Migration, identity and risk: the experiences of migrant male sex workers in London

Elisa Del Carmen Ruiz Burga

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Public Health
School of Health Sciences, City University London
July, 2018
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter One: Introduction</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Overview</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Study Background</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Defining the Main Terms of the Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. The politics of Sex Work</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Legal Aspects and the Social Organisation of Sex Work in the UK</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Advertisement: Government Policies and Strategies</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5. Sex Work Population in the UK: Migrants and the Sex Market</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Two: Literature Review</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Overview</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sex Work Paradigms</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Topics Studied on Male Sex Work</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. The Social Organisation of Male Sex Work</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Factors in Entrance to Male Sex Work</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Sexual Identities, Sexual Partners, and Sexual Practices</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. Risks of STI-HIV</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1. Alcohol and Recreational Drugs Consumption</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2. Type of Relationship: Individual Sexual Arousal and Violence</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3. Male migration, Sex Work and STI-HIV</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Summary</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Research Questions, Objectives and Research Aims</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Overview</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rationale for Research Approach and Methods</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Research Paradigms</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Study Design, Research Methods and Strategies</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1. Inclusion Criteria</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2. Exclusion Criteria</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3. Sampling Methods and Recruitment Strategies</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4. Narrative Research</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.5. Interview Process</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Chapter Four: Preface to the Findings Chapters
1. Overview 70
2. Participants Description 70
3. Structure for Presentation of the Results 75

## Chapter Five: Migration Trajectories and Entry in Sex Work
1. Overview 77
2. The Pull and Push Theory 77
3. Findings 78
   3.1. Core theme: Push Factors for emigration ‘leaving the country of origin’ 80
       3.1.1. Economic Constraints 80
       3.1.2. Poor Employment Prospects 85
       3.1.3. Same-sex Desire and Homophobia 87
           a. ‘Living a Normal Life’ 88
           b. Experiences of Homophobia and Violence 91
   3.2. Core theme: Pull Factors for Migration towards the UK 92
       3.2.1. Following a ‘Dream’ to Europe 93
       3.2.2. Seeking Opportunities for Self-development in the UK 95
       3.2.3. The London Factor: Seeking Freedom and Living in a Cosmopolitan City 97
       3.2.4. Sex Workers Seeking Better Working Conditions in London 98
       3.2.5. Continuity with Sex Work Activities in the UK 101
       3.2.6. Selling Sex for the First Time as Migrants 103
           a. Motivations 103
           b. Circumstances 105
           c. Reflections 111
   3.3. Summary 112
4. Discussion 114

## Chapter Six: Constructing a Work Identity as a Migrant Male Sex Worker
1. Overview 121
2. Exploring Sex Work as a Labour 121
3. Findings 122
   3.1. Core theme: Perceived Self-image as Escorts 123
       3.1.1. Self-confidence to Fit into ‘The Pattern of Look’ of an Escort 123
       3.1.2. Self-Care 128
   3.2. Core theme: Establishing a Presence as Independent Escorts 129
       3.2.1. Using the internet and Mobile Technologies to Navigate the Online Sex Market 129
3.2.2. Learning the Language and Codes 132
3.2.3. Creating Online Profiles and a Persona 134
3.2.4. Developing Strategies of Self-marketing 135
   3.2.4.1. Branding 135
   3.2.4.2. The Use of Images 137
   3.2.4.3. Comparison of the Self with Others 139
      a. Positioning in the Market in Relation to Competition 139
      b. Surveying the Competition 143
3.3. Core theme: Establishing Expertise as Independent Escorts 145
   3.3.1. Becoming Independent 146
   3.3.2. Valuing Autonomy 147
   3.3.3. Self-Efficacy 149
   3.3.4. Establishing a Professional Reputation 150
   3.3.5. ‘Being Good at It’ – Taking Pride in Services Provided 152
3.4. Core theme: Expectations of Others 154
   3.4.1. Meeting the Needs of Clients’ Expectations 155
   3.4.2. Negotiating Sex Work with Romantic Partners 157
3.5. Core theme: Role Conflict and Ambiguity 158
   3.5.1. Escorting perceived as ‘any other job’ 158
   3.5.2. No Disclosing Occupation 162
3.6. Summary 165

4. Discussion 169

**Chapter Seven: Managing Risk as a Sex Worker** 176
1. Overview 176
2. Approaching Sexual Behaviour 176
3. Findings 178
   3.2. Core theme: Risk Reduction Strategies 183
      3.2.1. Choosing the Active Sexual Role 183
      3.2.2. Unprotected Oral Intercourse (UOI) 184
      3.2.3. Using Persuasion with Clients 186
   3.3. Core theme: Risk Assessment of Client – ‘In Situ’ 186
      3.3.1. Intuitive Sense of Trust/Safety 186
      3.3.2. Perceived Riskiness of Clients 188
      3.3.3. Familiarity/Trust – ‘Regular Clients’ 188
      3.3.4. Physical Appearance 189
   3.4. Core theme: Factors Underpinning Engagement in High-Risk Sexual Activity 190
      3.4.1. The Use of Recreational Drugs 190
      3.4.2. Attractiveness to the Client 193
      3.4.3. Clients Removing/Breaking Condoms 193
3.4.4. Giving in to Client Demands/Requests 194
3.4.5. Extra Financial Incentives 196
3.5. Core theme: Reflections on Risk and Risky Behaviour 198
  3.5.1. ‘Worry about Self’ 198
  3.5.2. ‘Paying the Price’ 204
  3.5.3. ‘Worry about Others’ 205
3.6. Summary 206
4. Discussion 209

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Final Remarks 216
1. Overview 216
2. Conclusions 216
3. Contributions of the thesis 218
  3.1. Contributions to Knowledge 218
  3.2. Contributions to Policy and Practice 221
4. Potential Limitations of the Study 223
5. Suggestions for Future Research 224

References 226

Appendices 259
Table 1. Papers retrieved by the terms 259
Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet (PIS) Approved 260
Appendix B: Consent Form Approved 263
Appendix C: Flyers approved 264
Appendix D: Interview Schedule Approved 265
Appendix E: Hierarchical organisation of the thematic map with description and examples 267
Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the contribution of the 25 participants who decided to share their stories. To them goes a very special thank you because this study represents a projection of their generous sense to help others to understand their realities and lives without prejudice and stigma.

Likewise, I want to express my gratitude to the Jefferiss Wing Research Committee that facilitated access to the Working Men Project based at St Marys Hospital. I am deeply indebted to Gregory King and Javier Calatrava, collaborators in this study, who played a fundamental role as their hard-earned trustworthiness amongst their clients made participation in this study possible. I would like to thank Lee Brooker, health worker with the SWISH Project who also co-operated with this study.

This thesis represents much of what I wanted to achieve several years ago when I started working in research in other countries. This programme gave me the opportunity to develop my own research. In this sense, I have to say that years of previous experience smoothed this research process. Here I have to express my gratitude to my ex-colleagues and friends – Professor Carlos F. Caceres Palacios, Professor Daniel Halperin, Dr Andre Maiorana and Professor Susan Kegeles, for inspiring me, opening my mind and heart to the experiences of vulnerable groups of male and female sex workers.

I would also like to thank Dr Eamonn McKeown and Dr Yiannis Kyratsis, supervisors of this thesis, for their help during this programme. In the same manner, I want to thank Dr Katherine Curtis and Professor Christine McCourt for their advice and support.

Finally, I am profoundly thankful to my son and my mother for their enormous understanding and support all these years. This thesis is especially dedicated to the memory of my father, who always encouraged me and gave me the strength to complete this programme, and to my whole family that makes me feel proud of my roots and values to show empathy towards others.
Declaration

I, Elisa Ruiz Burga, ‘the Depositor’, would like to deposit ‘Independent male escorts in London: a thematic analysis of the lived experiences of international migration and sex work’, hereafter referred to as ‘the Work’, in the City University Institutional Repository and agree to the following:

Rights granted to the City University Institutional Repository through this agreement are entirely non-exclusive and royalty free. I am free to publish the Work in its present version or future versions elsewhere. I agree that the City University Institutional Repository administrators or any third party with whom the City University Institutional Repository has an agreement to do so may, without changing content, translate the Work to any medium or format for the purpose of future preservation and accessibility.

I understand that work deposited in the City University Institutional Repository will be accessible to a wide variety of people and institutions – including automated agents – via the World Wide Web. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being included in the British Library Electronic Theses On-line System (EThOS).

I understand that once the Work is deposited, a citation to the Work will always remain visible. Removal of the Work can be made after discussion with the City University Institutional Repository, who shall make best efforts to ensure removal of the Work from any third party with whom the City University Institutional Repository has an agreement.

I AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

- That I am the author of the Work and hereby give the City University Institutional Repository administrators the right to make available the Work in the way described above.
- That I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the Work is original, and does not, to the best of my knowledge, break any UK law or infringe any third party’s copyright or other Intellectual Property Right. Where I have included third party copyright material, I have fully acknowledged its source.
- The administrators of the City University Institutional Repository do not hold any obligation to take legal action on behalf of the Depositor, or other rights holders, in the event of a breach of intellectual property rights, or any other right, in the material deposited.

Signed:

Date:
Abstract

This dissertation explores the experiences of migration and sex work amongst migrant males operating in London. Twenty-five non-UK born males, who were working as independent internet-based escorts, contributed to this study. This investigation used convenience sampling selection to recruit participants from two sexual health programmes specialising in male sex workers in London. The data was compiled through in-depth interviews and analysed using thematic analysis.

This study provides connections between the trajectories that participants reported towards the UK and the routes of entry into sex work. It also delivers insights about their experiences operating as independent internet-based escorts in London. Finally, it contributes information about their risk perception and unprotected sex experiences in the context of commercial sex, which allows the contemplation of risky sexual behaviour from the perspective of an occupational risk.
### List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSW</td>
<td>Female sex workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMSW</td>
<td>Female migrant sex worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMSW</td>
<td>Internet male sex workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMSW</td>
<td>Migrant male sex worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSM</td>
<td>Men who have sex with men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>Male sex worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STI</td>
<td>Sexually transmitted infections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMSW</td>
<td>Street-based male sex workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAMPEP</td>
<td>The European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK NSWP</td>
<td>UK Network of Sex Work Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>The World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One: Introduction

1. Overview

Beginning with the establishment of the rationale for this research study, it is important to explain that as a professional dedicated to sexual and reproductive health issues, I have developed a strong interest for vulnerable groups. Most of my experience was achieved as a research assistant in projects conducted in Peru, Dominican Republic and Haiti. These studies, mostly centred on behavioural change models, were funded by international institutions that collaborated with the local governments. They were focused on groups living in poor contexts such as women and men who exchange sex for goods or money in what is called in Latin America ‘compensated sex’. Likewise, they studied women, men and ‘trans people’ selling sex for money in settings such as streets, brothels, and those working as ‘exotic’ dancers.

After years in this arena, I find difficult and challenging to fully understand the limitations and barriers for behaviour change programmes. Today, I am aware that systematic reviews (e.g. Hong et al., 2011; Mishra et al., 2012; 2012; Fonner et al., 2014; Sunguya et al., 2016) show that only few models of intervention have provoked a positive impact. Thus, human behaviour as a whole understanding of human nature is still something that really intrigues me, and that motivates me to continue in this field. Then, this research emanates from a deep fascination with regard to the individuals who decide to sell sex.

Women and men who sell sex have increasingly attracted the attention of researchers, particularly after the emergence of HIV-AIDS. Nonetheless, scholars claim that compared to women, men have been much less studied (Weitzer, 2013). For long they have been represented as homosexuals (Browne and Minichiello, 1996, p.30) and with a considerable amount of focus on street-based workers. Moreover, it has been acknowledged the scarcity of information about some specific groups such as migrants that represent an important proportion of those operating in London (TAMPEP, 2010a). Therefore, this research programme represented a unique opportunity to study under-researched group as male migrants.
selling sex in a high-income country, and largely operating in indoor settings as internet-based independent escorts.

2. Study Background
This chapter details the background of this study. First, it defines the main concepts that direct this thesis. Then, it briefly introduces political and legal aspects of ‘prostitution’ in the United Kingdom (UK), provides an outline of the social organisation of sex work and explains government policies related to advertising. Finally, it offers an overview of the sex work population in the UK.

2.1. Defining the main terms of the study
This section explains the core concepts that were adopted for this study. To this end, it explores the ambiguous and sometimes problematic nature of their delineation in the literature.

The activity of selling sex is largely called ‘prostitution’. This term describes the exchange of sexual services for material compensation (Weitzer, 2014). Hence, a ‘prostitute’ is an individual who receives money for sexual services as determined by direct physical contact (Weitzer, 2010). The terms ‘prostitution’ and ‘prostitute’ commonly have derogatory connotations and are subject to a moral stigma which imputes an inferior status (Weitzer, 2017). For this reason, researchers have recommended the use of neutral language that avoids derogatory names. Following that suggestion, this thesis employs the categories of ‘sex work’ and ‘sex worker’, as Carol Leigh has proposed (Leigh and Harlot, 1997), in order to promote tolerance for people who work in this sector – especially males, who must usually cope with the stigma of homosexual desire as well.

This thesis investigates migrant male sex workers (MMSW) as empirical evidence exposes them as an important group in the UK sex work population. This study focuses on international or transnational migration, which is defined as a change of residence that involves the spatial movement of persons across country borders (Urquia and Gagnon, 2011). In this manner, the term ‘emigration’ describes the act of leaving one's country of origin with the intent
to settle elsewhere, and ‘immigration’ references the movement of persons into one country from another (ibid). The thesis also adopts the term ‘secondary migration’, which is also known as ‘two-step migration’, ‘remigration’ and ‘double leap’, to refer to migration to another place after an initial migration (Urquia and Gagnon, 2011).

The position of migrants as a significant sub-group of the sex work population has motivated this exploration of the intersection of migration and sex work to identify connections between the two conditions amongst participants. This research uses the category of a migrant male sex worker to describe a foreign-born biological male who receives money in exchange for sexual services. Research on migration has usually made a distinction between the type of relocation of individuals (permanent versus temporary) and the legal status of migration (legal versus illegal). In terms of legal status, research on sex work has strongly linked illegal migration, or lack of a legal right to mobility, with vulnerability to trafficking or other harms. However, such studies have predominantly expressed this perspective in regard to women and children (Sanghera, 2016); thus, it is not particularly applicable to men. Researchers have tended to differentiate sex work by the degree of the individual’s involvement, as some individuals practice ‘duality’ by engaging simultaneously in both ‘straight work and sex work’ (Bowen, 2013, p.1). Bowen and Bowen (2015) has described this practice as ‘living a dual-life’ to illustrate the experience of living within the border of stigmatised labour and conventional work amongst women. Considering the scarcity of information on male sex workers – particularly those who are migrants – this study explores the experiences of this group as a whole rather than differentiating the group into sub-categories based on the type of relocation, legal status or extent of involvement in sex work, for example.

Finally, this thesis also studies health risks that participants have encountered from the perspective of sexual health. Specifically, it examines the sexual practices, especially in regard to condom use with clients, that have exposed
them to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

2.2. The politics of sex work

Although selling sex is a global phenomenon, it varies enormously across echelons (Weitzer, 2014). In fact, history, social and economic factors, legal frameworks and policy practices shape the composition of the sex industry (Harcourt and Donovan, 2005). Therefore, the particular context is highly relevant, as every country has distinctive structures and dynamics that direct and regulate sex work and are thus crucial to understand. Laws and policies regarding sex work depend primarily on the position of the particular government and society towards the industry. In this manner, some countries promote the regulation of sex work (e.g. Dominican Republic\(^1\)) or its limitation (e.g. Australia\(^2\)), while others aim to eradicate it (e.g. South Africa\(^3\)).

This section provides a broad overview of the politics of sex work and a brief description of the legal framework and policies in the UK. This discussion employs the terms ‘prostitution’ and ‘sex work’ interchangeably to reflect the laws and policies that it cites.

The abolitionist position is based on politics that associate sex work with victimisation. Authors have proposed that this perspective depicts women as victims of coercion by male pimps, traffickers or both (Showden and Majic, 2014). The feminist standpoint of ‘sexual politics’, which refers to the ‘powered-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by other’, strongly endorses this position (Millett, 2000 p.23). It characterises sex work as a hierarchical, stigmatised, violent and exploitative activity that exposes women’s subordination by male dominance (Schotten, 2005). Since the 1990s, feminists have focused public and political attention on the representation of trafficked women as a harmful expression of global gender inequalities (Bernstein, 2010), especially amongst the economically vulnerable (Showden and Majic, 2014). Therefore, the victimisation

\(^1\) http://prostitution.procon.org/sourcefiles/DominicanRepublicCodigo_Penal.pdf
\(^2\) http://www.pla.qld.gov.au/
\(^3\) http://prostitution.procon.org/sourcefiles/SouthAfricavJordanSummaryJudgement.pdf
perspective denies sex work as a type of free-choice labour (ibid). Conversely, it reinforces the political position of many governments that define prostitution as a criminal activity in connection to smuggling (Kempadoo, 2005).

In contrast, a different perspective situates sex work as a labour by choice. This vision considers prostitution to be an expression of freedom and autonomy for some women (Showden, 2011). Showden has claimed that modern prostitution is ultimately only an option for sexual and economic resistance because of the configurations of sexual desire and economic production (ibid). Supporters of this point of view have posited that sex work is a manner of commodification and an intimate labour (Walkowitz, 2016). Furthermore, they have argued that all forms of sex work are not compatible with trafficking, and consequently, not all migrant sex workers are simply passive victims of overpowering social and economic forces (ibid). Some authors (e.g. Bujra, 1977) have viewed the option of prostitution and the mechanisms that some migrant women develop to make this option viable to be a means of insubordination and rejection of submission to men. Supporters of this position have argued that prostitution should be decriminalised not because it is an inherent good to protect but rather in view of the harms that accompany criminalisation (Showden, 2011).

As a critical point, abolitionist discussions have not considered male sex workers to be relevant to the analysis of sex work. Some authors (Showden, 2011) have reasoned that men are not naturally pathologised for engaging in sex work in the way that women are. Others have claimed that it is because they do not meet the stereotypical criteria of victimhood and exploitation, as the typical male hooker is regarded as ‘tough and invulnerable’ (Marlowe, 1997). In all cases, it seems that the politics of sex is based on the politics of gender, as they perceive male and female sex workers differently and assign them separate roles. This debate supports the need for research on male experiences in sex work.

2.3. Legal Aspects and the Social Organisation of Sex Work in the UK
The social and geographic organisation of sex work varies substantially across societies (Baral et al., 2015). Thus, in order to understand the context in which
migrant males operate as sex workers in London, it is important to introduce certain aspects of the legal framework that define and regulate prostitution. This section also introduces characteristics of the social organisation of sex work as well as the most prevalent types of sex work. It finally presents historical evidence regarding environmental measures as a legal response to the use of certain areas for prostitution, which has directed further criminalisation.

First, prostitution is not an illegal activity in England and Wales. Rather, the legal framework approaches it in terms of offenses. In this manner, Sections 48 to 50 of the Sexual Offenses Act 2003 outline ‘prostitute’ as follows:

‘a person (A) who, on at least one occasion and whether or not compelled to do so, offers or provides sexual services to another person in return for payment or a promise of payment to A or a third person; and “prostitution” is to be interpreted accordingly’.

The same line offers the following definition for ‘payment’:

‘any financial advantage, including the discharge of an obligation to pay or the provision of goods or services (including sexual services) gratuitously or at a discount’.

Section 56 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 extends the gender specificity of prostitution only to make this activity explicit for either sexes, ‘whether male or female’. This is a crucial fact to understand in a context where ‘homosexual acts’ were only decriminalised in 1980.

Second, a variety of markets and sex work settings have been reported in the UK. Sex work settings are places or social networks in which sexual services are exchanged for money (The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2012b). Based on the setting, authors have tended to classify sex work as either active street sex work (outdoor) or off-street sex work (indoor) (Wilcox and Christmann, 2008; Covenry, 2010; Cunningham, 2011). This dichotomy conveys that sex work settings can vary from visible brothels and red-light

---

districts to venues such as bars, hotels, saunas, marketplaces or roadside areas. In view of these settings, clients can contact sex workers in a variety of ways: meeting face-to-face on the street; ‘kerb-crawling’ in red-light areas; visiting brothels, flats, massage parlours or saunas; responding to a card that has been left in a public phone box or to small advertisements in local newspapers; calling an escort agency; or engaging with sex workers via the Internet and chat rooms. The visible and hidden natures of different sex markets and the variety of sex work settings reflect the breadth of sex work in the UK.

With regard to the type of physical interaction between sellers and buyers, sex work can also be categorised as direct or indirect. Direct sex work usually involves sexual contact in exchange for money, while indirect sex work relates mostly to non-physical sexual stimulation (Sanders et al., 2009; Pitcher, 2015a). This classification also concerns the venue in which the client can make direct contact with the sex worker. Indirect sex work can occur in settings such as in lap dancing clubs, via ‘hotline’ services and in saunas and parlour massages, while direct sex work occurs in streets, brothels, private flats, houses and homes (Harcourt and Donovan, 2005; Sanders et al., 2009). From this list, the last three settings correspond to the escort market, which is a dominant market in Western countries (Sanders et al., 2009). Frequently, men and women who work in the escort market offer outcall services to hotels and homes, provide more elaborate sexual services and charge higher prices compared to other types of markets (ibid). Some operate through escort agencies, whereas others are self-employed and work independently through Internet advertisements. Therefore, every type of sex market has a unique organisation and characteristics.

Although selling sex is legal, the UK government has established laws and policies that outline the activities that are involved in sex work and determine which of them are criminalised. For instance, Section 1 of the Street Offences Act 1959\(^5\) specifies loitering and soliciting as offenses which govern street sex work. In this statute, the definition of ‘street’ includes any bridge, road, lane,
footway, square, court, alley or passage, whether thoroughfare or not, which is currently open to the public. Moreover, it encompasses the doorways and entrances of premises that are adjoining and open to a street. As another example, soliciting from a car by ‘kerb-crawling’ became an offence through the Sexual Offences Act 1985, which states that ‘a person commits an offence if he solicits another person (or different persons) for the purpose of prostitution’. In the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the offences of loitering and soliciting were elements of ‘anti-social behaviour’ (ASBO).

The table below (Pitcher et al., 2006, p.4) summarises the classification of the above sex work offences, the acts which implemented them and the maximum penalties established by the law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offenses in England and Wales</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Maximum penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soliciting or loitering for purposes of prostitution</td>
<td>1959 Street Offences Act</td>
<td>A fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causing or inciting prostitution for gain</td>
<td>1956 Sexual Offences Act; 2003 Sexual Offences Act</td>
<td>Six months of imprisonment or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerb-crawling (with persistence and in a manner likely to cause annoyance)</td>
<td>1985 Sexual Offences Act; 2001 Criminal Justice and Police Act; 2003 Sexual Offences Act</td>
<td>Arrestandable offence: seizure of vehicle or driving ban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial behaviour</td>
<td>1998 Crime and Disorder Act</td>
<td>Serving of Anti-Social Behaviour Order, with up to five years’ imprisonment or up to six months’ imprisonment plus fine for breach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A recent report by the Release organisation (Douse et al., 2017, p. 15) details the maximum penalties for street work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offenses associated with street work</th>
<th>Maximum Penalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soliciting</td>
<td>Engagement &amp; Support Order/Fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex in a public lavatory</td>
<td>Six months and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway obstruction</td>
<td>Fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly behaviour</td>
<td>Fine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The legislation that the government has implemented illustrates its attempts to regulate the use of public spaces to alleviate tensions between local

---

communities and sex workers. This form of regulation aims to spatially contain sex work. For instance, during the 1950s, authors noted that the twin ‘vices’ of prostitution and homosexuality were displaced to a specific geographical region of London, which was labelled the ‘centre of depravity’ (Mort, 1998; Slater, 2010). Nowadays, street sex work and kerb-crawling provoke wider concerns about crime, and research on managed areas or designated safety spaces has given rise to considerable debate. Some researchers have examined whether residential streets could serve as shared spaces for sex workers and the community (Pitcher et al., 2006). They have revealed that responses to street sex work range from sympathy and engagement with working women to actions to displace them from local streets. Some researchers have explored despicable media representations of sex workers and the reactions of residents of certain British cities (See O’Neill et al., 2008). Thereby, they have highlighted the degrees of tolerance amongst residents towards street sex work. Research on this aspect has generally attempted to capture the needs of both sex workers and residents in their discourse on citizenship and safer spaces.

In addition, various forms of managing sex work activities (e.g. operating a brothel, causing or inciting prostitution for gain, controlling prostitution for gain and money laundering) are considered controlling offences. In the case operating a brothel, the law dates back to Section 13 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885. Later, it was amended in the Sexual Offences Act 1956 (c. 69), and the statutes of the Act of Sexual Offences 2003 address it as follows:

‘it is an offence for a person to keep a brothel, or to manage, or act or assist in the management of, a brothel to which people resort for practices involving prostitution (whether or not also for other practices)’.

Here, to ‘keep’ a brothel implies the act of conducting business within it. A brothel can be a house, flat, building or a part of a building that is utilised by

---

8The Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885.
https://ia601403.us.archive.org/0/items/criminallawamen00bodkgoog/criminallawamen00bodkg oog.pdf
more than one sex worker. The law extends the offence to landlords and tenants who let a place for use as a brothel.

The government also prosecutes ‘inciting’ and ‘controlling’ prostitution for gain, which can entail soliciting, procuring and earning money through the management of sex workers. A sex work statute that carries one of the harshest penalties for the forced involvement of adults in sex work is Section 51 of the International Criminal Court Act 2001,⁹ which includes forced prostitution by trafficking as a crime against humanity. A person commits a human trafficking offence if he or she arranges or facilitates the travel of another person (‘V’) with a view for (V) to be exploited. It is irrelevant if (V) consents to travel. According to the Release’s report (Douse et al., 2017), the Modern Slavery Act 2015 consolidates, replaces and broadens the scope of existing trafficking offences, including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and committing an offence with the intention to commit human trafficking for sexual exploitation. The penalty for trafficking offences is a fine or a maximum of life in prison (Douse et al., 2017).

The Release’s report (Douse et al., 2017, p. 25) indicates severer sentences for those who benefit financially from controlling or employing others who provide sexual services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controlling Offenses</th>
<th>Maximum Penalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeping a brothel</td>
<td>Seven years and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causing or inciting prostitution for gain</td>
<td>Seven years and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling prostitution for gain</td>
<td>Seven years and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money laundering</td>
<td>Fourteen years and/or fine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, there are offences and penalties that relate to buying sex. Similarly, to other European countries, the UK has shifted its approach to sex work to criminalise clients of sex workers. In this manner, in July of 2015, Northern Ireland criminalised the purchase of sex but decriminalised its sale (Walkowitz,

2016). The table below provides a list of these offences (Douse et al., 2017, p. 19).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offenses for those who buy sex</th>
<th>Maximum Penalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kerb-crawling and soliciting</td>
<td>Fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying for the sexual services of a prostitute subject to force</td>
<td>Fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying for sex with someone who is under 18</td>
<td>Seven years and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying for sex with someone who is under 16</td>
<td>Fourteen years and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying for sex with someone who is under 13</td>
<td>Life imprisonment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section has explained how the implementation of laws to regulate sex work has influenced the organisation of sex work in the UK. Society’s perception of sex work and the legislation to control it has been a crucial aspect for the government. Consequently, there have been several attempts to incorporate public opinion. For instance, the Home Office (2004) has published the Green Paper ‘Paying the Price’ as a consultation paper about prostitution with the aim of prompting a public debate on how to address the issues that prostitution presents in England and Wales. The document concerns the protection and support of children in prostitution, multi-agency approaches in response to risk factors amongst vulnerable children and human rights abuses in trafficking. Furthermore, it advocates for the welfare needs of those who exit prostitution and presents multiple options to regulate and minimise prostitution. ‘Paying the Price’ received hundreds of responses, and ‘A Coordinated Strategy on Prostitution (The Strategy)’ was subsequently published in 2006 to summarise them. This document sets out the government’s proposals for a coordinated prostitution strategy that focuses on disrupting off-street sex work establishments to particularly prevent the involvement of children and young people and provide exit routes for those who are already involved. It also proposes tough enforcement against clients

---

10 Paying the Price: https://prostitution.procon.org/sourcefiles/paying_the_price.pdf
who buy sex, whereby men who have not been guilty would be subject to untested psychological treatment known as ‘re-education’. In regard to this point, some authors (e.g. Brooks-Gordon, 2006) have claimed that trends and shifts in moral, ideological and symbolic images have an influence on the government's position.

Nevertheless, scholars have claimed that the government has failed to reduce prostitution since the law that regulates sex work does not have the explicit and clear purpose of a feasible policy for the sex industry (Brooks-Gordon, 2006). Furthermore, they have underlined that the lack of recognition of sex work as legitimate work can impact the work conditions, autonomy, safety and wellbeing of sex workers (Pitcher and Wijers, 2014; Pitcher, 2015b). Regarding male sex work, researchers, health workers and activists have expressed disappointment about the absence of male and transgender sex workers from the agenda of ‘Paying the Price’. ‘The Strategy’ presents a response from the Home Office based on the fact that men mainly work off street and do not have the same issues regarding drug use, coercion or trafficking. Hence, they reinforced their focus on women in prostitution by neglecting the male group as a relevant part of the sex work population.

2.4. Advertisement: Government Policies and Strategies
Authors have identified ‘fingering one’s lapels’ in Piccadilly Circus and coded messages in mainstream periodicals as forms of male advertising in Victorian London (Tyler, 2014, p. 86). A steady reduction in street-level work in past decades, which has perhaps been due to local community pressures and the involvement of police activity (Matthews, 1997), has displaced men and women to indoor sex work. Consequently, the government has attempted to control the advertisement of sexual services and prosecute it under ‘soliciting’ legislation. This section outlines advertisement-related legislation.

Since the passage of Section 46 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, the placement of advertisements for prostitution has been an offence. The act states that

\[(1) \textit{A person commits an offence if –} \]
(a) he places on, or in the immediate vicinity of, a public telephone an advertisement relating to prostitution, and
(b) He does so with the intention that the advertisement should come to the attention of any other person or persons.

In addition, an advertisement is considered to relate to prostitution if it

(a) Is for the services of a prostitute, whether male or female; or
(b) Indicates that premises are premises at which such services are offered

In London, placing advertisements in a telephone booth was once a popular strategy for publicising sexual services. Postcards that were known as ‘calling cards’ (Sanders, 2005b; Sanders, 2006) or ‘tart cards’ (Archer, 2004) featured provocative images and provided a (professional) name, telephone number, location and brief description of the available services. However, the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 declared this type of advertisement a legal offence. This act identified telephone booths as ‘public places’ that should be used for residential purposes only, and it defined a ‘public telephone’ as

(a) any telephone which is located in a public place and made available for use by the public, or a section of the public, and
(b) where such a telephone is located in or on, or attached to, a kiosk, booth, acoustic hood, shelter or other structure, that structure.

Scholars have interpreted the introduction of this piece of legislation as an expression of a classic moral panic that devolved from the common perception of the advertising cards as a threat to community values and cohesion (Hubbard, 2002).

At the present time, it is not illegal to advertise sexual services. However, it is still an offence to place an advertisement for prostitution on or in the immediate area of a public telephone. This offence does not apply to telephones in locations that deny entry to people under the age of 16 (Douse et al., 2017). People who are employed to insert sex workers’ cards in telephone kiosks also risk prosecution for unauthorised advertising (ibid). However, this approach to advertising sexual services is no longer as popular as it was in the past.
Studies have revealed three main spaces for advertising sexual services: notices posted in gay pubs, magazines that target a gay readership and the Internet (e.g. Parsons et al., 2004; Koken et al., 2010). The latter has transformed the social organisation of sex work by generating a new sector of ‘Internet-based’ sex work. The website categories can be subdivided into individual sites, agency sites and social-networking sites (Tyler, 2014). The Internet has created a new route for the advertisement of sexual services to potential clients and the facilitation of forms of sexual interaction. Thus, it has enabled new forms and subtle strategies of offering and procuring sexual services through advertisements in order to navigate and circumvent legal norms and policies. Since the 2001 act did not declare any specific offence for advertising in newspapers or online Internet-based services, it may present a remarkable opportunity. Moreover, experts have argued that it is difficult to be prosecuted for advertising sexual services on the Internet because people can view the sites from anywhere in the world (Douse et al., 2017).

The table below displays advertising-related circumstances which are considered offenses as well as the maximum penalties (Douse et al., 2017, p.52).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertising Offenses</th>
<th>Maximum Penalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publishing an obscene article</td>
<td>Three years and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecent displays</td>
<td>Two years and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placing adverts for prostitution on a public telephone</td>
<td>Six months and/or fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unauthorised advertising</td>
<td>Fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal damage valued at less than £5,000</td>
<td>Six months and/or fine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of advertisements for male escorts, there have been some changes in past decades. During the 1980s, escorts in the UK advertised mostly in newspapers and magazines under classified personal services by using specific phrases to signal which services were on offer (Sanders et al., 2009). Reports of the incorporation of photographs in the advertisements emerged at the beginning of the 2000s (Cameron et al., 1999). Sex workers have also advertised their services via creative descriptions on massive web pages (Sanders et al., 2009) which advertise explicitly and implicitly for sex and sexual experiences (Tyler, 2014). Tyler has claimed that the advertisement of
sex and sexualised services to men via gay media reflects the shifting and blurring of sexual boundaries that men who advertise as masseurs and escorts have experienced and constructed (ibid).

Throughout 2007, the government engaged in intensive debate over its prostitution policy, and it introduced restrictive guidelines in 2008. The Poppy Project has described a local scenario wherein restrictions were imposed on ‘the nature and publication of classified advertisements offering commercial sex acts, whether blatant or implied’ (Bindel and Atkins, 2008 p.3). The report centres on women who work in brothels in London, and it evidences the government’s interest in identifying those who were trafficked.

Thus far, this chapter has described the legal aspects and social organisation of sex work in the UK in a brief introductory context. The following section describes the magnitude of migrants in the male sex market.

2.5. Sex work population in the UK: Migrants and the Sex Market

There is a paucity of reliable and up-to-date evidence to indicate the size of the sex work population in the UK (Wilcox and Christmann, 2008). Authors have attributed this unavailability to the stigma and marginalisation that confine sex workers as a ‘hidden’, ‘less visible’ or ‘hard-to-reach’ group (Shaver, 2005; Anderson et al., 2016). The lack of accurate information has motivated scholars to estimate its magnitude. For example, Kinnell and colleagues (1999) have determined that there were 80,000 sex workers in the UK. One decade later, Cusick and collaborators (2009) reported that the number had increased to 101,625. These calculations are extrapolations that are founded on objective sources. Kinnell (1999) used data that were gathered from various types of services that are known to provide assistance to sex workers, while the estimation of Cusick and collaborators (2009) was based on data that derived only from specialist services. However, these authors have noted weaknesses and limitations of their calculations that were mostly due to double-counting issues and the data’s exclusion of people who did not self-identify as sex workers. More recently, Brooks-Gordon and colleagues (2015) have introduced a method to integrate the advantages of the methods of Kinnell (1999) and
Cusick (2009). Through this method, they have estimated a figure of 72,816 sex workers; of these, 31,990 operate in London, and 40,826 works in other regions of the UK. The House of Commons’ third report of prostitution also informed these figures (Home Affairs Committee, 2016).

In terms of the gender distribution of the sex work population, several reports have indicated a larger proportion of women than of men (TAMPEP, 2010a; Abramsky and Drew, 2014; APPG, 2014). Nevertheless, there are variations amongst sub-groups and sex markets. For instance, some authors (e.g. Pitcher, 2015a) have claimed a proportion of 98% women and 2% males (1% men and 0.42% trans people) among sex workers. In indoor settings, the proportion of men increases to 11% (10% males and 1% trans people). Another interesting example is an estimation by Brooks-Gordon and colleagues (2015) that, in London, the majority of males and trans people work in indoor settings (5% occasional independent, 20% male and trans people regular independent and 5% high income) compared to street workers (5% considered low income). This estimation corresponds with findings from other studies which claim that, similarly to in other countries (Abdullah Avais et al., 2014), the male sex market in London is less visible than the female sex market (Sanders et al., 2009). However, some authors have argued that male sex workers are usually less visible than female sex workers because this group is not only smaller than that of its female counterpart but also less commonly studied (Baral et al., 2015). Consequently, researchers (e.g. Pitcher, 2015a) have widely identified a need for accurate and current data which reflect the composition of the sex work population, especially of males and trans people, who can be significantly underestimated.

Brooks-Gordon and collaborators (2015) have claimed that the steady influx of migrants in the UK has created distinctive segments in the sex labour market. For example, according to a report by the European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers (TAMPEP), the sex work population in 2008 was composed of 41% migrant women and 20% of migrant men (15% males and 5% trans people). However, recent publications
have suggested a larger proportion of migrant women (61.5%) (Mc Grath-Lone et al., 2014a) and migrant men (37%) (Mc Grath-Lone et al., 2014b). The figures that the TAMPEP and McGrath-Lone have published are not equivalents because they used different data sources (the first based on sex workers who attend specialised sex work programmes and the second on clients who attend genitourinary medicine [GUM] clinics in England); nevertheless, they are useful in some ways to scale the magnitude of these groups.

In addition, several sources have reported that the vast majority of migrant sex workers operate in the indoor market. For instance, the TAMPEP (2010b) has claimed that 97% of migrants operated in off-street settings in 2008, and later studies have corroborated their absence from street-based sex work (Pitcher, 2015a). Besides, studies have suggested that the structures of indoor sex work are gendered in ways which, for example, ‘dependent’ self-employment in the brothel and agency sectors in the UK is more prevalent for female than for male sex workers (Pitcher, 2014).

Additionally, Brooks-Gordon and collaborators (2015) have distinguished the London-based sex economy from that of other UK cities. They have argued that London provides historical and distinctive spaces (e.g. Soho), whereas other UK cities tend to be more rural and have dispersed sex work and fewer migrant sex workers. Moreover, the authors have asserted that there are noticeable discrepancies amongst the levels of income and expenditures that are linked to the types of sex market.

Therefore, little information about migrant sex workers has been documented, particularly in regard to males, who mostly work in indoor settings. This aspect is important since that authors have claimed that commercial sex on the street is distinct from that found in the indoor market (Sanders et al., 2009). In view of this, there is a need for information about the experiences of migrant males who work in the escort market and how it shapes their behaviour.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

1. Overview

This chapter presents the results of the search for relevant published material to inform this thesis. The review centres on two areas: the findings of individual primary studies and theories to explain the phenomena. This chapter also introduces a structured summary of available published research on male sex work with special attention to international migrants.

The initial inclusion criteria were qualitative and quantitative empirical studies that focus on international migrant male sex workers and are written in English, Spanish or Portuguese. The literature review has compiled publications from journals and books as well as theses and institutional reports. The literature was retrieved through Google Scholar, Web of Science (Thomson Reuter) and the MetaLib of University College London (UCL), City University and the University of Essex. In addition, the search involved revision of the references section of every paper to identify other relevant publications. This review was updated in April 2018.

The initial quest used the terms migrant male sex workers* and the combination of male migrants* AND sex workers*. However, this combination retrieved few papers from the databases. For example, the search on the UCL database yielded 17 available papers, of which only two fulfilled the aforementioned inclusion criteria. Thus, the literature review that was conducted for this thesis supports scholars who have claimed that although research literature on ‘prostitution’ is sizeable, it remains deficient in certain key respects (Weitzer, 2014). Namely, it has focused predominantly on female street prostitution and devoted much less attention to indoor prostitution and male sex workers (Weitzer, 2009; Weitzer, 2011). This fact motivated an expansion of the search with a mixture of terms, such as migrant* AND male prostitutes*, male migrant* AND sex workers*, migrant* AND men selling sex*, migrant* AND male escorts*, migrant* AND rent boys* and migrant* AND money boys*. This wide-ranging search provided six suitable papers (see the Table 1 in the Appendix). Papers on male migrant sex workers have emerged mostly in recent decades and tended to centre on those who operate in
Europe. The papers have described different segments of the male sex work population and certain migration-related aspects as well as sex work involvement, HIV prevalence, condom use and access to medical care. For instance, Zacarelli and colleagues have studied the incidence of HIV amongst immigrant transsexuals. They have presented data that were collected from 473 clients who attended an outpatient clinic in Rome. Most of them (99%) were from South America. This quantitative research has found that the incidence of new HIV infections remained high and related to non-regular condom use (Zaccarelli et al., 2004). In addition, a remarkable contribution is from Nick Mai, who has conducted large studies on migrant sex workers in the EU. Three of the retrieved papers (Mai, 2006, 2009a, 2011b) describe the experience of 82 males (from Romania, Albania, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) who work in Europe (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands). The study applied ethnographic and interview methods to explore their livelihood strategies and the risk behaviour amongst children and young adults who work as street-based sex workers. It explains emigration as an ambivalent and confusing experience and portrays the contexts of arrival as settings that offer a highly limited range of strategies of survival. Furthermore, it found that participants did not accept some of the gender- or sexuality-related implications of their engagement in male sex work and identified a connection between the use of alcohol and drugs with risky experiences. In a later qualitative study in the UK (Mai, 2011a), Mai explored routes into the sex industry and experiences of sexual exploitation of a sample that was mainly composed of women (67%). The author has reported that most of the participants did not work in the sex industry before coming to the UK, and only a small group felt deceived and forced into selling sex. In fact, most of the interviewees identified advantageous aspects of their involvement in the sex industry. A recent contribution by Heide Castaneda has discussed health concerns of migrant street-based male sex workers in Germany. It presents the findings of ethnographic research that entailed 46 semi-structured interviews with physicians, social workers, health department staff and male sex workers from Romania and Bulgaria. The study highlights a lack of access to regular medical services amongst migrant male sex workers that resembles the

The scarcity of papers in conducting this review has confirmed other authors’ claims of a lack of information about migrant sex workers (Agustin, 2005; Benoit and Shaver, 2006), especially men (Weitzer, 2009; Weitzer, 2011, 2014). Indeed, most research on male sex workers in general has included male migrants as one aspect. Accordingly, studies of sex work have typically focused on women and examined male sex workers as a minority sub-group (Baral et al., 2015). For this reason, the scope of this literature review was broadened to not only male sex work in general but also relevant studies on female sex workers that direct special attention to existing knowledge of international migrants. It is expected that the main findings of this literature review on male sex workers might also be relevant to migrants, as they share the sex work condition.

To more thoroughly comprehend the experiences of migrant male sex workers, it is important to briefly review the frameworks that underlie the phenomenon of sex work. The following section describes three main paradigms.

2. Sex Work Paradigms

The oppression paradigm centres on the perspective of ‘prostitution’ as an ‘expression of patriarchal gender relations and male domination’ against women (Weitzer, 2012, p. 10). Supporters of this position are predominately radical feminists who consider sex work to extend beyond the time, context and type of sex work that is performed (Dworkin, 1981; MacKinnon, 1989; Barry, 1995; Jeffreys, 1997). Critics of this framework have emphasised its strong focus on women – and consequent ignorance of other genders and identities within the sex industry – as well as its tendency to generalise adverse examples of sex work.

In contrast, the empowerment paradigm presents commercial sex as an element of human agency that empowers male and female sex workers (Carmen and Moody, 1985; Delacoste and Alexander, 1987; Chapkis, 1997). This perspective claims that sex work is organised for mutual gain and, in this manner, it is comparable to any other economic transaction (Weitzer, 2012). Supporters of this paradigm, which
emanated from the sex workers’ rights movements in the 1970s, have proposed that commercial sex is work. For this reason, the concept of sex as work may also be broadly associated with a liberal, rights-based feminist tradition which perceives the removal of discriminatory laws as a means to equality (Sloan and Wahab, 2016). Contrary to the oppression paradigm, the supporters of this position are more inclined to neglect negative experiences in the context of sex work.

Finally, the polymorphous paradigm embraces the complexities and structural conditions that determine the uneven distribution of agency, subordination and job satisfaction of sex workers (Davidson O’Connell, 1998; Chapkis, 2000; Weitzer, 2007). This paradigm presents sex work as a diversity of occupational arrangements, power relations and worker experiences. Therefore, these paradigms offer three distinct lenses to study sex work.

Researchers have increasingly claimed that the intrinsic nature of sex work is not wholly oppressive since there are multiple levels of victimisation, exploitation, agency and mobility to describe the experiences of sex workers; in that sense, it is important to differentiate between types of sex workers, sex markets, client experiences and sexual activities (Harcourt and Donovan, 2005; Scott et al., 2005). These aspects assume particular significance in the case of male sex workers, as this group has historically been framed as deviant and strongly linked to issues such as childhood abuse, use of recreational drugs and alcohol, violence and HIV/AIDS. Without denying the relevance of the social and health issues that male sex workers must confront, this thesis aims to investigate their diverse experiences without overshadowing any potentially positive aspects of sex work. Thus, the lens of the polymorphous model seemed appropriate to examine the experiences of migrant males, who largely operate through the Internet in London (TAMPEP, 2007), as they have not been explored in any real depth (Parsons et al., 2007). The escort sex market has prompted a debate about the impact of the Internet and communication technologies on the sex industry. Consistent with the oppression paradigm, some authors have identified the Internet as the main facilitator of the oppression of sex workers (Hughes, 2000), while others have posited that it has contributed to their empowerment (Sharp and Earle, 2003; Davies and Evans, 2004). Hence, the lens of
the polymorphous model aids this thesis, which intends to capture the whole range of sex work experiences in order to build upon the contributions of other sex work scholars. Thus, this thesis is based on the assumption that sex work should be researched as an occupation, which reflects a broad, liberal tradition of viewing adult prostitution as a form of work. However, it is also open to capturing relevant issues, such as power and autonomy within the work context.

3. Topics Studied on Male Sex Work

This section presents the information extracted from the papers retrieved for this review. The information has been categorised according to frequently occurring topics to provide an organised description.

The review of the existing research literature was conducted in relation to the main aspects that have consistently received more attention about male sex work. They have been categorised in the following themes: the social organisation of male sex work; factors in entrance to male sex work; studies on sexual identities; sexual partners and sexual practices; risks of Sexual Transmitted Infections (STI) and Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV); and male migration, sex work and STI-HIV.

3.1. The Social Organisation of Male Sex Work

Since early stages, there was a dominant tendency to categorise ‘male prostitutes into typologies despite that some authors insisted on describing these men as a heterogeneous group (e.g. Raven, 1960; Gandy and Deisher, 1970). One of the earliest contributions by Ross (1959) distinguishes three types of ‘male prostitutes’ on the basis of the locus of their hustling activity: (1) the bar-hustler who usually visits bars on a steady basis in search of queer clients; (2) the street-hustler, usually a teen-aged boy who turns ‘tricks’ with older men; (3) and the call boy who does not solicit in public. Years later, other researchers supplemented this classification adding new descriptive categories. For instance, Reiss (1961) outlined the ‘call boys’ as runaways who were kept by an older male or Gandy and Deisher (1970) who reported the category of ‘delinquents’ to describe men that typically use sex work for robbery and assault. In the long run, other researchers adopted a more simplistic
classification of ‘male prostitutes’ such as street hustlers, bar hustlers, call boys and kept boys (Caukins and Coombs, 1976) or a categorisation centred in the time of dedication suggested by Allen (1980): a) full-time street and bar hustlers, (2) full-time call boys or kept boys, (3) part-time hustlers, who were usually students or employed, and (4) peer-delinquents.

Moreover, initial literature illustrates about the structures that organise and support sex work activities has contributed to highlight the importance of the settings where sex workers operate. For instance, the initial contribution by Visano (1986) described male street activities in Canada. This author argues that participants understand selling sex from an occupational perspective that transform their identities. Further, Visano describes ‘prostitution’ as a social enterprise which is developed in non-institutional work settings. From this point of view, the accomplishment of sex work was strongly connected to the context of social relationships in which actors interact (e.g. other male street workers, clients and official agents). Visano concluded that the occupational relationships in street sex work settings were short-term, instrumental, and burdened with conflictive relationships. In addition, research has contributed to unveil hierarchies amongst the sex work settings. For example, Aral and colleagues (2006) found a hierarchical order that ranged from elite brothels, hotels, nightclubs, dance clubs and strip tease bars, massage parlours, saunas, apartments or ‘‘pleasure flats’, streets, bus stations, truck stops to specific highways. The authors acknowledge the presence of other actors such as the taxi driver, the madam and the bartender who are central roles in the organisation of each type of setting. They also acknowledge cell phones and internet technology enabling sex work activities and transforming this activity in highly dispersed and spatially mobile.

