

Sexuality, Social Marginalization and Wounded Masculinity: A Male Sex Worker's Case

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Abstract. *A great number of men affected by rapid social, economic and political developments suffer severe marginalization due to their age, class, sexuality, disability and ethnicity in Lithuania. This paper examines the intersection of social marginalization, sexuality and masculinity. Using a Lithuanian male sex worker's case, it argues that a dysfunctional family, poor employment and educational history and low socioeconomic status made his choice of sex work the means of survival. Differently from studies conducted in Europe and North America that suggest that enjoyment of sex was, in many cases, a reason for working as an escort, pleasurable sexual interactions with clients were not a critical reason for involvement in escorting in this case.*

The paper is based on an extensive semi-structured interview with a 27-year old male escort. The interview demonstrates that the Lithuanian sex worker both confirms and deconstructs the traditional male sexual script of erotic adventures (Gagnon and Simon 1973, 1984). On the one hand, he plays an active role both in sexual and non-sexual encounters and tries to look and act like a real man aspiring to the institutional gender script of hegemonic masculinity. On the other hand, he minimizes the risk in dealing with clients by not engaging in an unsafe sex, declining unwanted sexual practices and rejecting drugs.

Besides pleasant memories of his generously paying clients who bolstered his sense of self, the escort is susceptible to societal condemnation, stigma, and self-doubt because he clearly considers his work as a conscious deviation from sexual and gender norms. Othering himself, the respondent expresses a subjective feeling of hopelessness and powerlessness that makes him miserable. Both powerlessness and the lack of imaginable future create a sense of his wounded and injured masculinity.

Keywords: *masculinity, sex work, sexuality, sexual scripts, social exclusion.*

Raktažodžiai: *vyriskumas, seksualinis darbas, seksualumas, seksualiniai scenarijai, socialinė atskirtis.*

Introduction

Despite greater acceptance of sexual diversity in European and North American cultures, a very narrow understanding of sexual norms prevails in Lithuania. Sexuality is often naturalized and described as morally reprehensible. There also exist the deeply entrenched sexual hierarchies described by Gayle Rubin in

the 1980s as a binary struggle between sex considered “good,” “normal,” and “natural” (it is usually heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive and non-commercial sex) and “bad,” “abnormal,” and “unnatural” sex (it is usually homosexual, non-marital, casual, non-reproductive and commercial sex) (Rubin 1984, 280–281). Different non-normative forms of sexuality are either silenced or openly denigrated in the public sphere in Lithuania.

Little research has been done on the sex industry and prostitution that is illegal in the country (Code of Administrative Violations of Law of the Republic of Lithuania 2007; Penal Code of the Republic of Lithuania 2003). A few studies deal with female prostitution and human trafficking (Marcinkevičienė and Praspaliauskienė 1999; Ruškus 2004; Sipavičienė and Gaidys 2002; Sipavičienė et al. 2004; Bazylevas and Žekonis 2003; Ruškus and Mažeikienė 2005; Navaitis and Ralys 2009). Some of them are particularly one-sided and methodologically flawed. They often put sex work and prostitution in a moralistic framework relating them to the “spiritual degradation” and “moral downfall” (Navaitis and Ralys 2009). Instead of attempting to comprehend circumstances of sex workers’ lives, some studies stigmatize and marginalize them. Such attitudes towards sex workers and sex industry go hand in hand with the stigmatization of non-normative sexual practices and manifestations in general. There are almost no studies on sex workers’ views on their lives and their engagement in sex industry. No research has been conducted on male sex workers.

Understanding sexuality as a social construction and using John Gagnon and William Simon’s theory of sexual script, this article examines sexual practices and self-perceptions of a sex worker named Anatolijus who calls himself an escort. The article attempts to answer the questions: How does this sex worker’s life correlate with his sexual behavior? What events of his life have most significantly affected his professional choices? What cultural, social and sexual scripts does Anatolijus use in his work? This article is based on a comprehensive semi-structured interview (3.5-hour long) with the sex worker about his life in sex industry. Besides the analysis of the interview, the article briefly presents the terms of “sex worker” and “sex work” and describes the theory of sexual script.

Sex Workers and Sex Work

Currently, the terms “sex work” and “sex worker” are used more widely than the notions “prostitution” and “prostitute.” The former are also consistently favored in this article.

“Sex work” is a “generic term for commercial sexual services, performances, or products given in exchange for material compensation” (Weitzer 2000, 3). Prostitution, pornography, stripping, lap dancing, and telephone sex are examples of sex work (Kontula 2008, 605). “Sex industry” encompasses organizations, owners, managers, and workers involved in commercial sex (Weitzer 2000, 3–4).

