

**'Four Men, Four Lives: A Psycho-social study of experiences of Male
Sex Workers in Manchester'**

by

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies of male sex work present a more positive view of the subject than earlier research which viewed male sex work and the men who engage in it as deficit figures (Aggleton & Parker, 2015; Ellison, 2017; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016; McCabe, 2011; McPhail, Scott & Minichiello, 2015; Minichiello, Scott, & Cox, 2017). Stigma, however, is still a significant concern in the literature. Focusing on the everyday lives and lived experiences of male sex workers who access support from the Men's Room, Manchester (TMR), this study provides new knowledge about how insight into the wider lives of male sex workers can contribute to constructing them as fully human, a way to counter the everyday experience of stigma. It demonstrates how a long-term, non-interventionist model of support provides care, relationships, peer-to-peer connections, and access to social spaces and a cultural life, which attends to both immediate and future needs of the men in this study. Drawing on a psycho-social methodology that prioritises opportunities for dialogue, the data collection methods of map-making and repeat interviews allowed the exploration and appreciation of the everyday lives and lived experiences of the male sex workers in this study, their relationships, and their changing relationships to selling sex.

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of love learnt through our common and shared humanity. “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal” (1Corinthians 13:1, NIV).

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Male sex work (MSW) has been described as a growing enterprise (Aggleton & Parker, 2015; Minichiello & Scott, 2014), with discourses of criminology, deviance and social control giving way to new understandings which contextualise the motivation for selling sex as a rational employment choice based on financial gain (Scott et al., 2005; West & Austrin, 2002). This has included growing use of the Internet and digital platforms for employment purposes (Cunningham & Kendall, 2011; Kuhar & Pajnik, 2019; Mclean, 2015). Male sex work has also been presented as an opportunistic source of income and masculinity (Bacio, 2023; Gaffney & Beverley, 2001). Manchester, with its association with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) community, has been recognised by agencies and researchers as important to the understanding of MSW in the UK. The LGBT Foundation has its headquarters in Manchester and at least two other charities, the George House Trust and the AKT (previously known as the Albert Kennedy Trust) have been supporting the LGBT community since the mid-1970s. Alan Turing, the celebrated mathematician, computer scientist and LGBT community icon, is memorialised in a statue in Sackville Gardens at the centre of the Gay Village, which also houses the national transgender memorial and Beacon of Hope, a sculpture dedicated to people who have died from HIV/AIDS. Research studies with male sex workers (MSWers) have been undertaken in Manchester including explorations of spaces of MSW and public sex (Atkins & Laing, 2012), a visual ethnography of public sex between men (Atkins, 2013), the

dynamics of female and male street prostitution (Ellison & Weitzer, 2016) and the life patterns of street-based MSWers (Ellison, 2017).

Although I had been a Manchester resident for about two decades, my first encounter with MSWers was during my social work student placement at The Men's Room (TMR). I accepted the placement which provided the opportunity to engage with and learn about MSW(ers). This thesis is inspired by my journey of learning with MSWers and TMR.

My naivety around MSWers before my placement at TMR speaks to a wider academic discourse about MSW. Although I was unaware of this at the time, significantly less was known about MSW(ers) compared to their female counterparts (Minichiello & Scott, 2014; Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2015). This was despite the fact that there was evidence of MSW practice in Europe in pre-modern Greece and Rome (Friedman, 2014), and in London by the 1870s (Weeks, 1981). This lack of knowledge about MSW has meant that it had originally been situated within understandings of female sex work (FSW), and the 'whore stigma' (Pheterson, 1990), through which the social and legal prejudice associated with FSW(ers) have also been transferred to MSWers. More recent literature on MSW(ers) have provided further insight into the complexities of MSW. This has included two volumes of collected writings over a 16-year period, 'Men Who Sell Sex', edited by Aggleton and Parker (1999; 2015); and Minichiello and Scott's (2014) collection 'Male Sex Work and Society'. Despite evidence of differences between MSW and FSW, some MSWers continue to be defined through

understandings of FSW (Ellison & Weitzer, 2016; Kong, 2009; Oliveira, 2018). Sex work stigma also continues to be a significant challenge for men engaged in this activity (Sanders, 2017; Siegel et al., 2022; Weitzer, 2017). Male sex work also continues to be conflated with homosexuality (Matthews, 1988; Kaye, 2004), or seen as a form of deviated sexuality and gender (Minichiello & Scott, 2014). Economic determinism/survival sex and/or individual pathology are seen as motivations for MSW (Bimbi, 2007; Scott, 2003), and MSWers are regarded as vectors of disease (Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2015), all contributing to construct MSWers as deficit figures.

The picture that emerged from my engagement with many of the MSWers I encountered at TMR was mainly at odds with the above. Far from being deficit figures engaging in survival sex, with a reckless attitude to health and other risks, expressed through sexual deviance, they presented as men with needs and circumstances for which they sought support from TMR. These men were reluctant to access available support because of their suspicions of the intentions of professionals and agencies, and they exhibited a long-established capacity and/or capability to meet their own needs. There was a sense that many MSWers were suspicious of professionals and agencies who lacked an understanding of their lives and needs and many had previous experiences of discrimination and poor treatment within services (Atkins, 2014; Speed, 2016). Despite their mistrust of agencies and professionals, these men continued to engage regularly with TMR, suggesting that its model of support was different to those they had previously experienced. Understanding such an environment of care and support, and how it met the needs of the MSWers who

engaged with it provided a motivation for this study, which I hoped would support the development of better models of care and support for MSWers and other vulnerable groups.

The Men's Room, Manchester (TMR)

At the time of this study, the Men's Room (TMR) described itself as an arts and social care agency that works creatively with young men, offering them opportunities to be involved in high quality artistic projects whilst providing support for challenges they may be facing in their lives. Throughout its history, TMR has engaged different constituencies of young men, including those involved with sex work or with experience of sexual exploitation, and those with experience of homelessness and/or the criminal justice system. Beginning life in 2004 as 'The Blue Room', the agency became 'The Men's Room' in 2009 and 'Our Room' in November 2023. I have referred to the agency as TMR throughout this thesis to reflect the name it was known by, during the study.

Since its inception, TMR's focus has been on men who were not, and unlikely to access other support services available in the city. Many of these men live outside of normative social and familial frameworks, and present with severe and multiple disadvantage including issues around homelessness, alcohol and substance misuse, physical and mental ill-health, and involvement with the criminal justice system. However, these men show a determination to live within and engage with society.