What is more, researchers observe a hierarchy amongst male sex workers according to the sex work settings. Concerning this point, Browne and Minichiello (1996) argue that unsafe sex may influence the order amongst different categories of male sex workers. The authors adopted a rich classification ranging from bar/theatre workers, book/call men, escorts,
models, masseurs, dilly/rent/kept-boys, delinquents or peer-delinquents, streetwalkers/walkers/hustlers, and ‘chickens’. In that way, for instance, ‘call men’ who often work in a safe environment with regular clients can be perceived differently from ‘street workers’ who are most exposed to danger, and are therefore, they are considered less glamorous (ibid). Conversely, a study by Gaffney and Beverly (2001) that introduced the categories of street workers, brothel workers and flat workers, claim that hegemonic and heterosexist constructs are used to subordinate, control and oppress male sex workers independently their work setting.

This review also found that in the last two decades research has been mostly focused on the organisation of female sex work (Whittaker and Hart, 1996; Aral et al., 2003; Church, 2003; Bradley, 2004; Mei-Hua, 2006; Stoebenau, 2006; Sanders et al., 2009; Chin and Finckenauer, 2011; Emmanuel et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2014), compared to male sex work (Visano, 1986; Gaffney and Beverley, 2001; Abdullah Avais et al., 2014). Nevertheless, it is possible to notice a small but increasing interest on comparing the organisation of sex work between the male market and female market. This new attention may be motivated because of claims that various characteristics of commercial sex offered by men are distinct from female commercial sex (Baral et al., 2015). In line with this, a recent research centred in examining street prostitution in Manchester (Ellison and Weitzer, 2016) draws differences amongst genders. The authors characterised women as mostly white and British, from the same area, and significantly older than men who were invariably white British. They found that while 15% of female sex workers were Romanians, just few men were Asian. Authors also describe a key difference in the way that both group operate in relation of the use of space. While women follow the traditional pattern of standing around soliciting and waiting to be picked up by drivers, the clients of men often leave their cars and mingle with them on the bridge, stroll along the canal towpath, or take them for a drink in a nearby bar. This study validates other findings (Aral et al., 2006) that locates male sex workers in more outdoor settings than women.
Regarding migrants, Mai (2011a) describes a sample composed of 67 women, 24 men and 9 trans people who were operating in London. The majority of participants were originally from Eastern Europe, Latin America and EU. The author found that female market was principally based on flats, clubs (strippers) and independent escorts, while men and trans people tended to work as independent escorts, with a minority of men working in flats. Besides, 10% of interviewees were employed in jobs not related to sexual activities such as women working as maids and men working as card boys. Conversely, in Moscow a study located male migrants in a diversity of venues that ranged from the traditional pleshkas, public areas that are known for sex work, public toilets at railway/metro stations and saunas, to more technology-based sources (Wirtz et al., 2014).

In this manner, all studies presented above show the influence of gender in the organisation of sex work.

3.2. **Factors in Entrance to Male Sex Work**

Despite that research has consistently indicated economic issues as the primary reason for the initial engagement in male sex work, there have been valuable contributions in revealing others relevant aspects driving the entrance into sex work. In this manner, early research indicates the strong interest of academics in explaining male ‘prostitution’ through psychopathological theories wherein it transpired a discriminatory and homophobic attitude towards these men who were presented as ‘deviants’ (e.g. Freyhan, 1947).

Later literature placed importance on providing general patterns focused on family backgrounds and relationships. In this manner, issues such as alcoholism within the family, physical abuse, sexual abuse, lack of education, quality of education, sexuality, runaways, drug use, and criminal activities have been largely reported (Allen, 1980; Davis and Feldman, 1999; Gaffney and Beverley, 2001; Cusick, 2002; Leichtentritt and Arad, 2005; McCabe et al., 2011; Abdullah Avais et al., 2014).
Likewise, since very early research social and structural complexities have been connected with the entrance into male sex work (e.g. Coombs, 1974; Allen, 1980). Indeed, studies conducted in different countries and context corroborates this. For example, a study concentrated on young males in Israel portrays a complex and cumulative process that started at an early age of the participants, and over which they did not have any control or influence. From the participants’ point of view, their involvement in sex work was determined by their life circumstances long before they met their first client (Leichtentritt and Arad, 2005). Other studies focused on male to female trans people explicate the presence of structural forces such as discrimination along with other individual factors (e.g. low socioeconomic status, financial need, and drug and alcohol addiction) as reasons for engaging in transactional sex (Reisner et al., 2009). Studies on internal immigrants (people who relocate within the same country) explain the engagement in sex work from the perspective of an emerging economic market. For example, a study developed in Moscow describes that the lack of economic opportunities in some European countries creates a large-volume male immigration that consequently generates a considerable demand for sexual services. Concurrently, young women who cannot find employment in their places of residence are attracted to perceived employment opportunities in Moscow and finally enter in sex work (Aral et al., 2003). Also, it is remarkable the contribution of Mai who has conducted research on migrant sex workers based in European countries (Mai, 2004a, 2006, 2009a, 2011b) and particularly in the UK (Mai, 2009c; Mai, 2012, 2013). The author combines social-economic background, family history as well as gender and sexuality to explain the involvement of international migrants into sex work. For instance, the study conducted in the UK unveiled that the majority of men, women and trans people immigrated to re-start a project of social mobility that became unviable in their home countries. Some participants understood sex work as a better option than engage in less rewarding jobs available in non-sexual sectors. On the other hand, migrants whose skills, priorities and needs were not equally met and valued in other sectors perceived sex work as the only option. It the same circumstances were participants that
the lack of English language skills, legal immigration status and poor access to personal networks restricted their opportunities (Mai, 2009c).

Furthermore, the factors driving the involvement in sex work have been used to classify sex workers giving the route of entrance. For instance, Scambler delineates six categories of sex workers: ‘coerced’ (e.g. trafficked), ‘destined’ (e.g. family and peers), ‘survivors (e.g. drug users), ‘workers’ (e.g. as a permanent occupation), ‘opportunists’ (e.g. project financing), and ‘bohemian’ (e.g. casual, no economic need) (Scambler, 2007, p.1080).

3.3. Sexual Identities, Sexual Partners and Sexual Practices

Literature portrays male sex workers as a very diverse population across regions and within countries worldwide (Baral et al., 2015). It is important to emphasise in this section that in most countries the group of male sex workers includes those identify as males and trans people. The term transgender or trans people represents an umbrella for people whose gender identity and expression do not conform to the norms and expectations traditionally associated with the sex assigned to them at birth (Poteat et al., 2014; WHO, 2014). This term includes people who are transsexual, transvestite or cross-dressers, or otherwise gender non-conforming (ibid). On the other hand, gender identity is a personal sense of being male or female (HIV/AIDS, 2012a), and this may include a personal sense of the body. For this reason, the individual may freely choose the modification of body appearance or function through medical, surgical, and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms (International Commission of Jurists, 2007). They can express their genders in a variety of masculine, feminine, and/or androgynous ways, and self-identify themselves as female, male, trans people, transwoman, or transman, and transsexual. Therefore, the term trans people does not imply any particular sexual identity as they may be heterosexual, gay, bisexual, or asexual (GlobalRights, 2008). In this way, studies on transgender male-to-female sex worker show a diversity of sexual identities within this group which reflects the fluidity of sexuality that is unleashed to gender expectations. For instance, Reiner
(Reisner et al., 2009) found that the study sample was composed of heterosexual 45.5%, bisexual 27.3% and homosexual 27.3%.

In addition, the sexual practices of male sex workers have attracted significant research attention. Early research contributed to explaining that their sexual behaviour is not necessarily associated with a distinctive self-sexual identity, sexual role preferences (passive/active or top/bottom), sexual practices (oral-anal), clothing styles, or mannerisms (Troiden, 1988; Calhoun, 1992). Since then, a large evidence accumulated (see, e.g. Davis and Feldman, 1999; Ziersch et al., 2000; Belza et al., 2001; Belza, 2005b; Sethi et al., 2006; Abdullah Avais et al., 2014; Mc Grath-Lone et al., 2014b; Yu et al., 2016) has demonstrated that these men can declare themselves as heterosexual, bisexual or gay, however, trade sex with either other women or men. However, it is important to note that commercial heterosexual sex probably encompasses a small proportion of all commercial sex offered by men (Baral et al., 2015).

Concerning to sexual orientation, evidence indicates some men who sell sex to men have regular female partners or have formed heterosexual families but sell sex to men because they are dealing with poverty, lack of opportunities or because sex work is a fairly easy source of income (Okal et al., 2009). Another example is giving by a study focused on behavioural patterns of 75 male sex workers in India that found that 15% were married or were living together with a permanent female partner (Shinde et al., 2009). These proportions were higher amongst internal migrant male sex workers where one-fourth of participants were married and the spouse was living at the place of origin, an additional 25% were living with spouse at the place of destination and about 49% were unmarried (Verma et al., 2010).

Moreover, authors such as Dennis (2008) claims that male sexual practices are often characterised by roles such as active/penetrative, or passive/penetrated anal sex rather than gender or sexual identities. The author explains that despite of this perspective follows the masculine/feminine pattern, these sexual practices may not correspond with the sexual identity that male sex workers often report. Dennis’s point of view validates earlier contribution by Browne.
and Minichiello (1995) who explains the significance of the various social meanings that male sex workers attribute to sexual encounters and sexual practices. Later studies argue that the expressions of sexual and gender identities, sexual roles and sexual practices amongst male sex workers can be very distinctive in specific cultures and ethnic groups (Poteat et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2017).

In accordance with the above perspective, and in relation to migrant male sex workers, Mai (2004a) suggests the importance of understanding the connections between the models of male homosexuality in the migrants’ countries of origin, and the experience of a male in sex work abroad. This author found that Albanian men selling sex in Italy and Greece were impregnated with the same hegemonic cultural constructions that classify masculinity according to the dichotomy of penetrative/masculine vs. penetrated/feminine, and which clearly stigmatised ‘passive’ as dishonoured men. In this sense, the interviewees expressed their worries of being considered peculiar through their regular engagement in sexual activity with other men, as some memories of their sexual encounters had become part of their sexual fantasies. This point of view is supported by Bar-Johnson and colleagues (Bar-Johnson and Weiss, 2014) who highlight the relevance of the attitudes of male sex workers towards their own sexual identities. These authors found that participants self-identified as homosexuals reported the fewest symptoms of depression, while heterosexuals and bisexuals reported the more symptoms of anxiety and depression. They conclude the importance of the cultural contexts in internalized homophobia. Conversely, from the perspective of heterosexuality in Latin America and the Caribbean, men who play the penetrative role in same-sex encounters may often convey themselves into a more locally constructed hyper-masculine sexuality (Carrier, 1995; Murray, 1995; Padilla, 2007).

Likewise, Mai (2009a) explains the interconnection between male sex work and youth migration through the lenses that displays the nexus between psychological and physical mobility. Selling sex and independent mobility are
addressed as two connected phenomena allowing many young men to negotiate their gendered and sexual identities and to find an ambivalent answer to their equally ambivalent need to both de-territorialise from and re-territorialise at ‘home’.

3.4. Risks of STI-HIV

Evidence indicates that sexual transmitted infections have been a significant part of the research agenda, especially from the emergence of the HIV-AIDS. Nowadays, these infections are still a great concern as a reason of the high prevalence amongst groups such as male sex workers, which rate is worldwide higher compared to female sex workers (14% vs. 11.8%) (Shannon et al., 2009; UNAIDS, 2013). This prevalence remains greater even in high income countries as UNAIDS (UNAIDS, 2014) reported a median HIV prevalence of 8.9% in seven European countries between 2007 and 2013. Hence, male sex workers are considered most at risk of HIV in most, if not all, epidemic contexts (WHO, 2013a).

However, it is important to mention that within the male sex workers group the distribution of HIV prevalence is not homogenous as there are some groups with higher rates such as trans people (27.3%). (Poteat et al., 2014). The findings by Shinde and collaborators’ (2009) support this claim. They found that in a study based on a sample of 75 male sex workers in India (24 men and 51 male-to-female trans people), the HIV prevalence of group was 33% but it was observed a great disparity between the sub-groups (17% men and 41% trans people). Likewise, the STI prevalence of trans people was greater than other males (61% vs 58%), and even slightly higher than the prevalence of the whole group (60%). Coherently, researchers informed that all individuals had had anal sex (87% anal receptive and 13% anal penetrative) but had never used a condom (13%). They concluded that the risk of HIV was associated with being a trans people, age (less than 26 years), and engaging in sex work for more than one year.

Another group that has been listed as greater exposed to HIV risk is represented by young males. Regarding to this point, authors claim that male sex workers
are present in the young MSM population and are at risk of acquiring HIV infection due to their sexual interactions with numerous population groups that report a high prevalence of HIV risk (Baral et al., 2015; Tang et al., 2015; Clatts et al., 2016). Yu and colleagues (2016) reinforce this point of view arguing the presence of multiple interactions as instigators in young male sex workers’ lives that expose them to risk and low health outcomes (Yu et al., 2016). However, it has been also stated the need of more evidence to support this aspect as young male sex workers represent a sub-group with higher HIV incidence and low population-level incidence (Baral et al., 2015).

Regarding to the dynamics of HIV transmission, unprotected sex during anal intercourse has been acknowledged as a greater risk amongst male sex workers. However, this also a well characterised factor shared with other MSM (Beyrer et al., 2012; Restar et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2017). For this reason authors challenge assumptions of sex work as inherently risky to the sexual health of men who have sex with men (Callander et al., 2017). Callender and colleagues found that 18% of male sex workers and 17% of non-sex workers were diagnosed with HIV or an STI, and after controlling for demographic and behavioural factors, sex work was not independently associated with any of these infections. Conversely, other authors claim that the higher risk in MSW is related to a larger number of sexual partners, more complex sexual networks and intersectional stigmas (WHO, 2014; Baral et al., 2015). Consequently, the risk for HIV acquisition amongst male sex workers is not only related to biological factors such as anal sex but structural factors that determine the efficient transmission transforming them in a key population (ibid). Furthermore, authors claim that the spread of HIV infection amongst sex workers probably occur within contexts with specific features (Zhao et al., 2011; Baral et al., 2015) or related to particular risk perceptions (Vuylsteke et al., 2012). This aspect has been explored from the perspective of occupation-related risks associated with commercial sex. The search of literature brought factors such as socio-economic disparities, sexual and physical abuse, and the use of recreational drugs and alcohol as frequent themes. They are discussed in
the following sections as factors that influence the practice of unprotected sex and consequently HIV infection.

3.4.1. Alcohol and Recreational Drugs Consumption

Empirical evidence shows the consumption of recreational drugs amongst male sex workers frequently occur before, during or after a sexual session with clients (Mimiaga et al., 2009; Parry et al., 2009; Verma et al., 2010). Moreover, drug use seems to be also common during their free time (Salmeron, 2011). Trying to explain the consumption of drugs outside sex work, recent studies such as the study of Yu and colleagues (2016) claim that drug use is a critical issue as it assists them to alleviate their distress of selling sex.

An important aspect to highlight is that the level of consumption of alcohol and recreational drugs in this group varies between countries (Marino et al., 2003; Minichiello et al., 2003; Timpson et al., 2007; Mimiaga et al., 2008; Baral et al., 2010; Abdullah Avais et al., 2014). For example, whereas the use of alcohol and drugs has been confirmed in the UK (Cusick, 2002; Cusick et al., 2003; Cusick and al., 2005); in Russia the consumption of alcohol seem to be more regular than the use of recreational drugs (Baral et al., 2010).

Furthermore, research has largely contributed to associate the consumption of alcohol and drugs to certain types of sex work setting where male sex workers operate (Minichiello et al., 2000; Minichiello et al., 2003; Zhao et al., 2011; Ballester-Arnal et al., 2013). For example, the use of substances described as ‘soft drugs’ such as alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and cannabis have been reported in settings such as agencies and brothels (Minichiello et al., 2001), together with the sporadic consumption of cocaine (Zaro Rosado et al., 2006). On the contrary, injected drug use has been more often reported amongst men offering sex on the street (Belza, 2005b; Baral et al., 2010).

Most importantly, research has provided strong evidence about the direct association between the consumption of alcohol and recreational drugs and unprotected sex amongst male sex workers (Timpson et al., 2007; Mimiaga et al., 2008; Verma et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2015). Other studies corroborate this
finding showing that common drug consumers reported a lower percentage of condom use with clients than non-consumers (Lau et al., 2009; Ballester-Arnal et al., 2013). In contrast, a study developed in Argentina (Marino et al., 2003) indicates that the low consumption of alcohol and drugs was related to a low prevalence of unprotected sex. Besides, evidence has confirmed connections between HIV and unprotected sex. The study of Timpson et al., (2007) describes in better detail the sexual behaviour of male sex workers who reported using drugs with 60% of their sexual contacts before or during sex. Participants informed vaginal sex with 108 women and anal sex with 1,254 men but only 32% used a condom. The great majority (85%) were tested for HIV and 26% had tested positive. The studies of Reisner and collaborators (Reisner et al., 2008; Reisner et al., 2009) confirmed the previous study. The study conducted in Boston (Reisner et al., 2009) show the relation between 54.5% of drug use amongst participants with the high rate of HIV infection (36.4%).

Additionally, many researchers have identified drug abuse as an important initiator of increasing HIV rates of infection amongst MSM as well as linked to injection transmission (Clatts et al., 2007; Yu et al., 2016). However, a greater HIV risk has been found amongst male sex workers that reported syringe exchanges and associated to higher rates of unprotected anal intercourse (Estcourt et al., 2000; Kuyper et al., 2004; Clatts et al., 2007). This findings confirmed early research such as the study of McKeganey and colleagues (1990) who demonstrated that the injection drug use amongst male rent boys was considerably higher and condom use less common than in female street-based prostitutes. A later study published by Sethi and colleagues (2006) also confirmed a strong association between injecting drugs, unprotected sex and STI-HIV amongst men who sell sex. This study showed an increase in the rates of unprotected anal intercourse with paying and non-paying partners as well as an increment in the number of regular female partners. However, the authors concluded that STI-HIV risk was related to unprotected sex with a casual partner and not associated with sex work itself.
3.4.2. Type of Relationships: Individual’s Sexual Arousal and Violence

Initial contributions by Browne and Minichiello (1995) explain that the meaning of having sex amongst male sex workers is related to the way that they perceive their partners, conduct themselves during sexual encounters, and engage in safe sex practices. This claim was supported by researchers who claim that the importance of the modes of interaction during the negotiation with the client during the sexual encounter may influence the decision of unprotected sex (Joffe and Dockrell, 1995; Davis and Feldman, 1999). In line with this, feeling attraction and loving relationships with clients are main factors linked to unprotected sex (Joffe and Dockrell, 1995). Conversely, unprotected sex was also explicated through the strategic relationship of power and control between the MSW and the client during the sexual encounter (See, e.g., Bloor et al., 1993; Joffe and Dockrell, 1995; Davis and Feldman, 1999; Ziersch et al., 2000; Weine et al., 2013). Regarding to this point, evidence exposes the organisation of sex work as a key element that may expose or protect sex workers according to different sex work organisation procedures and work conditions that influence work practices (Robinson and Davies, 1991; Whittaker and Hart, 1996; Wong et al., 2012). From this point of view, constraints on behaviour are seen as a result of a lack of power that is very much linked to poverty or lack of management support in sex work settings (Ziersch et al., 2000; Choi and Holroyd, 2007; Decker et al., 2012).

The perspective of risk related to the working environment has also been described in other studies, but most of them have focused on female sex workers (Whittaker and Hart, 1996; Campbell and Kinnell, 2000; Church et al., 2001; Penfold et al., 2004; Davies and Evans, 2007; Sanders, 2008a). Studies focused on males have insinuated the lack of skills to negotiate the sexual encounter not only expose the MSW to unsafe sex, but also to physical violence from clients (Bloor et al., 1993; Luchters et al., 2011). A recent study centred on migrant males working as sex workers in Moscow found that variations in physical, sexual, and social risks of participants were influenced by the mode or venue for advertising and selling sex, as well as the clientele who frequented these venues (Wirtz et al., 2014).
Further, violence against sex workers by clients, pimps and police has been reported in all regions, but the prevalence can vary between countries and groups (UNAIDS, 2002; HIV/AIDS, 2012b). Certainly, violence is another significant risk factor for HIV as it makes the negotiation of safer sex with intimate partners and clients difficult. Likewise, it has been suggested that attempting to negotiate safer sexual practices and condom use with clients may result in violence (WHO, 2013b). In the particular case of sexual violence, it often causes sensitive mucous membranes to tear, which further increases the possibility of HIV transmission (UNAIDS, 2002). Regarding violence against male sex workers evidence remain short, despite studies insinuate variations across regions and amongst diverse groups. For example, a study in Russia found that 28% of male participants reported violence perpetrated by clients. The mean number of these incidents was 1.7 but none was informed to either a physician or the police. In addition, a third of the sample did not always use condoms with clients because they refused protected sex (Baral et al., 2010). In the same way, studies developed in Brazil informed high levels of physical violence against males and transvestite sex workers (Tun et al., 2008; Prado Cortez et al., 2011) and psychological (Tun et al., 2008). It also reported abuse from the police (16.5%) because of homophobia issues (Tun et al., 2008).

On the other hand, a study based on the perspectives of male sex workers in the UK, reported that they perceive themselves as less exposed to client-perpetrated sexual violence compared with female sex workers (Jamel, 2011). Participants explain that men are less vulnerable than women; gay men are non-confrontational; and because the clients avoid attracting any attention. The few cases of violence reported in this study were connected with disagreements related to the high consumption of alcohol and drugs, and unprotected sex. However, it is important to mention that the majority of participants were indoor-based. These findings corroborate a previous study in the UK conducted by Wilcox and Christmann (2008) that affirmed that men working in indoor settings are less exposed to violence and are more likely to practise safe sex, as these settings have been described as more ‘stable, self-contained and unproblematic compared to working on the streets’ (p.10). This perception is
shared by other authors who claim that internet-based sex work has been characterised as an unproblematic online sex business because it is safer than other forms of sex work (Döring, 2009). Nonetheless, there are not enough research findings to assume that indoor sex work settings are also safe for migrant male sex workers who are, in any case, more likely to work under different conditions.

The preceding discussion has introduced evidence about risk factors that increase the rates of STI-HIV amongst male sex workers. The following section reviews the connections between male migrations as a condition connected with the risk of STI-HIV.

3.4.3. Male migration, Sex Work and STI-HIV

Migration has been particularly linked to STI-HIV risks (Weine and Kashuba, 2012). Some studies support the concept of the migrant as a ‘risk taker’ in different areas of their lives (Burns et al., 2011). This study found higher number of sexual partners and greater rates of injecting drug use as factors associated with HIV infection amongst men than in women migrants in London (ibid). In this respect, research studies have shown increased STI rates and risky sexual behaviour amongst male migrants compared to those males who do not migrate (Li et al., 2007; Magis-Rodriguez et al., 2009).

Moreover, early research contribution suggested that the construction of masculine identities renders particularly labour migrants such as miners, vendors, farmers, cleaners, etc., as more vulnerable to HIV (El-Bassel et al., 2011; El-Bassel et al., 2016). In the same way, sexual orientation and gender have been also identified as main characteristics that expose specially men who have sex with men (e.g. Carrier, 2001). In fact, there is evidence that lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) migrants may face problems both as a migrant and as a member of a sexual minority (Bhugra et al., 2011), mostly those who engage in high-risk behaviour as sex work (Vogel, 2009; Wirtz et al., 2014).

This behaviour seems to be connected with the social, economic and policy
environmental contributors of the receiving country such as poor housing and living conditions, unfavourable employment rights, poverty, restricted health care access, inadequate support, isolation, and heavy migration policies and policing (Weine and Kashuba, 2012). However, authors highlight the scarcity of evidence to disentangle the extent to which the higher HIV/STIs risk found amongst migrant males is associated with greater mobility versus the greater likelihood of their exposure to other risk factors in their environment (El-Bassel et al., 2016).

Furthermore, scholars’ contributions to this topic has also helped to understand different connections between STI-HIV and migrant male sex workers and differences amongst diverse sub-groups. For instance, a study based on internal migrant males in China (Wong et al., 2008) reveals that gay and non-gay money boys were not significantly diverse in socio-demographic characteristics, patterns of substance use and low HIV knowledge. However, sexual orientation was more linked to sexual risks, with gay money boys showing higher sexual risks than non-gay money boys. Another study that compared two types of Chinese male migrants - ‘money boys’ and general male migrants found that compared to the latter group, ‘money boys’ used less alcohol but more drugs; had more knowledge about STI-HIV; higher HIV/STD testing rates and fewer HIV risk behaviours. Nonetheless, the authors identified two sub-populations that reported an inconsistent condom use: (1) younger, less-educated money boys who have little knowledge of HIV and (2) general migrants MSM who do not perceive themselves at risk because they are not money boys.

Regarding to international migrants, recent evidence from McGrath-Lone and collaborators (2014b) confirms the greater risk of STI-HIV amongst male sex workers in the UK. This study found that male sex workers are three times more likely to be diagnosed with chlamydia or HIV, and twice as likely to be diagnosed with gonorrhoea as other male attendees of the GUM Clinics. Likewise, reinfections with chlamydia and gonorrhoea were more common amongst male sex workers, and they were more likely to have had post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV. Comparisons by migration status
determined that migrants are at greater risk as they were twice as likely to be diagnosed with some STI such as chlamydia compared with UK-born male sex workers. The UKNSWP (2009) underlines that these migrant males may face several issues such as higher rates of STIs and HIV, barriers accessing health services, and self-medication, as well as other factors influencing their health behaviour such as isolation, lack of network support, the need for translation and interpretation, and mistrust from the authorities and health professionals due to their visa. These observations concords with other studies focused on migrant sex workers (Platt et al., 2011; Richter et al., 2014; Goldenberg et al., 2015; Goldenberg et al., 2016).

4. **Summary**

Drawing upon this review, it can be highlighted the deficient literature on male sex work in general (Weitzer, 2009; Weitzer, 2011, 2014), and on migrants in particular (Agustin, 2005; Benoit and Shaver, 2006). Early research contribution shows a persistent interest in explaining ‘male prostitution’ from psychological and sociological perspectives. Studies have been concerned with addressing the psychological patterns of sex workers, typologies, and reasons for entering into sex work, sexual orientation, and sexual practices. It allows several ways to classify male sex workers endorsing specific psychological, social and economic characteristics and behaviour that help their differentiation. Further, the emergence of HIV increased the interest in male sex workers from clinical and epidemiological perspectives, particularly during risky sexual practices, and the use of drugs and alcohol as predictors of sexual behaviour. Moreover, the STI-HIV risk is still one of the main topics currently investigated. This approach explores the information gathered offers key arguments with regard to the social organisation of male sex work.

The acute lack of available research papers on migrant male sex workers. Nonetheless, it does not allow a clear understanding about the possible connections between the trajectories of migration and the entrance into sex work. Moreover, there is a paucity of information about the experience of migrant males who are mainly working in indoor settings in London, UK. Having identified the relevance
of better understand the experiences of male migrants operating in London, the next section introduces the research questions, objectives and aim that directed this thesis.

5. Research Questions, Objectives and Research Aim

4.1 Research Questions

The present investigation was focused on this underlying question:

*What are the experiences of migrant males selling sex in London?*

4.2 Research Objectives

- To explore the connections between the trajectories of migration towards the UK and the routes of engagement in sex work.
- To examine the social organisation of male sex work in London, the types of male sex work, and routines and practices.
- To explore circumstances exposing migrant males to sexual health risks.

4.3 Research Aims

This study offers an analysis of the narratives of non-UK born males selling sex in London, UK. This is an attempt to research individuals’ subjective experiences of international migration and sex work through detailed interviews in order to explore how males make sense of and construct an account of their experiences. As a whole, this research aimed to contribute to the growing knowledge of male sex work amongst migrants from an exploratory perspective.

The following chapter details the methodology and procedures employed for the purposes of this thesis.
Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

1. Overview

To answer the research questions specified in the previous chapter, the study employed a qualitative approach by conducting in-depth interviews with migrant males working as sex workers in London. This chapter outlines the methodology and research processes applied in the study as well as a description of the process for ethical approval.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of the methods adopted, their relevance to understanding the research, and how the research questions were addressed. An account is then given of the methodology and methods implemented in the sample selection, data collection, and the rationalisation behind these choices. Likewise, it also explains the different steps and procedures involved in the analysis and interpretation of data.

2. Rationale for Research Approach and Methods

2.1. Research Paradigms

A research paradigm refers to a research culture and the lens used to make sense of things (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2007). It is the basic belief system that guides the researcher (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), and it is based on three assumptions: ontological, epistemological, and methodological (Scotland, 2012). Ontological assumptions concern the nature of the world and human beings in social contexts and refer to whether reality is objective and external to human beings or whether it is created by individual consciousness (Bryman, 2001). Epistemology can be defined as the relationship between the researcher and reality (Carson et al., 2001). Thus, it is concerned with knowledge and how it can be acquired (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2012). It has been described, as ‘the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be’ (Blaikie, 2000). The adoption of different
epistemological approaches can lead to different interpretations of findings (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Therefore, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality, whereas epistemology is concerned with ‘how we come to know about what exists’ (Blaikie, 2000).

This thesis proposes a holistic approach to studying male sex work, one that would include core themes and qualities within the context of migrant men’s lives. A holistic approach assumes that a description and understanding of an individual's social environment or an organisation's political context is essential for a global understanding of what is observed. This investigation, with its focus upon understanding the views, perceptions and experiences of migrant male sex workers, was consistent with the interpretive paradigm that claims all human action is meaningful and has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices (Usher, 1996; Scotland, 2012). Thus, qualitative research inductively and holistically explores a human experience in its unique context. The interpretive paradigm tends to use qualitative methods and takes an inductive approach in which theory is generated from research (Ritchie, 2003). Using an inductive method of analysis means that patterns and themes are allowed to emerge from the data rather than being constructed and imposed prior to collection (Patton, 1990a; Patton, 1990b). Qualitative research, therefore, is concerned with interpreting and understanding phenomena through the meanings that people attach to them (Brannen, 2008). The data in a qualitative investigation is obtained from the individual's own perception of their experience and provides a comprehensive description of the phenomenon (Patton, 1980).

In addition, this thesis adopted the constructionism epistemological position. This research paradigm was appropriate because it encompasses a discursively dependent multiplicity of views, experiences, and accounts. Social constructionism covers theoretical orientations regarding the nature and creation of knowledge. It is concentrated in interpretation based on cultural norms and values to create a social reality and the human action and experience
within it – which is the type of knowledge sought here. In this manner, social constructionism offers a new idea of fluctuating and negotiable truth (Guba and Lincoln, 2003).

The following section explains the development and justification of the research strategy adopted for this study.

2.2. Study Design, Research Methods and Strategies

This section describes the methodological perspective focuses on the methods used for data collection (Cohen et al., 2011), outlines the data collection methods and strategies that were used, and explains the steps taken to implement each.

2.2.1. Inclusion Criteria

This section outlines the specific characteristics applied to recruit participants. They came from the definition of the migrant male sex workers that were explained in the chapter one, section 2.1. This concept was operationalised in the following inclusion criteria:

- Biological males
- Aged 18 and over
- Had worked or were still working as sex workers in the UK.
- Non-UK born
- Living in the UK for at least a year.

The last two criteria follow the definition of a migrant as a foreign-born who has moved to the UK for a year or more (Anderson and Blinder, 2013). Then, this study was centred in international migration, which is defined as a change of residence involving the spatial movement of persons across country borders (Urquia and Gagnon, 2011).

2.2.2. Exclusion criteria

Migrant male sex workers who did not speak English, Portuguese or Spanish were exclude to participate in the study. This limitation was because the researcher could only speak these three languages.
2.2.3. Sampling Methods and Recruitment Strategies

To generate a sample that enables the understanding of the social processes of migration and sex work, this investigation used convenience sampling selection. It was the most productive method to answer the research questions without intending the findings to be representatives of the migrant male sex work population in the UK.

This study successfully combined key informants and snowballing as strategies to recruit participants. This strategy was applied in collaboration with the nurses of the health programmes where participants were recruited. They facilitated the identification of potential participants for this study using the inclusion criteria detailed in the previous section. Snowballing, or chain sampling strategy, is used to identify cases of interest from the dynamic ‘people who know people’. This strategy can be placed within a wider set of link-tracing methodologies (Spreen, 1992), a chain referral that seeks to take advantage of the social networks of identified participants to provide a researcher with a new potential set of contacts. It is a strategy that allows the identification of participants who can be considered cases to obtain rich information – that is, good examples for study, good interview subjects (Patton, 1990a). Likewise, snowballing is very useful amongst groups that might refuse to be interviewed without such personal contact or where some degree of trust is required to initiate contact. This strategy is recommended when a sampling frame is unavailable or unknown and, in particular, is commonly used to gain access to deprived and socially stigmatised populations (Atkinson and Flint, 2001; Clive, 2002; Penrod et al., 2003). This strategy was applied amongst all participants. They were asked at the end of the interview if they knew of other migrant male sex workers in London who would like to participate in the study.

The identification and recruitment of participants was developed through the ‘Working Men’s Project’ and the ‘SWISH’ project. The reasons for the recruitment only taking place through these two organisations will be
explained in the Ethical considerations section of this study. The Working Men Project was a distinctive programme for males working in the sex industry in London and has operated since 1994. It was based at St. Marys Hospital – Imperial College Health Care NHS, and offered counselling and psychological support, sexual health information, free supply of condoms and lubricants, free access to full STI-HIV screening and treatment, including Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), vaccination for hepatitis A and B, and screening for tuberculosis (TB). In the same manner, the SWISH project was a charity project based on the Terrence Higgins Trust that provides support to males and females working in the sex industry. It offers free health clinic services, screening tests, vaccination, condom provision, lube, sponges, outreach, and counselling services. Unfortunately, both projects were closed in 2016 for financial reasons.

As previously mentioned, the identification of potential participants was conducted in close collaboration with the nurses and health workers working in these projects. They distributed the participant information sheets (PIS) and flyers to potential interviewees amongst those who attended counselling and outreach activities. In this manner, all potential participants were informed about the purpose of the study, what involves their participation, terms and limits of confidentiality as well as risks or benefits to participate in this study (see Appendix A). The flyers were approved by the NRES Committee and were available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Potential participants interested in the study provided their mobile numbers or emails in order to be contacted by the researcher. Few of these participants decided to call or email the researcher on their own initiative to ask for more information about the study, while others contacted her directly to arrange an interview. It is important to mention that our work was supported by St. Marys Hospital facilitating a counselling room to conduct the interview.

The recruitment started in May 2013 and ended in August 2014 after 25 significant narratives were obtained. With regard to this study’s sample
size, it is important to underline, once again, that the conceptualisation of representativeness was not the main concern as it is in quantitative studies. Usually, a qualitative study needs to address continuous expansion to encompass participants with different characteristics and experiences until saturation has been reached (no new types of stories/experiences/data to report). The sample size for this study was adequately adjusted to answer the research questions and recruitment of participants was closed when new categories, themes or explanations stopped emerging from the data.

Fifteen of the 25 participants were recruited through the ‘Working Men Project’, five from the ‘SWISH’ project and five using the snowballing strategy. Participants who were recruited using snowballing told that they became interested in participating in the study after their friends told them about positive experiences during the interview. These positive experiences were mostly related to the opportunity to talk without judgement, and the chance of reflecting about their own lives. The great majority of the participants stated that they had never thought about their lives in that detail.

In acknowledgment of the fact that attending the interview incurred transport costs, every participant was given £20 as compensation. This sort of reimbursement has been used in similar studies (Browne and Minichielo, 1995). However, it is important to mention that the reimbursement cannot be considered the main motivation for the participants to attend the interview. Almost all of them emphasised that they decided to take part in this study because they wanted to contribute by telling their stories. Highlighting this reason, a few interviewees even refused to receive the economic incentive.

2.2.4. Narrative Research
Applying a qualitative research paradigm to investigate a particular phenomenon can provide relevant narratives on the subjective experience of it. Then, by virtue of its nature, the qualitative research examines the everyday language that characterised it. Language is the axis of the human
experience, ‘the house of being’ (Heidegger, 1998 p. 254), therefore, through an analysis of the essence of the language, our existence takes form (Heidegger, 1949).

Heidegger (1962) points out the existence of ‘meanings’ in the discourse (Heidegger, 1962 p. 203). For this reason, this investigation concentrated in the lived experiences of participants applied narrative as a method of data collection to obtain rich descriptions of meanings of migration and sex work through storytelling. The narrative has been suggested as a significant way for individuals to express and construct meanings (Mishler, 1986). This study captured its data from lengthy in-depth interviews in terms of specific experiences in the everyday language that characterised them. A research interview is a specific form of conversation with a special purpose to obtain descriptions of the individual’s lifeworld in order to interpret the meaning of the phenomena under study.

The interview schedule of this study was divided in two main sections. The first section was designed to collect information from participants about their process of migration towards the UK, with emphasis in the reasons and circumstances for leaving their home countries and motivations to immigrate to the UK. The second section was based on the literature review conducted for this thesis. It helped to determine the main themes (Chapter Two, section 2) related to male sex work that may also be relevant for international migrants as they shared the sex work condition. This section aimed at collecting information about the reasons and circumstances that led participants’ involvement in sex work. It was also expected that this section let us to understand how male migrants incorporate themselves into the male sex market in London, how they operate, type of services offered, the type of clientele (men vs women), their self-reported sexual or gender orientation, their perspective as male migrants working in the London sex market, and how participants experience some risks of STI-VIH in the sex work settings.
It is important to mention that the interview schedule was also developed thanks to the contribution of some research experts and professionals working in health and social services for male sex workers in London. Here, it is important to acknowledge Professor Daniel Haperin (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Professor Nick Mai (London Metropolitan University); and inspired health professionals such Justin Gaffney, Matthew Grundy, Javier Calatrava and Gregory King who had worked for many years as nurses in the Working Men Project. They reviewed the first draft of the interview schedule and provided a precious feedback that help us to adapt a final version of the interview schedule. They mostly thought that the first draft was too large and ‘ambitious’, and for that reason it was recommended to focus on migration trajectories and the experiences of selling sex. In that manner, some more specific and detailed questions related to these main topics such as the process of engagement in the male sex market in London, their business perspective, individual experiences of unprotected sex, etc. could be better covered during the interview. This recommendation was very valuable as it helped us to optimise the use of the participants’ time for this interview.

All this material helped to prepare an interview schedule that was piloted to ensure the relevance and culture adequacy of the instrument. After initial piloting, a revised draft of the interview schedule was sent to experts working in this field to receive final comments and suggestions. The final version of the schedule was centred on participant experiences of migration, incorporation into sex work and specific experiences of sex work in the UK (see Appendix A).

2.2.5. Interview Process
From the social constructivism perspective, language is a pre-condition for thought, a form of social action, a focus on interaction and social practices, and a focus on processes (Burr, 1995). Through the process of interaction, the meaning is created by language and interpretation emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee. For example,
representations of cultural differences in male migration and sex work can be seen as relational, which means that they emerged from the joint interpretation during the interaction between the participant and the researcher, a migrant male and a migrant female, and the interviewee and the interviewer. Hence, this approach was best suited for the current research, which aims to study how they made sense of these experiences. In exploring the different perceptions of the reality of these men’s social world, I took the view that reality was best constructed in collaboration with them.

Compared to an everyday conversation, the research interview has a methodological awareness as the researcher guides and facilitates the individual’s storytelling (Dahlberg et al., 2008). A goal of the interview is also to encourage the informant to reflect upon the phenomenon; therefore, a good interview is signified by both the researcher and the informant understanding the phenomenon (ibid). All participants in this study had the opportunity to choose the place for the interview. Following the conditions that the Ethical Committees determined about the place of the interview, all participants could choose between meeting rooms in the City University building or a counselling room in the Working Men Project building. Generally, participants were more interested to do the interview at City University because they wanted to experience a university environment. The characteristics of the interview rooms in these both sites can be considered as private and comfortable environments. Most of the time, the researcher and the participant agreed to meet at the bus or underground station and then walk together to the interview venue. It gave us the opportunity of ‘breaking the ice’ by chatting in a very informal way with the participant.

In order to create an environment of comfort during the interview, I opened my interviews by thanking the participant for their interest in participating in the study and acknowledging the importance of their contribution to the research. Before the interview began, participants were asked if they had
enough time to read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) that they previously received and, if they had questions or concerns about it. Only few participants wanted to know who else would have access to their information and the way that their data would be anonymised. Not a single participant expressed concerns or worries about the limits of confidentiality that clearly state that ‘criminal behaviour’ could be reported by the researcher (See Appendix A). Regarding this point, it is important to mention that the type of information provided by the participants unveiled feelings of trust and comfort during the interview that encouraged them to talk freely about any type of experience or behaviour. This perception was confirmed during the transcription of the recordings that showed the flow of ‘natural’ conversations, using colloquial language, highly use of jargon and the free expression of emotions such as laughing, crying, etc. It is possible that the sense of anonymity and the interviewer skills – developed as a research assistant in several projects focused on these populations; influenced the rapport created during the interviews that took place in a non-judgmental atmosphere. Consequently, it facilitated that participants disclosed sensitive data related to their activities or behaviour. Another possible explanation about the type of data collected, is that considering that the participants were non-UK nationals, they would not know much about certain activities that could be typified in this country as criminals.

Respect for free and informed consent was very important during the face-to-face interviews. To protect the identity of the participants, I presented the idea of changing their real names for pseudonymous. Almost all participants wanted to use their real or professional names during the interview. They explicated that their stories correspond to the character that they have created and to that particular part of their lives.

To facilitate the flow of the conversation that allowed us to construct meaningful experiences between the researcher and the participant, I encouraged participants to talk openly and naturally about their
experiences using informal or everyday language. I also reminded them that they were free to bypass questions that made them feel uncomfortable and that they could stop the interview at any time. None chose to bypass questions or end the interview before the time.

2.2.6. Thematic Analysis

This thesis aimed at exploring the lived experiences of migrant male sex workers operating in London, therefore, it was focused on mapping the participants’ experiences and the identification of the meanings that shaping them. This emphasis led to attain and analyse the data in terms of specific experiences coming from the everyday language that characterised them. Although, the interest here was not on necessarily what discourses were mobilised, but the themes emerging from a set of statements to answer the secondary research questions of this study (see Chapter 2 section 4). Hence, thematic analysis was appropriate for the present work because of it concentrates in participants’ meaning-making (Braun and Clarke, 2006), capturing the most prominent constellation of affective, cognitive and symbolic meanings present in the data (Joffe, 2012). Thematic analysis can extract the manifest and latent drivers concerning issues such as the engagement in male sex work as it identifies, analyses, interprets and reports patterns of recurrence as themes (Boyatzis, 1998; Bryman, 2001; Braun and Clarke, 2006) within the data. There is not a clear consensus amongst authors about what is a theme, but for the purpose of this thesis we accepted the definition by Joffe (2012) that explains it as a distinct pattern of meanings that contains manifest or latent content of the data (depending how directly observable can be). Guest and colleagues (2012) describe it as a cluster of linked categories conveying similar meanings which are observed (noticed) by a reader of the text. Likewise, as Cohen and colleagues (2011) recommend, analysts need to move throughout the data developing new concepts and emergent themes. This role suits perfectly to thematic analysis which follows an inductive analysis where the themes are close to the data itself (Patton, 1990).
As a theoretical framework, thematic analysis has the flexibility to generate patterns of meaning from the data which can be interpreted through the lens of the researcher’s theoretical orientation (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the thematic analysis, the task of the researcher is to identify a limited number of themes that adequately reflect their textual data and the required level of analysis (Tuckett, 2014). In addition, thematic analysis is compatible with social constructionist paradigms (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Colahan et al., 2012) that funded this study. In the thematic analysis, researchers may claim a passive role by saying that the themes emerged from the data but themes are in fact a result of intellectual processing in the researcher’s head so that is where they truly live (Ely et al., 1997). In this study, the subjective narratives and accounts are sought and the research design acknowledges the role of the researcher in the co-creation of knowledge. Thus, it allows for researcher accountability in transactions between the participant and the researcher that leads to the generation of data and the final interpretative claims.

The use of thematic analysis for this study facilitated that the unique and distinctive narrative of each participant was explored and transformed into a pattern description of multiple dimensions of the phenomena of male migration and sex work. By exploring the qualities of the data, a picture unfolded to describe the potential ‘realities’ of the twenty-five participants of this study.

**The Process of Thematic Analysis in the Study**

Following the advice of some authors (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012), I developed my analysis in the next phases:

**Familiarisation with the Data**

As an essential step recommended (Riessman, 1993; Bryman, 2012), I personally engaged in the transcription of the audio-recorded material collected. Each interview was listened and examined with the intention of owning each narrative, and this process allowed the capture of some implicit dimensions of the participant’s experience. The transcription
transformed the audio-recorded interviews into textural forms in order to conduct the analysis. Once this process was completed for the twenty-five interviewees of this research, the transcripts were read carefully and thoughtfully to secure an accurate description of the recording and a clear understanding of each participant's experience.

It is important to note two main aspects about the transcription. Firstly, it was performed keeping the verbatim language of the participants who English was not their first language. In this manner, the excerpts that were used to illustrate the findings chapters exhibit some grammatical errors, which were not removed to keep the natural speaking of interviewees. Secondly, personal information and other potential identifiers were removed from the original transcripts to maintain their anonymity and confidentiality. To make evident the position of the excluded material within the narratives, the researcher used brackets such as - [name of the city removed].

Generating Initial Codes

I printed copies of interview transcripts. Before I began my formal coding, I read the entire data set closely, line by line, to identify possible themes. Having read and familiarised with the data and generated an initial list of ideas, I then developed initial codes, which also promoted an open coding. Coding is a process of attaching labels to lines of text, consequently the researcher can group and compare similar or related pieces of information. At this stage, it was very useful the use of memos that I wrote during each interview to provide additional information about potential recurrent code. Later, a new immersion in reading the transcripts involved again listening the interviews to take notes that helped me to recover some of the substance of the experience hearing from the participants. This step allowed the differentiation of some feelings and reactions arisen during the interview, focusing when these reactions occurred, linked to which topics and how these emotions developed. After hearing the interviews, some
relevant extracts were again highlighted. This process was repetitive as a first approach to the data gathered.

I started marking with a highlighter all descriptions that were relevant to the topic of research and research questions. From the highlighted areas, I marked each distinct unit of meaning. While coding manually, I wrote notes on the texts and by using highlighters with different colours to indicate potential themes. At this point, themes related to some qualities in the nature of migration and sex work began to emerge.

**Searching for themes**

I made notes of major themes as they emerged in order to acquire a sense of the various topics rooted in the data. Once I had done this, I began a more formal coding process using the Atlas-ti software. The word files of the interview transcripts were imported into this programme and I started coding the transcripts using the coding process described by Cohen et al. (2011) who suggested make codes for every two or three lines of text. For this research codes were not assigned to paragraphs, but to phrases, parts of phrases or even to words to guarantee detailed coding. I developed codes, labels, words, and phrases from the transcripts for as many potential themes as possible. At this stage, I kept the codes as simple as possible to assist in flexibility in the categorization process. As this process was completed, I had a large number of codes.

In the second phase, I attached conceptual labels to the interview transcripts to capture what had been said. I then began to think about the relationship between codes, themes, and different levels of themes. To categorise general themes that appeared repeatedly during the interviews I developed subthemes and put similar subthemes together. In this manner, I was able to create themes by grouping codes and labels given to words.

**Reviewing and Defining Themes**

The third coding phase was more focused. Here, I chose the most important codes to represent the interviewee’s thoughts. After coding each subtheme,
I created a word file for initial main themes. To identify the core categories emerging from the interview data, I revisit all of the themes as a whole to make overall sense of the interview transcripts. Many themes were similar so I combined some and re-labelled them finalising the final construction of each theme. At the end of this process, several main themes had emerged (selective coding).

**Presentation of the Themes**

In the final stage, I undertook a simple frequency count of the number of participants who referred to each theme. This analysis meant that I could calculate the percentage of participants that referred to each theme, and compare the different factors affecting the participants’ experiences. Each theme was presented with a brief description and examples from the interviews as evidence of its content. A list of illustrative statements that contained a relevant moment of the experience of migration and engagement in sex work was prepared (Appendix E).

### 2.2.7. Validity and Reliability

This section defends the consistency and trustworthiness of this study which did not seek to measure but rather to understand and explain fairly complex social phenomena as male migration and sex work. It brings back the nature of this research focused on the human experience, perceptions, and their underlying motivations, which according to some authors may not be easily accessible through research (Cohen et al., 2007). It gives us the opportunity to explain the main considerations and decisions undertaken to assure the validity and reliability of this study.

In qualitative research, an account is valid ‘if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise’ (Hammersley, 1987, p.69). Then, the term validity deals with the research question whether the findings in the investigation represent real events to answer it (Popping, 2000). Consequently, the researcher is particularly confronted with issues related to the categories described and whether these are relevant to the research question. Thus, a matter for my
thesis was whether the methods and strategies adopted were appropriate for meeting the aim of this study.

