. Both are

¹ I use the terminology of both victim and survivors in this thesis. While they are being trafficked, an individual is a victim. However, after getting out of a trafficking situation and recovering out they become a survivor. Both terms are intentionally used interchangeably as some identify as a victim while others prefer the term survivor.

² While discussing sex trafficking, I acknowledge that consensual sex work is not human trafficking. I am adding this disclaimer because frequently the anti-trafficking discussion can be conflated with sex work or overtaken by the sex work legalization debate. However, it is important to note that the line between human trafficking and sex work can be very narrow and easily crossed. When the dialogue of human trafficking comes up, sex workers frequently assert they are participating in the industry under their own volition and do not want to be lumped together with victims of non-consenting sex trafficking. Due to the nature of human trafficking victims cannot provide affirmative consent as they are being forced to work in the sex industry by force, fraud, or coercion. It is impossible for consent to be freely given under these circumstances. Someone engaged in sex work can be subject to rape or human trafficking if their consent is withdrawn or violated during the course of conducting business. While this issue is incredibly complex, the focus of this capstone is human trafficking. All victims, survivors, and groups I refer to are affected by human trafficking in either the form of labor trafficking, sex trafficking, or some combination of both. The people involved and the specifics of the trafficking vary from case-to-case. However, what is the same about most trafficking cases is the ongoing oppression of women and vulnerable populations including people of color and the LGBTQ community. As our society becomes more invested in fighting human trafficking, we are finally uncovering more of these devastating stories, many happening in our own backyards.

forms of human trafficking and while they are inherently different in definition, overlap frequently occurs between both forms of trafficking.

Human trafficking is a growing issue in the United States: The US National Human Trafficking Hotline operated by The Polaris Project reported a 20% increase between cases identified in 2018 and 2019 with a total of 11,500 victims identified in the US in 2019 (Polaris). While the United States has the most comprehensive anti-trafficking policy, along with the most financial resources dedicated—an average of \$80 million annually—cases continue to skyrocket. Funding is primarily directed toward law enforcement, rather than toward subsidization of service providers (Brysk and Choi-Fitzpatrick 2012, 2-3). The omnipresent Covid-19 pandemic is also impacting human trafficking and aviation. During 2020 shelter-in-place mandate, calls to the human trafficking hotline increased by 40 percent. This reveals that trafficking is still a major issue, even during a global pandemic (Wilton 2020, 8).

While human trafficking is prevalent across the United States, the highest frequency of trafficking has been found in California with 1,507 cases identified in 2019 alone (Polaris). Despite the prevalence of trafficking in California, this issue is not frequently part of policy discussions, and many members of the public do not understand the gravity and extent to which human trafficking takes place. It was only in 2017 that California extended immunity from prostitution prosecution to children under 18 (Nazaradeh 2018, 189). It is undeniable that there is a human trafficking problem in California. Yet, very little media and political attention is devoted to developing policy solutions.

Between one and four million people are trafficked worldwide, with almost one million people trafficked across national borders. While human trafficking can affect all genders and ages, most victims—four-fifths—are women and children. International victims enter the United

States most commonly from Southeast Asian, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Russia (Bartlett and Rhode 492, 2010). Internationally, people in developing countries, women, and people of color are most likely to become victims of human trafficking (Baker 2015, 4). These victims are frequently overlooked, blamed, or pushed to the fringes of society. The majority of those affected by human trafficking in the United States are female and members of the BIPOC community; 40% of sex trafficking victims between 2008 and 2010 were Black females (Rights4Girls). For example, in Alameda County, the neighboring eastern county to San Francisco, 60% of children who are trafficked or at risk of being trafficked are African American. The African American population in Alameda County is just 12% (Alameda County District Attorney's Office 2013). In San Francisco, 51% of all human trafficking victims are women of color and 29% of trafficking victims are Black women (Minouche and Peterson, 2019, 27). The demographics of victims raise questions about the race of who is creating the demand for child sex trafficking.

The New York Times reports that there is limited data on men who purchase sex with a minor. However, a study conducted in King County Washington found that 79% of arrested “johns” between 2013-2015 were white and 44% of victims were African American. Kings County has an African American population of just 7%. This shocking discrepancy between these statistics shows that sex trafficking has a disproportionate effect on victimizing people of color. Digging deeper, the statistics also show that the majority of those who fuel the demand for sex trafficking are white. The typical buyer of sex is a white, educated, married man (Williams 2017).

Men who purchase sex with minors often evade consequences. An example of this miscarriage of justice can be seen in the high-profile Jeffery Epstein case. Despite an intense

effort to initially prosecute Epstein for 57 identified cases of sex trafficking in Florida, Epstein was ultimately given a sweetheart plea deal in 2006 with only misdemeanor charges (Patterson 2016, 164). Epstein only spent about one year in jail with work release, meaning he was able to leave the jail 6 days a week for 16 hours per day (202-215). Interestingly, this sentence lines up exactly with the trafficking minimum sentence identified by Bartlett and Rhode that will be discussed later in this section. Ultimately Epstein and Maxwell would go on to abuse dozens of other children until Epstein was finally arrested and charged for similar crimes thirteen years later in New York in 2019 (Barnard 2021). Maxwell was recently convicted in Epstein's place for the same crimes at the end of 2021.

Traffickers like Epstein and Maxwell are experts at identifying vulnerable youth, and the legal system allows trafficking to persist by not offering great enough deterrents for criminal behavior. Youth who are trafficked are at a great disadvantage to being believed about their victimization and receiving appropriate social services. The economic and cultural systems of police abuse of youth, sexual abuse, and limited social services make children even more vulnerable to being trafficked (Baker 2018, 208). Young victims with weak family ties and low self-esteem are targeted by sex traffickers and made to believe that the trafficker loves them and has their best interests in mind (Contrera 2021). Once involved in human trafficking, youth can develop conflated feelings of love toward their trafficker, or fear of retaliation from running away. Another issue is a lack of resources for formerly trafficked and vulnerable youth. Housing and job opportunities are reported by youth as their most pressing needs; however, their minor status leads to difficulty in accessing these resources. The fact that youth need approval from a

parent or caseworker to access these resources inadvertently feeds the cycle of children going back to their traffickers³ (Baker 2018, 208).

The consequences of human trafficking include complex public health problems and social justice⁴ and human rights violations. Victims can face numerous health risks while being trafficked including unsanitary conditions, poor nutrition, and limited or no health care (Zimmerman et al. 2011, 330). Trafficking survivors are also at a higher risk for mental health issues and physical health problems than the rest of the population (Shadowen, Caroline, Beaverson, Sarah and Rigby, Fidelma 2021, 38). Detrimental sexual and reproductive health outcomes are the most common consequence of being trafficked, regardless of whether the victim has been trafficked for sex or labor. Coercion to use drugs and alcohol can leave victims with lasting addictions that can lead to future criminalization (331). In the unlikely chance victims do receive medical care, there is a good chance that the medical provider does not have the skills or training needed to identify a human trafficking victim. A study conducted by Jessica McDow and Jean Dowling Dols in 2021 found that 57% of women who received health care

³ Arguably, the most valuable means of support for trafficking victims is providing economic support for both youth and adult trafficking victims. Economic support can help with securing housing, mental health care, childcare, or afford the autonomy for the victim to get away from their trafficker.

⁴ While there is not a singular definition of what social justice is, for the purposes of this section I define social justice as the equity or lack thereof of the distribution of resources such as privilege, financial capital, and access to opportunities. The ACLU argues that human trafficking is a social justice issue because victims tend to be members of vulnerable groups such as those facing racial or ethnic oppression, economic injustice, or gender discrimination (Flores, 2009). While not all trafficking victims are members of marginalized communities, the reality is that trafficking statistics tend to show that victims are more likely to be poor women of color. Additionally, the very premise of human trafficking is a dynamic between the powerful and the powerless. Human trafficking violates the dignity and fundamental human rights of those who are trafficked (Pfeffer 2018, 5). Even if a victim is no longer under the control of their trafficker, trauma along with a potential criminal record further stifles the access to opportunities for survivors. Opportunities can be difficult for some to ever achieve such as steady, non-exploitive employment, safe housing and beyond. The ongoing criminalization of trafficking victims causes many to rack up criminal charges for prostitution, loitering, or drug use while they are trafficking victims. These factors combined with a lack of economic resources and a limited amount of public assistance options can lead victims to be unable to find safe housing and therefore being susceptible to unsafe situations or even being victimized again. The economics of human trafficking expand from a consequence lack of opportunities for victims all the way to how private corporations are profiting from human trafficking.

were not identified by providers and were returned to their traffickers. Additionally, if victims become pregnant, they are unlikely to receive timely prenatal care, and are not offered privacy when speaking to their medical providers (McDow and Dowling Dols 2021, 339). While victims experience trauma at particularly high rates, trauma can also be a reason people are susceptible to being trafficked in the first place. Trauma such as surviving abuse or being in the foster care system can lead to an increased likelihood of being trafficked. The cycle of human trafficking can be perpetuated by trauma from victimization, leading to a greater likelihood of revictimization (Scott et al. 2019, 348-349). If victims try to escape, they face threats of assault, murder, or the harm of their families. Trauma bonds can also form in some cases when a victim is carefully groomed by her trafficker. This is a frequent occurrence in cases of youth sex trafficking (KALW Youth Radio 2011).

In addition to being at higher risk for adverse health outcomes, trafficking victims—including children—also frequently face criminalization from law enforcement and the systems that were supposedly designed to protect them. In some states, youth involved in sex trafficking can be arrested and charged with prostitution. For example, in Nevada, at least 290 children were arrested for prostitution in 2019 (Contrera 2021). Nevada is also the only state that has legalized prostitution in some counties. Labeling children as prostitutes and arresting them for being victims causes the public to further misunderstand the perils of human trafficking. Despite the human rights violations in this policy, it persists and unfortunately impacts far too many child victims of human trafficking in the United States today. If legal policies allow and even encourage the criminalization of child victims of sex trafficking, the impact on adults is even more expansive. In a report issued by The University of New York Law School Trafficking Victims Advocacy Project, researchers assert that victims are considered instruments of police

investigation as opposed to people whose human rights were violated by their traffickers (Soohoo 2015, 6). The United States has been criticized by the United Nations for allowing both children and adults to be arrested, prosecuted, and charged for prostitution when the person arrested is in fact a victim of human trafficking. Just three states provide immunity for children under 18 who have had “prostitution” offences racked up during their time being trafficked. In 2012, New York arrested 2,962 individuals for prostitution, but only 34 for trafficking related offences (Soohoo, 2-3).

The financial impact of human trafficking is extensive for victims and the fabric of our society. Human trafficking is the third most profitable organized crime activity following gun and drug trafficking (Bartlett and Rhode 2010, 492). Unlike drugs or weapons that can only be sold once, a human being can be sold over and over again becoming an attractive way to illicitly earn money. Individuals enter trafficking through deception, kidnapping, coercion, or being sold into the industry. Consequences for traffickers are notoriously minimal with sentences that can range from only one to four years of prison time (Bartlett and Rhode 2010, 495). For comparison, the average drug trafficking sentence is over six years (US Sentencing Commission). With the profits higher and the consequences lower than other crimes, it is no surprise that trafficking continues to increase drastically year-over-year. But what consequence does this have for the victims, many of which unknowingly enter the human trafficking trade? To date, there is little financial recourse for victims who fall prey to human trafficking.

The history of US human trafficking policy and where funding is directed reveal that victims are considered as an afterthought or used as collateral to help convict the perpetrator. The response to human trafficking within the United States and beyond can be described as reactionary instead of preventative at best, and virtually non-existent in many cases. Funneling

money into law enforcement has not reduced the number of human trafficking cases.

Furthermore, legislators and political leaders rarely advocate for anti-human trafficking policy as it is considered an issue for law enforcement to address. The struggle to get trafficking onto the policy agenda stems from numerous misconceptions such as human trafficking only being an international human smuggling issue (Bonilla and Mo 2019, 201-234), or other sex related issues such as the age of consent or legalizing sex work as discussed above.

The first public policy to address human trafficking in the United States was The Mann Act, created in 1910. Also known as “The White-Slave Traffic Act of 1910,” this federal law made the transportation of women for prostitution or other immoral purposes illegal (Cornell Law School). The policy at the time had an extremely racist agenda; prostitution was commonly referred to as “white slavery” and other consensual activity such as interracial relationships was criminalized under the Mann Act. Using the term “immoral” in a legal context furthered the ability for the act to be misinterpreted in a racialized way. Furthermore, the act stipulated that only white women could be victims of human trafficking, excluding women of color. This has the effect of implying that white slavery of women is worse than “Black slavery” thereby downplaying the horrific experiences that Black slaves faced. This policy also advanced anti-immigration bills by instilling fear that increased immigration would lead to white women being at higher risk of being subjected to slavery (Bonilla and Mo 2018, 204). To date, the Mann Act has never been repealed, only amended to reflect contemporary issues such as child sexual exploitation. In 1986 The Mann Act was revised to replace the word “immoral” with “any sexual activity for which any person can be charged with a criminal offence” (Cornell Law School). Finally, in 2000 with the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the definition of

human trafficking was extended to reflect the definition of slavery, instead of white slavery. The policy language also took away age and gender restrictions (Bonilla and Mo 2018, 204-205).

As the history of public policy surrounding human trafficking in the United States shows, public policy addressing human trafficking was only established within the last 100 years. Much of it was proven to be symbolic or ineffective at addressing the issue. Furthermore, many girls and women of color are still not considered sympathetic trafficking victims, despite being at greater risk of being trafficked. International trafficking policy has a remarkably similar pattern to US Policy.

