

# 1 Nodes, guardians and signs: Raising barriers to human trafficking in the tourism 2 industry

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## 4 1. Introduction

5 Trafficking in human beings (THB) is a form of modern day slavery affecting almost every  
6 country in the world (Europol, 2016). It involves the movement of victims through force,  
7 psychological coercion or abuse, predominantly for the purposes of sexual or labour  
8 exploitation. THB is a rapidly growing criminal activity despite concerted efforts worldwide  
9 to address it. Hopper and Hidalgo (2006) maintain that the victims' physical and psychological  
10 erosion through chronic fear become the "invisible chains" (p. 185) that bind them into slavery.  
11 While there is great disparity between the number of estimated victims, e.g., 21 million by the  
12 ILO (2017) and 45.8 million by the Walk Free Foundation (2017), there is consensus that  
13 official statistics reflect only the "tip of the iceberg" (Di Nicola, 2007:53). The Palermo  
14 Protocol, the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (2000), is  
15 the most globally adopted legislative framework (UNODC, 2016), requiring signatories to  
16 make THB a criminal offence (Hernandez and Rudolph, 2015).

17 Researchers acknowledge that THB often involves the use of legitimate businesses, which,  
18 knowingly or unknowingly, are enablers of THB (Aronowitz *et al.*, 2010; Skrivankova, 2010),  
19 providing opportunities for the crime to take place. Tourism businesses, by their very nature,  
20 facilitate the movement and accommodation of traffickers and their victims and thus are  
21 potential THB enablers. There are numerous examples of airlines, travel agencies and  
22 restaurants being used by traffickers for their crimes (Bulman, 2017; Carolin, *et al.*, 2015;  
23 Deutsch, 2016; Donovan, 2010). A growing recognition of THB within the tourism industry  
24 has led to many commendable initiatives such as the introduction of the Code of Conduct for  
25 the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. However, the  
26 majority of these efforts to date have focussed on increasing the awareness of THB and  
27 particularly of child sexual exploitation (CSE). There is arguably a need to increase awareness  
28 of other types of sexual and labour trafficking and to identify measures to disrupt the business  
29 of THB within the tourism industry.

30 Tourism researchers have thus far considered human trafficking within broader studies of sex  
31 tourism (Cansel *et al.*, 2009; Chang and Chen, 2013, Uzama, 2011) and labour exploitation,  
32 mainly of migrant workers (Hjalager, 2008; Joppe, 2012; Robinson, 2013). Child exploitation  
33 has been of particular attention (Brackenridge *et al.*, 2014; Magablih and Naamneh, 2010) with  
34 researchers suggesting prevention practices in the travel and tourism (Richter, 2005; Tepelus,  
35 2008) and hotel sectors (Kalargyrou and Woods 2015). Researchers have also highlighted the  
36 potential for mega events to provide opportunities for sex trafficking (Brackenridge *et al.*,  
37 2014; Matheson and Finkel, 2013). However, there is currently no research that offers a more  
38 in-depth study of THB as a crime in the tourism sector and that proposes a methodology for  
39 identifying critical intervention points where a tourism destination or tourism businesses can  
40 raise barriers to disrupt this crime.

41 This paper contributes to this gap by combining theories of criminology and social science to  
42 understand THB patterns and the behaviour of traffickers and victims within tourism industry  
43 and identify ways to disrupt this criminal business. It reports the findings of a hotel study partly  
44 funded by the European Commission's Directorate of Home Affairs under the Internal Security

45 Fund's targeted call for Trafficking in Human Beings. The hotel industry, was deemed an  
46 appropriate research context given its susceptibility to both sexual and labour trafficking  
47 (Annison, 2013; Tuppen, 2013). In doing so, it answers calls for further research on the  
48 prevention of THB (Birkenhager, 2014; Kabance, 2014) and the involvement of the private  
49 sector in its prevention (Friesendorf, 2007; Rogoz, 2016).

50 The research makes two distinct contributions to our understanding of THB. Firstly, it  
51 identifies critical intervention points within hotels where trafficking for sexual and labour  
52 exploitation can be disrupted. Secondly, it identifies potential warning signs at each of these  
53 intervention points that can alert staff members to potential THB incidents and practical  
54 measures that can be implemented to erect barriers to effectively disrupt THB. Whilst the  
55 framework is hotel-specific, the overall approach of mapping a trafficked victims journey, of  
56 identifying critical intervention points, and of recognising warning signals, may be applied by  
57 any tourism business or destination management organisation.

58 The paper begins by defining THB and examines it as a business opportunity to identify the  
59 reasons for its prevalence. Criminological theories and concepts are then used to examine the  
60 opportunities for THB generally and then within the hotel sector. The research design is  
61 presented next, before the findings of the study are discussed. A hotel-specific framework  
62 which depicts the trafficked victims' journey is then developed. The conclusion identifies the  
63 implications and limitations of the study and directions for future research.

## 64 **2. Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)**

65 Although there are different definitions of THB adopted globally (Wylie and McRedmond,  
66 2010), the Palermo Protocol (2000) applies the following definition.

67 The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons,  
68 by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of  
69 abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of  
70 vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve  
71 the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose  
72 of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation  
73 of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced  
74 labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the  
75 removal of organs or other types of exploitation. (Article 3, para. (a))

76 This definition identifies the three major elements of THB: (a) the act (what is done); (b) the  
77 means (how it is done); and (c) the purpose (why it is done) as depicted in Table 1. Victims  
78 of THB include both adults and children; male and female. While Table 1 identifies different  
79 purposes or types of exploitation, the majority (79%) of victims are trafficked for sexual  
80 exploitation and 18% for labour exploitation (UNODC, 2016). This definition and the  
81 elements of THB clearly highlight why it is a human rights crime. The following section  
82 however, examines THB as a business opportunity, albeit a criminal one.

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Act of THB	Means of THB	Purpose of THB
Recruitment	Threat or use of force	Sexual exploitation
Transport	Abduction	Prostitution of others
Transfer	Coercion	Forced labour or services
Harbouring	Deception	Modern slavery
Receipt of persons	Fraud	Servitude
	Abuse of power	Removal of organs
	Vulnerability	Other types of exploitation
	Payments or benefits to person in control of another person	(e.g. forced criminality, begging, marriage)

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**Table 1: The Three Major Elements of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)**

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Adapted from United Nations (2000) *The protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children*, supplementing the United Nations convention against transnational organized crime. *GA res, 55*, p.25 (November 15).