The first issue to draw the attention was accessing the degree to which available data are either an unbiased sample for a universe of interest or sufficiently similar to another sample from the same sample, which emphasises issues related to generalizability in non-random research. Despite the aim of this thesis was not generalise the findings to the universe of male migrant sex workers in the UK, the study design sought to increase the sample validity following the Penrod and collaborators’ recommendations based on the inclusion criteria of participants and the main sources or settings to recruit participants (Penrod et al., 2003). In this manner, the inclusion criteria of the participants were well outlined (see section 2.2.1) and used as a criterion by key informants during the recruitment. This aspect helped to increase the validity when the snowballing strategy was especially used because most snowball samples tend to be strongly biased towards the inclusion of individuals who have many inter-relationships and the absence of individuals more isolated. In the same line, the main health and social programmes to recruit male sex workers in London were identified and approached. I approached the only two projects which were dedicated to providing health services to this group: SWISH project and Working Men Project. In this way, I tried to gain access to a diversity of participants.

Regarding reliability, Schwandt (2001) claims that an account is judged to be reliable if it is capable of being replicated by another inquirer. However, ‘opinion is divided among qualitative researchers over whether this criterion has any meaning whatsoever in judging the accuracy of fieldwork accounts’ (p. 262). Thus, reliability refers most to coder consistency and not to data consistency (Popping, 2000). As Holsti claims, ‘reliability is a function of coders’ skill, insight, and experience, clarity of categories and coding rules which guide their use, and the degree of ambiguity in the data’ (Holsti, 1969 p.135). From this perspective, reliability comprises three
main aspects: accuracy, stability and agreement. To achieve the first condition, considering that interviews were the main source of data, and interpretation and coding were the main techniques of analysis; it was important to secure the accuracy of the transcripts, especially related to content and semantic. This aspect surfaced because I was aware that when the qualitative research is conducted in a language which is not the mother tongue of the participant, sometimes the analysis process might not be described adequately. During the interview process, I noticed that some participants mixed English with Spanish, or Portuguese when they tried to explain specific concepts or describe a scenario. For this reason, I asked them more details and expand the information that they attempted to provide. Besides, I was familiar with all these native languages of the participants and did the interview translation myself. Therefore, there was little risk of misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Mangen (1999) suggests that the risk of misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and loss of a respondent's intended meanings is high unless the translator is familiar enough with the dialect to convey conceptual equivalence. Furthermore, the collaboration of two participants was asked to review their own interview transcriptions to confirm that the transcription and interpretation of some terms within the data were accurate described.

Despite the fact that I agree with authors who claim that different actors can give accounts of multiple realities about the same phenomena (Pyett, 2003), sharing some of the transcripts and initial coding with colleagues who work in HIV prevention and behavioural programmes helped me to secure the stability and agreement since the beginning of the analysis. I and another colleague independently analysed the data to check for validity and reliability in the coding and emergent themes. In the same way, I need to acknowledge the assistance of the supervisors of this programme who also reviewed and commented on the coding. They independently reviewed the overarching themes in addition to the statements taken from the individual interview transcripts to determine the appropriate categorical placement for each. These checks showed
agreement in terms of theme content and influenced the final list of core
themes and sub-themes. During the whole process, I developed a clear
definition of the themes to ensure they would not overlap as well as coding
rules to avoid ambiguity or inconsistency that could cause a wide
discrepancy between the coders. Thus, reliability, denoted as
reproducibility, was considered fundamental in this process.

3. Ethical Considerations of Researching Sex Work

This section aims to provide information about the ethical issues and challenges
that were involved in designing the ethical frame to develop this study. Certainly,
the study of hidden populations raises a number of specific methodological
questions usually absent when the study group is different. These issues are
commonly faced by researchers interested in sex work because of the characteristics
of this group and the type of information that usually attracts the attention of
researchers.

Research on sex work implies two opposite perspectives. Firstly, sex workers are
almost always socially sanctioned and even considered within the illegal behaviour
frame depending on the circumstances under which they operate. Then, it was my
first caveat to undertake my research. My previous experience researching sex work
gave me different forms to understand this phenomenon every time that I took part
in a study, especially in a country where I am a foreigner. In all cases, my first step
was to learn about how the country perceives sex work. To approach that, I find it
helpful to gain knowledge of the legal framework that defines sex work. I reviewed
the Sexual Offenses Act 2003, especially Chapter 42, which determines the legal
aspects that outline what ‘prostitution’ is, who is considered a ‘prostitute’, what is
considered a ‘payment’ and the circumstances describing exploitation of
prostitution (Sexual Offenses Act ). I also reviewed studies published by the UK
government to learn its perspective about sex work (e.g. May et al., 1999; May et
al., 2001; Cusick et al., 2003; Office, 2008; Cusick and al., 2011; Mai and
Campbell, 2011). From the legal point of view, ‘prostitution’ is not illegal and
consequently not prosecuted. However, there are certain conditions that can fall into
an unlawful situation. For example, a person cannot be prosecuted if they are selling
sex in their own flat/home, but if there are two or more people living in and undertaking the same activity at the same place, prosecution is likely. Likewise, the government approaches the sex markets as strongly connected with the drugs markets, crime and trafficking. These aspects marginalise and stigmatise sex workers and make it difficult to reach them, but not because they are difficult to locate, but because of the legal framework that confines the researcher within a variety of barriers. All the conditions specified above may have repercussions for the gathered data as the main characteristic of the participants was that they were recruited from sexual health programmes.

The manner in which the above conditions influenced the development of this study can be explained as follows. This study had to obtain the ethical approval of three different ethics committees. Firstly, the approval from the Ethics Committee of the School of Health Science at City University London, obtained in April 2013 as part of my research programme as a MPhil student. This committee asserted that the researcher was not allowed to approach sex workers directly (by website, telephone, email, etc.) but through health or social programmes focused on this population. This condition limited the recruitment of participants to two main projects working with sex workers in London. One of them was part of St Mary’s Hospital (NHS). For this reason, the researcher had to apply to the NRES London Central Committee for ethical approval, which was obtained in November 2013.

Likewise, as sex workers are frequently perceived as involved in illegal activities, the NRES London Central Committee requested that considerations about limits of privacy and confidentiality were clearly stated in the PIS and consent forms as contingent upon UK law terms (Data Protection Act; Human Rights Act; ESRC, 2010). Hence, the following paragraph was introduced in the PIS:

However, I have to let you know that confidentiality will be preserved as far as the law permits. It means that there are limits to confidentiality, particularly in cases where you or another person identified during the interview is in significant and immediate danger of death or any type of physical or psychological harm. In addition, confidentiality can be
breached if a situation of criminal behaviour is reported. In this case, as a researcher, I will report these situations to authorities.

A similar brief statement about this was also introduced in the consent form.

Both committees, the Ethics Committee of the School of Health Science at City University London and the NRES London Central Committee, expressed concerns about aspects related to the interview process. Specifically, they requested information about the evaluation of the mental capacity of the participants. To respond accurately to this query, I gathered information about the definition of mental capacity and the elements concerning its evaluation of the current UK guidelines (Mental Capacity Act, 2005). They also required detailed protocols about how to manage situations of distress amongst participants and to preserve the safety of the researcher during the fieldwork. In these cases, the recommendations about the place, time and conditions in which to conduct the interviews were agreed with the organisations and institutions that collaborated as centres to identify potential participants.

Afterwards, the study was revised and approved by the Research Committee of St. Mary’s hospital – where Working Men Project was based – in January 2014. The participant information sheet (PIS), the consent form, the interview schedule and the flyers were also reviewed and approved by these committees (See Appendix A, B, C and D).

Secondly, research on sex work brought to light issues related to sensitive research topics because it can involve a substantial threat for participants. The hazard can emerge from the collection, holding, and/or dissemination of research data (Lee and Renzetti, 1993), or even as consequences of the research (Mirvis, 1982). Platzer and James provide examples of sensitive research topics, describing the difficulties that arise when examining the private spheres to explore phenomena that can be highly emotional, focused on oppressed or less powerful groups, and that involve issues of social control, potential stigmatisation, or incrimination (Platzer and James, 1997). The hazards of these concerns are particularly acute when dealing with sensitive issues in an oppressed or stigmatised population such as male sex workers. As has
been established, researchers have the responsibility of balancing the acquisition of knowledge with the rights of participants according to principles of professional and scientific responsibility (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997). Stevenson and colleagues outline the unique ethical issues surrounding privacy, confidentiality, and security in studies related to high-risk or hard-to-reach groups (Stevenson et al., 1993).

To tackle these issues, the Framework for Research Ethics (ESRC, 2010) was a very useful guide to ensure the protection of the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in every stage of the study, from the recruitment until the description of the sample and the presentation of findings.
Chapter Four: Preface to the Findings Chapters

1. Overview

This study gathered data from 25 London-based male migrant sex workers. The information was collected using face-to-face in-depth interviews suggested that all participants were aware of specific moments and circumstances that influenced their experiences of migration and sex work. They provided vivid descriptions that convey the feel and shape of their experiences as they emerged in consciousness during the interview. While each participant portrayed uniquely different contexts with their stories, the thematic analysis allowed for the construction of common textural themes that combined multidimensional aspects and qualities that framed the participants’ experiences. The main findings will be introduced in the next chapters.

Whilst reading the following three findings chapters, there are a few points to bear in mind. Firstly, it is important to frame the results in terms of the historical moment in which the study was conducted, and specifically with regard to the policies of migration pre-Brexit. Secondly, it is essential to recognise differences and similarities amongst participants which may have had influence in their experiences. This chapter aims to provide an introduction to the findings that will be presented in the following chapters as well as the way that they have been structured.

2. Participants description

The convenience sampling provided a sample composed of twelve Latin Americans, twelve Europeans and an African. The table 2 displays the countries distribution of participants. It presents countries with larger representation were Brazil and Spain (ten and six respectively). Most importantly, eleven of the twenty-five participants reported having immigrated in other European countries before coming to the UK. This condition determined the first division of the sample into two distinctive subgroups – males who migrated directly to the UK, represented mainly by Europeans, and those who migrated to another European country before coming to the UK, largely composed of Latin Americans. These trajectories
towards the UK indicate that an important proportion of interviewees went through two-step migration (Urquia and Gagnon, 2011).

Likewise, the table shows differences amongst some socio demographic characteristics that indicates a mixed sample in terms of levels of education and employment condition at the date of emigration.

Table 2. Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Participants</th>
<th>Two-step migration towards the UK</th>
<th>One-step migration towards the UK</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region/Country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin-America</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current age (average)</td>
<td>31.9 years</td>
<td>34.5 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration age (average)</td>
<td>19.7 years</td>
<td>26.9 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the information compiled about the legal status of the participants at the date of the interview demonstrated that the great majority (21/25) had obtained European citizenship after years of settling in other countries before the UK. Two participants had obtained UK citizenship, one held a student visa, and another was under the status of ‘illegal’ immigrant.

At the time of the interview the whole group of 25 participants was working as independent internet-based escorts in London. A brief description of each participant is introduced below:

Geordie is 37 years old, originally from Brazil and self-reported as a gay man. He started working as a sex worker in his home country in Saunas and also worked for
escort agencies. He had worked in sex work for about 13 years. He has been living in the UK for about 7 years. His legal status was UK spouse.

Martin: 27 years old, was born in Brazil and self-reported as a gay man. He sold sex for the first time in a first receiving EU country. He worked in flats in Belgium and Spain. He had worked for about 2 years. He has been living in the UK for about 2 years. His legal status was EU spouse.

Alejandro: 40 years old, from Brazil and self-reported as a gay man. His entrance in sex work happened in the UK. He had worked for about 6 years. He has been living in the UK for about 15 years. His legal status was UK same-sex partnership.

Leo: 26 years old, was born in Brazil and self-reported as a bisexual man. He started working as a sex worker in a first EU receiving country. In Spain, he worked in brothels (‘Casas’). He informed about 5.5 years working in sex work. He has been living in the UK for about 4 years. His legal status was illegal immigrant.

Brooke: 30 years old, from Portugal and self-reported as a bisexual man. He sold sex for the first time in his home country. He had worked for about 16 years. He has been living in the UK for about 10 years. His legal status was EU.

Gilbert: 29 years old, originally from Brazil and self-reported as a bisexual man (‘more bisexual than gay’). He started sex work in the UK and had worked for about 1 year. He has been living in the UK for about 1 year. His legal status was student visa.

Evaristo: 41 years old, was born in Colombia and self-reported as a gay man (‘more a gay man than bisexual’). He started sex work in the UK and had worked for about 1 years. He has been living in the UK for about 1 years. His legal status was EU.

Carlos: 42 years old, from Spain and self-reported as a gay man (‘more a gay man than bisexual or a bit bisexual’). He started sex work in his home country and had work experience in brothels (‘Casas’) and flats. He had worked for about 2.5 years. He has been living in the UK for about 2 years. His legal status was EU.
Karla: 26 years old. She was born in Brazil and self-reported as a woman (sex re-assignment). She started sex work in Spain and had worked on streets and flats. She had worked for about 8 years. He has been living in the UK for about 6 years. His legal status was EU.

Pedro: 28 years old, originally from Brazil and self-reported as a bisexual man. He started sex work in his first receiving country. In Spain, he worked in brothels (‘Casas’), flats and for agencies. He had worked for about 3 years. He has been living in the UK for about 1 year. His legal status was EU.

Angel: 36 years old, was born in Brazil and self-reported as a gay man. His entrance in sex work occurred in the first time receiving country. In Spain, he worked in brothels, flats, bars and for agencies. He had worked for about 8 years. He has been living in the UK for about 2 years. His legal status was EU spouse.

Jake: 36 years old, originally from Spain and self-reported as a gay man. He sold sex for the first time in the UK and had worked for about 2 years. He has been living in the UK for about 2 years. His legal status was EU.

Romeo: 28 years old, from Spain and self-reported as a gay man. He started sex work in his home country. In Spain, he worked in brothels and clubs. He had worked for about 9 years. He has been living in the UK for about 8 years. His legal status was EU.

Eva: 26 years old, originally from Bulgaria and self-reported as a trans people (transvestite). She started sex work in the first receiving country, Greece, where she mostly worked on streets. She had worked for about 8 years. He has been living in the UK for about 2 years. His legal status was EU.

Daniel: 25 years old, was born Latvia and self-reported as a gay man. He started sex work in the UK and had worked for about 3.5 years. He has been living in the UK for about 4 years. His legal status was EU.

Giacomo: 34 years old, from Italy and self-reported as a gay man. His entrance in sex work happened in the UK and had worked for about 5 years. He has been living in the UK for about 17 years. His legal status was EU.
Gareth: 40 years old, originally from Brazil and self-reported as a gay man. He started sex work in the UK and had worked for about 4 years. He has been living in the UK for about 7 years. His legal status was EU spouse.

Jarvis: 37 years old, was born in Brazil and self-reported as a gay man. He started sex work in the UK and had worked for about 4 years. He has been living in the UK for about 7 years. His legal status was UK spouse.

Indigo: 36 years old, from Spain and self-reported as a gay man. He sold sex for the first time in his home country, where he mainly developed experience as independent escort. He had worked for about 4 years. He has been living in the UK for about 2 years. His legal status was EU.

Lara: 28 years old was born in Colombia. She self-reported as a trans people that had breast implants. She started sex work in the first receiving country where she mainly worked in flats. She had worked for about 7 years. He has been living in the UK for about 2 years. His legal status was EU.

Reo: 44 years old, from Nigeria and self-reported as a bisexual man. He started sex work in the UK and had worked for about 15 years. He has been living in the UK for about 23 years. His legal status was UK citizen.

Gino: 24 years old, originally from Brazil and self-reported as a gay man. His entrance in sex work occurred in the UK. He had worked for about 9 years. He has been living in the UK for about 6 years. His legal status was EU.

Genevieve: 39 years old, was born in Bulgaria and self-reported as a trans people (having breast implants). Her entrance in sex work happened in Greece and had worked only on streets. She had worked in sex work for about 10 years. He has been living in the UK for about 2 years. His legal status was EU.

Joel: 33 years old, from Brazil and self-reported as a bisexual man. He started sex work in the UK. He had worked for about 4 years. He has been living in the UK for about 4 years. His legal status was EU.
John: 30 years old, was born in Spain and self-reported as a gay man. He started sex work in his home country and mainly had worked for agencies. He had worked for about 12 years. He has been living in the UK for about 12 years. His legal status was EU.

3. **Structure for Presentation of the Results**

The information was examined following the different steps of the thematic analysis outlined in the previous chapter (section 2.2.6). Each individual’s experience was certainly rich and unique. The data analysis showed specific patterns of commonalities and discordances related to the entire sample group. The subsequent three chapters will present the most relevant findings as outlined below.

Chapter Five: ‘Migration trajectories and entrance into male sex work’ explores the connections between migration and sex work emerged that from the stories. Using the pull and push theory to describe the migration process, this chapter presents main themes that became apparent to describe the different factors driving the migration process that interviewees followed towards the UK, and the routes into sex work that they experienced throughout this process.

Chapter Six: ‘Constructing a work identity as a migrant male sex worker’ examines the experiences of participants working in the escort market in London. This chapter presents core themes that describe the process of incorporation into the London sex market as independent escorts, how they had built their understanding of being a male escort, their professional role and conflicts that emerge from their work identity.

Chapter Seven: ‘Managing risk as a sex worker’ analyses sexual health risk sexual within the context of commercial sex. Using the theory of planned behaviour, this chapter presents core themes that describe different factors influencing unprotected sexual practices amongst participants. This chapter describes participants’ risk perception and risky sexual behaviour.
Each chapter presents a summary of the main findings and closes by highlighting a discussion using relevant scholarly literature available about the topic and concludes by acknowledging the main conclusions.

Finally, Chapter Eight ‘final remarks’ presents contributions to knowledge and contributions to policy and practice of this thesis. It also highlights limitations and suggestions for further research.
Chapter Five: Migration Trajectories and Entry into Sex Work

1. Overview

The global economic crisis and the expansion of the European Union (EU) have generated a massive increase in migration flows within Europe (Nations, 2013). Studies on populations coming to the UK, one of the most popular destinations, has developed an understanding of their heterogeneity and mixed motivations that attracted them to the country (Linneker and McIlwaine, 2011; Molnar, 2011; Luthra et al., 2014; Okólski and Salt, 2014). Yet, and in spite of the significant growing of literature, it is important to note that these studies have examined migrant populations mainly considering their countries of origin, overlooking labour subgroups as migrant sex workers. Certainly, a group considered a highly mobile population operating in several European countries (TAMPEP, 2007). In the UK, migrant male sex workers represent a significant sub-group of the sex work population (Sethi et al., 2006; TAMPEP, 2007). Despite of its relevance, there is little information about these men who are predominantly selling sex in London.

This chapter addresses the first research objective of this study: explore the connections between the trajectories of migration towards the UK and the routes of engagement in sex work. In principle, it examines the individual’s experience to identify when/how occurred their journeys towards the UK and when/how they decided their entrance into sex work. In this manner, this study aims to provide an understanding of possible linkages between these phenomena.

2. The Pull and Push Theory

Globalisation and economic factors have traditionally influenced migration inside and outside borders (IOM, 2010, 2013). People migrate for a number of reasons, however, theorists point out three common and well-defined types of primary migration: permanent settlement migration, temporary labour migration and refuge movement (Castles, 2000). The complexity of the reasons has attracted the attention of researchers from a range of disciplines such as economics, anthropology,
sociology, and politics (Borkert et al., 2006; Fernandes et al., 2007). Certainly, one of the most well-known theories - the Push-Pull Theory (Everett, 1966), enlightens migration as the result of the interplay of political, social, economic, legal, historic, cultural, and educational forces. Push factors explain that people leave their home countries because of internal forces such as economic crisis, social or military conflicts, extreme religious activities that expose individual to risks, etc. Conversely, pull factors are forces or attributes that attract people to the destination countries such as better economic opportunities, more jobs, or better standards of living. In that sense, migration occurs when the reason to emigrate (the push) can be solved by the corresponding pull factor. Consequently, push and pull factors are complementary and intertwined. In addition, there are independent forces that facilitate migration such as country policies and agreements between countries, or conversely, legal constraints that limit or impede migration. The complexity and multi-dimensional elements that examine the Push-Pull theory motivated that was selected to analyse the data gathered for this thesis.

The analysis of the process of migration was centred on the reasons to leave the home country, the motivations in selecting a receiving country, and the nature of the experiences during the immigration. Most importantly, the lenses of this theory help to understand sex work in the context migration as many participants move from one country to another attracted to the sex market opportunities. In order to approach migration as a life-long process as it was proposed by (Castles, 2000), the examination of the narratives included the descriptions of family’s backgrounds and contexts that framed the participants’ stories as they were part of the qualities and nature of migration, and the entrance into sex work. This section has succinctly introduced the premises of the pull and push theory - which lenses aided the analysis, and some provided information about some aspects of the data collected. Then, this section paves the way to present the main findings in the following section.

3. Findings
During the interviews, participants shifted back and forth from the past to present when telling of their journeys towards the UK. As it was mentioned in the previous
chapter, the examination of their narratives revealed two different trajectories of migration (Chapter 4 - Table 2). While the majority of participants (14/25) only reported the UK as a receiving country, others (11/25) had immigrated to other European countries before settling in this country. Most importantly, as the narratives unfolded, it became evident that the involvement in sex work occurred in different stages of migration for these two sub-groups (see table 3 below). The data indicates that whereas six participants that reported the first trajectory had worked selling sex before their emigration, the second group described a progressive involvement along with the different stages that they took towards UK. In this way, a great proportion (8/11) of the latter group sold sex for the first time in another European country before coming to the UK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trajectories of migration towards the UK</th>
<th>Started sex work in country of origin</th>
<th>Started sex work in the first receiving country</th>
<th>Started sex work in the UK</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males who immigrated to another country before the UK</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males who immigrated directly to the UK</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>06</strong></td>
<td><strong>08</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet, and spite of the uniqueness of each story, the analysis of the twenty-five narratives using the thematic analysis exposed patterns about the trajectories of migration that were represented with two main textural blocks: the core theme ‘Push factors for emigration: Leaving the country of origin’ and the core theme ‘Pull factors for migration towards the UK’. Hence, they illustrate distinctive qualities of the stages of migration but also clustered specific themes and subthemes related to the entrance in sex work.

The following sections presents the core themes as blocks of textural portraits of the temporal dimensions of the phenomena under study. They emerged from the distinctive stages that were inherent in, and the sequences of, the participants’ experiences.

This core theme contributes to the understanding of how emigration emerged amongst interviewees. It describes the reasons for, and circumstances in which, it occurred, as well as the meanings, thoughts, and feelings that this experience generated. In addition, this core theme presents the experiences of six of the twenty-five interviewees who started selling sex before their departure.

Certainly, the interviewees described a diversity of personal backgrounds in terms of family relationships, social and economic status and employment condition at the time of emigration. This information depicted the social and chronological contexts through which the initial thoughts about emigration surfaced. To explain how they decided to leave their home countries, participants brought specific meanings and unspoken assumptions that generated their later decisions. The great majority associated the initial thoughts of emigration with family experiences and their own needs as individuals, which allowed distinction of one from the others. The analysis of the narratives permitted the construction of three themes – ‘Economic constraints’, ‘Poor employment prospects’ and ‘Same-sex desire and Homophobia’. These themes are explained as follows:

3.1.1. Economic Constraints

This theme presents statements that indicates financial reasons driving emigration. Furthermore, it connects precariousness with the entrance into sex work for some participants.

Coming from different parts of the world, nearly half of the interviewees evoked initial thoughts of leaving the home country even years before their departure. Despite the disparities concerning the family backgrounds and milieus where the participants grew up, the majority of narratives showed that emigration surfaced from the awareness of hard living conditions and economic deprivation related to family experiences. This was the perspective of Leo, who portrayed his family conditions in a rural area of Brazil:
She [his mother] lived in a very poor place in the mountains, washing the clothes in the river and my brother had problems with the farmers and these things always made me feel depressed

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

Likewise, poor urban scenarios provoked similar feelings of hopelessness and frustration:

I was born in Lisbon in a favela pretty much like Rio of Janeiro or Sao Paulo, those sorts of towns where you see everybody is trafficking, guns

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

I said to my mother, ‘I don’t like this neighbourhood. When I grow up I am not going to live here and maybe I am going to leave the country

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

Even more importantly, interviewees connected their understanding of leaving the country to the necessity of having money for their families’ everyday occurrences:

I never said anything to my mum, she tried everything, but sometimes if you don’t have money to do nothing, she lost the job and especially when you are a bit older, it is difficult to find a job … he [father] never paid for anything, and when my mum tried to request an economic support for her children because he never gave us money for food, treatment, or dentist, nothing, he only gave us his back

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

I see the money that I have in my bag pack and I think this money is for my mother because we have been always a poor family, we never had money

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

Equally poignant to note, the excerpts – as those displayed above, revealed that the majority of participants came from single-parent families. More specifically, 17 interviewees reported a single parent at home, which, in most cases, was represented by the mother. This fact may have influenced the gender role of economic providers that they assumed:

My family was in really bad condition because my mother went crazy, so we were fighting for the house and for everything. My mother has a shop and she, but she went mental and has financial problems [...] she [mother] worked very hard for that, you know she started selling clothes like a door by door

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

I thought, ‘I need to go somewhere else,’ because it was very difficult to find a job and I thought, ‘I need to help my family,’ and I decided to move

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)
For some participants, such as Genevieve, the role of provider began at a very young age. For her, working as a singer of a ‘gipsy’ band since she was 10 years old had a negative impact on her education:

*I didn’t complete my education because my life was very hard. I was a singer and all my life I had to go to sing to one place to another. I completed primary school but I couldn’t complete the secondary [...] I worked singing in weddings, parties, restaurants. I worked for a band – wherever they went, I went with them. Because in Bulgaria there are lots of gypsies there, and the style of music that they made is gypsy style [...] that was the only problem when I worked as a singer because I was a small child, I didn’t sleep good because when I went for a wedding it lasted three or four days and I had to sing*

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

In the same way, Angel’s narrative brought to light child labour and exploitation. He was 10 when his mother ‘gave him’ to a woman as a worker of a candies’ factory. He worked baking cakes and sweets for local schools in exchange for accommodation, food, and a small salary. He recalled that he had to sleep in a hole that the owners made in the roof of the factory. Angel spoke about his feelings of sadness and frustration because he had to drop elementary school – ‘I always like studying but it was not possible’. The lack of basic levels of education provoked negative feelings of anxiety, low self-esteem, and an incapacity to interact with other people – ‘when I was 20, I only had the studies of an 8-years-old boy and this caused me lots of uncertainty, lots of frustration, social anxiety’.

Furthermore, it is important to remark that economic deprivation forced two interviewees to start selling sex at a young age. Visibly different from many other interviewees, their stories highlight strong childhood experiences linked to poverty, abandonment, and difficult upbringings in dysfunctional families. For example, Brooke, who never met his parents but heard that they used to sell drugs. He and his cousin, who was an orphaned, were brought up by his grandmother. Brooke sold sex for the first time at the age of 14 – ‘feeling the responsibility’ to provide ‘clothes, food, electricity, gas, everything in a house’. Immediately afterwards, he also engaged in dealing and using recreational drugs – ‘I never had any money until I started dealing with drugs when I was very young. I needed money to provide food for the table’. Brooke told that
drugs helped him to cope with the fact that he became a ‘prostitute’. In this manner, he strongly linked these events with family experiences – ‘like a picture, when I started, the reasons that I started, what leads me to drugs and everything was my family’. Evoking that time, Brooke claimed the enormous impact on his life. He was expelled from different schools because he was deeply immersed in drugs and selling sex— ‘sex and drugs became a big part of my life’. Years later, he decided to leave his country because his life was threatened by people who were part of this business – ‘I was on the row’.

In the same way, Romeo was 19 when decided to sell sex for the first time. He wanted to help his mother to overcome his family’s poverty:

*I helped my mother because my family was always poor and the opportunity to have money and help my family was the reason that motivated me to be an escort*

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

Despite Romeo was working as a waiter, he decided his entrance motivated for the higher earnings from sex work, as he went on to explain:

*The fact that I was working very hard but the amount of money that he offered me, it was the same that I earn in a month of hard work, that attracted me more, and then I accepted I thought ‘Ok let’s do it’ [...] he gave money and some gifts such a chain made of gold that I have sold a few weeks ago, a bracelet that I gave it to my mother*

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

Conversely, four participants who engaged in sex work before leaving their countries did not relate their decision to financial problems of their families. In fact, they categorised the economic status of their families as a ‘good life, pretty good life’, or they felt that during that stage they belonged to ‘upper middle class’ families. Yet the decision to engage in sex work was connected with their personal needs and circumstances. For example, John told that his family never had economic problems but reported psychological abuse from his stepfather. He was 18 when decided to run away from home:

*The issue was her husband that he was a sick bastard, he just hated me, he was sick, he always played games between me and my mum, telling lies between me and my mum, he always disrespected me, calling me names, it was not a nice situation, you know, he did not beat me or anything, but it was very psychological, you know, it was on a daily basis, you know, I*
could not have a day in peace, it was terrible, this is not something that I normally talk about because I deleted from my brain  

(John, 30, Spain)

John and a friend journeyed to Madrid where they sold sex to save money and buy tickets to London. Then, his experience of emigration and involvement in sex work were more related to family experiences as a way to escape from a harmful environment.

In the same line, for participants such as Geordie, his engagement in sex work was associated to the significance of having peers connected to sex work. He was working as a tourist guide and had a stable income but remembered that his boyfriend was working as an agency escort. He offered him the opportunity to make ‘a quick money’ for participating in a sex session:

*Once he told me – ‘Listen, I have a very posh client coming. This client wants ten boys and I only have five in the agency. Do you like to do it? Because if you come to do, you are going to make 200 dollars for one or two hours and you don’t need to have sex, only talk to him. ’ So, I said, ok, it is fine not doing anything because he said I would have sex if I want. I went there, but what supposed to be an hour I stayed the entire night because the client liked me and I got paid the commission by the agency more than 1000 dollars*  

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

Therefore, the excerpts that illustrated this theme indicate that interviewees described the process of coming to an understanding of emigration through the awareness of the underlying issues surrounding their contexts and material realities. By far, poverty was part of the familial experiences that generated initial thoughts related to emigration. Even more importantly, this theme exposed that economic precariousness drove some participants to engagement in sex work before their emigration and at very young age. The stories exposed underlying aspects of the participants’ lives that affected their personal development and influenced their immigration decisions, such as the impact of a difficult childhood. The majority of participants told of their aspirations to pursue education, particularly those who dropped out of school because of their obligation to work at a very young age. In this way, their immigration responded to their strong aspiration to overcome their negative circumstances. Amongst these participants, feelings of sadness and frustration were expressed
as well as low self-esteem. Thus, the statements indicate some connections between family experiences, the entrance into sex work and their decision to emigrate.

3.1.2. Poor Employment Prospects

This theme collects excerpts that associated emigration with thoughts and feelings of dissatisfaction because of issues in the work environment.

At the time of emigration, the great majority of participants (20/25) were engaged in skilled and unskilled jobs. They understood emigration in the context of a prevalent disappointment associated with salaries, work conditions and a lack of appreciation in their work environments.

Undoubtedly, dissatisfaction about salaries was a frequent motivation linked to emigration. For example, Eva decided to leave Bulgaria because her salary as a caregiver was not enough to support her father:

> When I was in my country I had a normal job, I was a caregiver for children with disabilities. I love my work, I really like it but I left it because I only earn £16 per month.

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

For Alejandro, who was working as an independent architect, leaving the country was explained through the feeling of frustration about his career and future because his clients were not willing to pay a fair price for his work:

> I got really disappointed with the way people treated the architects because we work a lot but they pay thousands for a kitchen but they don’t want to pay 200 for a piece of paper because they think that they pay for paper that we design but they don’t realize that five years to be at the university to do that drawing and architects have as much value as much as I thought they would be

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

In addressing economic motivations, interviewees also connected their decision to emigrate with a growing feeling of dissatisfaction because of the lack of opportunities for self-development and professional improvement, as well as an absence of appreciation and respect in their work environments. For example, Leo, who was working as a school teacher in a rural area of Brazil, told about experiences of abuse and exploitation from his employer. He was earning a ‘really small’ salary that was also paid irregularly – ‘they pay one
month but no the next, you know, it is hard to be a teacher’. Every time that he complained about this situation, his employer’s response was harsh – ‘if you are not happy you can go because there are lots of people who can stay in your place, you know, you have to be grateful’. The way in which he was treated made him feel like a ‘dog’.

In a similar way, Angel, who was 18 when he was working as an assistant in a vet clinic, felt disrespected and abused by his employer. He always wanted to attend an educational programme for adults to complete his basic levels of education, which he had neglected because he was compelled to work at a young age. He requested permission from his employer to leave earlier, but it was denied. Angel interpreted this attitude as lack of appreciation for his daily work – ‘it doesn’t matter how good worker I was or whatever I did, they always told me that’. Moreover, he thought that his employer’s behaviour was based on the fact that he knew that Angel did not have his family’s support:

They spoke about of my own life and they knew that I hadn’t no-one, you know, no-one that speaks out for me, then they knew what to say me, they said ‘you work or you study’

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

For Angel and Leo, their circumstances provoked a growing sense of dissatisfaction and frustration about their realities and future that generated their decision to emigrate:

I decided to leave my country because I didn’t see any future there for me

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

I have to try something more or I will die in this place because nothing is going to change

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

It may be surmised, then, that despite the vast majority of participants were engaged in unskilled jobs in their countries of origin, they decided to emigrate seeking better employment opportunities. This observation supports other authors who note the influence of unfavourable living and working conditions (Molnar, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2012), and differences in earning power as the most important aspects that culminate in migration towards and across Europe (Gomel, 1992). Most importantly, this theme explains emigration beyond
financial issues. Leaving the country emerged from the dimension of the participants’ work life as a social space in which their interactivity, interconnectivity, and interdependence with others provoked a general sense of unhappiness, frustration, separateness, helplessness, shame, and a sense of inferiority as part of their everyday life. It exposed a growing sense of a lack of opportunities for personal and professional development at home.

3.1.3. Same-sex Desire and Homophobia

This theme gathers statements that indicate implicit and explicit connections between the decision to emigrate and the awareness of same-sexual desire.

An important proportion of participants also reported sexual orientation as a relevant factor leading to emigration. In this manner, this theme unveils the dominant structures underlying the awakening of participants about their same-sex desires, its acceptance, and the feelings that it provokes. Hence, this theme describes the individual’s contemplation of his/her inner world:

*I accepted it. I felt it inside me, you know, since I was born I felt that I needed to be with a man, I never felt like a man in my life. When I started to understand myself, when I know me, I knew that I feel like a woman*  
(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

*Since I was very young and I played with my friends I always wanted to dress up as a girl*  
(Karla, 36, Spanish/Brazil)

*I was growing and I found that I was gay*  
(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

This process was experienced with feelings of guilt, sadness, anxiety, and fear. Participants kept these negative feelings and thoughts in an inner life:

*I always knew what I was, but I felt that I was in a closet and I couldn’t express what I really felt because I knew that I would be rejected because this was forbidden*  
(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

*When I started to realise that it was my case, how can I say to my family, ‘Oh, by the way, I am homosexual’*  
(Martin, 27, Brazil)

In this manner, interviewees connected emigration with feelings of anxiety, depression and shame provoked by fear of intolerance and rejection for their non-heteronormative sexualities. Heteronormativity is the belief that people
fall into distinct and complementary genders (male and female) with natural roles in life. It maintains a general sense of heterosexuality as a normative regime (Cantu, 2009). Thus, those who cannot, or will not, conform to gender norms can be the target of societal disrespect and punishment.

The experiences amongst participants varied from those who decided to hide their sexual orientations to those who disclosed them. These two different processes had a distinct impact on the participants’ lives and generated the following two sub-themes: ‘Living a normal life’ and ‘Experiences of homophobia and violence’. These sub-themes are described as follows:

a. ‘Living a Normal Life’

Thirteen of the 25 participants never disclosed their sexual orientation. For these interviewees, emigration occurred when they completed their own ‘coming out’ and acceptance of their sexual orientation. As Evaristo, a Colombian who migrated when he was 28, told the next:

*When I got in gay life I thought I cannot stay here because I had a normal life, I had a partner; I had a normal life*

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

The representation of a ‘normal life’ was precipitated by how participants wanted to be perceived by their families and society. They were concerned about portraying a sense of a ‘normal life’ that followed social norms and gender expectations that distanced them from effeminacy. They used different strategies to mimic a ‘straight’ behaviour. For example, Giacomo told about the use of ‘covers’ to avoid people realising that he was gay. He described ‘covers’ as a natural mechanism to survive ‘I never read a book about these covers, it is surviving instinct, and you just learn them in the world.’ These covers involve switching the way that Giacomo walks or speaks from a gay manner to ‘straight’:

*I was effeminate in the way that nature give me manners like crossing my legs or put my hands up on here or drag more expressions which are more perceived as feminine than masculine in me [...] I don’t think I am too effeminate compared to other people that I know but still something in me, and it was source of lot of headaches, even today to some extent, because when I walk, my hips swing along and if I am walking around the streets here in London on my own and I see across the road a group of hoodie*
guys, I just start to put more on it push/bush walk just to create the aspect more masculine and to don’t let anyone know that I am different, then they will leave me alone

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

In the same manner, Giacomo and eight other participants reported female partners to cover their sexual orientation. For example, Reo evoked his anxiety about having a relationship with a woman in Nigeria. Talking about their relationship, Reo said that he ‘pretended’ that they ‘were together’:

都要 went because I was very well in that, so she was scared of it, so we decided don’t do it in that way. I was happy because I knew that like boys, right? So, I felt like I needed to show people that I was normal

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

Reo felt fortunate because his girlfriend did not want to have a sexual relationship either. She was Catholic and desired marriage first. Therefore, they only ‘kind of play around a bit but not really much’. Eventually, he felt more pressure from his family – ‘everybody was getting married and having children, so you could see the pressure was growing’. He felt guilty because he was ‘living a double life’. However, he was not ready for ‘coming out’. In this situation, he started to make sense of his emigration – ‘I knew that that the society will not accept it, I wasn’t able to live there.’ Nevertheless, the relationship between the self and the others was described as ‘oppressive’; ‘repressive’; ‘confining’, and ‘judgemental’. It provoked anxiety, frustration, and a lack of acceptance because they felt unable to express their sexualities – ‘people don’t fully appreciate me for what I was’.

The excerpts describe a volunteer deprivation of the individual’s self-expression in order to be accepted in the others’ everyday world. In this way, participants were living ‘a normal life’ following gender and social norms. The creation of a public image provided them with a temporary confidence in belonging to the world of the significant others, attuning their public image to events and experiences outside one’s self (e.g. ‘to be part of’). In other words, from their perspective, living a ‘normal life’ was a strategy for reconciling being gay with having a family life because they maintained a public image that helped them to negotiate the relationship between the self with the others in order to avoid judgement.
Concurrently, the findings also brought to light the influence of images and cultural meanings related to same-sex relationships in the self-perception of the individuals. In particular, the excerpts illustrate the strong influence of religion in their experiences of discrimination and homophobia in the private and public sphere. This view was shared by Jake, who was married to a woman for about ten years. After his divorce, he decided to have a relationship with another man for the first time. Reflecting about his same-sex desire, he always felt repressed due to his strict upbringing within a Catholic family. In fact, Jake felt a strong religion repercussion in enclosing his sexuality: ‘I lived between my desire to express myself and my desire to follow my family norms.’

For Martin, religion provoked distressing feelings and thoughts about his sexual orientation. He was mainly worried about his mother’s reaction because she was very Catholic and perceived same-sex relationships as a ‘sin’. The fact that his family was not aware of his sexual orientation always provoked a strong perturbation – ‘it went deep in my brain’ because he feared being ‘pushed away’. He remembered a ‘horrible moment’ when his aunt told him that ‘it could be better to see one of my parent’s dead than to be a homosexual’. These negative thoughts and feelings caused him to attempt suicide several times.

Another illustrative example was provided by Alejandro, who felt rejected by the Catholic Church as a gay man:

\[I\text{ was born Catholic but, in these years, I realised, you know, I am gay and Catholic Church doesn’t want me, I am not welcome so why should I be a member of a club where I am not welcome?}\]

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

Thus, emigration occurred after interviewees completed their own ‘coming out’, which led them in new directions that released the self through the exploration of a core set of personal values, needs, and interests. Subsequently, the participants made sense of emigration on the premise that their dispossession of freedom rendered them unable to express their own thoughts and desires. As Giacomo and Evaristo claimed:
I leave Italy because I wanted freedom of expression. Although Italy is not a country which is not intolerant about sexuality unfortunately homosexuality is not very well digested

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

You know, the fear that you feel as Latin American that you think that everybody is looking at you and that they are going to notice something

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

This sub-theme explains that emigration was mediated by participants’ sense about their countries as settings of their everyday world. At some point, interviewees were struggling to project a ‘normal life’ outwardly. This structure gave particular meanings to their emigration regarding the significance of non-belonging to their countries. As such, Alejandro stated, ‘I didn’t really fit in Brazil anymore because of a different mentality, particularly being gay’ and Reo said, ‘I wasn’t really able to live there, I always felt like an alien.’ These feelings and thoughts came from their inner reflections on their incapacity to satisfy demanding relationships with their others. They made sense of leaving their countries of origin through worrisome thoughts and concerns about the need to satisfy gender and social norms.

b. Experiences of Homophobia and Violence

Five interviewees that disclosed their sexual orientation to their families or who freely expressed their sexuality in a public sphere reported a continuous sense of rejection, intolerance and abuse. Three of them ‘ran away’ several times because of this fact, and two attempted suicide.

As such, Angel recalled episodes of verbal and psychological abuse that he suffered when he was about 10 years old when his mother’s family used to humiliate him:

*I was a very sensible boy; like a lady and they were [his mother’s family] ignorant people who used to laugh at me [...] when they saw me walking and my mother follow them*

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

Explaining his relationship with his mother, Angel told that she had ‘bad feelings’ because of his feminine behaviour:
She felt ashamed of me, but she was unable to chat with me, and explain to me what was happening because until then I didn’t know what was wrong with me

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

To avoid public embarrassment, Angel’s mother did not buy him clothes and shoes to make him stay at home. Consequently, he had to drop out of elementary school. He remembered that his friends used to give him shoes and clothes, but when he returned home at 9 pm–10 pm, the door was locked and he had to sleep in other places.

Similarly, other participants linked their emigration to the events of homophobia and violence that they suffered:

_I have some effeminate in me, and I started to get bullied a lot […] they started to target me_

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

_I want to escape because where I am from to be gay was difficult. I am from a small town which is part of Alicante. My family is from the countryside then they didn’t understand my situation and for that reason, I decided to come_

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

_I was not the perfect situation and that is why, at one point, I thought I want to leave, I need to go far away_

(John, 30, Spain)

_I remember that people didn’t like us, didn’t accept us like a person, they get ready to fight us, and you know they do lots of bad things_

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

Consistent with previous research (Asencio and Acosta, 2009), the statements that illustrated this sub-theme show sexuality - a broad category that encompasses sexual beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and identities, as an important dimension in the migration process. The findings reinforce the use of sexual migration to describe the international movements of people based on sexuality (Carrillo, 2004), and entails a broad range of groups and sexual orientations (Parker, 1997).

3.2. Core theme: Pull Factors for Migration towards the UK

This core theme outlines the main reasons and motivations that attracted interviewees to immigrate to a receiving country. This core theme is composed
of four themes that give an account of the participants’ experiences according to the trajectories of migration.

3.2.1. Following a ‘Dream’ to Europe

This theme is concentrated on the experiences of participants who followed two-step of migration as they immigrated to another European country before the UK.

For several of these participants, the first immigration was connected with a representation of ‘the American dream’ or simply ‘having a dream’. This group was mostly composed of Latin-Americans who immigrated at a young age (average 20 years). As such, Evaristo and Pedro explicated the ‘American dream’ as a utopian construction about ‘perfect’ realities in other countries:

you know, the one that you grow up since you are a child, you know the dream to travel, the idea that everything is wonderful in other countries, that everything is perfect and I feel always like that

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

You think you are going to get a job immediately and you can buy very soon a car, but things are not like that, not that soon. But I had that dream

(Pedro, 28, Brazil)

In many instances, interviewees acknowledged the role of the media in the creation of ‘the dream’. They pointed out the significance of the media representation creating images that reinforce the perspective of foreign countries as ‘full of opportunities’. For Leo, his ‘American dream’ began with a popular Brazilian soap opera:

My dream was to go to America and it came from soap operas, even the escorting [...] I don’t remember the name, but he was an escort, it was a soap opera produced by Globo Company in Brazil

(Léo, 26, Brazil)

Furthermore, Martin was about 10 years old when he started thinking about living in Europe. He recalled watching a documentary on TV:

When I was ten, I was watching TV with my family and then I saw something about Europe, you know the life outside my country.

(Martin 27, Brazil)

The statements would suggest that the media may have originated an awareness of the environment and living conditions that generated a desire to be part of
other realities. Thus, unsurprisingly, ‘having a dream’ emerged from the participants’ dissatisfaction and personal struggle with the material realities in their home countries. In like manner, this theme supports theories of migration that claim the choice of a destination country is mostly associated with economic opportunities and local/regional amenities/opportunities (Roseman, 1983).

For some interviewees, having a ‘dream’ continued throughout an examination of their personal needs and aspirations, such as their desire for education, which provoked a sense of seeking opportunities by immigrating to any country. For example, despite Evaristo claiming he never thought of immigrating to Europe because he wanted to go to America, he recognised that he was constantly dreaming of travelling to different countries:

> Even in my work, people told me, ‘You are crazy, what was your dream today?’ ‘Because I always said something different, sometimes I said, ‘I am going to Canada’, you know these things that you sometimes say – ‘I want to do this or that’, same, sometimes I said, ‘I am going to Cuba, I am going to Canada’, etc. Then people made laugh at me but not in a bad way, you know just to make jokes because I said – I am going to New York, not to Australia’ and I search for information because my cousin worked for a travel company and I asked her how much was a ticket to Australia because at that time there was not internet and I searched for information, have a look at maps, you know everything.  

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

Besides, hopes for a better ‘future’ to fulfil interviewees’ aspirations were significant in pulling immigration. As such, Martin told of the perspective that drove him to take the opportunity given by his employer to live in Portugal: ‘I see you in 30 years in front of a company like this because you have future’ prompted his sense of ‘adventure’. For Martin, ‘having a dream’ was connected with ‘building a future’ and a sense of ‘adventure’, which were understood as an opportunity for ‘a new life’.

The narratives show that having family members, friends or acquaintances in other countries was significant in selecting a first receiving country amongst these interviewees. Some participants felt connected to the world of these significant others, and in that way, they perceived themselves as part of their
realities. In this manner, these connections gave a sense of reality to interviewees’ ‘dreams’:

My mother worked in Greece and she lived there and I spoke to her and asked her to go there to live with her, to have a new life there.

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

We always travelled because my mother was Brazilian and my father Spanish. I was born in Brazil but we always visited Spain for three or four months and then we returned to Brazil. But I went to live to Spain when I was 13 years old. I finished my secondary when I was 18 years old because we travelled too much.

(Karla, 36, Spanish/Brazil)

My mother was in Spain, so I decided to come. I was too happy to see my mother again because we were separated for many years.

(Pedro, 28, Brazil)

I never thought to leave Brazil and come to England before I met my partner. I met him in Brazil 13 years ago, and he always was coming to London and go back to Brazil and come here again. When I met him, he was working in Sao Paulo and we started living together but he lost his job and he decided to come here and I wanted to come with him.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

I have a friend from my village in Brazil, who lived in Lisbon, Portugal [...] he told me I have a bedroom to rent and told me, ‘Why don’t you come and stay with me?’ I said, yes. Then I organised everything and went to Portugal.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

Further, some excerpts documented that the first experience of immigration was related, in many cases, to family or friends’ reunion. Indeed, these familial and social ties facilitated participants’ immigration providing information about the characteristics of the receiving country, policies and regulations of migration as well as routes of entry to the country.

3.2.2. Seeking Opportunities for Self-development in the UK

This theme compiles statements that explain the interviewees’ immigration to the UK was motivated by their interest in further education, learning a second language and obtaining job experience.

Indeed, a recurrent motivation to choose the UK as a country of destination was their interest in learning English as a ‘worldwide language’ that would improve their future:
Here I could have the opportunity to learn another language, work and save some money to go back to Brazil.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

If you want to learn another language, go to England, got to learn English, which is the first language in the world.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

In the case of Joel, he selected the UK amongst other countries considering characteristics such as distance from his country of origin, time difference between the countries, weather and opportunities of social and romantic life:

When you have options to study English, you have three or four countries; in the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada and South Africa, yeah four or five. I would never go for the USA because I hate them, Canada...err, I thought about but I probably wouldn’t enjoy much the culture and the weather is too cold, I think it wouldn’t have the mixed culture that I enjoy like here, South Africa could be cool but it still has a different accent. So, at the end, I had to decide between Australia and the UK. I thought Australia would be amazing because there are so many sexy guys there, they are really hot, surfing, beaches and culture is similar to Brazil, it could be a dream but I just remember the difference the time’s difference between Australia and Brazil, when it is day time in Australia is night in Brazil and that could be a big drama because I have friends like they broke their relationships because of that, and they have parents very upset because sometimes your parents don’t realise that when they call you like 3 am, maybe you don’t realise and you give a wrong answer for something that should be sweet.