Honed over a 20-year period, TMR's model of support is underpinned by arts-based practices (Batsleer, 2011) and a relational approach (Hughes, Roy & Manley, 2014). At the time of the study, TMR facilitated regular (at least weekly) creative sessions where the men engaged in various artistic projects including photography, drama, street art, drawing, and website development. These sessions have both formal (identifiable outputs, with a structure and theme) and informal (clients and staff share a table and a meal after sessions) aspects, and the sessions are playful and allow experimentation.

TMR facilitated drop-in sessions for MSWers which provided a safe space for the men to develop community, share their stories with other MSWers, and seek support around any sex work specific issues. The drop-in sessions also hosted relevant professionals such as sexual health nurses, staff from homeless charities, and addiction support. During this session, some of the men offer to go with a member of staff and/or volunteers to pick up food donated by catering businesses like Greggs for the session. This provides further opportunities for clients to engage in informal discussions with staff about their needs.

TMR also offers one-to-one support to the men around various needs as may be required. The use of this support varies from person-to-person and is demand-driven by the men themselves. Where TMR is unable to directly support the men such as in specialist areas like addiction support, it connects them with partner agencies. TMR facilitates this support in one of two ways. One approach is to facilitate relationships

with co-located key staff from partner agencies during creative sessions, who would then become named contacts for the men during support sessions with that agency. The other approach involves TMR staff members accompanying the men to initial meetings with to ensure that they are feel ready to engage with the partner agencies.

TMR's approach is caring, friendly, non-judgemental and not time-limited. TMR has deliberately chosen not to apply for forms of funding which require them to deliver identifiable, tangible and quantifiable outcomes. Although this can be challenging financially, it means that TMR can focus on the needs of the men they support and not work towards funder pre-defined targets and measures.

Ludlum

The immediate trigger for this study was Ludlum's (a pseudonym) tragic death. As a social work student attached to TMR, I supported Ludlum, a client of TMR who took his own life having been deemed to have made significant progress. Ludlum's suicide highlighted the difficulties men accessing support from TMR confront during the process of attempting to move forward with some of their challenges, because this process inevitably requires explicit recognition and engagement with their vulnerabilities, past and present hurts, as well as their marginalisation.

Following Ludlum's death, it became clear from discussions with staff and other 'lads' at TMR that this was not an isolated or unexpected incident. The loss of any human

life is tragic and diminishes those who survive it (Donne, 1624), but Ludlum's suicide weighed heavily on me, as well as on some of the 'lads' and the staff. The community created through engagement with TMR had been breached by Ludlum's passing. A few 'lads' had arrived early to help prepare a meal on the day we found out about Ludlum's death. As part of the TMR community, Ludlum was 'one of the lads', but to me, he was more than just 'one of the lads'. I felt that I had established a connection with Ludlum and was so pleased to see that he was making progress. I had accompanied Ludlum to his appointments and he had been able to secure housing. He had successfully applied for employment-related welfare benefits and was actively looking for work. At his request, I had accompanied him to the shop to choose interview clothes. He had registered with health services. Ludlum actively engaged in the creative sessions and through this, decided that he wanted to be a musician or songwriter and had started experimenting with writing lyrics. On the face of it, he had a lot to live for and appeared ready to move forward and yet this did not stop him from taking his own life.

Roy (2016c) observed that some of the men accessing TMR's support had taken their own lives and these suicides appeared to have occurred at periods when some of them seemed to be making the most progress. Faced with their past and present trauma, vulnerabilities and the challenges yet to be navigated, some of these men are unable to manage the distress that this insight brings, despite the progress they seem to be making. Hoggett, Mayo and Miller (2006) argue that the anger and frustrations of many practitioners at the social injustices experienced by those they work with tends to fuel a commitment to continuing to work with those on the margins. For me, it fuelled

the motivation to seek to explore pathways to a better understanding of the men's lives and support needs, and this contributed to a decision for a PhD study.

Statement of Problem

Following Ludlum's passing, some details of his life trickled in. He had relocated to Manchester following the death of a close relative. New to a city where he had no friends or a job, he became street homeless and sold sex to make a living. With no previous connection to Manchester, there were challenges with accessing housing, welfare benefits and health services. Ludlum also indicated that he was socially isolated prior to his engagement with TMR. TMR supported him to access housing, welfare and health support, and introduced Ludlum to a community of other men he identified with. This provided a sense of acceptance, belonging and comradeship for a man who was grieving the loss of a close family member.

Ludlum had severed ties with his family when he relocated to Manchester and had little contact with any of his relatives. After his death, his family did not acknowledge the community he had found in Manchester, and neither TMR nor any of Ludlum's friends were made privy to his funeral arrangements. It is not clear why his family chose to exclude staff from TMR and his friends in Manchester from his funeral. This could be about mentally and emotionally closing the door on Ludlum's life in Manchester. It could also reflect a deliberate decision to reject Ludlum's association with TMR and the sex worker community it supports, to remove the possibility of sex work stigma that knowledge of this association with TMR may have occasioned.

Whatever the reason, this decision was experienced as a serious slight by the men and staff at TMR and it denied everyone the opportunity for closure and to celebrate the life of someone who had been a key part of a small and shared community. TMR subsequently arranged a memorial service for the lads, staff and volunteers.

Understanding how men like Ludlum manage the challenges of their lives on an everyday basis is important. It is also important to explore the implications their sex work identity has for their relationships with their families (as in Ludlum's case) and how they manage these relationships. For Ludlum, how he managed (or did not manage) his emotions following a family bereavement and what support he could have accessed to help him re-build his relationships with his family is important as this could have mitigated the risk of suicide. At the time of his death, Ludlum had indicated that he no longer sold sex and was exploring other non-sex work jobs while working towards a career in the music industry. However, Ludlum continued to engage with TMR, regularly joining the community of MSWers and actively contributed to creative sessions.

The aim of this research has been to identify a methodology and methods that would allow me to explore and gain an appreciation of the everyday lives and lived experiences of the MSWers who engage with TMR, and their changing relationships to selling sex. This would support an understanding of how TMR's model of support can help men like Ludlum to navigate the risks they encounter.

Aims/Objectives of Research

The overall aim of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the everyday lives and lived experiences of MSWers in Manchester who engage with TMR.