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## 2.1 THB as a Business Opportunity

95 There are numerous factors that underpin the growth of THB, with some scholars (e.g.,  
96 Simmons and Lloyd, 2010) arguing that THB represents the dark side of globalisation. These  
97 factors can be divided into those that ‘push’ victims and those that ‘pull’ victims into THB  
98 (Wheaton *et al.*, 2010). Victims might be ‘pushed’ into falling prey to traffickers due to poverty  
99 and unemployment, limited social support (Bales, 2005), poor or limited education (Kelly,  
100 2002), an unstable family life, domestic violence, war or civil unrest (Hughes, 2000) and  
101 underlying cultural attitudes and practices (Ejalu, 2006). Accordingly, Aronowitz *et al.* (2010)  
102 advise that victims share the common trait of being vulnerable or being in a vulnerable situation  
103 within their countries of origin. Victims are also ‘pulled’ into trafficking by environmental  
104 factors in destination countries where there are job or educational opportunities, higher wages,  
105 political stability and the demand for sexual services and foreign labour (Kabance, 2014).  
106 These pull factors increase the willingness of victims to migrate, making them more susceptible  
107 to traffickers (Hernandez and Rudolph, 2015).

108 Together, ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors provide traffickers with a business opportunity by creating  
109 an economic market for THB; the physical or virtual places that connect demand from buyers  
110 with the supply from sellers either directly or through intermediaries (Wheaton *et al.*, 2010).  
111 THB is reported to be particularly profitable (Hernandez and Rudolph, 2015). Those trafficked  
112 for sexual exploitation can generate between 100 and 1000% profits and those trafficked into  
113 forced labour provide over 50% return on investment (Pennington *et al.*, 1999). The forced  
114 prostitution of a single woman amounts to US\$100,000 profits a year (Aronowitz *et al.*, 2010).  
115 The relatively cheap cost of a trafficked individual in today’s marketplace combined with few  
116 barriers to market entry or exit (Wheaton *et al.*, 2010) further explain the growth in the business  
117 of THB. Combined supply, demand and profitability explain why THB is an attractive business  
118 opportunity. The importance of opportunity is also recognised by researchers who examined  
119 THB from a criminal perspective as the following section explains.

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## 2.2 THB as a Criminal Opportunity

122 Three theories within the field of criminology, combined to develop the domain of  
123 environmental criminology, highlight the importance of opportunity: rational choice, routine  
124 activity and crime pattern theories. A fundamental concept of criminal law is that a crime needs

125 a motive, means, and an opportunity (Cornish and Clarke, 1987). Motives are the reasons for  
126 choosing an illegal activity over a legal one and they are typically monetary or economic  
127 (McKendall *et al.*, 2002). Rational choice theorists focus on this economic perspective to  
128 explain the motive for criminal activity. Criminals are considered to make rational choices  
129 based on their consideration of costs and benefits when they observe an opportunity (Lutya and  
130 Lanier, 2012). Included in the decision-making process is an estimation of the risks involved.  
131 Criminologists recognise the importance of perceptions and that criminals make decisions  
132 under conditions of bounded rationality (Birks *et al.*, 2012; Sato, 2013). However, as the  
133 preceding section demonstrates, the benefits of THB outweigh the costs and Kara (2011)  
134 maintains that “the risks involved are almost non-existent” (p. 69). As such, strong motives  
135 exist for undertaking THB provided criminals have the means or the instruments available to  
136 carry out a task. For THB, means include the supply of victims, identified above, the manpower  
137 for their recruitment, transportation and exploitation, as well as the communication and  
138 distribution channels to market their services (Kara, 2009).

139 Routine activity theorists recognise motivated offenders as one of the three key elements of a  
140 crime. They argue that opportunities for crime arise when motivated offenders, a suitable target  
141 and the absence of a capable ‘guardian’ converge in space and time (Gialopsos and Carter,  
142 2015). Hollis *et al.* (2013) explain capable guardianship as a human element with the ability to  
143 deter crime through their presence, proximity and capability. In other words, guardians must  
144 exist, be close by and be able to take action against the criminal. In the absence of a capable  
145 guardian or if the guardian is ineffective or negligent, crimes are more likely to occur (Cohen  
146 and Felson, 1979; Hollis *et al.*, 2013). These guardians can be located within a social or  
147 physical environment, either of which can facilitate an opportunity (Hollis *et al.*, 2013). In a  
148 physical environment, such as a building, place managers serve as guardians and have the  
149 potential to control and regulate behaviour (Eck and Weisburd, 1995).

150 Building on these two theoretical perspectives, crime pattern theory asserts that offenders learn  
151 about their environment during legitimate everyday activities and that crime takes place where  
152 and when their awareness space intersects with criminal opportunities. The routine activities of  
153 the motivated offender form mobility patterns which evolve into awareness and activity spaces  
154 (Brantingham and Brantingham, 2008). Awareness spaces include all the places an offender  
155 has familiarity with, whereas activity spaces are those an offender has contact with as part of  
156 their routine activity (Bernasco, 2010). Activity spaces are made up of (a) *nodes* that are the  
157 places routinely visited by criminals and (b) the *pathways* travelled between them (Iwanski *et al.*,  
158 2011). Nodes may offer conditions conducive to specific crimes and thus create opportunity  
159 (Pooley and Ferguson, 2017; Rossmo, 2014). The offenders’ movement from node to node  
160 therefore becomes a ‘crime journey’ (Bernasco, 2014).