Internationally, human trafficking was first addressed in 1921, when the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Girls recognized that trafficking victims could be of any race, including male children. This did not establish a change in US law; it only provided a global recommendation for categorization of trafficking cases. In 1933, the definition of human trafficking was restricted again by the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of the Full Age, focusing on the original definition of transferring women across state borders. In 2000, the United Nations adopted The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, also known as the Palermo Protocol. These global public policies unfortunately were not law, instead merely recommendations for policy change (Baker 2018, 85). This project seeks to find human trafficking interventions outside of formal federal or international legal instruments by looking into alternative forms of intervention in aviation.

Human trafficking thrives on secrecy and isolation of victims. During the few chances victims may interact with the public such as in a doctor's office or airport, many front-line medical responders or aviation staff are not sufficiently trained to identify and intervene in

human trafficking cases (Shadowen, Beaverson, and Fidelma 2021, 38). One of the most productive ways to establish policy interventions is focusing on instances of when trafficking victims are being transported since it is so difficult to identify trafficking behind closed doors in the underground economy. One of the main chances of identifying one of the numerous victims who are transported across national borders (Bartlett and Rhode 2010, 492) is while they are passing through airports. In 2004—the last time a formal estimate was conducted—between 600,000 and 800,000 victims were trafficked by air (Corthay 2020). Cutting off a primary method of the supply chain used by traffickers can begin the necessary movement to reduce and eventually abolish human trafficking worldwide.

The aviation industry is a primary vehicle to move trafficking victims, and oftentimes the last point that public identification and intervention can occur. There is still not enough emphasis on the importance of using airports as an opportunity to identify and intervene on potential victimization. Furthermore, existing entities in airports such as border control, police presence, and security provide ample opportunity for training and policy specific measures to identify victims before they depart the airport (Corthay 2020, 605). Despite the stringent anti-terrorism security measures that have been implemented in US airports, numerous children and adult victims of human trafficking pass through the unique “boarderlessness” neutral ground of US airports (Petani 2020).

While many instances of human trafficking do not initially involve interstate or intercountry travel, preparators frequently use commercial airlines to transport victims during the course of trafficking. The primary reasons commercial aviation is so frequently a means for trafficking is speed, convenience, and anonymity. Traffickers can quickly separate victims from their friends and family, putting many miles between them and their community making it

difficult to return home. TSA also does not require children under 18 to show identification while traveling with a companion within the United States. This can help perpetrators avoid victim identification by Amber Alert which only applies to transportation via roadways. In some cases, traffickers can quickly and easily transport victims long distances by air without needing to accompany them (Wilton 2020, 4-5). The aviation industry has finally started catching up with trafficking methods.

Human trafficking in aviation was first officially recognized in 2003 with The Palermo Protocol. The Palermo Protocol officially required The International Civil Aviation Organization to legislate prevention of commercial aircrafts being used for trafficking related offences. This was the beginning of officially recognizing airports as an important tool to combat human trafficking (Shallow 2020, 3). Additionally, The Palermo Protocol created a way for institutional frameworks to be established at a national and international level. The Protocol was the first international consensus on the definition of trafficking, therefore creating a more concerted effort to end human trafficking. Article 11 and 12 of the Palermo Protocol specifically address transit such as aviation and include mandating stronger border controls and increasing the quality of travel documents (Youth Underground 2020, 4).

In 2019, the first human trafficking guideline handbook was released to airports. The Airports Council International group published the “Combatting Human Trafficking Handbook” that offers a breakdown of eight areas that airports can take an active role in preventing human trafficking. Some of the noteworthy mentions in the handbook are the use of multi-media to raise public awareness such as dynamic signage that includes digital displays or videos at departure gates, movable signage, and social media postings (Marcellin 2019, 3-4). US aviation policy

began addressing human trafficking a few years before the release of the Combatting Human Trafficking Handbook.

The most extensive strides to combat human trafficking in domestic aviation work has taken place from 2016- to the present. In 2016, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security, and U.S. Customs and Boarder Protection created the “DHS Blue Campaign.” It is also known as the FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016, which requires airlines to provide initial and annual trainings for aviation staff to recognize and respond to potential human trafficking victims they may encounter while working. This was reauthorized in 2018 and expanded to include ticket agents, gate agents, and other airline workers who have passenger interaction. To date, 200,000 aviation professionals have been trained through the Blue Lightning Initiative. The training is about 17 minutes and has four lessons that define human trafficking, provide information on the indicators of human trafficking, and reporting human trafficking. Current airline partners include Delta, Jetblue, Frontier, SkyWest, Spirit, and airports include Miami International, Houston Airport System, Philadelphia International Airport, and many others (US Department of Transportation 2021). The Houston Airport System was also praised by Polaris in 2016 for creating the first comprehensive, municipal level response to human trafficking. The airport created an anti-trafficking campaign in collaboration Customs and Boarder Protection that strived to alter public perception and improve links to support victims. The campaign was shared out to other municipalities in the hopes of further increasing public awareness (Marcellin 2019, 4). Media coverage of human trafficking in aviation has overlapped with the increase in federal public policy.

The Jeffery Epstein human trafficking case was a catalyst that highlighted the urgency of having protocols in place to identify and prevent human trafficking in all forms of aviation. In 2019 US Representatives Bill Pascrell and Josh Gottheimer became whistleblowers about gaps in TSA guidelines regarding human trafficking. The Congress members realized that while TSA focuses on security threats in “general aviation,” they do not identify human trafficking as an issue. General aviation is essentially airports that cater to specialized and private clients. Jeffery Epstein was able to take advantage of this gap in enforcement to traffic hundreds of victims over several decades through the New Jersey Teterboro Airport. The Congressmen called on TSA to better collaborate with general aviation in addition to commercial aviation to update its security guidelines (Pascrell 2019, 2-3). This case highlights the urgency in having clear protocols in place to thwart traffickers in aviation settings.

The last 10 years have shown a marked increase in the aviation industry to combat human trafficking. Airports globally have shifted to report suspected human trafficking with some of the campaigns including using increased employee training, e-alerts, facial recognition software, and publications for airport industry professionals on identifying, reporting, and combatting human trafficking (Wilton 2020, 4). In a publication by Airports Council International, Billy Shallow advocates that airports have the ideal legal and public position to help combat human trafficking through staff awareness and training, public awareness, victim information, and inter-agency communication. Airports already are a place where extensive training takes place on security and safety, so it is easy to add additional trainings to address human trafficking. Additionally, airports are a location that many people pass through which make them a great platform for public awareness presentations, exhibitions, or announcements. Victim information can also be strategically placed in bathroom stalls and near authority figures. Finally, airports have

established communication with agencies such as law enforcement and immigration so information about a suspected case of human trafficking can be relayed quickly and acted upon (Shallow 2020, 3-4).

The past two years have been a time of change as airports update policies to reflect the changing pandemic world and travelers adjust their travel behavior. This unique moment in history is an excellent opportunity to change how human trafficking is responded to in an aviation setting. Existing security measures deployed in airports such as behavior analysis conducted by officers can be modified to include looking for signs of human trafficking. Looking into the future, there is the possibility of training technology through machine learning and artificial intelligence to pick up on warning signs of human trafficking such as distress in travelers or patterns of children traveling without a familial guardian. Trafficking will not be combated through technology alone. Community awareness campaigns and warning signs of human trafficking must be disseminated in a larger way to the public so that everyone is more vigilant and able to identify and report potential cases of human trafficking (Shallow 2020, 5-6). Airports are the one of the last points of intervention to divert or remove a victim from a human trafficking situation while they are on their journey.

I decided to focus my research study on human trafficking in the aviation industry. I am specifically conducting a case study of the San Francisco International Airport. I chose as my research site because it is possible to make an impact with the existing tools available. San Francisco International Airport has implemented their own share of intervention strategies and trainings in recent years in part due to the geographic location's propensity to trafficking. San Francisco is a transit hub not only into the United States, but also to the greater Bay Area, Sacramento, and The Central Valley. Additionally, the proximity to Asia, Mexico, and South

America makes SFO the likely first US stop for international victims being trafficked into the US. In my Capstone, I plan to examine San Francisco International Airport's efforts to combat human trafficking by analyzing the impact of their victim-centered intervention campaign in the form of bathroom stickers. The stickers provide victims with a contact number to call or text to receive help if they are being trafficked while at SFO. Current anti-trafficking models rely more on self-reporting than proactive identification of victims (Corthay 2020, 640). Even the bathroom sticker initiative at SFO relies on victims being 1.) aware that they are being trafficked and 2.) alone and able to access a cell phone to report their traffickers. The stickers require the victim to do the work in identifying themselves and their trafficker. I will uncover what SFO considers to be successful in their anti-trafficking efforts, what is planned for the future, and how to expand successful aspects of their work to more US airports. My research question asks: how is the SFO sticker campaign constructed to intervene in human trafficking? What are the limits and possibilities of this campaign? The sticker campaign is victim-centered and trauma-informed in order to create a safe avenue of communication for victims to report trafficking. The possibilities of this campaign emerge from a collaboration between city officials and prominent non-profits that aim not only to support and aid victims but also to raise public awareness of the issue. And yet, the campaign is limited by the implementation of the intervention.

In order to answer this question, the remainder of my Capstone will be divided into several sections. Firstly, I examine the existing literature produced by leading anti-human trafficking scholars. The literature review is divided into three different bodies. The first addresses the concept of human trafficking and law, both as policy and a human right. Next, I examine forms of intervention strategies in human trafficking, and what is the most meaningful and successful in practice. Finally, I analyze public awareness of human trafficking and the

importance of this concept in leading to policy changes. I use my literature review as an opportunity to justify the gap my research fills in the greater context of human trafficking intervention scholarly literature. I use the next section to describe the methodology of my research which was conducted through ten qualitative interviews with participants including SFO leadership staff, anti-human trafficking organization leaders, and direct service providers. I next take a brief moment to define my positionality by citing the professional experience I've had, and the personal aspects of how I initially became interested in anti-human trafficking work, In the following section, I discuss the methodology of my data collection, and how I chose to collect data in a way that answers my research question and expands the scholarly knowledge base of human trafficking in aviation. I next provide a historical overview of my case study site, SFO, that will help contextualize the advent of the bathroom sticker campaign. In my second to last section, I analyze in detail the data I collected from people involved with the sticker campaign execution, along with other industry leaders through my selected theoretical framework by the scholar Eric Corthay. My final section will explain the value of this research study and the policy lessons and recommendations that other airports can use when implementing anti-trafficking policy.

Literature Review

There is little debate within the public and among policy makers about how egregious human trafficking is. The many nuances of the issue highlight diverse perspectives which lead to numerous proposed solutions. The following literature review seeks to clarify some of the arguments and perspectives, while also pointing out the intervention models and ideas that have been conducted with success across different scholarly research projects. These bodies outline the different components of the ongoing conversation about what constitutes human trafficking, potential interventions through the legal system and public awareness of human trafficking in an aviation setting. I begin by discussing human trafficking regulation through the legal system. This component of my literature review will look at physical sites of regulation such as airports and the criminal justice system. While the legal system is the primary means for human trafficking intervention today, I want to examine some of the problems with this system such as the debate of regulating prostitution and its relation to human trafficking. Next, I address forms of intervention and best practices used to intervene when human trafficking is discovered. My research question hinges on the very idea of replicating a form of intervention, so I plan to address this in my literature review. Finally, my third research body will take a close look at the literature on public perceptions and awareness of human trafficking. These bodies open my research question by providing greater context to the three components of my question along with providing additional information about the nuances of legal regulation of human trafficking. These literature sources help me outline what gaps exist in the literature surrounding the issue I'm claiming in my research question: how is the SFO sticker campaign constructed to intervene in human trafficking? What are the limits and possibilities of this campaign?

Regulation: Human Trafficking and The Law

My first research body will explore and define the scholarly conversation of human trafficking and the law. Authors in this research body primarily discuss the concept of abolishing human trafficking through legal measures. I examine this concept with three types of regulation and policy: trafficking as a human rights violation, law as a vehicle for policy change, and finally physical and virtual sites of regulation. These three types of legal analysis help set up a guide to creating policy change that not only recognizes the inherent human rights violation of trafficking but also address the unique challenges of having few physical opportunities to recognize instances of human trafficking.

The framework of human trafficking is as human rights violation is the primary framework I examine in this project. Alison Brysk defines human rights in relation to human trafficking as “voice and choice” (2012, 85). How do we give victims back their voice and choice after they have been trafficked? The United Nations defines human rights as “...the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more (United Nations 2022). Using force, fraud, deception or coercion to traffic people for labor or sex is an inherent violation of the right to freedom from slavery and expression. Despite this definition and the global expanse of this social problem, human trafficking is not listed under the “Global Issues” section of the UN website.⁵

Leurm et al. follows this framework by looking at the issue of human trafficking and prostitution through a human rights lens. They argue that the origin of the tension between the

⁵ A search on the website only shows articles, with no space dedicated to defining the issue of human trafficking or providing resources for those who are interested in learning more. Perhaps this is a sign of how human trafficking is viewed as a global issue? This lack of urgency in addressing human trafficking is not new or novel in any way. In fact, there is a long history of human trafficking being misclassified or misidentified.

anti-trafficking movement and prostitution can be traced back to the passage of TVPA: Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. The main unintended consequence of this legislation is the criminalization of sex workers. Ultimately, Leurm and her coauthors claim there is not a clear distinction between prostitution and human trafficking, and therefore both issues need to be viewed through a human right's legal lens to best serve victims. Ultimately, they argue sex work and human trafficking should be reframed as a domestic human rights issue, instead of a crime (88-96, 2015). While all commercial sexual exploitation of children is technically considered sex trafficking and therefore a human rights issue, the law still treats children as criminals in some states. The next scholar delves into this issue specifically.