The specific objectives were to:

- Explore how male sex workers navigate the everyday experience of stigma.
- Examine their changing relationships to selling sex over time.
- Explore how men in contact with TMR negotiate, sustain and re-build relationships over time.
- Consider the Men's Room (TMR) model of support and how it attends to the needs of the male sex workers who engage with it.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

This chapter reviews the literature on male sex work, which provides useful insights into the development of research and dominant trends. This includes a historical overview, categorisations and classifications of MSW, and key academic discourses. These have contributed to knowledge around the motivations, risks, and more recently incursions into the complexities of MSW and the men who engage in it. Dominant narratives have focused on deviance, pathology, economic necessity, rational employment choice, oppression, exploitation, public health risks and stigma to provide a rich and broad background contributing to understandings of MSW. The literature also highlights the incidence and experience of stigma by sex workers. The

experience of sex work stigma has been broadly explored as both sociological (status loss, societal, structural) and psychological (internalised, felt, symbolic). An understanding of the limitations of these explorations of stigma as sociological and psychological is emerging, with sex work stigma researchers like Hannem (2012), Benoit et al., (2018) and Treloar et al., (2021) recognising that sex work stigma is at the boundary of the individual (psychological) and community (sociological). What is missing is a holistic approach to theorising this stigma in a way that integrates the ‘sociological’ and the psychological, as co-occurring and inter-dependent on each other.

I argue for a psycho-social view of sex work stigma. In this view, the ‘psycho’ and ‘social’ elements are not two parallel paradigms, but represent an epistemological position in which each is impacted by, and impacts the other. A psycho-social understanding of sex work stigma is underpinned by a view of MSWers as:

Subjects whose inner worlds cannot be understood without knowledge of their experiences in the world, and whose experiences of the world cannot be understood without knowledge of the way in which their inner worlds allow them to experience the outer world. (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013: 4)

This psycho-social position informs the approach to this study, arguing for an investigation which takes seriously the ways in which stigma is experienced by MSWers seen in the context of an understanding of their everyday lives and lived experiences.

Chapter 3: Methodology.

This chapter discusses the justification for an overall qualitative methodology, grounded on a psycho-social ontology, phenomenological epistemology, and creative methods (map-making and walking interviews). Although this study is essentially about the everyday lives and lived experiences of men (a phenomenological study), there is a focus on psycho-social understandings of these experiences requiring 'depth' methods which are not associated with all schools of phenomenology.

Map-making and repeat walking interviews are used as methods for data collection. The maps enable an associative way of thinking and communicating ideas by invoking affective and aesthetic responses to emotions (giving forms to feelings) rather than a total reliance on voice or verbal narration (Langer, 1953). The repeat walking interviews promote a longer-term relationship than in most narrative research, which allows for single interviews. Repeated interviews to the same or different locations facilitate opportunities for re-telling of stories and also new stories. Walks to locations previously visited can allow for new stories to emerge as participant and researcher engage with the location. Within this relationship, the walking interviews also enable researcher and participant to engage in a different way by tapping into the tempo and rhythms of life as they walk to different locations at different times, and experience together the ideas, experiences and circumstances that frame the narratives (both literally and metaphorically). The chapter also discusses the analysis of the data collected. Case studies of the participants maps and stories are developed which are explored for a cross-case analysis based on common themes, and to support the identification of a emergent Gestalt of the individual participant.

Interpretive Data Analysis Panels (IDAPs) are used to support the data analysis. To support the identification of the emergent Gestalt, each case study is introduced by a scenic composition (Froggett & Hollway, 2010; Froggett et al., 2014) taken from a research encounter with the participant (a map-making session or walking interview), representing the researcher's subjective view of the participant. It also functions as a symbolisation to communicate what is a more complex expression of emotions invoked during the experience of a close research relationship in a piece of sensitive research including intimate and emotionally charged discussions (Froggett & Briggs, 2012).

There are details of recruitment, selection, field work processes and procedures including arrangements for interviews, consent and gatekeeping processes, and research ethics. There were two periods of targeted recruitment, each lasting at about six months and over a year's gap between these periods. A total of 17 contacts were made with participants, excluding 5 that were removed from the final data.

There is also a section on researcher reflexivity and positionality, as well as reflections on the limitations of the university ethics process in addressing ethical concerns during the fieldwork. This included a discussion of supporting research participants and the researcher to manage the emotional challenges of engaging in psycho-social research about the intimate lives of participants whose narratives involve re-living difficult experiences.

Chapter 4: Four Men, Four Lives.

This chapter presents case studies developed from the maps and walking interviews of the four participants. These narratives provide an exploration of in-depth, individual accounts of the everyday lives and lived experiences of the participants as presented in their narratives. The narratives reveal them as individuals with unique lived experiences who make distinctive decisions about how to navigate their lives on an everyday basis, including selling sex. There are some similarities in the narratives, but the focus in this section is on the individual rather than the shared experience. While there are aspects of biography in the case studies, they are not a chronicle of life stories but rather narratives of everyday lives and lived experiences of the MSWers who engaged with TMR. The narratives represent stories that have been developed over an extended period of contact; from participant maps and repeat walking interviews over selected locations. These provided opportunities to explore and re-explore ideas, places, themes, and stories, allowing participants multiple ways of presenting material they feel and see as relevant to their own lives and situations. Broad themes on the everyday experience of selling sex, emerging from these case studies are further explored in the 'Discussion' chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion.

This chapter critically examines some of the issues that emerge from the case studies and the contribution to our understanding of the lives of MSWers. It cuts across some themes common to the four cases while at the same time highlighting important individual differences.

The discussion is presented in three broad sections; 'Relationships with Spaces and Places', 'Relationships with People', and 'Models of Support'. The first section has two sub-sections on 'Mundane Practices and Routine Activities', and 'Being in and at the edge of the City'. The second section has three sub-sections on 'Relationships with Family', 'Friendships and Fraternity', and 'Volunteering'. The third section introduces the 'The Men's Room Model' and has four sub-sections; 'Ethics of Care', 'Developing Community', 'Partnership Working' and 'Re-imagining Lives'. The Discussion draws together aspects of participants' accounts from the case studies to argue that being a MSWer inevitably leaks into other parts of the lives of these men. The Discussion explores the wider lives of men through their relationships, with people as well as with spaces and places, which highlighted their pre-occupations and needs and how best they can be supported. This provides responses to the objectives of this study.

The discussion provides new knowledge about how insight into the wider lives of the men can contribute to constructing them as fully human, contributing to research which moves on from understandings of MSWers from a deficit perspective. This supports initiatives that deliberately invest in normalising practices for MSWers as a way to counter stigma. There is also new knowledge which highlights that working creatively and informally with MSWers considering transitioning out of sex work can be empowering and effective, enabling them to maintain their dignity, and self-worth.

The Discussion also provides new understandings of how MSWers' characterise their relationships as psycho-social, as defences against anxieties and ultimately about maintaining a good enough sense of self. Support to identify containers for their anxieties help them to repair, sustain and re-build these relationships. The TMR model provides care, relationships, peer-to-peer connections, and access to social spaces and a cultural life, and attends to both the immediate and future needs of the men.

Chapter 6: Conclusions.