(Joel, 33, Brazil)

Joel chose the UK as a destination because of his perception of British English over others:

I think that the UK has the pure English, the most beautiful accent ever, it is a powerful and beautiful country and it has a mixed culture of the world is like can be happy for everyone so I decided to go there.

(Joel, 33, Brazil)

Other interviewees told of their interest in pursuing further education as the main motivation to come to the UK:

I want to learn English and maybe try to do some studies.

(Lara, 28, Colombia)

I finished my 11th grade and I wanted to come here and study at the university.

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

I see myself living in my home, with my dog, working in a normal job and getting ready to take a place in a university or to do a course.

(Angel, 36 Brazil)
I decided to study accounting and that was more than a year ago, but for different reasons I went through a period when lots of things happened. I just like went back to exams literally last week.

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

Thus, this theme explains immigration amongst the interviewees from a perspective of aspirations and a future beyond sex work.

3.2.3. The London Factor: Seeking Freedom and Living in a Cosmopolitan city

The analysis also found excerpts that suggest the interviewees linked the UK to a perception of freedom and tolerance. They saw immigration as an opportunity to shift their sense of repression as told in common parlance:

*I love this city, I feel like one more here, I don’t feel out of place, I am a very sophisticated guy, elegant, I like to be stylish, express myself but I don’t like that people look at me much because that scares me.*

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

*I decided to come to the UK because it is very cosmopolitan because there are people from different countries because the UK is open mind.*

(Evaristo, 42, Colombia)

*I thought that here there wasn’t racism, but that is bullshit because I had to ‘eat’ all that on my face (laughing).*

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

Most particularly, the perception of freedom was related to London. For example, Giacomo, who came to London for the first time when he was 17, was doing his undergraduate studies in Italy and came during the summer break to study English and to gain work experience. Recalling that time, he related that he ‘fell in love with the city’ because of the sense of freedom that was connected with his sexual orientation. He told about his first sexual experience with another man and the feelings that it provoked – ‘*I could enjoy for what I haven’t done and I gave myself how I haven’t done in Italy.*’ After few months, he returned to Italy, dropped his undergraduate studies and moved permanently in London:

*I came to London for freedom of expression, to do whatever I fuck want to do without anybody looking at me or pointing a finger of me because I am different or I am somebody may have been perceived as unethical or immoral.*

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)
This theme explains immigration from a perspective of autonomy and acceptance amongst the participants.

3.2.4. **Sex Workers Seeking Better Working Conditions in London**

This theme concentrated on the experiences of interviewees who became sex workers in the first receiving country. It describes the reasons for which they decided to leave the first receiving country, and what driven them to immigrate to the UK.

As it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, eight of eleven interviewees who immigrated to a first receiving country before the UK became sex workers. The majority had worked in different settings such as brothels, streets, flats and windows, and some had operated in several European countries for short periods. After years of working in this manner, they decided to emigrate again because they were experiencing difficulties such as language barriers, unsafe sex work environments, and economic crisis that impacted their daily life as sex workers.

A recurrent problem reported by the interviewees was language barriers as a hindrance to developing their work. As such, Martin told of problems with communication with clients when he was working in Belgium. Despite the fact that he was working with a Brazilian friend who helped him to translate, he felt frustrated and decide to leave because he did not want to learn French: *‘I was tired and I didn’t want to start another language from scratch.’*

And Leo, who felt disappointed about working in Italy because of the language:

> I went to Milano, Italy, and it was so difficult because the language was complicated, it was a complicated life.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

Then, difficulties in communicate, motivated interviewees to immigrate to a country where they could not have this problem. In this manner, some decided to come to the UK because they knew English and, in their perspective, it could facilitate their quick engagement in the local sex market:
I decided to come here because I speak a bit of English and, of course, there are other countries which are better as Germany, Switzerland, France, but the problem was the language.

(Evaristo, 42, Colombia)

I came to England because I speak English and I could stay until I get confident about the language and explore more opportunities in the country.

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

In addition, participants reported concerns about their personal safety. Angel and Leo, told that the death of two colleagues, who were also sex workers, provoked anxiety:

In Malaga, I met a guy ‘X’ [name removed] from Sao Paulo, and he told me to come to Milano ... then the guy that I told you died in Madrid and I was so afraid.

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

It was a big Friday 2009, I remember because he said – ‘I worked too much I am going to a hotel because it is difficult to sleep’, and he was gone and after three days the police called – ‘you know this guy, he is dead’, and then everybody was desperate because the police didn’t say how he died. We thought maybe it was a client or it was the police or something like that because he was illegal in the house.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

In addressing the push factors for their emigration, the pull factors to select the UK as a new receiving country became apparent. In this way, interviewees were attracted to the UK because of the better sex work conditions:

I came because the work because people told me that here you can work well, thus I decided to come.

(Pedro, 28, Brazil)

Things in the UK are the same like in Bulgaria, maybe these things are quieter here, people here are more discreet and police here is less scary.

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

Finally, interviewees decided to leave the first receiving country because of economic issues. As such, Evaristo stated:

I migrated here because in Spain the things are really bad because there is an economic crisis.

(Evaristo, 42, Colombia)
Indeed, the great majority of these participants were attracted to the UK because of their perspective of a strong economic situation compared to other European countries:

*London is one of the cities where you can work better and also because the UK is in a better economic situation that the rest of Europe.*

(Carlos, 42, Spain)

*I came because this work, to make more money.*

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

To this end, Carlos, who had worked for several years as an independent sex worker in Spain, explained his perspective about a more profitable sex market in London:

*There are more people who are better off. Of course, there are poor people or people who are working £6 per hour ... More clients, more calls, I have more clients that I have in Spain and I can charge more money of course. In Spain, I charged 30 Euros, here I can charge £100.*

(Carlos, 42, Spain)

There were other specific financial problems that participants reported such as debts, loans, or the necessity of sending money to their countries of origin. For example, Eva, who related her difficulties selling sex for first time on Greek streets without speaking the language – ‘*when I started working there, I learnt it. I learnt my Greek from the streets, from the clients.*’ Despite Eva receiving first-hand information from another trans people about ‘how to work’, she struggled to negotiate with clients:

*She was from Bulgaria and explained me well, for example, if he asks me weird things I can ask for more money, but when the client gave me 30 Euros I thought it was because he hasn’t more money, I didn’t understand things clearly because it was the first time for me doing this, you know, for me was like, he gives me money and I fuck him, and no problem, you know, but the problem started when I have to understand what exactly involves this work, then I became very nervous.*

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

After seven years working as a street sex worker in Greece, financial problems and debts pushed Eva to emigrate again. She was attracted to the economic prosperity of the UK: ‘*I thought I would come here make money to pay these, save money to put my boobs and then I will go back.*’

For some like Leo, the necessity of sending money to his home country motivated a new emigration:
Compared to the first immigration that the interviewees acknowledged the role of family and friends, the second immigration was mainly facilitated by friends and acquaintances linked to sex work. Participants explained that these friends and acquaintances had strong connections that helped them to move from one country to another and to join specific sex work settings.

As such, Leo told after years of working as an escort in Spain had decided to move to a different country. One of his friends recommended him to a manager of a local brothel in London and offered also accommodation. During the interview, he spoke about his continuous movement within Europe facilitated by people that he usually met working as sex worker.

Thus, this theme portrays that participants decided a second immigration mainly attracted by the specific characteristics of the UK sex market such as a higher number of clients and income, and connections (friends and acquaintances) in the local sex market.

3.2.5. Continuity of Sex Work Activities in the UK

Some of the interviewees who sold sex before leaving their home countries (6/25) reported their intention of taking on other types of jobs when they immigrated to the UK. However, they said that difficulties drove them to sell sex again.

For example, Brooke, who was 19 when he decided to immigrate because wanted to achieve a university degree in London. He wanted a new start after five years of working as a ‘prostitute’ in Portugal. However, language barriers constrained Brooke’s opportunities into the regular labour market: ‘When I got here, I only knew one thing, I wanted to study but I didn’t have any money to study or anything. I couldn’t afford anything.’ Months after his arrival, he decided to start selling sex in London:

I started sex work, the sex industry but within the community, the Portuguese-Latin community, because it was easier for me to do that […]

(Leo, 26, Brazil)
Because of my language, because people from the community know me, in Portugal already knew me where I was from, they said: ‘This guy who was doing business in Portugal is here.’ We sort of maintain contact here, they trust me.

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

In the same way, John, when he arrived in London after selling sex in Spain, thought: ‘that was like all was in the past, we thought we never are going to do that again [laughing].’ However, he could not get a job because he did not speak any English: ‘We were looking for cleaning job or anything, we were looking for any random job, but we could not get anything, honestly we did not get anything.’ In these circumstances, John decided to sell sex again, in a male brothel in London:

We needed money for a month deposit and a month of rent, you know to rent somewhere place because I did not want to go back to my home, not in a million years, that was not an option at that time. I prefer to go and beg on the streets rather than go back there, that was not an option in my head, so, as I said we could not get any job and then what came across was the advertisement of a sort of gay brothel.

(John, 30, Spain)

On the other hand, Indigo, who had worked as escort in Spain, came to the UK to study English and work as a teacher in a dancing school. However, Indigo told that after some months in London, he saw the opportunity to start posting his adverts:

At the beginning, I was only studying and working in a dancing school, but what happen is that because I have worked like this in Barcelona, then I didn’t have any problem to do it here again, then I posted my advertisements and I started to do outcalls.

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

A somewhat similar story was related by Geordie. He who had worked in different sex work settings in Brazil but when moved in London, Geordie decided to have a different type of job. He worked as a kitchen porter in a ‘posh’ restaurant in Kensington - which helped him to improve his English:

I worked 55 hours as a kitchen porter, it was a very hard job, but I did well. I didn’t speak anything in English and I was pretending that I didn’t speak anything so I was very quiet. But from that time when I worked in middle class restaurants I started my progress in English because I had contact with many, many levels. Most people in England go to school to study, but foreigners no, but I went directly to high level South Kensington...
where people tend to mix, they are quite and well spoken. So, it was never slowly, I was pushed to the high top.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

After a year, Geordie decided to return to sex work mainly motivated by a higher income from escorting:

_The reason why I stopped working in restaurants as a runner, it was because I started working as an escort, ok? It was because I started working as an escort and I had a job in a club and it started to be very difficult because if I want to say, I cannot work this day, they said you don’t want to work because you have a client of 200 or 300 pounds. So, you start to lose credibility so they told me – you know something or do one or another. I really put my face out so now let’s go_

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

Similarly, Romeo said:

_I wanted to work but I didn’t speak English and then my only job opportunities were those like washing dishes and I had to work too much and earn very little money and I knew that as an escort I could earn much more money, and that was the story_

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

Thus, this theme suggest that interviewees decided to return to sex work because of situations of unemployment due to language barriers, hard work conditions or low-paid jobs.

### 3.2.6. Selling Sex for the First Time as Migrants

This theme describes the entrance in sex work amongst those participants who were at this stage immigrants. As it was mentioned in a previous section, 8 participants started selling sex in the first receiving country (EU country), while 11 sold sex for the first time in the UK. Hence, this theme provides insights into the experiences of the 19 participants who sold sex for the first time after their emigration. Thus, this theme clustered the following sub-themes: ‘motivations’, ‘circumstances’ and ‘reflections’ related to these experiences.

#### a. Motivations

The whole group of interviewees reported ‘money’ as the main factor driving their entrance into sex work. As such, Gareth and Lara said:

_The persuasion was especial because it was not ‘reales’ [Brazilian currency], it was British money [laughing] and it is four times my
currency, almost. Yes, so he gave me £200 for that, so £200 at that time, I should work using my student visa like two weeks of work. I thought what! And I only spent 40 minutes because the guy came really fast, and I thought – seriously!

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

I think he told me that I could do extra money.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

Similar to Gareth and Lara, many other interviewees decided to enter in the sex market when they compared the low wage (about £6 per hour) for unskilled employment, which is typically available for migrants, against a higher income from sex work (e.g., £60–80 per half an hour).

Nevertheless, ‘money’ was linked to the different type of needs amongst interviewees. For example, the great majority connected the need for money to the development of personal projects. This perspective was reported by three of the participants in the following way:

I decided I wanted to take it on for the studies, but working as a hairdresser could not be possible.

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

I started working in sex work because I wanted money to pay the surgery

(Karla, 36, Spain/Brazil)

I am doing this to help my family in Brazil, then my mother can buy a house because I want to do some money, let’s do it for a while one more year or two years and that is fine

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

Another recurrent factor associated with the engagement in sex work was related to sexual life. For some interviewees (04), having a sexually active life was an opportunity that could be added to the fact of getting paid for having sex:

My friend gave me this idea, and I think is very good because you enjoy sex and you get paid for it, then more than better and if you can save money to do something else, then much better.

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

I was 18 years old and I had lots of sex by then, I had sex since I was 14, I had boyfriends, I did clubbing, I met guys, it was like, I was not new to sex. I was 18 years old and I had lots of sex anyway and I thought, ‘Ok, why not, maybe I can do that,’ because in those days I was having sex anyway [laughing]. I am going to do that anyway with guys on the weekend when
I go to clubs and I am doing it anyway, so why do not get money out of there, which could work, let’s see.

(John, 30, Spain)

What happen and then my friend told me: ‘Listen to all the things that you are doing and you are complaining about, you always going out, you always having a fling here and there, right? Why don’t you just charge people?’ You know and so, ‘listen to me and you also very well in that and this, I have a couple of clients that you may be interested and whatever’, he wanted to connect me.

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

Hence, participants made the decision to enter into sex work motivated mainly by economic reasons, but there was a diversity of needs driving the engagement. Further, the findings of this study describes the entrance as male sex work by choice (Cates and Markley, 1992) because none reported coercion.

b. Circumstances

In addition, the conditions or contexts in which these interviewees decided to start selling sex for the first time was varied. Certainly, the interviewees gave an account of the process of coming to an understanding of sex work through an awareness of the underlying issues surrounding their contexts and realities.

In this way, some participants told of their struggle to insert themselves in the local labour market. As Pedro, a Brazilian who immigrated to Spain, related:

*I couldn’t find a job quickly. I arrived in Spain in November and in December my mother went to Brazil on holidays and I had some friends from my hometown who were living in Spain. My mother gave me money to go there and visit them. I was there for a month and I couldn’t find a job.*

(Pedro, 28, Brazil)

Language barriers to obtaining a ‘normal’ job was also reported by Eva, who immigrated to Greece seeking a better paid job and to reunite with her mother after years of living apart. Nevertheless, she could not get any work available. Distressed at the prospect of her possible return to Bulgaria, Eva decided to sell sex on the streets: ‘I wanted to get a job and don’t to go back to Bulgaria [...] any job, I was ready to kill somebody for money [laughing].’
Rejection also occurred in the case of some participants, such Genevieve, a Bulgarian trans people. She felt discriminated every time that she tried to achieve employment:

> It was because every time that I searched for work, immediately people saw me they realised I was gay and they didn’t give me the job. There were very few people who understand me and accepted me, but other immediately they realised I was gay they told me, ‘I don’t have a job for you,’ or sometimes they say, ‘I don’t want you in my job’. These are normal things that happen in Bulgaria.

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

Genevieve understood her engagement in sex work as her only choice to support her parents:

> I couldn’t get another job and I am in charge of my mother and father and I have to give them everything because they trust me and if they have any problem they come to me, I am the person who takes care of them

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

Other participants decided their entrance because of hard work conditions. For example, Martin, a Brazilian who immigrated to Portugal seeking for better job opportunities. He remembered with sadness his arrival:

> This guy picked me up at the airport and left me in this, you know, in a hostel but you know these crowded places, really crowded, mainly Brazilian people in there, two, three, four people per room and this guy supposedly had to help me to find a job, but in nine years I never saw the guy again, just that day and then he disappeared and the rest I was completely by myself and I only had 500 euros in my pocket.

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

Fortunately, Martin managed to establish himself in Portugal and began working in restaurants as a waiter. After seven years of hard work, he was confronted with economic restrictions. At this stage, he compared his precarious situation with a friend who was working as an escort. It encouraged him to take the decision to engage in male sex work:

> I spent seven years without going to my country because I never had enough money to go, because in Portugal, everybody knows how Portugal is, the economy is so broke and it wasn’t bad, had but it wasn’t good either at that time and my friend was doing this kind of job. So then going back when I started in Belgium, I met up with my friend and he was doing this and earning money to do whatever he wanted. Obviously if you feel like, ok, I thought, let’s give a try, you know?

(Martin, 27, Brazil)
In the same way, Leo recalled that his decision to emigrate from Brazil was related to hard work conditions. Yet ironically, he found himself working in a restaurant from 9 AM until midnight, and earning about 400 Euros per month. It made him feel that he would ‘die working’ in Portugal. Moreover, his legal situation was complicated because his visa had expired. His employer promised to help him by providing a contract, but it did not happen. Feeling depressed and anxious about his future, Leo met on the chatrooms a Brazilian escort operating in Spain. The escort recommended Leo to a manager of a brothel in Spain, and consequently, he travelled there by bus, but without having a valid visa - ‘when you don’t have anything to lose, you just go. I think it was that happened to me, I never had anything to lose, just life.’

Nevertheless, not all interviewees described hard conditions in the first receiving country leading to engagement in sex work. For some interviewees, such as Lara, who not only found an opportunity of acquiring extra money in sex work, but also a job that allows her free time to enjoy social life. She was born in Colombia but immigrated to Germany when she was 15 years old because her mother had married a German citizen. She recalled having a ‘pretty good life’ and a good relationship with her family. After completing her further education, Lara obtained a job as a geriatric nurse. Nonetheless, she was dissatisfied with her ‘very hard job’ and asked herself: ‘Is this what I want to do for the rest of my life?’ She felt that working as a nurse restrained her social enjoyment with friends. The opportunity surfaced during her holidays in Spain when she took the advice of a friend and went to a brothel to earn additional money to pay her expenses.

Similar to participants who sold sex for the first time in the first receiving country, 11 interviewees who became sex workers in the UK reported a diversity of conditions driving their entrance. For example, Evaristo, a Colombian who, after living in Spain for several years, decided to immigrate to the UK, told of language barriers to obtaining a job:

When I was there, I tried to get a job but I couldn’t because of the language. Also, because I felt really frustrated because when I went to a
supermarket and people are really close, I tried to speak in English but it didn’t work, you know.

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

For Jake, a Spaniard who graduated in business, entrance into sex work was the only way to overcome a harsh situation that he was experiencing. He had lived and studied in the UK during the 90s, after which he returned to Spain. Years later, the economic crisis in Spain and personal bankruptcy made him return seeking employment opportunities. He believed that a degree obtained in the UK and possessing national insurance and language skills might facilitate his entry into the labour market. Firstly, he sought jobs related to his education, but after a few weeks he started applying for any job available:

I applied for very basic jobs to those jobs very related to my career, but I couldn’t find any. I also look for a job doing theatre, but I speak English like I just arrived here, I even tried to get a job in Starbucks but I couldn’t. People can’t believe that I can’t find a job because I have a good CV, I speak five languages, but I don’t what happen, I have tried everything and I couldn’t get anything.

(Jake, 36, Spain)

Without a job and money to keep his accommodation, he started sleeping in the underground stations. In this circumstance, he decided to sell sex for the first time:

I was in the situation that I came to sleep to Paddington station because I lost everything here [...] I got in a very bad economic situation and I only had this [showing his clothes]. I was sleeping on the streets, you know, I come to sleep every night to Paddington as other people who sleep there.

(Jake, 36, Spain)

Likewise, other participants gave an account of feelings of depression and frustration working in unskilled jobs in London. To his end, Gareth related:

Everything was weird, I didn’t like anything, I didn’t like food, I didn’t like that I couldn’t speak with people, I didn’t like that I had to work like as cleaner and then doing the washing up, I found it kind of humiliating because I used to work in a better job in Brazil, but I couldn’t speak to people and I couldn’t understand what they ask me to do, I felt kind of humiliating, and I started to feel depressed.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

After many years of working in a cleaning company, Gareth and his partner were jobless, did not speak any English, did not have a valid visa to stay in the country, and the need to pay their living costs. Under these circumstances, Gareth decided to start selling sex for the first time:
I started in this business because we have some problems, we worked together and we both lost our jobs. He couldn’t do anything and I couldn’t speak English at that time, still my English is not good, but at least I can communicate. But we ended up in this because we need money to pay the bills, rent and everything and then started doing this and my partner was looking for job but he could find anything.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

Similar to Gareth, Jarvis revealed that his condition of being in the country illegally made him start selling sex:

I was illegal and I didn’t have documents for me was hard the risk of living here [...] I thought I need to go somewhere else because it was very difficult to find a job.

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

It is important to note that three participants who never engaged in sex work in their countries of origin decided to come to the UK to sell sex for the first time. In all cases, these males were not only attracted to the economic situation in the UK but also because of the attributes related to the sex market. For example, Gilbert came to the UK to sell sex for the first time because of the economic problems that his mother was facing. He received information about the sex market from a transvestite who was already working as a sex worker:

I met a guy who was doing this, and we always talk about this, how it works and he explained me everything and then we became friends and he knew another transsexual from Brazil. I have met her as well, and she was a transsexual, she has an operation and everything and she works in Italy, and she was so rich. We spoke about my family and everything, then she told me, ‘You have brown hair and dark skin, that attract Europeans, why don’t you try to move to London? It is very good spot, go there, stay for a while and work in this, make some money and you will have a good time.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

Likewise, Daniel, came to London to sell sex for the first time because he had received information about the sex market from a friend. He came with only £150 and immediately after his arrival, went to a local brothel seeking for employment. For Daniel, his engagement was related to higher earnings: ‘I thought I don’t want to work for pennies.’ He considers that sex work will permit him to plan a comfortable life in the short term:

I will do that until I will be 30, until then I can do something else with my life, or I would stress myself, working and stressing myself and feeling like 30 years but I would be still 25.

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)
Notably, these participants’ stories mainly described sex work as an option for immigrants who were struggling to obtain work or were experiencing bad work conditions. The narratives linked the process of immigration with feelings of sadness and hopelessness. Thus, for some immigrants, sex work surfaced as a survival strategy, while for others, it was viewed as a means of improving their living conditions. Then, the entry in sex work emerged in a context of personal struggle during the immigration process that surfaced emotional issues for most of the interviewees. Indeed, selling sex for some represented an escape from the harsh realities of life. Other participants in this study felt completely hopeless seeking a ‘normal job’ or working in situations that created their perception that they lived in even worse conditions than in their own countries. Jobs such as catering, kitchen assistant, and cleaning were described by participants as ‘hard jobs’, for which they earned only a small amount of money. In these circumstances, they evaluated the perceived advantages of becoming sex workers.

In addition, the great majority of participants connected their entrance into sex work with the presence of partners, friends, and/or acquaintances linked to sex work networks. The role of these connections was to assist the participants, inter alia, to spot opportunities to begin selling sex, provide specific information about websites, approximate monthly income, type of sexual services, and prices:

*I started when I was, to be honest, I can say that I started when I was 19, but not working every day. I started because a guy told me, ‘You are handsome, go and become a prostitute [a putear]’. Maybe he didn’t tell me ‘putear’. I think he told me that I could do extra money. I think everything started because my friends, all the time my friends have been girls, they work like this.*

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

*At that time, I was working in a club and he [boyfriend] was working as an escort in a house. When I worked in the club I went to pick him up at his work and sometimes he said to me, ‘I have this client, let’s do it together.*

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

*But I had another friend who was also from my hometown who was working as an escort but at that time he was in Switzerland and he gave me some contacts. He also spoke with this friend who I was living with.*
about my difficulties to find a job, and he suggested to me friend that I
could do escorting because you can make money and it could be easier
because he had already some contacts in Spain.
(Pedro, 28, Brazil)

I decided I wanted to take it on for the studies but working as a hairdresser
could not be possible. At the time, I had a friend that he was doing it so I
tried and it worked.
(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

I came directly to [name of the brothel removed] because a guy told me
about this and he worked there when he was studying at the university.
(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

Interestingly, nearly all of the interviewees claimed that, at some point, they
discussed their engagement with partners or friends:

My partner was in a group like five or seven guys, all of them were escorts.
So, that made my start like ok why not.
(Jarvis, 37 Brazil)

My ex, he was an escort and I do it because I want to save the relationship
and it was my first relationship because I was not in love before.
(Gino, 24, Brazil/Italian)

According to the data compiled for this study, at the time of their engagement
in sex work, interviewees’ circumstances ranged from unemployed to working
in unskilled jobs. For the majority of participants, the entry in sex work was
evoked expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, frustration and sadness
because of the circumstances that drove them to make this decision. Despite
the principal reason for entrance into sex work being the economic incentive
(‘money’), there were multiple additional motivations and circumstances.
Moreover, this study also found that, for some participants who had never sold
sex before, the entrance into sex work represented an economical alternative
that was always present, even before they left their home countries, as was
demonstrated in Leo and Guillermo’s excerpts.

c. Reflections

This sub-theme collected statements that express how participants feel about
their insertion in sex work:

I always did everything right, I never needed to do this job because some
people come for this job, when I said this job, I mean the escort thing. At
the beginning, it was really hard because I never did this job because I had
other goals in my life, you know, and actually I never thought I could to do
his job. When it happened, I was kind of, you know when you are mad with

111
the universe like oh I have been working so hard and I don’t have anything. I didn’t build anything in all those years so maybe I should try to do things in the wrong way.  
(Martin, 27, Brazil)

When you are in need and desperate, you are able to do things that you wouldn’t do in normal circumstances.  
(Jake, 36, Spain)

This is basically made money because I am 41, but in the website, I wrote 37. I have to say that I am younger, and it is like that I am not going to be 60 year old man working. I can become 100 years old but I don’t want to follow the parameters that people impose you, the society or the system that you have to work until the 60s, that you have to pay your pension and then you can retire, no way!. I don’t have time for that. I have migrated, I have been to many places, I went here and there, I went to so many places, I have been in Canarias, Barcelona, Madrid, you know, I am going to do my own pension, if right now I don’t do anything to get money I will be f*cked.  
(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

Under closer examination, these excerpts show that participants expressed mixed thoughts and feelings related to their decision to engage in sex work. All are related to the physical, emotional and economic implications of their work.

3.3. Summary

The data obtained for this thesis contributes to identify different trajectories of migration amongst the male sex workers who took part of the study. Yet, the two core themes introduced in this chapter describe the migratory experience that participants followed towards the UK and their entrance in sex work in different stages of this process. These core themes comprise several themes and sub-themes which frequency varied amongst the sample. The table 4 shows the frequency of answers per theme:

| Table 4. Frequency of Participants’ responses relating to push and pull factors of migration |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Themes                                        | Total of Participants | Frequency | Percentage |
| Push Factors for emigration                   | Economic constrains  | 25          | 13           | 52%          |
|                                               | Poor employment prospects | 25          | 16           | 64%          |
|                                               | Same-sex desire and homophobia  | 25          | 17           | 68%          |
| Pull Factors                                  | Following a ‘dream’ to Europe (immigrate to another European country) | 11          | 07           | 63.63%       |
Seeking opportunities of self-development in the UK (all participants) 25 15 60%

The London factor: seeking for freedom and living in a cosmopolitan city (all participants) 25 11 44%

Sex workers seeking for better working conditions in London (participants that sold sex in the first receiving country) 11 08 72.72%

Continuity with sex work activities in the UK 06 06 100%
Jobless 06 02 33.3%
Low-paid jobs 06 04 66.6%

Selling sex for the first time as migrants 25 19 76%
• Motivations: 'Money' 19 19 100%
• Circumstances
Jobless 19 05 26.3%
Low-paid jobs 19 14 73.7%
Extra-Money 19 01 5.26%
• Reflections 19 19 100%

The core theme Push factors for emigration: ‘Leaving the country of origin’ contains three themes ‘Economic constrains’, ‘Poor employment prospects’ and ‘Same-sex desire and homophobia’. Hence, it indicates economic and non-economic factors driving emigration. The analysis found that more than half of the participants contributed to the first two themes (52% and 64%). In this manner, it was confirmed that economic factors were substantially present in the data collected. In addition, the analysis contributed to expose the connection between the theme ‘Economic constrains’, that mainly depicts family experiences of poverty, and the entrance in sex work of six participants before their emigration. There were also connections between ‘Economic constrains’ and the theme ‘Poor employment prospects’. This connection may be explained as a consequence of dropping out of school amongst these interviewees that consequently reduced their opportunities because of their low level of education. However, despite the significance of economic factors, these themes did not by any means, dominate completely this core theme. A great proportion of interviewees contributed to the theme ‘Same-sex desire and homophobia’ (68%). This theme illustrates the influence of the awareness and disclosure of sexual orientation in the decision of leaving the home country. It reveals the effect of socio-cultural and emotional dimensions in the process of
migration. Therefore, this core theme labelled as ‘Push factors for migration’ described the participants’ understanding of their different contexts and realities that were linked to social and psychological aspects related to economic, but most importantly, to non-economic factors such as homophobia, sense of inferiority, sense of rejection and violence as factors influencing the decision to emigrate.

The core theme ‘Pull factors for migration towards the UK’ contains six themes: ‘Following a dream to Europe’, ‘The London factor: seeking freedom and living in a cosmopolitan city’, ‘Seeking opportunities for self-development in the UK’, ‘Sex workers seeking better working conditions in London’, ‘Continuity of sex work activities in the UK’ and ‘Selling sex for the first time as migrants’. This core theme represents a range of factors attracting participants to this country. The frequencies of the first three themes expose the influence of individual expectations in selecting a receiving country for immigration (64%, 60% and 44%) whereas the last theme indicates the attraction of some participants who had experienced sex work in other European countries to a specific labour market in London (100%). In this manner, this study suggests potential connections between factors that attracted participants to this country and the type of immigrants that they represent. Therefore, the analysis found a synergy between economic and non-economic themes acting as cooperative forces that shaped the experiences of the migration and the involvement of sex work amongst interviewees.

The next section discusses main findings and theme connections in light of relevant literature.

4. Discussion

**Push Factors for Emigration**

The findings of this study corroborate human migration as a phenomenon intimately associated with economic factors. The theme ‘economic constrains’ reveals that the majority of participants generated initial thoughts of emigration years before their departure. These thoughts were linked to familial experiences
of scarcity that more than half of the interviewees reported, independently of the country origin. In this way, and similar to other studies on sex workers in Europe (Vogel, 2009; Weine et al., 2013), the interviewees decided to leave their countries feeling responsible to help their mothers. Further, this observation insinuates the impact of poverty on the internal relationships of fatherless families as those described by participants. Moreover, this theme depicts economic deprivation as a strong determinant of the entrance into sex work of six participants before their emigration. Some started at a very young age (14–20) because of the necessity of placing ‘food on the table’ and consequently, they had to abandon the school. These participants can be categorised as young male sex workers, a typology described by other researchers (Cusick, 2002).

Consistently, the theme ‘poor employment prospects’ explains emigration connected with traditional economic factors that commonly characterise labour migration as the majority of the interviews reported salary dissatisfaction for unskilled jobs and hard work conditions. These aspects have been also found in studies focused on internal female migrants working as sex workers (Van Blerk, 2008). In addition, there were some connections between ‘poor employment prospects’ and ‘economic constrains’ as poverty conditioned, in many cases, low educational attainment amongst interviewees, and consequently the lack of opportunities that pushed them to leave their home countries seeking for better opportunities in labour market. However, participants also spoke about non-economic reasons associated with work life such as lack of opportunities for self-development, career prospects and absence of appreciation as workers. These findings support the standpoint that poor jobs not only provide poor incomes, but also disempower and devalue workers with a negative impact on their autonomy, personal development, and self-esteem, which finally generates social exclusion (Gough et al., 2006).

Additionally, the theme ‘same-sex sexual desire and homophobic’ was an equally an important component of the core theme push factor for emigration: Leaving the country of origin. In this way, this study validates other studies
(e.g. Asencio and Acosta, 2009) that informed economic and non-economic reasons were equally important factors in leaving the country. The meaningfulness of this theme was related to the linkages with family experiences. It was particularly noteworthy when interviewees evoked the process of self-awareness of their sexual orientation. These memories were realised as moments of transition that led them to their self-acceptance of same-sex sexual desire. This process finally generated their initial rationales for emigrating. This theme also portrays a resistance to social pressure within heteronormative milieus. Many participants reported negative thoughts and feelings - guilt, shame, and fear; while projecting a ‘normal life’ (e.g., having female partners) as a way of self-protection against homophobia. Some interviewees reported suicide attempts and running away from home. Certainly, sexuality and homophobia have also been observed as driving factors of emigration amongst the LGTB population (Asencio and Acosta, 2009; Bhugra et al., 2011) and amongst male sex workers (Mai, 2009c; Vogel, 2009; Mai, 2011b; Wirtz et al., 2014). In this manner, the findings corroborate the importance of LGBT groups as invisible minorities that can be more vulnerable. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that, for the study participants, emigration seemed to be a response to precariousness, oppressive conditions, and homophobia.

**Pull Factors for Migration towards the UK**

The core theme ‘pull factors for immigration towards the UK’, by contrast, was represented as a ‘dream’. The narratives of our interviewees show that immigration as a ‘dream’ provided new dimensions of material realities, autonomy, and a turning point in their lives. This theme was more recurrent amongst participants from Latin America. They associated their immigration to the representation of the ‘American Dream’ which has been also found amongst Latino non-sex workers (Garni, 2010; Hill and Torres, 2010). This connection can be explained by the large historical flows of immigration to that country. Likewise, immigration as a ‘dream’ has been also found amongst Latino trans people working as sex workers in Europe (Vogel, 2009).
Besides, the theme ‘the London factor: seeking freedom and living in a cosmopolitan city’ suggests that the selection of a receiving country emerged from the awareness about personal needs and desires that matched with some characteristics that participants attributed to that country. In this manner, many participants associated the UK with ‘freedom’ and ‘tolerance’, while London was imagined as a ‘cosmopolitan’ city. This perspective concords with a study centred in LGTB groups (non-sex workers) that perceived the UK as a more positive and accepting country (Bhugra et al., 2011). In line with this, a study found that migrant male sex workers in Moscow reported a great sexual freedom when they moved to this global city. However, these feelings were mixed with a persistent fear that their relatives in homelands would learn of behaviours (Wirtz et al., 2014). Hence, this theme was a significant pull factor that explains that our interviewees sought acceptance and safety in a receiving country as a result of their same-sex sexual identity and ethnicity.

In addition, the theme labelled as ‘seeking opportunities for self-development in the UK’ show other key motivations for immigration to the UK such as learning English and pursuing further education. In this manner, these findings suggest that the selection of a receiving country was linked to a sense of self-renewal and enrichment of their lives. It seems also strongly connected with the push factors ‘economic constrains’ and ‘poor employment prospects’ explained above as they represent a response to their needs.

Moreover, the themes ‘continuity of sex work activities in the UK’ and ‘selling sex for the first time as migrants’ explain that the majority of interviewees immigrated without the intention of engaging in sex work in the UK, but eventually decided their entrance feeling disappointed, hopeless and anxious because of their circumstances. Similar to studies centred in MSW (Biello et al., 2017), interviewees told that money was the main factor leading their decision. However, the extent of their financial conditions varied greatly. While for some participants, sex work created a viable opportunity for survival in a context of unemployment caused by language barriers or illegal migration status; for other interviewees, it was a way of improving their poor living
standards working in low-paid jobs. The majority spoke about an increasing sense of frustration that made them think they were living in ‘worse’ conditions than in their home countries. These findings corresponds with previous research that show the lack of opportunities available as a result of poverty and low educational attainment amongst vulnerable groups that migrate, despite that engaging in migration is initially perceived as a strategy to access more prosperous work (Van Blerk, 2008). On the other hand, some motivations for the engagement in sex work amongst our participants (e.g. support a lifestyle, obtaining extra-money and having a high sexual life) seem to be linked to the themes ‘the London factor: seeking freedom and living in a cosmopolitan city’ as participants perceived that London provides new social and sexual spaces where a prospering sex industry offers a more rewarding labour market.

In this manner, the findings suggest that interviewees were dealing not only with financial issues, but also with the way that they fitted into the host country - its culture, language, legal framework, and its labour market. These findings corroborate studies on migrant sex workers who reported financial needs, lack of stable employment, inadequate income work (Mimiaga et al., 2008; Weine et al., 2013; Wirtz et al., 2014) as main factors leading the entrance in sex work as well as the perception of having a chance to improve their lifestyles (Mai, 2004a; 2004b; 2006; Wilcox and Christmann, 2008; Mai, 2009a, b; 2009c; 2011a, b; 2012, 2013). The findings seem to expose linkages between human mobility and entrance in sex work as an expression of human agency and as capacity of response to structural factors that determined labour force (Castles, 2010).

Moreover, the findings of this thesis identified some commonalities between migration and the involvement in sex work. It was identified the necessity of supporting their families as a strong reason to reinforce their decision of migration and later their entrance in sex work. Then, it can be proposed as one of the qualities interweaving both phenomena. The decision of participants unveiled the relationship between the self and important ‘others’ (family), as expressions of giving up one’s self in favour of satisfying the needs of these
'others’. This finding contradicts early authors’ contributions (e.g. Earls and David, 1989) who claim that family background may be less important than other factors driving entry into male sex work, and rather supports those (Markos et al., 1994; Mai, 2011a; Mai, 2012) who pointed out its relevance. Moreover, it corroborates authors’ perspectives about the negative consequences of the socialisation process of the male gender role (Levant, 1996), particularly in contexts where these discourses do not join with poverty agendas. Hence, this study corresponds with authors that claim a miscellany of surroundings driving the engagement in sex work amongst migrant sex workers in the UK (Balfour and Allen, 2014).

In addition, nearly all participants linked their entrance to the male sex market with friends, partners, or acquaintances who were already working as sex workers. Similar descriptions have been reported in other studies on male sex workers (Srivastava and Goldbach, 2017). Our interviewees explained that they acted as sources of information and guided them in their entrance, but none thought that their decision was influenced by them. This finding confirms studies focused on MSW that listed ‘coercion’ amongst the least common reasons to start selling sex (Biello et al., 2017) and contradicts a study on migrant women who reported pressure from friends or acquaintances (Weine et al., 2013).

In addressing the implications of their entrance, the vast majority of participants expressed conflicting points of view. One the one hand, they clearly thought that immigration provided opportunities, particularly in a cosmopolitan city such as London where a blooming sex industry offers a more lucrative labour market. On the other hand, their engagement represented incorporation into a marginal, informal and stigmatised economic sector.

Conversely, the theme ‘sex workers seeking better work conditions in London’ describes the experience of participants who started selling sex in a first receiving country and came to the UK seeking for better sex work conditions. They were experiencing issues within the context of sex work such as language barriers, unsafe settings, individual financial problems, and economic
recession of the first receiving country. Hence, they selected the UK as a new receiving country because of the economic stability of the country, characteristics of the sex market and the presence of friends or acquaintances linked to sex work. These social networks helped them with temporal accommodation and their insertion into the local sex market. Indeed, the role of social ties has been acknowledged in migration studies focused on general population (Molnar, 2011; Borozan and Bojanic, 2012; Rodriguez et al., 2012). Nevertheless, this finding allows the understanding of the role of transnational networks linked to sex work, during the second immigration of this group, which seemed predominantly economic-labour orientated.
Chapter Six: Constructing a Work Identity as a Migrant Male Sex Worker

1. Overview
It has been claimed that the social organisation of sex work varies across countries and within societies. The position of sex workers within this organisation depends on working conditions and arrangements, the presence of other actors, ecological patterns and their dynamics. For this reason, this chapter is dedicated to examine the experiences of participants who were operating as internet-based escorts in London. Although escorts have been the subject of research attention (Bimbi and Parsons, 2005; Pruitt, 2005; Minichiello et al., 2008; Lee-Gonyea et al., 2009), most of these studies have been concentrated on sex work as an activity, failing to explore the individual learning process that involves the entrance in this wider economic sex market. In this manner, this chapter addresses the second research objective of this thesis: to examine the social organisation of male sex work in London, the types of male sex work, and routines and practices.

2. Exploring Sex Work as a Labour
The examination of sexual labour by its nature challenges discourses of prostitution, therefore, it is important to recap the three main theoretical frameworks to approach sex work. As it was explained in the chapter two, the prevailing divergence between the oppression paradigm and empowerment paradigm may cause limitations to study the experiences of commercial sex of our participants. While the oppression paradigm claims prostitution as a fundamental example of patriarchal relations and consequently a natural expression of women exploitation, the empowerment position demands the acknowledgment of sex work as another economic occupation and concede sex workers the same rights than any other workers (O’Neill, 2001; Sanders et al., 2009). From Zelizer’s perspective these ideological positions separate those who reduce prostitution to nothing but the sexual subordination of women from those who argue that the sale of sexual services is no different from other bodily-mediated exchanges (Zelizer, 2005). For this reason, the lenses of the polymorphous model were more appropriate to explore direct male sex work as a
labour market activity amongst migrants as this model accepts the co-existence of different type of experiences.

Moreover, the chapter five introduced findings that explains the entry into sex work amongst participants from the influence of lack of alternatives and economic constraints but also in their preference to other employment options, for a range of reasons. These findings support scholars who suggest treating commercial sex as a form of work, and therefore, setting analyses of labour processes and workplace relations in sex work in the context of broader social and economic trends (Sanders, 2005b; Brents and Hausbeck, 2010). Then, this chapter will be focused on the nature of the male escort market and to the various aspects that it involves. In so doing, the chapter seek to expose aspects and dimensions related to the work identity that interviewees have constructed as independent escorts as these aspects have often been left underexplored in male sex work.

3. Findings

This chapter describes the incorporation of the participants in the escorts’ sex market in London. At the date of the interview, all interviewees informed that were operating as independent internet-based escorts. The examination of their narratives show that their experiences were not homogeneous because of the different career paths that they followed. While nearly half had worked in different settings and European countries, others took part in sex work for the first time after their arrival in the UK.

Examining the data, five core themes became apparent: ‘Perceived self-image as escorts’, ‘Establishing presence as independent escorts’, ‘Establishing expertise as independent escorts’, ‘Expectations of others’ and ‘Role conflict and ambiguity’. Correspondingly, each core theme is composed of themes and sub-themes that outline the dimensions, qualities and meanings that participants have created about being independent escorts. These core themes are described as follows:
3.1. Core theme: Perceived Self-image as Escorts

This core theme presents statements that explain the way that interviewees have constructed their self-image of escorts. It clustered two main themes that are described as follows:

3.1.1. Self-Confidence to Fit into ‘The Pattern’ of an Escort

The analysis found excerpts that suggest that the majority of participants were aware of some physical and social attributes that may allow them to take part in the online sex marketplace. They acknowledged certain socio-demographic characteristics, physical descriptions, sexuality, sexual orientation and social demeanour; information frequently found as part of escorts profiles (Cameron et al., 1999; Pruitt, 2005; Agresti, 2009), as highly demanded in the sex market. Then, this theme denoted a sense of self-assurance about possessing some of these features, therefore, being able to take part of it.

This section is illustrated with real examples of advertisements that participants were using at the time of the interview. As such, Joel outlined his profile in the following way:

> Straight act guy, 27 years old, 6.5 height, and nice 8 inches of cock. I put some pictures, and I put a picture of my feet as well because they like this type of fetish.

(Joel, 33, Brazil)

It is important to note the inclusion of the description of the penis in Joel’s profile. Unsurprisingly, the description of the penis was a recurrent element in other profile descriptions because the penis is perceived as an essential element to developing the role of escort, independent of the sexual orientation or sexual role that interviewees were willing to provide. For example, in more common parlance, Gilbert (more bisexual than gay) and Evaristo (a bit bisexual) spoke about the importance of the penis’s size to succeed in the online marketplace of escorts:

> Of course, you need to have a big penis, if you don’t have to forget because you will never succeed as an escort, never.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)
How I sell myself? Well, I say my cock has this number of centimetres of length and a thick dick. I am a Latino, dark skin, no so tall, strong, and masculine and all these things.

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

Equally telling are data gathered from the interviewees who self-reported as trans people. To this end, Lara and Eva, who usually offer versatile sexual roles amongst their services, both highlighted the penis depiction in their adverts:

I am 27-year-old [reading her text], I am Latina beauty, great body. My height is 5, versatile, which means that you can be active or passive, with a juicy cock, 7 inches of cock.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

I am a fun, I am a transgender, that I come from Bulgaria, that I like to play games, that I like to be active and passive, that I have 9 inches of that. This what I remember he wrote in my advertisement.

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

Thus, the above statements support previous research (Pruitt, 2005; Piqueiras, 2013) that emphasised the significance that male escorts place on the penis size. Indeed, its importance has been considered ‘central to an understanding of masculinity’ (Rothschild, 2003, p. 597) that evokes competition and as a means to dominate another person’s masculinity.

It is important to return to the observation of providing services as trans people. This study found that some participants (6/25) were offering services as cross-dressed without this being their gender preference. To this end, Pedro, who self-reported as ‘bisexual’ and cross-dressed only for work, corroborated that, as a trans people, he had earned more money compared to other services. He outlined his understanding of this service: ‘Because the clients treat you as a woman who has a penis. They have a fantasy in their heads that a guy is a woman who has a penis.’

A very similar perspective was evident here too, in Lara’s account. Despite having breast implants, Lara dismissed the idea of sex reassignment surgery because of her work. She explained the penis as an extension of masculinity but enclosed in a feminine figure, which is a fantasy amongst clients:

Some men have a fantasy to see a guy dressing as a woman and that is true, here men don’t care if you look feminine or not, what they care is that you have a good penis to get fucked, they are not looking for feminine side.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)
These statements suggest that some interviewees were able to adapt their sexual orientation or gender preferences to fit into a marketplace.

Likewise, participants felt able to fit into popular categories that catalogue male escorts. They were based on characteristics of their bodies, age and socio-economic status amongst others. The statements selected to illustrate this section suggest that the interviewees went through an inner reflection about their physical and social attributes to adopt popular typologies. For example, one of these types was the ‘school-boy’ or ‘boy looking’. Indeed, this type was not entirely related to age, but to a young appearance and particular to the kind of body as was claimed by Martin. Considering his young appearance, height (160 cm) and skinny body, Martin had assumed this typology:

_I couldn’t sell myself as the muscle type because I am skinny, so I have to go for the school boy thing because I look young and I am still young, imagine two years ago, I was still more. So, I started saying that I was 18 and they went crazy._

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

From Martin’s perspective, ‘school-boy’ escorts fulfil the fantasy of customers who want to show young males ‘the sexual world for the first time’:

_They have this fantasy, you know, especially if you behave that you don’t have much experience and it is like they are showing you the sexual world for the first time, which is not true. Normally we know more than them [laughing], we could teach them if you have experience._

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

For others, such as John, this category typically attracts ‘paedophiles’. Recalling his personal experience when he started selling sex at 18 years old, John said:

_I had a boy looking so I got kind of paedophiles really, it was a complete type of public._

(John, 30, Spain)

‘Paedophile’ customers were portrayed as ‘old’ males seeking young escorts. Gilbert, who had worked in a London brothel, called them ‘wolves’ and ‘sheep’:

_Honestly in [brothel’s name removed] go customers who are paedophiles very old men, and who work more in [brothel] are guys who have child appearance, you will_
See small guys looking innocent, I don’t know but they look like sheep and the customers like wolves.

(Gilbert, 24, Italy/Brazil)

Another common category was ‘the muscular’ type, which was characterised as ‘big guys, ‘the gym type’ and ‘bodybuilder’. This type of escort is not necessarily composed of young males. According to the interviewees, this kind of escort can charge higher prices because of the investment in the gym, supplements, etc. As such, Carlos related:

Those called bodybuilder, the very muscular guys, they use to charge more because I noticed that in the websites, they charge more. For example, I charge £100 but they can charge £200 or £250 and of course, this happen because the clients that like this type has to pay that because these escorts also invest lots of money and time in their bodies.

(Carlos, 42, Spain)

Thus, attributes such as age or physical appearance were used as significant markers by participants to transform themselves into different types of escorts. Furthermore, for escorts with a long career path, it represented a switch from one category to another. This was reflected by John who, at 18 years of age, catalogued himself as ‘boy looking’, while at present (30 years old), was into ‘the muscular’ type. He explicated that his physical appearance attracts clients seeking ‘domination’ (sadomasochism) services:

The clients that I get now are because the way that I look now, you know, big muscles, tattoos, everything, they are more submissive, more fetishist, complete different from the type of clients that I get used to getting from there when I was a boy.