For this article, classification of male sex workers is also necessary. Male sex workers are usually divided into four sub-groups. The first group – street or bar hustlers who look for their clients in the streets or gay bars often identify themselves as heterosexual; they provide sexual services to men to obtain money or drugs. The second group – call boys or men arrange for sexual services by phone (Allen 1980). Often they work through an agency or have an agent who takes a fee as commission. The third group includes *kept or rent boys* – younger men supported by older men for their sexual services (Bloor, McKeganey and Barnard 1990; West and de Villiers 1993). Finally, the last sub-group – *escorts* who identify themselves as gay or bisexual usually advertise their services in gay publications or the internet (Hickson, Weatherburn, Hows and Davies 1994; Lumby 1978; Salamon 1989).

Researchers argue that escorts differ significantly from other three sub-groups of sex workers. Because of the specificity of their work, they are more selective of their clients; they charge more money for their services and are more in control of their schedules. While hustlers risk of being arrested, raped or beaten up, escorts rarely encounter such problems (Calhoun and Weaver 1996).

In Western Europe and North America, most studies on sex industry concern female sex workers. According to Ronald Weitzer, “studies of male sex workers (such as prostitutes and strippers) comprise only a fraction of the literature. These studies point to some important differences in the ways male and female sex workers experience their work, but much more research is needed to corroborate these differences” (Weitzer 2000, 8). No systematic investigations have been made regarding the consequences and effects of sex work on the individual. Studies on sex work often ignore the fact that individuals engage in it for many reasons: “gratitude, pity, admiration, or affection; desire for security or companionship; to make someone jealous, enact revenge, or outdo a rival; to obtain payment or a favor...” All these things may or may not be related to sexual desire and pleasure (Hall 2007, 463).

Among all four sub-groups, male hustlers have been analyzed the most. The growing research on male commercial sex has increasingly drawn the distinctions between sex workers. More attention has been paid to new technologies that inadvertently influenced sex relationships and sex industry. With the advent of the internet, male sex workers have been exploiting it as a new venue for their commercial exchanges (Parsons, Bimbi and Halkitis 2001).

Sociology of Sexuality and Sexual Scripts

Since the 1970s, the theory of social constructivism, arguing that sexuality was always grounded in wider material and cultural forces, has been dominating sexuality research. Sexuality encompasses all erotically significant facets of life – desires, practices, relationships and identities. Any analysis that does

not recognize that human sexualities are always organized through and influenced by economic, religious, political and social conditions is regarded to be seriously flawed.

According to Richard Parker, the understanding of sexuality as socially constructed that emerged at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s directed researchers' attention to "the social and cultural systems which shape not only our sexual experience, but the ways in which we interpret and understand that experience" (Parker 2009, 255). This approach increasingly emphasizes social and cultural dimensions of sexuality.

In the 1970s, American researchers John Gagnon and William Simon proposed the theory of sexual script that highlighted the cultural construction of sexual life. According to this theory, individuals construct their sexuality in direct relation to social and cultural structures that form their lives (Gagnon and Simon 1973; Parker and Gagnon 1995; Simon and Gagnon 1984). Gagnon and Simon emphasized the everydayness of sexuality and the idea that non-sexual needs can influence sexual behavior. Sexuality "occurs in the context of ordinary lives and is shaped by wider social institutions" (Jackson 2007, 5). Mutually shared conventions that enable social actors to enact sexual situations and practices also influence sexual scripts (Parker and Gagnon 1995; Parker and Gagnon 1984). According to Dworkin and O'Sullivan, this theory critically deconstructs biologism in sexuality research that often overlooks the complexities of sexual practices, desires and identities (Dworkin and O'Sullivan 2007, 105–106).

Thus, taking into account sexuality as a social construct, sociology of sexuality examines sexual scripts that exist in different environments and circumstances that organize the structure of sexual possibilities and encounters in specific ways (Paiva 2000). The direct relation between sexual desire, sexual behavior and sexual identity has been questioned. Diverse "sexual cultures" have become a subject of sexual research (Parker 2009, 255).

A focus on sexual scripts prompted researchers' interest in wider cultural scripts, discursive practices, complex systems of knowledge and power that define sexual meanings and experiences in different historical, social and cultural environments (Parker 2009; Rubin 1984; Weeks 1985). The theory of sexual script explains the relation between individual and socially contextualized meanings by distinguishing three levels of sexual scripts: intrapsychic, interpersonal and cultural (Whittier and Melendez 2007, 193). All these levels simultaneously operate in sexual encounters and have impact on the production of sexuality as social activity. The first level of sexual script encompasses social norms and standards that dictate appropriate sexual behavior in sexual interactions. Called cultural scripts, they are acquired through collective life, from such sources as schools, peers, media, religion, family, sport, and cultural discourses. At the second level, individuals apply these broad cultural scripts to specific social contexts at the same time revising and changing them. These

scripts are called interpersonal. At the third level, intrapsychic scripts motivate individuals to stick to certain sequence of sexual interactions and mediate diverse goals, fantasies and desires (Dworkin and O'Sullivan 2007, 105–106). Although individuals construct their intrapsychic scripts in relation to dominant cultural meanings, “these meanings are altered, combined, and translated into individual-level meanings – which, as such, are not completely synonymous with cultural scenarios as culture is carried and developed, in part, in the everyday activities and uses of individuals” (Whittier and Melendez 2007, 193).