The conclusions of this study; the knowledge generated with MSWers about their everyday lives and lived experience mean that policy and practice can be shaped to support men like Ludlum to consider possibilities beyond taking their own lives. This study's conclusions demonstrate the importance of relationships to people and places, fitting in and maintaining a strong sense of self, together with a model of support that offers MSWers opportunities to participate in collective and cultural activities. Together, these features enable the men in this study to feel recognised as fully human. The limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are also addressed.

This journey began with the tragic death of Ludlum. His everyday experience of being a MSWer, the implications of this and how to manage or navigate through these were at the forefront of this study. It was therefore important that the findings and conclusions of this study have implications for policy, and indeed practice aimed at improving outcomes for men like Ludlum.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

After the 'Introduction', this Literature Review is structured into seven key parts concluding with a case for a psycho-social understanding of sex work stigma as offering a more comprehensive understanding of the stigma experience of sex workers. There is a broad discussion of the nature and incidence of stigma within sex work in a section exploring 'Stigma and Sex Work', which is further developed to highlight the similarities and differences in the basis of the stigma experienced by female and male sex workers respectively. The incidence of this experience is then discussed to unpick the psychological and sociological impact of this stigma.

There is evidence of the practice of male sex work (MSW) as far back as 346 BC (Friedman, 2014), mirroring female sex work (Kaye, 2014) although Kaye (2014) argues that formal recognition of MSW as a pattern of behaviour is more associated with the rise of homosexuality as a sexual category and subject of study in the 1600s. Compared to female sex work (FSW) and workers, academic study of MSW(ers) has a shorter history (Allen, 1980; Cates, 1989; Earls & David, 1989; Minichiello & Scott, 2014). Academic literature on MSW(ers) in the 1970-80s had a narrow focus informed by homosexuality and deviance (Allen, 1980; Coombs, 1974; Luckenbill, 1986). Browne and Minichiello (1996:30) described academic study of MSW as a 'Pandora's Box' that few researchers were willing to unlock. Aggleton and Parker's (2015) and Minichiello and Scott's (2014) edited collections of studies and articles demonstrate

the development of scholarship on MSW(ers) resulting, among other conclusions, in better understanding of commercial and transactionary sex among men and its implications for the possession, objectification, and consumption of the male body. Sanders (2018), writing in the 20th anniversary edition of the 'Sexualities' journal, celebrates the journal's contribution to addressing gaps in the understanding of MSW(ers) identified by some earlier reviews.

Male sex workers experience significant, often multiple stigma, resulting from understandings of MSWers as socially, psychologically and economically deviant (McClean, 2012; Minichiello, Scott, & Cox, 2017; Oliveira, 2018). Selling sex has been conflated with homosexuality, which was seen as a deviated and/or subordinated form of masculinity (Aggleton & Parker, 2015; Kaye, 2004; Morrison & Whitehead, 2007b), and as an activity undertaken by psychologically maladjusted young men, opportunists and social misfits (Allen, 1980; Coombs, 1974; Gandy & Deischer, 1970; Luckenbill, 1986) although more recent research has challenged these conclusions (Bimbi, 2007; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016; McCabe, 2011; Minichiello, Scott, & Cox, 2017). The MSWer has also been situated in research as a 'vector of disease', with many studies exploring how sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and in particular HIV/AIDS risks could be managed among MSWers (Aggleton, 1999; Aggleton & Parker, 2015; Bimbi & Parsons, 2005; Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2015; Weitzer, 2010). These studies have been countered by research that presents a more positive view of MSW as a rational and viable employment choice (Bimbi, 2007; West & Austrin, 2002), offering financial advantages (Ellison, 2017; Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2013) and flexibility to many, including university students (Sagar et al., 2015). In addition to existing

locations, the Internet has offered new opportunities for MSWers to advertise their services (Logan, 2010; Tyler, 2014, 2016), contributing to greater flexibility, autonomy, anonymity and choice compared to the street or in indoor locations (Cunningham & Kendall, 2011; McLean, 2012, 2015). McPhail, Scott and Minichiello (2015) claim the Internet has 'normalised' MSW; increased market reach and visibility, shifted risk management action from formalised social control to more informal practices, and contributed to an understanding of MSW as an everyday commodity rather than a 'deviant' activity.

However, there is still much to be understood, including but not limited to, an investigation of the more personal (Bimbi, 2007) and 'psychosocial' aspects (Friedman, 2014) of the lives of MSWers.

The focus of this study is on the everyday lives and the lived experiences of a particular group of MSWers in Manchester, those who associate and identify with the Men's Room Manchester (TMR); seeking sundry support through TMR's services or who join in their community activities such as their arts-based sessions and social support. I start by drawing on the important study by Ellison and Weitzer (2016) in which they examined the similarities and differences in street prostitution among males and females in Manchester, observing key areas where street prostitution takes place in the city for 130 hours in addition to loosely structured interviews with 15 MSWers. Their study highlights marked differences between female and male street sex work(ers) which is relevant to this study to justify the importance of a distinct focus on

this population. Although limited to Manchester and street prostitution, Ellison and Weitzer's (2016) study highlights how differences in their demographics, work experiences, behaviour patterns and the ecology of the locations they sell sex, contribute to understanding some peculiarities of selling sex as a man and how these can influence the differences in their experiences of stigma compared to FSWers. Ellison and Weitzer (2016) identified that the male street market in Manchester is more dispersed across the Manchester Gay Village, a gentrified, pedestrianised and commercialised area of restaurants, shops, clubs, hotels, and beyond, whereas the female street market was more spatially compressed within a defined area, an industrial hub that is poorly lit in the evenings when soliciting and selling of sex usually occurs. The authors argue that this difference in ecology influences how sex is sold in Manchester, with FSWers in the city adopting a traditional pattern of standing on kerbs to solicit while MSWers are more mobile, moving across the beat. MSWers also tend to be more mobile in choices of location, moving between the street, indoor locations or online while FSWers rarely demonstrate such mobility. Although the Manchester Gay Village has previously been seen as a tolerant gay, male space (Atkins & Laing, 2012; Binnie & Skeggs, 2004), Ellison and Weitzer's (2016) study concluded that male street prostitution in the Village was now seen as a nuisance, resulting in increased police enforcement. I argue that this perception of MSW as a nuisance and its propensity for police enforcement heightens the potential for stigmatisation of MSWers.

