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**Sexual Being or Emotional Being? Inquiring the Motivations of the Clients of the
Sex Workers in The Hague**

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Contents

| | |
|--|-------------|
| <i>List of Tables</i> | <i>v</i> |
| <i>List of Figures</i> | <i>v</i> |
| <i>List of Maps</i> | <i>v</i> |
| <i>List of Appendices</i> | <i>v</i> |
| <i>List of Acronyms</i> | <i>vi</i> |
| <i>Abstract</i> | <i>viii</i> |
| Chapter 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1. Nature of the Problem | 3 |
| 1.2. Justification of the Research | 4 |
| 1.3. Research Objective and Question | 5 |
| Chapter 2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework | 6 |
| 2.1. Neo-Abolitionism | 6 |
| 2.2. Theoretical Underpinnings of Sex Workers' Clients' Perceptions | 7 |
| 2.2.1 Review of Empirical Findings on Sex Workers' Clients | 8 |
| 2.2 Literature Review | 9 |
| Chapter 3 Methodology | 11 |
| 3.1 Ethnographic Orientation | 11 |
| 3.2 Study Locale | 12 |
| 3.3 Sampling Method | 13 |
| 3.4 Sources of Data | 13 |
| 3.5 Observation Method | 14 |
| 3.6 Informal Interview/ Discussion | 14 |
| 3.7 Ethical Consideration | 15 |
| 3.8 Challenges | 15 |
| 3.9 Positionality | 15 |
| 3.10 Limitation of the Study | 16 |
| Chapter 4 Discussion & Analysis | 17 |
| 4.1 The Clients of the Sex workers: Identity, Background, and Diversity | 17 |
| 4.2 Once Upon a Time at Geleenstraat and Dubletstraat: The Client's First Encounter with the Sex Workers | 22 |
| 4.3 Clinet's Perspectives | 23 |
| 4.3.1 Partner versus Sex Worker | 23 |
| 4.3.2 The Chosen Platform: The Window Based Platform is the Top on Priority | 26 |
| 4.3 Motivations of the Clients: Sexuality or Commodified Products or Emotion | 27 |
| 4.4 Factors Deterring the Clients in Accessing Sexual Services | 31 |
| Chapter 5 Conclusion and Policy Recommendation | 32 |

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----|
| 5.1 | Conclusion | 32 |
| 5.2 | Policy Recommendation | 32 |
| | <i>Appendices</i> | 35 |
| | <i>References</i> | 36 |

List of Tables

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Table 1: Details of the Interview | 20 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

List of Figures

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1: Clients in Geleenstraat | 17 |
| Figure 2: Clients in Dubletstraat | 22 |

List of Maps

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Map 1: Map of Geleensraat | 34 |
| Map 2: Map of Dubletstraat | 34 |

List of Appendices

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Appendix 1 Interview Guide | 35 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

List of Acronyms

| | |
|------|---|
| CDA | Christian Democratic Appeal. ¹ |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| GDM | <i>Groep de Mos/Hart voor Den Haag.</i> ² |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| STD | Sexually Transmitted Diseases |
| ISS | International Institute of Social Studies |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| GSS | General Social Survey |
| EU | European Union |
| PvdA | Social Democrats |
| SHOP | <i>Stichting, Hulpverlening, Opvang, Prostituees</i> ³ |

¹ In literature, the coalition of Christian party is also known as Christian Democrats (CDA).

² Group de Mos/Heart for The Hague. In this research referring to the local political coalition part of municipality The Hague.

³ Stichting (foundation), Hulpverlening (helping organization), Opvang (reception), Prostituees (prostitutes)

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⁴ Spot 46 belongs to the organization SHOP.

Abstract

Research focus on public policy regarding prostitution always prioritizes sex worker's voices instead of the clients. On the name of the gentrification of the city centre, securitization of prostitution or anti-trafficking standpoint, the states introduce more restrictive law for both sex workers and clients. In the Netherlands, the state maintains the legalization approach though, the local authority differs to some extent because of the decentralization model of prostitution law. This study aims to uncover the perspectives of the clients of the sex workers in the two red-light districts (Dublestraat and Geleenstraat) in The Hague, the Netherlands. The main objective was to contribute to the policy discourse regarding the criminalization of the clients of the sex workers. The factors that motivate the clients to access sexual services were the main queries to focus on their position. In this research, 10 clients (five from each street) of the sex worker were selected through purposive snowball sampling method where the street was taken as a stratum. Ethnographic orientation was used as a research approach with participatory observation and interviews in an informal setting in terms of methodology. Respondents highlighted the sexual and emotional needs, some associated it with an idea of commodified products. They also acknowledged the importance of prostitution in society for clients and sex workers. This research paper addressed the heated issue of the criminalization of the sex workers' clients, it could be use to formulate policy for the betterment of the actors and institutions associated with this sector, however there remains some limitations to this study.

Relevance to Development Studies

Since the late nineteenth century, a growing concern regarding 'Ban on Brothel' has been emerged to prohibit the act against the moral value of the society. It was linked with women trafficking to prostitution from Eastern European and so called 'third world' countries [termed as 'White Slave Trade']. The repercussions were characterized by the abolition of prostitution and criminalization of the actors like clients, pimps, and brothel owners. The debate is still going on with some issues such as the sex workers are subject to trafficked and exploited by the pimps or other beneficiaries, meanwhile, the neo-abolitionist model introduced by Sweden added fuel to the fire. This contentious debate put pressure on the Dutch Legalization policy on prostitution when some other European countries like France, Norway, and United Kingdom have been following the 'Nordic' model of prostitution, interestingly some politicians from the Netherlands were invited to Sweden to see the apparently 'Successful' Nordic brand. The model states that buying sexual services is the violation of moral values that should be criminalized. But the sex workers can sell their body, ultimately they will stop doing it because of the changes in demand-side [clients] flow. This model and its patronisers (e.g. Radical feminist) highlighted that women's body cannot be the field of oppression where the clients (as if the male can be the clients only) are framed as oppressors and perpetrators. This paper is relevant to development studies as it contributes to the knowledge production on sex work and its clients in the Netherlands and to provide a firmer evidence based on a heated debate on social justice.

Keywords

Client, Dubletstraat, Gleenstraat, Motivation, Netherlands, Red Light Street, Sex Worker, Sexual Services, The Hague.

Chapter 1 Introduction

It was summer in the Netherlands when I continued visiting the red light area in The Hague, since the first week of July 2019 for my research purpose. I reached there at 16: 55hrs to meet the team I was working with, they were still not there. I was standing and waiting for the team at the intersection of Geleenstraat and Wateringkade. The street had not turned on its “red lights” and it was not the busy hour of the day with clients, sex workers, pimps or tourists, seemed like the day had not picked its pace. I encountered Moss at the red light district, the whitish skin man, almost bald but had hairs on the edges of the head, the middle height, in his mid-forties, expressed his identity as Moroccan origin Dutch and a chef by profession. In the first interaction, he seemed shy and introvert. Moss understood my intention when I explained to him of being there for my research though ‘language’ stood as a barrier between us sometimes. Moss started telling his story,

Once I had a wife, a daughter, and a family full of happiness. At a certain point, it did not work well. We broke up mutually. Since then, I am alone. Working in a restaurant, from dawn to dusk is not easy, I feel tired physically. When I see customers are coming to the restaurant with their partners, cuddling and kissing to each other, I feel good to see them in one way that they are happy. But on the other hand, I feel bad about myself. I do not have anyone to share my emotions. I feel pressure when I cannot have sex. I go to the red-light district, pay for the services for fifteen minutes. The sex worker smiles at me, kisses me, offers sexual services to me and says goodbye. My neighbour saw me going to the street once, asked me where I was going. I felt shy and could not say anything. They do not know about my entire life and what they can do ‘only think of me as a bad person’. I like to go to the red light district, want to see the smile on their [Sex worker] face and spend some good moments with them (Moss 2019, personal interview).⁵

This small vignette is the heart of my research. Before getting into the debate on sex work, I would briefly highlight how sex work is being understood in academia. Cohen et al. (2013: 4) mentioned that sex work denotes ranges of activities where sexuality is being sold to the clients either directly in the prostitution (e.g. flat, brothel and street) (Brents et al. 2009) or via pornography (Fazzino 2013), erotic dance, camsex and phonesex (Selmi (2013) cited in Cohen et al. 2019). Sex or body works that have powerful social meaning incorporate the body, touch, physical attachment to intense emotional labor required to manage both worker’s and client’s⁶ bodies and emotions (Cohen et al. 2013: 7). So, Sexual services are not only bodily needs but are more than that to the clients. The fundamental question arises, why do clients go to avail sexual services? What is it which motivates them? I want to understand this complexity from the client’s perspective.

On the other side, under the social media-led campaign named ‘I am priceless’,⁷ the activists wanted the buyers of the sexual services to be criminalized. 42000 people signed on this issue to be discussed and debated by the politicians in The Netherlands (Holligan 2019) which has some flexible laws regarding paying for sex (Brants 1998: 624). The activism is partly inspired by the

⁵ Personal interview with Moss on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 28 August 2019.

⁶ In this research, the ‘clients’ will be mentioned for the person [male] who pays the sex workers [female] for her service/time.

⁷ The Dutch translation is ‘Ik ben onbetaalbaar’.

Christian party (CDA) and feminists where the supporters continued raising the question in an online platform like ‘What if it was your sister?’ along with posting as ‘the prostitution is a form of social inequality’ (Holligan 2019).

According to the campaigners, the vulnerable women should be protected more and the nature of the Dutch sex industry being exploitative and outdated should follow the model of Sweden. They argued that country like Sweden is less attractive to the traffickers, people are less interested in buying sex and people are less exploited by the prostitution (Ibid). Question is that who is a vulnerable woman in what sense?’ and ‘Who is deciding for whom?’

In response to the campaign, the politician and public who are against it said that if the sex workers want to sell the body, it is their choice. The sex workers argued that if it will happen, then they have to do it illegally, resulting in more likely to be victimized and vulnerable because at that time, they will not be able to inform the police. It happened in France who followed the Nordic model of prostitution (Ibid). A small contextual example can be the ‘Law 2000’ which pushed a significant portion (Two-third) of the sex work sector from legality to illegality in the Netherlands. The sex workers who did not have resident permits moved from a regulated tolerance to total illegality, pushed them out from the brothels to the street where they are invisible and more vulnerable (As Aalbers and Deinema (2012: 135) described in Heumann et al. 2017).