Edrina Nazaradeh looks at how prostitution charges have affected children in California. Unlike Lerum's assertion that sex workers are needlessly being prosecuted, Nazaradeh advocates for human rights focused changes to the law to better protect child victims. Nazaradeh is a fierce believer that California should build on and direct victims to appropriate services while cracking down on perpetrators with bigger consequences, especially for recidivism (2018, 189). While both authors differ on the best way to address the human rights issues surrounding human trafficking and prostitution, they agree that the issue is an inherent human rights issue and that we must evolve the way these crimes are handled. Lerum et al. describe this phenomenon: "The conflation of trafficking and prostitution policy, however, has allowed for federal dollars to be used locally for anti-prostitution purposes. Anti-Trafficking raids...have resulted in the arrest of many sex workers nationwide using federal anti-trafficking dollars" (2012, 87-88). Nazaradeh believes that increasing the prosecution of perpetrators will reduce trafficking and aid in giving victims better human rights, while Lerum advocates for updating TVPA and other policies that end up criminalizing trafficked victims and sex workers alike. Viewing human trafficking and

prostitution as an issue of human rights not only aligns with my framework but also is a way to reframe the policy debate on both issues.

Annie Smith argues that while sex trafficking is prevalent, labor trafficking is also a human rights issue that is not receiving the same level of attention towards protecting victims. Smith advocates for strategic partnerships between law enforcement and federal government in establishing clearer laws and stricter consequences for labor trafficking, especially since labor trafficking can have sex trafficking overlap. Currently, federal agencies are not working hard enough to prevent human rights violation in the workplace. For example, overtime pay violations, equal pay, and child labor are frequently not enforced due to an underfunding of federal agencies (Smith 2019, 497). Looking toward an international framework of addressing labor trafficking, Kotiswaran believes the solution is moving away from the law enforcement and government partnerships that Smith advocates. Instead, Kotiswaran asserts that traditional legal interventions have continuously failed victims and believes a “development approach” is more effective. This means that labor trafficking should be analyzed by external factors such as a lack of development, gender inequality, or an informal economy (2019, 380). Forced labor should be handled by intervening in the structural factors that lead to trafficking in the first place. Workers in contract labor, inter-state migration, and rural settings that are at high risk for trafficking should be receiving special human rights consideration from government agencies to ensure their welfare is taken care of (Kotiswaran 2019, 413-414).

In addition to the Federal government dropping the ball, scholars also assert that private businesses are not incentivized to prevent or investigate human trafficking occurring through their platform. Monica DeLateur shows that private organizations can also be to blame for trafficking if they are not sufficiently regulated through legal means. As we reach new horizons

with technology, this can also create new legal issues in the anti-trafficking fight. Websites have not been facing legal accountability to block human trafficking from taking place on their platforms. The websites are not being held accountable for the legal violations taking place. DeLateur (2016) specifically cites Craigslist⁶ and Backpage⁷ as big-time players that have historically facilitated sex trafficking (539-540). Both researchers support government agencies holding themselves and private businesses accountable for policies that allow human trafficking to thrive and go unchecked. Some ways to intervene with potential human trafficking scenarios are establishing robust sites of regulation and building out better federal agencies to identify and report human trafficking occurrences. The next scholars discuss putting this theory into practice specifically within the aviation industry.

Human trafficking regulation and intervention in aviation is an emerging topic in academic literature. Benjamin Perrin identifies a specific context to intervene on international trafficking cases when victims are being passed through “transit countries.” A transit country is a place that is in-between the origin and destination of the trafficking victim’s journey. Perrin (2010) calls for a joint effort between transit and destination countries to identify and prosecute perpetrators by strengthening border controls (22). Nazli Avdan’s (2012) legal intervention perspective contradicts this idea. Essentially, there will not be a demand for illegal trafficking or

⁶ A study conducted by the United States Government Accountability Office published in December 2021 found that cryptocurrency is an emerging currency that people and institutions involved with human trafficking are utilizing. The nature of cryptocurrency makes it a nearly perfect currency to be used for illegal transactions such as human trafficking. Peer-to-peer exchanges of currency and virtual currency kiosks, essentially a crypto ATM may not collect the extensive personal information a typical credit or debit card transaction trigger. (Government Accountability Office 2021, 11). Currently, sex trafficking is the most likely illicit transaction to be completed with cryptocurrency, labor trafficking does not yet seem to have a strong crypto transaction market. The extent of transactions of crypto for sex trafficking is likely due to the online nature of the crime. The Government Accountability Office found in their study of 27 platforms that may be used for sex trafficking activities that over half of the platforms, a total of 11 accepted virtual currencies. 3 of the 11 platforms exclusively accepted cryptocurrency (Government Accountability Office 2021, 19-20).

⁷ When Craigslist personal ads were shut down in 2010, BackPage.com had revenue from online prostitution listing increase by 15.3% and online prostitution listing increase by 17.5% (DeLateur 2016, 54). Backpage was seized and shut down by the FBI in 2018. Backpage earned 90% of its revenue from adult ads (Williams 2017).

smuggling if there were not such tight immigration restrictions in place. Avdan cites that extensive border control policies lead to an influx in human trafficking: "...stricter migration control may embolden organized crime networks by fostering the market for traffickers and smugglers" (178). Visa restrictions, for example, may lead to instances human smuggling. When a person enters a human smuggling situation, it is unfortunately very likely that the situation will devolve into human trafficking. Avdan does back up Perrin's claim that transit states are at a higher risk for human trafficking (2021, 173). While the authors both discuss the issue of identifying human trafficking at the border, they don't get the opportunity to propose policies that will lead to higher rates of actual identification of victims and prosecution of traffickers.

Our changing economies, technology and travel patterns highlight the need for proactive legal intervention and policy to sufficiently account for the many ways people can be trafficked. Law on the books can sometimes backfire and either not provide strict enough consequences for traffickers, or increase the demand for trafficking. For example, countries with strict immigration law have the unintended consequence of a higher volume of human trafficking cases. Furthermore, the law has not always been able to keep up with the rapid expansion of technology, and with it more ways to victimize and traffic people. Because of the limitations in the law, it important to explore non-legal interventions and ways of helping victims escape their traffickers.

Models: Forms of Intervention in Human Trafficking

Once an instance of human trafficking has been identified, a strong yet culturally sensitive intervention must be conducted, typically through a legal means as discussed in the previous body of literature. Human trafficking intervention trends are currently focusing on frontline responders such as medical workers, police, and customs and immigration enforcement. Despite the differences in venues, the literature indicates that there is an overall gap in training and knowledge in front line responders who may encounter human trafficking victims. Almost all authors advocate for increased training and awareness for those who may be able to identify human trafficking victims in the brief times they are out in the public. Typically that is when a victim is seeking medical treatment or traveling to be trafficked, or during their exploitation.

Interventions in a healthcare setting are a prominent theme in the literature. McDow, Dowling and Dols advocate that while healthcare is a prime setting to identify trafficking victims, many healthcare providers lack training or education on potential signs of victimization. Healthcare providers should be trained on when to institute separate screenings for potential victims (2021, 339). Shadowen et al. follow a similar line of thinking citing that emergency department employees generally lack the proper training needed to interact with human trafficking victims.

Ultimately, the authors agree that both healthcare providers and first responders cannot handle human trafficking cases alone. A team-based approach entails doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers collaborating on trainings and interventions. Both sets of scholars theorize that due to the underground nature of human trafficking, a medical setting is one of the only ways to successfully intervene and remove a victim from their traffickers. Collaboration in

creating intervention protocols also needs to include the perspectives of those who experience the greatest impact: survivors.

Human trafficking survivors are an essential part of the anti-trafficking team and should be heavily consulted on both warning signs and best communication and intervention practices. Both sets of authors advocate for a team-based approach to intervention that takes into consideration testimony from survivors (Shadowen et al. 2021, 38).

While scholars like Shadowen and McDow & Dowling advocate for intervention through educating first responders, Holly Burkhalter takes a more law-and-order approach, arguing that prosecution and perpetrator accountability is the most effective way to intervene and ultimately reduce human trafficking. In a 2015 article, Burkhalter asserts that unlike other human rights abuses, human trafficking is the singular human rights issue that the public, law enforcement, and non-profit organizations have created a collective climate that allows a lack of perpetrator accountability which in turn leads to a greater number of individuals being victimized (123).

This standpoint is similar to Annie Smith's human rights perspective in the human trafficking and law literature body. This overlap in literature is important because it highlights a tremendous opportunity for improvement in law enforcement's response to human trafficking. Burkhalter does assert that police reform should be conducted in a mindful, victim-centered way. Extensive training, mentorship, and oversight should be established in addition to judicial accountability in prosecuting traffickers. Police officers, however, do not always have jurisdiction over ambiguous borders that are often found at places of international and inter-state transit like airports. Therefore, in rolling out improved training aviation, first responders and officers must receive specialized training.

The final section of this body aligns the most closely to the topic of this capstone: intervention through aviation and how airports and other places of transit can identify human trafficking victims. This is important to my research question as I focus my case study on human trafficking intervention at an international airport. Eric Corthay argues that aviation staff must take a larger role in identifying and preventing the estimated 200,000-400,000 human trafficking cases that occur in aviation yearly. Everyone from customs officers, flight attendants, security, and gate agents should receive extensive and standardized training on recognizing and intervening in human trafficking cases (2020, 606). Like Corthay, other scholars believe in a team-effort approach of airline staff to help recognize trafficking; however, other authors believe in taking a more critical look at human smuggling and other 'semi-legal' activities that can devolve from human smuggling to trafficking (Derluyn et al. 2010 and Miller & Baumeister 2013). Miller and Baumeister assert that the State should be responsible for upholding the human rights of migrant workers and those who are being trafficked. Instead of helping recognize unsafe situations, border control is simply criminalizing illegal migration. A solution they propose is appointing a non-partisan Anti-Trafficking Commissioner to oversee and provide government accountability to human trafficking interventions at the border (2013, 27). The authors find that this is the most victim-centered way to address trafficking while simultaneously holding different agencies accountable for their human trafficking prevention efforts at highly susceptible entry-points.

While it is incredibly difficult to coordinate collaboration in human trafficking interventions with officials inside and outside of an airport, the next set of authors in this literature body assert that collaboration between agencies is required. Derluyn et al. specifically look at trafficking in airports through the lens of unaccompanied minors. Like Miller and

Baumeister and Corthay, they advocate for better collaboration between social services, police, and government (2009, 177). They argue that the lack of awareness among authorities is the primary reason so many victims go unnoticed. Proper collaboration among agencies cannot take place if there is not a strong baseline understanding of the issue of human trafficking. Derluyn et. al. acknowledges the inherent challenges of collaboration in recognizing different groups have conflicting interests along with cases crossing state and country lines (2009, 164-65). The idea of recognizing human trafficking goes beyond just professionals who may encounter human trafficking victims like customs officers, nurses, and doctors.

Identification: Public Awareness of Human Trafficking

The public is also an important source to identify human trafficking cases, as demonstrated by the unintentional co-occurrence of public awareness from SFO's sticker campaign. In my final literature review body, I examine the issue of the general public's perception of human trafficking. In this body, I explore the idea of re-framing public awareness of human trafficking victims and investigate literature that reports on changing the negative public perceptions that frequently are a consequence of incorrect media reporting, poor public messaging, and even conspiracy theories.

External factors such as media representation of human trafficking can play a major role in determining how the public perceives victims. The media's impact on public perception of human trafficking plays a strong part in this body of literature. Hill and Martian explain that the media revolving around human trafficking tends to be sensationalized while playing into stereotypes—such as the Super Bowl sporting event leading to a major increase in human trafficking. While non-evidence-based media is difficult to dispel in public perceptions, it is vital

to do so to spread more accurate narratives. The authors propose a solution by creating a media collaboration between law enforcement, antitrafficking organizations, and local leaders (2019, 13). Media does not only encompass reputable sources such as news agencies, but it can also include alternative internet sources that more and more Americans seek as a primary news resource.

Because more and more Americans seek news from platforms such as social media and blogs, the next set of authors assert that a proactive approach is needed to address false information regarding human trafficking that can quickly disseminate on unreliable platforms. Internet conspiracy groups are one cause of public confusion and misperceptions of human trafficking victims. Benton and Peterka-Benton point out that conspiracy groups like QAnon are spreading harmful misinformation about human trafficking that can even undermine the work that legitimate organizations are doing. Martain and Hill's proposed strategy to counter the harmful effects on public perception of human trafficking is with better collaboration between law enforcement and media agencies. Benton and Peterka-Benton also cite that it is the responsibility of law enforcement and local leaders to address QAnon trafficking misinformation. This can be done by including a disclaimer that addresses different conspiracy theories during anti-trafficking education (2021, 114). Perhaps some of these misconceptions arise because there is a lack of unity in our society on how the public should address human trafficking cases. Carrie Baker notes that while there is universal cultural agreement on the ills of human trafficking, there is not a consensus among the public on how to best address it (2015, 8). Baker is in agreement that decisive approaches that Martain and Hill and Benton and Peterka-Benton critique can lead to less effective intervention. Baker takes this argument a step further and advocates for an intersectional policy approach that uses critical analysis against the systems

that contribute to trafficking. She blames privatization of public resources, unfair trade, and a lack of government services as catalysts to our current climate of misinformation and divisive public perceptions (2015, 12-13). In an ideal collaboration that Baker along with Benton and Peterka-Benton outline, law-enforcement, local leaders, and the media should work together on what messaging and framing is the most effective in positively impacting public awareness.