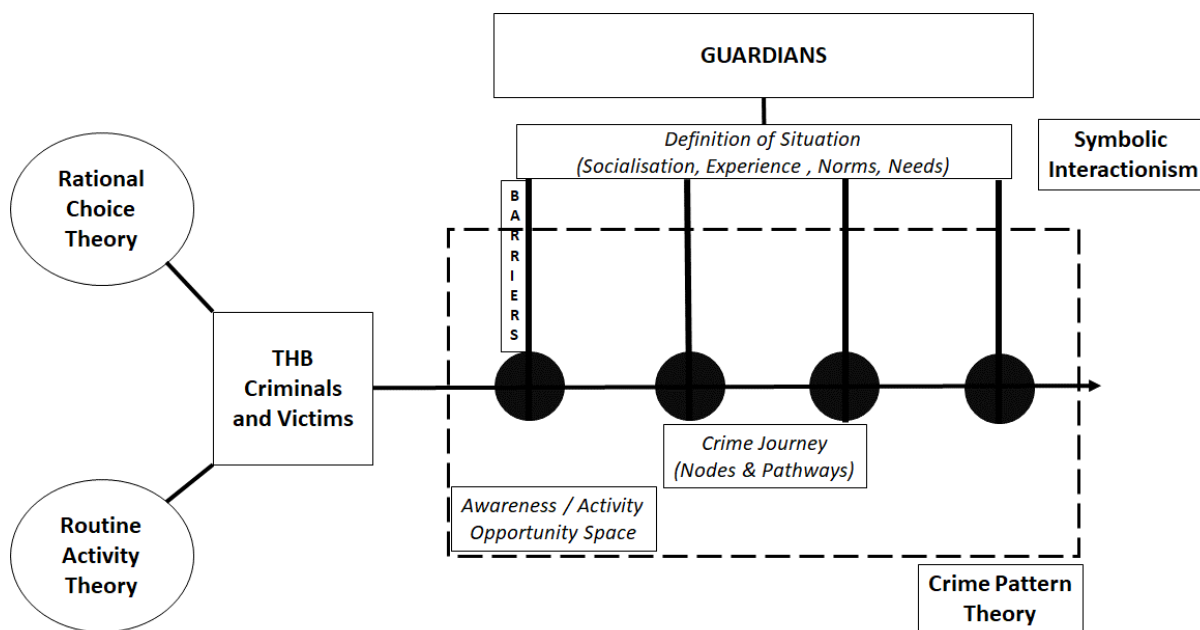
161 Using the concept of nodes and pathways, crime pattern theory focuses on where and when the  
162 convergence of offenders, victims and the absence (or inactivity) of guardians occurs and helps  
163 to explain the distribution of crime across places (Eck and Weisburd, 1995). Researchers have  
164 examined where this convergence occurs at the macro (e.g. regions, communities,  
165 neighbourhoods) and micro level (e.g., specific buildings or types of business) (Groff *et al.*,  
166 2014). At both levels, these places can be distinguished as to whether they are crime attractors  
167 or crime generators (Pooley and Ferguson, 2017). The main distinction between the two is  
168 whether offenders purposefully visit the place to commit the crime or act on impulse while  
169 there. Nonetheless the characteristics of either type of place are important. For example, the  
170 permeability of a region or the accessibility of a building are important considerations when  
171 creating interventions or barriers to prevent crime (Groff *et al.*, 2014). So too, is the degree to  
172 which guardians can recognise and control deviant behaviour within a premise. According to  
173 symbolic interaction theorists (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934), recognising deviance depends on

174 guardians' 'definition of the situation', whereby subjective meaning is imposed on objects,  
 175 events and behaviours. This meaning is continuously shaped through socialisation and  
 176 influenced by prior experiences, education, knowledge of norms, customs and beliefs as well  
 177 as by individual and collective needs and wants (Carter and Fuller, 2016).

178 Taken together, rational choice, routine activity, crime pattern theory and symbolic  
 179 interactionism can be used to develop a conceptual framework for THB crime prevention (Fig.  
 180 1), increasing our understanding of the decision making that occurs when evaluating  
 181 opportunities, where and how opportunities are created and where and how interventions can  
 182 be made to aid in crime prevention. The following section considers the opportunity for the  
 183 crime of THB in the hotel sector.

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**Fig. 1 – A Conceptual Framework for THB Crime Prevention**

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### 189 2.3 THB in the Hotel Sector

190 Drawing on crime pattern theory, the tourism industry can be considered as an activity space  
 191 that provides opportunities at the micro level for the crime of THB to occur. Lutya and Lanier  
 192 (2012) argue that tourism businesses facilitate both the harbouring and transfer of trafficked  
 193 victims. Hotels, in particular, are increasingly used as vehicles for the sexual exploitation of  
 194 trafficked victims (Annison, 2013) and the US National Human Trafficking Hotline identifies  
 195 that hotels are a more likely venue for sexual trafficking than commercial brothels (NHTH,  
 196 2016). The use of forced labour is also growing in hotels (EUROSTAT, 2015; Tuppen, 2013).  
 197 Hotels, therefore, can and do provide both the means and the opportunity for traffickers to do  
 198 business. As enablers of THB (Skrivankova, 2010), they also have a potential role to play in  
 199 its prevention.

200 Given the multi-faceted nature of the hotel business, and the opportunity for both sexual and  
 201 labour exploitation, hotels may contain different nodes, where the traffickers, as offenders,  
 202 converge with the target or THB victim. As such, there are different employees who could act  
 203 in the role of guardians. When used for the purpose of sexual exploitation, guardians could be

204 any employee with a customer-facing role, whereas guardians of labour exploitation, are more  
205 likely to be those with responsibility for recruitment and procurement as well as department  
206 heads. The presence, proximity and capability of guardians to regulate behaviour (Hollis *et al.*,  
207 2013) in both types of THB would be variable. Similarly, according to the symbolic interaction  
208 theory, their recognition and interpretation of the possible warning signs emanated by  
209 traffickers and victims would depend on the level of interaction with these individuals  
210 (socialisation process) and their understanding of this crime (experience and training). Possible  
211 disruption of the THB journey within the hotel would depend on the anti-THB standards and  
212 policies (norms) the hotel has in place and the guardians' personal and professional  
213 characteristics.

214 Understanding the nodes and paths, the role of the guardians and the types of signs they would  
215 consider as a warning for THB is therefore arguably important to identify where and how  
216 opportunities for THB can be disrupted within the hotel sector. These disruptions would reduce  
217 the opportunities for traffickers to do business as they would increase risks and costs and  
218 thereby reduce the profitability of THB (Aronowitz *et al.*, 2010). This study therefore sought  
219 to:

- 220 i) assess the awareness of THB in the hotel sector and identify critical intervention  
221 points where the opportunity for THB could be disrupted;
- 222 ii) identify the warning signs of THB at different critical intervention points to develop  
223 the capability of hotel guardians and
- 224 iii) identify barriers that can be erected to disrupt the business of THB.