In this debate and discussion, the voice of the clients remain silent even being they are the important actor[s] of this system. According to ‘Exxpose’ where the campaign ‘I am Priceless’ is operative, the statistics of an approximate quantity of visitors and frequency of accessing sexual services of the clients at the red-light district of Amsterdam is available (Van Husen and Van Dijk 2014). But it does not clarify the fact that what the demographic characteristics are such as, ethnicity, race, religion, age, nationality, and professions of the clients. They also stated by refereeing the ‘Survey Data’ of Farley et al. (2011) that the motivations in accessing sexual services differ before and after from positive to negative way respectively. This idea contrasted with other researchers where Bernstein (2001; 2005; 2010) and Sanders (2008) pointed out that the clientele of the sex work industry is quite diverse. Having varied backgrounds, the motivation of the clients in accessing the commercial sexual services is also diverse along with seeking a range of services and experiencing different situations while visiting the sex workers at the red light district (Sanders 2008) (e.g. Dubletstraat and Geleenstraat). Research regarding the motivation of accessing the sexual services from the sex worker within the Dutch context has never been conducted before, despite, the regulatory nature of the Dutch law⁸ (Outshoorn 2012). The remarkable and upset story is that while the political and social pressure to criminalize the clients of the sex worker is increasing, the knowledge regarding the actors, how they can be affected in the new legislation is missing and ignored (Baas 2009: 6).

This study do not engage with the debate that either sex workers are exploited or empowered. Rather, this research intends to provide an insight into the client's motivations in accessing the sexual services irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and profession. I argue that the

⁸ Dutch prostitution policy is clearly defined in the legal rules of Dutch administrative and criminal law regarding regulation of prostitution (Post et al. 2019). Its attitude towards prostitution is legalization approach based but it differentiated between legal voluntary sex works and forced prostitution which is a criminal offence (Outshoorn 2012). After the shift of ban on brothel, different issues (e.g. Abuse, abduction, trafficking etc.) came in frontline which made the policy maker rethink and revise the legalization agenda coinciding strict regulation. For example, if a sex worker want to works in the prostitution, the person has to be 21 years old at least and the clients have to check if the sex worker is registered or not (Ibid).

men who are paying for the sexual services are not only sexual beings but are also emotional beings who have been ignored in the heated debate of criminalizing the sex worker's clients, relocating the red light district in The Hague and implementing the neo-abolitionist model to some extent.

1.1. Nature of the Problem

The history of accepted legal prostitution in the Netherlands started its journey some 600 years ago in Amsterdam. Since then, the state has been concerned about prostitution and its relation to public order, not with the criminalization of sex work (Brants 1998: 621). The Netherlands is famous in the world for its progressive approach to pressing issue like prostitution (Campbell 2019). This sort of attitude comes from the Dutch pragmatism that lies “in social, political, and legal tradition” (Brants 1998: 622). The core of pragmatism is that certain law is imposed not to show tolerance to certain activities rather than for the success of other criminal laws (Brants 1998: 622). However, in comparison to this, the position and approach of Sweden is the successful neo-abolitionist model, which is the outcome of the ten years abolitionist feminist movement where the sex work was framed as a form of oppression against women (Kulick 2003). The conservative block of politicians wanted to give the idea that sex work is the violation of the moral value of the society along with sealing the border to stop the incoming migration flow of the Eastern European women after joining the European Union (EU) (Ibid). The European Union asked the member countries to make an alignment with its anti-trafficking standpoint where the European neo-abolitionist women lobby dominated by Sweden, Norway, France, and the UK is strongly active in promoting their campaign on violence against women (‘European Women’s Lobby’ 2011; Weitzer 2010: 12). Hence, the debate around sex work that either ‘it should be legalized or not’ became controversial within Europe and at the national level in terms of regulation and legislation (Pitcher and Wijers 2014: 549) whether paid sex is ethically acceptable or not, has been judged on the moral ground (Campbell 2019).

To understand the current debate, it is important to locate the historical roots and debates around this issue. In 1911, the Netherlands was influenced by the abolitionist movement⁹ and enacted the “Morality Laws”, which argued [Prostitution is seen as the violation of the morality of the society and prostitute must be seen as victim of immoral behaviour under the “Act against Immorality of May 20, 1911, Stb. 1911, 130” (Post 2019: 8)] the result of which was ‘Ban on the Brothel’ and the given argument was to prohibit women from trafficking as the Netherlands was a possible destination of trafficked women (De Vries 2005: 53-53). But it did not work because when the authority closed the brothel in one city, it was opened in another place (Volmuller 1966; Stemvers 1985). After that, Sex work is recognized as a legal profession since 1988. In the interim of lift of the ban on brothel in 2000, the Dutch penal code with a clear definition has legalized the “voluntary sex work” but criminalized the “forced prostitution” (Outshroorn 2012: 1). But still, it was considered as a special form of work as it directly impacts on human body and mind, so the legislator gave the autonomy to the local authority to make it more transparent (Post et al. 2019).

Since 2000, the different political parties more specifically the Christian parties (Christian Democrats and Christian Union) have been emphasizing the law reforms on prostitution and sex work (Heumann et al. 2017). In 2009, Hirsh Ballin¹⁰, who had been actively working on the more

⁹ The sex workers must be seen as a victim of violent behavior of the other actors in the prostitution and offering sex is not punishable (Post et al. 2011)

¹⁰ Hirsch Ballin, a enthusiastic abolitionist from Christian Democrats (CDA) who became the Minister for Justice.

restrictive policy, introduced the “law Regulating Prostitution and Preventing Abuses in the Sex Industry” which is a major shift from the “Kaderwet”(More Uniform Legal framework) (Heumann et al. 2017). As a result, the image as a self-employed and autonomous person of a sex worker also changed to a victim of trafficking and abuse. The proposed law is linked to neo-abolitionism like the sex workers are the victim of male desires (Post et al. 2019; Ward and Wylie 2017).

In 2010, the proposed law “law Regulating Prostitution and Preventing Abuses in the Sex Industry” in the parliament in the first round debate was criticized strongly by the anti-abolitionist feminist lobby like Association for Women and Law ‘Clara Wichmann’¹¹ and sex worker rights activists. The political parties divided into two camps and some proposed law (e.g. “compulsory registration of sex workers into a central database”, “compulsory ID for sex workers”) were removed but political parties like Christian Democrats (CDA), Cristian Party, Socialist Party and Social Democrats (PvdA) all came into an agreement to reintroduce the law of criminalizing the clients of the unregistered sex workers and increase of sex worker’s age from 18 to 21. These two laws can show the growing pressure of the neo-abolitionist on the Dutch system (Heumann et al. 2017).

Initially, the idea was to criminalize the sex worker whose age is under 21. Then, it was thought that it would make the young sex workers more vulnerable so that it was rejected by the minister for justice in April 2015. The law was justified by the idea of ‘protecting young people’s lives’. But gradually, it changed its position from a human rights-based approach where they did not consider the agency and decision-making capacities of the young people. It is also a gender control process by putting the sex worker as a female body and client as the male body as if the female body can be polluted by the male desire. So, this increased the legal age of a sex worker from 18 to 21 where the minimum age of consent (e.g. sexual intercourse voluntarily) is 16. But the law of criminalization of the clients of sex workers aged under 21 is still in place. A reason can be given that still paying for sexual services is prohibited due to taboo and social stigma. The politicians, media, and abolitionist lobby sketch them as a person with immortality, associated with the story where prostitution is equated with trafficking, the client as a rapist (Heumann et al. 2017). It is important to question why the men are portrayed as rapist with a polluted desires on the bodies of the women. Why it is not being questioned who are these men (Clients) and why are they accessing the sexual services? Why all the clients are homogenized as one? It is important to look into this clientele. Without looking into these questions the debate and analysis on the issue of criminalization of the sex workers’ clients remain partial and wrong.

1.2. Justification of the Research

In every society and history, sex work is regarded as a societal phenomenon that incorporates different public and political debates (Pitts et al. 2004; Post et al. 2019). The dominant paradigm in the research has focused on the public safety and health (Pitts et al. 2004), however, the clients of the sex workers remained under researched (Vanwesennbeck 2001). According to Perkins (2001), not more than one percent work has been done on clients. And most of the research was also conducted on the pathological purpose as well as investigating certain types of personality characteristics of the clients (Xantidis and McCabe 2000). This research will address one of the under-researched areas regarding prostitution such as the motivation of the clients. Weitzer (2009: 10) argues that research on the world of commercial sex is distorted and incomplete as it

¹¹ <https://www.vrouwenrecht.nl/>;

only focuses on “Street prostitution”, “Female sex worker” and “Illegal prostitution”. He urges the research community for a shift in research agenda and asks to pay more attention to other actors and structures such as “indoor prostitution”, “clients of the sex worker”, “male and transgender sex worker”, “male and female sex worker”, “female customer” and “manger”. Further research on the above-mentioned topics should have brought more nuanced, multidimensional and broader understanding than what exists now in the sector of sex work.

That's why the ongoing study will try to focus on the clients of the sex workers in terms of the motivation to access the sexual services from the sex worker.

1.3. Research Objective and Question

Research Objective

This research attempts to contribute to policy discourses about the criminalization of the sex workers' male clients in The Hague.

Research Questions

1. Who are the clients of the sex workers?
2. What are the factors that motivate the clients to have sexual services from the sex worker?

Chapter 2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Neo-Abolitionism

Neo-abolitionism is an established approach to prostitution and abolitionism. It basically demands to close the space and scope of commercial sex transactions incorporating different strategies. The neo-abolitionist idea reflects two themes, First, its a form of violence against women by making an alignment with the radical feminist idea of gender relations and gendered power (Ward and Wylie 2017). It was referred as the prohibitionist idea by Weitzer (2010) in his work. Neo-abolitionism is thankful to the radical feminist and different lobbies like fundamentalist and conservative religious groups for their support. Surprisingly, the feminist and fundamentalists sometimes appear in a platform of feminist governance (e.g. US foreign policy for implication regarding international relations during Bush Administration) (Halley 2006). The idea of neo-abolitionism do not contradicts with the neo-liberal values like the hyper-individualistic nature of the state (Halley 2006) and there is no clear indication of the suitability of the prostitution regime in a particular state (Ward and Wylie 2017). Secondly, it underscores sex trafficking and prostitution as an inseparable issue. Sex trafficking takes position apart from the other types of trafficking (e.g. organ trafficking) and it focuses on the criminal justice and law enforcement responses without coupling with the social policy framework like harm reduction and anti-poverty measure (Ward and Wylie 2017). The contemporary feminist anti-trafficking movement's views regarding prostitution have different subdivisions such as neo-abolitionism that's main idea is from the book *female sexual slavery* (1979) of Kathleen Barry (Doezema 1999). Prostitution is considered as violence against women, a form of sexual exploitation and violation of human rights. It is the place where women are sold and trafficked on the name of migration. The women from the third world or the Eastern block of Europe are lured due to the hope of well-paid jobs or the marriage ended up in the ally of the red-light street that directs the concept "White Slavery" (Ibid). 'White Slavery' campaign which linked to the neo-abolitionist idea failed to acknowledge the racism which termed as "Colonial Gaze" coined by Mohanty (1988). Here, the women from the global south are portrayed by western feminist as illiterate, poor, naive and under-powered. This sort of tendency can be found in the work of Kathleen Barry where there is an 'othering of the developing countries' women' exists in terms of socio-economic condition (poor, uneducated and under the power of the male). In the western foreign policy, western men are partially regarded as trafficker (Mirkinson 1994) wherein White Slavery the foreigner is considered as a trafficker.