Bonilla and Mo assert that an accurate public perception about human trafficking is vital to establishing awareness and policy changes about trafficking. Human trafficking definitions that only include labor trafficking do not impact public support. Alternatively, sexual exploitation emphasis does impact public support. Furthermore, emphasizing that human trafficking is a local issue causes the public to feel more passionate about establishing policy changes (2019, 229-230). While these findings are very logical and fit within what would be expected, Wiener et al. take us down a different path of messaging's impact on public perception. Subjects that the authors studied generally held more blame for the victim, especially if the human trafficking victim had a history of sex work. Half the population thinks that arresting victims is a good way to combat the human trafficking epidemic (2021, 539). This finding supports the previous literature on media impact on human trafficking victims. Benton in addition to Martian and Hill also cited how easily the public could be influenced by stereotypes, and these findings are upheld by Wiener et al.

Conclusion

My three bodies of literature paint a complex picture of legal discourses surrounding human trafficking, intervention policy in human trafficking, and how public awareness of human is influenced. These literature bodies address factors such as false information spread by online

conspiracy groups, the benefits of victim involvement in intervention, and methods to begin addressing human trafficking in aviation. Despite this wide array of topics covered, the story about successful human trafficking intervention in aviation is incomplete. While the work of Eric Corthay and Derluyn et al. begin to address the need for human trafficking in air travel, overall, there is no literature that explores victim-centered and trauma-informed methods of human trafficking intervention in aviation. My research question addresses this gap in the literature while using the data that is available to create a well-informed and impactful study.

While some academic research on human trafficking exists, research that specifically targets victim-centered intervention in the context of aviation has not yet been published. This lack of data is detrimental because aviation is one of the few opportunities that victims enter the public space and have an opportunity to self-present to officials. The public and trained professionals can also work in collaboration to spot potential instances of human trafficking. While there is very little literature available that covers human trafficking in aviation, parallel topics, and the recent coverage by Eric Corthay in 2020 indicate that this scholarly issue is important and will be a growing part of the literature in the future.

My project begins filling the gap in the scholarly literature surrounding human trafficking interventions in aviation. As more and more airports begin to implement intervention strategies to target victims, a robust body of scholarly research must be available to reference. Scholars tend to avoid acknowledging the inherent power dynamic of racism, sexism, and oppression that leads to the commodification of the human body, specifically regarding sex trafficking. Overall, I was only able to find two scholarly articles that specifically studied human trafficking in an aviation setting. One of the articles was based in Europe. US airports are beginning to lead the charge in creating human trafficking public awareness campaigns, or victim targeted campaigns

such as the one I am examining at SFO. My research seeks to understand how successful this work is, and what limitations may be present at SFO specifically. Ultimately, I seek to take the successful aspects of the anti-trafficking work at SFO and create policy to replicate it at other airports. In doing so, I will contribute to the academic literature on human trafficking and aviation with a specific focus on work being done in the United States.

Methods

My literature review addresses the current limitation in the scholarly body of human trafficking research: there is not enough information about human trafficking interventions in an aviation setting. My study strives to close this gap and provide more information about substantive ways to identify and stop human trafficking while it is occurring in the context of aviation. In this section, I outline my data collection methodology. I investigate SFO's response to human trafficking using qualitative, semi-structured interviews designed to target several aspects of human trafficking intervention in aviation. Through these interviews, I take a close look at the effectiveness of the existing victim-targeted human trafficking intervention sticker campaign conducted by SFO.

Semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate research method for my study. Semi-structured interviews are a way to solicit data by asking "open-ended" and "theoretically driven questions." The goal of conducting semi-structured research interviews with a participant is to gain insight based on their personal experience within an organization and personal data that is rooted in narrative (Galletta and Cross 2013, 45-46). First-hand accounts from experts in the field prove to be most effective in answering my research question. My research question asks a

question specific to SFO's sticker campaign and the nuances of its implementation and results. My research method is critical to finding the most accurate, up-to-date data. My study focuses on both gaining experts' reactions to the anti-trafficking stickers at SFO and learning background information of the history leading up to the creation and approval of the campaign. I was able to build on my existing knowledge of the SFO anti-trafficking sticker campaign from my work at The Department on the Status of Women. In selecting interview participants, I chose key players in the sticker rollout campaign along with prominent leaders in the anti-trafficking movement. Having the opportunity to participate in semi-structured interviews allowed me to collect targeted data from experts with first-hand and historical knowledge. This method provided me with clear data that directly answered my research question and helped me craft my thesis.

I conducted semi-structured interviews as my sole research method. Individuals were invited to participate in my study if they fell into one of two categories. The first criteria are that the subject must be either a leader at an anti-human trafficking organization in the Bay Area or an anti-trafficking in aviation leader. The second criteria are that informants need to either be a representative of SFO or a partner with extensive knowledge of SFO's anti-trafficking sticker campaign. These groups combined formed my participant selection criteria since they had clear input or participation in the creation and roll out of the stickers. Participants are required to be 18 years old and sign an IRB approved consent form to participate.

I conducted 10 interviews between February 2022 and March 2022. During this time, the anti-trafficking sticker campaign at SFO had been in place for just over one year. This was a good time to conduct my study as there was some distance from the initial implementation. However, the campaign is still relatively new so people will have recent memories of the full process from proposal to implementation. Interview informants included but were not limited to

prominent anti-human trafficking non-profit directors, San Francisco International Airport leadership, direct service providers, government agency employees including The Department of Homeland Security, The City and County of San Francisco, and survivor activists.

Interviews were formally held on Zoom, over the phone, or in-person. I used the Zoom recording feature or a tape recorder to record the interviews and uploaded the interviews on Otter.ai to transcribe. Each participant was asked for permission before I recorded our interviews. The interviews lasted from approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour and consisted of approximately 10-15 questions depending on the interview subject and any necessary follow up questions.

The questions were written for two different audiences—those who have direct involvement with SFO’s anti-trafficking sticker campaign, and those who are anti-human trafficking leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area with extensive knowledge of the nuances of human trafficking victim outreach and prevention. The interview questions for SFO staff and partners are primarily focused on the following areas: the history and context of the bathroom sticker campaign, how partner agencies worked with SFO to execute the project, who the stickers are designed to reach, campaign effectiveness, and anti-human trafficking policy in legislation. The interview questions for anti-trafficking leaders revolve around human trafficking issues specifically related to The Bay Area, obstacles to intervening in human trafficking cases, potential limitations of the SFO campaign and extending intervention in human trafficking through more models in aviation.

My research method was beneficial as I was able to ask participants carefully crafted questions and access the insights and opinions of numerous leaders in the antitrafficking movement. I was able to ask probing questions when I identified certain patterns emerging in my

data and was able to pursue them to form a more complete story. An additional benefit of my research methodology was being able to ask key decisionmakers questions such as why they chose to use certain verbiage in the sticker campaign, their thoughts on policies, and to clarify what replication across other airports would look like. Having access to these leaders had drawbacks as well. Due to the organizational standards they needed to uphold, sometimes I felt like I was not receiving the full story or the participants' true feelings on the matter. Receiving conflicting information was also challenging for me as I worked to weave a coherent narrative together with my data. Challenges also included having limited access to victims as they are a protected group in Human Subjects Research. While I feel I was able to survey a wide sample of direct service providers, victim rights activists, and anti-trafficking leaders, my results will be inherently limited as I was not able to conduct research directly with victims. Because this topic is so sensitive and oftentimes fraught with misconceptions, apathy, or trauma-uninformed methods, I feel that it is necessary for me to justify my interest in this research area and positionality in relation to the topic.

To conduct my capstone research and analysis to the most ethical standard that I am able, I would like to define my positionality in relationship to human trafficking, research and advocacy. In my sophomore year of college, I was the victim of a sexual assault in Oakland. At the urging of my university, I reported incident to the Oakland Police Department and was faced with an extremely hostile process of interacting with law enforcement and the district attorney. During my experience interacting with police, I was referred to as the suspect, questioned inappropriately in a suspect interrogation room, and forced to act as my own advocate. While this experience was unfortunately commonplace, what wasn't common was the media attention my case received. I had the opportunity to publish a widely shared article about happened to me

and was subsequently featured on the front cover of The Oakland Tribune and The San Francisco Chronicle. As a result of this publicity, I was invited to meet with the chief of the Oakland Police Department and advocate for policy changes such as increased sensitivity training and creating a “soft interview room” for victims of sexual violence. This experience has pushed me to become a fierce advocate of women’s issues. While I’m no longer focusing on the treatment of sexual assault victims by law enforcement, the issue of human trafficking still feels deeply personal to me based on my past experiences. I felt alone navigating the legal process, despite all the media coverage and public support I received. I have a fierce desire to help raise awareness and help bring an end to this systematic human rights violation.

History

In the last section I outline my study’s research methodology and define my positionality in relation to human trafficking. In this section, I provide background on the circumstances, policies and collaboration that led to execution of the stickers in the SFO bathrooms today. I also create a foundation of knowledge for the reader to interpret my data by outlining the history of the anti-trafficking sticker campaign at SFO. SFO is a unique location with both the propensity to be a hub for trafficking and an airport leadership team that is interested and willing to address the trafficking head-on with carefully planned intervention measures.

SFO has always been on the forefront of anti-trafficking. SFO was the first airport in the nation to provide specialized training to airline personnel to better spot the signs of human trafficking. In 2012, SFO began conducting specialized anti-trafficking trainings to frontline employees who were most likely to encounter victims including custodial, guest services, and communication center employees. Three years later, SFO hosted a human trafficking awareness

walk with 250 walkers who raised \$150,000 (San Mateo County Sherriff's Office). In the same year, SFO started distributing tip cards to newly badged SFO team members with information about human trafficking and resource phone numbers to contact if a potential trafficking case was spotted. The most recent staff trainings were conducted in 2020 when SFO partnered with Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition (BAATC) for a two-pronged assessment of frontline staff and protocol assessment of reporting trafficking cases. BAATC also connected SFO with UC Berkeley to evaluate the impact of frontline staff trainings (Wilton 2020, 5-7).⁸ Today, as part of their new employee orientation and in order to receive their badges, airline employees must undergo training on how to spot human trafficking victims (San Mateo County Sherriff's Office).

San Francisco airport's high volume of travelers and unique geographic location is the ideal place to test the effectiveness of a victim-centered and trauma-informed intervention campaign. In 2020, 16,409,625 passengers passed through SFO with 79.9% domestic flights and 20.1% international flights (SFO Fact Sheet). San Francisco is a transit hub and the gateway to the Bay Area while also being the closest US airport to Asia and a starting point for numerous direct flights from all over the world. Labor trafficking victims headed to the Central Valley for agriculture work pass through alongside sex trafficking victims being moved domestically and internationally to feed the tremendous global market for sexual exploitation. A recent trend is young men being trafficked from Central America to sell drugs in the Tenderloin (Interviewee H). Each victim's trafficking either begins or continues if it is not caught while the victim is passing through SFO.

These factors combined make SFO the gateway to the FBI-designated "red zone" for human trafficking that is the San Francisco Bay Area (Interviewee F). In an attempt to reduce

⁸ Other airports known for leading the way in the anti-trafficking movement include The Houston Airport, The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Vancouver Airport and The Port of Seattle (Shallow 2020, 4).

human trafficking through SFO and beyond, Mayor London Breed’s office established the sticker campaign (Interviewee A). Ultimately, SFO is striving to be a place known for such stringent anti-trafficking enforcement that it is “blacklisted” by traffickers (Wilton 2020, 8). SFO officially launched the anti-trafficking bathroom sticker in January of 2021. Each sticker was designed with a unique QR code that if scanned will reveal the exact bathroom location the victim is in to the SFO Communication dispatch team. The language of the sticker reads as follows:

“Are you okay?
 Are you feeling safe?
 Are you being forced to work for little or no pay?
 Are you in control of your own travel documents?
 You have rights.
 For help now, call or text San Francisco International Airport.”

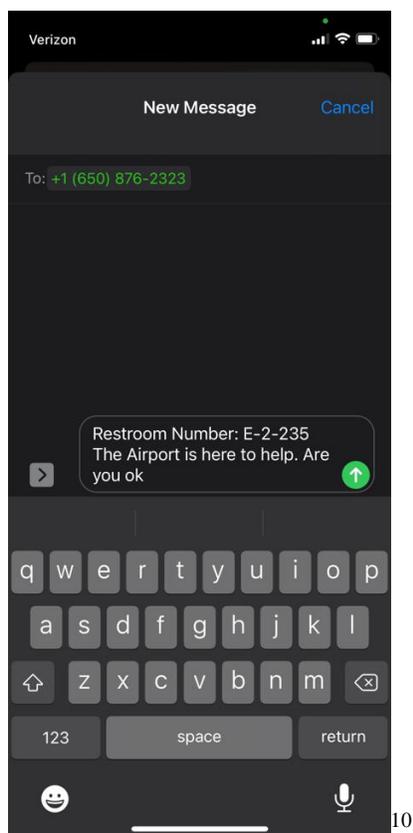
The official SFO sticker image is shown in the below image.



The striking blue bathroom sticker has a faint handprint on the lefthand side of the image with the logos of SFO and The City and County of San Francisco. The sticker image also makes it

⁹ An image of the sticker that is affixed to each bathroom stall at SFO (SFO 2021).

clear that you can call or text the provided number. If the QR code is activated, it will create a text message that reveals the exact bathroom location of the victim. An image of what this looks like on a cell phone is below.



The sticker messaging and the direct communication from SFO is very neutral. The word “human trafficking” is not on the sticker or the initial phone communication. The only images on the sticker are official city government and airport seals and an anodyne handprint. The decision to not use the verbiage or imagery that depicts perceptions of human trafficking was a strategic choice by SFO that I will explore in my next section.

Data Analysis

¹⁰ Screenshot image of the author’s cell phone after hovering over the QR code.

My history section outlines SFO's unique position on human trafficking intervention along with the steps and unique conditions that merged to create a climate in which anti-trafficking bathroom stickers could be implemented on a wide scale. In this section I illuminate the positive and promising aspects of SFO's work and challenging the response "beyond the sticker." My data analysis will answer my research question which asks: how is the SFO sticker campaign constructed to intervene in human trafficking? What are the limits and possibilities of this campaign? My findings ultimately reveal that while the sticker is well formatted, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed, SFO's response protocol to the sticker must be conducted in a more trauma-informed manner.