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### 226 **3. Research Design**

227 As part of a wider European Commission funded project, the study was conducted within the  
228 three European countries where the project partners were located; the UK, Romania and  
229 Finland. Given the exploratory nature of the study and the sensitivity of the topic, a qualitative  
230 research approach was adopted (Altinay *et al.*, 2016) consisting of three stages.

#### 231 **3.1 Stage 1**

232 In the first stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informant stakeholders  
233 in all three countries. Participants were recruited via combined purposive and snowball  
234 sampling techniques. Informants were selected based on their experience in their sector, their  
235 understanding of THB as a crime and their professional standing nationally and internationally  
236 as depicted in Table 2. The interviewees were asked to give examples and details of THB cases  
237 they were aware of, explain the warning signs that were or could have been spotted and what  
238 actions could be taken to prevent future THB incidents. The interview schedule was developed  
239 in English, then translated and back translated into each partner's language to ensure  
240 translational equivalence (Usinier, 2011). In total, 29 semi-structured interviews each lasting  
241 up to one hour were conducted by trained interviewers in the partners' local language.

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Stakeholder Sector and Code	United Kingdom	Romania	Finland	Total
Hotel Corporate Executives (HI)	3	2	3	8
Tourism Industry Corporate Executives (TI)	1	1	1	3
Law Enforcement (LE)	1	1	2	4
Security Services (SS)	3	1	1	5
NGO / Charity (NC)	1	3	2	6
Sector Stakeholder (ST)	1	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29</b>

**Table 2: Sample of Interviewees by Country and Sector**

### 3.2 Stage 2

The second stage of the research sought to build on stage 1 through a qualitative survey of hotel managers in the three countries. Specifically, the surveys sought to explore whether the respondents felt that THB is an issue for hotels; the types of THB hotels are vulnerable to; the warning signs by which traffickers and victims may be identified; and the possible barriers that may disrupt their ‘journey’ through a hotel. As before, the survey was developed in English and then translated and back translated into the partner’s language to ensure translational equivalence (Usunier, 2011). A convenience sample was employed as the researchers needed to utilise personal contacts within hotel chains and professional associations who recognised both the sensitivity and importance of the study. 147 usable surveys were returned, 94 from the UK, 29 from Finland and 24 from Romania, reflecting to a reasonable extent the respective size of the hotel markets in these countries. Although both independent and chain hotels were included in the targeted sample, the majority of respondents were employed within luxury and mid-scale, chain-affiliated hotels with more than 100 rooms. 48 of the respondents were hotel general managers (GM) while the rest were heads of departments (HoD).

### 3.3 Stage 3

The third and final stage of the research included 3 focus groups in the UK which aimed to: (a) get deeper insight on potential warning signs from traffickers and victims and possible barriers to erect within hotels by presenting and discussing distinct cases of THB identified in the study; and (b) enrich and validate the THB journeys developed in Stage 2. Participants were members of Hotel Watch, a UK public-private partnership designed to identify and minimise crime within the accommodation industry, including the crime of THB. These partnerships are collaborations between police, independent and chain-affiliated hotels and other accommodation businesses and the local government council. The participants were presented with THB cases and asked to individually identify nodes, pathways, guardians, warning signs and barriers. They then were presented with the two THB journeys (in the hotel’s front- and back-of-house) derived from the data analysis for comment. The discussion with these different stakeholders helped to revise and enrich these THB journeys.

### 3.4 Data analysis

The digital recordings of the interviews in stage 1 were transcribed, anonymised, member-checked and then analysed by the partners in their respective languages. Interviewees were

284 coded according to their professional role (e.g., interviewees representing an anti-THB NGO  
285 would be coded as NC1, NC2... NC6, sector stakeholders ST1, ST2... ST3. The same process  
286 was followed for the stage 2 surveys (SR1, etc.). It is important to note that the survey data  
287 was not analysed quantitatively and nor was it intended to be. Its purpose was to gather as  
288 much data as possible on THB in the hotel sector in line with the study's objectives: to identify  
289 all potential critical intervention points, warning signs and potential barriers to disrupt the  
290 opportunity for THB. This analytical approach facilitated the development of the framework  
291 of the victim's journey.

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293 The analysis of the data in the first two stages drew on the framework analysis approach  
294 developed for applied policy research by Ritchie and Spencer (1994). This approach involves  
295 five interconnected stages of: familiarisation through review and reading; identification of a  
296 thematic framework; indexing; charting; mapping and interpretation (Ritchie *et al.*, 2013). The  
297 thematic framework in this study was shaped from the familiarisation stage when the focus on  
298 data coding was placed at the nodes and pathways of traffickers and victims in a hotel, the  
299 guardians, the warning signs of trafficking and the barriers that could be erected. Following the  
300 indexing stage, the researchers used textual codes to link specific quotes to these topics and  
301 identify further codes to inter-relate them (i.e., nodes with guardians, nodes with signs,  
302 guardians with barriers, etc.). Inter-rater reliability was ensured with the involvement of a third  
303 party (a member of the project's advisory board). The mapping process allowed the visual  
304 display of the relevant data. The results were translated into English by professional translators  
305 and shared with the rest of the partners for data consolidation (Usinier, 2011). This  
306 consolidation enabled the development of a framework that depicts a trafficked victim's  
307 journey in hotels (front- and back-of-house), identifying critical intervention points where signs  
308 of THB may be detected and barriers erected to disrupt THB. The third stage of the study  
309 helped to further enrich and refine the model of the victim's journey and to validate warning  
310 signs and barriers.

## 311 **4. Findings and Discussion**

312 The findings are presented according to study's three objectives. All interviewees, survey  
313 respondents and focus group members are referred to as project participants.