Neo-abolitionism emphasizes that the government needs to abolish prostitution in a way that the initiatives will be taken focusing on the demand for sex. If they criminalize the demand for sex, the supply will be reduced automatically. The neo-abolitionist idea was first introduced in Sweden where the male was considered as a buyer and female as a seller (Ward and Wylie 2017). Apparently, Sweden has a different image in front of the world in terms of the welfare state and humanitarian issue and they are trying to sell their Swedish abolitionist 'supermodel' of prostitution to other European countries. They make space to show their model to different political parties and organizations that hold the radical feminist flag in the world. Sweden maintains the state feminism and assumes that the state has the right to intervene in sexual acts to redress and rebalance the gender inequalities.

2.2. Theoretical Underpinnings of Sex Workers' Clients' Perceptions

Sociologists have studied sex work with a correlation to deviant behavior, gender relation, and distinct occupation (Weitzer 2009: 2). The deviance framework discusses the stigmatization of the actors of the sex work who are subject to social control and discriminatory treatment (e.g. mandatory registration as a sex worker in different organizations, mandatory health checkup). There are three more paradigms which are related to two other frameworks (Ibid). The oppression paradigm that describes sex work, as a form of patriarchal gender relation, whereas, the empowerment paradigm takes a totally different standpoint regarding sex work. The empowerment paradigm which stands diametrically in opposite positions focuses on human agency and empowerment of the workers in sexual commerce (Carmen and Moddy 1985, Chapkis 1997, Delacoste and Alexander 1987). Here, Sex work is compared to other types of economic transaction which enhance the person's socio-economic condition with better control over working conditions (Weitzer 2009: 3). The theorists argue that this sort of job is similar to other "women's work" like physical therapy, massage, and psychotherapy. They also highlighted that sex work can be lucrative, edifying and esteem enhancing for them who try to fly from chauvinism of a small town, job without mobility and family stress (Augustin 2007: 45). Though the academics belong to this school do not claim that sex work is the only way of empowerment but it has the potential to be.

Weitzer (2010) criticized that there are some successful academics, who backed up the monolithic oppression paradigm, understood prostitution as a form of oppression and violence against women. For example, he suggested Scotland Women Support Project report where the clients were portrayed as the perpetrator and exploiter of women (Weitzer 2010: 2). Similarly, Farley (2007: 181) referred to the famous organization named "Prostitution Research and Education" (PRE) where she claimed that prostitution is not only harmful to them who (sex worker) works there but also it promotes sexist attitude and male aggressive sexual behavior that is both harmful for "prostituted" and "non-prostituted women"¹²

Feminist ideas concerning prostitution are divided into different groups. For example, the radical and liberal believers of feminism look at the role of prostitution in different way ranging from normal business activities to subordination of women (Ward and Wylie 2017). There are different opinions showing the sex worker as a victim or free agent pursuing their legitimate economic interest. The radical feminists tried to separate the moral and spiritual forces of relationships from the temporal forces in a mechanical way while analysing prostitution. Therefore, it presented an incomplete view between man and woman along with intricate relationships between the sex workers and their clients (Ibid).

In the very beginning, radical feminists and sex workers have appeared in the opposite direction with each other. Feminist like Laurie Shrage said that female prostitution is a way of women oppression not because that some women work in this sector and have been suffering in the eyes of the society rather than the organized practice and hegemonic beliefs that oppressed all women in different spheres of their life (Stewart 1994: 74). This sort of idea is also supported by different statistically defined logic (like frequency of violence initiated by the male clients) what made the ground strong. But Gali Pheterson also unveiled the abuse of research and misuse of statistics in his book "The prostitution Prism" to clarify the phenomena (Pheterson 1996).

Radical feminist Kathleen Barry (1995) compared prostitution with the world full of darkness, abuse, and violence whereas it is a place of sex work, general experience and common sense to

¹² Sometimes, they use the term "Prostituted" to show how the prostitution shapes them (Raymond 2004).

others. All the statements of Barry cannot be denied but there are so many positive life encouraging aspects also. So, the portrayal of prostitution like full of grim, violent and thankless job only represent the stereotypical representation of phenomena. Here, the motivation of clients, their desire for sexual demand, and the self-will of working in prostitution have been ignored. So, a major shift of scholarly focus can be seen in the demand side equation which has been ignored as of the time (Soo Jin and Shu Xu 2016: 2)

2.2.1 Review of Empirical Findings on Sex Workers' Clients

2.2.1.1 *Who are Sex Workers' Clients?*

Grenz (2005: 3) conducted research on the heterosexual male clients of the sex workers who were white German people and the university-educated participants were slightly greater in number. The reason was given that they were able to afford the sexual services of being highly paid or they were familiar with the research in the academic environment resulting in less feared to give the interview. The Dutch government repeatedly mentioned clients and the business operator of the sex workers as male and sex workers as female by using the pronoun "He" and "She" respectively which implies a stereotypical gender imbalance and power dynamics between the actors (Campbell 2019). Vreugdenhil (2019: 46) referred Ms. Davituliani, a councilwoman of GDM (Group de Mos), who portrayed clients in the Dubletstraat in The Hague as noise maker, alcoholic, drugs abuser and key actors of the other peripheral criminalities in the street. Vreugdenhil (2019) was also confused about the statement of Ms. Davituliani that she meant ethnic background linked with these nuisances mentioned above as the non-white clients belonged to the lower socio-economic background.

2.2.1.2 *Clients' Motivations*

Research on the client's experience of an actual emotional and physical attachment has been taken a considerable portion in the recent research on the client's perspective (Soo Jin and Shu Xu 2016: 1). Experts on sex work and prostitution described this sort of experience in a different way with different terms. For example, the experience of an authentic emotional and physical connection of clients is termed as 'Bounded Authenticity' (Bernstein 2007), 'a shift towards affection and romantic relationships' (Weitzer 2012), and 'girlfriend experience' (GFE) (Milrod and Monto 2012: 793).

Bounded intimacy relationship is a term coined by Bernstein which denotes a genuine emotional physical experience perceived by both clients and sex workers. This sort of relationship actually takes place for the time being in a particular space. The clients are also aware of the limitations. However, the main actors mean the clients and the sex worker do not build up any expectations after this. So, they try to enjoy the moment rather than focusing on further intimacy outside of the arena (Bernstein 2007). Another term is Girlfriend Experience (GFE) which is performed by the sex worker physically and verbally within the commercial area. This sort of activity inspires the mainstreaming towards a conventional relationship and normalization of the sex trade partially. It do not suggest that the sex worker cannot enact any limitation rather than the sexual pressure release will be performed mutually including enjoying the sexual encounter in a reciprocal manner (Milrod and Monto 2012: 793).

Pitts et al. (2004: 4) highlighted three factors such as "Ease", "Arousal" and "Engagement" for accessing the sexual services by the clients from the sex workers. The factor Ease undepinned the motivations like avoiding permanent relationships, seeking specific services that a partner

cannot provide, and the belief of 'paid sex is trouble-free'. The second factor Arousal derived from sexual arousal motivation which is termed positively and the influence of drugs and alcohol was described negatively. The last factor is Engagement where desire for company and wish for entertainment was highlighted positively and negatively in that order.

This research uses the anti-abolitionist feminist approach to examine the phenomena of sex work. The concept of bounded intimacy is considered a background to examine the client's motivation in accessing sexual services. Who are the clients and why they prefer to access the sexual services from the sex workers will be opened, to be argued by relevant theories and literature which is the heart of the discussion. Motivations unveiled from this study of the clients will show the underlining that how the clients look at the sex work(er).

2.2 Literature Review

The general thinking of having sexual services from sex workers, that human beings like to spend money where they find enjoyment. Research conducted on the Dutch male clients suggested that the sex workers and clients proposed different statistics in terms of accessing sexual services from the sex workers by the clients (Vanwesenbeeck 2001). In the British context, McKeganey and Barnard (1996) studied the motivation of male clients of purchasing sexual service where they [clients] reported clandestine and illicit nature of the contact are their main motives to visit the sex workers. A telephone survey conducted among Australian males found that good sex, convenient sex without commitments, companionship and intimate contact were the main motivations of accessing sexual services. Sexual frustration, variety of partner and sexual activity were identified behind the motivation from the interview simultaneously (as Louie et al.1998 described in Letherby et al. 2013). Sometimes, particular types of sexual practice which were not performed by the regular partner inspired them [clients] to go to the sex workers. (Monto 2001; Sullivan and Simon 1998). Lack of social and sexual effectiveness can also play a role to motivate clients to go to sex workers because these two characteristics are not mandatory to take the services from the sex workers (Xantidis and McCabe 2000).

Grenz (2005) in her book wrote that there is no specific class of the society from where the men came to have sexual services. Kleiber et al. (1994) examined the psychological factors of the clients and did not find any abnormalities in their behavior except the aggressiveness and desire to have sex without contraceptives among married male clients.

Some of the clients might be driven by sexual impulses. Gerheim (2013) stated that most of the male clients are sexually frustrated or they have an erotic desire for the red light area. According to HYDRA, many men who have a wife or girlfriend try to do a comparative experiment between sex worker and partner by accessing services from the sex workers. Gerheim and Kleiber both agreed with the idea of romantic love with the sex worker and found some cases among their respondents that they found love in service based settings. Kleiber et al. (1994) underscored that some of the clients translated the sex worker charming, intelligent and portrayed them as perfect women. Lever and Kanouse (1999) said that the clients tried to find a social connection with them by asking their names and other things. Most of the time they preferred to go to particular sex workers and one of four customers went to the particular sex worker more than 100 times found in the description of the Los Angeles' clients. Daneback and Månsson (2006) describes in his speech at European parliament that according to many customers, sex is like a consumer product and others [clients] also described it as 'Going to MacDonald's'.