The sticker verbiage and design are created in a way that employs victim-centered¹¹ and trauma-informed¹² language. In doing so, the creators of the sticker try to establish a safe avenue for human trafficking victims to communicate with the airport. The campaign creates the possibility of collaboration with city officials and non-profits to create a direct victim outreach campaign, with the added benefit of increasing public awareness of human trafficking. However, my data reveals that the campaign is limited by the intervention that is carried out by SFO when victim communication is received from the sticker.

In my data analysis section, I present evidence that the models for successful intervention in aviation require intensive collaboration between airport officials and anti-trafficking leaders. They also require a substantial budget to support such an extensive policy change. I next articulate what is required to implement aviation-related interventions in the case study of SFO,

¹¹ For the purposes of this capstone, I define "victim centered" as keeping the victim's needs, desires, and trauma at the center of the intervention and investigation process.

¹² For the purposes of this capstone, I define "trauma-informed" as having extensive training, understanding, and sympathy towards the complex and unique trauma that human trafficking victims experience. This means in some cases victims may not relate to the word "human trafficking" or have a difficult time distancing themselves from their trafficker.

specifically the design of the bathroom stickers, police response, and the use of SFO's existing communication center. Finally, I talk about the goals and effects of the campaign at SFO both in the official context along with the "unofficial" or coincidental effects. After providing this initial analysis that discusses the climate and context of creating a robust anti-trafficking awareness campaign, I bring my study together by discussing the findings specifically relating to the measurable effects of the stickers. I use the human rights scholar Dr. Eric L Corthay's study: "On the Detection of Victims of Human Trafficking in the Civil Aviation Environment" to provide a framework of airport interventions as I model the data of my semi-structured interviews. In putting my findings in conversation with Corthay's, I explore replicable models of human trafficking interventions in aviation.

Conditions for Trauma Informed Intervention & Implementation

While San Francisco International Airport has been a champion of anti-human trafficking for the last decade, the bathroom sticker campaign is a policy that was initiated by Mayor London Breed's office. SFO's existing stance on human trafficking intervention is what ultimately led to the airport readily accepting the policy, allowing for a smooth rollout. Six out of my ten interviewees cited that pressure from the mayor's office and clear "marching orders even in the time of COVID" drove the campaign forward (Interviewee A). This was a major reason it was possible for the mayor's sticker campaign to be well received by SFO and implemented in a timely manner. The stickers had been an idea in development within city hall for some time; the mayor's office even sent a representative to Houston¹³ to learn from Mayor Sylvester Turner's Human Trafficking Office (Interviewee D). Creating the sticker wound up being an 18-month

¹³ As discussed in my introduction, the Houston Airport System was recognized Polaris for creating the first comprehensive, municipal level response to human trafficking in 2016.

collaboration between SFO, Mayor London Breed's Office, and the Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Collation (Interviewee B).

Despite originating the idea, the mayor's office was not able to contribute financially to this project since the mayor's office is a political entity and doing so would be challenging to budget for and ethically questionable. SFO was required to cover the cost of the campaign in its entirety including printing and posting the stickers and handling dispatch and communication with victims (Interviewee A). The dispatch translation system needs to be renewed annually and is one of the larger costs of the campaign. The price point for the service is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars (Interviewee A). The stickers are in each bathroom stall at SFO. A total of nearly 1,000 stickers needed to be printed and posted, incurring a tremendous cost (Interviewee B). The expensive cost of the program requiring the buy-in from the city came up in 50% of my interviews and many interview informants spent substantial time discussing the cost implications as a logistical challenge, especially during COVID-19. The cost and need for extensive collaboration may be barriers for other airports interested in implementing something similar. SFO is technically a department within San Francisco City Hall, so that also increased the ease of collaboration and timely implementation.

Like the hesitations other airports might have about executing such a costly campaign, SFO administrators were initially unsure about taking such extensive anti-trafficking measures. The main concern was that human trafficking might not be a big enough problem to warrant such a costly and involved solution. This was a direct result of the poor communication and a knowledge gap that tends to surround human trafficking in many contexts. A 2018 internal study found that every few weeks at least one victim self-presented to airport law enforcement at airports across the Bay Area. Once these statistics were formally presented to SFO officials, the

airport was fully on board (San Mateo County Sheriff's Office). This shift shows that it is possible for an airport that does not initially prioritize or believe human trafficking is an issue to come around and become an essential partner in intervening in human trafficking cases.

Airports must have the buy-in of local anti-trafficking non-profits in order to execute a trauma-informed intervention both in the training of aviation staff, and in the imagery and information communicated to victims. San Francisco is one of the few United States cities that has an office in City Hall dedicated to promoting and advancing the rights of women and girls. The Department on the Status of Women has a human trafficking expert on staff who was able to advise and assist with the sticker rollout, verbiage, and features. SFO also has an existing partnership with a prominent Bay Area anti-human trafficking non-profit: The Bay Area Anti Trafficking Coalition, also known as BAATC. BAATC has partnered with SFO since 2012 to conduct trainings for airport frontline staff who may encounter victims of human trafficking while performing their regular job duties. SFO tapped BAATC as a collaborator on the sticker campaign in addition to other non-profit groups and victim service providers. A representative from the mayor's office offered the following overview of the collaboration that took place:

I think it was really like the mayor's office was just super committed to this project. And we had great people at SFO that were also on board and believed in the project and wanted to make it happen. I mean, it, it was no easy feat, the design of the stickers and the amount of bathroom stalls that had to be covered. Like, just figuring out, you know, where all the bathrooms were, and how the stickers were going to be put in, and then the training of the officers that are going to respond. (Interviewee A)

The successful partnership of two agencies – one public and one private – which were able to support SFO's initiatives and provide expertise in creating a victim-centered campaign is clearly reflected in the final verbiage and design of the sticker. During interviews, SFO officials, the Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition, and other interviewees made it clear that the partnership between SFO, DOSW and BAATC provided a unique collaboration opportunity that was

invaluable to the timely creation and execution of a trauma-informed sticker campaign. Without insight from experts on victims it is unlikely such a culturally competent, trauma-informed sticker would have been created. Just creating the five “are you okay” questions on the SFO sticker was an extensive process requiring input from multiple organizations.

We probably started with like 12 different questions. And then it was like, okay, well, what are we really trying to get at here? And then we kept whittling down and whittling down... You don't have time to read something super long, especially if your trafficker's waiting outside. We're contemplating all these things, what is most impactful in terms of what we're asking somebody? Keeping it short, concise, you know, and the look and feel being something that, you know, appeals to somebody? And, you know, create something for them to get help. (Interviewee C)

This SFO official's description of the process of narrowing down the sticker questions, verbiage and imaging is a summary of what many respondents described in the process of creating a trauma-informed and well thought out sticker. The audience was carefully considered in creating these stickers, appealing directly to someone who is a human trafficking victim. Including a question about being in control of your travel documents targets potential victims at the beginning of their victimization, when they may not realize this is abnormal and a telltale sign of trafficking. Ultimately SFO's unique position of being an airport at the forefront of the anti-trafficking movement combined with having access to expertise from a wealth of nonprofits and city support created the perfect mix of conditions for a victim-centered sticker campaign to be achieved.

Other airports do not put so many hours and thought into the stickers and signage which can lead to campaigns that miss the importance of being victim-centered and trauma-informed. Eight out of ten interviewees I spoke to commented favorably on SFO's language and imagery choice for the sticker. Far too often bathroom stickers and other anti-human trafficking campaigns show sensationalized perceptions of victims or rely heavily on the term “human

trafficking.” SFO is different in utilizing a more subtle approach. Other stickers were described by interviewees during my data collection as “PSA’s that nobody can read” (Interviewee I) or an effort to solicit donations for a specific anti-trafficking group (Interviewee B).

Other airports such as Salt Lake City and Las Vegas have bathroom stickers, but the stickers clearly indicate that the number goes to the Human Trafficking Hotline (Interviewee J). Additionally, these airport’s anti-trafficking stickers have sensational images of human trafficking victims. To a victim, seeing such jarring images or overt mentions of human trafficking can cause an adverse response. The SFO sticker features a bright blue background with the almost transparent imagery of a handprint on the right side. All writing is in a clear and professional font with “Are You Okay” in enlarged text. The sticker avoids using the word “human trafficking” and is careful about the imagery shown. “A lot of the other airports will use like imagery of somebody in shackles” (Interviewee C). This sensationalized imagery is unfortunately commonplace in anti-trafficking and shows the airport’s lack of collaboration with victim experts on creating compelling and trauma-informed language. Six interviewees specially addressed the general lack of appropriate language or sensationalized imagery at other airports or in other anti-trafficking campaigns. One interviewee commented on the “picture neutrality” of the SFO sticker:

That is very picture neutral, which is important. Because a lot of entities even in the anti-trafficking space use sensationalized imagery. And it causes more harm than good. (Interviewee J)

This shows that it is all too easy for officials to quickly move forward with a campaign without taking time to research the complex trauma that victims go through, and how that may cause them to react negatively to something less subtle. Pictures of victims in chains, with their mouths covered, or images of money can backfire and cause a victim to not identify with the sticker or to

be dissuaded from reporting their trafficker. It also plays into incorrect public perceptions of what human trafficking consists of.

Once the sticker verbiage and image were created, next step in the process was answering the calls and texts that would come from potential victims who responded to the sticker, and dispatching responders. SFO made the deliberate choice to route calls and texts directly to airport employees at its in-house communication center as opposed to routing them to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. While the National Human Trafficking Hotline was initially considered as the respondent, the hotline said that they would not be able to have a fast enough response, and that the typical calls to the hotline last 15-18 minutes (Interviewee B). This extra time the conversation would take could raise suspicion for a trafficker waiting outside the bathroom. Additionally, while the sticker is only written in four languages, the text dispatch can respond to inquiries in 170 different languages based on the language settings of the victim's phone (Interviewee B). A victim advocate who provides direct services to victims noted the importance of using a seven-digit phone number that victims can hide in their phone instead of using something like 911. "I know people that have young women who have told me that they've seen numbers like this, and what they do is they jot it down, or they type it into their phone backwards" (Interviewee D). This provides victims a chance to reach out for help when they are ready and in a way that is not clear to their traffickers. This is also why inside the bathroom stalls was selected for the sticker placement (Interviewee A). If the dispatch is contacted, they follow a script that was created in collaboration with anti-trafficking advocates (Interviewee A).

While the telephone number does not look like it is a way to contact emergency services and the sticker just says the number is for "help," if called or texted, a uniformed airport police officer will be dispatched to the victim (Interviewee A). The first responding officers are part of

SFPD Airport Bureau, but cases are typically moved to San Mateo since despite the name, SFO does fall under the San Francisco Police Department's jurisdiction (San Mateo County Sheriff's Office). The next section will discuss and critique the response of sending uniformed officers to respond to human trafficking victims in more detail.

Goals & Effects: Sticker Communication and Public Awareness

The first section of my data analyzed the conditions for victim-centered interventions to take place and what was required for SFO to execute the sticker campaign from idea to active policy. In this next section I will look at how the goals of the campaign line up with the actual effects, both intended and unintended. The decision to route calls to SFO's dispatch center instead of to 911 or to the National Human Trafficking Hotline is the precursor to collecting detailed data that SFO can use to prove the viability of the campaign. However, it seems that in the year since the sticker was posted not many victims have utilized the call or texting system (Interviewee A). Furthermore, reduced travel due to COVID 19 and other factors are further preventing data from being collected in a way that can be quantified:

Not a huge amount of communication that we've received off the sticker campaign. And it probably is because there's not a lot of [travel] activity in the airports. We're building up our numbers, but as you know, through COVID...people aren't traveling like they used to. So I think that that plays a part. I'm sort of waiting for the point where I can't go through the information myself. (Interviewee C)

This quote suggests that SFO is receiving limited data from the stickers due to decreased travel during the COVID-19 era. While it is unfortunate the stickers are not receiving extensive amounts of victim communication at this point, I'd like to note that the Corthay would assert that the stickers are only a small part of a robust and multi-tiered intervention to combat human trafficking at SFO. Another barrier to reporting on and tracking the success of the sticker

campaign is that once a case is identified, it is quickly referred out of the airport. Information on the outcome of the case is typically hard to come by and not shared back to SFO officials.

It's super hard...I'm always trying to get resourcing for these efforts, and I would love to be able to say, well, in 2021, we have X number of cases. But the data collection around this is super hard. And to be quite frank, like even when we do get something that is referred out, I don't know what happens to that case, once it's referred out. So I don't know the final disposition or outcome. (Interviewee C)

Due to the extremely sensitive nature of human trafficking cases, it is understandable that there is data that is privileged. Furthermore, SFO not handling the cases in-house makes them reliant on outside agencies to report back, something that is not part of an established standard operating procedure. The lack of data both regarding the sticker campaign and the confirmation of identified human trafficking cases may prove challenging when SFO needs to renew costly contracts. It also makes it difficult for other airports to use SFO as a model for the benefit of proactive intervention policies. Having no data that can be shared or reported creates a barrier in making a case to replicate SFO's program on a wider scale. That being said, doing something is better than nothing and having the infrastructure in place to field calls sends an important message to traffickers, victims, and the general public.

While there is no tangible numeric data that is currently being collected by SFO from the sticker campaign, data collection and replication by other airports is not an articulated goal of the campaign by SFO. Officially, the bathroom sticker campaign seeks to intervene in and disrupt the human trafficking process in a way that is accessible and non-threatening to victims (Interviewee B and C). While the stated goals of the sticker appear relatively simple, there are several unofficial outcomes that the sticker provides.