(John, 30, Spain)

Martin supported John’s statement as he claimed that ‘the muscular’ type can be the next stage for those male escorts who started their careers very young:

There is another type of guy who is the muscle, big guy. If you want to stay longer in this business, at some point when you don’t look young anymore you have to take yourself to the gym, so you can go to another side, to this other public which is more into massive bodies, biceps, chest and everything.

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

The ‘bears’ were another category of male escorts. Evaristo and Carlos portrayed as ‘regular’ and ‘hairy’ men whose appearance is more masculine than regular escorts. This type of escort attracts ‘fat’ clients. As such, Carlos stated:
They seek someone more regular, someone that they can meet on a street, someone who cannot match with the gay pattern [...] I mean a normal guy, a guy who is hairy, who is not shaved, and who has a much more masculine appearance. Then, there are clients who like more effeminate, skinny, shaved, you know. Also because of the size of the penis.

(Carlos, 42, Spain)

Finally, there were other two kinds of escorts, ‘high-class escorts’ and ‘party boys’, which emerged from Geordie’s personal experience. He had been in a civil partnership with a ‘white English’ man for a couple of years, but at the date of the interview, they were living apart. They used to work together as escorts, and this experience lets Geordie differentiate these particular categories: a ‘high-class escort’ as white, young and blond male, well-educated, no tattoos, who can fit in any event of high social class, while ‘a party boy’ was described as a dark-skinned man with tattoos and a non-native English speaker. From this perspective, Geordie described himself as a ‘party boy’ while his husband was a ‘high-class escort’. Also, he specified the social sphere in which each class can interact:

One is the high-class who the clients are going to take the ballet, to dinner, to the theatre, ok, usually they are white, well-spoken, look like student, no tattoos, ok [...] the first one is never going to translate and never going to mix with the second one.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

Additionally, Geordie assigned distinctive patterns of behaviour to each type and the possibilities of social mobility:

One is the angel, and the second is the devil, and the one in the middle he is able is he looks for education, he can go to the high guy and go for dinner, the boring things [laughing] and the another will go to the ‘heavy’ [drugs].

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

These findings show characteristics amongst interviewees to construct a more nuanced picture of mobile masculinities. In addition, participants were able to adopt escorts’ typologies by their body self-image (e.g., ‘bears’ and ‘schoolboy’). The majority of these typologies were related to the kind of services that they were willing to provide (e.g., ‘dominant partner’). In this manner, for example, the fabrication of a particular type of body (e.g., ‘muscular type’) allowed them to fit into a category (e.g., ‘dominant partner’) because it reproduces a stereotype (e.g., ‘rough’). Thus, the provision of
‘domination’ needs to be represented through more asymmetric power relations.

### 3.1.2. Self-Care

This theme described the body, the smell, clothing, and social interaction as fundamental elements of escorting. As such, Gilbert, listed some key aspects:

‘you need to wear nice clothes, have a good body, you should look the best.’

He explained that body care has been a constant learning process for him:

*The body is everything. I am learning about looking, I keep myself fit because I don’t want to lose myself, my hair has to be very short if I don’t dress nice I see differences. I see how people just judge you, especially in this job, I feel lots of pressure, all time thinking, ‘Oh my God, I need to be like this!’*

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

This view was shared by his compatriot, Jarvis, who described his body care routine:

*Of course, you need to look beautiful every single second. Like if someone calls me now, I would say that I am busy because I look horrible. I have to shave and everything, so you need to look beautiful every single time – hair, skin, face, clothing – because people who ask for escorts when they come need to see a beautiful guy. They do not want to listen to your problems, they come and need to see a beautiful guy and have amazing time.*

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

Moreover, Jarvis also spoke about a particular care routine dedicated to married clients:

*If you are going to have a client for the first time, you need to look really nice, beautiful, but never perfume [laughing] […] natural smell. Of course, you need to put some creams, lotion but not perfume because people have wives, especially when I have clients for a long time, then I can’t put perfume because everybody knows that I love perfume and my perfume is really strong.*

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

Gilbert highlighted that apart from physical appearance, it is also important to have knowledge about other aspects in order to interact with the client: ‘I need to know about wine, about perfumes, at least the basic, I need to know.’

While such accounts may reflect traditional notions of what was deemed to be the body image of an escort, there were also some expressions of stigma linked
to their physical appearance. As such, Geordie spoke about his difficulties exiting escorting because of his physical appearance:

*It is not about you are good looking or you are not good looking, it is not about the fragrance or you don’t have the fragrance or you smell or you don’t smell, OK, or I used to be or I am still the pattern looks.*

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

3.2. **Core theme: Establishing a Presence as Independent Escorts**

This core theme describes the different steps that interviewees developed to take a place and increase their visibility in the online sex marketplace. It gathered together six themes: ‘using the internet and mobile technologies to navigate the online sex market’, ‘learning the language and codes’, ‘creating an online profile and a person’, ‘developing strategies of self-marketing’.

3.2.1. **Using the Internet and Mobile Technologies to Navigate the Online Sex Market**

This theme is composed of excerpts that illustrate participants’ experiences using facilities such as the internet other technologies to access the online marketplace and their experiences advertising their services.

For example, Indigo’s statement was valuable because it provides understanding of the easy access to advertising using free websites:

*There are some websites which are for free, you can advertise there and other that you have to pay, maybe one pound per day or memberships of 150 pounds per month.*

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

Gino, an Italian/Brazilian escort had somewhat different, but still advantageous, experience in achieving his entry into the online marketplace. He sold sex for the first time in a local brothel in London. On the date of the interview, he was experiencing serious personal and financial problems. He had split up with his partner, who was also an escort, in a context of physical violence for which he was arrested for damaging his boyfriend’s flat. Gino’s situation was critical because his partner had destroyed all his personal belongings and passport. Without identification to prove his European nationality, he could not keep his job in the brothel, nor was able to seek another. In consequence, the use of free phone applications was crucial to
survival. In this manner, stories such as Gino’s confirm that new technologies can become an opportunity for sex workers in economic disadvantage:

I am not good with names, anyway, this is an application that you can download on your phone and let you find people using your phone because I don’t have even the money to subscribe me on a website.

(Gino, 24, Italy/Brazil)

Likewise, the exploration of male escorts’ websites allowed interviewees to gain an understanding of its magnitude and diversity:

Most of them Latino, you know, bit darker, or few blacks and something like that and because the majority of blacks were British, they attract mostly white guys, but maybe because you have so many Brazilians there.

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

Undeniably, this miscellany was recognised by interviewees as a potential space and an opportunity to insert themselves into this market:

Of course, all men who are on that website are very muscular, beautiful bodies and I am ... you know, but I am part of a sex work scene called ‘bears’, and of course for me this is easier because not everybody like fat people but I do, because everybody like the image of a handsome man who cares about himself. Then I thought I don’t have anything to do on this website but at the end, I did open my profile and oh surprise! I have some calls [laughing].

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

Many, if not all, participants were subscribed to several escort websites to prevail in this competitive market. It gave them a sense of increasing their opportunities to attract more clients. As John and Indigo said:

Paying 500 pounds in the advertisement because there are so many escorts in London, so many of them that you need to be everywhere.

(John, 30, Spain)

I am registered on different sites, you have to make diverse profiles and try to open profiles in different sites to improve your probabilities to have more clients.

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

Indeed, participants were aware that advertising on the internet delivers a breadth of instantaneous distribution of their services. In that manner, participants realised that advertisements were an investment to achieve a wanted income. As such, John described his monthly budget dedicated to advertising:

You know, Rentboy.com is 160 pounds a month, and I have to pay platinum membership to be in the first pages because if you do not have platinum
membership, it does not even worth pay for it because there are so many of them by the time that a client gets on my page where I am if I am on the fifty page, it does not worth it, you know. So, 160 pounds for Rentboy.com, 200 for getting hodings, 100 pounds for Sleepyboys, 55 pounds for Gaydar, you earn lots of money, but you also spend lots of money.

(John, 30, Spain)

This type of expenditure brought to light a mixture of income expectations amongst participants. For example, Pedro, who had worked mostly in brothels in Spain, had paid expensive advertisements only to support his basic maintenance in London:

This is very expensive because you have to pay rent, food, to post advertisements are really expensive, you have to compete with lots of other escorts, if you want to have work you have to post in five or seven websites and every registration is about £70 to 100, you spend lots of money.

(Pedro, 28, Brazil)

This perspective was shared by Lara, a transsexual who had worked in several European countries and settings. She emphasised the instability of her income working in London compared to her past experiences:

Horrible! If you come to make money, you won’t really get much. I was talking with a friend to this day about this, I was telling her that if you can make money here you have to be very patient, you have to become very popular and have regular clients.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

Somewhat in contrast, for John, advertising was an investment that allows him to not only to pay for his basic expenses, but also his ‘OK life’:

If I want a normal life, nothing like I am not talking about luxuries or something like that. If I want to have an OK life, being able to go out, buy a drink, buy clothes, an OK life paying 500 pounds for advertisements because there are so many escorts in London, so many of them, that you need to be everywhere.

(John, 30, Spain)

This theme describes the perception of interviewees about the access to the internet and mobile technologies to develop sex work activities and, most importantly, the significance of these facilities in their daily life. It described the process of understanding the internet-based sex work brought to light the perspective of a very competitive sex market that was possible to tackle by subscribing their services on several websites. At the same time, the findings also indicated advertising was a crucial element in ensuring a regular income, according to every particular expectation of the participants.
3.2.2. Learning the Language and Codes

Since participants opened an online escort profile, writing a self-description became an important part of their work activities. They spoke about the significance of the written language to design an appropriate and attractive profile to capture the attention of clients. Writing a profile became a permanent task in the everyday activities amongst participants. It was presented by Geordie and Lara in the following way:

The messages [from clients] are coming; basically, you need to speak English in messages and images.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

Now I am changing my advertisement; do you want to read it? [Opening her computer and showing me her profile] I wrote hi I am Camila; you have to play with what you write in these sorts of profiles.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

The examples of profile descriptions that participants provided suggest that most of them had developed a sense of creativity and self-expression as they had learnt how to ‘play’ what they wanted to express through their descriptions.

In addition, the narratives brought to light the familiarity with specific language, codes and acronyms typically used on the escorts’ websites. The statements suggest that these are accustomed amongst those who are part of or are interested in the sex industry such as peers, clients, and website developers. For example, AC/DC (bisexual), OWO (fellatio without a condom), BFE/GFE (boyfriend experience/girlfriend experience), DFK (deep French kiss). Regarding this point, Lara’s narrative shows how she discerned the meanings of these ‘dialects’ – ‘here there is a thing called GFE, which stands for Girlfriend Experience, and I did not know what it means, but then looking at another profile I realised what it was.’ For her, it was vital to understand the definition of these acronyms related to escort services and, most importantly, what it involves. Her narrative allows the understanding of the significance of incorporating some services into the individual’s repertoire:

There are many dialects that clients use. For example, DFK. It means Deep French Kiss. So, if you write this it means that you are going to kiss to everybody but I do not put this because I cannot do this. But there are
many other things like sucking without condom [...] well you suck without a condom you say OWC which means Oral without Condom.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

Thus, the decoding and translation of this language were part of the learning process. In this manner, the structure of the websites shows the use of specific language and acronyms as kinds of sexual codes prescribing their behaviour regarding sexual services to offer, how to describe themselves and limits in their services.

Even more important, Lara’s account suggested that these ‘dialects’ can be subject to ambiguous interpretation. As she explained:

*I want to do what I say also is that I am open-minded, which means that I can be active or passive, but also could mean that I like to do it verbally [laughing] you understand? And if they do not understand, you can say a girl who is not complicated. So now, I have changed the text – ‘Hi guy I am Camila. I am the hottest girl who is extremely feminine and open minded’. When I say openly minded is because I have some clients who come to dress like a woman or open minded that I do not have problems to be active or passive, or open minded could also mean that I like to do it bareback [laughing], do you understand what I mean? So, you have to be careful how you express yourself when they ask you, you can say I am a girl not complicated.*

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

Additionally, the accounts shed light on the language barriers that limited some participants in the development of their advertisements because they do not speak English. As Eva, a Bulgarian trans people who had worked in Greece for about six years before coming to the UK, stated:

*I tell you something, it is a secret, and I don’t do my advertisements, so I don’t know what attract my clients [laughing]. I can’t read or write in English. I have a friend and I asked him to write something about me.*

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

Similar to Eva, a few participants rely on friends or acquaintances to write their adverts, which shows a capacity for adaptation and agency amongst interviewees.

This theme compiles statements that illustrate the understanding of the written language in the design of the escorts’ online profile as well as the usage of a specific dialect on the sex marketplace. It shows that participants gained an understanding of the functioning of the websites and the use of ‘a language of
ambiguity’ (Cameron et al., 1999). In this sense, it is possible to suggest that participants were immersed in the sub-culture of sex work.

3.2.3. Creating Online Profiles and a Persona

To operate as independent escorts, interviewees designed an online profile on websites to display themselves and their services. The construction of a profile implied, in most the cases, the use of nicknames or pseudonyms. As such Leo recalled:

*I thought I should open a profile with the name of Leonardo, it is a fake name [...] that was the beginning of the story of Leonardo, like everything begin to happen like I opened a profile and I open a door.*

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

Moreover, interviewees endowed the pseudonymous with a ‘character’, a story to tell, a way to present themselves to the customers and other escorts. In this manner, they created a story that, in many cases, included family backgrounds, social and economic characteristics. As such, Martin related:

*Literally, I created a character, Marc a character, personality, background, where I came from, I had to memorise if someone asks me when I was born, you know and everything. If someone asks me it would come naturally.*

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

Similar observations have been pointed out by Sanders (Sanders, 2005a) who describes the creation of a particular role as an actor that enables the sex worker to elicit the desired response from the customer, similar, she argues, to the way in which restaurant waiters present a particular persona to reflect perceived customer demand.

Besides, as the interviewees’ narratives unfolded, the significance of these new work identities in the separation of the personal life from the professional life became evident. Under closer examination, the excerpts indicate that they helped participants to re-define and construct a new Self. In this manner, during the interview, some participants talked about themselves in the third person when they referred to their ‘characters’ or professional identities. For example, Alejandro, who cross-dressed as ‘Linda’, described her in the following way:

*A very powerful woman, she knows what she wants, she is powerful, and she got self-esteem, out of bed it is not self-esteem, look [showing his*
Alejandro’s statement indicates the separation between Linda and himself throughout the body awareness and physical transformation every time that he cross-dresses. This sense of separate identities – but also intense, and perhaps, more emotional expressions of vulnerability and hopelessness – was particularly captured in Leo’s statement:

*I am like Beyoncé. She is shy, but when she gets on the stage is something like she changed. Leo is like this, he is more confident, is more, nobody makes me ... I don’t feel less than a client, I don’t care if you pay my price or 1,000 or 2,000, I am very confident with myself. I am really good because I talk and I am trying to understand. It is different with other guys that take steroids who think more about this [showing his body], they don’t think about their minds. I know because I take drugs and I cry desperately, but when it is about Leo, he has no problem.*

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

This theme illustrates the use of pseudonyms in the creation of a persona for their business. Likewise, it suggests the influence on the participants lives beyond the business’ perspective.

### 3.2.4. Developing Strategies of Self-marketing

Self-marketing consists of those varied activities undertaken by individuals to make themselves known and stand out in the marketplace (Shepherd, 2005). Then, this particular theme contains sub-themes that outline three main approaches that participants used to overcome the competitive virtual environment of escorts.

#### 3.2.4.1. Branding

The key premise of personal branding is that everyone has a personal brand or ‘a sign of distinction’ (Peters, 1999). This theme presents the use of brands as it was understood by interviewees who were from different age groups, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds. Certainly, branding is one of the most popular strategies amongst internet-based escorts. It has been reported the frequent use of characteristics such as nationalities, race or ethnicities amongst male escorts (Phua and Caras, 2008). However, there is little information that sufficiently articulates how sex workers use these brands.
The data analysis found that the majority of interviewees did not mention their country of origin in their profile description. Indeed, some reported that, at some point in their career as escorts, they used nationality as a descriptor but eventually removed it. For example, John told about this change:

_In my advert? No, I do not. Actually, that is a good one, I used to say ‘Spanish’ ‘Latin’ or ‘Latino’ but I do not say that anymore, I would rather no say it._

(John, 30, Spain)

Similar to John, other interviewees decided to stop using their nationalities as part of their description. This decision was also connected with concerns about keeping their anonymity:

_Before yes, I did, but after a while, I thought that it is a bit complicate if I mention the nationality because if someone else sees my pictures from my country. So, I started to put, well depends on the time, I started to put like two years ago, I put Colombian and then I changed it for Italian._

(Joel, 33, Brazil)

_At the beginning, I described myself as a Latino because Spain is that close that I wanted to be more discreet._

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

_No, because I don’t think where I come from is important […] I don’t use that part because I don’t want to reveal much about me._

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

Instead of nationalities, most of the interviewees were inclined to brand themselves by race, skin colour, sexualities or gender characteristics. For example, Reo branded himself as a ‘big black guy’ which, from his perspective, matched better with the ‘dominance’ services that he provides:

_I have to brand myself. I would say black guy but not necessarily the nationality, I wouldn’t do that, I don’t want the clients ‘exotify’ me but I don’t brand me in that way, I would brand my size […] I only say big black guy, and that is it._

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

Similar to Reo, Jarvis and Evaristo present themselves using their ‘Latino’ ethnicity and the ‘dark’ colour of skin to attract clients:

_I don’t say Brazilian guy properly, I say that I am a Latin guy and I am dark as well so I can’t say European, not with this colour._

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

_I am a Latino, dark skin, no so tall, strong, and masculine and all these things._

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)
Similar to Evaristo’s statement that linked the representation of being Latino to masculinity, Pedro thinks that a Latino image provides him characteristics related to sex drive:

*I say that I am a Latino [...] because of Latino in general, they think that Latinos are horny and that they are good in bed.*

(Pedro, 28, Brazil)

For other participants, such as Lara, there is a broad spectrum of preferences related to ethnicity in the local market, and for that reason she prefers to describe herself in general terms:

*I say sexy transsexual from Latin-America, or I can only say sex transsexual [...] It depends on some men like more Latinas and other more Asians*

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

In addition, it is important to mention that the excerpts presented above reflect a branding process that Arruda (2003) described in three broad stages: “extract, express and exude”. In this process, the individual is encouraged to contemplate themselves to discover their key identifying attributes - “your unique promise of value”, then they construct a compelling ‘personal brand statement’ around to this attribute set, and finally, they create a strategy for making the brand visible to the outside world.

3.2.4.2. The Use of Images

This theme illustrates interviewees’ use of photos in their escort profiles. The use of photos in the online profiles was a prevalent practice. The images depicted different perspectives, from completely nude, topless, fully clothed or wearing fancy outfits. There were more explicit images showing a penis in erection, ejaculation, portraying masturbation, anal sex, and oral sex amongst other types of sexual interactions. They were used to present a particular image for customers; therefore, to attract a specific group. As such, John explicated that his muscular appearance and tattoos create the image of being ‘rough’, and in consequence, he attracts clients who are looking for ‘domination service’:

*It is not like that you woke up and say ok, I am going to start providing domination, SM, no, it is not like that. Because in my pictures, the way that I look at my pictures, the tattoos, rough, that kind of thing that clients want to try, that is the market, I guess. You know, most of the client come to me, well no all of them, but high percentage, they want to be submissive, they*
have fetishism, they want to eat shit, they want to be slapped, they want to be hit, they want to be fucked rough, raped and that sort of things. So, that is mainly what I get.

(John, 30, Spain)

For Evaristo, who was associated with a friend, the use of outfits was effective to attract clients seeking ‘kinky’ services:

*We thought wearing football uniform because the style of using football uniform is kinky, so we did it.*

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

In the case of Indigo, all the photos displayed in his profile presented him fully dressed in casual clothes and posing in ordinary London landscapes. For example, one of them showed him wearing a long black coat, a typical English hat and standing near the Thames River, holding a beer. He thinks that his photos represent a ‘very normal’ guy because they are intended to attract married clients and businessmen who are not necessarily interested in sex:

*For example, in this website, everybody is showing their arses but I, in this photo, show something very normal because I do not target the public that comes to fuck and leave, I do target men, business men, or regular men, most of them married men but my intention is not to show that I want sex directly because not all men are looking for that, so I target a different group.*

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

Similar to Indigo, Gilbert does not want to show his naked body in his profile. He wanted to present himself as an ‘exclusive’ escort, provoking the curiosity of the customers. He was targeting rich clients:

*I try to don’t go for sex thus why my pictures don’t show much. Advertise is everything because even if you want to see, you need to pay, so when you don’t show things, the guy gets curious about what you are not showing and he wants to know more. If you are rich and clever, you are going to get something is more unique, they are not going to want something that everybody can have, and they don’t like things very easy or cheap.*

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

The interest in rich clients was shared by Geordie, who had invested in professional photos to advertise his services. Geordie had included certain elements that could only be recognised by a very specific public, such as expensive clothes, exclusive places or antiques:

*Who I wanted to call here were the guys who care brands and expensive clothes, this (photo) with the dog I want to call the guys who don’t care*
pay 300 pounds in shorts, if you don’t care to pay £300 in shorts you don’t care to pay for an hour of sex. Right? So, this is my philosophy, my intention […] this picture … this chair is in a house [details of location removed] I would say this chair is about 15,000 pounds. Of course, the picture doesn’t say, but who knows, who recognise fine things, so I am calling clients that have this status.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

Nevertheless, profile descriptions and photos seem to have a temporary effect on the ‘market’ as Evaristo mentioned. For this reason, escorts need to renew their photos frequently:

People started to call us but then the number of people calling decrease … then, we always change the photos, always change the photos, we try to attract the attention using new photos.

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

Thus, interviewees needed to assemble a statement as self-description and display a set of attributes using images to attract a certain type of client according to their own interests.

These findings suggest a sense of ‘marketing’ to target their clients. They also supported the standpoint of a personal brand that comprises a set of unique characteristics (Shepherd, 2005) that surface from a reflexive and ongoing process of individualisation (Zukin and Maguire, 2004 p.180).

3.2.4.3. Comparison of the Self with Others

This theme provides information about the strategies and decisions that allowed participants identify a niche for services that they were able to provide, in this way taking a position within the online marketplace. Two sub-themes became apparent during the analysis: ‘Surveying the competition’ and ‘Positioning themselves in the market in relation to the competition’.

a. Positioning in the Market in Relation to Competition

This theme explains how the popularity of specific services determined the interviewees’ repertoire. Thus, this theme collected excerpts about the escort services that they incorporated in their repertoire to be able to compete in the online sex market.
Overall, participants gave accounts of a wide range of services available in their adverts, which ranged from sexual services to non-sexual or more social services. Within the sexual services, the most popular were – ‘vanilla sex’ (also called ‘normal sex’), ‘blow jobs’, ‘erotic massage’ and ‘full-service’. As such, Eva described what was included in her ‘full-service’:

*Ok for half an hour is £60 finish and leave, and for an hour is full service, everything; sucking, fucking, dirty massage, blowjob and ‘excrement’ that is what is about the full service.*

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

All participants offered sexual services to men, and a vast majority (22/25) was willing to provide a versatile sexual role (active and passive sexual role). It is important to note that an important proportion of interviewees (10/25) reported a female clientele in the context of sexual services for couples (man and woman). This service was provided independent of their sexual orientation. As such Gareth, who self-reported as a gay, told of his experience:

*I started to do also women, but you know, I am gay, I am not bisexual but I am offering my services for women. I have had two already clients, two couple and for that Viagra for me works really well! So, I was relying on Viagra to have sex with the girl.*

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

In line with Gareth’s statement, many interviewees reported the use of Viagra to accomplish their sexual services, especially in situations where it was hard to feel sexually aroused by a client (e.g., ‘very old’, ‘too fat’ or ‘a woman’). For others, such as Reo, the use of Viagra was not necessary. He described his sexual orientation as ‘bisexual’ and reported feeling equal sexual pleasure with women and men:

*I do enjoy it, otherwise I wouldn’t be doing it. So, I do enjoy it and when I get the cases of mixed couples, I actually enjoy more than the traditional gay men.*

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

Additionally, interviewees were willing to provide services that involved diverse forms of social interactions. As such, Jake and Jarvis’ adverts described this mixture:

*I say people – ‘I am versatile, I am completely open mind, sweet guy, friendly, I speak three different languages and I can be your friend, your social partner, I can be your slave or I can be your master.’ When people ask me for pictures, then I send.*

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)
I can be your personal assistant, your cook, your bodyguard, whatever the client wants me to do.

(Jake, 36, Spain)

Amongst the participants in this study, social interactions that imply a sense of closeness, friendship, or even more intimacy were developed more often with regular customers. For example, Jarvis gave an account of this:

They trust me and tell me their stories. I should charge also for my services in psychology [laughing]. In Holland, I have a guy who is my client but now I see him more as a friend and every time that he sees me have sex, now I cannot. He was married and got divorced from his wife and he started to see transsexuals first and got divorced from his wife and now he is with a transsexual, but it was me who told him, well I did not tell him to get divorced but I told him that is what you want in your life? So, I gave him a little push. He was not happy with her and she was not happy with him, they were only together because of their children.

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

Similar to Jarvis, Jake told about a caring and loving behaviour as key ingredients with his clientele:

I am caring, gentle, I love to hug and kiss a client when he is leaving [the client], I don't like to call them clients, and to me they are my temporal boyfriends. I love when a client calls me and ask me, ‘When are you coming?’ or they tell me, ‘I would love to invite you to play the piano and then you can give me a massage’. I think that you should interview my clients instead only me [laughing] they can tell you more about me.

(Jake, 36, Spain)

These excerpts validate claims by authors who explain that sexual labour in indoor sex work also involves the interpretation of clients’ emotional cues to manage transactions (Brents and Jackson, 2013). In this sense, these findings imply that the labour processes that involve sex work can also be enriched in the context of intimate and emotional spheres. Zelizer complements this point of view explaining that people can blend intimacy and economic activity and in so doing are engaged in constructing and negotiating ‘connected lives’ (Zelizer, 2005: 22). Pitcher (2014) complemented this knowledge claiming that the diversity in labour requirements within indoor sectors varies not only to the type of setting, but also the client base and personal circumstances of sex workers. Indeed, authors claim that direct and indirect sex work involve distinct labour processes, levels of intimacy and types of bodily interaction with customers (Cohen et al., 2013). In line with this perspective, the following
fragments suggest interesting ways of interaction regarding the nature of intimacy and the relationship that the participants developed with their clients:

Interviewees reported a popular escort service that implies a sense of closeness between the provider and the customer: ‘Boyfriend Experience’/ ‘Girlfriend Experience’ (GFE/BFE). From Lara’s perspective, this service is appropriate for her:

\[
\text{I am like – do not touch me like this, like too delicate and for that reason he told me that I could offer girlfriend experience and that means that I will give him a good time as I was his girlfriend but I can decide what I want to do what I say.}
\]

(Lara, 28, Colombia)

However, this type of service has both advantages and disadvantages. One benefit is that time can be spent in non-sexual interactions, as Gino related:

\[
\text{I provide mostly a talkative service because I don’t like clients who only want to use my body, maybe they can see that I have a brain and we can talk about lots of stuff, and I talk a lot with my customers}
\]

(Gino, 24, Brazil/Italy)

The downside is that one has to pretend intimacy with clients. As such, Lara explained that it is difficult for her to maintain regular clients because she ‘gets bored of them’. Despite the fact that she offers GFE as one of her best services, Lara accepted that she cannot interact for a long time with a client:

\[
\text{Because to be with a person, it is two hours is enough for me [...] I feel very uncomfortable, he wanted to talk I didn’t want to, when this happen I become aggressive but afterwards I felt bad because I thought it is very sad that the man wanted to have satisfaction but I was very fed up [laughing].}
\]

(Lara, 28, Colombia)

Other types of services that participants offered were those called ‘extreme services’ such as ‘domination’, ‘fisting’, and ‘bondage’. Amongst this kind of service, domination was more popular. However, it is important to mention that this service implies specific characteristics of the escort. As such, Joel explained:

\[
\text{I try to play a little like a dominant, which I think I like very much here and try to persuade people about my absolutely straight behaviour, this is another thing, because I people say I don’t look like a gay at all, so I try to say to them that I am straight guy that I have a girlfriend but I am exchanging sex for money.}
\]

(Joel, 33, Brazil)
Also, this study shows that a large majority of interviewees offered a diversity of services according to the place of the encounter, agreed hours or days (e.g., travelling to other cities or countries). Regarding the former, similar to other studies (Sanders et al., 2009), the participants provided ‘in-call service’ and ‘out-call service’, charging higher prices and more elaborate sexual services. The former is a sexual session that takes place in a setting provided by the escort (e.g., escort’s place), while an ‘out-call’ service occurs in a setting provided by the client (habitually happens in hotels or at the client’s place). These two distinctive categories are charged differently. A greater majority of interviewees reported that usually, the price for out-calls is lower. Regarding in-call services, while the majority of participants receive clients in their place, participants who work with friends or flatmates can operate using a common space or make monetary arrangements for its use:

*I was working in my flat. That was my friend’s flat. I shared the flat with friends and we all were escorts. It was like the building was only for an escort [laughing]. I saw this guy last week so he went upstairs and then I saw another guy.*

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

*Most of the time it is going to be hotels because I don’t bring anybody to mine so I have an agreement with my friend that I pay him for using his place, so I go there, or we can somewhere else but I don’t like that except I know the guy already.*

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

Participants also provided overnight service, which usually involved several hours and the use of recreational drugs. This type of service will be described in more detail in the next chapter.

Hence, this core theme describes the modes that participants have developed to select their service repertoire taking other escorts’ services into consideration.

**b. Surveying the Competition**

The analysis found that interviewees examined the behaviour and tendencies of other escorts who were also part of the online marketplace. They were involved in a persistent search for information and observation of other escorts’ profiles as well as gathering information from people who were part of the gay scene. These kind of role models provided an experience of self-learning
amongst participants based on the comparison between them and the other escorts. For example, Joel, who came to the UK to undertake a postgraduate course after few months decided to become an escort, sought first-hand information amongst compatriots to help him to build and ‘boost’ his ‘career’ as an escort:

> Then I started to get information. I went to websites and try to check the profile of other Brazilian guys. I went to clubs and try to make some friends and I understood more how it works and how you can really, what is the proper word? – boost!

(Joel, 44, Brazil)

In contrast, for Angel and Giacomo, gathering initial information about how to become independent escorts within their social network was a subtle step because they decided to investigate without telling their friends the real reasons for their interest:

> I started giving massages and posted this advertisement […] I got that chatting with people because I never wanted to admit it but I knew people who work in this. They always mentioned websites and I memorised the names of the websites.

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

> You look at other profiles of the boys there, you see what they do, as an escort they do massages, and you start marketing yourself of what I do best.

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

Furthermore, there was a common practice of constantly updating their services following the local market trend. To achieve this, they studied other escorts’ profiles to use them as a reference to develop their own.

However, interviewees in this study show a variety of points of view about how to apply the information gathered from their exploratory experience. While some used the information to identify popular types of sexual services and fantasies that they could incorporate into their personal services, others tried to cover the gaps in the market. For example, Evaristo had worked in association with a male friend providing ‘threesome’ services because they noticed that it was popular in the local market. Evaristo and his friend enjoy going to a local McDonalds, sitting there and talking about how to improve their escorting: *‘We do a market research of this ‘puterio’ [prostitution].’* From their perspective, ‘the market’ determines what is popular or trendy amongst male escort services
and, for that reason, they are constantly updating their repertoire and strategies to work in duo:

*We both are the top, many guys ask the style dominant, they want to men tops, dominants, and all these things, they like this fantasy and sometimes we want to describe our services in the website one offering some services and the another, you know, like one offering one style and the another something different to attract the client.*  

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

Similar to Evaristo, other participants were available to provide group sessions or threesomes. The majority had provided these services in cooperation with friends, partners or flatmates. The association amongst male escorts has also been described in other studies (Cameron et al., 1999) that explain this as a way to satisfy that client niche demanding group sexual encounters. Further, interviewees felt more comfortable working in pairs, living together, to share expenses, but also it represented an opportunity to increase the variety of services offered.

Likewise, Lara explored other escorts’ profiles to update the type of services in the local market:

*For example […] I also saw PSE, which means porn star experience, and there are many people who have this in their profile.*  

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

In contrast, Jake was trying to provide services that other escorts probably were not:

*I have posted my advertisements in websites as Romeo, Gaydar, etc. When I did my search in these websites, I studied lots of profiles and all were very similar, describe the penis, say ‘I am very horny’, ‘I am very virile’ and I thought all say mostly the same, people are probably tired of this, and applying my knowledge I offer another service.*  

(Jake, 36, Spain)

In this manner, the excerpts suggested the significance of the websites in the development of sex work, and the influence in the escort’s activities and what they perceived as an economic success.

3.3. Core theme: Establishing Expertise as Independent Escorts

This core theme presents key features that define working as independent escorts. These important aspects made participants think that they were capable
of fulfilling the dimensions of being independent escorts and feelings that suggest expertness.

Examining the data, the following three themes became apparent: ‘Becoming independent’, ‘valuing autonomy’, ‘Self-efficacy’, ‘Establishing professional reputation’, and ‘Being good at/taking pride in services provided’.

3.3.1. Becoming Independent

This theme elucidates how interviewees experienced the process of engagement as independent escorts in London. For the majority of participants (14/25) who had operated as sex workers in other countries, working as independent escorts was related to a process of adaptation. It brought comparisons between their previous sex work settings, conditions, and the way that they perceived the organisation of the local sex market in London. For example, Geordie, who started working in an escort agency at the beginning of the 1990s in Brazil, only stayed at that agency a few months because he found it more profitable working in saunas as the number of clients was larger. Making sense of the time, he said: ‘it was before the internet when the prostitute used to be on streets, or in sauna or agencies’. Thus, his immigration to the UK at the end of the 90s implicated substantial challenges to adapt his work regarding the use of the internet and a new language:

I lived the transformation from the time before the internet, ok, agency ... For me, the thing was about how to learn to work on the internet. When I started working as an escort it was a big work to find out how to work on the internet because when you are not well-spoken English and the messages are coming.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

During the period of adaptation to the London sex market, interviewees immersed themselves in the exploration of other escorts’ profiles to gain an understanding of the social aspects, organisation and work conditions of the London sex market. For example, clearly influenced by his previous experience in escort agencies in Spain, Leo thought that in London males were not perceived as ‘glamorous’ as females, and for that reason, they needed to be ‘independents’. His statement suggests a perceived gender division that places migrant males in indoor settings:
The business in London is more about working outside [...] Gays are not glamorous as women to work for agencies. Boys have to be independent.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

For those participants who sold sex for the first time in the UK, the entrance into internet-based escorting was somewhat different. For example, Gareth, who initiated his career as independent, the process of engagement was outlined throughout the following simple steps:

I decided to work independently. So, I set my profile and give my phone number, my email address and I started to receive calls and that was the way how I start working and that is how I worked

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

Carlos, who had worked mainly in ‘casas’ [brothels] in Spain, explained how he changed the type of sex market. Thus, his engagement in the London sex market brought access to new routes, such as online advertising and the use of mobile technologies, to his experience of attracting clients:

Here I am working independent and using advertisements [...] I have posted advertisements in Rent Boys, manwhores, in Gumtree as a masseur [smiling] which is a cover because generally, clients are looking for sex, and also, I use an application called ‘paragaysosos’ which is called ‘Cron’

(Carlos, 42, Spain)

Thus, the excerpts show that interviewees were able to adapt their work to a new reality of male escorts in London.

3.3.2. Valuing Autonomy

All the participants explained working as independents through the fact of developing escort activities on their own terms. Therefore, they would not have to answer to any particular authority. In this sense, working in the escort market made them feel free and in complete control of their lives. This perspective was widely illustrated by Indigo, who compared this setting against working in brothels:

I would never be able to work in a house with other men, and let someone decide for me, I am independent, I do whatever I want, live my life in that way that I like, I am my own boss [...] I do this because I can do it on my own. So, for me, this is a job like any other job where I am autonomous, as a taxi driver.

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

A very similar point of view was expressed by Brooke regarding the work in brothels:
I have never work in a house [brothel] or anything, the only house that I work is my house. So, the guys call me if I am available or not, and I go to their place or they come to mine.

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

Moreover, working as an independent allows him to combine sex work with other regular activities. In this manner, he can decide when and where to serve a client according to his convenience and availability. Indeed, self-determination to accept a client was the most important characteristic, as Daniel claimed:

This is the best way because if I don’t like somebody, I can say always no. Actually, it looks quite ok for me.

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

From the excerpts presented above, it is possible to claim that interviewees delineated their work as private, free from any management, and for that reason, similar to any other autonomous job. Moreover, they felt they were in a comfortable position to accept or refuse clients at their discretion.

Further, interviewees perceived being independent as a way to work in a more lucrative mode of selling sex. As Carlos claimed:

It is more comfortable, I don’t have to pay to anyone, it is better economically.

(Carlos, 42, Spain)

This better economic perspective was widely shared by participants, especially amongst those who had worked in other modalities and settings. For example, Leo and Gareth, who had worked for agencies in London, discussed sharing the earnings as a clear disadvantage:

If you work with agencies, they tell you to do, one, two, three and have to give them a percentage but you charge independently. So, I don’t particularly like to work for agencies.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

They send me clients and I have to pay a percentage for every client that I had, but it didn’t work in that way.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

Likewise, interviewees were able to increase their profits by adding other escort services such as a webcam. For example, Alejandro pointed out that doing webcam sessions at home was more profitable than doing out-calls. This
fact also made him believe that he would be able to support himself only performing this service. As such he explained:

I also do camera work when I am not with a client I do camera. I can make £150 a day only doing camera. So, if I would stop working I can only do camera and still, you can make £700 a week without meeting any client if I want to only to sit down and do the camera.

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

The findings suggest that profitable activities within the internet-based escort market have diversified; for example, the popularity of web-cam shows. This fact supports other authors’ claim (e.g. Agresti, 2009).

Similarly, Jake, who perceived escorting as an independent as a ‘businesses’, told about the innovation of offering different products and services:

I don’t want to be an escort as the old times and only sell sexual services, I think I can also offer the company, I can give a massage, I have something special on my hands, and of course if I have to offer sexual services, I will. I am not the typical escort, I am not an old-school escort, what I have done is applying my knowledge and establish a business where I can be an escort, a masseur and also offer companion.

(Jake 36, Spain)

A similar point of view was shared by Evaristo:

I offer massages but also sex and then it becomes an erotic massage. So, you can go to their places or they come to my place and I give an erotic massage.

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

This theme displays the meanings that the participants have constructed related to autonomy as independent escorts.

3.3.3. **Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance (Bandura, 1994), has been linked to job and task performance (Judge et al., 2007). By drawing on the ways in which interviewees spoke about their daily work and the exemplary quotations, this theme collected excerpts that indicate the extent to which interviewees believed in their ability to perform the role of escorts, complete tasks and reach goals.

Firstly, the analysis found that interviewees acknowledged the influence of peers. These peers were perceived as models of success and assisted them to
construct their perception of what being a professional escort entailed. In this manner, they learnt and validated their work from these patterns. One of the most relevant examples was provided by Gilbert, who came to the UK to sell sex for the first time. He recalled receiving information from a transsexual Brazilian who was working in Europe. She not only explained to Gilbert how to start the business, but the sense of escorting as a job ‘to make money’:

*She taught me how to behave, how to dress, how to talk to people, she explains to me how to be careful, how to behave with a client, when to see a client and when not, the process of all. Because she is, this is her work, you have to take it as a job because you don’t take it as a job is not going to work, you won’t make any money because it is about psychology, and this is more about psychology than sex because it is not all about sex.*

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

These role models not only instructed participants about how they should perform escorting, but also the risks related to this work in London. As such, Martin was told by a friend about the legal consequences of having drugs in his flat when working as an escort:

*I had a good teacher, my Portuguese friend who took me to London when I came here. I went to his place when I came here, he was doing this already. He always told me never have drugs inside the house because one thing is the police find you as an escort probably luckily nothing is going to happen but another thing is having drugs, you will go to jail straight away.*

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

In this manner, the findings suggest the construction of self-efficacy as a learning process shaped by social experience. Likewise, interviewees reinforce their performance from clients’ loyalty and their perceived satisfaction about their role:

*Because I found that nowadays, I forgot that, my clients are more, sorry, I try to find the words, my clients are more into me, they come back for me, my clients always come back for me.*

(John, 30, Spain)

This theme illustrates that participants related being professional escorts with ‘knowing what to do’ and a perceived ability to accomplish tasks.

### 3.3.4. Establishing a Professional Reputation

This theme comprises fragments that give account of the construction of a professional name amongst participants. Interviewees that contributed to this
theme claimed a very good opinion of their customers about their escort services. This point of view was based on the conditions under which they provide their services. For example, Reo told about key points that he assembled to increase his professional standing amongst clients and other escorts. For him, do not taking drugs or alcohol in order to perform his escort service is essential:

*Now within the gay scene orgies involve lots of drugs, right? I don’t say I am 100% clean, I won’t say that I never took drugs before because I enjoyed or whatever or alcohol or whatever, but I don’t do that with clients because I think that thing can change, the emphasis changes, the time changes as well because they think that since you are there and are also enjoying the drugs and you expect to be there for an hour don’t do that, so when I say orgies in scenarios were I have been in orgies I have been in a place where there were three or four guys, escorts as well or somebody escort but then they were taking lots of drugs and they cannot really perform, so I go there to do what they should be doing but what I have done is, I always tell the clients, ‘Listen, I come here to do all the job, so I am going to charge you for everybody.’ So, I don’t get this that much because I have reputation for not being, nor playing ball in this kind of business, I am too business oriented.*

(Reo, 43, Nigeria)

Similar to previous studies (Hendrix-Sloan, 2009), Reo’s statement indicates his concern about the negative effect of the abuse of alcohol and drugs consumption on his work. He explains that as escort who mainly provides ‘dominant’ services, the excess of alcohol or using drugs would affect his erection. Then, avoiding these substances is part of his norms to secure the quality of his service:

*I could have a glass of wine to be social but not really, I am not going sit down there and drink. Because like a dominant partner, you need to be active so you cannot be drinking if not you cannot perform, so I won’t do anything which would impede my performance. That is my rule, what is drinking, what is drugs, I won’t do anything which impedes.*

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

In this manner, the statements suggest the existence of rules that guided the normative behaviour of the participants and allowed them to generate a sense of reputation.

In addition, participants considered relevant components to construct their professional reputation different forms of interaction with clients such as a
‘good conversation’, having dinner and travelling together. For example, some interviewees thought it was valuable to have a good level of English. This was the case of Gino who highlighted feelings of satisfaction about his capability of having a conversation with clients as an escort:

*When I get the old ones, I can tell that they were smart, they have a brain, you know. They are not only rich, they have good taste, they have culture, even if they were very old, but they hired me to have a real conversation with them, like a real escort, I mean I was in a room having a conversation with a handsome man and that is it.*

(Gino, 24, Italy)

Likewise, John and Gino proudly told about keeping a regular clientele because of their social and communication skills:

*My clients are more into me, they come back for me, my clients always come back for me. They may not come back every week, but maybe in few months, most of my clients come back and I think is because you know why? Because before my English was not very good and I could not have a conversation with them, but now they can interact with me, they have a great sex and they get a very good service and they can have a proper conversation with me, I think they like that.*

(John 30, Spain)

*I talk a lot with my customers [...] for me my service is like if you are tired and you come to my place, it is like you are coming to see your lover, and I will ask you how was your day of work? I do this like a regular routine like: ‘I have been waiting for you’, you know, like a regular partner and it does not just go straight away for sex, so maybe they feel more comfortable.*

(Gino, 24, Brazil/Italy)

All the statements propose the relevance of personal and communicational skills as part of the professional components as escorts.

**3.3.5. ‘Being good at it’ – Taking Pride in Services Provided**

This theme compiled arguments that suggest feelings of satisfaction because of a work performance that fulfils the dimensions of being a professional escort.

Firstly, one of the aspects highlighted was sexual performance with clients. Indeed, being a ‘professional’ required the division of sexual life – described best, perhaps, by Leo: ‘I feel like a professional escort because I divide my personal life, my normal life and I do really good service’. Indeed, it would seem that Leo perceived being skilful enacting sex with clients to be a more
important element of a ‘good’ escort service than physical appearance, as he went on to explain:

*I do have sex, but I have my quality, standard like ... I don’t say I am the best, I am the most handsome, but I do my best that I can.*

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

This vision was shared by Giacomo, who emphasised sensuality as the main ingredient of his service:

*I make quite clear in my profile, in my description, that I am more sensual because there are some guys who are about ham-ham-ham [making a noise] especially the Brazilians ones. But I am not like that So, if you want to engage in a service with me it would be more sensual [...] I mean physical contact, body to body, kissing, I am more intimate that sucking like other guys because if you do that you get fucked in the arse very hard, then don’t come to me.*

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

Yet, as the participants’ narratives progressed, it became clearer that sexual performance is not always easy to achieve. It exposed the use of Viagra amongst interviewees to secure the performance of the body. In fact, they confirmed that it was commonly used when there is no sexual attraction to the client:

*I have done Viagra with a client before because I thought, ‘OK, in this situation a need Viagra because the client is fat or whatever. I have done that of course, but I don’t need to do anything kind of substance abuse that can take me away from my performance because, as I said, the majority of my clients repeat clients if I don’t perform well they won’t back.*

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

A second, and related, dimension that participants acknowledged was the provision of an enjoyable environment in which to receive the client. The majority of interviewees invested time and money in a good place to provide ‘in-call’ services. This type of service is frequently described in the online adverts. As Lara, an escort renting a luxury flat in Greater London, confirmed:

*I can receive you in my private place, clean and discreet.*

(Lara, 28, Colombia)

Interviewees explained that organizing a nice environment aimed at making clients feel comfortable and satisfied. Relevant elements that were frequently mentioned included: having a shower, clean towels, drinks, incense, and cleanliness, and a quiet and discreet place. Furthermore, the ability to satisfy
clients’ comfort generated a sense of being ‘professional escorts’ and a successful management of their ‘businesses’. This point of view was explained by Leo and Jake:

*I try to have clean towels, good drinks, make the place well organised, don’t get many people. I feel like I am a professional escort, no a bitch or a puta because some people say you are a bitch [making a funny voice] and I said I am not a bitch I am an escort.*

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

*I have applied my professional background in everything; marketing, customer services, quality service, I would never take my client to a nasty place with dirty door, I have invested money in a nice place, it is not a big flat but you can see that it shows my style. I always offer nice drinks, clean towels [...] the result of all that is that I am successful in this business.*

(Jake, 36, Spain)

It is important to note that for, Leo, this point of view helped him to separate himself from being a ‘prostitute’, while for Jake, this perspective showed his marketing skills for a successfully run business. In the same way, John argued that:

*I am very professional about it, I like to do it well, you know. I like to give a good service, I like if someone comes to my home find a good environment, the incense, everything has to be good, it is like someone go to your room.*

(John, 30, Spain)

All in all, the themes outline the characteristics of the escort services that participants detailed were embedded in statements that express the significance of achieving a ‘standard’ as professional escorts. They clearly used all the marketing strategies learnt to keep clients as ‘regulars’. The perceived competence to achieve this ‘standard’ seemed to reinforce their sense of professionalism, which, in turn, determined their role as escorts. This theme indicates how participants have constructed their professional expertise.

3.4. Core theme: Expectations of Others

Considering that the division of the sexual life amongst interviewees was regarded as an essential element of their perceived competence to perform their work role as professional escorts, this core theme explains how they negotiated this division with ‘the others’ – clients and their partners. The examination found two themes: ‘Meeting the needs of clients’ expectations’ and ‘Negotiating sex work with romantic partners’.
3.4.1. Meeting the Needs of Clients’ Expectations

Considering the business perspective, meeting the needs of clients was a priority amongst interviewees. They explained different angles and strategies of their business that aimed at improving the satisfaction of their customers.

All participants commonly offered discretion to their clients as part of their services. For Geordie, who had been working as an escort for more than 13 years, being discreet was a fundamental characteristic of his service. He defined himself as a ‘high profile’ escort and had worked as a ‘porn’ actor in several adult films. He reported that most of his regular customers were politicians, people linked to fashion, or well-known people in different spheres. Thus, for Geordie, being discreet implies ‘pretending’ not to recognise his clients:

I don’t work for an agency, so my mother is not going to say you are going to meet a very important politician, but this important politician doesn’t want to be noticed, ok. So, don’t talk about this, don’t talk about that, so try to … pretend that you don’t recognise him. You are going to meet George Michael, so please pretend that you don’t recognise him, ok. For example, in brothels you have the Madame who says this, boys don’t.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

Other interviewees support Geordie’s statement:

I posted my advertisements and I started to do outcalls, which are when you go to their client’s place. Obviously, you earn money with that, but not that much than when you receive them in your own place, because many clients are married or they want discretion and prefer to go to your place.