Daneback and Månsson (2006) estimated that sixteen percent of men pay for sexual services in the United States. On the basis of the research work done in Los Angeles on 998 street-based sex workers and 83 call girls, she reported that twenty-eight percent of the total men patronized sex workers and half of them took the sex service regularly and the rest of them had it occasionally. According to Daneback and Månsson (2006), the percentage of having sexual services by Dutchmen is fourteen percent whereas it is forty percent for men in Spain. According to Hydra, a Germany based organization claimed that three fourth of the men paid for sexual service. Westerhoff (2012) highlighted that in Thailand where prostitution is illegal but socially acceptable, interestingly almost ninety-five percent Thai men accessed the services from the sex workers. He also tried to focus on the disagreement among the researchers. For example, some of them illustrated it as the desire for love, sex, or romance and others [researchers] are driven by the idea of chauvinistic motive directs to male domination over females or control over the female body (Westerhoff 2012). A study conducted on 71 girls and 150 brothel workers in Nevada, USA found that most of the customer seeks emotional attachment like love and romance not only the sex (Prince 1986: 490). Research conducted on the clients who paid for sexual services in London highlighted the finding that sixty percent of the total men interviewed prioritized brothel to access sexual services (Farley et al. 2009)

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Ethnographic Orientation¹³

This study employs an ethnographic orientation due to the fact that it is difficult to get away from the stigmatization of accessing sexual services. Talking about such personal issue with a random person/ researcher is not easy. So, it was important to build a rapport with them to make sure that I am not being judgmental toward them, earning their trust was important to collect an empirical evidence. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 14) mention that ethnographic method is not a tool only for the collection of data but rather a social interaction between a researcher and the subject, it informs the researcher about the understanding and perspective of the person under research. Similarly Bernard (2016: 258) mentions that, involvement of the researcher with the people under study should be in such a way that “people go about their business as usual when you show up”. For the issue sensitive like these research question, ethnographic orientation turned out to be a very useful. Through the informal conversations, “going out and staying out” with the research participants was helpful in gathering and generation of the data. So, ethnographic orientation was one of the key tools where the underpinning of the principles of ethnography was tried to incorporate in my research as much as possible¹⁴. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 3),

“In terms of data collection, ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry.”

In Ethnography, People’s everyday action and account is studied and data collected from a range of sources like documents, informal conversation without creating an experimental setup by the researcher. (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 3). So, everyday account is one of the principles of ethnographic orientation. In this study, I interacted with some of my respondents in evening during the whole summer of 2019 in the Netherlands. We had our food together, shared stories and experience and talked about my research. They were not only stakeholders of this research in terms of respondents but also worked as a guide to introduce me to the other respondents. Another principle was social interaction (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 3) which can be compared with my experience of relating and engaging with the research (Ibid). For example, I used to go to a shop to buy my groceries. When I intended to conduct the interview, I did not approach the shopkeeper immediately because of the sensitive nature of the issue. So, I interacted with him every day, told him about my research and interest. I wanted to make him habituated with my work and gave him that idea that the clients of the sex workers will not be stigmatized by me at least.

Collected data incorporates different meaning from the conversation. For example, one of my respondents told me that he loved a sex worker but he did not meet outside of the prostitution. He assumed that the sex worker also loved him. But on another day, he did not emphasize this

¹³ Author’s previous work upon “Assignment 2” of the course “Ethnographic research and reflexivity in development context”, ISS, 12 July, 2019

¹⁴ Class notes on Ethnographic Research and Reflexivity in Development Contexts, Slide: 11, Roy Huijsmans, 2019

issue when I asked him again about the romantic relationship with the sex worker. So, I did not want to bother him again. It reminded me the concept 'Bounded Intimacy'. What I saw and experienced in Bangladesh regarding sex worker's clients at the street, it might not be similar to the clients of the red-light district in The Hague. The clients of Amsterdam Red-light area may carry different motivations in accessing sexual services in compare to the clients of The Hague. It is similar to the arguments by many other researchers who believe that local difference helps to illustrate the phenomena which are not monolithic that is shaped by local realities along with the particular group (Cerwonka 2007: 1). So, that's why I went not only to the Dubletstratt or Geleenstraat but some strip clubs and bars to encounter the phenomena. Additionally, I understood that it will not be easy to collect data in a short time like July to August 2019 using any other quantitative method.

A broad and general question is typically the starting point for ethnographic interviews which is called *Grand Tour Question* by Spradley. Then, it is followed by specific questions. This is known as the "funnel interview" (Bernard and Ryan 2016). In the interview guide, I included some specific questions but before I started with a very informal interaction which looked like casual conversation [e.g. Tell me a bit about yourself]. Getting their own experience which is not filtered or changed by the respondents to avoid hidden and actual part of the story, it was the best way to get the people on the topic. Sometimes, it was not possible to get all the topics in a single sitting, so, I followed the participant observation method as well, went back to the same setting again and again (Ibid). In this research, I described everything in the first person by mentioning "I not We" that marks the presence of the researcher to knowledge production¹⁵.

3.2 Study Locale

Hague is one of the safest places in terms of public security and for prostitution¹⁶. There are two red-light streets namely Geleenstraat 23 (Map 1.1) and Dubletstraat (Map 1.2) in The Hague where the window-based prostitution is operates. From evening till midnight, prostitution remains active in terms of sexual services and the presence of the clients. In the Netherlands, there are eleven cities where window-based prostitution is operative and other three cities like Arnhem, Rotterdam, and Utrecht were closed at different times (Wagenaar and Amesberger 2017). I have chosen the municipality "The Hague" as my study locale due to some reasons. First, it is close to my living place. So, whenever I wanted, I went there within a short time. I needed not to bear any extra costs for my travel to another city. The people I know in the Netherlands, most of them are from The Hague. So, I can share my ideas with them and they can help me by playing a role as a gatekeeper which is very important for the issue like sex work and prostitution. The Hague is the administrative capital of the Netherlands and headquarters of many organizations so people with multi diversified characteristics and background travel and live in The Hague (Hall and Rath 2007). Visiting these places on a regular basis helped me to engage and observe more about the dynamics of these places to obtain the data for my field research.

¹⁵ Class notes on Ethnographic Research and Reflexivity in Development Contexts, Slide: 11, Roy Huijsmans, 2019

¹⁶ <https://www.denhaag.nl/en/in-the-city/safety/camera-surveillance.htm>

3.3 Sampling Method

Sampling is an important part of the research and a successful sampling can show the real scenario of the population. I used snowball sampling purposefully which is called purposive snowball sampling rather than a quantitative method of sampling. My intention of using this sampling was to reflect on the phenomena in terms of informal discussion, in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and analysis based on theoretical and conceptual significance rather than quantitative statistical analysis (Huijsmans 2010: 83). So, it also depends on the accessibility of the respondents. I wanted to interview as much as possible but as it was a sensitive issue related to the social stigma so I had to depend on “The more I will get, I will try to talk to them”¹⁷.

Primarily, I selected the window-based prostitution of the municipality Hague from eleven other cities in the Netherlands. And the strata were two streets namely Geleenstraat and Dubletstraat. I took five participants from each stratum (the street). Vreugdenhil (2019: 28) highlighted that the clients who belonged to a high socio-economic status, mostly the older Dutch purchased the services from the sex workers in Geleenstraat. Whereas mostly the young people with variety of ethnic identity and low socio-economic background accessed the services from the Dubletstraat as the price in Dubletstraat is almost the half in comparison to the Geleenstraat (Ibid). I selected equal sample to see that if the respondents reflect identical demographic characteristics. The respondent I interviewed first worked as my gatekeeper for the next interview so that's why I am calling it purposive snowball sampling. My selection criteria was to choose those men who had at least accessed the sexual services once in his lifetime from the red-light street. As the legal age of having the services is 21, the age group I selected started from 21 to upwards and the interview duration was minimum twenty-five minutes to two hours.

3.4 Sources of Data

I started going to the red light street for my research purpose since the beginning of July, 2019. I met people of different ethnicity, race, social class, religion, and gender. Not every one of them was a client. Some of them were tourists, passer-by or inhabitants of The Hague who actually went to “see” the sex workers. Along with my continuous participant observations, I also approached the people of the two streets and shared my research, with an intention to see if they can be my possible interviewee. On the basis of my observation and attitude, I asked them for the interviews. Some of them agreed to give me an interview in an informal way like I walked with them, smoked cigarettes with them and talked to them which I term as “informal conversations”.

The Hague municipality works for the sex worker by taking the support from organization which are SHOP¹⁸ and Spot 46¹⁹. The organization SHOP works for sex workers in terms of help,

¹⁷ I wanted to interview people as many as possible if they could fulfil my sampling criteria. The reason is that sometimes it is not possible to get very clear and effective data from every one because everyone is different in expressing their idea, thoughts, believe and perception. So, I did not want to rely on a limited number of data. Though it is not a quantitative research after that if the research incorporates more sample, it can give a broader view.

¹⁸ SHOP is the abbreviation for Stichting (foundation), Hulpverlening (helping organization), Opvang (reception), Prostituees (prostitutes) -Social Work organisation for street and indoor sex workers in The Hague.

¹⁹ Spot 46 is a part of SHOP but works on different issue (<https://www.spot46.nl/info/en/>)

support, and shelter²⁰. They also provide support to the sex worker working or living in The Hague who are victims of human trafficking. Spot 46 provides information to the sex workers in order to ensure safe and healthy living. I met with different key personnel of the organization at different time, sometimes in a formal meeting or informal discussion. They provided me support, for example, introducing me with sex workers and researchers who worked on sex workers before. By taking their help, I got in touch with a sex worker named Tika, a female sex worker, who is providing sexual services to disabled people. Tika introduced me to her former clients, gave me their address, asked them to help me by providing information as well as taught me literally how to talk to them because the people with a disability sometimes carry some anxiety. I talked to Tika number of times over the phone, via mail and Face book. She gave me an appointment at Spot 46 where I learned a lot from her that how to approach the clients in the street or in other places. In the end, I got an invitation from Spot 46 to work with them at the two red light areas on two different days. It was a collaborative promotional work on reminding free sexually transmitted diseases (STD) test for the clients and awareness-raising program (e.g. client's responsibility for paying a fair price, safe sex with the sex workers and reporting the sign of forced prostitution and exploitation) for both clients and sex workers arranged by the Hague Municipality with the help of SHOP, Spot 46 and Sexual Health Center of the GGD Haaglanden. I interviewed a significant portion (6) of my total respondents from this event. The first event happened on the 28th of August at Geleenstraat 23 and the second one took place on the next day at Dubletstraat.

3.5 Observation Method

I tried to see how the clients interacted with the sex workers and what sort of relations they maintained with each other. Apparently, it was an exchange relationship but I wanted to go in-depth to see that besides the sexual need what other motivations the clients carry to access the services. And because of this very reason, I need to know the dynamics as a silent observer. I went to the brothel, stood their hour after hour to see how the client walk around, why after finishing their intercourse they again went to the same-sex worker? How the sex worker interacted when they saw a familiar face in front of their window? Why the clients acted like they did not belong to the street? All the questions were raised from my observation that partially were filled up by the interview.

3.6 Informal Interview/ Discussion

I developed an interview guide to conduct the interviews. After building rapport, I wanted to interview the possible candidates in their desired places, sometimes in the café, sometimes in the Bars over a glass of beer. During the interviews, I listened to them without interruption. Then I probed them to say more about their motivation, life, feelings, and problems so that I could get a snapshot of their life. With due permission, I recorded their narratives and took some short notes in cell phone²¹ so that I can remember the whole discussion later clearly. It helped me to fill the gap of the research later. Likewise, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) stressed on the recording and organization of data in their book and argued that technological development has had a major impact on ethnographic data of how it was recorded and how it was organized for further analysis(Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 3). My appearance as a participant-observer helped me to know the life and dynamics of the clients from very closely.