### 314 **4.1 Objective One: To assess the awareness of THB in the hotel sector and identify critical** 315 **intervention points where the opportunity for THB could be disrupted**

#### 316 ***4.1.1 THB as a Concern for the Hotel Sector***

317 Wheaton *et al.* (2010: 123) refer to the different types of THB as the "differentiated products"  
318 traffickers offer. This study revealed that many of these differentiated products are offered  
319 within the hotel sector. Participants acknowledged their awareness of cases of forced  
320 prostitution, domestic servitude, forced labour both in hotels and in their supply chains  
321 (including the construction of hotels) and forced criminality. Forced criminality is a specific  
322 type of forced labour where trafficked victims are coerced to commit an activity that is contrary  
323 to the law, such as "pick-pocketing, shop-lifting, drug trafficking and other similar activities  
324 which are subject to penalties and imply financial gain" (Antislavery, 2014, p. 89). The study  
325 identified cases where trafficked victims were placed as employees in hotels in order commit  
326 fraud. Child sexual exploitation (CSE), was also acknowledged as a form of forced prostitution  
327 in hotels, despite the many industry initiatives to eradicate this specific type of THB.  
328 Surprisingly, many participants felt that CSE was not an issue in the industry. One possible



329 explanation is the belief that this type of THB has been sufficiently addressed by the various  
330 industry-targeted initiatives. However, more seasoned law enforcement participants (SS2, SS3,  
331 SS5) argued that the main issue is that it is often quite challenging to identify a minor both  
332 from a legal and a physical perspective. Additionally, some focus groups participants indicated  
333 that many hotel employees do not perceive age difference of guestroom occupants as an issue  
334 of particular concern.

335 Participants from all three countries in stages 1 and 2, felt that sexual exploitation through  
336 forced prostitution was the type of THB that the industry was most vulnerable to. However,  
337 the study also identifies confusion between ‘voluntary’ prostitution and ‘forced’ prostitution.  
338 According to one indicative participant:

339 *“Most prostitution is not trafficking. These girls and boys do it because they like*  
340 *the glamour of hotels, the luxury lifestyle and the clothes and shoes that the money*  
341 *they make can help them afford. They do it for a few years and then they ‘retire’*  
342 *or they open their own escort services.” (SR34)*

343 While this finding is consistent with previous research (Lutya and Lanier, 2012; Outshoorn,  
344 2005) the survey also revealed that many industry members are not particularly concerned with  
345 this type of THB. As such, the study identifies that this confusion between voluntary and forced  
346 prostitution may enhance the opportunity for THB within the hotel sector, particularly in  
347 countries where prostitution is an accepted practice within the hotel sector and is not a criminal  
348 offence.

349 The findings also revealed cases of forced labour within the industry. However, many  
350 participants were surprised to hear that this could be the case. As one commented,

351 *“Honestly, the thought never crossed my mind that a staff member or agency*  
352 *people would be victims of trafficking. I always believed that agency staff are*  
353 *cheap labour just because they are economic immigrants. But victims, never!”*  
354 *(SR38)*

355 One hotel security consultant with international experience in hotel chains, summed up the  
356 situation hotels face accordingly,

357 *“Criminals always seek paths of least resistance in order to make money.*  
358 *Unfortunately, due to a misconstrued understanding of hospitality and*  
359 *discreetness and a strange mix of naivety and complicity, our industry offers*  
360 *plenty of these paths in spite of the efforts of security and operations.” (SS2)*

361 Hotels are therefore crime attractors (Pooley and Ferguson, 2017), purposefully visited by  
362 traffickers in order to commit the crime of THB. Looking at the different types of THB  
363 conducted in hotels (mainly sexual and labour exploitation), traffickers are arguably using  
364 hotels as activity spaces (Iwanski *et al.*, 2011) in both the front and the back-of-house.

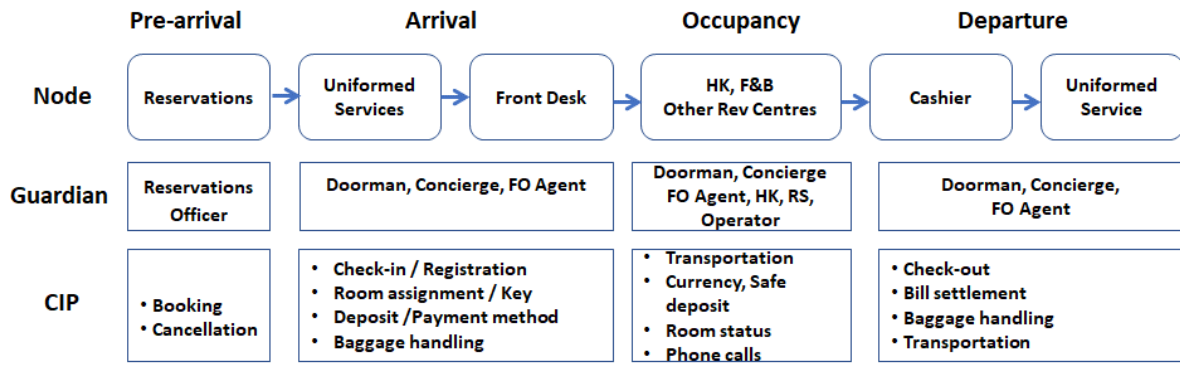
#### 365 ***4.1.2 Crime Journeys, Nodes, Guardians and Critical Intervention Points***

366 Following the processes dictated by crime pattern theory (Brantingham and Brantingham,  
367 2008), the analysis of the data from Stages 1 and 2 enabled the mapping of the crime journeys

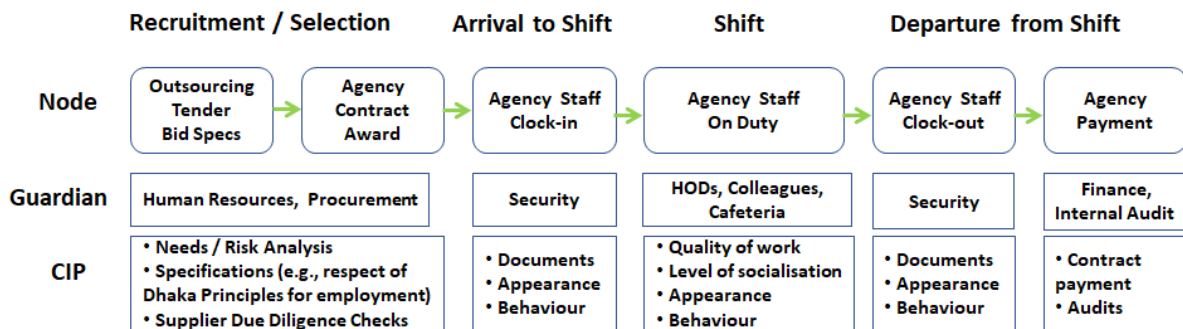
368 of traffickers and their victims in a hotel (Fig. 2) with specific nodes and pathways (Iwanski *et*  
 369 *al.*, 2011).