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

If you want a girlfriend experience, Camila is the one that you are looking for, my pictures are really me, I am not fake, I can receive you in my private place.

(Lara, 28, Colombia)

In the same manner, Leo pointed out being discreet as a way to secure the ‘loyalty’ of his clients:

If you are not discreet, they won’t come again. So, I try to treat the clients in the way that I know they will go back is the way to make money for one hour, two hours, different clients.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

There were also other ways of being caring with clients that the participants perceived as relevant. For example, after the sexual session, Indigo used to invite clients for dinner or a body massage:
Many people think this is easy, but it is not if you are doing well. I mean, I do not work for a client come and I go directly for sex, no, I don’t do that. What I do regularly is doing an erotic massage because I have many years doing massage. I have good hands, I have regular clients, and after that, of course, we have a good time and I have many clients that they stay to have a meal with me after that. So, for me, it is not like let’s fuck and bye, no. So, I try to work well in this, do my best.

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

In the case of Leo, he understood the necessity of making the client feel relaxed:

They come stressed, problems with their women, with their wives, when they come they have to feel that they can be relaxed.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

For Gilbert, his clientele, mostly composed of married executives, wanted to live a fantasy. Thus, he thought emotional support for his clients was an essential component of his services:

If they knock your door and you don’t have manners, don’t have a good conversation, they are going to want to have sex, but if they come here and you serve some wine and make a nice conversation because they love fantasies to create the world which doesn’t exist, can you imagine the guy who is millionaire they work hard every day and then he wants fantasies; sometimes they don’t want sex, sometimes they only want be relaxed; sometimes only want to meet a guy who is good looking from Brazil, so he wants all the things not only sex, just comes around and this is how it is.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

Conversely, participants also established limitations for their services. They were more related to the use of their bodies, certain sexual practices and the dynamic interaction between them and the client. Amongst the most frequent services they were not willing to provide were: kissing, letting the customer ‘finish’ in their mouth, the use of sex toys on them, ‘fisting’, and the submissive role during an ‘S&M’ session and performing the passive sexual role:

I did it, but in the very beginning and I didn’t like. It became a big statement for me – I have to keep my arse for private like, so that is what I decided. It is like, I don’t know, but I think it was something that really affects my mind when I did it before.

(Joel, 33 Brazil)

Neither to be passive because I don’t like to be penetrated by a client.

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

Further, some interviewees preferred to suggest these limitations in their profiles:
Participants react to some specific sexual services requested of them by clients considering their individual likes or dislikes. The following excerpts suggest their reaction and attitude to some sexual services that seem to be popular in the local market:

*I don’t do ‘water sports’ and they also call ‘hard sports’ when it is to shit on them and some people ask, I don’t do that*

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

In this way, participants also exposed personal or moral values or sexual preferences influencing their decision to provide (or not) certain services:

*I am the kind of person who does one-to-one, and I wasn’t even a threesome, it was like an orgy because there were three guys, and I thought that is not for me, it is not me, not my style, if I would do it in my personal life probably I couldn’t do it professionally.*

(Gino, 24, Brazil/Italy)

Maybe as an escort, an escort company maybe I can do a woman but as a prostitute, I could never do a woman, or maybe if I take lots of Viagra.

(Gino, 24, Brazil/Italy)

Hence, despite participants accepting that the provision of body services was part of their work identity, it was also claimed that as they owned their bodies, they were able to deny the use of certain zones, sexual roles and practices. Regarding this point, there is a debate about the extent of the social or emotional involvement of an escort in the context of commercial sex. While some have confirmed that escorts are willing to provide a more in-depth social, emotional and physical experience that may include kissing as a natural element of their services (O’Neill, 2001), others discussed ‘the bodily exclusion zones’ (Sanders, 2005a p.326) or even reported emotionally-needy customers as a disadvantage of their work (Hendrix-Sloan, 2009).

3.4.2. Negotiating Sex Work with Romantic Partners

Only five of the interviewees reported having a ‘formal’ relationship (e.g., dating, in a relationship, living together, and civil partnerships). The narratives suggest that these interviewees have managed to differentiate and complement
their routines and even to divide their time related to partnerships with their escorting activities.

*I don’t bring any baggage from the work to my house, I am very organised about it and for what I showed you now, how focused I am on it because for me it is like I am running my business.*

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

In Reo’s case, he had been with his partner for about 15 years and they were living together. The following statement suggested a kind of commitment between them:

*My partner is very supportive of my business but he knows that I am very responsible and that is being our kind of rule. I am responsible so I am not going to go somewhere and forget about myself, and forget about what I am here, you know, I am always go there for one or two hours, get the money and leave, that is it.*

(Reo, 43, Nigeria)

Gareth’s excerpt gave an account of the process of accommodation that divides personal and work life:

*It takes time, until I get relaxed and comfortable with this and when my partner was feeling comfortable with this because I was worried about him because knowing that he didn’t feel upset with my job that made me feel better since the beginning. No, he even likes when I told him that I enjoy the clients, he is pleased because we have so much sex with people that we don’t like and he said that he is pleased that at least I enjoy sex with some clients, he is now comfortable.*

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

Interviewees who reported in-call services told about some arrangements with their partners to serve customers at home such as having an extra room to receive customers to maintain a barrier between commercial sex and private sex with their partners.

### 3.5. Core theme: Role Conflict and Ambiguity

This core theme presents participants’ perceived position and attitudes towards sex work as well as thoughts and feelings that they provoked.

#### 3.5.1. Escorting perceived as any other job

This theme gathers statements that illustrate the perspective of interviewees about escorting as a paid job. Firstly, they had created a clear perspective about what pay for sex involves. For example, Reo gave his point of view:
I always say to people and to myself, ‘Listen, you are not paying for sex, you are paying for the convenience of somebody dropping everything that they are doing and coming to you to your own time and dealing with you and giving you pleasure and then leaving and you do not have interruption with them any longer, that is what you are paying for, you are not paying for sex by sex because you get it anywhere, you are paying for the fantasy that you have somebody who comes and spending their time and do things at your own time.

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

Then, unsurprisingly, interviewees represented ‘having sex’ in the context of a commercial agreement with ‘work’. This point of view was explained by Lara:

I got in there, the guy was there. Of course, you ask yourself, what are going to do? It is a bit weird because you think I will have sex, well, you have sex, you work.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

Similarly, as a category, ‘escort’ was spontaneously linked to the meaning of a ‘business’ or to ‘make money’. Both Gareth and Gilbert, for example, claimed to escort as an economic activity that provided them with their main income:

I do mostly get money from clients as an escort.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

You need a good balance in this, you need to have a good looking, you don’t need to think you are better than anyone because you are doing money, you are making money because it is not easy, I think is very hard money.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

As escorting was perceived as work, interviewees had incorporated all the activities related to independent escorting in their daily routines. For example, they embraced the development of online profiles as a fundamental element to recruiting clients because ‘advertise is everything’. For most of them, the creation of new online profiles, updating the existing profiles, answering customers’ queries and arranging services were tasks that had become part of their everyday life. As such Jake, who had worked as a full-time escort, explained to us:

I am the sort of person that wake up very early in the morning and the first thing that I do is having a coffee, the next thing is to have a look on my computer all the websites where I am posting, also the chatrooms.

(Jake, 36, Spain)

Conversely, Evaristo, who was combining escorting with a part-time job as a cleaner, described a different routine:
I go back home, have lunch, take a nap because ‘I am dead’ [tired], and sometimes ring the phone and I have to go or they come home [talking about clients], because you know, it is money.

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

Then, from this point of view, escorting was perceived as ‘any other job in the world where you have to give your body’ without attachments:

I see this as any other job in the world. Any job in the world that you think of, you have to give part of yourself; you know, you are selling your body, in any job you are selling your body for the hour, you know, the only difference is that I sell my body and people can touch it.

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

In that manner, commercial sex was understood as the provision of the body, but not necessarily the conquering of the intimacy. As such, Alejandro stated:

I sell my body and people can touch it, but actually sometimes I am not there, you know, it is like there are not attachments.

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

This perspective may lead to the understanding that commercial sex would not involve feelings or emotions, as Gilbert and Gino related:

I don’t go there and try that somebody fall in love with me if I don’t like the person, no, I am clear all the time. I say that I am an escort; if he wants to live a fantasy we can, but for money because I am an escort and then I am not doing this because I love him, no, I am doing this because he is paying me.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

I can give you good service if you feel comfortable, you can be my regular customers, I don’t love you.

(Gino, 24, Italy/Brazil)

However, there were statements that indicated that participants might also obtain sexual pleasure when they were performing sex sessions with clients. This observation supports studies that list sexual satisfaction amongst the benefits of commercial sex (Hendrix-Sloan, 2009). For example, Reo told of his experience:

I have been doing this for a while, yes, I am professional about it […] in the scenario it is not going to involve more than the sexual act, it is not emotion involved, but what I am doing it, I don’t look at the paid media this is and this, I only look at the pleasure of it, so I give myself to it.

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

Indeed, similar to Reo, other participants in this study also accepted that these limitations and boundaries might disappear if they feel connections and sexual
attraction to the client. In these cases, they accepted a complete sexual interaction because they are getting sexual gratification. Thus, body and work identity may clash depending on the role playing by the Self during the interaction with the client.

Reo’s point of view was shared with other interviewees who highlighted the role of the body in performing sex with clients. This standpoint describes it as a tool for working that needs to be in good condition to accomplish the sexual service which has been paid for. As such, Indigo related:

**Interviewer: When you are in a session with a client, do you also get sexual gratification?**

Yes, usually I do enjoy it. I have a very good thing for this work and that is that I am very energetic and in that way, I can do it many times a day and usually I get hard without any problem. I think that everything is in your mind. It is like that your body knows when it has to work. When I see a client, I don’t have much to do because my body knows and reacts immediately. I get ready very fast!

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

Daniel’s statement with regard to this supported Indigo’s perspective:

I feel that it is work. If I am going to get paid, I need to perform. It is something that enjoys it, sometimes it sucks, and you know it is work.

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

Evaristo told about the issue of escorts being unable to get an erection within the context of commercial sex:

Sometimes you feel ok because you think, ‘OK, I will fuck this guy who is very handsome that actually you should pay him’. Because you can get someone that you think, ‘Fuck, what a spectacle, I should pay him because he looks ... oh my God!’ but other times, you can get a person ... because you don’t know what are you going to get. Sometimes you can get a person that only call you and tell you, ‘Look, I want to see you at this time ... and that is it,’ and you get to that place and you think [puffing some air]. ‘Fuck, now what are going to do! And now what are going to do to get hard?’ So, it is a bit tough this. At the beginning, when I started in this I was scared that I couldn’t get hard, but you have to start thinking in sometimes else like sex with another person, sex with another thing. But now it is fine, I can handle it, I am ok now.

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

The statements that illustrated this theme suggest that interviewees had generated solid meanings about performing sex in the work context. Indeed, they provided a range of positive reasons for viewing escorting as ‘any other
job’ where ‘one uses the body’. Thus, the functionality of the body was central from this point of view.

3.5.2. Not Disclosing Occupation

Essentially, this theme highlights tensions between the work identity that participants had built as professional escorts and the social and moral meanings attached to their social identities associated with their work. The identity theory (Stryker, 1968; McCall and Simmons, 1978; Turner, 1978; Burke, 1980; Stryker, 1980; Stryker, 1987) assumes the self as a social construct (Mead, 1934), and in this sense, it comprises distinct components for each of the role positions that it occupies (Stryker and Serpe, 1982).

The examination of the narratives showed that during different moments of the interviews, some participants called themselves ‘prostitutes’ or used the term ‘prostitution’ to describe their economic activity. As expected, the feelings and thoughts provoked by this identity were negative and related to the impact on their lives. For example, Brooke had sold sex for about 16 years. Speaking about his entrance into ‘prostitution’, he described it as one of the strongest events in his life: ‘I don’t want this for my life but if I can find five or 10 people to do business with but I don’t look for more because this is not what I want, because prostitution for me is the same like dying slowly’. Despite that, he recognised that it helped him to overcome the precarious situation of his family: ‘It is a way out, sex industry helped me when I was running out of ways out, to get things’; he also believed that it was the way that he ‘threw out’ his life. When he spoke about his work he only expressed feelings of frustration and hopelessness: ‘I wasn’t born to do this’ and ‘it is mint’. He thought that sex work is going to kill him because it makes him feel disgusted, lacking in confidence and depressed. Brooke had attempted suicide several times.

In the case of Leo, there was a clear conflict between the self-identity that he had created as an ‘escort’ and being a ‘bitch’ [prostitute], which is the social identity that people told him he should assume. From his point of view, he can separate himself from the social identity because of the quality in his escort work:
I feel like I am a professional escort, no a bitch or a puta [prostitute]. Because some people say, you are a bitch [using a funny voice] and I said I am not a bitch, I am an escort. I do have sex, but I have my quality, standard like.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

This conflict provoked a mixture of thoughts and feelings. On the one hand, Leo felt depressed because doing escorting was hurting him – he was ‘crying inside’. He said that he sometimes felt sick but had to work to pay his expenses and send money to his family in Brazil. Moreover, a big issue was the fact that he had to take drugs with clients and in his personal life to avoid his reality. On the other hand, he felt grateful and proud because his work had improved his family’s economic condition. Likewise, Leo stated that people from his hometown respected him because he had ‘made money’, but they did not know about his real job. He also felt proud of being an escort because he does ‘his best’, ‘give advice to other people’ and ‘never has tried to steal someone’.

For Gino, he could switch from being an ‘escort’ to being a ‘prostitute’ depending on whether the client’s request also involves sex. ‘I only try to avoid sex if I could so I am more an escort than a prostitute.’ Whereas, when a client hires him as a companion and to have a real conversation, he feels like a real escort: ‘they hired me to have a real conversation with them, like a real escort’.

For other interviewees, such as Jarvis, being an escort and being a prostitute were interchangeable categories. He believes this perception is due to the tolerance in London:

I don’t feel like I was an escort or let’s say a prostitute, I think the whole society would be like you can’t do this, you can’t do that and when I moved to London, everybody is complete open mind and it doesn’t matter who you are or what do you do, everybody is like – do what you want.

(Jarvis, 30, Brazil)

For John, being an escort was equal to being a sex worker because both categories describe the sex industry. The term ‘sex worker’ was coined by Carol Leigh in 1978 to define someone who works in the sex industry and who provides sexual services (Sayers, 2012):

I am an escort; I am an escort. Yeah, I am an escort and a sex worker as well because I give sex, I mean, this is a sex industry.

(John, 30, Spain)
Similarly, Geordie used ‘sex worker’ and ‘prostitute’ in a comparable sense:

I have to confess in Italy and in Portugal I was confused [mistaken] as a new prostitute in town during the night and I got in trouble. So, from that time, I think I have on my face like sex worker when you are in town.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

The narratives show that no matter which term the participants used to catalogue themselves, there was a strong connection between their work role and the stigma and sense of marginalisation. According to some theorists, role identities are conceived of as shared social positions, like social categories and, hence, can be regarded as social identities (Turner et al., 1994).

It is equally important to note that the interviewees communicated their concerns about being publicly linked to selling sex. Thus, most found working as independents very convenient. Indeed, interviewees reported that, rather than providing their personal information and documentation (e.g., passport, European residence card, or visa) to brothels or agencies, they were able to create an online profile as a way of professional identity without fear of having their real information recorded. Moreover, they were able to create an online profile to advertise their services without necessarily showing photos of their faces. This profile feature was fundamental for participants who wanted to avoid ‘putting their faces out there’. As such, Angel stated that it was the main reason to enrol in this sex market in London:

I don’t like the idea people know what I am doing and for that reason, I have not uploaded a photo of my face.

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

This view was shared by his compatriot, Gilbert, who had worked in a brothel before engaging in the escort market. He compared his past experience with the advantages of working as an independent. His statement exposed feelings of fear related to stigma:

I am doing this but I don’t want anybody to know and there I was, very exposed [brothel], there are lots of escorts there and I was very careful because nobody knows because I don’t want to stay all my life in this, all the time scared. Thus, I didn’t put my face on the internet, because some guys put their faces and I think is crazy and somebody can see your picture and then all your life is going to be like this and your family will know, so I prefer to be more discreet.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)
Indeed, the importance of controlling the public exhibition was related to disclosing sex work to family, friends and acquaintances as well as protecting themselves from stigmatisation and thinking of their future. This sense of protected identity was a fundamental aspect for Reo and Brooke, who hold other ‘regular’ part-time jobs:

_"I don’t show my face, I mean if you go there you can’t see my face, I know there are lots of people who put their faces, but I don’t because now I have other things besides this. So, anonymity is quite important for me. If I see somebody, of course, he will see my face, but I never show my face on the computer, never."_

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

_"I don’t work in hotels or anything because I don’t want my face out there, I don’t want to be known for this, and I want to pursue my studies, do something else with my life."

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

3.6. Summary

The data analysis allowed the construction of five core themes that illustrate the experience of migrant males operating as internet-based escorts in London: ‘Perceived self-image as escorts’, ‘Establishing a presence as independent escorts’, ‘Establishing expertise as independent escorts’, ‘Expectations of others’, and ‘Role conflict and ambiguity’. In the same manner, each core theme was composed of themes ad sub-themes that outline the dimensions, qualities and meanings that participants have created about being ‘independent escorts’. The table 5 shows a diversity of frequencies of participants’ responses for each theme and sub-theme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Total of Participants</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived self-image as escorts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence to fit into ‘the pattern of an escort’</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-care</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing presence as independent escorts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the internet and mobile technologies to navigate the online sex market</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning the language and codes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating an online profile and a persona</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing strategies of self-marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first core theme ‘Perceived self-image as escorts’ comprises two themes – ‘self-confidence to fit into the pattern of an escort’ and ‘self-care’. From these, the first theme was the most recurrent (78%). The theme ‘self-confidence to fit into the pattern of an escort’ describes the capacity of participants to reflect on their own physical, social and sexual characteristics – keeping gender, sexual orientation, and sexual practices as separate constructions. It explains the characteristics that allow participants to adapt themselves to the existing demand in the online sex market. The compiled data suggest a certain sense of the self-image management amongst interviewees. Indeed, the perception of escorting as a business seem to direct participants to acquire certain self-care, lifestyle and appearances that they assumed were part of the image of a professional escort. In this sense, participants gave special importance to body representation, body care and clothing as well as social and interpersonal skills as attributes attached to their work identity. Further, the excerpts suggest that these features seem to correspond to the organizational identity created in the context of the online sex market. Although the great majority of statements suggest a positive perception of the characteristics that represent the self-image...
of the interviewees, it also seems to be influenced by the work role as male sex workers in a society, that is, the occupational image in a stigmatized industry.

The second theme ‘establishing a presence as independent escorts’ comprises four themes and several sub-themes. The whole group of interviewees contributed to the themes ‘using the internet and mobile technologies to navigate the online sex market’ and ‘developing strategies of self-marketing’. In the same manner, a great majority of participants (92%) told about their experiences ‘creating an online profile and a persona’. This core theme explains that, for most participants, establishing as independent escorts was a process of adaptation to the patterns and working arrangements of the local sex market in London. It suggests that the understanding of interviewees about selling sex in London was shaped by the material realities of the local sex market. Their incorporation in it, as independent escorts, was fundamentally facilitated by the available and easy use of the internet and mobile technologies.

It explains how participants made sense of the online sex marketplace, and their response to a highly competitive environment, perceived through the application of self-marketing strategies. It suggests that the design and maintenance of the advertisements involves significant effort that implicates a constant process of learning and adaptation. The findings indicate that interviewees considered advertising crucial, therefore, designing a ‘good’ profile was an important task and the best way to successfully ‘market yourself’.

The third core theme ‘establishing expertise as independent escorts’ contains five themes. They were very frequent amongst participants. It explains the understanding of escorting as a work process that involved becoming independent escorts and described the process of institutionalisation of interviewees. The themes outline the participants’ perception of their competence and agency. They suggest that individual work experience transformed the integrity of their activities into a bigger construction, such as a professional sense within their work. Interviewees expressed a solid sense of being professional according to the perceived qualities of the service that they
provided and their image management (i.e., the categories attached to this work and the incorporation to the Self into these categories).

The fourth core theme ‘expectations of others’ comprises two themes ‘meeting the needs of clients’ expectations’ and ‘negotiating sex work with romantic partners’. There was a major contribution to the first theme (20/25). This can be maybe explained by the fact that very few respondents reported having a relationship at the time of the interview. This core theme described a strong necessity to compartmentalise sexual life into a personal sphere and sex as paid employment. Participants felt that having this division in their sexual life was extremely important to their own sense of escorts as a work identity that they have constructed. This was particularly the case where their social identities were seen to be linked to the kinds of sex, or sexual partners, they had. Interviewees who reported that they had formal partners gave an account of a previous agreement to deploy their work activities without problem. Others found it difficult to have a formal partner while working as an escort because of the conflict that it could create in the relationship. Nevertheless, for our interviewees, it was often difficult to maintain clear boundaries between personal enjoyment and work. Overall, for the interviewees in this study, boundary creation and maintenance were seen as an essential yet problematic process.

Finally, the fifth core theme ‘role conflict and ambiguity’ encompasses two-themes ‘escorting perceived as any other job’ and ‘Not disclosing occupation’. A larger number of participants contributed to the second sub-theme. The theme ‘Not disclosing occupation’ mainly shows that several participants used both categories – ‘prostitutes’ and ‘sex workers’ – interchangeably; therefore, they placed them in the same hierarchical position within the sex industry. It suggests that although the term ‘sex worker’ was coined in an attempt to reduce the stigma (Sayers, 2012), the moral and social meanings attached to prostitution still remain. In this sense, the role of stigma in contributing to the marginal status of participants as sex workers. In this sense, it is important to note statements that suggest self-rejection and self-reproach related to their
entry in sex work. In general, this core theme exposes contradictions in the participants’ discourse about their work because despite of the statements that claim escorting as ‘any other job’ there was also a persistence sense of frustration and sadness related to their involvement in sex work which seem strongly associated with the stigma.

The whole group of core themes illustrate mainly how participants experienced their entrance into the sex market in London as independent escorts and the understanding of their job from the experiences that they gained. They represent the particular understanding of the organisation of the male sex market in London, the process that the participants enacted to operate as independents escorts and the perspective of their role. Furthermore, these core themes explain the participants’ understanding in which escort services can be sold, how they are decided upon and organised, and how they can be performed and experienced. For many of them has generated the construction of a work identity that involve from a ‘professional’ perspective.

The following section presents the discussion of these findings.

4. Discussion
This section will revisit the core themes introduced in the previous section in light with relevant literature.

Taking part of the male escort market in London
The core themes ‘perceived self-image as escorts’ and ‘establishing a presence as independent escorts’ illustrate how the interviewees become part of the male escort market in London. They suggest that the easy access to the internet and mobile technologies may have facilitated the incorporation of the participants in this sector. In this manner, this study adds information using the narratives that describe the interviewees’ experiences of selling sex for the first time in the UK escort market as well as the insertion of those who, after they became sex workers in the first receiving country, immigrated to take part in the London market. Thus, this study specifically outlined the participants’ experiences working as independent internet-based escorts.
The accounts imply that the interviewees were active agents in organising and positioning themselves in the escort market. The findings extend this knowledge describing how they acquired an understanding of the magnitude, diversity and functioning of the escort websites as an online marketplace. Similar to other studies (Pitcher, 2014), the Internet has in principle enabled participants to take greater control of self-presentation and to establish the terms and conditions of their services. The narratives unveiled a set of strategies deployed to achieve a presence, competence and expertise that participants used to overcome a ‘highly competitive’ environment. Firstly, they actively explored other escort profiles to compare themselves with other escorts in order to recognise physical and social attributes to attract customers. This observation made some interviewees notice strong similarities in the online advertisements, which supports claims of a repetitive advertising pattern in escort advertisements (Pruitt, 2005; Agresti, 2009). On the other hand, this continuous exploration – reported as a common practice amongst escorts (Sanders, 2008b) – built an awareness that clients value particular physical features (e.g., body shape) and a specific demeanour of escorts (Holt and Blevins, 2007). Consistent with this, it was found that interviewees gave importance to certain social characteristics such as ‘being friendly’, ‘affectionate’ and having ‘good communication skills’, which were also perceived as highly demanded in other studies (Sharp and Earle, 2003; Holt and Blevins, 2007). One particular service linked to the significance of this aspect was ‘Boyfriend Experience’/’Girlfriend Experience’ (GFE/BFE). As others have informed (Bernstein, 2007b), this service involves closeness and a more intimate companionship as ‘a real girlfriend’ interaction. While some participants found it beneficial because it does not necessarily involve sexual intercourse, others found it hard to pretend intimacy. This standpoint reinforces the controversy between authors who represent GFE/BFE as ‘counterfeit intimacy’ (Weitzer, 2009 p.227) and those who describe it as genuine emotional ties that seek to endow customers with a sense of ‘desirability, esteem, or even love’ (Bernstein, 2007b p.103). The latter attempt to present this service as a stressful experience (Agresti, 2009) because it involves
'emotional labour’ probably unparalleled to any other job (Davidson, 1995 p.4). Regardless of this aspect, the existence of this service proposes the emotional needs of some clients (Lucas, 2005, p. 531), perspective that certainly challenge claims about the objectification of sex workers as ‘simply bodies’ or as ‘targets of sexual conquest’ (Sanders, 2008b, p.98). Secondly, the constant examination of other escorts’ profiles let participants realise the trend in popular services that they could implement in their own repertoire. Indeed, the majority was inclined to offer a wide range of services, both sexual and non-sexual (e.g., personal assistant, companion at social events). The most frequent sexual services reported were: ‘vanilla sex (also called ‘normal sex’), ‘blow jobs’, ‘erotic massage’, ‘full-service’, ‘domination service’ and ‘kinky service’ (‘bondage’, ‘water sports’, ‘scat’). It is important to emphasise that the whole group reported the provision of sexual services to men. As such, the great majority (22/25) provided a ‘versatile’ sexual role (active and passive). Nonetheless, it is also valuable to note that an important proportion (10/25) reported a female clientele in the context of sexual services for couples (man and woman), which usually involved penetrative vaginal intercourse and the use of Viagra. The provision of sexual services to women has also been described amongst male (West and Villiers, 1992; Browne and Minichiello, 1995) and female (Bernstein, 2007a; Agresti, 2009) internet-based escorts. In the case of Bernstein, she depicts her participants as ‘bisexual and experimental’ women who were driven by sexual fluidity and economic reward (Bernstein, 2007a). This thesis found that having a female clientele was not related to the self-reported sexual orientation of our interviewees. In line with this, some also reported the provision of services as cross-dressers without being their gender preference but motivated by higher earnings. These findings insinuate that, in the context of the online marketplace, the interviewees were eager to adopt and adapt a more flexible representation of their masculinities. In addition, the narratives showed that interviewees had developed strategies of self-marketing. Certainly, the use of personal branding was largely found amongst the interviewees. Branding was applied as a unique marker to cross-
cut the marketplace using their physical characteristics, race and ethnicity as well as cultural and social attributes. As others have also noted (Burghart, 2008; Phua and Caras, 2008; Agresti, 2009; Logan, 2010; Weitzer, 2010), interviewees perceived the use of ethnicity and race as more valuable to target particular groups of clients. This finding reinforces very earlier research (Cameron et al., 1999) that shows how male escorts in London use their ethnicity to represent ethnic-sexual stereotypes such as ‘highly-sexed Latin males’ (ibid: p.1525) to attract customers who seek a more exotic range of sexual services. Recent studies have also associated a high demand for ethnic groups to novelty, perceived willingness to participate in certain sexual practices, and perceptions that low social connectedness that would prevent migrant male sex workers from blackmailing clients (Wirtz et al., 2014). In this sense, it is possible to propose that the use of branding aided participants to create a niche within a wide and competitive virtual market. Another important strategy in self-marketing, also reported by other authors (Pruitt, 2005; Agresti, 2009; Lee-Gonyea et al., 2009), was the use of graphic, and sometimes very explicit, material that sought to endorse their online identities with sexualised images to stimulate clients’ fantasies. Moreover, some reported the use of other elements and symbols within the images to capture the attention of a specific clientele (e.g., expensive clothes to attract rich clients).

**Establishing expertise as independent escorts**

This study found that, similar to previous research on independent internet-based escorts (Wilcox and Christmann, 2008; Pitcher, 2014), participants labelled their job as an autonomous and convenient employment that suited their personal routines. They told that working as independent escorts help them to avoid low-paid jobs and provides autonomy to develop business skills. This perspective has been more frequently found amongst people working in the escort market than those operating in managed work (Pitcher, 2014). Corroborating other studies (Parsons et al., 2004; Agresti, 2009; McLean, 2013), our interviewees linked working as an escort to higher earnings than any other regular occupation in the labour market or even compared with other types of sex market (e.g., brothel, agencies). Moreover, participants
represented their work as an authentic ‘career’, which shows similarities with previous studies (Koken et al., 2004). This standpoint was possibly influenced by the length of time that participants had worked in the sex market (five or more years). Additionally, a vast majority had built a work-based self-concept of ‘professionals’ who manage their own ‘businesses’, which reinforces claims that categorised internet-based escorts as entrepreneurs (Marino et al., 2003; Koken et al., 2004) and ‘indoor entrepreneurial’ (Cusick and al., 2005).

More interestingly, this study added insights about the individual organisation in the escort market. The interviewees described the implementation of organisational activities and functionalities that outline their understanding of what being an independent escort entail. One of the main aspects was the division of their personal and professional sexual life. Separation that, in some cases, was agreed with their formal partners. Early contributions by Browne and Minichiello (1995) indicate that male sex workers divided work and personal sex partly through defining work sex as “not real sex”, which was also found in studies of female sex workers, such as that by Oerton and Phoenix (Oerton et al., 2001). Smith, Grov and Seal (Smith et al., 2008) also reported that male sex workers using the Internet devise strategies to manage their emotional labour and differentiate their professional and personal lives, which can include reserving specific sexual acts for their personal relationships.

On the other hand, participants have also provided implicit and explicit statements that implied their understanding of the body as a shared territory for personal enjoyment as well as a ‘tool’ for work. The latter has also been informed in previous research (Almeida, 2011). In this sense, it can be proposed that a shared standpoint of the body as a possession and a commodity that can be let for commercial exchange as a vision that helped interviewees to underpin escorting as an opportunity for business. This point can be supported by the participants’ advertisements that show a clear self-perception as providers of sexual services and fantasies.
‘Expectations of others’ and ‘Role conflict and ambiguity’

Another important aspect attached to the self-perception of being ‘professional’ was related to key features that characterise the provision of their escort services. They frequently listed the provision of a clean and discreet place to receive the customer, good companionship, nice conversation, being discreet and sexually perform in order to accomplish clients’ sexual satisfaction. This perspective has been described by other authors as the provision of a ‘love nest’ scenario (Perkins and Lovejoy, 2007) that comprises fundamental aspects to attract clients. In this manner, it is corroborated the creation of a work environment more intimate (Perez-y-Perez, 2003).

In this manner, the findings of this study were consistent with other authors who claim that, unlike street sex work (Aral et al., 2003; Emmanuel et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2014) or even other indoor settings such as brothels or saunas (Abdullah Avais et al., 2014), internet-based sex work is ‘better organised, more mature and reliable’ (May et al., 1999 p. 3). Consistent with this position, the accomplishment of these key service aspects helped participants in the generation of symbolic boundaries to differentiate themselves as ‘professional escorts’ from other males working in different sex markets. These boundaries show similarities to previous studies (Koken et al., 2004; Hendrix-Sloan, 2009; Kong, 2009) that pointed out the possession of social and entrepreneurial skills as the criteria that facilitate the creation of these professional barriers.

Yet, and in spite of the perspective of internet-based escorting as an ‘autonomous business’ and the self-concept of ‘professional escorts’ as positive aspects of their work role, which have been also reported in other studies (Pruitt, 2005; Phua and Caras, 2008; Agresti, 2009), the narratives showed fundamental contradictions about their work (Phoenix, 2000; Dodsworth, 2014). Certainly, participants’ excerpts showed that they had internalised the negative meanings attached to the social identity of a ‘prostitute’ as well as society’s perception of a deviant occupation (Davis, 1971). In this sense, participants explained the incorporation of their role of ‘escorts’, ‘prostitutes’ or ‘sex workers’ into their identities with feelings of
shame, guilt and frustration provoking in some cases depression (Wong et al., 2008; Lau et al., 2009). This contradicts a study on male sex workers that found 72.0% reported usually or always feeling good about engaging in sex work (Biello et al., 2017). However, our results support studies that claim the devastating impact of the sex work on the identity (Gorry et al., 2010; Cox et al., 2012; Weine et al., 2013) that provoked tensions between the work identity and the social identity amongst sex workers. Indeed, a great majority had not disclosed the nature of their work to family or friends because of their fear of stigma and marginalisation. This aspect can be supported by the significance that participants gave to anonymity, which can be also compared to MSW working using mobile-technology (Maher et al., 2012). In this manner, the use of pseudonyms to protect their real identities, as in other studies (Sanders, 2005a; Agresti, 2009; Coelho, 2009; Hendrix-Sloan, 2009; McLean, 2013) was perceived as an advantage of this sex market (Sanders, 2005a). In the same manner, they spoke about the use of photos (without showing their faces) in the online profiles as a ‘safe’ way to sell sex in London. Hence, the negative perception of their job largely contradicts initial claims of escorting as ‘any other job’ available in the labour market also found in several studies (Browne and Minichiello, 1996; Calhoun and Weaver, 1996; Uy et al., 2004; Sanders, 2005a; Weitzer, 2005). Therefore, this study’s findings support authors (Koken et al., 2004) who claim that sex work is not completely perceived as a legitimate, constructive and positive job amongst male escorts.
Chapter Seven: Managing Risk as a Sex Worker

1. Overview

Migrant male sex workers in Europe are characterised as a population with a greater risk of STI-HIV infections. Studies suggest they are more likely to practice risky sexual behaviour compared to women sex workers (Belza, 2005b; Leuridan et al., 2005; Sethi et al., 2006; Ballester-Arnal et al., 2013; Mc Grath-Lone et al., 2014b). The evidence indicates that despite males reporting the use of condoms, the number of new cases of HIV remains higher and linked to inconsistent use (Zaccarelli et al., 2004; Belza, 2005b; Restar et al., 2017). In turn, the examination of sexual behaviour remained a key to understanding the sexual health of this group. In an attempt to contribute to the identification of the contextual factors associated with sexual risk behaviour, this chapter will address the objective: to explore circumstances exposing migrant males to sexual health risks. The findings aim to contribute to the intervention strategies in preventing the continuing spread of HIV amongst vulnerable groups.

2. Approaching Sexual Behaviour

Unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) is considered the riskiest of HIV transmission-related behaviours. Studies on male sex workers confirmed that, despite a high proportion using condoms for either penetrative anal practices (Ballester-Arnal et al., 2013), there are still males who would consider dispensing with the use of a condom if the client paid enough. This fact provokes concerns about sex workers risking infection by not using condoms and maintains the attention on their sexual behaviour.

The examination of the data collected for this study focused on the intention of performing safer sexual practices and the experiences of risky sexual behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen and Madden, 1986; Ajzen, 1987) was very useful to guide the data analysis. The theory of planned behaviour is rooted in the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) that explains the conduct of an individual through the intention or willingness to perform a
particular behaviour. According to the theory of reasoned action, the intention is a function of two different components – *attitudinal* and *normative*. A further development through the theory of planned behaviour proposed *perceived behavioural control* as an additional predictor emerging from the intentions of performing an action. This theory has been one of the most dominant models of intentional behaviour in social psychology and has been extensively applied to the prediction and understanding of health behaviour (Chatzisarantis et al., 2009). It is a theory of rational decision-making that describes what and how information is processed during deliberative decision making (Ajzen, 1991).

Although, there is prolific evidence supporting the efficacy of the theory of planned behaviour and the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1988; Sheppard et al., 1988; Terry et al., 1993), other theorists (Stryker, 1968; McCall and Simmons, 1978; Turner, 1978; Burke, 1980; Stryker, 1980; Stryker, 1987) claimed the relevance of incorporating other predictors such as the identity theory. The role of self-identity has been acknowledged as a key predictor of behaviour (Terry et al., 1999; Chatzisarantis et al., 2009). It defines the extent to which performing a particular action is a major component of a person’s self-concept (Sparks and Shepherd, 1992; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). In addition, some academics (Hogg et al., 1995; Thoits and Virshup, 1997) claim that identity theory, the theoretical basis for the incorporation of self-identity in the theories of planned behaviour and reasoned action, shares some foundations with the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Hogg and Abrams, 1988). Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) assumes that individuals are more likely to perform a particular behaviour if it is in agreement with the norms of a group that they have developed a membership (White et al., 1994; Terry and Hogg, 1996). The incorporation of the social identity as an element of analysis was significant in this study, considering the focus on a particular group such as migrant male sex workers. Social identity theory predicts that people who have strongly identified themselves with a group, and therefore have developed a social identity, will have a tendency to adopt its norms (e.g., accepted goals, attitudes, beliefs, intentions, and behaviour) because they validate their own status through being a member of the group (Turner, 1985).
Hence, this chapter explores possible connections between social identity constructs and the intention to practise protected sex in the context of sex work. For this investigation, protected sex is defined as the use of a condom for any penetrative or receptive sexual practice (oral sex and anal sex) between the interviewees and clients. Conversely, unprotected sex is the absence of a condom during the aforementioned sexual practices. The data examined perceptions, attitudes, and past experiences of unprotected sex. This chapter aims to contribute to the extent to which a focus on social identity (group membership) can improve the understanding of unprotected sex. Most previous studies focused on behaviour have applied quantitative approaches, but this study has collected data in textural forms that unveil the underlying meanings of the participants’ experience. This investigation is, therefore, an attempt to display an array of qualitative findings systematically and to contribute to a body of knowledge commonly presented in quantitative approaches.

3. Findings

Overall, the twenty-five participants provided information about their understanding of STI-HIV risk within the context of sex work. Their narratives exposed their self-perceptions, which were based on their interpretations of their social interaction with clients. Generally, the interviewees provided similar views about their roles as sex workers shaping the interactions with customers. It is important to note that the sense of being a ‘migrant’ did not emerge during these narratives. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that the great majority of participants had obtained European citizenship and had been living in the UK for several years. Likewise, they probably did not feel that being non-UK born influenced their sexual dynamic with a client or their role as sex worker. However, it is difficult to draw much from this finding given the small sample size of this study. This observation may be supported by the fact that there is no previous research that found this category influences risk-taking decision making in sexual behaviour. For example, He and colleagues (He et al., 2007b) claim that the term ‘migrant’ deserves closer examination as many of the migrant males that they studied did not perceive themselves as such. On the contrary, they reported that they felt they were ‘home’. These authors argue that perhaps their lifestyle in the
receiving country may have a more profound impact on this perception. In line with this, Ballester and collaborators assert that despite the great heterogeneity amongst the MSW, cultural differences because of migration background are not a predictor of unsafe sex with clients (Ballester et al., 2014).

Another important remark is that participants were not asked about their experiences using health services. It was assumed that almost all may use health services as they were recruited from the ‘Working Men’s Project’ at St Marys Hospital. This project, dedicated to male sex workers, offered free access to services such as counselling and psychological support, sexual health information, free supply of condoms and lubricants, full STI-HIV screening and treatment including post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), vaccination for hepatitis A and B, and screening for tuberculosis (TB). However, it may be important to gather information about using these services due to the length of time that each interview took and the limitation of time that each interviewee was willing to provide, and that the focus of the interview schedule was on sexual behaviour and risk sexual practices.

The analysis allowed the identification of significant core themes that represent the constructions of perceived risky behaviour amongst interviewees. To provide a better understanding of the themes grouped in each core theme, relevant concepts will be introduced along with the findings. These core themes are explained as follows:


This theme clustered excerpts that state the point of view about the utilisation of condoms within the context of commercial sex. Certainly, the whole group of participants claimed a consistent use of condoms. In common parlance, the interviewees reported ‘always’ using condoms with clients:

Condom? I always use condom. (Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

I always use condoms. That is a very basic. (Daniel, 28, Latvia)

Always, always condom, nothing without a condom, never, ever, ever. They can pay me any money, there are some offers, and some people asked me to do you do bareback? For that reason, in my profile I wrote no bareback, don’t even ask me.
In addition, given the excerpts quoted above, it may be assumed that the general agreement about the importance of a condom was mainly determined by the perspective of protected sex:

So, you have to learn lots of tricks to do it as safest as you can but obviously, the most important thing never to do bareback because many clients ask you.

(Martin, 27, Brazil)

For Alejandro, protected sex is one of the principles along with other codes of behaviour that define a ‘professional’ sex worker:

If you are a sex worker you probably will be sober, you will be in daytime sober, you won’t be under the influence of alcohol and drugs, so you know what are you doing because you are a professional.

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

As such Gilbert, who included ‘safe sex’ in his online advertisements, spoke about this vision:

Interviewer: When you negotiate condoms with your clients, or you just imply that you are going to use a condom?

It is like I know, my clients never want anything without a condom because my clients are high class as I told you, and they want to, I have to write even in my profile ‘I am looking for somebody clean and safe’. So, they don’t expect me to be someone who is going to do unprotected sex and they expect me to be very safe.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

This perspective was echoed by Gino and Reo who implied the perspective of safe sex within the type of services that they offer:

Interviewer: What kind of services are you offering?

Anything as soon as it is safe.

(Gino, 24, Italy/Brazil)

I don’t really do anything unsafe, I always do safe things.

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

The participants’ perspective suggests the use of condoms as part of their role identity as sex workers. A role identity is defined as a set of expectations as to what constitutes role-appropriate behaviour (Simon, 1992) to validate a person’s membership to a particular group (Callero, 1985).

Yet, as the participants’ narratives unfolded, it became clear that while the
condom was considered crucial to avoid the risk of STI-HIV, the favourable attitude towards its use was particularly reinforced by an individual’s preferences or needs regarding the type of sexual services they were willing to provide. For example, Eva and Angel claimed the use of condoms as a non-negotiable part of the agreement, especially when the client requested ‘full-service’, which usually includes anal penetration:

*I just only tell them, ‘Sorry baby, but I love my life. If you want everything, has to be with a condom if you like I can do everything’. Sometimes people say no and they don’t understand when you ask them and they don’t care if you are clean [of infections] or not, when you tell them on the phone that you will not make sex without condom some will anyway come, others will not come because they really want to have sex without condom.*

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

*I offer a full service, a complete service, but I try to be specific because people always ask you if you do without a condom, so I say always condom, I won’t give you my phone.*

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

Similarly, Giacomo claimed the use of condom as a non-negotiable part of the commercial agreement because he only provides sexual services as a passive (receptive) sexual partner:

*It should be condom because there is no other way for me. Regardless or client or not client, it has to be a condom otherwise, you are not going to have sex with me.*

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

In a parallel way, participants supported their decision to use condoms due to the condition of the clients’ body, such as hygiene, odour or dislike of a client. As Alejandro, who reported unprotected receptive oral intercourse (UROI) explained:

*I would do it without a condom, but if the person is too much then I would say ‘I only suck with condom’ and then put condom […] I don’t want to suck if the cock looks smelly or the guy is too fat or whatever the reason.*

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

A third motivation to use condoms was related to maintaining individual preferences. For example, both Alejandro and Reo explained this perspective:

*There are not attachments when I am wearing a condom and having sex with the clients and there is a protection there, there is not ... I am not actually there but there is a barrier between me and him using condom.*

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)
Listen, I have my new ... the recent clients that I have are straight people and they prefer oral sex with a condom. So, that is fine. I actually prefer that.

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

Alejandro and Reo’s statements support authors who described positive attitudes towards protected sex, specifically amongst male sex workers who are not interested in sex for the sake of pleasure or intimacy (Boles and Elifson, 1994).

In contrast, despite participants recognising the benefits of using condoms, some reported their personal dislike. They claimed that wearing a condom interferes with their personal sexual satisfaction during the sex session. For example, Daniel admitted unprotected receptive oral intercourse (UROI) and unprotected insertive oral intercourse (UIOI) with clients. He stated that the main reason for the former is the lack of personal sexual enjoyment and for the latter, difficulties in maintaining an erection:

*It is just that I don’t enjoy at all when I use a condom for blowjobs because it is like you are sucking a rubber [laughing] and I just get soft when I wear a condom for a blowjob, once again it is because of it something like squeeze it is a bit weird.*

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

However, despite Daniel’s dislike of using a condom for oral sex, he would request it depending on the physical attraction or disgust of the client:

*I don’t like use condom when I do blow jobs. Well, sometimes I do with a condom, but it depends on the client. If the client is too old or too weird, or too ugly I ask him for condom for blow jobs as well, but if the client is, let’s say, in his early thirties and kind of good looking in his way, so I will probably don’t ask him for condom, but I don’t do this much.*

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

This view was shared by Gilbert, who referred to protected sex as ‘poor sex’:

*I don’t have problems, but of course, I always will wear a condom but it is so difficult because always that we will have sex always will use a condom, the sex is going to be poor all the time.*

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

These excerpts suggest that additional motivations to use condoms were linked to the decision of performing a protected sex, which is consistent with the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) that claims an
individual’s attitude describes the perceived favourableness or advantages about a particular behaviour may reinforce the practice.

3.2. Core theme: Risk Reduction Strategies
This core theme explains how participants dealt with the risk-taking decision to perform unprotected sex. To provide some context for this core theme, it is important to note that models of health behaviour agree that the impact of a negative outcome on motivation to act also depends on beliefs about the likelihood that this outcome will occur (Weinstein, 1993; Douglas, 1994). These models assume that individuals who anticipate a negative health outcome want to avoid or reduce its impact, and this, in consequence, creates a motivation for self-protection (Weinstein, 1993).

As the previous theme explained, the interviewees were aware of STI-HIV risk and all seemed to be risk-adverse. In turn, they claimed their intention to ‘always’ use condoms with clients, particularly for anal sex. Yet, and in spite of this initial intention, nine of the 25 interviewees reported events of unprotected anal intercourse (UAI). This finding proposes that in some instances, risk awareness and initial intention of using a condom did not secure protected sex.

This core theme gathered some actions that can be interpreted as intentions of health protection in a scenario where they had to make the risk-taking decision of agreeing to UAI. Thus, as a response to risk, this core theme may facilitate the identification of the following practices and strategies:

3.2.1. Choosing the Active Sexual Role
Many participants who reported agreeing to UAI decided to perform the active sexual role (the insertive role) to reduce their possibility of getting STI-HIV infections. They believed that performing the insertive sexual partner role was less risky than undertaking the receptive sexual role. This perspective was perhaps put most forcefully by Gareth, whose statement exposed the conflict and anxiety of his experience, particularly contrasting it against past STI events:
One thing that made me don’t be so worried was that I was active with him. So, I know it is less risky to get infected so I thought maybe anything would happen to me and I didn’t catch anything, but I got chlamydia, syphilis, and other things that I have already [laughing] but in a year-and-a-half I haven’t had anything.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

In the case of Reo and John, they felt less exposed to risk because, as ‘dominant’ escorts, performing the passive sexual role was less frequent:

Part of me think I am mainly top, I normally do not get people to fuck me, I fuck them, I am mainly top, and that is a very low risk, so fuck it! I am not at risk because it is the very little rate to catch something if I am mainly top […] if you are top, you know that the risk is a lot lower, but if you are bottom is a lot higher. That is how I take the risk.

(John, 30, Spain)

I don’t really do. As I said, because my speciality is more the active dominant partner, I am not. The majority of my clients are like, I am standing there and they are down there, I won’t be taking them, they will be the one doing it on me, you know, the majority is like that and occasionally is given and taken but not as much.

(Reo 44, Nigeria)

Conversely, there were also statements, such as Evaristo’s, who thought that both sexual roles – ‘the top’ (active sexual role) and ‘the bottom’ (passive sexual role) were equally risky. This point of view made him hesitate to use a specific sexual role as a factor to decide UAI:

Recently I was contacted by a young guy who wanted fuck me. And, I thought a lot about it but at the end, I didn’t answer more because the risk is the same if you are the top or bottom. The risk is the same to acquire any infection as AIDS and these sorts of things.

(Evaristo, 41, Colombia)

3.2.2. Unprotected Oral Intercourse (UOI)

A second strategy regularly deployed by interviewees was the practice of unprotected oral intercourse (UOI), either unprotected insertive oral intercourse (UIOI) or unprotected receptive oral intercourse (UROI) modalities. Indeed, several interviewees accepted that this may be the first choice when unprotected sex is requested by clients. As such, Karla stated:

The maximum that I can do is suck you without a condom but not for penetration.

(Karla, 36, Spanish/Brazil)

Although UOI was part of the regular repertoire for the great majority of
participants, some differentiate the level of risk between UIOI and UROI. In this manner, one was preferred over the other:

To suck me without a condom, yes, because I know it is less risky […] It depends if he is my regular client. I don’t see any contraindication or something like that. And again, I know it is less risky when I suck him than when he sucks me or to kiss him. But it is not for everybody, depend on of the situation.