²⁰ <https://www.denhaag.nl/en/in-the-city/safety/working-in-prostitution.htm>

²¹ The idea was I did not want to make them uncomfortable and give them a feeling of formal environment.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The Nature of this research is sensitive. I had to consider their social status and position which could be tormented by my small mistake. So, the anonymity of the respondents is assured by changing their names and nationality. It was always under consideration that the recording or other script related to their actual name and story will be safe and protected. I talked to some sex workers who did not want to say their actual names. So for their privacy reason, they will remain anonymous. Before talking about my research, I discussed my research and research question with them. Then, I started my discussion. No data is manipulated. It was transcribed as it was described by them. Due to the huge amount of the data, I transcribed that portion which was much relevant to the research questions and interview guide. Sometimes, the interviewee did not want to answer some questions and I did not force them to answer or if I found the answer previously, I did not ask them again.

3.8 Challenges

The main challenge I encountered during my fieldwork is the unavailability of the respondents. The reasons can be realized in the discussion section very clearly. But the main reason I found, is the social stigma that people did not want to expose their identity. They acknowledged that sexuality was an important part of their life but after that, they tried to hide their experience of accessing sexual service from the sex worker. Sex workers are working in the street but it was hard to get in touch with the clients because they preferred to leave the place after availing the services. I found some persons were really arrogant and dangerous when they were questioned about their demand for sexual service from the sex worker. For example, one of my respondents touched my chest and told me to keep a distance from him. Later, when I explained to him briefly, he understood and gave me the interview. In the beginning, one of my respondents did not want to acknowledge that he took the service because he thought that he could be exposed badly among the people with whom he was living. Then I had to gain the trust of him by interacting so many times. One of the clients gave me time at a different place but when I reached the place, he did not pick up the call. As a result, I had to exclude him from the possible respondent list. I was working by my own financial support. So, when I wanted to go to different strip clubs and bars, it was costly for me. Though it was not my research field, I had to go there for the prospective clients who visited the red-light street also. As a South Asian brown person, it was challenging for me to interview people from different cultures, ethnicity, and social class. I faced the problem when I interviewed people whose native language is Dutch and two of them could not talk in English very well. In that situation, my colleague from SHOP helped me a lot as a translator. The respondent who shared their story with me was very personal. So, as an unfamiliar person, my biggest challenge was to gain their trust and make them believed that their identity will not be exposed.

3.9 Positionality

I am 30 years old, male, Muslim, middle-class, brown-married man who is interested in understanding the issue of sexuality, prostitution not to understand the political economy around it but its role and contribution in the society. The exploitation of the sex workers and clients by the law enforcing agency, stigmatization by the society, and violence against the sex worker by the pimps or partner are the critical issues that I encountered back in Bangladesh. But I did not get the opportunity to research on this issue because even the research like this will be stigmatized. Sex workers, clients, and prostitution exist in Bangladeshi society but the norms and values do not recognize their existence, role and contribution. This is a story of my interest and inquisitiveness about this issue. Apparently, the pre-assumption of the motivation of accessing sexual

services is the desire for having sex but I believe that accessing sexual services is not only bodily needs. So in this equation I position myself as a silent companion of the clients. I positioned myself as a researcher and a learner who wanted to learn the dynamics between the sex workers, clients and their needs and motivations to avail these services.

3.10 Limitation of the Study

In this research, the respondents were only those who accessed the services but they were not compared with those who did not take the services. So, the opinions were not compared with a control group that can be consider the major gap which is also not considered by the theorists of the oppression paradigm (Weitzer 2010; Monto and McRee 2007). The study is not gender neutral because only the males were considered as a respondent and the females and transgender community were not included. Due to the lack of accessibility of sufficient respondents, it was not successful to reach the female clients and male sex workers after taking several initiatives. The research was conducted in the city The Hague, so it is not applicable while developing the policy for the whole of the Netherlands because of contextual differences. Lack of sufficient literature on the clients was also a barrier in terms of intellectual resources.

Chapter 4 Discussion & Analysis

4.1 The Clients of the Sex workers: Identity, Background, and Diversity

In the first section (4.1) of this chapter, I present detailed background of the clients of the sex workers derived from the empirical data for this research, such as the profession, religion, age, nationality, etc. In section (4.2) the choice of choosing a particular platform for availing sexual services will be covered along with the data on observation in the red-light district regarding different persons, interactions with people and their nature to provide a holistic scenarios of the clients in the red-light district.

It used to be around 18:00hrs in the evening when the hustle and bustle started in the red light streets (Dubletstraat and Geleenstraat). I could see sex workers, clients, tourists, passers-by, and pimps. Some clients and sex workers exchanging money and services before that time period. As I used to go every day to the red light street, I could see the “load of clients” was heavy from Friday till Sunday. The peak hours were from 21:00 to 00:00. I kept on recording the “type of the crowd”. Because of my frequent visits to the place I was able to distinguish between tourists and the clients. Sometimes, I talked to the people and sometimes just stood and observed in the corner. From the impressions I gathered, I always felt that the clients had a ‘special mood’ and emotion while they were exploring the platform. Sometimes they seemed anxious before taking the service and sometimes excited but sometimes just lost. From their physical appearance, they looked Dutch as many of them were tall and reddishness in their white complexion. Due to the heat wave in Europe, I noticed many of them were wearing half pants and half polo shirts, sometimes tee shirts with sea printed on it. They were coming to The Hague because it is the cheapest city in terms of price for the sexual services (Heemelaar Alge-meen Dagblad 2016). Since it was not a survey, so it remained difficult to learn about that how many clients visit weekly, monthly or annually and is similar to Pitts et al. (2004: 353) that it is hard to predict the annual amount of prostitution’s clients.

Figure 1: Clients in Geleenstraat

(Window has been circled as white)



Source: <http://casaviola.nl/>

On every visit to the place, I maintained my initial approach, in which I initiated the conversation with the participants casually, sometimes just by offering a cigarette and sometimes just by the exchange of gestures. Some clients also started recognizing me because they found me every day in the street. My physical presence without a paper and pen in the hand like a 'normal' researcher helped me to make them feel that I was not a 'danger' to them who is going to stigmatize them. Gradually, my interactions build-up to the extent that I won their trust and was able to interview them on that day when the promotional program was organized at the red-light district. Not only this, they also introduced me to their other fellows who were availing the services.

In the beginning, I approached two persons for my possible study sample. They looked brown south Asian, middle-aged, holding bag in their arms, bit hesitant, and were in tee-shirt and jeans. The other persons also wore green windbreaker. They were moving here and there separately but when I approached one person, the other person came to me to face the 'challenge' together or only because of curiosity. So, I thought my appearance as a brown south Asian male would work here. I talked to them in English until I did not know their nationality. The moment, they told, they were from India, the language and conversation changed from English to Hindi and they felt comfortable²². They listened to me inquisitively and at the end told me that they were traveling in the Netherlands, heard about the red light street, that's why they came to see 'the street'. But it was not a successful interview because they could not be my respondents. One of them replied to me,

I cannot give you an interview, because, I did not take the services from the red light street, but if you want to know about my experience (e.g phone sex services), I can be your respondent. I came here to see the prostitutes in the red-light street. We will not be here tomorrow and will go back to India two days later (Anonymous, 35).²³

This small interview is not an effective one in terms of research focus²⁴ but it denotes the variety of clients in the red-light street. The tourists I interviewed shortly, did not take the services but it enhanced my understanding in terms of the variety of clients.

In the red-light street, everyone was busy with their own interests and was not fascinated to meet some unexpected person like me. However, they also introduced themselves [not everyone but most of them] and I came to know about their backgrounds. To the best of my observation, the clients whom I have seen going behind the window at Geleenstraat were white people that was mentioned by Vreugdenhil (2019) in her research. The women at the red light street are also diverse in backgrounds like South American and Eastern European (Regioplan 2012). Geleenstraat is occupied by sex workers from different gender identity like heterogeneous white women, transgender, and transvestites. The room is much better than the Dubletstraat in terms of decoration and facilities. All these characteristics and variety of backgrounds of the sex worker increase the market price of the service in Geleenstraat. One can see easily that the white Dutch clients are solely browsing the window with a limited number of other nationality's people in the evening at Geleenstraat²⁵. The reason can be the economic stability of the clients. The clients at

²² I could perceive from their body language and flexible manner of interacting with me.

²³ The response was not taken into account in the interview (Table: 1.1) because of its failure to fulfill the sampling criteria. Anonymity of the person is ensured due to ethical consideration.

²⁴ The respondents had to be from The Hague who access sexual services from the red-light street. Therefore, the interview was not taken into account.

²⁵ https://www.wikisexguide.com/wiki/The_Hague#Red_Light_Districts

the Dubletstraat were more diverse in terms of nationality, colour, and ethnicity. One of my respondents told,

I prefer to go to Dubletstraat because they charge less money, like 30 euros whereas in Geleenstraat, they charge 50 euros. In Doublet [straat], there is a diversity of the sex workers like African, Eastern European, Surinamese and South American (Duke 2019).²⁶

I saw that there existed an informal relationship among some clients. Once, I was interviewing one of my respondents at the Dubletstraat and he was exchanging greetings [smiling, saying *hi* or *hello*, and asking short questions] with the other clients. I was sure about 'the others' as clients because two of them I interviewed on the previous day at Geleenstraat. My respondent also assured me that if one continues going to the red light street often, he will be able to recognize who are the regular clients of the street. The clients sometimes exchange the information and help each other finding their chosen sex worker. One of my respondents was informed by another client during our interview session that he [my respondent] should have gone to a specific room because *Sarah*²⁷ was there [according to my respondent, *Sarah* was one of the beautiful sex workers from Eastern Europe]. It was interesting to note that during my interviews, I came across the fact that my interviewees were religious as can be seen from the quotes below

I am unmarried and a kind of religious person...Roman Catholic. (Jasper 2019).²⁸

I am a twenty-seven years old guy from Uganda. I am Muslim, a religious person in performing my prayers every day (Moinz 2019).²⁹

Having premarital sex is sometimes shaped by religious institution as it is prohibited in different religions. A general social survey (GSS) (1988-1996) conducted in the USA depicted that never-married adults with higher religious motives (Catholic and conservative protestant) have fewer sexual partners than people who are less religious (Monto and Carey 2014).

Though my above-mentioned respondents were Roman Catholic and Muslim but they took the services from the sex worker without suppressing their sexuality in terms of accessing sexual services as a religious person which is different outcomes if I compare it with the literature mentioned above (McFarland et al. 2001: 2).

²⁶ Duke 2018, Personal interview with Duke on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 16 July 2019.

²⁷ Pseudo name to maintain the anonymity of the person.

²⁸ Jasper 2018, Personal interview with Jasper on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 23 August 2019.