Sexual scripts based on heterosexuality that put men in an active position and women, in a passive position, predominate in Western societies of the late modernity. Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott argue that “despite greater acceptance, even valorization, of sexual diversity, the heterosexual couple remains enshrined as the normative form of adult sexual relationship” (Jackson and Scott 2004, 236). In Lithuania this form of sexual relationship is regarded politically and legally as the only one possible (State Family Policy Concept 2008).

Traditional heteronormative scripts of sexual behavior are gender based. Traditional “female” script is associated with romantic love. According to this script, girls are expected to save sexual intercourse for a special person. They are also responsible for birth control, reproduction, childcare and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Moreover, women are expected to play a passive role, saving themselves for romance and marriage. On the other hand, the traditional “male” sexual script is commonly referred to as the adventure script. Men must play an active role in seeking sexual relations and attempting to fulfill their desire for sexual adventures (Mutchler 2004, 35). The script of sexual adventures in Western cultures is exclusively assigned to men.

In relatively repressive societies such as Lithuania, homosexual sexual scripts carry negative connotations. It is assumed that gays and lesbians, particularly homosexual men, are promiscuous and always at risk of sexually transmitted diseases and that they are unable to keep up long-term sexual relationships. Homosexual men are called “whores” and “deviants” (Tereškinas 2007, 136–137). The dominant perception of gay men as entirely devoted to sexual adventures demonstrates that they are assigned the same male sexual script.

The article analyzes the ways in which the sex worker who calls himself an escort enacts broader sexual scripts in specific social contexts, i. e., in seeking clients and communicating with them. It also examines cultural scripts that he uses in his sexual practices. Attention is also paid to the intrapsychic level of a sexual script that highlights the sex worker's fantasies and desires. According to Simon and Gagnon, the intrapsychic level is “the symbolic recognition of reality in ways to more fully realize the actor's many-layered and sometimes multi-voiced wishes” (Simon and Gagnon 1984, 54).

Methodological Remarks

The semi-structured interview with the 27-year-old Anatolijus was conducted on July 29 in a small Lithuanian town Visaginas. Its duration was 3.5 hours. The interview took place in the town park.

During the interview, Anatolijus was poorly dressed in the black trousers and a white synthetic shirt. He wore grey socks and simple house slippers. His whole appearance was characteristic of a very tired person. Perhaps this impression was exacerbated by the fact that, in his own words, he was partying all last night.

The interview was conducted in Russian because the respondent was of the Russian descent.¹ At the beginning of our meeting, he said that his Lithuanian was poor and that he did not like the Lithuanian language at all: “I detest speaking Lithuanian, it’s not my language. Sometimes I like speaking a foreign language. Lithuanian is also a foreign language to me. I am not against Lithuanians, I just don’t like the Lithuanian language...”

During the interview, the respondent was allowed to talk of his life freely. Questions about the main facts of his biography, profession, sexual behavior, his understanding of masculinity, his dreams and future plans were addressed. All these questions helped me to examine particular sexual scripts that the respondent used in his sex worker’s life.

Despite the respondent’s candidness and openness, in analyzing the interview it is necessary to keep in mind that, according to Plummer, individuals no longer simply tell sexual stories to reveal the truths of their sexual lives. Turning themselves into socially organized biographical objects, they construct their intimate “self” narratives that may or may not be related to the truth. Therefore, these stories cannot be regarded as a simple manifestation of some inner truth. Instead, they tell more about a certain social order, historical time and place. If we look at sexual narratives this way, we cease to treat them as “the harbingers of a relatively unproblematic truth” (Plummer 1995, 34).

The Choice of Sex Work

At the time of the interview, Anatolijus was 27-year old. He has been engaged in sex work since he was eighteen. In his words, he worked as a hustler for four years and as an escort for five years. Thus, the respondent was an experienced sex worker:

My mother is Russian and my brother is from Russia. I’ve got a lot of relatives in Moscow. I was born there and grew up until I was six years old. Then my mother moved to Lithuania. I attended a school here, finished twelve grades; then I studied at Polytechnic University

¹ In transcribing, the interview was translated into Lithuanian.

[in Moscow]. But I did not finish my studies because my mother fell ill. I returned to Lithuania and worked here and there. I worked as a loader and later I became a hustler and afterwards, an escort.