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

I always use a condom, no for oral. On me it is fine, you can do it without a condom, but if they want me to suck them it would depend.

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

In addressing a risk-taking decision, then, the majority of interviewees took into consideration the type of relationship established with the client.

A serious concern amongst participants who accepted UOI was avoiding physical contact with the client’s seminal liquid. The response to this potential risk was reducing the length of time performing UOI or using their hands to trick clients:

I don’t like any practice without a condom, except oral sex, but always use for penetration. I don’t like either that a client finished off in my mouth without a condom. When I suck the penis, I suck it for few minutes and when it is ‘dry’, I mean when it is not seminal liquid but mainly I don’t like unsafe sex.

(Carlos, 42, Spain)

I have some tricks […] because I don’t put the whole penis in my mouth, you can play with your hands, or you can pretend that you are sucking but you don’t.

(Jake, 36, Spain)

Further, participants related UOI sexual practice as part of the group norms amongst male sex workers. From some interviewees, this practice distinguished them from female sex workers. To this end, Joel stated:

I never use because it is difficult that male escorts use a condom for oral sex, I know females always use a condom, it is like standard procedure for females but for boys I have got something like – what!? You want me to use a condom just to suck my cock and get excited, what at a fuck! So, they don’t work.

(Joel, 33, Brazil)

The major concern about insisting on the use of a condom during oral sex is related to losing clientele, as Jarvis and Reo explained:

I don’t do oral sex with condom […] I never ask condom for oral sex in
any case because clients can be like – sorry but I don’t pay for this, it is like you take a sweet and put in your mouth with paper, the client will not pay you. This is dangerous of course.

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

I know people that I won’t have many clients if I insist on having oral sex with a condom, so I prepare to take that risk that is the only one that I prepare to take the chances.

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

3.2.3. Using Persuasion with Clients

Finally, statements exposed that some interviewees used persuasion with clients to use condoms. For example, Joel and Karla told of their efforts to create awareness of STIs amongst clients who requested unprotected sex:

I have clients that ask me for bareback, and I said no. And they tell me that they are going to pay more money for me if I accept to do bareback. Then, I said ok. I play this very smart and I just say, ‘OK, but I am not sure if my cock is going to get hard because it is a turn off for me to have shit on my cock,’ and I use to say things like that. So, I was actually playing a game to don’t do bareback. So, yeah that is how I work.

(Joel, 33, Brazil)

It is not easy but I am the sort of person that because I have received psychological treatment for a long time, I have learnt lots of psychology. For example, some clients call you and ask you if you do without a condom. I always answer them, ‘Love, if you want coming here and we can talk about it,’ and when they are here I told them, ‘Do you know about sexually transmitted infections? Do you know how dangerous are they?’ I give them a talk about that [laughing].

(Karla, 36, Colombia)

However, it is important to point out that the same interviewees reported later incidents of unprotected sex with clients.

3.3. Core theme: Risk Assessment of Client – ‘In Situ’

This core theme collected statements that indicates a sense of evaluation about the client’s riskiness every time that participants had to make a decision about performing unprotected sex.

3.3.1. Intuitive Sense of Trust/Safety

This theme explains risk-taking decisions based on intuition. Thus, the statements did not describe specific characteristics of the client or the conditions under which the services were performed, but a sense of what made
interviewees feel safe. Giacomo’s narrative, which was echoed by others in this study, illustrates this perspective:

Interviewer: What do you think about these diseases?
Well, horrible.
Interviewer: Are you scared of them?
Yes, a bit, yeah! Because it doesn’t stop me to engage in sexual activities. You try to assess the person.
Interviewer: How you do that?
You always try to assess the person, but of course it will never be possible with your naked eye because you cannot see what they got bacterial infections or not, their lifestyle may come across.

(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

Giacomo’s fragment exposes that being aware of STI-HIV risk does not influence his sexual behaviour despite the negative feelings that this provokes on him. Moreover, it explicitly states the way that he copes with the possibility of having unprotected sex is, for the most part, by trusting his own judgment to assess his clients.

Similarly, Jarvis explicated this process through feelings of confusion and uncertainty because of his experience of being diagnosed with STIs:

You never know how you feel, maybe it is your big risk because you trust someone or you trust yourself and I thought, ‘It is fine the guy is clean’ [no infections] but then you realised he is not.

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

Jarvis’s statement also describes the conflict that arises when making a decision about unprotected sex despite his awareness of risk. Trusting his own assessment or what the client tells him about his health condition appears to be an important condition.

Conversely, John’s excerpt shows confidence in making a decision about unprotected sex. Moreover, the quote unveils a sense of satisfaction because he thinks that his experience provides him with a better judgment:

‘I think I could tell about everything. I do not think he has anything because he probably has very little sexual life, you know what I am saying, that is why because I chose not to use a condom’

(John, 30, Spain)
3.3.2. Perceived Riskiness of Clients

This core theme explains risk-taking decisions based on scientific knowledge about specific characteristics that were represented as potential risks linked to STI-HIV. The excerpts show that participants were inclined to accept UAI with clients they considered part of low-risk groups. For example, ‘married men’ were stereotyped as ‘heterosexuals’, therefore, a low-risk group. As such, Alejandro explicated this characterisation:

> I think people who come to see us, 90% or 100% are straight and they only have sex with sex workers who normally look after themselves or have sex with their wives so this [...] That is important point here, I was told this by a nurse that the rate of STIs among sex workers is much lower than people think and it is probably the safest group to have sex with.

(Alejandro, 40, Brazil)

Alejandro’s point of view suggests the ability to incorporate a hierarchy of risks, based on scientific knowledge, to balance the risk-taking decision.

Thus, this adaptation of medical discourse can be characterised as the diffusion of science into common sense and confirms the apparent influence of scientific knowledge as a relevant institutional force (Joffe, 2003) that may have helped interviewees to shape the risk construction and their response through their own behaviours. Despite that the statements suggest that participants could identify some risk factors, the application of scientific knowledge amongst participants did not preclude misconceptions. As such, for example, Alejandro’s view of ‘heterosexual’ males as a safe group was shared by his compatriot, Gareth, who explained this aspect:

> I was completely attracted to the guy, it wasn’t the first time that I met him, he was my client but it wasn’t the first time, he was regular, like every week and has a wife and all that, and I was, ‘Oh, what attractive guy’.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

However, it is possible to observe that Gareth’s excerpt mixed the categories of ‘married man’ and regular and feelings of attraction to the client.

3.3.3. Familiarity/Trust – ‘Regular Clients’

Social interaction established with the client was an influential factor in the risk-taking decision. One of the most recurrent factors was the condition of being a ‘regular’ client. This was a favourable social characteristic attributed
to clients who were indulged with unprotected sex. The construction of the ‘regular client’ was related not only to the length of time that the respondents knew the client, but whether the type of relationship established was characterised by trust. As such, Genevieve stated:

_Maybe if I know him very well, for a long time, maybe then I cannot use a condom with him, I have to trust him very well._

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

However, other statements show the presence of other conditions that reinforce being ‘a regular client’ as a factor. For instance, Brooke, a part-time escort, stated that he accepts unprotected sex with his ‘regulars’ because they are also a small number who pay him well:

_There are a couple of people that I don’t use a condom because I know them for quite long time. I know it is not a good policy. I know I should use a condom with everybody and that’s it, but there are few people that I do that […] because I know them, I know them for a long time and they pay well for that, and I take the chance._

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

Further, Brooke’s narrative went to considerable lengths to explain the type of relationship established with his ‘regular’ clients as he also provides his service to their wives:

_If they know I am here, they call me: ‘Can you come?’ because they want me to have dinner or have sex with their wives and they want to watch me._

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

### 3.3.4. Physical Appearance

To a significant extent, interviewees based their risk-taking decision considering certain physical characteristics of clients over other risk factors. This process was perhaps better explained by Jake:

_For example, yesterday I had a man from Barbados who looked very healthy but I know he is from a high-risk region for these diseases. The guy was very clean, he was very nice, but even though I was very cautious. At the beginning, he asked me for only a massage and then I did oral sex on him but when I saw that there was that liquid pre-ejaculation I didn’t touch him again with my mouth or my penis because I know it can be dangerous._

(Jake, 37, Spain)

Jake’s assessment of his client considered demographic and epidemiological information about areas of high prevalence of HIV-AIDS (e.g., Barbados). He
also measured other aspects such as physical appearance (e.g., ‘very healthy’, ‘clean’) and social interaction (e.g., ‘very nice’) established between them.

Arguably, attractiveness was another important factor in the risk-taking decision. As such, John described the following scenario:

_He was so gorgeous! [Laughing] This guy was amazingly gorgeous, and I remember I didn’t have condoms, actually I wasn’t on drugs, this time I wasn’t on drugs, I came to see this guy in the Ritz Hotel and he was an Arabic, he was about my age and he was so gorgeous! Sexy, he was like my God! I just wanted to eat him alive, he was so sexy and then, you know what actually I did it without condom […] I fucked him all without condom but it was not a risk as I could tell that I was probably the second or third person who he has sex with. I think I could tell about everything I do not think he has anything because he probably has very little sexual life, you know what I am saying, and that is why because I chose not to use a condom._

(John, 30, Spain)

Likewise, John’s statement exposed the assumption of having ‘little sexual life’ as an additional factor influencing his decision.

### 3.4. Core theme: Factors Underpinning Engagement in High-Risk Sexual Activity

This core theme collected statements that indicate the perception of lack of control in decisions related to UAI. The analysis found the following factors:

#### 3.4.1. The Use of Recreational Drugs

A large number of interviewees who reported UAI connected these events with the consumption of drugs. Indeed, a significant proportion reported the use of recreational drugs (19/25). The majority (14/25) started the consumption after they emigrated from their home countries. Fifteen reported their use within the context of sex work, and 18 in their private lives (e.g., clubbing, sharing with friends).

Interviewees reported that drug use was connected with the ‘chem-sex’ regularly provided as part of male escort services – the client pays for a session where the escort provides companionship for the consumption of drugs as well as for sexual interaction. Due to the characteristics of this service, the charge is usually much higher than a regular service. The cost was variable, and
depended on the number of hours or days that the escort was required, the number of escorts requested for the session, type of drugs, etc. As a result, an approximate cost could be £600 for a couple of hours or £3,000 for the whole evening. Participants reported cocaine as the drug most commonly used with clients. Other drugs included: GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate), ketamine, Mephedrone, and crystals (crystal methamphetamine). The consumption of these substances, also known as club drugs, has been reported in other studies on internet-based male escorts (Mimiaga et al., 2008). Only one participant reported the use of heroin. The experience of UAI linked to the consumption of crystals has also been reported in other studies amongst gay and bisexual men (Frosch et al., 1996; Romanelli et al., 2003; Bolding et al., 2006).

Participants greatly connected the use of drugs with UAI. For example, John, who reported the consumption of cocaine, crystals, Mephedrone and weed within the context of sex work, described his risk awareness with mixed feelings of fear and excitement, especially when he used Mephedrone:

*I try not to touch it, I am a bit scared of it. I like it because it is amazing but at the same time, I am scared of it because I know taking Mephedrone is not using condoms, is taking risks, because I am not able to control myself when I am having sex I would not use condoms.*

(John, 30, Spain)

John explained his conflict due to the high sense of sexual pleasure that he had experienced: ‘*Sex with Mephedrone is amazing. It is the most, it is the best sex that you most ever had. That kind of sex is over any other drug*.’ Recalling the latest UAI, he had not had condoms available when met the client in the hotel, and for that reason, he agreed to provide only foreplay, although the effects of the drugs increased his sexual arousal to the point that he had unprotected insertive anal intercourse (UIAI):

*I told him that I didn’t have condoms [...] he said, ‘No, we cannot do penetration, it is fine, we can do something without, like foreplay where you don’t have to do penetration’, I said, ‘OK, fine then’. And then we did the foreplay and I was so horny and we fucked without a condom and then I fucked him all without condom.*

(John, 30, Spain)

Some authors have detailed the pursuit of higher sexual sensation as being associated with sexual compulsivity, both helping drive the engagement in
HIV-risky behaviours (Parsons et al., 2001). The influence of recreational drugs on risky behaviour has, in part, accounted for reduced inhibitions (Semple et al., 2002), cognitive dissociation (McKirnan et al., 1996), sensation seeking (Low and Gendaszek, 2010), and as function of the reinforcement of sexual identity (Frosch et al., 1996; Rosario et al., 1997; Knox, 1999). It has been suggested that the sexually debilitating drug action of methamphetamine (i.e., it causes erectile dysfunction which may impact the sexual role of many gay/bisexual men), may lead to more anal-receptive behaviours (Halkitis et al., 2001). The drug also increases the sensitivity of the anal area, leading again to more recurrent anal-receptive behaviours (Semple et al., 2002). With its use related to increased physical stimulation and the reduction of sexual inhibitions, these aspects have been directly linked to longer periods of sexual intercourse and greater frequency of ‘extreme’ (e.g., fisting, group sex, use of sex toys) sexual behaviours (Halkitis et al., 2001; Halkitis et al., 2009; Gawin, 2012). Thus, unsurprisingly, the use of drugs has long been considered a risk factor in acquiring any STI-HIV (Fullilove et al., 1990).

Similar to female sex workers (Green et al., 2000), interviewees reported that the use of drugs undermined their safety at work and exposed them to violence. For example, Geordie reported:

_I have been in a house with a guy, who I don’t know who he is, he is Arabic but I don’t know if he is exactly a prince whatever he is, but he was able to close the entire building to put escorts in, to play with many guys inside that. Well, he didn’t want to pay me, he was a little bit obsessed with me, I guess, or he hates me and he didn’t want to open the door to let me go. So, I said Toms why did you called me if you don’t like me or if you don’t want to pay me and he stands up in front of the cameras pretend to I was pushing him and pretending he was paying me […] I have to confess I was high I was under pressure I absolutely terrified about what was happening but I was absolutely determined to call the police._

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

Moreover, a few participants also reported events of sexual violence:

_Only once happened, but I know him and I don’t really think that I was abused, but I was very freaked out at that moment because he was stronger than me […] I asked him to stop and to leave but he wanted to stay cuddling me and he was still with the erection and started to hug me and he wanted to penetrate me and I couldn’t move because he was much stronger than me. I was scared, I didn’t feel raped but I felt violated because I asked him to stop but he carried on. I can see he is a kind of_
friend of mine now so he wouldn’t do anything to hurt me.
(Gino, 24, Italy/Brazil)

3.4.2. Attractiveness to the Client
Interviewees also reported feeling physically or sexually attracted to a client. For example, Giacomo and John, who had also reported the consumption of Mephedrone, crystals and cocaine with clients, explicated risk behaviour as a consequence of the effect of drugs, but predominantly to the attraction to the customer:

If condom is not involved is because I stupidly allow myself to feel so disinhibited like I am going to give myself to this guy who I really like him, maybe drugs is in there as well, but you know that barrier, drugs are making you pass that barrier, your inhibition just get dropped further.
(Giacomo, 34, Italy)

The last time that I did it without condom, I can’t remember one particular person…right I think I remember that, yes I remember that, he was so gorgeous! (Laughing), this guy was amazingly gorgeous
(John, 30, Spain)

In this manner, as it was described in the previous chapter, participants reported feeling attracted to a client as an independent factor or co-factor driving the UAI or UOI decision.

3.4.3. Clients Removing/Breaking Condoms
The narratives gathered for this study described scenarios where the terms of the commercial agreement were renegotiated or just taken by the client in a dynamic context that misbalanced the control of the sex worker. The most frequent circumstances were unexpected modes of physical interaction during the sex session that resulted in UAI. Firstly, the interviewees reported that the physical interaction that determines their sexual roles exposed them to UAI. For example, Lara, a transsexual escort, reported clients who removed condoms during sexual intercourse. She indicated the provision of both active and passive sexual roles to her clients, but a few times that UAI had occurred, she was acting as ‘the bottom’:

For example, three or four months ago, I was having sex with a guy who was doing as active, and you know suddenly I saw him with the condom on his hand and I asking him, ‘Was you fucking me without a condom?!’ He said no but a client will never say yes and I asked him what are you doing with the condom on your hand? And he said because I just took it off.
(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)
Lara’s narrative was, in many ways, a typical scene of unintended exposure to risk, which emphasises the lack of control during the physical and sexual interaction. Recalling that particular experience, Lara accepted that sometimes she ‘gets distracted’ when she is having sex with clients:

> Sometimes they are fucking me and I am thinking about the things that I have to do, the I have to buy this or I have to pay that advertisement, and after you know, it is my way how I work [...] Possibly I took much time because I was in this position exactly here [showing the situation] and I took too much time to turn around and he took the condom, when I saw him with the condom in his hand.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

Lara had no choice but to trust her experience and knowledge about risk to examine the scenario and calm herself:

> I went mad, to be honest, but the man looked calmed and he said that he just took it off but I was thinking that the man had not bad intentions also he was a professional, also I realised that he did not come [ejaculated], later when I saw him that he ‘came’ I confirmed that he did not come before, so I was more relaxed.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

In the same way, Pedro, an escort who had worked providing sexual services in pairs (he and his flatmate), reported a client who intentionally broke the condom:

> I had a very bad experience because I went to do a client with another guy and I realised the guy broke the condom and the guy was ready to penetrate me and all that. For that reason, I had to take PEP treatment and I was so bad. I started this treatment a few days ago, the day that we met. I was very nervous because I could get AIDS.

(Pedro, 28, Brazil)

In this manner, the excerpts presented above described scenarios of physical domination that became hazardous situations that exposed these interviewees to the risk of violence from customers, particularly for male escorts and those performing passive roles.

### 3.4.4. Giving in to Client Demands/Requests

This theme explains circumstances under which participants performed UAI after the initial rejection. For example, Indigo, an escort who mainly provided a passive sexual role to clients, clarified: ‘I can fuck them, but of course it is not the same’. Far from an experience of seeking bareback sex, for Indigo, URAI meant something very different – a moment of ‘playing a bit in bed’ that
let the client take control – ‘let him do it for some seconds, and then re-gain it by asking for a condom:

> It never went too far. What I mean is they ‘get in’ but not until the end. When I saw that things were going too far, I ask them, please put on a condom. They will never finish in there [...] I didn’t accept that. This is the sort of thing that happen when you are playing a bit in bed, playing that he wants to get in and he does that, you get surprised and then you let him do it for some seconds but then you react and think, no I need to ask him to wear a condom. It is not like you let him be in there for 10 minutes or so, no like that, but it may be about 30 seconds and then you react and ask for condom.

(Indigo, 36, Spain)

These findings brought about a discussion regarding the linkages between negotiation skills and safer sexual practices in the context of commercial sex. While often going to considerable length to minimise the unspoken terms of the agreement with clients, participants’ accounts showed a lack of explicitness before and during the encounter about using condoms. Indeed, some interviewees expressed a particular perspective about the verbal communication related to the condom. For Brooke, the use of condoms was ‘a natural process’, an implied term of the agreement with the client and in that manner, it does not need to be discussed:

**Interviewer:** When do you negotiate the use of a condom?

> I pull it out, it is a natural process, [laughing], it is not like you talk first and condom come next, if I know I am up to sex, I put out the condom, luvs, everything that I am going to need. I try to put it on it and see. I always try.

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

Brooke’s perspective was supported by Gareth, who revealed the absence of verbal negotiation for condom use in UAI scenarios:

**Interviewer:** Who decided don’t use a condom?

> We didn’t talk about that [condom] but that month the business wasn’t good.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

This study found considerable variation in the verbal and nonverbal exchanges that preface commercial sexual encounters. This affirmation was corroborated by looking at the telephone conversations between the interviewees and their clients as informal observations. These dialogues demonstrated a very short
exchange of information based on the type of services they were willing to provide, time and prices. For example, during Lara’s interview, she received a couple of calls from clients. The following fragment was one of these conversations:

Camila speaking, yes, I am, I live in XX [address removed], I can see you between one and two o’clock. What time do you want to come? Ok, my places are located near to [train station removed]. OK love, I will wait for you tonight then.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

The above example suggests that, due to the rapidity with which initial negotiations by telephone can occur, interviewees agreed to some services and arrangements quickly, and in that way, much of the real negotiations took place during the encounter. This mode of unclear communication may facilitate greater levels of ambiguity and dependence on tacit understandings and expectations of the client that resulted in unintended risk, or just an opportunity to disclose his intentions of having unprotected sex.

3.4.5. Extra Financial Incentives

This theme collected statements suggesting that participants who accepted UAI were mainly motivated by economic reasons. It shows clients deploying verbal persuasion using economic rewards to dissuade interviewees from using condoms.

To provide some context about the financial situation of participants, the data shows that the income from escorting was diverse and unstable due to the different factors that characterised the sex market. Firstly, according to participants, they may charge from £60 to £200 per hour for a sex session. The final price for a service depends on the type of sexual service (e.g., ‘fucking’, ‘sucking’, ‘erotic massage’) and conditions requested by the client (e.g., in-call, out-call, use of toys, use of recreational drugs, number of clients to serve, number of hours or days requested, service requested within the country or abroad). Moreover, the number of clients per week varied widely, ranging from three to 15. Thus, all of the interviewees emphasised that it was very difficult to predict a monthly income from their escorting activities. This situation provoked concerns because, as was claimed in the previous chapter, London
was considered a very expensive city. Under these circumstances, some interviewees gave an account of bargaining with clients, which has been also described by other authors (Cameron et al., 1999). As such, Jake related:

> How much do you have? £40, OK come and we can arrange something because there is always an exchange for something. 'I have done clients for £40, not sex but massage for example, as well as I have done clients for £200.

(Jake, 36, Spain)

Besides, it is important to note that some participants (9/25) were working in other jobs that provided a regular basic income. Consequently, it can be suggested that the economic conditions amongst interviewees varied significantly. This fact provides different circumstances under which interviewees accepted UAI. To this end, Gareth, a part-time escort and cleaner, told us:

> I had a client once, the same client three times because that client, he pays very well, much more that what I asked. The first time I asked him to use a condom but he didn’t want it, the second and third time I didn’t use a condom but was really scared.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

Gareth also asked the client about his health status, and it was clear that he did not trust his statement: ‘He said that he didn’t have anything but people can say whatever they want’. In this manner, his excerpt shows that he made his decision to perform the UAI service based on the economic incentive and his interest in seeking pleasure:

> That month the business wasn’t good and I needed money and he paid well and then I decided, I enjoyed, it was good sex.

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

Gilbert, a full-time escort living in a very exclusive area of London, had a somewhat different, but still negative, perception about the verbal and economic persuasion that clients exercise to obtain UAI:

> Of course, some people who come here and say, ‘I want without condom,’ and sometimes they put some pressure as before when I was quite innocent, and I didn’t know what to do, I didn’t know what to say, how to behave, and then I need the money because it is like that.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

Far from an extra money perspective, for other participants, UAI was a matter of survival. This was perhaps put most forcefully by Brooke, who described
his behaviour of non-use of condoms as ‘not good policy’ because he was aware of the risk: ‘I get well paid but also scared if they do this with me, without condom maybe they had also with someone else and we had unprotected sex, yes, I am risky, I put myself in risk for that’. Brooke contextualised this decision in his circumstances at the time of the interview – jobless, homeless, trying to cope with drug abuse and addiction, and struggling with a severe depression:

I am at risk if you ask me how I feel about it, not very safe, not very clever. But I gamble for the best, I need the cash, I need the cash for food, I need the cash for transport, and I need to get out of this hole because I smile when I meet new people and everything, but when I am alone is not easy.

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

3.5. Core theme: Reflections on Risk and Risky Behaviour

Initial research (Pollak et al., 1989) found little or no connection between widely available information about HIV-AIDS leading to preventive behaviour. However, other authors claimed that prior knowledge of the risk of contracting HIV is a pre-requisite for protected sexual practices involving condoms (Spira et al., 1993). In this sense, the perception of risk amongst participants was a relevant information to obtain in order to understand better its connections with safe sex practice.

This core theme clustered three themes that contain thoughts and feelings related to risk perception expressed by participants:

3.5.1. ‘Worry about Self’

This theme collected excerpts that indicate respondents’ awareness of their proximity to STI-HIV risk. Thus, it provides information about how they had constructed the knowledge of the risk and the feelings that it provoked. The analysis allowed the identification of three main sources: scientific knowledge obtained from health programmes, individual experiences with STI-HIV and the experiences of important others (e.g., friends, partners and flatmates). The influence of every source is explained below.

Coming to sex work from different parts of the world and career paths, the interviewees confirmed health programmes that specialised in sex workers were important sources of information about STI-HIV infections. Almost all
interviewees remembered that were approached by health professionals – through outreach activities – in their work settings at some point in their careers. For example, Romeo had worked for more than a year in different brothels and clubs in Spain but recalled receiving information for the first time when he started working in a brothel in London:

_Interviewer: Where did you hear for the first time about gonorrhoea and other diseases that you mentioned?_

_When I started working in London, I started working in a house called ‘X’ [name of the brothel removed] [...] I remember ‘X’ [name of the nurse removed] was there giving the leaflets and talking about the sexual health clinic, that they help us, that you can receive vaccination and you can do your blood tests and all that. So, I knew about this just there because until that time I didn’t know it._

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

For Jake, who sold sex for the first time in London two years ago, the experience of using health services was somewhat different but still effective:

_X [name of the nurse] contacted me. He sent me a message through ‘Gaydar’ telling me about this project and told me that all was a free charge. I answered that I want to come because I was working in this and also because I thought it was very interesting not only because the tests if not to come and ask if I am doing the things correctly. So, until now, I have been using these services for about 18 months._

(Jake, 36, Spain)

The tendency to seek reliable information from health programmes was evident in Geordie’s account. Geordie’s career as sex worker started in Brazil 13 years ago:

_For example, my flatmate had scabies, nothing more disgusting than scabies, but you can get scabies just like touching, especially in the summer and when I went to the hospital and get information about scabies, and the doctors say no worries because you can have the scabies blah, blah, blah._

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

Interviewees reported that they received general information about STI-HIV services (e.g., STI screening, counselling, provision of condoms) available in specialised health programmes for sex workers and the characteristics of the services (e.g., time, dates, ways to book an appointment, emergency services). While the statements provided the context of the participants’ experiences with these health programmes, more importantly, they revealed how these experiences were shaped by their particular position as sex workers. It is
important to mention that interviewees were asked if ‘they have heard about STIs or HIV’ as a way to capture the sense of closeness of these diseases, spontaneous feelings that they provoked and to know in which context they knew about them. This question did not aim at measuring the levels of knowledge, correctness or incorrectness about this topic.

A second, and undoubtedly equally important source of information, was the respondent’s illness experiences with STI-HIV. Illness experiences were defined for this study as any episode where interviewees or important others were diagnosed with STI-HIV. Almost the whole group (22/25) in this study had been diagnosed with one or more STI, and some of them (3/25) were living with HIV. Therefore, interviewees’ understanding about these infections was based on their personal experience and not solely on abstract knowledge (Moscovici, 1984b). Indeed, the vast majority of interviewees connected these infections with their entrance into sex work. For example, when Eva, a trans people who sold sex for the first time in Greek streets when she was 18, was asked about the sources of her knowledge about STI-HIV she stated:

My experiences for example [laughing loudly] because when I worked in this, I learnt.

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

This view was shared by Geordie, who worked for the first time as an agency escort when he was about 24 years old:

When I started escorting I got chlamydia.

(Geordie, 37, Brazil)

In Eva’s case, she reported genital warts, while Geordie reported a more significant experience as he had been diagnosed with chlamydia, syphilis and HIV. Considering that 11 of the 25 participants, such as Eva and Geordie, started selling sex at a young age (from 14 to 25 years), this finding is consistent with other authors who claim that young male sex workers are more likely to acquire an STI during their work career (Deisher and Paperry, 1983).

Hence, the statements indicate that interviewees had constructed the risk perception throughout a process of awareness that combined a mixture of sources such as information received from specialised health programmes for
sex workers, participants’ experiences with STI-HIV that they associated with their work, and the experiences of important others – who were also friends, flatmates and partners selling sex. In line with this, interviewees recognised STI-HIV as inherent to their work, hence, part of their realities as sex workers, which provoked a profound sense of vulnerability that they experienced with feelings of fear, anxiety and concern. As such, the results indicate the extent to which the understanding of STI-HIV seemed to be a major component of the participant’s self-concept and the way that they had constructed and approached the risk.

Therefore, this study explicated participant’s construction of risk as a cognitive (Moscovici, 1984a), and experiential (Moscovici, 1984b), social (Slovic, 1997) phenomenon. In light of this result, most excerpts showed that participants had a high awareness of STI-HIV risks linked to sex work. To this end, Eva emphasised:

> And this is, for example, why I want to stop working in this because the risk is getting higher and higher as I am having sex with more and more people.

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

Whilst Eva based her intention of exiting sex work on the perceived risk that is implied by having sex with a wide range of clients, other interviewees showed a clear attitude of risk-taking despite a similar sense of awareness. As such, Leo and Lara said:

> If I catch something, I knew the risk, you know, I know how many people I do a year, I know the risk, I know how much money I can make, I know the risk, sometimes the condom can be broken and I can take it, I know the risk.

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

> To be honest, I prefer don’t think about these diseases because if I think about them, I can catch them [laughing]. I don’t feel scared about them, if I catch any of them, well I catch them.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

Such statements may endorse some authors (Piqueiras, 2013; Abdullah Avais et al., 2014) who claim that male sex workers are not concerned about the risks of STI-HIV infections, although this point of view may be interpreted as the way that interviewees approach the risk as part of their work disadvantages.
The narratives showed that risk had been incorporated into the participants’ everyday life and from that, they each took a particular position. For John and Brooke, the risk of STI-HIV was clearly interpreted as the chance of acquiring any STI infection:

*Because you expose yourself to a risk, to a sexual risk and it would stop the chances of getting it, and I thought, fuck it!*

(John, 30, Spain)

*I know them, I know them for a long time, and they pay well for that, and I take the chance.*

(Brooke, 30, Portugal)

In Reo’s case, he explained the risk of acquiring HIV when performing UROI using a numerical representation:

*Interviewer: When you say that you are prepared to take the risk, what does it mean exactly?*

*Well, it means that the chances that you get something because someone is sucking you off are very, maybe like maybe 3%, you know the chances are quite minimum but it is possible so that I am prepared to take a risk.*

(Reo, 44, Nigeria)

By drawing on the above statements in which interviewees described risk, it can be said that they defined it as the ‘chances’ of acquiring STI-HIV infections during a ‘sex session’ with a client, therefore, the risk of STI-HIV was understood as part of their domain as sex workers.

A third relevant source of information that shaped participants’ understanding of HIV infection was the experiences of friends, flatmates or partners who were also sex workers. Eva told of what she learnt from the illness experience of a friend and the feelings that it provoked:

*I know HIV you are not in pain or feel something special because I have a friend and he has told me about that, he said that he doesn’t feel anything and he only take his tablets, go to do his blood tests and that is it. But, anyway, I am scared about this and I don’t want to get it […] you cannot protect yourself with anything because the condom is not thick enough and even the HIV can pass the condom and you can fuck your life forever.*

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

Similarly, Jarvis and Romeo spoke about their understanding of the impact of HIV infection on people’s lives:

*He is HIV positive and he is a beautiful guy, he is amazing and he is an*
escort as well and when he told me, ‘I am positive’, I was completely like, and ‘I don’t know what to say’. He is like my brother, we are sharing the place, rent everything. I told him, ‘If you would tell me that you have cancer I would be sad, but HIV, you can live with it’. Because my flatmate has HIV and he is fine. But it is too close to me and if it is like the years don’t go around and it is trying to come and I feel like I need to be careful, I need to stop, so that is what I feel about HIV.

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

I feel scared, especially because I have some friends who are positive here in London. I think is very normal already, especially if you are part of the gay scene, also in the escort world. People tell you that is fine now you can receive medication and it is ok.

(Romeo, 28 Spain)

As can be seen, the experiences of important others who were also working as sex workers and living with HIV provided social qualities to the participants’ experiences.

The statements presented in this section suggest that interviewees gained an understanding about the transmission of HIV that was clearly associated with the loss of health status. In addition, the statements exposed the knowledge about treatment available, its impact on lifestyle and life expectancy. Likewise, from the excerpts presented above, it is possible to highlight that some had installed the understanding of HIV as ‘very normal’, ‘part of the gay scene’, especially in ‘the escort world’. In this manner, it is possible to claim that some interviewees learnt about HIV-AIDS before it happened to them. From this perspective, the recognition of risk was a social construction before an actual experience. This statement is supported by Berger and Luckmann (1967), who argued that individuals’ perceived reality is a social construction based on the ideology and beliefs shared by members of certain social groups. Thus, the statements suggest risk perception as a process determined by a group-specific that is grounded in an individual’s experiences. Moreover, the statements revealed the interviewees’ perceptions of STI-HIV as potential threats to their lives, taking into account that they and the important others affected were working as sex workers. In this manner, they recognised HIV as a risky part of their realities and, in consequence, it was possible to perceive a profound sense of vulnerability.
Thus, considering the different sources that contributed to the participants’ understanding, several statements indicated a broad range of perceived levels of knowledge about STI-HIV:

*I think that I know pretty much about risks, I know about diseases.*

(Daniel, 28, Latvia)

*There are lots of diseases here, I never heard about these diseases before, I know there are many here.*

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

*Yes, but I heard [about STI] but I didn’t know much about them, I didn’t know if it was easy or no easy to catch them.*

(Gareth, 40, Brazil)

*I wasn’t new to sex, I was new to escorting, but I knew everything about condoms, I didn’t know a lot about HIV but I knew about HIV.*

(John, 30, Spain)

The statements indicate that interviewees were aware of the risk; therefore, safe sexual behaviour should be expected.

### 3.5.2. ‘Paying the Price’

The analysis captured several meanings representing the social, moral and psychological impact of HIV. This statement follows Yardley’s material-discursive position in which risk is a material and social phenomenon (Yardley, 1997). HIV was represented as a misfortune, praying to ‘God’ for protection to avoid this infection, and a ‘price to pay’ for unsafe sexual behaviour. As such, interviewees said:

*Yes, I have got some (STIs). I have got a bit of everything but fortunately, the only thing that I haven’t got is AIDS.*

(Angel, 36, Brazil)

*You know that this work has some risks, of course I know there is a PEP, but I don’t think that they are a ‘sin’, but if I get them, I get them.*

(Lara, 28, Colombia)

*I am scared about that because I know that someone can have it but you cannot know that straight away. I don’t know, maybe God protects me.*

(Eva, 26, Bulgaria)

*It depends on [laughing], it depends on, and sometimes I get really obsessed about it, get really, really worried extremely worried like negative thoughts, you cannot help to have them.*

(John, 30, Spain)
Interestingly, the representation of HIV as a misfortune assumes the human choices or individual’s decision leading to likelihood of this negative or adverse outcome (Walster, 1966). All these thoughts provoked feelings of fear and anxiety related to the risk of acquiring HIV:

\[
\text{I feel scared, I feel scared about HIV. I wouldn’t like to get it. But if I would get it, I will try to prepare myself, I have to take care of myself better, but I would probably blame myself because I get it because I am not the sort of person that I like to have sex without a condom, then I would blame myself very much.}
\]

(Romeo, 28, Spain)

\[
\text{After a month, I had my test and I was, ‘Oh my God!’ I was so nervous and ‘X’ [nurse name removed] asked if I was nervous and I said yes because you say that I have something wrong and now I have to pay the price.}
\]

(Jarvis, 37, Brazil)

3.5.3. ‘Worry about Others’

This theme clustered implicit and explicit statements about the perceived social pressure to perform safer sexual practices: the individual’s perception of the extent to which others who are important to that person think that they should perform a particular behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). In this way, this theory incorporates social influence regarding how much other relevant people want the individual to perform a given behaviour, and how much that person can be motivated to comply with each of their preferences. For example, Leo made reference to his family background to explain his worries about a negative impact on the lives of the wives and children of his clients, but this also insinuates the social pressure of his behaviour and what is ‘morally unacceptable’ in that context:

\[
\text{Sometimes the condom can be broken and I can take it, I know the risk, but I imagine the women of the guys who come here if they get the HIV, you know women are at home cooking, cleaning, I think in my mother for example, if my father goes with someone and catch the HIV. You know, I don’t forget the place where I come from. I really think in that way and I think I couldn’t forgive myself if I knew I pass HIV or something to people who has nothing to do, like children, you know, they suffer.}
\]

(Leo, 26, Brazil)

Not surprisingly, a few participants who had disclosed their work to their families spoke about the importance of preserving their well-being for these important others:

\[
\text{When the time comes, I put the condom on because I am scared and I}
\]
decide to put condom because I take care of myself. I have to take care of myself in this work because I have a small child to take care, my niece. I have to protect that child.

(Genevieve, 39, Bulgaria)

She knows about my work and knows all my friends who also work in this. She always asks me to be careful, like any other mother.

(Lara, 28, Colombia/Germany)

Such accounts reflect the significance of preserving their health because of their commitment to supporting their families economically. Other interviewees wanted to protect their health to avoid their parent(s) knowing about their work:

I talk everything to my mother and she talks everything to me, like we were friends, of course not everything [laughing], and this makes me be careful and to want to have a family.

(Gilbert, 29, Brazil)

The analysis found that very few participants had disclosed their sex work to their parents or relatives. The large majority reported that friends and formal partners knew about their activities because they were also sex workers.

3.6. Summary

The previous section has shown five core themes: ‘explicit policy on condom use – non-negotiable’, ‘risk reduction strategies’, ‘risk assessment of client – in situ’, ‘factors underpinning engagement in high-risk sexual activity’, and ‘reflections on risk and risky behaviour’. The table 6 displays the different frequencies of the participants’ responses by core theme and themes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Total of Participants</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit policy on condom use – ‘Non-negotiable’</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk reduction strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing the active sexual role</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprotected oral intercourse (UOI)</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using persuasion with clients</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk assessment of client – ‘in-situ’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive sense of safety</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived riskiness of clients</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Familiarity/Trust – ‘regular clients’ 09 09 100%
Physical appearance 09 02 22.2%

Factors underpinning engagement in high risk sexual activity
Use of recreational drugs 09 07 77.7%
Attractiveness to the client 09 04 44.4%
Clients removing/breaking condoms 09 03 33.3%
Giving into clients demands 09 03 33.3%
Extra financial incentives 09 07 77.7%

Reflections on risk and risky behaviour
‘Worry about self’ 25 20 80%
‘Paying the price’ 25 06 24%
‘Worrying about others’ 25 03 12%

The whole group of participants contributed to construct the core theme ‘explicit policy on condom use – non-negotiable’. The determination of participants to confirm the use of condoms with clients was notable. It describes different aspects related to how they perceived STI-HIV risk as well as attitudes and practices towards condom use in the context of commercial sex. In addition, the meaningfulness of the use of condoms as part of the discourse of interviewees emerged from their position as sex workers. While undoubtedly framed by the risk awareness of STI-HIV transmission, a favourable attitude towards the use of condoms went beyond this aspect.

The themes: ‘risk reduction strategies’, ‘risk assessment of client – in situ’ and ‘factors underpinning engagement in high-risk sexual activity’ explain the conditions and circumstances in which events of unprotected sex occurred and the rationale for this behaviour. It is important to note that only nine participants contributed to the core themes ‘risk assessment of client – in situ’ and ‘factors underpinning engagement in high-risk sexual activity’ because they were based on experiences of unprotected sex within the context of sex work. The core themes ‘risk reduction strategies’ and ‘risk assessment of client – in situ’ explained, in some ways, interviewees’ behaviour from a point of view that indicates a sense of control and autonomy to make a risk-taking decision. In this manner, these themes represented a perceived behavioural control, which was originally defined as an additional predictor of intentions
of behaviour, particularly about behaviours that cannot be performed at will (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen and Madden, 1986; Ajzen, 1987). Thus, it was suitable to examine unexpected events of UAI or other risky sexual practices.

Furthermore, these themes may explain the response of the participants against a perceived risk from their position as sex workers. Their statements demonstrated that the decision-making process was equally experienced with feelings of worry and anxiety. Regarding this point, Joffe claims that individuals faced with potential danger operate from a position of concern that motivates them to represent the risk in a specific way (Joffe, 1996; Joffe, 1999).

In line with this standpoint, Schiltz and Adam state that the application of a risk management strategy is influenced by how an individual perceives his/her exposure (Schiltz and Adam, 1995). Thus, the perceived behavioural control amongst participants explicates that, even in unexpected circumstances, they balanced different factors and developed several strategies to balance their risk-taking decision to perform unprotected sex. The narratives suggested that this risk management was primarily the guiding system for day-to-day decision making. They applied risk management in a very intuitive manner, almost as a mental shortcut to process risk-taking events. In reality, the interviewees triggered this mechanism either consciously or unconsciously through a mixture of feelings and thoughts such as attraction vs. anxiety, sexual arousal vs. fear, and throughout they sought a positive attitude based on their knowledge and work experience, and important others’ experiences in managing risk. This response to danger seems to activate a set of learnt sexual practices and strategies aimed at reducing their chances of acquiring any STI-HIV.

The sub-themes ‘the use of recreational drugs’ and ‘extra financial incentives’ contributed significantly to the theme ‘factors underpinning engagement in high risk sexual activity’. They explain unprotected anal intercourse embedded in scenarios of material and sexual power as well as a shared subculture that involves the escort services. The findings highlight the inherent risks involved
in male sex work, demonstrated in the type of interaction with their social identity as sex workers and the type of service requested.

Finally, the theme ‘worry about self’ largely (80%) contributed to the core theme ‘reflections on risk and risky behaviour’ compared with the theme ‘worry about others’, which only 12% of participants mentioned. This suggests that participants were worried about acquiring the STI-HIV infections, but it is not possible to state if they were not worried about transmitting them as this specific question was not asked.

4. Discussion

Risk Perception

This study found that the whole group of participants knew about STI and HIV. This may be explained as almost all (22/25) had acquired one or more of these infections, and some (3/25) were living with HIV. This finding is consistent with observations published on male sex workers in Europe (Belza et al., 2001; Ballester-Arnal et al., 2013). Not surprisingly then, the construction of risk was based on their illness experiences and the experiences of ‘important others’ who were also sex workers. In that manner, their awareness of risk was strongly linked to their work identity as sex workers. Consistently, participants told of their intention to ‘always’ use condoms, which supports claims that male sex workers do not seek bareback sex (e.g. Bimbi and Parsons, 2005), unlike gay men (Elford et al., 2007; Parsons and Bimbi, 2007; Persson et al., 2016). Further, as others have also noted (Smith and Seal, 2008; Braine and al., 2010), the great majority of participants explained protected sex as a part of being ‘professional’, and for that reason they stipulated the use of condoms in their online advertisements. They spoke about condom use as a significant component of their self-presentation and, in doing so, gave the impression of separating themselves from escorts who do not perform safe sex. Moreover, similar to another study (Smith and Seal, 2008), our interviewees explicitly associated condom use with their occupational expectations and roles. This result can be supported following the reflection of (Thoits and Virshup, 1997) that positive and meaningful self-evaluations related to the self-concept of
‘professionals’, which emanates from their role identity, seem to validate an expected behaviour that, in this case, is related to protected sex. Yet, a great majority of our interviewees expressed positive attitudes towards protected sex – specifically those who were not interested in sex for the sake of pleasure or intimacy – while others claimed that condom use interferes with their personal sexual satisfaction, an attitude more frequently reported in studies focused on MSM (e.g. Strong et al., 2005).

Risk Management and Unprotected Sex in Commercial Sex

The examination of the participants’ sexual experiences in the context of commercial sex brought to light events of UAI, a risky behaviour also noted in other studies (Wong et al., 2012; Abdullah Avais et al., 2014; Biello et al., 2017). However, it is important to highlight that the proportion of participants who reported this behaviour (36%) was much higher than in other studies with samples highly represented by migrants (Zaro Rosado et al., 2006; Cortez et al., 2011; Ballester et al., 2012). This finding suggests that the response to risk amongst the interviewees was not necessarily connected with the practice of safer sexual behaviour. For this reason, this study proposes to interpret the self-reported frequency of ‘always’ using condoms as a desirable behaviour but not necessarily evidenced in practice.

Most importantly, this investigation shed light on a system of risk management amongst participants who accepted performance of UAI. They thought it was possible to reduce their chances of acquiring STI-HIV by deploying a self-protective behaviour called ‘selection and avoidance’. This behaviour has also been reported amongst gay men (Schiltz and Adam, 1995) and male sex workers who want to avoid anal intercourse (Bloor et al., 1993); they select their clients (Wirtz et al., 2014) and adopt specific strategies in protected sex negotiation (Bloor et al., 1993). As such, the selection of sexual practices was based on a hierarchy of risk that was grounded on a notion of ‘probabilities’. This response to risk validates the assertion that people tend to use scientific knowledge to estimate probabilities about taking risks (Kahneman et al., 1982). This rationale for risk-taking decisions has been informed by MSM (Van de
Ven et al., 2002; Persson et al., 2016), and MSW (Bimbi and Parsons, 2005; Braine and al., 2010; Ballester et al., 2012).

From the narratives of UAI events, it was possible to identify sexual practices that they catalogued as ‘low risk’ as well as groups of customers considered safer. Most of these have also been reported in previous studies. For example, a significant proportion of participants perceived UOI as a low-risk practice for HIV transmission (Piqueiras, 2013; Grov et al., 2016), considered ‘married men’ as a low-risk group (Bimbi and Parsons, 2005) and were more willing to indulge in UAI with ‘regular’ clients (Braine and al., 2010). More specifically, this research revealed the consideration of not only one, but several of these factors as a recurrent pattern (e.g., indulge a ‘regular’ and ‘married’ client with a low-risk service such as oral sex without a condom).

Yet, in spite of this ability to identify some risk factors, the narratives confirmed claims that the application of scientific knowledge amongst male sex workers was not free of misconceptions about HIV transmission and risk reduction (He et al., 2007a; Ballester et al., 2012). This statement can be supported by claims that rating risk can, in general, be susceptible to an erroneous process of individual information (Slovic et al., 2000). Regardless of the accuracy of the risk management applied by participants, its use to support their risk-taking decision suggests some degree of control of the sex session with the client, as it is postulated that protected sex is modulated by an individual’s ability to gain control of the sexual encounter (Minichiello et al., 2003). Thus, the findings that safer sexual behaviour amongst the participants may not be determined by their risk awareness and the significance of the impact of STI-HIV on their lives, but by their confidence in the risk management they display as sex workers.

Conversely, the narratives also connected events of UAI with a complete lack of control during the sexual encounter. The consumption of drugs, the attractiveness of the client and the physical domination exercised by the client were frequently linked to unprotected sex. Similar to other studies on internet-based male sex workers, a great number of participants reported the use of
recreational drugs (Mimiaga et al., 2008; Braine and al., 2010; Blackwell and Dziegielewski, 2013) and associated them with UAI (Colby et al., 2016). They strongly connected the ‘chem-sex’ service with the use of recreational drugs at the customers’ request. In this manner, this study confirms the perception that drug use in this context is a social aspect of the occupational role-playing undertaken by a sex worker (Ross et al., 2012). On the other hand, the findings contradict studies that claim that drug use is less problematic for male sex workers than for women (Sanders et al., 2009), or those that describe the indoor sex market as less compatible with drug use (Cusick and al., 2005), or only tell about changes in the sex work scene in London, particularly gay scenes.

In addition, this study corroborates early observations (Bloor et al., 1993) about the variation in the verbal and nonverbal exchanges that preface commercial sexual encounters. It was found that some interviewees did not consider the use of condoms a relevant topic of conversation with clients, especially if they felt attracted to the customer. This observation supports claims about the relevance of pleasure and sexual arousal amongst male sex workers (Almeida, 2011). Considering this point, these interviewees’ expectations about the sexual session become similar to those found amongst MSM (non-sex workers) who sought bareback sex because they place pleasure, freedom and intimacy over the risk of contracting HIV (Carballo-Dieguez et al., 2006). However, it is important to note the significance of sexual enjoyment amongst participants was not only perceived as individual sexual satisfaction, but also the need for sexual arousal to maintain an erection that let them accomplish their work role of professional escorts. Despite participants describing the use of recreational drugs and sexual attraction to the client as two independent factors, it was found that, similar to other studies focussed on gay men (Wilson et al., 2009) and sex workers (Basson, 2001; Tiefer, 2001; Almeida, 2011), their combination greatly diminished the condom’s negotiation and consequently increased the HIV risk (Lo et al., 2011).

The third circumstance described scenarios where interviewees felt unable to control the consistent use of condoms during sexual intercourse. The narratives
explained that the initial negotiation about the conditions of a sexual service can be influenced by hidden motivations for unprotected sex that can make the encounter unstable. Certainly, some participants, particularly those who perform the passive sexual role, described scenarios of physical domination that drove them to hazardous situations such as clients breaking or removing condoms. In addition, some interviewees evoked events of physical and verbal violence perpetrated by clients, some associated with drug consumption, which is consistent with incidents reported in other studies of male sex workers (Jamel, 2011; Wirtz et al., 2014; George et al., 2016; Biello et al., 2017). However, it is important to mention that similar behaviour has been informed amongst women migrant sex workers who felt intimidated by their male clients and feared violence (Weine et al., 2013).