Ellison and Weitzer's (2016) study confirmed Johnson's (2008) view that youth and vitality are privileged within mainstream gay culture, resulting in considerably shorter

working life periods for MSWers compared to FSWers. Shorter working lives make older MSWers more vulnerable to exploitation and stigma as they approach the end of their working lives. The sexuality of MSWers and their clients is more fluid than that of FSWers and their clients. Ellison and Weitzer (2016) also concluded that MSWers have more diverse sexual orientations including heterosexual, gay, bi-sexual (mirrored by their clients) whereas FSWers and their clients are usually heterosexual. There is greater camaraderie among MSWers, providing them with a sense of purpose and belonging which was not easily evident among the FSWers in the study. Taken together, these differences highlight how MSWers' experience of stigma can vary from that of FSWers. Sanders (2017) draws attention to the importance of recognising and responding to the nuances in the dimensions and intersections in the stigma experienced by MSWers including homophobia and racism.

This review of literature will explore historical as well as a more contemporary understanding of MSW, including how stigma has been experienced by MSWers and its contribution to understanding the nature of MSW. The literature points to sex workers' experience of stigma as both sociological and psychological. Sociological stigma includes structural, status loss, social/societal exclusion and psychological stigma includes symbolic, internalised, and felt. Armstrong (2019, 2022), Oliveira (2018), and Weitzer (2017a) among others argue that sex work stigma is pervasive, with street-based workers the most stigmatised. Lyons et al., (2021), Salhaney et al. (2021), and Benoit et al. (2018) describe sex work stigma as multi-layered, affecting their working conditions, physical and mental health, social relations, access to support and services like housing. Easterbrook-Smith (2022), Wolf (2019), and Kong

(2009) point to the endemic nature of this stigma; produced, reproduced, negotiated, encountered and resisted in all spaces, places and sites sex workers inhabit including media, legislation and policies, societal misconceptions and in social interactions. I will make a case that this experience of stigma is psycho-social; simultaneously psychological (psychic) and sociological (social). Woodward (2015:5) places the psycho-social in the liminal space between the micro and macro, personal and social, inner and outer worlds. The feelings of shame, guilt, abjection, anger etc. that sex work stigma produces cannot be removed from the social structure, practices and processes that produce them, and within which they are experienced on an everyday basis. A psycho-social understanding informs the development of a methodological approach which challenges the sociology-psychology split (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009) to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of stigma of the group of men in my study.

Stigma and Sex Work

Goffman (1963:13) defined stigma as an “attribute that is deeply discrediting”. McLaughlin (2021:2) reframed this as “those who have been cast as inferior beings, as unequal in various ways, whether due to social status, physical or mental attributes, immorality or deviance.” Link and Phelan (2001) emphasise the importance of recognising stigma as the co-occurrence of several components including labelling, stereotyping, separation, status loss and discrimination. Tyler (2013, 2020) applies a structural focus to stigma, seen through the lens of power in relationship, producing abjection and dehumanisation. Stigma then, is “a way of seeing, classifying and understanding a vast array of discriminatory social attitudes and practices” (Tyler &

Slater, 2018:729). There is significant evidence in the literature on sex work pointing to the experience of stigma among male, female and transgender sex workers (Armstrong, 2019, 2022; Calhoun, 1992; Easterbrook-Smith, 2022; Koken et al., 2004; Morrison & Whitehead, 2005; Oliveira, 2018; Scambler, 2007; Valente et al., 2020; Wolf, 2019). Weitzer (2017a:717) describes it as ubiquitous, omnipresent and one of the most important problems in sexual commerce, even extending to sex work researchers (Hammond & Kingston, 2014; Huysamen & Sanders, 2021). Participants in Wolf's (2019) study describe stigma as the most challenging or hardest part of their job as sex workers.

Goffman's (1963) thinking on stigma continues to influence discourse on the subject. Goffman (1963:9) conceived of stigma as resulting in a 'spoilt identity'; "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance". The stigmatised are deemed as inferior and a danger to the 'normal'; animosity towards them can be justified on this basis. Goffman (ibid) distinguished between discrediting attributes and discreditable attributes. Discrediting attributes are evident or immediately apparent in an interaction such as a physical disability or skin colour whereas discreditable attributes are not immediately apparent such as mental ill-health or homosexuality. People with discrediting attributes are more vulnerable to stigma than those with discreditable attributes who can manage information about their attributes to manage the experience of stigma. For Goffman (1963: 12, 31, 57-58), the language of the relationship and not the attributes themselves are important to managing the discrepancy between a person's 'virtual social identity' (their imputed attributes) and their 'actual social identity' (their real or actual attributes), to manage stigma. For

example, it is not immediately apparent on encountering a person to tell that they are a sex worker and Goffman (1963) would suggest that such a person could manage the information around selling sex to avoid stigma. In this sense, Goffman (ibid) would argue that the language of stigma (in this case discourses on selling sex), rather than sex work itself contributes largely to the incidence and experience of stigma. For example, a discourse of sex work as deviance would contribute to sex workers being stigmatised even before one encounters sex workers. Bruckert and Hannem (2013) suggest that stigma discourses are vehicles into negotiation, resistance, challenging and embracing everyday lives and lived experiences of stigma. In this thesis, I will explore whether sex work is experienced as discreditable and/or discrediting by the men in my study, exploring the different forms of visibility and modes of identification which occur in various locations where sex is sold.

Sex workers have historically and continue to be constructed in 'deeply discrediting' language; as 'whores' (Pheterson, 1990), and in the case of male sex workers, as 'hustlers' (Allen, 1980), 'rent boys' (Dorais, 2005), 'vectors of disease' (Aggleton, 1999; Bimbi & Parsons, 2005) and other equally offensive labels that pathologise or situate them as deviant (Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2013; Scambler, 2007; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001). Weitzer (2010, 2017a, b) intimates that stigma is present in all forms of sex work irrespective of gender or location of selling sex, only differing in levels of intensity. Sex work is largely framed in stigmatising language and sex workers positioned as one-dimensional deficit figures, passive victims in need of saving or social problems in need of intervention. Radical feminists like Jeffreys (1997) and Dworkin (1981) have contended that sex work is patriarchal, immoral and

constitutes sexual slavery of women by men. Others like O'Connell-Davidson (1998) and Phoenix (1999) also frame sex work within the practices of a patriarchal society that privileges male sexuality (where selling sex is organised and managed by men) and consequently as a pragmatic response to economic needs.

Female Sex Work Stigma

Pheterson (1990) presents 'prostitution' as a category in social science research which has developed from legal and symbolic representations of the 'bad woman' or 'whore stigma'. This stigmatised social status constructs FSWers as perverse in their sexual behaviour, delinquent, and vectors of sexually transmitted diseases, many of whom misuse drugs. This notion of fixity about women's involvement in selling sex do not reflect the reality that majority sell sex temporarily or on part-time basis. Bowen's (2015, 2021) study with Canadian FSWers supports this idea that many women engage in sex work temporarily or as a form of duality in employment (in addition to other non-sex work employment, which she referred to as square jobs). These speak to the dual challenges of morality and risks, and their intersections. These factors appear to underpin the stigma that FSWers experience.