²⁹ Moinz 2018, Personal interview with Moinz on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 10 September 2019.

Table 1: Details of the Interview

| Respondent Number | Respondent Name | Occupation | Age | Nationality | Interview Place | Time | Appointment Date |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 01. | Duke | Student | 37 | Nigerian | Interviewer's Place | 23:00 | 16/07/2019 |
| 02. | Jasper | Student | 29 | Nigerian | Interviewer's Place | 17:11 | 23/08/2019 |
| 03. | Mitshow | Shop Keeper | 21 | Dutch | Hogewall MiniMarkt Haags Hofkwartier | 14:00 | 24/08/2019 |
| 04. | Moss | Chef | 45 | Moroccan Dutch | Geleenstraat | 18:30 | 28/08/2019 |
| 05. | Martin | Worker | 64 | Dutch | Geleenstraat | 19:45 | 28/08/2019 |
| 06. | Marcen | Business | 41 | Curacao | Geleenstraat | 9:00 | 28/08/2019 |
| 07. | Novem | Security Officer | 32 | Dutch (Half-Dutch and Half Spanish) | Dubletstraat | 18:30 | 29/08/2019 |
| 08. | Mohammad | Student | 23 | Syrian Refugee | Dubletstraat | 19:30 | 29/08/2019 |
| 09. | Stefan | Boxing Teacher, Former Chef, Painter | 39 | Hungarian | Dubletstraat | 21:00 | 29/08/2019 |
| 10. | Moinz | Student | 27 | Ugandan | In front of ISS | 23:33 | 10/09/2019 |

Source: 2019 Field Work.

The variety and the background of the clientele of the sex workers can be seen from Table 1.1. For example, three person's age is below thirty and only one person age is more than sixty, one-third of the total sample's ethnic identity belong to African continent and four out of ten were students.³⁰ The information such as their name came at the first introducing session whereas if I knew the person before I did not ask the question unnecessarily. Age of the person sometimes came when I asked them of 'accessing sexual service first in their life', simultaneously question

³⁰ Three of the four students are doing their masters in a same university and other person is doing his undergrad in a different university in The Hague.

like ‘what was their age in the time of interview’ was also asked. Though I could assume the ethnic origin of the respondents but I asked them about their family and nationality to be confirmed. For example, my question was ‘Tell me a bit about yourself’ to one of the respondents. He replied,

I am Novem, thirty-two years old. My father is from the Netherlands and my mom is from Kabugaredat....Canaris Islands....only five thousand people live at this Island (Novem 2019).³¹

In this case asking question about age and ethnicity is impertinent. When the respondents talked about their financial incapability to access the services often, they also talked about their profession. From my observation, I can say that there are people from different nationalities are accessing the sexual services from the sex workers. Clients from different ethnicity, religion, and profession are accessing the services from both district but the people in the Geleenstraat are mostly white preassembly Dutch which is evident by this research finding whereas in Dubletstraat, the clients are much diversified.

³¹ Novem 2018, Personal interview with Novem on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 29 August 2019.

4.2 Once Upon a Time at Geleenstraat and Dubletstraat: The Client's First Encounter with the Sex Workers

I found from my research [from the interview and the informal discussion at the red light street] that the people who came to the Netherlands as a tourist or resident went to the red light street to see, visit, or access the sexual services due to their curiosity regarding sex work (ers) and prostitution or sexual need or different reasons [that will be described later part of this paper]. My respondents [who were outside from the Netherlands] compared the situation, context, quality of services, security, hygiene of the prostitution of their own countries with the Netherlands, more specifically with The Hague. For example, one of my respondents, Duke mentioned that he went to the red light area immediately after arriving at The Hague. He was satisfied with the services in terms of hygiene and environment. He mentioned,

Each sex worker has their own room...you can find a water tap...towels...tissue paper...music...nice bed... you see...and even the price you can get to know at the door.” (Duke 2019)³²

Witzer (2009: 15) mentioned the comfortable, homely and club environment at the prostitution that attracts the clients. Then, he [Duke] continued going to the red light street once or twice in a month until he got a girlfriend in The Hague. He also mentioned the financial incapability for not going there very often. My respondent mentioned earlier that the comparison between the respondent's own country and The Hague was pointed out as the organized form of prostitution. He mentioned that the sex workers in Nigeria have to work in the street, pay money to the police, pimp and politician sometimes, and need to negotiate with the clients by standing at the street which is usually really busy³³. Sometimes, they face danger like assault, robbery, and rape (Weitzer 2009: 6).

Figure 2: Clients in Dubletstraat



Source:

<http://casaviola.nl/>

³² Duke 2018, Personal interview with Duke on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 16 July 2019.

³³ Data collected from the fieldwork 2019.

Another respondent from the same region Nigeria³⁴ mentioned,

It was 2014 when I was doing my undergrad in Nigeria. Once, I wanted to go to a nearby club and our senior took us around and showed us this kind of activity was going on [The sex workers in the street were selling their sex]. They stay in the street and will be close to you physically to negotiate the price and take you into a building like a guest where you could have sex with them. I paid a little amount of money and enjoyed the services. I felt, Owol! This part of the world I haven't explored. I felt relaxed and refreshed (Jasper 2019).³⁵

According to Jasper (30), most of the sex workers at the street would agree to have sex with the clients without contraceptives if the client gives the sex worker some extra money which is very dangerous in terms of transmitting STD. It is about the Nigerian context. Jasper's quote highlights the difference between the environment and hygiene. So, it is much safer in The Hague than having services with a sex worker in Nigeria.

This brief background of the clients helps to understand the positionality and identity of the clients along with how the author encounters them from a corner of a researcher as a male south Asian brown person. The respondents with varied ethnicity, language, nationality, religiosity, and profession also highlight that prostitution is not a place for a specific class or a particular nationality. It's a place where people try to find the "answer" of their sexual demand, curious mind, emotional attachment or sometimes only as an alternative of the partner in a commercial setting (Van Husen and Van Dijk 2014: 6).

4.3 Clinet's Perspectives

4.3.1 Partner versus Sex Worker

In this section, I intend to show how the clients perceived the sex workers at the red-light area in The Hague in comparison with their partners. Sometimes, the clients reflected on their attitude based on their previous or concurrent experiences with the partner, girlfriend, or wife. Sex without any emotion during intercourse came upfront from their narratives but crave for love or emotion remained behind the story. The researcher's own experience of seeing the interaction between the client and sex worker serves further understanding from a different dimension.

I respect the women with whom I had sex at the red-light street. But the satisfaction you get from your girlfriend that you will not get from them. When you get a girl in your life, you can hug her, you cuddle, you share your emotion with her but you cannot do those same things with them [Sex worker] (Mitso 2019).³⁶

I met Mitsho, a twenty-one years old, young, enthusiastic person in The Hague since I first came to The Hague, the Netherlands. In the course of time, I have built up a rapport with him not

³⁴ The name of the country is also changed to maintain the research ethics but the continent remained the same.

³⁵ Jasper 2018, Personal interview with Jasper on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 23 August 2019.

³⁶ Mitso 2018, Personal interview with Mitso on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 24 August 2019.

because of my research purpose but due to social interaction and buying grocery from his shop. He was very much vocal and comfortable in sharing his personal story by sitting behind the counter at his shop. Our conversation was being interrupted a bit when the customer came to buy products from the shop that we both came into conscience as ‘an accepted interruption’. So, he told me that he had a girlfriend before with whom he used to have sex but the relationship was broken because of his own misconduct. The girl’s parents also influenced her to start a new relationship by breaking up with Mitso. Since then, he is single except sexual relationships with some partners. When he finished his work at the shop at late night and did not have much time to interact with his partner, he went to the red light district to have sexual services from the sex worker. Though he mentioned that the relationship with the sex worker is not the same relation which he had with his girlfriend in terms of emotional attachment, conversely, he mentioned,

You can go there and smoke a cigarette and joint³⁷ with them. You can pass some extra time with them. It depends on how you have built up the relationship. If they like you, they can do these [things] with you (Mitso 2019).³⁸

This statement is contradictory to the previous statement of Mitso. It denotes that the sex worker and the client maintain some informal relationship (e.g. engagement) if anyone is able to build a ‘relationship’ or tries to build an intimate relationship as highlighted by Pitts et al. (2004).

To answer the question included in the interview guide, *how do your visits to [name of sex worker(s)] relate to your partner?* Stefan, a thirty-nine years old, almost bald, with a big body (tall and fatty), a boxing teacher by profession, Hungarian person replied,

If I had a partner, I would not have come here. Women are here for the money. It’s a business and the men come here to release their stress. When you have a partner or wife, that’s not the business, not only for the sex, moreover making love. The women are not here to make love with you, rather make you ejaculate. But some women make believe on you. If you come often, they will think you as their own customer. One may ask you....come in....come in. If you will not go, she will be angry. Even she will not look at you. (Stefan 2019)³⁹

He [Stefan] liked to go to the sex worker who was from Romania. Surprisingly, we talked to the girl together which is not very common in red-light street. I was standing beside Stefan near the window where my position was 1.5 meter distance from Stefan. He touched one side of the window by his lower part of the right shoulder where the distance between the sex worker and Stefan *per se* was less than two feet. While standing the beside of Stefan and right side of the sex worker, I could clearly saw the body language and could hear their conversation. He was supposed to introduce me with her but ended up interacting solely. The girl said to him, ‘Hi, How are you? Stefan replied that he was fine. He also replied, ‘long time no see’. Then she replied, ‘Yeh, I was traveling and can I take a break for one minute to smoke a cigarette? The guy replied, ‘Yeh, sure...sure.’

³⁷ In the Netherlands, another name of smoking stick made of *canabis* is Joint.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Stefan 2018, Personal interview with Stefan on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 29 August 2019.

I was standing beside him and the girl did not look at me. She was focusing on her client and they were talking in such a way as if I did not exist there. When the girl closed the door, I started talking to the guy and he told me that he was very excited to go inside the window. And I found it a bit weird to be with him when he was only thinking about the girl because when he was talking to me, he was not looking at me rather than watching the girl. So, we said 'bye' to each other and he gave me his visiting card.

My observation is that if it is a business, why should there not be emotional attachment in business transactions (e.g. Mitso)? On the other hand, what sort of feeling makes the sex worker believe that she has fixed clients and they cannot go to the other sex workers? Why the client keep going to the specific sex workers (e.g. Stefan and Romanian Girl)?

I want to address the idea of business transaction without love or emotional attachment with a theory of consumer behaviour. The theory highlights that consumers carry some special preferences for a particular product, brand or shop and keep going to a particular shop though the product can be availed from another shop. Human being and its characteristics cannot be compared with the product but as the sexual services is compared with the business transaction, the theory of consumer behaviour proposed by Lancaster can provide nuance explanation (Ratchford 1976). The brand loyalty is that the consumer purchases that product where he/she finds all the expected characteristics which maximizes their utility. They can move to another brand where they find similar characteristics with same utility. In prostitution, the clients may prefer to take the services from different sex workers who can provide them with identical sexual services (e.g. Mitso). Is it because of consumer behaviour which separate the role of love [or loyalty?] and sex in different position?