Instituting public awareness regarding human trafficking is an unintended, yet positive co-occurrence of the sticker. It may even inspire people who are victims of another type of crime

to step forward. A former member of the mayor's office who was heavily involved in the sticker creation articulated some of the unintended positive multipliers:

I think probably unintended... We want the stickers to be out there... We wanted them to be attractive, but also to maybe pique interest. But I'm not sure that the sticker itself gets at human trafficking in terms of like outwardly. Because we know it's covert, right. And so I don't know if I suspect it, you know, expect the public to look at the sticker and say, oh, this, this is a human trafficking effort. But I do expect the sticker to prompt the public to self-identify or to reach out if they need help, and that might go beyond human trafficking. But in any case, we want people to know that SFO is here to help. (Interviewee I)

The unintended public awareness campaign the stickers provide was echoed by almost every person I spoke to. A positive consequence of the stickers is raising public awareness¹⁴ and making members of the public stop and think about why the stickers are posted, what they mean, and who they are targeting.

When asked, airport officials and those who had direct involvement with the campaign asserted that there was not a public awareness goal with this sticker campaign specifically. However, public awareness can be a way to recognize victims and help them. A member of an anti-trafficking non-profit explained that stickers can lead to regular civilians recognizing victims:

Yeah, I think the stickers are definitely effective, any type of education or outreach in that aspect I think is important... I actually spoke to a lady who was able to save two very young girls at her hotel, because there was [sic.] stickers up and posters up in the hotels. So I think it is definitely helpful... and great education for sure. (Interviewee F)

This anecdote was echoed across several interviewees, small instances that the stickers were able to help a member of the public identify a victim or become aware of the issue in general. Even without using sensationalized images or even the word "human trafficking" SFO's anti-trafficking bathroom stickers have an impact on members of the public. Not only are the stickers

¹⁴ Anecdotally, when I mentioned my thesis research to friends, family members, and colleagues many people I spoke to volunteered that they saw the sticker at the airport and knew it was about human trafficking.

supporting victims in a trauma-informed way, but they also inform the public about the reality that human trafficking takes place in the San Francisco Bay Area too. This shows that public awareness campaigns about human trafficking can be simultaneously trauma-informed and public-informing. Other airports have been inspired by SFO's work and have begun to plan similar victim-informed sticker campaigns.

Long Beach and Oakland actually asked for the [sticker] file. And there was this back and forth of whether we could [share the design.] We spent over a year on designing this sticker with so many community members being part of it, a lot of advocacy and survivor advocacy groups, being part of the conversations of the mayor's office to get to something that is a what seems like a very simple sticker. But it was so complex in how we designed it from the imagery, we use the questions that we put in, the languages we incorporated...Because of sort of the spirit of this campaign and what we're trying to do, just save lives. We've actually given the file over to different airports to replicate, because the idea is that, you know, more people that can see it, and potentially, you know, get help through the stickers. I mean, that's the idea. That's the spirit. (Interviewee C)

SFO ultimately made the decision to share the sticker with airports who ask for the file to maintain the "spirit" of the campaign which is articulated as "saving lives." Creating a model for intervention in aviation was not something that SFO initially anticipated when creating the verbiage and image for the sticker campaign. This was an accidental outcome of the sticker campaign but shows the value of an airport taking a stand and producing a trauma-informed anti-trafficking campaign.

While the sticker does not have the word "human trafficking" on it, it implies that gender-based violence such as human trafficking takes place. This idea has the potential to impact many individuals who think human trafficking is something that happens only overseas or is an issue of immigration or human smuggling. Placing the sticker in a place that is difficult to ignore and one must confront at eye-level forces people who typically turn away from difficult issues to face the issue head-on. SFO having the bravery to state the claim that "trafficking happens here too" creates an opening and condition in which other airports can follow suit in

creating a visible and productive implementation of anti-trafficking policies while maintaining a victim focus.

“Spiritual Blindness:” The Challenge in Maintaining a Trauma-Informed Response

The previous section of my data analysis drew the public awareness implications of the sticker into practical policy implications. I begin this section by drawing on Eric L. Corthay’s: “On the Detection of Victims of Human Trafficking in the Civil Aviation Environment” to complicate and understand this model of intervention. Corthay argues that while the government is ultimately in charge of detecting victims and arresting offenders, the aviation industry is a valuable asset to the fight against human trafficking both on the ground, and in the air. He asserts that “boots on the ground” members of the airport such as ticket agents, security, and immigration staff can provide a streamlined way to report suspected cases of human trafficking to the appropriate authorities (Corthay 2020, 606). SFO is following that with regular trainings for airport staff. However, this could be expanded to include security officials and more frequent and detailed trainings. A prominent anti-trafficking in aviation advocate has a positive opinion on the proactive training SFO is conducting.

I applaud what they're doing about working internally. Because anybody can see a trafficking situation might be a baggage handler. Might be a bus driver. It might be a ticket agent. It might be a flight attendant. (Interviewee E)

SFO is well known for the efforts in training on-the-ground staff. However, a training can only go so far when employees don’t feel empowered or able to report cases of human trafficking that they observe. Despite the robust human trafficking detection training that SFO provides to their employees, there are still challenges in rolling out this model successfully:

People have a real fear of misreporting. So they may know all the signs to look out for, they've been educated. We have badge size tip cards that we give with every employee

who gets a badge. Everyone has to have a badge, who is employed by the airport, so not just commissioned staff, but greater airport community. So if you're, you know, Burger King employee, you have to have a badge. So we have these tip cards, that sort of lay out basically signs to look out for...But one of the biggest barriers is just people not feeling that they have enough to report. People often will come to my office and say: 'there was just, six months ago, something happened, and I saw something, and it just, you know, it, it checked off a lot of boxes on that tip card, but I just didn't know for sure, and I just felt like, you know, what, if I, what if I miss identified someone, or, am accusing them of something, and that's not the case.' And so that is absolutely a concern, but it like plagues them to the point where six months later, they're still talking to me about it and thinking, 'gosh, should I have done something more?' (Interviewee C)

This quote from an SFO official explains that even if employees have received training on how to report human trafficking, they may not feel empowered to do so. This limitation is important to recognize as it is an unexpected barrier to employee training and reporting protocols. SFO's example of the challenges of having employees feel empowered to report human trafficking after identifying a potential case reveals a limitation of Corthay's recommended protocol. Corthay does not address this challenge of airport staffers recognizing human trafficking but feeling afraid or disempowered to report it to authorities in the chance of misidentification. While the training infrastructure and reporting chain of commands can be carefully constructed and in place "on paper," human error or fear of mistakes can cause even recognized cases to go unreported. This shows that it is vital to have sets of eyes in the form of the public looking out for trafficking in addition to the formally trained aviation staff.

This issue is not unique to SFO. A non-profit founder and human trafficking researcher explained that this is a major challenge in training aviation staff to report suspected human trafficking.

The majority of our frontline workers have concerns about miss-identifying signs of human trafficking. And then we had two follow up question to them. What are those concerns to where they can identify what those concerns are? And the third question was, [do] those concerns prevent you from reporting signs of trafficking. (Interviewee J)

This interviewee explains that a soon to be published survey conducted by United Against Slavery shows that frontline responders continue to struggle with fear of misidentifying victims, which has the consequence of potential trafficking going unreported. This along with SFO's data shows that training first responders to be confident in their identification and not be afraid of the consequences or potential embarrassment from mistakenly identifying a non-trafficking situation is essential. Airline employees can have all the tools needed to identify trafficking, but without courage in their convictions cases can still pass through the airport unreported.

Awareness levels of both aviation workers and the public to the existence of human trafficking is an important indicator of how effective human trafficking interventions have the potential to be and provide an opportunity to evaluate contemporary intervention models in aviation. Historically, public awareness of human trafficking has been low. The results of my data collection only emphasize this further. All ten of my interview participants shared the same belief that public awareness surrounding human trafficking is minimal. Some mentioned they have seen slight improvement but overall felt there were significant gaps. One interview participant described the concept as "spiritual blindness:"

And we're not even talking about online traffic. And we just talking about street-based trafficking...I know y'all see these babies out here...I know you see that at 14, 15. So why are they still out here? What's going on? And then a part of me is like, y'all don't see them? Do you? You know, some in two minds about it. But within either mind, it's like, so what are you doing? What are you gonna [sic.] do? If you do see them? What are you doing? I think it's some kind of spiritual blindness, because I'm like, I don't know how you don't see a 14-year-old being out on the track. You know, I just like, I don't get it. It boggles my mind...And I know we've raised awareness. It still is not enough help. I don't know. (Interviewee G)

Reading this quote is chilling. This interviewee is referring to the "track" in Oakland, a section of International Boulevard that is a known sex trafficking hot spot for minors. Hundreds of cars drive by the victims as this street is a main thoroughfare in Oakland. Yet the track continues to operate

with countless youth being trafficked every day. If the public is turning a spiritually blind eye to this shocking display of overt human trafficking, how can awareness be raised to a less overt example of human trafficking in an airport, a place people are not typically thinking about or looking for trafficking? SFO's decision to target victims directly and encourage self-reporting through the sticker campaign puts less pressure on employees and the public to be responsible for identifying trafficking.

Perhaps the challenge of increasing identification through public awareness and employee intervention in cases of trafficking lies in who is most likely to fall victim. Another respondent suggested that the demographics of trafficking victims are to blame for the public not being compelled to learn more about the issue:

The studies that we look at, say anywhere between like 50 and 90% of kids in the sex trade in California have been touched by the foster care system, right. That's a huge range. I can tell you from the kids that I have met personally, it's almost all of them...And in the Bay Area, the people who end up in our foster care system are mostly African American young women...In this area we see...that this disproportionately affects trans youth and folks who identify as LGBTQ. (Interviewee H)

This is a theme that came up frequently in my interviews, the idea that society does not seem as concerned about human trafficking victims as they should be, in a large part because they are members of marginalized populations. In a total of four interviews this theme came up in some way. This raises the question of how airports should go about raising awareness in both staff members and the public when there is already a tremendous barrier in place of even getting folks to see past their biases and recognize victimization in the first place.

Another potential framework of looking at increasing public awareness in anti-trafficking campaigns in aviation is the idea that the stickers and outreach efforts must be more overt. While the stickers at SFO have been commended for being trauma-informed towards the victims, they do little to engage the public about what they can do to help identify human trafficking. While

public awareness has been a coincidental benefit of the stickers, it is possible that by keeping the sticker so victim focused, there is a missed opportunity to inform the public. One interviewee noted that the stickers' neutral language may miss the mark for increasing the public awareness of a generally uninformed population:

I mean, it could be because they're in every bathroom, but it also doesn't say anything about trafficking on it. Which, you know, I recognize they probably did, because a lot of people don't identify with that term when they're being trafficked. But from my public safety perspective, without the word trafficking, then there's a whole bunch of stickers that say: "Are you okay?" If that was the goal, I would add a line somewhere that says: yes, trafficking happens here too... so it helps the public know. Or maybe it's a second sticker that like, is trafficking happens here too, here's what to be on the lookout for, here's how to contact the Human Trafficking Hotline or the social worker. (Interviewee H)

This shows that the choice to avoid using the word "human trafficking" is a double-edged sword. On one side, it can increase the chances of a victim self-reporting, but on the other the messaging may be missed by someone uninformed. This complicates the idea of the sticker striking a balance between being victim-focused and trauma-informed while simultaneously addressing the public who encounters the campaign. A former city employee who helped design the stickers also offered the idea of taking up a more aggressive approach to informing the public about human trafficking.

We need aviation to really step up and know this as is a big issue just as like they would treat terrorism very seriously... They should treat human trafficking the exact same way. And at the end of the day, the sticker is helpful. But there's still going to be someone who's afraid to call or doesn't, you know, get the chance to go to the bathroom... And so how can they intervene when that person is on the plane or walking through the airport... We need to be a little bit more alert as a society to read those signs and to ask the right questions. (Interviewee I)

This interviewee explains that airports and airlines need to take a more proactive stance on training the public and airport staff to identify and report human trafficking. The idea of holding human trafficking intervention to the same level of an international security threat as terrorism

provides an interesting opportunity to utilize existing airport staff. This concept aligns with Corthay's argument to use "security screeners, customs, immigration, border agents, and police" to detect human trafficking (2020, 616). This is important because the similarities in intervention strategies show that current models are not sufficient and that utilization of every aviation employee is needed to successfully identify and intervene trafficking cases. While human trafficking and terrorism are different problems, airports have the existing infrastructure and public awareness to combat terrorism, and this can potentially be expanded to combatting human trafficking. Once a trafficking case is identified, the next steps in response are vital to maintaining a trauma-informed response.

My data shows that extensive thought was put into the verbiage, design, and placement of the stickers. Keeping victims as the priority of the campaign and targeted audience of the stickers may have come at some expense of public awareness. When a victim self-reports or member of the public or airport staff identifies a potential trafficking case, the airport's manner of responding to the case is crucial for maintaining a physically and emotionally safe environment for the victim. SFO's current model of having uniformed airport law enforcement respond to cases of trafficking does not take this into account. This intervention model received heavy criticism by groups who work closely or provide services to human trafficking victims. At least four interviewees expressed grave concerns about victims being afraid of law enforcement, running away when they see law enforcement coming, or feeling like they may get in trouble or deported based on their immigration status. Someone who worked closely with the sticker implementation mentioned that they didn't think airport law enforcement received any specialized training on how to interact with human trafficking victims (Interviewee A). One

interviewee summed up the concerns that may go through a victim's mind when they see a uniformed officer approach them:

If they looked like security or law enforcement, not everybody, but the majority of people I've worked with would go apeshit... For one of several reasons: either they're not here legally and there's a lot of fear around law enforcement and what could happen to them. Even though maybe they also are really afraid of their exploiter, right? Also, a number of the young people I've worked with, as I said earlier, have grown up in the foster care system, they are US citizens. But because they are children of color, they've had really bad interactions with law enforcement. Or even if they've never interacted with law enforcement, they've watched what happens to black folks on TV, but they've also grown up in the quote, unquote, system. And so their relationship to people in uniform, to people who represent the state is really triggering. And isn't seen necessarily as somebody who automatically is there to defend them or represent their best interest. (Interviewee H)

This sentiment was echoed in many interviews. Regardless of the individual victim's situation, most hold a deep fear or resentment towards law enforcement. While human trafficking is illegal and likely needs law enforcement to be involved, perhaps it is not the most logical entity to support victims. Uniformed law enforcement responding to a victim of human trafficking seems like an overreach, especially at SFO which took such care to create a trauma-informed anti-trafficking sticker campaign. While it may seem minor to someone who is not an expert in human trafficking, having law enforcement be the only first responder may be detrimental to the victim's perception of safety. Instead of a police-only response, there are other, trauma-informed ways to respond to victims that mirror the victim-centered posture of the stickers.