Like Pheterson (1987, 1990), Armstrong (2019) finds a strong correlation between the stigma experienced by FSWers and patriarchal norms about female sexuality. Understandings of female 'street' sex work were based on representations of sex workers as 'whores', and attitudes about female chastity and promiscuity. Female sex workers were seen to be violating patriarchal norms by accepting money in exchange

for sex, an activity that should be private and within the context of marriage (Armstrong, 2016). Smith (2017) points out that FSWers were adjudged to be party to their own oppression through contributing to the sexual objectification of women by selling sex. A commercial motivation for engaging in sex disrupted existing norms about women as sexually demure and produced a moralising narrative that presented FSWers as deviant. Such discourses of FSWers as deviant situates them in the media and elsewhere as socially unacceptable and/or their work illegitimate. This is the case even in countries like New Zealand where sex work has been decriminalised (Easterbrook-Smith, 2020; 2021). Easterbrook-Smith (2022) suggests that although sex work is decriminalised in New Zealand, it is a framework of neoliberalism and post-feminism that underpins the construction of FSW; promoting an indoor, appointment-based, low-volume form of sex work as preferred or more acceptable. Consequently, the empowerment that decriminalisation purports to achieve for sex workers does not preclude them from exploitation and stigma.

Other feminist views have challenged notions that FSW is patriarchal and contributes to the sexual objectification of women. These voices argue that by disrupting existing sexual norms, FSW empowers women to challenge moralising narratives of women as demure (Armstrong, 2019; O'Neill, 2001; Sanders, 2017; Smith, 2017). However, there is still a lot of mileage to be covered before FSWers can surmount the moral judgement as 'fallen women' and achieve real empowerment that counters the stigma they continue to experience. Sanders (2017), and Brents and Sanders (2010) advocate normalisation through legal reform (decriminalisation), and following neoliberal economics (selling sex as a market commodity) arguing that these should

be part of a comprehensive approach to challenging the stigma in selling sex. The psycho-social understanding of stigma that this thesis' argues for, will contribute to this comprehensive approach.

As apparent risks to society, FSWers have been seen as social problems; victims of sex trafficking, drugs addicts who are vulnerable to exploitation and social deviants whose presence negatively affect the public image of communities (Armstrong, 2010; Benoit et al., 2017; Bernstein, 2007a; Scoular et al., 2007; Wong, Holroyd & Bingham, 2011; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001). However, in a secondary analysis of a study of 304 adults trading sex in New York city, USA, Wolf (2019) highlighted that more than 80% of the participants defined as having been trafficked, reported that their experience of selling sex did not involve explicit force. Scambler (2007) identifies a 'sexual trafficking' discourse around migrant women who sell sex, purporting that they been tricked, coerced or kidnapped. Agustin (2006) suggests that trafficking is sometimes interpreted to frame anyone who helps such migrant women as 'traffickers'. Scambler (2007:1083), in his study of Eastern European women selling sex in London, refers to them as 'opportunists' – "women with discrete projects, whether to fund higher education, buy an apartment, support kin or generally enhance their prospects or wellbeing". This has sometimes been conflated with human trafficking and resulted in FSWers experiencing stigma including xenophobia-related stigma from local sex workers (Ellison & Weitzer, 2016).

Link and Phelan (2014) developed the concept of 'stigma power' to reframe stigma as a form of power, an imbalanced relationship that enables the 'stigmatiser' to deliberately achieve a defined goal of control over the 'stigmatised'. This form of power that stigma enables has a 'functional' quality that is experienced individually and structurally (Hannem, 2012; Tyler, 2020), allowing institutions, policies and laws to be so designed as to justify relationships of stigma. For instance, Bruckert and Hannem (2013) analysed laws regulating sex work in Canada, to conclude that stigmatic assumptions inherent in these laws reproduce risk discourses that stereotyped sex workers as 'at-risk and risky'. This consequently legitimised risk-management tactics that excluded and/or rejected sex workers from full participation in society. Such discourses of risk constructed the FSWer both as a victim (to traffickers, pimps and exploitation by men who buy sex), and a risk to society (as drug addicts, threats to families and communities, vectors of disease, immoral, criminals).

Male Sex Work Stigma

The experience of stigma for MSWers is located within understandings of MSW as deviant and/or pathological (Allen, 1980; Luckenbill, 1986), as well as a form of subordinated masculinity (Kong, 2009; Oliveira, 2018). This has been described as 'double stigma' (Kumar, Scott & Minichiello, 2017; Minichiello, Salhaney et al., 2021; Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2013) to reflect the combined stigma from engaging in commercial sex and male-to-male sex seen as a homosexual activity. Gilbert (1996, cited in McLean, 2012) goes further, describing the conflation of prostitution, homosexuality and HIV/AIDS in the discourse on MSW as constituting a 'triple stigma'. Like FSWers, MSWers are constructed as deviant and pathological in their sexual

behaviour, delinquent, dependent on substances including alcohol, vectors of diseases and men with subordinated forms of masculinity (Aggleton & Parker, 2015; Altman, 2015; Koken et al., 2004; Valente et al., 2020). Men are described as experiencing status loss, loss of social ties, physical violence and mental ill-health (ibid) and are constructed as both 'at risk' and as 'risks' at the same time.

Male sex workers are constructed as an 'at risk' group who are vulnerable to financial and sexual exploitation. Male sex work is positioned not just as a function of economic need undertaken by survival-driven men coerced by dire circumstances, but also as an activity which involves hapless, passive, disempowered men, open to oppression and exploitation (Bimbi, 2007; Leichtentritt & Arad, 2005; Scott, 2003; Smith et al., 2013). Because MSWers are presented as victims of social circumstances who are economically and socially disadvantaged, their main motivation for selling sex tends to be attributed to survival, making them highly susceptible to social, economic and sexual exploitation (Allen, 1980; Browne & Minichiello, 1996; Earls & David, 1989; Scott, et al., 2005). Many studies conclude that financial gain is the main motivation for selling sex among men (Atkins, 2014; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016; McCabe, 2011; Mclean, 2015; Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2013) and from the perspective of Matthews (1988), represents a pragmatic response to the problem of wealth and social mobility, and a relevant framework for understanding MSW. However, Calhoun and Weaver (1996) argue that poverty alone cannot explain the decision to sell sex because it is not the choice of many other men with similar economic backgrounds. Whatever the reasons for selling sex, financial gain or otherwise, they offer no justification for the stigma.