Although previously Anatolijus had worked as a hustler, during the interview, he emphasized that now he was an escort. Answering the question about the difference between these two occupations, he said that:

When I was prostituting myself, I did not care about my safety. Now I always have safe sex. When I was a hustler, I did everything spontaneously, nothing made difference to me... When you're a hustler, you just get fucked essentially... That's it. You get fucked as a sex doll. When I was a prostitute, I didn't feel any pleasure. As an escort, I experience pleasures of communication. I get some pleasure from this work. It is not from sex, but from communication. There exist different escorts. Some escorts engage only in sex, but they are simple prostitutes. I do two things: sex and communication.

The respondent clearly distinguished between the occupations of a hustler and escort. According to him, he did not have a manager or a pimp "because if you have a pimp, you're not an escort, you're a prostitute. You don't have any rights and you do what he says. Escorts have a choice. You meet a person, talk to him for a couple of hours. If you like him, you'll arrange for further activities or meetings." In the respondent's words, "an escort must be alone, he must reach his goals and look for clients himself because an escort mustn't interact with scum. He'll seek a rich and better client."

Anatolijus's definition of escort corresponds to the notion of escort used in Western countries. However, Lithuanian escorts differ from Western ones in some regards. In Western Europe or North America escorts can choose clients from a rather large pool; they can charge more for their services and control their schedule better. The Lithuanian escort was not able to do it because the sex industry that caters for men who have sex with men is not as developed as abroad; the demand for this type of services is not as high as elsewhere. However, if one believed Anatolijus's price list, the remuneration for his work was not very low: "normally, 400 litas (115 EUR) for an hour." If he meets a client for sex only, he expects to be paid "from 100 to 500 [litas] an hour." Thus, his pay is rather flexible; it depends on mutual agreement and client's possibilities. The respondent told that he knew a man who charged 70-80 Lt for sex. The biggest salary the respondent has ever received was 6000 EUR from a British client for his two-week work.

Why did he become a hustler and later an escort? It is possible to call his choice an inevitability of necessity. Those who engage in sex work often don't have or they think that they don't have any other choice. Sex work is chosen for survival purposes. In the academic research, this choice is called *survival sex* when sexual services are exchanged for money, drugs, shelter or food

(Greene, Ennett and Ringwalt 1999). On the contrary, men who choose sex work voluntarily often have another job and sex work is for them an additional source of income.

The respondent became a hustler and later an escort out of necessity: “It started a long time ago when I was a student. My mother fell seriously ill and she is still very ill. We needed money for her treatment... So, I started earning money this way...” Although it was very difficult at the beginning, in time the respondent adjusted to his work: “When first I prostituted myself, when I received money for it, I cried. Because I understood that I was a prostitute! But later there was second and third time, and gradually I got used to it...”

Studies on male sex hustling emphasize hustlers’ young age (Coombs 1974) and often conceptualize them as victims of circumstances (Allen 1980). The respondent started working as a hustler when he was 18 years old. He was pushed to sex work by the unfavorable circumstances: his mother’s illness, difficult life and a lack of education and profession.

In defining the socio-cultural profile of a hustler who looks for clients in the streets or bars, researchers argue that it is commonly a person who grew up in a dysfunctional family and who had a poor employment and educational history and low socioeconomic status. He is often characterized as having stereotypically masculine mannerisms (Allen 1980). The respondent matches this profile, first of all, with his life story. It emerged, throughout the interview, that he was raised in a difficult family in which violence and harassment were a norm: “My stepfather beat me frequently, he did beat my mother and my sisters too. The life wasn’t sweet...”; “He used to get drunk, he would beat [my mother], trying to break her arms and legs. He would bang her head to the wall... I blamed myself that I couldn’t defend my mother.” Despite the lack of education (he holds only a high school diploma), it is possible to describe the respondent as intelligent, eloquent and humorous. The masculine appearance and behavior are also characteristic of him.

In the interview, clients were discussed extensively. In looking for clients, Anatolijus exploited ads in Lithuanian and international dating sites. The respondent’s story attests to the influence of new technologies such as the internet on sex work. Although he still meets some of his clients in bars and clubs, the internet is the main meeting point. Anatolijus has most clients in summer, on average 10-12 per month. Most are tourists who come to Lithuania for holidays. According to the respondent, in winter he usually has fewer clients, on average 5 per month. The age of clients range from 35 to 45 years old. In the respondent’s words, clients “have families or partners. Most commonly, they are heterosexuals or closeted homosexuals. They come here on business or for holidays. And they have good holidays here. They have secret lives.” He has also had clients who lived as couples. Most clients came from Great Britain, Germany and Russia.