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**Activity Space: Hotel Front-of-House**



**Activity Space: Hotel Back-of-House**



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372 **Fig. 2 – A Framework of the Trafficking Victim’s Journey in a Hotel**

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374 Each node is a contact point between the trafficker and/or victim which involves one or more  
 375 potential guardians within a hotel. Although the absence of a guardian at a node may be  
 376 attractive to traffickers, in most cases, it is their inability or unwillingness to act that provides  
 377 better opportunities for THB (Gialopsos and Carter, 2015). The activities related to sexual  
 378 exploitation normally require access to guestrooms and, therefore, are front-of-house activities  
 379 taking place at the pre-arrival, arrival, occupancy and departure stages of the guest cycle. For  
 380 example, at the ‘reservation node’ the study identified traffickers’ advanced bookings for  
 381 airport hotel rooms for two or three nights. After travel visas were obtained the reservations  
 382 were subsequently cancelled. The inability of the automated reservations system to detect such  
 383 cancellation patterns offered traffickers an exploitable opportunity. The activities associated  
 384 with labour exploitation would normally be linked to recruitment, outsourcing and purchasing  
 385 as back-of-house functions. The growing use of outsourcing of housekeeping, maintenance and  
 386 gardening functions were practices identified that exposed hotels to labour trafficking. The  
 387 lack of appropriate vetting at the ‘tendering node’ or the ‘agency contract award node’ provides  
 388 traffickers with the opportunity to use their victims for these contracts.

389 The survey data, in particular, indicated that the lack of anti-THB standards and procedures, or  
 390 their poor enforcement by guardians, create enhanced opportunities for traffickers (Cohen and

391 Felson, 1979; Hollis *et al.*, 2013). Poor enforcement was predominantly attributed to a lack of  
392 awareness and training and most participants stated that they had not received any formal THB  
393 training. The study also revealed that guardians often lack authority and are therefore inhibited  
394 from taking action in response to suspected THB incidents. One participant reported that, “*my*  
395 *general manager does not allow me to ask questions about the identity of people checking-in*”  
396 [SR22]. Attitude or the willingness to act was also an influential factor for some guardians.  
397 As one suggested, “*I’m not paid to do the job of the UK Border Agency*” [SR70]. Cases were  
398 also reported (HI4, TI2, SS3) where guardians facing the dilemma between moral decision-  
399 making and achieving financial targets, opted for the latter. Furthermore, the study also  
400 identified that some employees’ contracts were terminated when they did opt for the moral  
401 decision.

402 In addition to presenting opportunities for criminals, the nodes also represent points at which  
403 critical interventions can occur by ‘capable guardians’ (Cohen and Felson, 1979; Hollis *et al.*,  
404 2013) in order to disrupt THB crimes. Fig. 2 presents the critical intervention points (CIP) in  
405 each node identified by the study. For these interventions to take place, however, guardians  
406 must be able to recognise the warning signs of THB, as discussed in the following section.

#### 407 **4.2 Objective Two: To identify the warning signs of THB at different critical intervention** 408 **points to develop the capability of hotel guardians**

409 The data from all three stages of the study revealed a number of warning signs that may alert  
410 hotel staff to potential incidents of THB. Through analysis, these signs were categorised  
411 according to their source; either the trafficker, the victim or the interaction between them and  
412 the guardians. They were also categorised according to the node where they can be observed  
413 and the meaning that can be attributed to them. Through the thematic analysis, the signs  
414 identified were also categorised as to whether they were particularly related to sexual or labour  
415 trafficking and then mapped onto the nodes identified where critical interventions could occur  
416 to disrupt the crime of THB.

417 The potential warning signs generally fell within two broad categories related to physical  
418 appearance of victims or to the behaviours of traffickers and/or victims. Participants from the  
419 three stages placed more emphasis on one category of signs, dependent on their background.  
420 For example, those with law enforcement and hotel security backgrounds reported signs that  
421 had more to do with the physical appearance of victims; whereas participants from anti-  
422 trafficking NGOs reported more signs that had to do with the behaviour of victims. Experienced  
423 hotel operators reported more behavioural signs of traffickers and victims as hotel guests.

##### 424 **4.2.1 Physical Appearance Front or Back-of-House**

425 The study revealed a number of physical appearance indicators could be taken into  
426 consideration in suspected THB incidents. For victims, under- or over-dressing for the  
427 premises and signs of malnourishment, exhaustion and/or physical abuse are potential warning  
428 signs. The disparity in age and race of people checking-in (e.g. between traffickers and  
429 potential victims) are also potential signs. However, as noted above, focus group participants  
430 suggested that hotel employees are not concerned about age differences. In addition, they also  
431 reported that to question any race differences between guests would be politically incorrect.

432 **4.2.2 Behaviour as Guests at the Front-of-House**

433 Participants identified a number of guest behaviours that serve as potential warning signs at  
434 different stages of the guest cycle. These signs are considered not that common, although not  
435 necessarily outside the norms of guest behaviour. Examples include requests for isolated rooms  
436 or rooms near fire exits when making reservations or on arrival and limited or no luggage,  
437 advance payment for the entire stay in cash or lack of formal identification on arrival. During  
438 occupancy, prolonged use of do-not-disturb signs; excessive numbers of visitors to the room;  
439 unusual housekeeping requests and exceptional levels of noise in the room are potential signs  
440 as are guests occupying the same room leaving at different times or guests collected by the  
441 same taxi driver at departure.

442 Some signs identified related to the interaction between traffickers and victims. For example,  
443 the complete dependence of victims on traffickers, where victims display fearful, anxious, or  
444 submissive behaviour and the sense that they are “*at loss for words even in the most routine*  
445 *conversation*” with hotel staff (NC4) are warning signs. SS3 and SS5 attributed this emotional  
446 dependence not only to the psychological or physical abuse by traffickers but also to a trauma  
447 bond (like the ‘Stockholm syndrome’) through which victims feel compelled to protect the  
448 person inflicting the trauma.