Male sex work has been presented as a function of a disrupted biography where challenging demographic and psychological backgrounds are seen as push factors for selling sex (Allen, 1980; Coombs, 1974; Earls & David, 1989; Ginsburg, 1967; MacNamara, 1965). These ideas have promoted simplistic and stereotypical images of MSWers based either on perceived personality types and traits, or dysfunctional family backgrounds (Marques, 2011; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001). MSW was argued to be part of a neurotic response to internal conflicts, including early life trauma, immaturity, psychological instability and early homosexual seduction (Ginsburg, 1967), or the result of deviance and poor upbringing which required interventions to control or curtail through enforcement and/or treatment (Allen, 1980; Bimbi, 2007; Scott, et al., 2005). Some of the earliest studies of MSW were by psychiatrists and psychologists (Allen, 1980; Butts, 1947; Freyan, 1947) and were aetiological.

Male sex work was conflated with homosexuality and sodomy which contributed to stigma (Minichiello, Scott, & Callander, 2013; Morrison & Whitehead, 2007a). Hegemonic understandings of maleness presented the masculinity of MSWers as perverted and/or subordinated, contradicting heteronormative orthodoxy. Male sex work also challenged ideas of male privilege and domination over women in commercial sexual relations (Kaye, 2004; O'Connell-Davidson, 1998; Scott, 2003; Weitzer, 2010). Understandings of homosexuality as a deviant subculture influenced views of MSW as sociopathology which provide a relevant framework to explore the pervasive stigma MSWers experience. Scott (2003) noted a shift of focus from discussions around the sexuality of MSWers (either as heterosexuals or homosexuals) in the 1940s-50s to a view of the male prostitute as an agent and victim of STIs in the

1980-90s. In the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, this shift brought a renewed focus on male-to-male sexual relations and MSWers as 'reservoirs of disease and transmitters of infection' from the homosexual to the heterosexual population (Scott, 2003:194). Male sex workers were doubly stigmatised; both as sexual deviants and public health risks (Kaye, 2004; Koken, Bimbi & Parsons, 2010). Male sex work was seen as archetypal of gender deviance, because it defied heteronormativity (MacPhail, Scott, & Minichiello, 2015; Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2013), creating a problematic discursive association that justified its regulation (Marques, 2011). Views on homosexuality continue to change post-HIV/AIDS, increasing the diversity and visibility of male-to-male relationships, which has reflected a greater acceptability of MSWers in society (Grov & Smith, 2014). In the UK and USA, legislation criminalising homosexuality were repealed and homosexuality was de-classified as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM 5) in 2013. Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, was repealed in 2000 in Scotland and 2003 in England and Wales respectively while the Model Penal Code (1962) which legalised consensual 'sodomy', was adopted by many US states after the 1980s.

However, MSWers still encounter stigma from being situated as engaging in a homosexual activity or having a subordinated form of masculinity, which they attempt to counter in their presentations. Many men who sell sex online project hegemonic models of masculinity (Connell, 1992, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) in their advertisements, presenting as 'macho' or 'alpha male' (Scott, 2003), as having an athletic build, a swimmer's body type, buff, or with a bodybuilder's physique (Blackwell & Dziegielewski, 2013; Logan, 2010; Tyler, 2014, 2016). In contrast, street or indoor

MSWers project a working-class male image (Atkins & Laing 2012; Ellison, 2017), or youthfulness and vitality (Gaffney & Beverley, 2001), which is described as part of a sexual choreography of selling sex within gay subcultures (Whowell, 2010). McLean (2012) suggests that the Internet's intense focus on images and photography creates a sense of inadequacy for MSWers who do not fit hegemonic models of maleness, putting them under additional pressure to conform to these ideals. Logan's (2010) quantitative study of the personal characteristics and sexual behaviours of nearly 2000 MSWers found a positive correlation between projecting hegemonic masculine ideals and financial rewards; online profiles of MSWers which projected hegemonic masculine characteristics enjoyed premiums of about 4% above the average price while those projecting non-hegemonic masculine body types (excess weight, thin, or older) suffered penalties of up to 30% on average prices. Studies in the UK, USA and Australia (Atkins & Laing 2012; Ellison, 2017; Gaffney & Beverley, 2001; Logan, 2010; McLean, 2012; McPhail, Scott & Minichiello, 2015) confirm that MSWers advertising hegemonic masculine sexual behaviours - active or insertive (top position) - attracted higher charges compared to those offering passive or receptive (bottom position). Ravenhill and de Visser (2018) suggest that two to three times as many MSWers indicate preferences for a top position, although this may reflect sexual preferences among the wider gay community. These findings suggest a strong influence of hegemonic masculine ideals (a nod to traditional missionary positioning in heterosexual relationships) on decision-making by MSWers. Kumar, Scott and Minichiello (2017) assert that these presentations represent MSWers' attempts to exploit a system used to position them as subordinated or perverted to gain primacy, and in so doing manage, counter or resist stigma.

Male sex workers have also been constructed as risks to society through being positioned as vectors of disease. This source of stigma has mainly stemmed from a high incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), primarily HIV/AIDS amongst MSWers (Aggleton, 1999; Bimbi & Parsons, 2005; Davies & Simpson, 1990) particularly, but not limited to, the 1980s-90s. Research studies have focused on the risk-taking behaviour and attitudes of some MSWers while selling sex including the use of performance enhancing substances during sex or 'chem sex'¹, and risky practices like 'barebacking'² (Bimbi & Parsons, 2005; Calhoun & Pickerill, 1988; Kaye, 2007; Morse et al., 1991). In 1990, following the death of Ryan White³ from complications of AIDS, the US government enacted the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act, which became the largest United States' federally funded health-related programme at the time. In 1993, the New York State Division of Human Rights ruled in favour of Bowers who filed a suit alleging discrimination by his former employers Baker McKenzie on the grounds of an AIDS-related illness and was awarded the largest sum for any complaint ever filed before it. In 1995, the HIV drug Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) became available. Davies and Feldman (1999) submit that HIV/AIDS found the scientific community lacking in reliable information on the populations primarily affected by the pandemic. Morrison and Whitehead (2007a) among others (Aggleton & Parker, 1999; 2015; Altman, 1999; Dennis, 2008; Minichiello, Scott, & Callander, 2013; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001) credit this interest in HIV/AIDS for the development of research into what was

¹ Sexual activity engaged in while under the influence of stimulant drugs such as methamphetamine or mephedrone.

² The practice of having anal intercourse without the use of a condom.