How would he describe a typical client? According to Anatolijus, a typical client belonged to a higher socioeconomic stratum. In the respondent’s

opinion, an ideal client was considerate, polite and elegant. For him, a 45-year old man from St. Petersburg in Russia was a perfect example because he was very sweet and generous: "...he's very sweet... I can send him a text message or call him and he'll understand me. How to explain it better? He is a person with whom I could spend my whole life. He's elegant, polite and considerate and doesn't ask for anything that is impossible to fulfill. I could call him ideal..." Such clients strengthen the sex worker's self-worth. According to him, "I like people, they are interesting. They are older than me by 20 or 25 years. It's better than to deal with youngsters. They have a lot of life experience. It is interesting to talk to them." Good clients empower the escort; they impart on him a sense of self-confidence and self-importance. The sex worker feels desired, attractive and respected. Anatolijus referred to the client who took him to the vacation in Spain as an exceptional case:

...Yes, it happened with one Russian. He attended my birthday and he booked me for a week. He arrived during my birthday and said that I had to cancel all my engagements. I didn't want to do it. But he put an envelope with money of the table. I said that I could not cancel my work, but he convinced me and we left for Spain. We spent two weeks there. It was his present for my birthday. I was shocked when we arrived at the airport... But I won't forget these two weeks as long as I live, first of all, because it was such an unexpected present and, I should say, from my favorite client. These fourteen days were very romantic with flowers and walks in the city. It was all I always wanted. And I wished to remain in this fairytale...

As a rule, bad clients require unacceptable sexual services (for instance, unsafe sex) or they are violent. One of the clients "seemed sweet and sensitive, but then he showed his real face. Although we negotiated for a different type of sex, he wanted to rape me. But he did not succeed. I submitted my complaint to the police. But he left. Later he called me and apologized. He said that he was extremely drunk, but this cannot excuse his behavior." However, according to the respondent, such clients are very few.

Sex, Pleasure and Risk

In choosing sex work, the respondent's main goal was to make a living; he did not associate his work with sexual pleasure. The latter aspect of his work was not important. Asked about the types of sexual services that clients required most often, he responded that it was oral sex: "It is possible to say that anal intercourse is very rare... Only oral, kisses and attention to oral sex... all are afraid of contracting a [sexually transmitted] disease. I use condoms, but they are still afraid... So, kisses, blowjobs and masturbation are the most common things that I do."

Although the commercial sex is not necessarily impersonal and alienating,

it was more pleasurable for the respondent just to spend time with clients without sexual interaction: "Communication is most pleasurable. I have had a lot of sex in my life. For me, it is a person that is most important and how he communicates with me." According to Anatolijus, an escort must be some sort of psychologist who knows how to listen to people: "People speak and you sit and listen and listen... to different stories and different problems. And if clients get drunk, they even cry..."

The escort's work, in the respondent's opinion, is dangerous. One of the risks is related to sexually transmitted diseases. Anatolijus risked his health only when he was a hustler. As a research on male sexual behavior demonstrates, risky behavior is a result of men's feelings of loneliness, frustration, anxiety and disappointment. Men entering potentially dangerous sex interactions feel unattractive. Furthermore, they are highly ambivalent towards these sexual interactions. Their emotional vulnerability frequently drives them to engage in an unsafe sex (Déaz 1999, 111). However, Anatolijus evaluated unsafe sex rather unambiguously: "No, I may risk, but for what purpose? God forbid, if I get infected... It's impossible to turn the time back. If I contracted HIV, both my parents and relatives would suffer." The respondent argued that he would not engage in unsafe sex even if he were paid a million Euros with the exception of a client presenting him with a negative HIV test. Anatolijus also argued that he takes an HIV test once a month at the Lithuanian AIDS Center. If we believed his statements, his sexual behavior would correspond closely to the behavior of escorts in Western countries favoring safe sex. Moreover, the respondent stated that he did not use any drugs except marihuana. He tried ecstasy pills at nightclubs, but now was against it.

The work of an escort as well as a hustler carries a risk not only of sexually transmitted diseases, but also of violence and coercion. Sometimes a sex worker is not paid for his services. Some clients are prone to harass and humiliate him. Thus, an escort may feel powerless in the face of violence and humiliation. As a hustler, Anatolijus was raped: "I met someone and he fooled me. We went to his apartment together; ten men already waited for us there. I could not report [this rape] to the police because I was afraid for myself and my family." After this incident, the respondent bought a gun and learned how to defend himself. It is difficult not to believe him because he described the story of acquiring a gun in a great detail. Now he is able to defend himself from violent clients.

As an escort, Anatolijus did not encounter extreme life-threatening situations, but from other male sex workers he learned about their physical traumas and injuries: "...one escort was murdered some time ago. An escort is like a prostitute. His work is dangerous because of the clients. Some clients can beat you up and break your bones. It's similar to female prostitution. You never know what kind of client you will get. For instance, they find a woman, rape her, beat her up and leave her on the street. Sometimes it happens to us too."

It is possible to notice, from Anatolijus's narrative, that, on the one hand, he tries to manage and minimize risks. Martial arts and a gun that he has

bought make his work safer. On the other hand, he does not associate sex work with sexual pleasure and emphasizes only the pleasures of communication.