Another recurrent factor linked to UAI was the verbal domination exercised by the client in order to obtain the acceptance of the interviewees. A common strategy also reported by the interviewees confirms studies (Biello et al., 2017) that report the use of economic reward. This aspect may corroborate claims of income instability amongst escorts (Hendrix-Sloan, 2009) as well as high financial expenses (e.g., clothing, advertisements, gym memberships, transportation). Nonetheless, it is important to note that this factor has also been reported amongst migrant women sex workers working in a diversity of settings (Weine et al., 2013).

Further, this perspective can also be supported by the economic model of individual preferences regarding the value of employment with increased risk to health and the associated compensating wage differential (Bipin Shah, 2006). Considering this point of view, constraints on safer behaviour amongst interviewees can be interpreted as imbalanced economic power that is very much linked to poverty or lack of management support in sex work settings (Ziersch et al., 2000; Pitcher, 2014). This finding is similar to a discussion regarding the linkages between negotiation skills and safer sexual practices in the context of commercial sex (Bloor and McKeganey, 1992; Bloor et al., 1993). The findings in this aspect highlight some discrepancies as participants
that gave an account of a ‘role of educator’ with clients, which insinuates a sense of confidence related to their negotiation skills, also described by other authors (Parsons et al., 2004), equally reported events of UAI.

This study challenges claims that independent male escorts operate in safer environments, receive higher earnings, exercise a higher level of control over their work conditions and maintain clear boundaries about what they are willing to do or not (Braine and al., 2010; Convery, 2010; Pitcher, 2014). As other authors have claimed, a significant level of autonomy to decide working conditions does not always result in higher levels of security, as external factors may impact on the agency experienced by some sex workers (Pitcher, 2014). Indeed, the descriptions of the sexual scenarios in which unprotected sex took place suggest that, within the context of commercial sex, participants adopted meaningful positions and modes of interaction that were dominated by the significance of their work identity and exposed them to risk. Therefore, despite the fact that the participants’ experiences were by no means entirely uniform, they support scholars who argue that, in certain contexts, the relationship of power and control between the male sex worker and the client can trigger dynamics of risk that expose them to unprotected sex (See, e.g., Bloor et al., 1993; Joffe and Dockrell, 1995; Minichiello et al., 1998; Davis and Feldman, 1999; Ziersch et al., 2000).

In this sense, the present study claims the extent to which engaging in risky sexual behaviour may be an important component of the participants’ self-concept as sex workers can be supported by the type of interactions that illustrate the physical, verbal and sexual interactions between them. In this manner, the study approaches STI-HIV from the perspective of occupational risk (Marino et al., 2000; Hendrix-Sloan, 2009) that describes the specific social context, organisation, and work conditions in which the participants deployed protective strategies to manage this risk, which was consistent with males in unfavourable and marginalised positions compared to other MSM groups (Schiltz and Adam, 1995).
Thus, the findings of this study may not be applicable to other types of male sex workers as it has been claimed that sexual practices vary in different groups (Hillman et al., 1990) and the diverse sex work environments are associated with the various degrees of exposure to risk (Kane, 1993). For instance, a study developed in Beirut found that escorts reported more consistent condom use with clients than MSW working in bathhouses. The authors claim the presence of influential factors including HIV risk knowledge and perceived risk susceptibility, job security, and internalized stigma and related feelings of self-worth and fatalism regarding health and HIV risk (Aunon et al., 2015).
Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Final Remarks

1. Overview
This study sought to understand 25 London-based males’ experiences of international migration and sex work. The work was an exploratory investigation that collected information using face-to-face in-depth interviews. Using narrative research, this study focused on answering the research question: what are the experiences of migrant males selling sex in London? The data collection sought to tackle the following objectives:

- To explore the connections between the trajectories of migration towards the UK and the routes of engagement in sex work.
- To examine the social organisation of male sex work in London, the types of male sex work, and routines and practices.
- To explore circumstances exposing migrant males to sexual health risks.

This section has succinctly recapitulated the premises of this thesis. This paves the way to present the conclusions of this thesis, which are can be summarised in the following section.

2. Conclusions
- This thesis suggests connections between the phenomena of migration and sex work in the experiences of the study participants. Although both processes were experienced uniquely by each participant, it was possible to identify common patterns intertwining these events. The findings demonstrate that while for some participants the entrance into sex work occurred before their emigration, the vast majority engaged in commercial sex during the process of immigration towards the UK. The study corroborates economic factors as one of the main forces driving both events but gives particular significance to meanings that participants had attached to economic constraints and different representations of poverty through familial experiences and poor work conditions. However, for other participants, their involvement was perceived as a better-paid job and
an opportunity to improve their lifestyles. Regardless of the main reason for engaging in sex work, many interviewees supported their decision on traditional masculine norms regarding males’ responsibility to support their families. Therefore, this research places importance on structural forces such as male gender role, socio-economic disadvantage and homophobia. Even more importantly, the findings support authors who claim that there is an overlap between sex work, migration and a wide variety of forms of social exclusion such as scarcity, family breakdown, homophobic violence and other forms of marginalisation as migrants (Balfour and Allen, 2014).

• This study found that interviewees experienced selling sex in London through their entrance into the male escort market. In this manner, the thesis contributes with some insights into the migrant experience in indoor sex work settings. Knowledge of the internet, mobile technologies and communication skills were considered essential elements that facilitated entrance to this sex market. Establishing a presence and developing expertise as independent escorts suggest a process that empowered participants to take control of their own advertisement and work management through entrepreneurial skills to tackle a perceived highly competitive sex work environment. In this sense, the use of the internet seems to magnify the degree of entrepreneurialism in the context of their work experiences. Thus, entrance into this sex market involved a comprehension of the organisation, structure and occupational arrangements of the online sex marketplace. Likewise, this study delivers aspects that the interviewees described as central dimensions in the construction of their self-image as escorts and the conflict between their construction of a work identity as independent escorts and the social identities of ‘prostitutes’ or ‘sex workers’.

This study outlines organisational aspects of the male escort market in London, a dominant typology in Western countries (Sanders et al., 2009), particularly in the UK (TAMPEP, 2007). In this manner, this thesis contributes with valuable information about indoor male sex work that has been commonly underexplored. It facilitates the understanding of how male escorts using the
internet and mobile technologies experienced the London sex market, work conditions, and ways to interact with clients.

- Finally, this thesis also shed light on the understanding and experiences of risky sexual behaviour in the context of commercial sex. Unprotected sex was explained from two different perspectives according to the perceived control during the sexual encounter. Firstly, it was explained as a risk-taking decision based on a system of customer assessment and selection of low-risk sexual practices. This system aimed to avoid losing customers who demanded unprotected sex while reducing the chances of acquiring STI-HIV. However, it was found that this system presented cognitive issues and misinterpretation of knowledge of risk that undermined the interviewees’ real capacity for self-protection. Secondly, participants depicted scenarios where they did not feel fully in control of using condoms. They identified the use of recreational drugs, the attractiveness of the client and the physical dominance of the clients as the main factors driving unprotected sex. In this manner, the results draw connections that may, to some extent, explain the dynamics influencing their sexual behaviour as sex workers. Therefore, this investigation proposes connections between the role of a sex worker in the interaction established with the client, risk perception and sexual behaviour.

3. Contributions of the Thesis

This investigation has provided valuable information for researchers, policy makers and public health professionals about the experience of migrant males working in the indoor sex work sector in London. The insights offered by this thesis can be divided as follows:

3.1. Contribution to Knowledge

Firstly, this thesis has contributed to migration studies examining male sex workers as a distinctive flow of migrants. In this way, this study complements previous research on a diversity of migrant flows that settled in the UK (Linneker and McIlwaine, 2011; Molnar, 2011; Luthra et al., 2014; Okólski and Salt, 2014). Furthermore, this thesis has provided insights into the heterogeneous trajectories amongst the migrant male sex workers who
participated in the study. This characteristic is often-overlooked as the majority of studies on migrant sex workers have been inclined to describe male sex workers with regard to their general socio-demographic characteristics (Belza et al., 2001; Belza, 2005a; Mai, 2009c) without paying much attention to the different patterns of migration that they may follow. This observation is significant because of the extent of the implications of their previous experiences in different sex markets and countries.

In addition, the findings of this research show migration in a period of time wherein free movement within Europe was still part of the policies. In this manner, this historical context represents the analysis of the phenomena of migration and sex work within a context of a social and political transformation in this region in different socio-spatial levels. In this way, the findings may reflect, to some extent, the connectivity between the local characteristics of male sex work in London and global phenomena that determine the involvement of migrants into sex work.

Secondly, this thesis enlarges empirical experience about migrant male sex workers who have been largely under-examined. Through the use of qualitative research methods, this thesis offers original insights about the complexity, diversity and contextual issues of the migratory process of the male participants who were working in the sex market in London. The use of thematic analysis contributed with rich information about patterns of meanings in the data set. In this way, this thesis offers a list of factors that influence the migratory process and engagement in sex work as well as some potential connections between them. Hence, this study contributes to an understanding of the patterns of mobility and engagement of sex work for this group. Likewise, the findings offer original material to enhance a conceptual framework based on gender dimensions that distinguish the entrance of migrant males into sex labour markets, and the way that these markets attracted them. Hence, it helps to understand how a mixture of economic and non-economic factors can transform male migration into a particular human experience.
This thesis also supplements knowledge of migrants operating in indoor settings and for that reason are considered a ‘hard to reach’ group. This investigation has provided valuable information about the experience of migrant males working in the indoor sex work sector in London. This sector has been frequently under-explored compared to others such as street sex workers. This thesis has outlined the entry of migrant male sex workers to this market and the relevant dimensions that shaped the construction of their work identity as independent escorts.

Furthermore, the findings propose thinking about the online sex marketplace not only as purely economic settings, but also as a structure that frames the written and visual communication of the participants, a social platform where they interacted with clients, website owners and different types of public interested in commercial sex. Hence, this study has extended analyses of sex work as a form of labour through consideration of occupational characteristics and working conditions across a broad spectrum of indoor sex work. From the point of view of individuals’ experiences, the online sex marketplace also seems to work as a complex organisation that reveals the flexibility and reinvention of the self through an understanding of attractiveness of bodies and the diversity of sex and pleasure. In that respect, the study not only describes frequent aspects of sex work activities but explores each individual’s understanding of the economy of indoor sex work and the linkages between the commodification of the bodies and adaptability to the sex market as a social sphere from migrants’ perspectives. It also presents the point of connection between what represents the work sphere and the types of experiences of our interviewees.

Finally, this study has provided substantial insights about the influence of the role of participants as sex workers and the way that they had constructed, approached and responded to the risk of STI-HIV. An important aspect to reinforce is the strong perception of these infections as part of their realities and occupational risks. In this sense, this study also portrays social and emotional aspects related to the role of male sex workers that surfaced during
the interaction with the client. The findings suggest that male escorts operating in London work in a highly sex-saturated environment in which societal expectations are often at odds with clients’ expectations and demands and the sex worker’s identity, of which social identity is a relevant component. Thus, the findings are informative with regard to the social construction of risk coming from the male sex workers’ experiences and also from the effect of the powerful structures of the social organisation of sexual behaviour in the London sex market.

3.2. Contributions to Policy and Practice
The findings of this research suggest that the current policies and legal framework in the UK do not reflect the complex spectrum of male migrant sex workers operating in the local market. They fail, for example, to acknowledge that some men were already professional sex workers in other countries and decided to immigrate to the UK as they were attracted to the work conditions of the sex market. Furthermore, existing policy approaches do not reflect the complex structures and spectrum of working conditions within the indoor sex market. They fail to recognise the diverse groups and experiences of men working in the escort market and, in doing so, may undermine their agency.

Although this finding indicates that participants as independent escorts seem to have a better capacity to organise their work and control their working conditions, they are still exposed to circumstances that diminish their personal safety and support. Therefore, the findings present strong rationales for considering decriminalisation as a first step towards approaching sex work as labour. In principle, this opens up reconsideration of the development of occupational health and safety standards. The recognition of sex work as labour will reduce the social stigma attached to sex workers, which clashes with the work identity that our participants have created as professional escorts. Further, consideration of labour regulation will help to rule the indoor sex markets under occupational standards that reinforce working conditions of men working as escorts, a career that was perceived as autonomous by the participants. The findings suggest further enhancement of the understanding of
how policy approaches might be tailored to specific work settings in order to advance recognition of sex workers’ work conditions in different circumstances. Moreover, they propose that research initiatives for migrant male sex workers are essential for the sake of not only public health but also social justice and human rights.

Regarding contributions to practice, the findings of this study suggest that the design of HIV-prevention programmes for male sex workers should address not only the biological drivers of HIV infection, with antiretroviral prevention and treatment approaches, but also the settings in which male sex workers engage in selling sex. Further, this thesis has provided valuable insights into risky sexual behaviour amongst participants. This information can assist programme planners to formulate and implement specific educational initiatives directed at migrant males operating in the country. In this manner, the findings can be used to produce educational material and to prepare prevention guidelines for health professionals working with this population. For example, the narratives, as a rich source of information, can be used to portray real situations and scenarios of unprotected sex. They may direct the identification of common factors driving unprotected sex and the risk perception some migrant males have created.

In addition, this valuable material can be used by nurses, psychotherapists and counsellors in order to identify other concomitant issues that male sex workers face with regard to risk, such as the use of recreational drugs. It may facilitate the referral to specific health programmes for those males who want to receive counselling and treatment. Likewise, this study described mental health issues due to traumatic familial experiences, violence experienced in the context of sex work, suicide attempts, depression, and dependence on recreational drugs. These findings can be used to identify common feelings, emotions, and thoughts that may be present in other migrant males in order to design counselling sessions and therapies for this specific group. The data presented can also be used to design training that facilitates the development of new skills to cope with the intense emotions that this group experience.
4. Potential Limitations of the Study

This section discusses some possible limitations of this study. The first relates to the study design. Certainly, the qualitative approach placed certain restrictions on the scope because the conclusions will be limited by the questions asked and the issues investigated. However, it is important to remember that the nature of this qualitative study was not to generalise the findings, but to explore the diversity of the experiences of migration and sex work amongst participants. Likewise, although the sample for this study cannot be considered as representative of migrants selling sex in the UK, these findings will rest on the assumption that the data materially represents only a potential truthful account amongst men with these particular characteristics.

Secondly, due to the recommendations of the ethical committees that reviewed this study, the researcher was constrained to recruit participants from health services and programmes in London. This situation, unfortunately, confined the scope of the participants who took part in the study. Recruitment used key informant and snowball sampling amongst users of two health programmes for male sex workers operating in the city. In the first case, participants recruited using key informants may reflect the nature of their interactions with the health providers of these programmes, while those in the second may include interviewees who trusted the invitation of their peers. In both cases, the sample for this study may likely be composed of those considered the most cooperative participants. Consequently, the narratives of those sex workers who were not interested in participating or who are not part of the health services were not reported in this study.

The third limitation relates to the translation of the interviews that were conducted in languages other than English. Considering their perceived level of communication skills, eight interviewees decided to speak in Spanish (their native language). During the transcription process, these interviews were translated into English. Although there was an attempt to make the translation and transcription processes as accurate as possible, it is important to acknowledge that some terms could lose their real meanings in translation. This
limitation has also been considered by other authors with regard to language equivalence (Brislin, 1986; Zea et al., 2003).

Finally, another important aspect to discuss is the researcher’s positionality within the interview process. Despite the claim that the interviewer’s gender had some significance on the data generated, I need to highlight that I did not perceive this aspect as an issue. I believe that my previous experience working with male and female sex workers has enhanced my communication skills to minimise the impact of gender on the interaction with male participants. A way to confirm this perception is the quality of information obtained throughout ‘natural’ conversations with the interviewees. On the other hand, ethnicity was an interesting factor facilitating the interaction with participants as the fact I am a migrant and may be perceived as a person who could better understand their stories.

5. Suggestions for Future Research
The findings of this thesis provide an interpretation of the experiences of interviewees that adds to future research by suggesting potential directions. One of the aspects to be considered, according to the findings, is the examination of the experiences of migration and male sex work amongst those who reported more than one stage of immigration. This aspect will provide more insights about the entry into sex work considering that, for an important proportion of the participants, it occurred in the first receiving country as well as the experiences of selling sex in different countries. This aspect will help to understand the transnational connections of sex work.

The miscellaneous characteristics of the participants in this study corroborate the presence of relevant sub-groups in the male sex work population, such as interviewees who engaged in sex work at a very young age (14–19 years old), trans people, and interviewees who self-reported as living with HIV. This identification of three sub-groups emphasises the importance of identifying their particularities, vulnerabilities, risks and health needs. Moreover, the findings suggest these men can be more vulnerable to STI-HIV as well as events of violence. In this manner, this thesis points out to the importance to
gather information about the long-term experience of sex work and the repercussions in their sexual health and mental health.

Additionally, the findings confirm that clients are still willing to pay more money to compensate sex workers for taking a risk. It suggests the necessity of gaining an understanding, from the clients’ perspective, about the meanings associated with same-sex commercial sex and unprotected sex. This aspect underlines the importance of collect information about the characteristics of clients and their experiences buying sex from male migrants.
References


Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Sexual Offences Act 2003. Chapter 42. Part 1 Sexual Offenses. Section Number 51A.


file:///C:/Users/Elisa%20Ruiz/Downloads/illegalactivitiesarticlefinalf_tcm77-365319.pdf


Campbell, R. & Kinnell, H. 2000. “We Shouldn't Have to Put up with This”: Street Sex Work and Violence. Criminal Justice Matters, 42, 12-3.


Castaneda, H. 2013. Structural Vulnerability and Access to Medical Care among Migrant Street-Based Male Sex Workers in Germany. Social Science & Medicine, 84, 94-101.


Coelho, B. 2009. Corpo Adentro: Prostitutas Acompanhantes Em Processo Em Si.


Cunningham, J. 2011. Street Sex Workers in Preston: An Evidence-Based Study. Foxton centre publication, Preston. UCLAN.


Mai, N. 2004b. Looking for a Modern Life...': The Role of Italian Television in the Albanian Migration to Italy Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture, 1, 3-22.


Mai, N. 2011b. Tampering with the Sex of 'Angels': Migrant Male Minors and Young Adults Selling Sex in the Eu. Ethnic and Migration Studies, 37, 1237 - 52.


Molnar, J. 2011. The integration process of immigrants in scotland, uk and in washington. Eurolimes (Eurolimes), 201 - 17


Who. 2014. Consolidated Guidelines on Hiv Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations.


## Appendices

Table 1. Papers retrieved by terms: *male migrants* AND *sex workers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Paper suitable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zaccarelli et al.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>473 immigrants, male to female transsexual sex workers</td>
<td>Testing, counselling and HIV</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai, N.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Report</td>
<td>18 cities: 10 EU and non-EU</td>
<td>82 young men immigrants sex workers</td>
<td>Migration experiences and resilience</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He et al.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>239 ‘money boys’ rural-to-urban immigrants</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and behaviours</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong et al.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>239 ‘money boys’ rural-to-urban immigrants</td>
<td>Alcohol and drug use. HIV/AIDS. Migration Experience. Sexual identity</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lau et al.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>199 male rural-to-urban immigrants sex workers</td>
<td>Psychosocial factors and unprotected Sex</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai, N.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>18 cities: 10 EU and non-EU</td>
<td>82 male children and young adult immigrant sex workers</td>
<td>Mobility patterns and livelihood strategies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai, N.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Report</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>67 women, 24 men, 9 transgenders international immigrants</td>
<td>Involvement in sex work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai, N.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>18 cities: 10 EU and non-EU</td>
<td>82 male children and young adult international sex workers</td>
<td>The involvement in sex work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kong, T.S.K.</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 ‘money boys’</td>
<td>Migration, ‘prostitution’, and homosexuality</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castañeda, H.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Germany (8 cities)</td>
<td>46 street-based male international immigrants. Also, physicians, social workers &amp; health department staff</td>
<td>Access to medical care</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Migration and sex work: an exploratory study of the experiences of men in London

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

This study is looking for non-UK born men who are willing to share their stories about migration, selling sex and the use of healthcare services in the UK. Before you decide to participate, it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please, take your time to read this carefully and then you will have the opportunity to ask some questions, request more information, or express any concern about the study.

What is the purpose of the research?
This study is a doctoral thesis that will contribute to a better understanding of male sex work among migrants, and how these experiences are connected with their use of health services. For this reason, your participation will be very much appreciated.

Who can take part in this study?
This study is seeking men aged 18 or over, non-UK born, who is living in the UK for a year or more, and who have worked or are still working as sex workers in London. We would like to hear from men of any ethnicity, sexuality, religion, socio-economic or cultural background. Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. Likewise, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and this will not affect you in any way.

What does taking part in the research involve?
Your participation consists of a face-to-face interview which will take between 1-2 hours approx. in a safe and quiet environment.

What will you be asked?
You will be asked to tell about your migration story, how you decide to get in sex work and your experiences using health services in the UK. In this way, you will be asked about your experiences using health services in general, and sexual health clinics in particular. For this reason, some questions will involve your HIV status. Although, it is important to remain you that you are free to avoid questions that can make you feel uncomfortable.

What will happen with this information?
Interviews will be tape-recorded and then transcribed into text for analysis by the researcher. The results will be written up and presented as a PhD thesis but also, they will be published in academic journals or presented at conferences. However, your identity will be protected by using a code. Similarly, any personal information such as names, cities or other information that you may tell during the interview will be removed or changed.

What about my privacy and confidentiality?
The information that you provide will be kept confidential at City University London. The files will be kept on a password-protected computer and any printed file will be kept in locked cabinets for the duration of the study. Only the researcher will have access to this data which will be discussed with supervisors and other colleagues but always in anonymised form. Similarly, reports or any publication will not have any name or personal information that can let someone
identify you. If you have any specific concerns or questions about this, the researcher will happy to speak to you in person or on the phone as you prefer.

However, I have to let you know that confidentiality will be preserved as far as the law permits. It means that there are limits to confidentiality, particularly in cases where you or another person identified during the interview is in a significant and immediate danger of death or any type of physical or psychological harm. Also, confidentiality can be breached if a situation of criminal behaviour is reported. In this case, as a researcher, I will report these situations to authorities.

What are the risks and benefits?
This study is offering you the opportunity to share and reflect on your life story. Participants in similar studies have found this process as an interesting experience. Because you will require spending some of your time and commute for this interview, you will receive £20.00 compensation.

What do I do if I am interested?
The first step is very simple, you can contact the researcher by phone or email. You will have the opportunity to question about the study or express concerns about your participation. You will then have additional time to consider your participation. If you decide to participate we will arrange the place and time for this interview. The day of the interview you will be asked to complete the consent form.

About the Project and the Researcher:
This study has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee of City University London and it has been issued with indemnity insurance through the university. The findings of this study will be written up as a PhD thesis.

Further Information
If you would like any further information about the study before taking part, please contact:

Elisa Ruiz (principal investigator) - School of Health Science, 1 Myddelton Street, City University London ECV1 0HB, phone: 0207 0408826, mobile for this study 07-528475785 and email: Elisa.Ruiz.1@city.ac.uk

Dr Eamonn McKeown (thesis supervisor) - School of Health Science, 1 Myddelton Street, City University London ECV1 0HB, phone: 0207 040591, and email eamonn.mckeown.1@city.ac.uk.

Dr Yiannis Kyratsis (thesis supervisor) - School of Health Sciences, City University London Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB, phone: 02070405855, and email: Yiannis.Kyratsis.1@city.ac.uk

University Complaints Procedure
If there is any aspect of the study which concerns you, you may make a complaint. City University London has established a complaints procedure via the secretary to the Research Ethics Committee. To complain about the study, you need to phone 0207 0403040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary of the Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is “Migration and selling sex: an exploratory study of the experiences of Latin American men in London”

You can also write to the Secretary at:
Anna Ramberg
Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee
Research Office, E214
City University London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
Email: Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk

**Who has reviewed the study?**
This study has been also reviewed by the NRES Committee London – Central. The full contact details are as follow:

Health Research Authority  
NRES Committee London – Central  
Skipton House  
80 London Road  
SE1 6LH  
Phone: 020 7972 2584

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet
Appendix B: Consented Form approved

CONSENT FORM

Please read the statements below and tick the designated box for each if you agree:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have read through the information sheet, and I have had the chance to ask questions. I have thus been informed of the purpose and aims of the research, and my role in the research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my participation from this study at any time, without providing a reason, and without being penalised or disadvantaged.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consent the interviews to be recorded, transcribed and held as data at City University London. I consent to the use of anonymised quotations from my interview in reports on the project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that all information that I provide will be kept confidential and securely at City University London, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). No identifying information about any individual will be disclosed in reports on the project or supplied to third parties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that there are limits to confidentiality and in that way, it will be preserved as far as the law permits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree to take part in this study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Person Taking Consent</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Flyers Approved

INVITACIÓN: INVESTIGACIÓN PARA HOMBRES TRABAJADORES SEXUALES

Si Usted:

✔ Tiene 18 años ó más
✔ No ha nacido en UK
✔ Pero vive en UK por un año ó más tiempo
✔ Ha trabajado ó aún está trabajando como un (a) trabajador (a) sexual en Londres

Puedes participar en una entrevista durante la cual podrás narrar tu historia de vida, así como tus experiencias de migración y trabajo sexual. Esta entrevista se llevará a cabo en un lugar seguro y tranquilo, y podría durar 90 minutos o más. Tu participación permanecerá anónima. Recibirá £ 20.00 por su tiempo.

Si estás interesado (a), por favor contáctame, soy Elisa Ruiz. El celular para este estudio es 075-28475785 - Email – Elisa.Ruiz.1@city.ac.uk

CONVITE: INVESTIGAÇÃO PARA HOMENS PROFISSIONALS DO SEXO

Se você:

✔ Tem 18 anos ou mais
✔ No nasceu em UK
✔ Vive em UK um ano ou mais
✔ Está atualmente trabalhando ou já trabalhou como profissional do sexo em Londres

Convidamos você a participar de uma entrevista e contar sua história de vida e suas experiências de migração e trabalho como profissional do sexo. Esta entrevista será realizada em um local seguro e tranquilo com duração de 90 minutos. Todos os seus dados pessoais serão mantidos em sigilo absoluto. Vamos oferecer £ 20.00 para seu tempo.

Se você gostaria de participar, por favor entre em contato comigo, eu sou Elisa Ruiz 075-28475785 - Email – Elisa.Ruiz.1@city.ac.uk
### Appendix D: Interview schedule

**Section I: Migration**

**a. Leaving your country of origin**
- What is your country of origin?
- How long have you been in the UK?
- So, let’s go back to the time that you leave your country: Why did you decide to leave your country? What was happening in your life at that time? (Explore main reasons to migrate, employment condition, family relationships, other stories of migration in his family or social context, motivations to immigrate to a country)
- Have you been in other countries before to come to the UK? If yes, which countries? (explore for how long/what they did there)
- How did you decide to come to the UK/London? Why did you choose the UK? (Explore possible existent social networks and routes to migrate, expectations coming to the UK). Did you have an idea of how the life in London was?

**b. Settling Down in the UK**
- What happened when you arrived in the UK? (experiences about language/culture/employment/socio-economic issues)
- Was it easy to adapt? If not, what were the difficulties that you experienced at that time? How long did that happen? What made you stay in London?

**Section II: Selling Sex**

**a. The entrance in sex work**
- Would you tell me, how did you decide to exchange sex for money? What was happening in your life at that time? Who told you about selling sex as an alternative to get money? Who facilitates your entrance? Did you have an idea of how was that? Can you tell me your experience with your first client? How did you feel after this encounter?
- Had you thought in selling sex as an alternative job before that? (explore previous stories of selling sex among family, friends, acquaintances) Do you think that your decision of engaging in sex work has changed your life? If so, in which ways?

**b. In Business**

Now let’s talk about the present:
- How you started selling sex in London?
- How do you currently work in London? Please explain me about your clients: how/where do you contact them?
- Do you use advertisement to offer your services? If so, where? How do you describe yourself in your advertisements?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Information Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you mention to your clients that you are from [mention his country]? Why? Why do you think clients look for men from...[country]?</td>
<td>(explore sexual images and stereotypes, sexual expectations) Do you think your race or ethnicity influence the way that you sell sex? If yes, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your body important in your work? Why?</td>
<td>(explore about body image related to sex work, use of steroids)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many clients did you have last week/month? Do you sell sex to women? /men? /couples?</td>
<td>How do you define yourself in terms of sexual orientation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the services that you are willing to do?</td>
<td>(explore types, description, prices) What are the services that you are not willing to do? Why? How much you charge for your services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had used drugs in your work? If so, which drugs? Would you tell about the last time that this happened? Can you please explain me, how is using drugs with clients?</td>
<td>(explore the dynamic with clients)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had consumed alcohol in your work? Would you tell how the last time that this happened was? Can you explain me how is this situation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use condom with your clients? How often you used condom? Do you use condom with particular type of customer?</td>
<td>Why? In your opinion what are the main inconvenience for using condom with clients?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that is difficult ‘always’ use condoms with all your clients. Does this have ever happened to you? If so, could you please tell me this experience (when was the last time that this happened, the circumstances, participant feelings and thoughts, etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the same label ['sex worker', 'prostitute', 'escort', etc.] that the participant spontaneously applied to himself in relation to his work, ask -How you see yourself as...?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the most dangerous thing that has ever happened to you selling sex? What were there situations that put you in danger?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closing and thoughts for the future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Information Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are your plans for the future? Do you plan to go back to your country?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So, has there been anything you were hoping I might ask you that I haven’t asked you? Is there anything that you would like to say that we haven’t talked about? Would you like to add any thought or comment?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thanks for sharing your story!**
Appendix E: Hierarchical Organisation of the Thematic Map with Description and examples: ‘Migration Trajectories and Entry into Sex Work’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic constrains</td>
<td>Financial problems given as a motivation of leaving the home country</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘My mother had a shop but she went mental and had financial problems [...] everything went bad. So, I have to do something, then I decide to come here and to do this (Gilbert)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I studied law in my country but there was an economic crisis and everything, and my mother lost her job (Daniel)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘my father was complete popular in the city, so everybody knows him, and he never paid for anything [...], then I decided to help my family and come here (Jarvis)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor employment prospects</td>
<td>Explicit or implicit statements that associated dissatisfaction because of issues in the work environment with leaving the home country</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I thought I need to go somewhere else because it was very difficult to find a job (Jarvis)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I tried to talk with my bosses to ask them permission to leave earlier to go to the school but they spoke about my own life and they knew that I hadn’t no one, you know no one that speak for me (Angel)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I thought I have to try something more or I will die in this place because nothing is going to change if you own one house you will have one house, you work for something else, you know, but people treat you as a dog (Leo)’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Core theme: Pull Factors for Migration

This core theme describes the main aspects that attracted participants to a receiving country. Likewise, feelings and thoughts related to immigration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Following a ‘dream’ to Europe</td>
<td>Statements and meanings that represent immigration as a ‘dream’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘The fact was that I wanted to leave Colombia, I wanted the ‘American dream’ (Evaristo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘my dream was to go to America and come from soap operas, even the escorting’ (Leo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The London Factor: seeking for Freedom and Living in a Cosmopolitan City</td>
<td>Excerpts that associate the UK and London to meanings of freedom, tolerance or multicultural society</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘the UK is a powerful and beautiful country and it has a mixed culture on the world is like you can be happy for everyone’ (Joel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘This is a multicultural country’ (Lara)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Same-sex desire and homophobia**

Implicit and explicit connections between the decision of emigration and the awareness of same-sexual desire

- ‘Living a normal life’
  - ‘I always knew what I was, but I felt that I was in a closet and I couldn’t express what I really felt because I knew that I would be rejected because this was forbidden’ (Lara)
  - ‘I lived between my desire to express myself and my desire to follow my family norms’ (Jake)

- ‘Homophobia and violence’
  - ‘when I was a teenager I had a horrible moment, like really horrible...maybe because I was afraid of people pushing me away because of my sexuality’ (Martin)
  - ‘I was like a lady, I was 9 years old but I behaved as I was a girl, I was very sensible and the family instead to support my mother, to talk to her, they were ignorant people who used to laugh at me’ (Angel)
| **Seeking opportunities of self-development in the UK** | Statements that present interest in further education, language skills and job experience amongst the aspects that attract respondents to immigrate to the UK. | ‘I wanted to learn English and maybe try to do some studies’ (Brooke)  
‘Because if you learn English you can work in this everywhere on the world’ (Lara)  
‘it was always my dream, to come to learn and speak English’ (Leo) |
| **Continuity of sex work activities in the UK** | Motivations and circumstances that drove participants who worked as sex workers in their home countries to re-start these work activities in the UK | ‘the first 6 or 9 months, yes, it was very difficult because I didn’t know much people, my language skills were not great’ (Brooke)  
‘I came from Madrid where I was living with my friend but the things were not going well and I decided to come here and see if I could be luckier’ (Carlos)  
‘We came to London and that was like all was in the past, we thought we never are going to do that again (laughing). But then we started looking for job or anything and I did not speak English when I get here, only like ‘hello’, ‘goodbye’, ‘excuse me’ and that was it, I did not speak any English and we were looking for a leaning job or anything, we were looking for any random job but we could not get anything, honestly we did not get anything’ (John) |
| **Sex workers seeking for Better Working Conditions** | Characteristics of the sex market that attracted participants to UK | ‘More clients, more calls, I have more clients here that I have in Spain and I can charge more money of course’ (Carlos)  
‘the UK is in better economic situation that the rest of Europe’ (Evaristo) |
| Selling sex for the first time as migrants | Motivations, circumstances and reflections of those participants that sold sex for the first time in the UK and other European countries | Motivations  
‘Money’ | ‘If I am going to do something that wasn’t my plan I am going to do for good money. In Belgium I could 120, 150 sometimes more’ (Martin)  
‘it is what I told you, this is basically make money’ (Evaristo)  
‘I started working in sex work because I wanted money to pay the surgery’ (Karla) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Circumstances** | ‘I am doing this to help my family in Brazil, then my mother can buy a house’ (Gilbert)  
‘He also spoke with this friend who I was living with, about my difficulties to find a job, and he suggested to me friend that I could do escorting because you can make money and it could be easier because he had already some contacts in Spain’ (Pedro)  
‘you know I was in the situation that I came to sleep to Paddington station because I lost everything here’ (Jake) |
| |  
**Reflections** |  
‘last year I got really depressed because I thought this is not the right way for me, I am lying to my friends and friends of my friends, to my family, I have two lives, I cannot be like this forever and I need to get the job, I need to get out’ (Alejandro)  
‘When you are escort everything changes. People look at you different. It is not the same, they think is like you are kind of criminal, no character, no feelings, no…. they think your life began there, and that is what is important to them’ (Leo) |
Appendix F. Hierarchical Organisation of the Thematic Map with Description and Examples: ‘Constructing a Work Identity as a Migrant Male Sex Worker’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core theme: Perceived self-image as escorts</th>
<th>This core theme outlines the significance of physical and social dimensions in the construction of their self-image as escorts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence to fit into ‘the pattern of an escort’</td>
<td>Statements that denoted a sense of owning physical and social characteristics highly demanded from clients’ perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-care

Excerpts that describe the importance of body care, clothing, and social interaction as part of the being an escort

‘Body is everything I am learning about looking. I keep myself fit because I don’t want to lose myself, my hair has to be very short if I don’t dress nice I see differences I see how people just judge you, especially in this job, I feel lots of pressure’ (Gilbert)

‘Of course, you need to look beautiful every single second like if someone call me now I would say that I am busy because I look horrible, I have to shave and everything, so you need to look beautiful every single time hair, skin, face, clothing because people who ask for escorts when they come need to see a beautiful guy’ (Jarvis)

Core theme: Establish

This core theme describes the participants’ incorporation in the escort sex market in London as independent internet-based escorts. It presented themes that describe the different steps and strategies that participants undertook to gain a place and increase their visibility on the online sex marketplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the internet and mobile technologies to navigate the online sex market</td>
<td>Excerpts that illustrate respondents’ experiences using the internet and other mobile technologies to access the online sex marketplace</td>
<td>‘I live the transformation from the time before the internet. For me the things were about how to learn to work in the internet. When I started working as an escort it was a big work to find out how to work in internet because when you are not well-spoken English and the messages are coming’ (Geordie)</td>
<td>‘My friend, he speaks English so he helped me. He was quickly than me, and started searching on the websites and he helped me with the English too’ (Romeo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I went to internet and started searching, and I learnt from my friend when I was in Brazil, she knew another guy who works in London and he gave me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning the language and codes | Statements that indicates the importance of the written language on the escorts’ websites. | ‘basically, you need to speak English in messages and images’ (Geordie)  
‘for me it was not a problem because when I came here my English level was very good’ (Indigo) |

Creating an online profile and a persona | Statements that describe the participants’ experiences writing for the first time an online profile as internet-based escorts | ‘I created a character, Marc a character, personality, background, where I came from, I had to memorize if someone ask me when I was born, you know and everything’ (Martin) |

Developing strategies of self-marketing | It outlines the use of strategies to tackle competition | Branding  
‘I am a Latino, dark skin, no so tall, strong and masculine’ (Evaristo)  
‘I understand Brazilian or Colombian guys or whatever brand themselves in that way, but I only say big black guy’ (Reo)  
‘like any other business you have to think who your customer targets are, the customers that you are targeting or in this case what kind of customers you would like to attract’ (Martin)  
‘I try to give the impression that I am very high class because I do like this I attract people with money, people who no necessarily want sex (laughing)’ (Gilbert)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The use of images</th>
<th>Comparison of the Self with Others: statements that indicates the examination of the profiles of other escorts and how they used this information</th>
<th>Surveying the competition</th>
<th>Positioning in the market in relation to competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘That photo was a regular photo but I thought this photo is not appropriated because it can be used only to flirt in a chat room and this is more professional. For that reason, we thought wearing football uniform because the style of using football uniform is kinky, so we did it and people started to calling us’ (Evaristo)</td>
<td>‘they call me because my phone is there, I have posted photos if they like you they call you and you make an arrangement’ (Romeo)</td>
<td>‘When I did my search in these websites I studied lots of profiles and all were very similar, describe the penis, say ‘I am very horny’, ‘I am very virile’ and I thought all say mostly the same, people are probably tired of this, and applying my knowledge I offer other service and say – I can be your personal assistant, your cook, your bodyguard, whatever the client wants me to do because all these things I have done it in the past (Jake)</td>
<td>‘I am 28 but there are escorts who are 18 or 17, can you imagine? So, there is lots of competition, so I try to be more attractive’ (Leo)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
people read my profile, they realised there is something different’ (Jake)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core theme: Establishing expertise as Independent escorts</th>
<th>This core theme presents relevant aspects of what the participants consider to be an independent escort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming independent</td>
<td>This themes contains excerpts that explain what implies becoming an independent escort or how they operated as independent escorts in London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing autonomy</td>
<td>Excerpts that show aspects and advantages of working as independent escorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td>Statements that indicate a perceived capability to attain specific tasks concerning to their role as escorts (‘knowing what to do’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I also do camera work (webcam. When I am not with client I do camera, I can make £ 150 a day only doing camera. So, if I would stop working I can only do camera and still you can make £ 700 a week without meet any client if I want to only to sit down and do the camera’ (Alejandro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘my dynamic is like this, the man comes and we start chatting with you, you tell them – you are very handsome, because you have a sort of menu, a dialect and specific phrases to interact with them, how are you? Please get undressed? What you want to do?’ (Gareth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘You eventually learn how to manage the clients but it is too easy, especially for me it is very easy because you basically are acting and you are pretending all the time. When you are young you get hard very easy, with almost anything because everything is in your head, you start thinking that you have to get hard and you get hard, because your head is very smart’ (Romeo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘you need to have very good English, you need to know how to treat’ (Gilbert)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

276
| Establishing professional reputation | Implicit and explicit statements that suggest participants' perception of building a name for themselves amongst their customers | ‘My clients are more into me, they come back for me, and my clients always come back for me. They may not come back every week but maybe in few months [...] because before my English was not very good and I could not have a conversation with them but now they can interact with me, they have a great sex and they get a very good service’ (John) |
| 'Being good at'-taking pride in services provided | This theme compiled feelings of satisfaction because of their work performance as escorts | ‘I won’t do anything which would impede my performance that is my rule, what is drinking, what is drugs, I won’t do anything which impede’ (Reo) |
| Meeting the needs of clients’ expectations | Excerpts that capture how participants perceived the clients’ needs according what they understood by their role | ‘But many clients that call me are because they are really interested in me’ (Evaristo) |

**Core theme: Expectations of Others**

This core theme explains how they negotiated their personal and work life in relation to “the others” - clients and ‘formal’ partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the needs of clients’ expectations</td>
<td>Excerpts that capture how participants perceived the clients’ needs according what they understood by their role</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘at the beginning was difficult but I had Viagra and then I realized it wasn’t that difficult’ (Alejandro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘You have to be ready any time that client needs you, they call you and you have to run to see them. If they call you and they tell you I need this and that, in how many minutes will you be available? If you will be there in an hour, you tell them in 30 minutes, you have to try to get/catch your client otherwise that client...’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Negotiating sex work with romantic partners

Statements that gave account how the interviewees think about telling their partners about their work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core theme: Role conflict and ambiguity</th>
<th>This core theme presents how work identity as independent escort clashes with the social identity related to their work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to see it as another job</td>
<td>Statements that illustrate the perspective of respondents about</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
escorting as any other 'regular' paid job

the only difference is that I sell my body and people can touch it' (Alejandra)

'for me this is a job like any other job where I am autonomous, as a taxi driver' (Indigo)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not disclosing occupation</th>
<th>Excerpts that explain the reasons for which participants did and did not want to disclose their escort work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'I don't work in hotels or anything because I don't want my face out there, I don't want to be known for this, I want to pursue my studies, do something else with my life' (Brooke)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'I didn't put my face in internet, because some guys put their faces and I think is crazy and somebody can see your picture and then all your life is going to be like this and your family will know so I prefer to be more discrete' (Gilbert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'I don't want my family and friends know about this job, I think they could be a bit upset about this thus why I didn't advertise anything anywhere' (Daniel)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 6. Hierarchical Organisation of the Thematic Map with Description of Codes: Managing Risk as a Sex Worker**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core theme: Explicitly policy on condom use – “no negotiable”</th>
<th>It describes the participants’ attitudes about the use of condom as well as the self-reported frequency of its use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excerpts that describe how often they use of condoms with clients. Also, statements that inform about thoughts and feelings about its use.</td>
<td>‘Always, always condom, nothing without condom, never, ever, ever’ (Gilbert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘It is complicate, I don’t mind to use condom, so I am very happy with condom, some people hate condoms but I don’t hate condoms. I am ok with condoms, for me it is just the same, almost the same’ (Alejandro)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core theme: Risk reduction strategies</th>
<th>This core theme describes different practices and strategies that interviewees chose when they accepted to perform unprotected anal sex with a client</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choosing the active sexual role</strong></td>
<td>Excerpts that indicate the selection of the active sexual role (the insertive role) as a practice aimed at reducing their possibilities of acquiring STI-HIV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘part of me think I am mainly top, I normally do not get people to fuck me, I fuck them, I am mainly top and that is a very low risk’ (John)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘the risk is the same if you are the top or bottom the risk is the same to acquire any infection as AIDS and these sort of things, but I think if I am the top the risk is minimum, much less’ (Evaristo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unprotected oral intercourse (UOI)</strong></td>
<td>Excerpts that indicate the practice of unprotected oral intercourse (UOI) as a ‘low risk’ sexual activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Condom? I always use condom, no for oral. On me it is fine, you can do it without condom but if they want me to suck them, if I feel like it is ok I would do it without condom but if the person is too much then I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using persuasion with clients</td>
<td>Statements that show the use of verbal persuasion with clients to use condoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘clients call you and ask you if you do without condom I always answer them - love if you want come here and we can talk about it and when they are here I told them – do you know about sexual transmitted infections? Do you know how dangerous are they? I give them a talking about that (laughing)’ (Karla)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Core theme: Risk assessment of client – “in-situ”

This core theme shows criteria that participants used to evaluate client’s riskiness every time that they performed unprotected sex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive sense of safety</td>
<td>Excerpts that describe risk-taking decision based on intuition.</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I think I could tell about everything. I do not think he has anything because he probably has very little sexual life, you know what I am saying, that is why because I chose not to use a condom’ (John)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived riskiness of clients</td>
<td>Statements that explain risk-taking decision based on characteristics of clients linked to scientific knowledge of levels of risk such as belong to a high-risk group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I think people who come to see us, 90% or 100% are straight and they only have sex with sex workers who normally look after themselves or have sex with their wives ’ (Alejandro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity/Trust – ‘regular clients’</td>
<td>Statements that support the risk-taking decision based on the condition of being a regular client.</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Yes, there are couple of people that I don’t use condom because I know them for quite long time but I know it is not a good policy, I know I should use condom with everybody and that’s it, but there are few people that I don’t do that’ (Leo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Ok maybe if I know him very well, for long time, maybe then I cannot use condom with him, I have to trust him very well’ (Genevieve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical appearance</td>
<td>Statements that describe confidence assessing clients</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Yesterday I had a man from Barbados who looked very healthy but I know he is from a high-risk region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

282
based on their physical characteristics.

for these diseases. The guy was very clean, he was very nice’ (Jake)

‘When you work with someone that you know for more than a year, you know if he has something or not because maybe he doesn’t go to check his body but I go and see’ (Eva)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core theme: Factors underpinning engagement in high risk sexual activity</th>
<th>This core theme shows main factors and circumstances that participants linked to past events of UAI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of recreational drugs</strong></td>
<td>It explains UAI because of the consumption of recreational drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘So, you see how strong is that drug, make you feel so sexual, attracted to someone, like it makes people more beauty’ (Leo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘it is like for sex, crystal meth and mephedrone, it is like the wild, it is like feeling, you feel so horney, if you take those drugs you have to know, not much with crystal meth because with crystal meth your brain is still more there but with mephedrone you do not even think straight so much, you are so horney that you do not even think, you only want sex, if I take mephedrone I know I am not going to use condoms, I may try but at one point of the night it is like fuck it! (John)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attractiveness to the client</strong></td>
<td>It contains statements that linked UAI to feeling attracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I was completely attracted to the guy, it wasn’t the first time that I met him, he was my client but it was the first time that... he was regular, like every week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients removing/breaking condoms</td>
<td>It contains statements that linked UAI to client’s actions such as removing or breaking condoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving into clients demands</td>
<td>This theme explains circumstances under which participants performed UAI after initial rejection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table includes extracts from the document where participants share their experiences of UAI. The themes are: Clients removing/breaking condoms and Giving into clients demands. The extracts illustrate the circumstances under which UAI occurred and the participants' responses to these situations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra financial incentives</td>
<td>Statements that explain UAI because of economic reasons</td>
<td>'I am at risk, if you ask me how I feel about it, not very safe, not very clever, but I gamble for the best, I need the cash, I need the cash for food, I need the cash for transport, I need to get out of this hole, because I smile when I meet new people and everything, but when I am alone is not easy' (Brooke)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'I had a client once, the same client three times because that client he pays very well, much more that what I asked, the first time I asked him to use condom but he didn’t want it, the second and third time I didn’t use condom but was really scared' (Gareth)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core theme: Reflections on risk and risky behaviour</td>
<td>This core theme shows thoughts and feelings related to the perception of risky sexual behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ‘Worry about self’   | Excerpts that indicate participants’ awareness about feeling at risk and its implications | ‘I won’t do without condom because I want to finish this, have a life, have children and even because I want to have children’ (Gilbert)  | ‘I knew the risk, you know, I know how many people I do a year, I know the risk, I know how much money I can make, I know the risk’ (Leo)  
‘I would never risk my health for a client’ (Romeo)  |
| ‘Paying the price’   | Statements containing feelings and thoughts about performing unprotected sex and the consequences of this behaviour | ‘I was completely freak out (laughing nervously) I called to someone, I called to (name of the nurse) and he asked me if I want to take PEP and I said – I don’t think so because the guy was completely clean and bla, bla. And after a month I had my test and I was oh my God! I was so nervous and (name of the nurse) asked if I was nervous and I said yes because you say  |  |
| ‘Worrying about others’ | Statements that highlight the importance of self-protection because of important others such as parents, relatives or partners. | ‘I take care of myself. I have to take care of myself in this work because I have a small child to take care, my niece, I have to protect that child’ (Genevieve) |

‘she (mother) knew about this and she told me that the life of a transsexual was not easy [...] I didn’t want her to be worried about me, because I always try to prevent my mother suffering’ (Lara) |