449 **4.2.3 Behaviour of Victims at the Back-of-House**

450 Most of the participants reporting back-of-house signs agreed that victims show clear signs of  
451 isolation. They do not socialise with other colleagues, take limited breaks and, when in the staff  
452 cafeteria, they sit alone and do not engage with other staff. They usually don’t possess a mobile  
453 phone and refuse offers of a ride home from colleagues. Victims are often dropped off and  
454 collected, usually by the same vehicle, at a distance from the employee entrance and out of  
455 sight of closed-circuit television cameras.

456 Participants, especially in Stage 3, emphasised that these potential signs of THB should not be  
457 interpreted in isolation, but within the wider context of the suspected traffickers’ and victims’  
458 behaviours. They agreed that ‘capable guardians’ must first be able to recognise signs of  
459 deviant behaviour from the general ‘noise’ and impose correct meaning on objects, events and  
460 behaviours observed (Carter and Fuller, 2016) in order to be able to intervene at a node and  
461 disrupt THB crimes (Groff *et al.*, 2014).

462 These findings support the importance of training in order to develop ‘capable guardians’ in  
463 the hotel. The survey revealed, however, that the participants who had undertaken some form  
464 of THB training had mixed views as to its effectiveness. The front office manager of an upscale  
465 hotel in Romania reported:

466 *“Any training is useful as it expands our knowledge on the topic; however, for us*  
467 *to be effective we need a strong commitment from the ‘top’ with proper policies*  
468 *and standards; signing the Code and taking a seminar will never be enough.”*  
469 (SR126)

470 Similarly, a housekeeping HoD in a UK midscale hotel said that she was “*thrilled with the*  
471 *training*” but her general manager would not take action on any of her reports and she could  
472 “*not risk*” reporting directly to the police (SR45). A GM of another midscale hotel reported  
473 that “*the ‘one-size-fits-all’ anti-THB training approach that our company implements at all*  
474 *levels of the organisation is inappropriate.*” She argued that a more nuanced delivery of  
475 training should be given to senior and executive-level management with a focus on the  
476 development of an “*anti-trafficking culture that will fully support a change of policies and*  
477 *standards to combat this crime; mere awareness training alone is not enough to change the*  
478 *perceptions within the company*” (SR67). This response is consistent with the symbolic  
479 interaction theory principles which suggest that, apart from knowledge and experience, the  
480 shaping of ‘meaning’ requires also appropriate organisational norms and values as well as an  
481 alignment of individual and collective needs (Carter and Fuller, 2016). It is only through such  
482 actions that effective barriers to disrupt THB can be erected as discussed in the following  
483 section.

#### 484 **4.3 Objective Three: To identify barriers that can be erected to disrupt the business of** 485 **THB.**

486 The study identified numerous potential procedures (interventions) to deter THB at the  
487 different activity spaces and disrupt the trafficked victim’s journey at critical intervention  
488 points.

489 At the front-of-house activity space, these barriers were categorised into customer  
490 identification, documented payment procedures and guest and/or visitor monitoring. One  
491 participant advised,

492 *“We should ideally be present with the guest throughout their hotel experience,*  
493 *from reservation to checkout; vigilance is required by everyone on the hotel and*  
494 *signs should be picked up and reported.”* (SR89)

495 This comment is reflective of Bales’ (2007) argument that, ‘effective deterrence of human  
496 trafficking means targeting every stage of human trafficking involvement’ (p. 31). Similarly,  
497 at the back-of-house activity space, barriers were identified as due diligence action for  
498 agencies; audit processes for agencies and suppliers; documentation, observation of and  
499 engagement with agency and suppliers’ staff. The signs and barriers identified were then  
500 mapped against the critical intervention points and guardians (Fig. 2). Examples of this  
501 mapping process are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

502 This mapping process was a critical step in the development of the final framework which drew  
503 on crime pattern theory and the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1. The Trafficked  
504 Victim’s Journey in a Hotel identifies the critical intervention points (activity spaces with  
505 nodes) and the pathways between them for both sexual and labour trafficking, taking place  
506 respectively in the front or back-of-house. At each intervention point, potential guardians who  
507 converge with traffickers and their victims according to routine pattern theory (Gialopsos and  
508 Carter, 2015) are also included. The framework also identifies where the ‘means’ (Kara, 2009)  
509 and the ‘favourable’ opportunities (McKendall *et al.*, 2002) may occur within hotels. As such,

510 it enables hotels to identify which potential barriers should be erected to disrupt these  
511 opportunities for THB so that traffickers find it more difficult to use the industry for their  
512 criminal business. As such, it also disrupts the nexus between motive, means and opportunity  
513 to combat THB.

<b>Critical Intervention Point</b>	<b>Guardian</b>	<b>Potential Signs</b>	<b>Potential Barriers to Disrupt THB</b>
<b>Pre-Arrival: Reservations</b>	Reservation Agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusual block bookings by 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers</li> <li>• Requests for rooms near fire exits</li> <li>• Queries about hotel rooms access/security policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor cancellation rates and source of reservations</li> <li>• Probe for reasons for request</li> <li>• Provide clear details on hotel policy and enquire as to whether guest is expecting visitors</li> </ul>
<b>Arrival</b>	Uniformed Services: Door staff Bell staff Valet staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different guests arriving with same taxi driver</li> <li>• Limited luggage on arrival</li> <li>• Service refusal, parking in isolated area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take details of licence and keep note of dates</li> <li>• Politely enquire whether luggage is arriving later</li> <li>• Require and verify car registration details</li> </ul>
<b>Arrival: Check-In</b>	Front Desk Agents Concierge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one person completes registration process</li> <li>• Guests display signs of abuse or exhaustion</li> <li>• Inappropriate clothing for type of property</li> <li>• Guest identification does not match name on reservation</li> <li>• Multiple keys requested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insist all guests register and provide photo identification</li> <li>• Enquire politely if everything is okay and assign room that can be monitored throughout stay</li> <li>• Require passport or other formal photo identification</li> <li>• Issue keys only to those named on registration</li> </ul>
<b>In-Room Occupancy</b>	Housekeeping Staff Room Service Staff Security Operator/Guest Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple visitors to guest rooms</li> <li>• Excessive use of Do Not Disturb signs</li> <li>• Excessive housekeeping requests for towels and/or linens</li> <li>• Evidence of drug, condom, and camera use</li> <li>• Room service orders for alcohol where minors are staying, staff denied room entry</li> <li>• Numerous external phone calls to room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep record of visitors, engage in conversation and make note if they are not able to identify guest by name</li> <li>• Implement policy to service room once every 24 hours</li> <li>• Keep record of requests, particularly if DND sign also used. Check number of guests registered</li> <li>• Inform security staff for investigation</li> <li>• Implement policy that room checked every 24 hours</li> <li>• Keep diary entries</li> </ul>
<b>Departure: Check-Out</b>	Front Desk Agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit card does not match that used for booking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure new credit card validated before departure and scan copy of photo identification of guest</li> </ul>
<b>Departure: Check-Out</b>	Uniformed Services: Door staff Bell staff Valet staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guests collected by same taxi driver as on arrival</li> <li>• Guests collected some distance from hotel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make note of licence and keep note of dates</li> <li>• Take details of vehicle and licence</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Examples of Signs and Barriers to Disrupt Sex Trafficking**