Sexual Desires and Fantasies

The intrapsychic level of sexual scripts touches upon the escort's passions, desires and fantasies and is inseparable from both the culture and the horizon of interpersonal expectations. How does Anatolijus describe sexual desire? With what gender scripts does he associate it?

The respondent started his active sex life very early, in his own words, "I started sleeping with men when I was thirteen years old." He called these sexual encounters "spontaneous childish games." The real sex life began when he reached the age of seventeen. The respondent also mentioned that his first anal intercourse occurred at the age of fourteen with a 21-year old man. However, he did not consider it rape. The respondent remembered it as consensual and pleasurable.

Men, like women, engage in sexual activity to fulfill what are often non-sexual needs of intimacy, self-worth and masculinity (Déaz 1999, 92). These non-sexual needs that men attempt to fulfill can be distinguished into four groups: 1) the need to prove one's sense of physical attractiveness; 2) the need to restore an injured sense of masculinity; 3) the need to escape the experiences of loneliness and social isolation; 4) the need to get away from difficult situations enhanced by poverty, racism and social exclusion (Déaz 1999, 111).

The respondent's story demonstrates that his earliest and later sexual encounters signified for him an attempt to escape the oppressive environment of his family, the experiences of violence and poverty and at the same time an attempt to prove his sense of masculinity.

According to Anatolijus, he had the plenty of sex in his life; therefore, it is no longer an important part of his life. Currently, he favors non-sexual forms of interaction. His sexual desires and fantasies that comprise the intrapsychic level of his sexual scripts are not very specific or distinctive. In his sexual encounters with clients, he often assumes an "active" position of a top ("I am mostly active. 70 % top and 30 % bottom"). He rarely practices the "passive" role of a bottom. Sometimes the respondent engages in a group sex with his clients.

His active role in sexual encounters confirms the traditional male sexual script. However, the respondent mentioned several fantasies related to submission, passivity and even humiliation. It can be argued that the dynamic between an active and passive role and between domination and submission demonstrates fluidity and changeability of sexual identifications and practices. Although he frequently assumed the dominant position in sexual activities, he was prone to try some non-traditional practices such as "golden shower" (when a partner urinated on him). In his words, "...I have not decided about this yet. But I have such fantasy. On the other hand, I don't want to try anything sado-masochistic. Well,

perhaps [I would like] to be tied down tenderly and to be dominated... to be a slave... but within the limits of reason. I don't want anything extreme. I would prefer tenderness..." Another fantasy that he called "my wild fantasy" involved ten men ejaculated on his naked body. This fantasy was also a part of the play of domination and humiliation, but it had to be moderate and reasonable. Any action that might physically traumatize him during sex seemed unacceptable to him. The respondent referred to a client's desire to use an extremely big dildo on him as an example of such traumatic unacceptable action: "One client wanted to put a huge, 25-centimeter vibrator into my anus. I refused because I was shocked by the sight of the vibrator alone..." The respondent admitted another fantasy of being in a pornographic film: "I have this stupid dream to participate in a normal gay pornography, but only in gay pornography and only once. I don't want to become a porno star... I would be willing to get filmed with one of my clients."

Thus, the respondent did not have a wide range of transgressive desires and fantasies. For him, the needs for safety, economic stability, trust and communication were more important than sexual fantasies. The latter served only as reference to either these needs or a way to fulfill them.

In talking about his fantasies, Anatolijus often emphasized that he was bisexual pointing to the fluidity and changeability of sexuality:

I consider myself bisexual. I can [have sex] with both men and women. But I prefer men. As I have told, I don't understand women. I can only sleep with them... I have never succeeded in having a [long-term] relationship with a woman. If it will ever happen, I would like to find a bisexual girl who could understand the current phase of my life. But, I think, it is difficult to find such a woman. If I found such a woman, I would like to live together with her...

As to the intersections of sexual and gender scripts, it is possible to argue that the respondent organized his sexual script along the lines of stereotypical male gender performance. Asked about the image of a man attractive to him, he said that this man had to be "strong, good and perceptive. These features do not depend on the age. Of course, this man shouldn't be 90 years old. I should feel safe and comfortable with him and would not be afraid to be frank and candid." The respondent emphasized not only a man's strength, but also his ability to listen and be sensible. Anatolijus thought that an attractive man was "dark-haired, brown-eyed and athletic." This definition of a man did not diverge significantly from his criteria of male beauty and attractiveness.

Stigma of Sex Work and Future Scripts

Sex work inevitably involves a lot of stress and tensions; it can either strengthen or diminish a person's self-confidence. During the interview, the respondent openly articulated the way society treated his work. In his view, it was a

stigmatizing job. Society regarded this work a deviant and ethically unacceptable profession: "It isn't a normal work. It's prostitution, but a different form of it. Anyway, you sell yourself. And it isn't normal." The escort constantly felt this stigma and reprehension despite the fact that he might not encounter any direct reactions to his work from the outsiders. However, Anatolijus beforehand predicted negative reactions and thought of his work in a stereotypical way. Here one must remember Erving Goffman's idea that people often conduct themselves in a way that is consistent with the response they expect from others, even in the absence of such a response (Goffman 1963).