Several interview respondents argued that the consideration of victims that SFO put into the sticker design needs to be expanded to the actual human trafficking intervention process. Having a trauma-informed sticker is not enough; the response to an identified trafficking case should have the same trauma-informed components.

As other airports look to SFO as a blueprint for establishing human trafficking intervention campaigns, potential barriers to replication should be addressed. Perhaps one of the

largest barriers is that SFO is uniquely positioned financially in comparison to other airports. SFO's budget allowed the timely rollout of the sticker campaign; however, other sites may not have access to such funds or buy-in from decision-making officials. The substantial cost of SFO's efforts came up in four of my interviews. If SFO is not able to prove the effectiveness of its campaign with data or anecdotal results, it is questionable whether other airports will be willing to implement similar models. An SFO official reported that challenges of funding the project:

It's not cheap, the service is certainly not cheap. And you know, the airport now is sort of in dire straits with our financial situation because of COVID. And the lack of, you know, travelers to the airport and, and things like that, but still we're maintaining the service as a priority. That is certainly when I think about the stickers, and how, maybe easily somebody could create the sticker and affix it to the restroom stall doors, but then sort of thinking about okay, well added measures you're taking and how much money you're willing to put toward the effort. I think that just separates SFO from the other airports. (Interviewee C)

The importance of not just having the stickers, but also the infrastructure in place to respond appropriately and quickly, cannot be understated. Not even SFO has completely figured out the best way to intervene when the sticker QR code is activated.

Replicating SFO's timely and trauma-informed response to victim calls could be challenging for other airports to replicate due to a lack of finances alone. One interview respondent even went as far as to say that the money spent on the bathroom stickers would be better spent serving victims in other ways. When I asked Interviewee A what might stop the campaign from working successfully at other airports she answered:

Honestly, I don't think we should [replicate the campaign at other airports]. I think it's jumping ahead. Because we don't really know how effective the sticker campaign is. It is incredibly expensive, like, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars for the text service. It was a lot of money. And I don't know, like, how effective it is in reaching survivors. I mean, there's a benefit, right to public awareness. But you could do that in other ways. I mean, if you think about it, right, the money that's being invested in this, like, if you look at [The San Francisco] trafficking report, the top need is housing. Like it

could go towards, you know, housing program, or housing vouchers, which I think, like the top need. Or it could pay, it could pay for an attorney to help with legal services, help with U Visas. (Interviewee A)

Two interview respondents shared the same hesitancy of rolling the campaign out at other airports since there is not enough information on the sticker's rate of victim's identification. Furthermore, the hefty price tag is a concern when allocating scarce funds to fight human trafficking. While other airports are eager to establish a victim-focused human trafficking intervention protocol, it is clear that more data is needed on SFO's rollout before implementing it on a wider scale.

Regardless of the challenges in creating an effective, affordable, and meaningful form of human trafficking intervention in aviation, it is important to remember the necessity for all airports to take part in some form.

Transportation is the first point of reference, where a trafficking survivor can intersect with a person that might be able to help them get freed. And there's so much truth to that... I guess that's why this study is just another reason why it's so important because transportation intersects with human trafficking, both sex and labor, trafficking, during recruitment, during exploitation during the extraction or escape, and also during the healing journeys. (Interviewee J)

This quote from a participant aptly contextualizes the urgency and necessity of having protocols in place for airports to recognize, and subsequently intervene when cases of human trafficking are discovered. An airport is a unique setting that victims of any type of trafficking may encounter during their exploitation, and also a place that is equipped to provide an immediate path out of the exploitation. As more and more airports begin to look into human trafficking intervention and public awareness campaigns, SFO provides an excellent model to examine both the possibilities and limits of intervention.

My data analysis revealed that The San Francisco International Airport was, in a way, the ideal site to roll out such an extensive and expensive campaign. SFO had a proven interest in

raising awareness about human trafficking, leadership that was already invested in implementing training protocols to staff, and access to collaborators with specialized skills and knowledge about the intricacies of human trafficking. Despite SFO's embracing of the campaign and successful rollout of trauma-informed stickers, its lack of data on whether the program has been successful is not useful to other airports interested in implementing intervention strategies. Corthay's concepts of utilizing "boots on the ground" in the form of training aviation staff at every level backs up SFO's policies. However, SFO takes this concept a step further in providing victims the opportunity to self-identify. In the verbiage of the stickers, SFO's work begins to address the complex trauma trafficking victims face. However, unfortunately SFO does not maintain the trauma-informed approach in the airport's policy of sending uniformed officials to respond to victims.

Conclusions & Recommendations

I began collecting data exactly one year after the stickers were launched which provided an excellent opportunity to gauge the progress and effectiveness of the campaign at the airport after a substantial sample of time. During my research, I endeavored to understand if and how the stickers worked to promote anti-trafficking awareness at SFO and what a model for anti-trafficking could be in urban airports. I also wanted to learn if the stickers could be beneficial to other airports and about the varied replication possibilities of the campaign. To accomplish this, I guided my research by asking the following research question: how is the SFO sticker campaign constructed to intervene in human trafficking? What are the limits and possibilities of this campaign?

San Francisco International Airport took a momentous first step in declaring human trafficking a problem and implemented victim-informed solutions to start to address it. This is much more than many United States airports have done to combat human trafficking. My case study of SFO reveals that human trafficking intervention in urban airports should be conducted in a way that is trauma-informed and victim-centered starting at the creation of an anti-trafficking sticker through the airport's response to reports of trafficking. The second aspect of this campaign should be public awareness that heightens the impact and cognizance of both the airport employees and its patrons. Victim service providers, former victims, and advocates should be tapped to provide ongoing feedback to the airport and work closely with airport leadership to ensure that interventions are effective and done in a way that does not cause victims to be re-traumatized or even withdraw from the prosecution process.

The policy recommendations I articulate in this section address both urban airports interested in replicating SFO's efforts while simultaneously providing opportunities for SFO to improve as an anti-trafficking leader in aviation. This is significant because there is very little academic data available that addresses this issue. The limitations that SFO shows in their sticker campaign's response highlight the necessity of involving direct service providers and activists in every aspect of the campaign, not just the most publicly visible components. Creating a uniform trauma-informed anti-trafficking intervention playbook may be necessary due to the many logistics and moving parts that urban airports need to consider when creating and executing such campaigns.

Eric Corthay's framework of recognizing victims in a civil aviation environment draws on the need to increase public awareness, implement better training for airport staff, and for TSA Security to proactively identify victims. Corthay also points out the limitations of relying on

victims to self-report as the only way to identify human trafficking in aviation. While human trafficking is a prominent issue that the aviation industry can use their resources to help combat, not enough attention or resources are being allocated to this issue. Corthay also notes that a more streamlined process of deep collaboration between law enforcement and social services is required to provide a more effective intervention for victims. This is a prominent issue that my data revealed in the case study of SFO. There is no collaboration between law enforcement at SFO and social services when responding to victims. In order to be victim-centered, the bathroom stickers were created with victim experts; however, the trauma-informed response to calls from the stickers is missing.

Corthay calls out the difference between the term's "detection" and "identification" in his research citing that detection in human trafficking is the "act or process of discovering signs that indicate a person is being trafficked" while identification relates "...to the act or process of formally ascertaining the status of the victim." (Corthay 2020, 615). Ultimately Corthay asserts that detecting victims is the priority in aviation settings and that check-in agents, security, customs, border agents should be well-trained and tasked with victim detection. Furthermore, other staff such as airline employees and cabin crew can work in a complementary manner to the boots on the ground within the airport.

Using Corthay's framework against SFO's current response to human trafficking events, one could easily make the call to urgently tighten up the police response policy and implement a greater amount of proactive identification instead of relying primarily on victims to come forward. This framework provides possibilities for SFO to adjust their intervention to be even more victim-centered. It also provides opportunities to expand as a model for other airports. This directly addresses and contributes to the research bodies of my literature review which include—

human trafficking and the law, forms of intervention in human trafficking, and public awareness of human trafficking. Creating an intervention that utilizes law enforcement in tandem with social services provides a great opportunity to implement a more trauma-informed victim experience. Furthermore, holding other passengers and aviation staff accountable by building the public awareness of human trafficking with accurate information has the potential to further increase instances of identification and therefore intervention.

Acknowledging the groundbreaking policy and model that is taking place at SFO is a substantial first step in a larger effort of recognizing human trafficking as a systemic problem in the United States. While airports are not the only place that human trafficking occurs, Corthay's argument that existing aviation infrastructure can be leveraged in order to fight it provides an excellent opportunity to address the issue and create best practices that other industries can follow. SFO demonstrates this in their creation and implementation of the bathroom sticker campaign. Following suit, I propose a series of recommendations that simultaneously leverage San Francisco's existing work while also honing in on opportunities for improvement and expansion at SFO specifically. Ultimately this research strives to create something that is beneficial to other industries that may encounter human trafficking victims while contributing to the greater urban and public affairs research of trauma-oriented human trafficking interventions.

Recommendation #1

Any airport looking to establish or update their victim outreach protocols should start by creating a bathroom sticker campaign using SFO's work as a guideline. The neutral imagery and verbiage on the sticker make tremendous strides in the right direction to appeal successfully to victims of human trafficking. In other words, it is vital to make sure that the airport's victim targeted outreach stickers are trauma-informed and victim-centered. To accomplish this, sensationalized imagery should be avoided plus language that further victimizes those who are trafficked. This is a critical step that all airports must take to ensure they are not playing into inaccurate stereotypes about human trafficking, while also breaking through the challenging situation to reach and appeal to victims. This point was repeatedly highlighted by experts during my data collection process.

Survivors, direct victim service providers, and non-profits who serve survivors in the region the airport is located should advise and offer feedback on the verbiage of the sticker, the color, image, and location of posting. Having the input of these important stakeholders is essential in ensuring the campaign is well received, and culturally relevant for victims most likely to be passing through the airport. In the case of SFO, while anti-human trafficking experts were consulted, a notable lack of direct service provider input may have caused the sticker to be less impactful in language than it could have been.

It is essential to note that this policy recommendation does not expect airports to have a clear understanding of human trafficking, or direct access to individuals and organizations who serve victims. Establishing a universal best practices repository with suggested sticker verbiage, a trauma-informed image library, and willing consultants may be necessary to ensure all airports interested in implementing a sticker campaign have access to the appropriate materials and

guidelines. Adding The Department of Homeland Blue Lightning team to this initiative may serve as a possible opening for collaboration and execution that can be done on a more universal level.

Recommendation #2

The bathroom stickers are not an effective way to both simultaneously increase public awareness and offer resources to victims. Instead of trying to utilize stickers as a public awareness tool, a best practice to increase public awareness in aviation settings is to implement large signage that has the potential to be moved and reposted in heavily foot trafficked areas of the airport. SFO has established some electronic human trafficking awareness communication for both passengers and staff, however due to the numerous amounts of videos, announcements, and other information that is being communicated verbally it is possible that these can be missed by travelers. A generalized best practice is to include both audio and visual communications about human trafficking.

Creating and posting large signage and audio/video announcements that are delivered on common walkways, in terminals, and throughout frequented retail establishments at airports such as fast-food restaurants have the potential to have an even greater impact on public awareness. This was also a major finding in my data analysis section. The additional areas covered in the airport may have an added benefit of reaching more victims as well. Not everyone who visits the airport uses the restroom, and there is always the risk of the bathroom sticker being blocked by luggage or a large backpack when people enter the stall. Providing more instances of signage and information will only increase the overall public awareness at the airport while simultaneously

increasing the chances of a victim seeing the signage, even if the verbiage is not as targeted as the bathroom signs.

While signage designed to raise public awareness should not be targeted exclusively towards victims, it should still maintain sensitive, trauma-informed language and avoid the use of sensationalized language or imagery. Based on my research findings, public awareness campaigns should use the term “human trafficking,” in addition to providing a definition that is inclusive of both labor and sex trafficking. There should be clear instructions for members of the public to report potential trafficking to airport officials. While using the word human trafficking is not always advised for communicating with victims, some experts have said that the bathroom stickers are too vague for the general public to understand. Achieving a multi-pronged outreach with several trauma-informed mediums is essential for airports to reach both a wide swath of the public and victims. Like terrorism, human trafficking should be a common issue the public is aware of, and on the lookout for while traveling. Increasing public awareness will lead to the use of the public as a valuable source for identifying victimization.

Recommendation #3

To ensure the successful execution of the above anti-trafficking measures across airports it is necessary to have an ongoing open line of communication between aviation officials, anti-trafficking non-profits, and the region’s Mayor’s office. SFO’s model of ongoing training with airport employees done in collaboration with Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition is an excellent template to follow as additional airports build out anti-trafficking programming.