'Bounded Intimacy' theory proposed that the intimacy and the affection between sex worker and clients remains limited for a specific time and area, and both of them knows and accepts this reality (Weitzer 2010). If the case of 'Stefan and the Romanian Sex worker' can be explained, they both were informal in interacting with each other in a formal setting. They were fine and comfortable with each other for the limited time they had. They both know after fifteen/twenty minutes later other clients will go inside the window and may be, another day 'Stefan' will again go to access the services from her as he did it before.

Most of my respondents claimed that the relationship with a sex worker is different than the relationship with wife, sexual partner or girlfriend. It was also claimed by a portion of respondents that going to the red-light street is comparable to 'going to the shop for buying some products'. Most of the reasons were mentioned that they [the sex worker] are so much business-oriented, only give a fixed time [Fifteen to twenty minutes], if anyone pay more than that, he will get more time to stay or have sex with them, they do not have any emotional attachment while having sex with the clients. In that sense, in their personal relationship, it is more relaxing, more emotionally attached, unpaid and not time-bound to have sex with a partner. But some feedback from the clients like the carrying an informal inmate relationship, interacting informally from both corner (sex worker and client) and keep going to a particular sex worker highlight different scenarios over the commercial sexual transaction between sex workers and clients.

4.3.2 The Chosen Platform: The Window Based Platform is the Top on Priority

In this portion, I would like to present the preference of the respondents in terms of accessing sexual services in the red-light district. The reasons of accessing this services will also be covered.

During this research, it was found, Window-based prostitution is the most chosen platform in accessing the sexual services from the sex workers in The Hague. But similar findings of was also noted in the research conducted on the clients at london (Farley et al. 2009). In this study, maximum respondents [Clients] told that they preferred to go to either Geleenstraat or Dubletstraat though they had previous experience of accessing sexual services from different platforms like cam sex, phone sex, escort services, strip clubs, and private clubs. Not a single person said that they did not like Geleenstraat but Dubletstraat is much more convenient for them because of the price. The feedback and explanation from the respondent can clarify their preference and opinion better.

Last time, I took the services from a sex worker one week ago at a website named Kinky.nl⁴⁰. I usually come here [Dubletstraat] two or three times in a month. I go to those girls who give me good services. But I do not prefer *kinky* because they charge a lot of money for one hour (for thirty minutes 100 euros and for one hour 150 euros). I enjoy the services here (Novem 2019).⁴¹

So, the financial inability is one of the main factors what motivates them to take services from either Dubletstraat or Geleenstraat that is comparatively cheaper price than other platforms. If anyone can negotiate with the sex worker, he can stay for more time by paying 15 to 20 euros more. The client pays sometimes thirty euros basic with an additional twenty euros tips to stay more time with the sex worker at Dubletstraat. If someone wants to take the services from the sex worker who is available as an escort, he has to pay more. There is another reason which motivates some clients to go to the red-light street that the picture of the sex worker working as an escort uploaded on the website does not match when the clients encounter them in person. One of the clients of Dubletstraat told this incident that he went to meet a sex worker in Rotterdam where he found that the person was not the same whom he had seen on the website. But he has the ability to access costly escort service which indicates not everyone is from low socio-economic background who access services from Dubletstraat. Similarly, Novem (32) indicated another reason which made him prefer red-light street for his prospective sexual service provider that he could leave his vehicle near Geleenstraat where a free parking zone existed and he could have taken a few minutes to walk to Dubletstraat from there. Thus, he could avoid the charges of the parking ticket.

⁴⁰ www.kinky.nl

⁴¹ Novem 2018, Personal interview with Novem on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 29 August 2019.

4.3 Motivations of the Clients: Sexuality or Commodified Products or Emotion

This section conveys the central idea of the research question whereas the previous section of this chapter were framed to shed light on the research question from different angle. I would like to start this chapter with some comments which hold the central argument of this section. Apparently, three broad factors appeared behind the motivation but the other factors came as findings surprisingly made the case interesting.

Sexuality.....

It is [sexual intercourse] important because you are ejaculating and releasing your pressure. It is about satisfaction, nature of human beings, sexuality to explore oneself to get in touch with women in the street. (Duke 2019)⁴²

It is [sexual intercourse] refreshing, relaxing and it will give you more energy to work more. (Jasper 2019)⁴³

I do not like to do hand Job [masturbate] and do not want to continue a relationship with a girl as a boyfriend so that I like to come here again and again and fulfil my desire. (Novem 2019)⁴⁴

If the first statement of Duke is taken into account, then it is clear that he acknowledged the idea of sexual pressure release. The keywords from the narrative of the respondent were 'natural needs', 'nature of human being' and 'sexuality' which came very frequently from their feedback. It is much more related to the underpinning of the second factor *Arousal* described by Pitts et al. (2004). So, when they feel that they are aroused, they demand the sexual services from the sex workers. The desire for sex and company appeared from the statement of Novem as he does not like to masturbate and maintain a permanent relationship that underscore the factors *Ease* and *Engagement*.

They did not consider it as unnatural phenomena in their life likewise different researcher of the contemporary time considered it as 'Normal' and 'Everyday' activities which rejected the psychopathological model proposed by Charles Winick (1962) (Monto & Milrod 2014; Monto & McRee 2005; McKeganey & Barnard 1996; Serughetti 2013). Jasper expressed his feeling overwhelmingly when he was talking about his sexual life. He described it as important and useful for the human being to be effective in physically fit.

Commodified Products.....?

In addition to what I have described Mitso (21) in the earlier part⁴⁵, he is a single person who did not intend to stick to a permanent partner. While discussing with him about the motivation he carried to access the sexual services, I found, he was quite clear of his purchasing motivations.

⁴² Duke 2018, Personal interview with Duke on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 16 July 2019.

⁴³ Jasper 2018, Personal interview with Jasper on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 23 August 2019.

⁴⁴ Mitso 2018, Personal interview with Mitso on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 24 August 2019.

⁴⁵ Client's Perspectives

Accessing sexual services in the Netherlands is quite normal, regular activity of everyday life like 'Buying Product from the Super Market', he mentioned, same as [sex] was compared to the term 'Buying McDonald' by Månsson (2006) in his study. The purchasing power depends on the price, customer's suitable time and sexual preferences. Pitts et al. (2004) described it as "ease", one of the major factors of accessing sexual services from the sex worker in a study conducted in Australia. For example, he [Mitso] told,

I enjoyed the sexual life with my girlfriend but you know when you will have sex with the same girl, you will get bored. (Mitso 2019).⁴⁶

Sullivan and Simon (1998: 152) argue that commercially driven sexual proclivity practiced by the client carries a variety of attitudinal and socio-emotional disposition measured by physical and emotional dissatisfaction and sometimes "not hav[ing] sex as an expression of love". In Mitso's case, he did not want to have sex with the same partner every day as he had the accessibility to go to the street, and due to unsatisfied broken sexual relationship with his girlfriend mentioned earlier. Monto (2000) depicted that the commodified view of sexuality is also characterized by the number of partners [as was observed in Mitso (21) and Duke (37)'s case who had multiple sexual partners]; use of pornography; and need sexual support when they feel aroused similar to the findings of Farley et al. (2009: 22). As Mitso (21) expressed his motivations, *When I saw the movie clips or music video when the girls are shaking their [boobs and booty], I feel like I am horny and I want to do the same things with women in the street*. McKeganey and Barnard (1996) argued similarly that having sex with a range of different women, attracted by some specific physical characteristics (mentioned by other respondents), thrilling of doing something that is socially unacceptable, limited emotional contact are the four aspects on which the clients can be motivated. Prasad (1999) in Bernstein (2005) argued that in recent time, the client's activities in prostitution is not different from the exchange of the product in the market place. Allisan and Prasad indicated that sexual behavior is much more recreational than relational where it is facilitated by its location in the market place (Bernstein 2005: 108).

Emotion, loneliness, or Love.....!

I have been living alone by myself. I do tiresome work, physically and mentally. It is necessary to share your emotions with someone for some time, whom you do not know or you know her for long time. I believe if I had a partner, I would not have come here. But now this is much better for me. Sometimes, it is difficult to find the right partner. (Stefan 2019).⁴⁷

Most of the respondents during this study declared that they continued going there or went there once because they did not have a sexual partner, wife, or girlfriend in their life. One of the leading answer of the question like "What were the motivations to go to the sex worker?", they said that they feel lonely, isolated, sometimes discriminated in the society and found an alternative way to

⁴⁶ Mitso 2018, Personal interview with Mitso on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 24 August 2019.

⁴⁷ Stefan 2018, Personal interview with Stefan on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 29 August 2019.

channel their emotion and love, It is similar to the findings of Prince (1986: 490) a research conducted on sex workers in Nevada, the USA.

Consequently, the indoor workers [e.g. behind the window] like to counsel and befriend with the clients often end up making a romantic relationship with them (Lever and Dolnick 2000, Lucas 2005, Sanders 2008 describe in Weitzer 2009). A similar example was given by a respondent,

I was having sex with a sex worker but I could not ejaculate. So, I asked the girl that can I have sex without a condom ? And she said, 'Yes'. Maybe, she liked me (Duke 2019).⁴⁸

I am a young guy you know and there are some women who really like to have sex with a young guy (Mitso 2019).⁴⁹

The idea of liking to have sex with young guys is not evident by available study but it directs the dichotomous idea of liking and disliking between the sex workers and the clients itself which brings the agency of sex workers upfront.

During my fieldwork, I got in touch with a former sex worker who is not working as a sex worker but currently doing another job. From her narratives, I came to know that she got married to one of her clients and after that, she continued working as a sex worker. Her children knew that she worked as a sex worker but she did not face any problem like abusing, violence, stigmatization inside the family except bullying and teasing by the neighbours.

Research data collected from the website like Kinky.nl or Hookers.nl depicted that the clients sometimes want something more than sex. They [clients] place those sex workers as premium on the website who can cuddle, kiss, and communicate better, more affectionate and overall friendly. Some abilities (better communication, friendly behavior etc.) mentioned above should not be considered as bodily sex rather than more social and emotional features (Holt and Blevins 2007, Sharp and Earle 2016). My respondent Novem (32) told,

I interacted with a sex worker outside the red light district whom I had met at the street. I built up an informal relationship with the sex worker outside of the street. I used to talk to her via Facebook. Once, I found that the girl quit her job from the red light area and engaged with a boyfriend, I stopped texting her (Novem 2019)⁵⁰.

Reflection came from an interview with an escort that sex is the pretext to visit the sex worker for many clients but the underlining desire is emotional (Lucas 2005: 531). Tika⁵¹, a former sex worker described her experience as a female sex worker who provided services to the male clients

⁴⁸ Duke 2018, Personal interview with Duke on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 16 July 2019.