Although the respondent himself did not express the feelings of guilt and shame for his occupation, it is obvious that his occupation raised doubts in his mind. He talked about the time when he would stop working as an escort. His conviction that he worked for a noble goal (to help his mother and to save for study abroad) reduced his sense of self-doubt and shame.

The respondent was hurt most by the unfavorable circumstances of his life and by the lack of possibilities for young people in Lithuania and elsewhere. According to him, because of the lack of jobs, some young women and men chose sex work although this profession was difficult and not everyone was capable of pursuing it. Anatolijus argued that the ruling classes' inability to include the youth into the development of the future increased criminality and a number of people at risk of social exclusion in society. The respondent clearly acknowledged deeply ingrained social inequalities although he did not think of himself as a victim. Realizing difficulties he might encounter in the future, he stated: "I don't expect an easy life. An easy life doesn't exist. There are always problems and difficulties in your life. But you must solve them."

What future scripts did the respondent imagine? He argued that he would continue his work only for a year and a half and then he would quit. He did not explain this fact, but he said that he could not quit his occupation at the moment:

If I, say, dropped everything and started studying, my mother would not have enough money for her medication. Drugs are now expensive. I spend much of my hard-earned money for her medications. ... My mother doesn't know that I work as an escort; it is my secret; she thinks that I work in construction. I am doing it for my mother.

The respondent had a vision of different life in the future: "Yes, I want to become a lawyer, I want to continue my studies and leave Lithuania. I plan to go to Russia, acquire its citizenship and live there." Here the respondent contradicted himself: in the first interview, he mentioned that he had a Russian passport and that all his relatives lived in Russia. Therefore, he related all his future hopes to Russia: "Yes, I have some plans for the future – to find a normal job and leave for Russia. This is my grand plan." Children also figured in his future plans:

Of course, I plan to have children. I want to have a child... I want to leave something when I am gone. Of course, I am thinking of children... But if I have a child, I will quit [my escort work]. I don't want my child to lead the same life as I do. I don't want him to follow my path. I would do everything to make him happy. ... I will educate him and I will provide him with good life and do everything to keep him normal. Not like me.

It is possible to argue that his current occupation has not totally usurped the sex worker. He had dreams about the future although in some bits of the interview he assured me that he had not had any long-term plans. He planned only for two or three days ahead. On the one hand, he spoke about his future, studies and permanent relationships in Russia. On the other hand, he said: "I don't want to change anything now. I like my life. Whatever will be will be. Nobody knows what will happen. And neither do I. I have never tried to foretell my future. I know that every plan may collapse."

Conclusion

Anatolijus undermines the image of hustlers and male escorts as psychologically wounded and even pathological individuals. He accepts his life with irony and reflexiveness although he cannot find any solutions for his current situation. Realizing the stigma of his occupation, he keeps his work very secret. Only a narrow circle of friends knows about it.

During the interview, three levels of sexual scripts emerged. Anatolijus's life story, his references to his childhood, gender relations, his future and society's attitude towards sex work comprised the general cultural script. His interactions with clients, his view of long-term relationships and the intersection of communication and sexual pleasure revealed the second level of sexual script. The escort's sexual fantasies, desires and needs belonged to the third level of sexual script.

The respondent both confirms and deconstructs, by the way of his occupation, the traditional male sexual script associated with adventures, risk and multiple partners. The escort's work in itself is risky, but he attempts to minimize its risks. The behavior based on risk cannot be understood as an individual pathology, but as the result of structural, personal and environmental factors that shape sexual encounters among individuals (Déaz 1999, 92). The respondent almost does not use drugs; he is against unsafe sexual relations although he practiced them while working as a hustler. He clearly distinguishes between these two kinds of sex work and during the interview reiterates that he is an escort. Similarly as Western escorts, the respondent can choose clients, and sexual encounters are only a part of his work with clients. According to him, more often he just spends time with clients. In choosing clients, he tries

to avoid risks. A rather rich experience of his hustling and escorting enables him to achieve it. It is important for the respondent to control situations related to clients, for instance, not to have an unsafe sex or unacceptable sex in general. After the traumatic episode of his rape of which he was unwilling to talk he bought a rifle and learned martial arts at the same time confirming the ideal of a "macho man."

Differently from the research conducted abroad in which escorts admitted experiencing sexual pleasure during sex with clients (Kontula 2008; Weitzer 2000), the respondent denied the importance of pleasure in his occupation. For him sex was work and not pleasure. The most pleasurable part of his work was, in his words, his communication with clients.