<b>Critical Intervention Point</b>	<b>Guardian</b>	<b>Potential Signs</b>	<b>Potential Barriers to Disrupt</b>
Outsourcing Tender Bid Specification	Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplier charging significantly lower costs.</li> <li>• Unknown or unclear provenance of goods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due diligence checks on supplier with tax payment evidence including references.</li> <li>• As above with supplier signing business ethics code of conduct.</li> </ul>
Agency Contract Award	Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff recruited on basis of recommendation only.</li> <li>• Agency staff without written contracts of employment.</li> <li>• Agency staff poorly paid.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with Dhaka RFQ competitive process with clear selection criteria.</li> <li>• Undertake in-depth background checks on agency.</li> <li>• Audit all employee documents.</li> </ul>
Agency Staff Clock-In	Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have no identification documentation.</li> <li>• Staff never arrive independently at work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff identification on arrival as security measure.</li> <li>• Engage staff member in casual conversation about journey.</li> </ul>
Agency Staff On Duty	Department Head Colleagues Cafeteria Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff excessively volunteer for extra shifts</li> <li>• Staff isolate themselves from colleagues.</li> <li>• Staff wear same clothes to work each day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure staff are aware of their statutory rights.</li> <li>• Observe appearance of staff, engage in friendly conversation, be vigilant for signs of abuse.</li> </ul>
Agency Staff Clock-Out	Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff always depart alone.</li> <li>• Staff never accept ride home from colleagues</li> <li>• Staff always collected by the same vehicle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage staff in casual conversation about journey home and where they live.</li> <li>• Take details of vehicle and licence</li> </ul>
Agency Payment	Finance Internal Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any of the above signs reported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake audit of agency or supplier to evaluate potential risks of THB</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Examples of Signs and Barriers to Disrupt Labour Trafficking**



## 521 5. Conclusion and Implications

522 The study sought to address a current gap in the tourism literature by combining theories of  
523 criminology and social science to develop a mapping approach of a trafficked victim's journey  
524 through a tourism business. This approach facilitates the identification of critical intervention  
525 points where 'capable guardians' (members of the tourism business) can disrupt this journey.  
526 This disruption can be achieved by the development of 'node-specific' policies and standards  
527 that will be implemented every time THB warning signs are detected by guardians. As such,  
528 the study contributes to the tourism literature by providing a comprehensive framework for  
529 businesses to use to combat the crime of THB in all its forms.

530 While the victim's journey presented in this study may be hotel-specific, the overall detection  
531 and prevention framework can be applied to other sectors of the tourism industry (e.g., airlines,  
532 travel agencies, etc.) or to tourism destinations by adapting the activity spaces, pathways,  
533 nodes, guardians and critical intervention points accordingly. The study confirms extant  
534 research that tourism activities and tourism businesses are crime attractors for both sexual and  
535 labour exploitation of THB victims. It also reveals that different types of THB can potentially  
536 take place both within the business and its supply chain. However, despite the growth in THB  
537 globally, awareness of this criminal activity within tourism businesses is limited predominantly  
538 due to a lack of training. The study also reveals that even when training occurs, the lack of  
539 authority or of effective reporting procedures undermine efforts to disrupt THB. As such,  
540 tourism businesses may remain vulnerable to exposure to THB and provide opportunities for  
541 traffickers. Nonetheless, the study also identifies how to limit this exposure through the  
542 identification of the activity spaces, pathways and nodes within the business where critical  
543 interventions might occur. It also identifies the potential THB warning signs for each  
544 intervention point, the guardians who might intervene and the barriers that could be erected to  
545 disrupt THB.

546 The findings have both practical and research implications for tourism businesses and  
547 destination management organisations. At the business level, the study reveals that there is  
548 more work to be done to create awareness of THB within the tourism sector and to improve  
549 the training of employees as guardians to recognise the potential warning signs. It also suggests  
550 a need for tourism businesses to develop a stronger anti-THB culture to ensure that guardians  
551 have the authority to act on their suspicions, and that they will be supported by senior managers  
552 when they do so. As such, the study points to the need to develop and implement clear THB  
553 reporting systems with the involvement of senior management. Further research to identify  
554 THB victims' journey in other sectors is thus warranted to address these needs in order to more  
555 effectively disrupt THB.

556 Further research is also required at the tourism destination level to identify activity spaces and  
557 trafficking journeys, pathways and nodes, as well as the appropriate stakeholders who will act  
558 as 'guardians'. The development of intervention strategies and policies that will disrupt all  
559 forms of THB and will help the rehabilitation of trafficking 'survivors' are two other areas that  
560 need attention by both tourism policy makers and scholars. Bales (2007) argues that the two  
561 major tools for fighting THB are awareness and resources. The mapping approach of the

562 trafficked victim's journey in this study is designed as a practical resource that tourism  
563 authorities and businesses can use to increase awareness, support THB training and to identify  
564 where barriers may be erected to disrupt THB opportunities.

565

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