⁴⁹ Mitso 2018, Personal interview with Mitso on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 24 August 2019.

⁵⁰ Novem 2018, Personal interview with Novem on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 29 August 2019.

⁵¹ <http://tikastardust.nl/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5jRV5FOD6M>

'Tika is a former sex worker who is currently working as an erotic and intimate service provider to the mentally and physically handicapped people who are somehow paralyzed or mentally sick but one thing is common that they had desire for intimate relationship. I got in touch with Tika by the help of an organization named SPOT 46. She gave lecture and speech to different workshop, TV channel and Ted* Amsterdam and wrote a book on the basis of her experience with the clients.'

previously and now providing services to the disabled male and female clients. I found that every client was not sexually driven but some of them need emotional support. Few clients do not have the sexual ability to have sex but they want intimate attachment of a female body. This kind of intimacy between the client and sex worker is stated as “manufactured intimacy” mentioned by Weitzer (2009) which is termed as Authentic libidinal ties with the clients that give them desirability, esteem, and love (Bernstein 2007: 103). Tika termed it ‘Skin Hunger’ which I perceived as a combination of physical and mental attachment. The experience of Tika is supported by a study that a sex worker is not always perceived as a body to conquest the sexual desire rather than a person with whom a meaningful and long-lasting relationship can be initiated (Sanders 2008: 98).

This research found three main indicators of motivations of the clients in accessing sexual services from the sex workers, which appeared frequently, though finding typology of the clients was not the primary aim to explore. But based on the data, the typology of the clients can be divided into three main types such as the clients who look at this phenomenon, first, (services) from a socio-emotional perspectives; second, sexuality as need; and third, as a commodified product. This finding is close to the typology as “business-type,” “romantic/ friendship-type,” and the “misogynist-type” as identified by Vanwesenbeeck et al. (1993).

Respondents addressed a variety of motivations in accessing sexual services. Besides, the motivations described above some other factors were also noticed. The idea was not only to reveal the common factors to focus on this issue but something new to find out to add value with the previous work. In that case, different interesting findings were discovered like hygienic and decorated environment (Weitzer 2009), client’s safety and security, cheaper price as compared with other cities, and racialized features (Bernstein et al. 2005). For example, the last point ‘Racialized Feature’ was declared by one of the respondents in these words:

I am a black person and if I want to have sex with a blond Dutch girl, I have to spend my emotion, time, money and labor. That’s alright. But in the end, I have to come back with a broken heart. They will say, ‘No, I do not want to go and be with a big, black, aged guy like you.’ I faced it in my life. So, I came to the red light district. (Marcen 2019)⁵²

Marcen’s idea of accessing sexual services from sex workers who are blond may be a combination of fantasy and sexual desire. But racial discrimination can be found as the underlining of the motivation of accessing sexual services in the red light district. Though, seeking a racialized feature of the sex worker was found in a study but racial discrimination was not addressed in a study conducted on the clients in Europe in 2008 that they preferred to have sex with young, beautiful and exotic sex worker who wears particular dress or have some specific physical characteristics (Marttila 2008: 43). In the next part, the motivations which deterred the clients to have sexual services will be discussed so that the other side of the coin can also be brought to the stage.

⁵² Marcen 2018, Personal interview with Marcen on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 28 August 2019.

4.4 Factors Deterring the Clients in Accessing Sexual Services

Once I went there [red light district], I saw my those friends whom I did not want to see and show myself. I did not let them know that I used to go there. Maybe the next day, they would ask me or laugh at me. I wore my hoody and tried to hide myself that nobody could see me. One day a friend of mine saw me and asked me, 'What are you are doing here?' I told him, 'I was just looking and roaming around'. If you live here, you saw them [sex worker and prostitution] multiple times. So, its a lie (Mitso 2019)⁵³.

From the statement mentioned above, a question arises that why the client wants to hide their identity while visiting the sex workers or uninterested to expose their identity as a client of the sex worker? Or they want to differentiate themselves from the 'other' (Van Husen and Van Dijk 2014). Study conducted on the clients stated that the customer distinguished themselves into two types such as 'every man's perspective' where the customer thinks himself like others who do not access sexual services and 'special man's perspective' refers the customer who feels different from others [non-clients] (as Monto and McRee (2005) described in Van Husen and Van Dijk 2014). This idea of 'othering' with a feeling of 'special' offers room for stigmatization and homogenization (Van Husen and Van Dijk 2014). A finding of this research highlighted that the clients do not want to encounter a familiar face, do not want to be a source of humiliation, joke, stigmatization or be criminalized (Baas 2019). There is a stereotypical norm of sexuality which denotes the socially acceptable and unacceptable form of sexual behaviors indicated in the earlier part of this research⁵⁴. Rubin (1986) proposed *charmed circle* wherein sex hierarchy, the sexual attachment of Mitso, Martin, and Duke with the sex worker will be stigmatized whether not having girlfriend, divorced or having girlfriend respectively. Mitso (21) stated that he took the service at the age of sixteen which is a criminal act in the law of prostitution but according to the Penal Law Code, art. 244 and 245, the age of consent for voluntary sexual relations is 16 years in the Netherlands which refers to a contradiction in terms of the law⁵⁵.

Poor hygiene conditions, fear of STD, commercialized behaviour⁵⁶, and financial incapability all were found as the client's deterrents of demanding sexual services from the sex worker in the red light district.

⁵³Mitso 2018, Personal interview with Mitso on formatting MA theses, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 24 August 2019.

⁵⁴ Nature of the problem

⁵⁵ <http://www.protection-of-minors.eu/en/country/NL>

⁵⁶ For example, according to some respondents, the sex workers ask the clients to go behind the window with a fake smile. And when they go there, the sex workers force them to complete all sexual activity negotiated before within fifteen minutes like 'put off and put on the clothes' including sexual intercourse. Sometimes, they feel like they were kicked out from the room. One of the respondents told that a sex worker behaved very rudely with him and asked him more money for a particular sex work which [the particular sex work] was pre-negotiated. But he refused to pay the extra money and left the room without completing the intercourse.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This research attempted to answer who are the clients of the sex workers and what are the factors which motivate them in accessing sexual services from the sex workers. In terms of the clients of the sex workers, it was found that the clientele of this sector is quite diverse in relation to culture, religion, age, ethnicity and profession. A representative size of the research revealed that they are students, businessman, and are from other service sectors. The age ranged between 21 to 64 where significant portion of the clients were below forty years. In regard to ethnicity, the Dutch and African are dominant in accessing the services. It was a starking finding that none of them had permanent relationship. In terms of motivation, it was found that most of them were lonely, with a broken relationship and needed emotional and physical support. Another interesting finding was racialized dimension for accessing sexual services, as one of the respondent mentioned that blond woman did not want to engage with him (being a black person) in a relationship but through money it was possible for him to have services from the blond sex worker. The three main indicators of motivations were found as socio-emotional perspective, sexuality as human need and lastly, sex as commodified product which is close to the typology of van-wesenbeeck et al (1993) such as “business type”, “romantic friendship type” and “misogynist type”.

The perception of the clients regarding the importance of sex workers and prostitution is quite clear found from the empirical data in this study. Most of them [clients] acknowledged that the work sex workers doing is not an easy job. They need all the provisions, entitlements what the other job sectors reserve it by default along with deserve proper honour and recognition from society. The sex workers, clients and others who associated in this sector are not special beings rather than the other normal persons in society. They all are equally important for this sector. The abolition of one actor [e.g. client] will threaten the existence of the whole sector. Coercion, exploitation, and trafficking are not uncommon phenomena but due to these incidents, the whole clients' group should not be marginalized, stigmatized and homogenize generally. The clients can be perpetrators as well as they can be the key actors to develop the condition of the sex work(ers). The radical feminists and neo-abolitionist ideas regarding sex workers and clients deeply reflect the so-called ‘moral value’ of the society where the agency of the women and freedom of choice were omitted. There is a proverb that if there is a problem in the head, the best solution is beheading. So, the state and the local government should consider the opinion of the actors of this sector objectively and critically encounter the problem avoiding the ‘problem and solution’ method prior to incorporate any ‘model’.

5.2 Policy Recommendation

The finding and analysis described previous chapter of this study can be a useful source of further research and policymaking for the authority of the prostitution of The Hague and the Netherlands. The clients’ experience regarding sexual service and prostitution can be a useful source of information to normalize the awful picture of exploitation of the sex worker in prostitution. The Hague municipality can take the initiative to include the clients as a key informant to collect data on the abuse of the sex workers. But before they have to make sure that they [the clients] will

not be stigmatized as the clients do not trust the authority because of being painted as perpetrators of violence against sex workers (Van Husen and Van Dijk 2014).

The findings of this research highlighted that in some cases, the clients thought the sexual service as a product that would deviate the clients thinking from the humanitarian corner resulting in the alienation of the sex worker from their work, abuse of the sex worker and distance relationship with the clients. So, the municipality can work on it by arranging collaborative workshops which include sex workers, clients, pimp, academicians, researcher, security forces, psychologist and authority, etc for the holistic understanding. During the fieldwork, I did not notice any information desk in both districts (Geleenstraat and Dubletstraat) where the clients or the visitors get the information regarding prostitution and sex work. So, initiatives can be taken to set up a visible information desk in both districts, though from online, the clients/others get most of the information. The focus of reporting is always exploitation or coercion centred which is not respectful and healthy manners. This sort of reporting should be changed by bringing some positive information and story which will ensure a healthy environment to the prostitution. The clients should be attracted via promotional (like the promotional program where the author participated) activity by giving them small souvenirs or showing documentary, so they can provide actual information. The debate on the criminalization of clients and the neo-abolitionist view of prostitution ignored the voice and welfare issue (DE stigmatization, include them in the policy issue, informed them) of the clients and painted them as 'perpetrator' which may influence the policymaker biased. So, this sort of issue should be taken into consideration while formulating the policy.

Map 1: Map of Geleensraat



Map 2: Map of Dubletstraat



Appendices

Appendix 1 Interview Guide

1. Tell me a bit about yourself
2. Can you tell me something about your first visit to a sex worker?
 - a. What was your age when you first took the services?
 - b. Did you enjoy it?
 - c. How many times do you take the services in a month?
 - d. Do you feel any emotional attachment with the sex worker or any respected sex worker?
3. How do your visits to [name of sex worker(s)] relate to your partner?
4. Which one you prefer most ...indoor or outdoor platform? Or both?
5. What motivates you to have the sexual services?
6. What deters you from accessing sexual services?
7. How do you see [name(s) of sex worker(s)]?
8. Do you think that prostitution is important? (If the answer is yes) Could you please explain "Why"?
9. Demographic Questions:⁵⁷
Age, Marital Status or Partner, Job, Social Status, Ethnic identities, Gender, Religion etc.

⁵⁷ These question can be asked at the end if it did not come during the conversation

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