Sexual pleasure was not a reason for his occupation. He began in this line of work after failing to find solutions to other problems of his life. Without a proper education and job he was pushed into hustling. He had to make a living and to support his disabled mother. The escort's salary, according to him, helps him save money for the future studies and life in Russia.

Keeping in mind Kenneth Plummer's idea about intimate life narratives that tell less about inner personal truths and more about a particular time and place (Plummer 1995), it is possible to argue that the respondent's is the story of a foreigner with the traumatic family life; it is the story of desperation and the choice of inevitability. Anatolijus feels alien to the Lithuanian society. He detests the Lithuanian language and speaks it poorly. The low social status, childhood traumas, the lack of education and a narrow range of professional choices influenced his choice of occupation. Although he did not directly express it, his identity constructed out of misery and poverty was a way to deny this reality of misery and poverty.

It is possible to assume, from the respondent's narrative, that he did not have any examples of long-term relationships and intimacy in his family. Moreover, he constructed long-term interpersonal relationships according to non-traditional sexual and gender script. He could establish these relationships either with a man or a woman although he argued that children were necessary. If the relationships were with a woman, she had to be bisexual, as the respondent himself, in order to understand him. Interestingly, these relationships were not necessarily monogamous.

How did sex work influence the respondent's self-perception? This work did not enhance his self-respect or self-confidence because he judged himself by the assumptions of society. Anatolijus understood that he deviated from the acceptable behavioral norms. He openly explained that sex work stigmatized and sex workers were deplored and reprehended. Those who did not stick to the traditional sex and gender scripts were often imagined as non-existent or existing on the margins of social life. As Judith Butler argues, "...those who live outside the conjugal frame or maintain modes of social organization for sexuality that are neither monogamous nor quasi-marital are more and more

considered unreal, and their loves and losses less than ‘true’ loves and ‘true’ losses. The derealization of this domain of human intimacy and sociality works by denying reality and truth to the relations at issue” (Butler 2004, 26–27). Even derealizing his profession, Anatolijus legitimized it as a necessary choice. He did not stop dreaming and he believed that in two and a half year he would stop his escort’s work and would begin a “different” life: “I will continue this work for a bit, but I will drop it eventually. I just want to start my own normal life.”

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Seksualumas, socialinė marginalizacija ir sužeistas vyriškumas: sekso darbuotojo atvejis

Santrauka

Suvokiant seksualumą kaip socialinį darinį ir naudojantis seksualinio scenarijaus teorija, šiame straipsnyje gilinamasi į sekso darbuotojo, save vadinančio eskortu, seksualinių praktikų ypatumus. Siekiama atsakyti į klausimą, kokiais kultūriniais, socialiniais ir seksualiniais scenarijais eskortas vadovaujasi seksualiniame darbe ir kaip jo gyvenimo istorija koreliuoja su seksualiniu elgesiu. Straipsnyje remiamasi išsamiu pusiau struktūruotu interviu, imtu iš eskorto, apie darbą sekso paslaugų sferoje. Interviu trukmė – 3,5 valandos.

Pagal amerikiečių tyrinėtojų Johno Gagnono ir Williama Simono seksualinio scenarijaus teoriją (1973, 1984), seksualinius scenarijus lemia daug kam bendros konvencijos, padedančios socialiniams veikėjams įveiksminti seksualinių santykių situacijas. Seksualinio scenarijaus teorija paaiškina asmeninių ir socialiai kontekstualizuotų reikšmių santykį, atskirdama intrapsichinį, tarpasmeninį ir kultūrinį seksualinių scenarijų lygmenis.

Interviu su sekso darbuotoju metu atsiskleidė visi trys seksualinio scenarijaus lygmenys. Žema socialinė padėtis, traumas vaikystėje, išsilavinimo trūkumas ir siaura profesinių galimybių skalė lėmė būtent tokį gyvenimo būdo pasirinkimą. Interviu metu paaiškėjo, kad skurde ir varge kuriama tapatybe siekiama paneigti skurdo ir vargo tikrovę. Kita vertus, pačiu savo darbu eskortas ir patvirtina, ir dekonstruoja tradicinį vyrišką seksualinį scenarijų, siejamą su nuotykiiais, rizika, daugialybiais partneriais. Pats eskorto darbas rizikingas, tačiau riziką stengiamasi kuo labiau sumažinti. Informantui svarbu kontroliuoti situacijas, susijusias su klientais: pavyzdžiui, neužsiimama nesaugiu seksu arba seksualiniais aktais, kurie jam nepriimtini. Informantas taip pat griaua moterų ir vyrų eskortų kaip psichologiškai pažeistų ar net patologiškų asmenų stereotipą. Tai žmogus, priimantis savo gyvenimo būdą su ironija, jį reflektuojantis, aiškiai suvokiantis savo profesijos stigmą, tačiau esamu gyvenimo laikotarpiu nerandantis kitų išeičių.