Training aviation staff both in the airport and airline employees is vital in recognizing the signs of human trafficking and providing intervention to victims while in transit. Training that is

well thought out, trauma-informed, and executed on a regular basis cannot be the responsibility of the airport alone to uphold. Collaboration with anti-trafficking agencies that possess the most up-to-date knowledge is vital for training as modes and techniques of trafficking change to evade law enforcement. Additionally, directives from the mayor's office may be necessary for airports to regularly run the trainings and maintain victim outreach and public awareness measures. My case study with SFO's example showed that while the airport cared about human trafficking, it ultimately took an order from the San Francisco Mayors' office to implement the sticker campaign.

To help with this oftentimes challenging communication between the airport, mayor, and non-profits, a liaison position at the airport should be established. SFO has received numerous accolades for their human trafficking efforts with many calling out a specific employee at SFO who ensures that policies are followed, and trainings are conducted. While a range of people in airports may hold this position, typically someone involved with diversity and inclusion, public safety, or community programming may be a better fit to act as a human trafficking liaison. In larger airports, it may be necessary to appoint someone whose full-time role is to work on the airport's anti-trafficking efforts. Without collaboration with the mayor and utilizing expert information, anti-trafficking interventions will be weaker and more difficult to maintain on a long-term basis.

Recommendation #4

The most noticeable flaw in SFO's human trafficking intervention programming is the uniformed airport police response that victims who contact the airport are met with. While involving law enforcement is the typical course of action for intervening in a case of human

trafficking, a best practice response in aviation must go beyond simply involving uniformed law enforcement officers. As discussed in my data section, seeing uniformed law enforcement officers can be problematic for a multitude of reasons. Victims are trained to fear law enforcement by their traffickers, or they may be concerned of deportation based on their immigration or visa status. Lastly, seeing a uniformed official can elicit a negative or fear response based on our current social climate regarding law enforcement and policing in America.

Many interviewees spoke of other ways to respond to victims without traumatizing them or creating a reaction that could even lead to a victim going back to their trafficker. Four respondents suggested alternative methods of first response including sending a non-uniformed police officer, a victim advocate or a social worker. Alternatively, allowing one of these individuals to respond to a victim alongside a uniformed officer has the potential to create a much more beneficial and even more productive victim experience. One respondent explained that if a human trafficking victim is encountered in Oakland by law enforcement, a non-profit is notified who can provide a victim advocate to help take them through the process (Interviewee G). This could serve as a model that SFO and other airports could replicate. Taking successful aspects of other trafficking intervention campaigns used by non-profits, direct service providers, or even law enforcement is a way to ensure SFO is maintaining a victim-centered focus when conducting interventions. This concept of replicating successful ideas comes into play as other airports begin creating human trafficking intervention stickers inspired by SFO's verbiage.

The addition of a plain-clothes officer, advocate, or social worker has the potential to put a victim at ease and make them feel more comfortable during the intervention process. The ideal response would be officers accompanied by a trained victim advocate, a social worker, or an assigned case manager. Law enforcement agencies have been able to implement similar policies

for victims of human trafficking and sex crimes, so this should be possible to build out in an aviation setting as well. Not only will this addition create a more trauma-informed victim experience, but it also has the potential to lead to more victim trust and cooperation leading to the eventual prosecution of the trafficker.

This work should be done in collaboration with SFO, SFPD and other Bay Area law enforcement jurisdictions that trafficking cases are passed onto, and of course with direct service providers. Creating a condition in which the actual intervention is as well-thought out and trauma-informed as the signage campaign has the potential to reach far more victims and to provide an overall better and more productive intervention.

Recommendation #5

The final policy recommendation of this Capstone is to propose a well-articulated financial justification and funding plan for creating bathroom stickers that other airports can review. This justification should include clear metrics of success that SFO has found. The metrics can include the number of victims self-identified each month, the number of cases passed onto law-enforcement, or number of employees identified cases. The cost barrier of implementing a victim-centered intervention campaign is extensive as demonstrated by my SFO case study. Creating a clear document that defines the issue of human trafficking in aviation, an estimate of the numbers of individuals affected on a monthly basis, and how airports can help intervene has the potential to ease initial objections. SFO was initially hesitant due to a lack of information on the extent of trafficking taking place in The Bay Area and at their airport. SFO should recognize that other airports may share this hesitation and disclose their statistics of

human trafficking cases that are identified in order to inspire other airports to implement similar protocols.

While other airports may not have the means to implement the same 170 language translation service SFO employs, having a few employees on staff who can speak multiple languages or getting software that translates the most prominent global languages the airport sees is enough to start out. Options like this should be proposed and outlined to make other interested airports feel empowered to start their own campaigns.

Another financial barrier to rolling out a sticker campaign is the startup cost of designing, printing, and posting the stickers. SFO did the hard work of creating a sticker with victim-centered language and are willing to share the sticker file with other interested airports. Perhaps a nonprofit like Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition or another interested party can take this a step further and apply for grants and raise money to help airports cover the cost of the initial printing and posting of the stickers.

Ultimately, lack of funds should not stand in the way of airports building trauma-informed public awareness and creating victim-centered intervention protocols. COVID-19 has had an impact on the profits of the aviation industry; however, I believe that there are creative ways to find funding, raise money, or reduce costs in order to help identify and help human trafficking victims at a place they are likely to be identified.

Conclusion

This capstone calls for the need for further study on how airports in the United States intervene and provide public awareness around human trafficking. SFO's groundbreaking anti-trafficking work provides a starting framework of intervention possibilities that other airports can

use to follow suit. However, until this work is thoroughly evaluated and built out in a way that successfully provides victims a trauma-informed intervention, it should not be replicated. One of the biggest challenges that airports will face is creating two separate visual campaigns that are both appealing to the victims and able to raise public awareness in a non-sensationalized way. This is something few airports have been able to achieve. Furthermore, once the campaign is built out, response to the victims must be done so in an extremely well-thought out and trauma-informed way. Once this is accomplished, the possibility of stopping the chain of trafficking when a victim is discovered in an airport will be greatly increased.

Further study should be done on the impacts of intervention in aviation settings. Combatting human trafficking cannot be done by just one airport, but instead it must be a joint effort between various aviation staff, airport contractors, airline employees, and perhaps most importantly, travelers passing through the airport. The various tools at the disposal of these parties will hopefully lead to knowledge sharing, longitudinal analysis, and eventual extensive victim consultation that are the first steps in eradicating human trafficking in airports.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol #1 Organizational Leaders at SFO or Community Leaders with Direct SFO Involvement

Hello, thank you so much for your willingness to participate in my research study. I greatly appreciate the time you are taking today to discuss human trafficking intervention and public awareness measures at SFO.

This interview will take between 45 minutes and an hour today. I'd like to briefly tell you about my research project and then we will begin.

I am doing a graduate-level research project in which my goal is to understand effective methods of anti-trafficking interventions at airports. I'm focusing specifically on SFO's sticker campaign and how it impacts public awareness of human trafficking. I'd like to emphasize that when I share the results of this interview with others, it will only be a high-level summary, or anonymous quotes but I will not share your name or identify you in any way.

Your participation in this interview today is completely optional and voluntary. At any point, you can skip a question you do not wish to answer; you can also choose to end the interview at any time while we are talking.

Before we get started, do you have any questions for me? And can I receive your consent to record the interview?

1. Can you please tell me a little bit about your role at _____ organization?
2. {Optional} Can you share a little bit more about the issue of human trafficking in the Bay Area? Such as what forms does it take, what are some of the challenges in understanding the full picture, and what efforts are being made to combat it?
3. What spurred the sticker intervention campaign at SFO that was started last year?
4. Can you talk about your role in this project?
5. Was doing bathroom placards the original idea for this project, how did it evolve from an idea to an active campaign?
6. Were there any other mediums considered for this campaign? What about other places for sticker placement? What ultimately led to the creation of the anti-trafficking sticker campaign?
7. How did different organizations such as the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women collaborate to make this happen? Were these new relationships for SFO to create?

8. Who was being targeted with this campaign? What was the process of approving the human trafficking placards?
9. When designing the campaign, who did you imagine it might reach?
10. How is campaign effectiveness measured? Do you have any examples of successes?
11. Do you think the work being done at SFO should be replicated through more airports? What might stop it from working at other airports?
12. In your opinion, what are the components of creating effective anti-trafficking policy in aviation?
13. Is there any other anti-trafficking policy in the works at SFO?
14. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about human trafficking intervention in aviation?

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. I deeply value the conversation and found _____ especially striking/interesting/helpful.

I am in the process of conducting more interviews and am seeking more interviews and would appreciate any suggestions or connections you might have. I will send a follow up email and would appreciate it if you can forward that to anyone who you think would be a good fit for my project.

Once the project is complete, I will circle back with you to see if you are interested in viewing the results of my research, I'd love to share my findings with you. Again, thank you so much for your time and have a wonderful day!

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Interview Protocol #2 Human Trafficking Leaders in San Francisco

Hello, thank you so much for your willingness to participate in my research study. I greatly appreciate the time you are taking today to discuss human trafficking intervention and public awareness measures at SFO.

This interview will take between 45 minutes and an hour today. I'd like to briefly tell you about my research project and then we will begin.

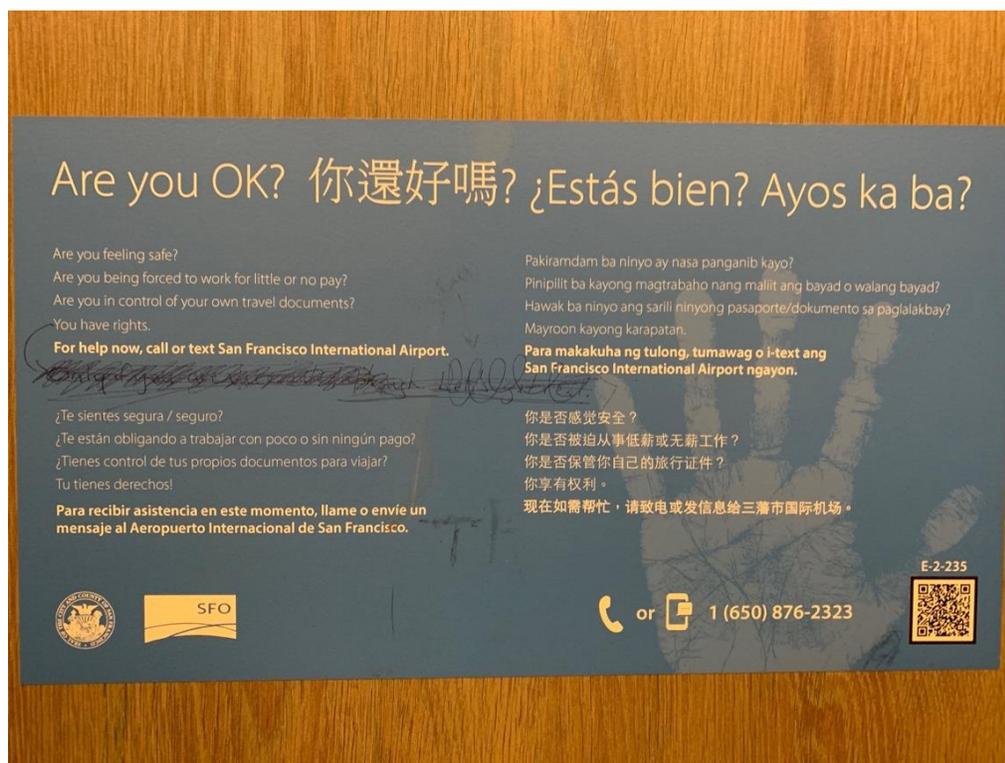
I am doing a graduate-level research project in which my goal is to understand effective methods of anti-trafficking interventions at airports. I'm focusing specifically on SFO's sticker campaign and how it impacts public awareness of human trafficking. I'd like to emphasize that when I

share the results of this interview with others, it will only be a high-level summary, or anonymous quotes but I will not share your name or identify you in any way.

Your participation in this interview today is completely optional and voluntary. At any point, you can skip a question you do not wish to answer; you can also choose to end the interview at any time while we are talking.

Before we get started, do you have any questions for me? And can receive your consent to record the interview.

1. What drew you to be interested in working as an anti-human trafficking leader in San Francisco?
2. {Optional} Can you share a little bit more about the issue of human trafficking in the Bay Area? Such as what forms does it take, what are some of the challenges in understanding the full picture, and what efforts are being made to combat it?
3. What are some of the main obstacles to intervening in human trafficking cases?
4. I'd like to now provide some background information on my research study. As you may know airports are a major channel that are used for human trafficking. San Francisco International Airport has implemented a bathroom sticker/placard campaign in January 2021 (show image.) These stickers are in each bathroom and the phone number is monitored 24/7 by SFO.



5. What are your thoughts on this campaign?
6. Do you think that the placard campaign misses some victims or has limitations in the people it reaches?
7. What other anti-human trafficking models do you suggest being useful in aviation settings?
8. What impact will this campaign have on raising public awareness regarding human trafficking in aviation, and specifically in The Bay Area?
9. Do you think it would be possible to replicate SFO's anti-trafficking work to other airports in the US?
10. Did [agency name] collaborate directly with SFO on this bathroom placard campaign? If so, do you see any other opportunities for working together in the future?
11. Finally, how aware do you think the public is on the topic of human trafficking in San Francisco/ The Bay Area?

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. I deeply value the conversation and found _____ especially striking/interesting/helpful.

I am in the process of conducting more interviews and am seeking more interviews and would appreciate any suggestions or connections you might have. I will send a follow up email and would appreciate it if you can forward that to anyone who you think would be a good fit for my project.

Once the project is complete, I will circle back with you to see if you are interested in viewing the results of my research, I'd love to share my findings with you. Again, thank you so much for your time and have a wonderful day!