³ Ryan White, an American teenager, became infected with HIV from a contaminated blood treatment in 1984. Although doctors indicated that he posed no risks to other children, his school barred him from attending, resulting in a protracted review. Following his death in 1990, the US Congress passed the Ryan White CARE Act, a major piece of AIDS legislation.

previously a subject with minimal research interest, and responsible for an expansion of research interest in MSW beyond North America. Aggleton and Parker (2015) argued that the AIDS pandemic provided a key justification for researching MSW. Altman's (1999) foreword to a 1999 collected edition by Aggleton titled 'Men Who Sell Sex: International Perspectives on Male Prostitution and HIV/AIDS' acknowledged that the publication would not have been possible without the HIV/AIDS pandemic, because most of the research had grown out of prevention programmes. Dennis (2008) concluded that HIV/AIDS provided the impetus for sex work research and had become an obsession for sex work researchers. In a twenty-year review of the literature on MSW(ers), Minichiello, Scott, and Callander (2013) observed that sexual health and HIV/AIDS remained a contemporary concern of researchers. Male sex workers and their clients were seen as a population that was particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS with some studies finding a high incidence of the HIV/AIDS from male-to-male sexual relations (Fendrich et al., 2013; Wang, et al., 2013) including MSWers (Meyer et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2001). There is continued evidence of high HIV transmission rates among men who have sex with men (MSM), with 69% of new HIV diagnoses in the USA in 2019 recorded among MSM (CDC, 2021). Although MSM includes MSWers with some studies of MSM identifying up to 23% being MSWers (Kelly et al, 2001), Minichiello, Scott and Callander (2015) have argued that STI and HIV transmission rates among MSWers are widely disparate and geographically contextual. This increased attention has led to a perception of MSWers as a public health threat and risks to society (Brown & Minichiello, 1996; Marques, 2011; Scott et al., 2005) which has fed into the stigma they experience. This has problematised MSW, with an emphasis on the dangers that it poses to the general population (Dennis, 2008). This has been used to justify the risk management of MSWers;

against the perceived dangers they pose to society rather than any concern for dangers that MSWers might pose to themselves. This view continues to contribute to the stigma that MSWers experience because it presents them as harbingers of STIs and signals an unrestrained way of life that is inimical to the welfare of society. It is important therefore for understandings of the sexual behaviour of MSWers to be contextualised to minimise stigma.

The Experience of Stigma among Sex Workers

Stigma has many forms and is experienced in several ways by both MSWers and FSWers. The sex work literature draws on and extends Goffman's (1963) thesis to explore these experiences, and an understanding of these dimensions or forms of stigma experience will contribute to understanding how and why sex workers respond to such stigma, and whether the management strategies of passing and covering (Goffman, 1963), and resistance (Tyler, 2020; Weitzer, 2017a) sufficiently explain these responses. In this review, I draw on Scambler and Hopkins' (1986) concepts of 'felt' and 'enacted' stigma to make a distinction between psychological stigma and sociological stigma but argue that such a distinction is not sufficiently representative of the stigma experience of sex workers. By psychological stigma, I focus on individualised, internalised experiences of stigma in contrast to the social (through social interaction and/or group) experiences of stigma which I delineate as sociological stigma. Within sociological stigma, I incorporate the concept of structural stigma (Hannem, 2012, 2022; Bruckert & Hannem, 2013). Scambler and Hopkins (1986) distinguish between 'felt' and 'enacted', the former referring to internalised shame and isolation from fear of judgement while the latter refers to unfair treatment, exclusion or

rejection (see also Scambler, 2004). The very idea of ‘enactment’ suggests an active occurrence whereas some of the experience of stigma described by Scambler and Hopkins (ibid) is more subtle and indirect. The problematic of a distinction between the sociological and psychological is the presupposition that there is always a ‘doer’ and a ‘done to’ whereas the experience of ‘felt’ stigma (shame etc.) is internalised without the action of an external person directly perpetuating an act. I therefore argue for a psycho-social understanding of sex work stigma, which presents psychological and sociological experiences as co-occurring at any one time and inextricably linked to each other in a way that one influences and is experienced as overlapping with the other. My ‘Methodology’, framed in a psycho-social approach, has been developed to provide opportunities to engage a specific group of MSWers in this study to explore their everyday lives and lived experience of sex work stigma.

The Experience of Psychological Stigma

Psychological stigma has also been referred to in the literature as felt stigma, symbolic stigma, and self-stigma (Hannem, 2012; 2022; Link & Phelan, 2014; Scambler & Hopkins, 1986). Herek (2007) distinguishes between felt and internalised stigma, seeing felt stigma as relating to expectations of stigma and consequent behaviour, while internalised stigma relates more to an acceptance of stigma. Pinel (1999, cited in Hannem, 2022) uses the term ‘stigma consciousness’ to describe a situation where individuals anticipate others’ behaviour towards them which shapes their own behaviour negatively. Goffman (1963:108-9) submits that the stigmatised person “..must necessarily pay a great psychological price..” in managing stigma through passing, suggesting that this produces a very high level of anxiety because of the risk

of their identity becoming revealed. Goffman (ibid) deploys psychoanalytic concepts like 'ambivalence', 'shame' and 'defensiveness' to theorise the situation of the person experiencing psychological stigma. In this sense, Goffman alludes to the psychic unease or pain that the stigmatised seeks to manage without acknowledging that even their best efforts may not sufficiently achieve this. The implication of the failure of stigma management is not sufficiently explored by Goffman (1963).

Many researchers have described how sex workers including MSWers, feel a sense of shame and fear of rejection related to selling sex which they internalise (Phoenix, 1999; Scambler & Hopkins, 1986; Weitzer, 2017a). Many sex workers in Wolf's (2019) study experienced stigma and considered this as one of the hardest aspects of being a sex worker, because of the negative psychological consequences associated with selling sex. Wolf (ibid) suggests that some of the effects of stigma include disassociation during performing sex and persistent unease and anxiety from the anticipation of violence. It also includes a sense of, or actual disconnection in romantic relationships and friendships, the burden of living with secrecy and shame as they compartmentalise their lives to avoid rejection, violence and other reactions from a disclosure of their sex worker identity. Many of Wolf's (2019:295-7) participants associated the experience of psychological stigma with intensified feelings of shame, isolation, and depression; "feelings of disappointment in themselves, disgust over the nature of the sex acts they traded, or displeasure around the clientele they had little choice in accepting". The weight of internalised shame from the secrecy resulted in some sex workers self-medicating with drugs and alcohol.

Research reports that MSWers experience psychological stigma, especially feelings of shame irrespective of the locations in which they sell sex. Browne and Minichiello (1995) outline how the participants in their Melbourne, Australia study, which included MSWers from the street, parlour, and escort (self-employed and agency), engage with a 'psychic context' including internal discursive dialogues to help them 'self-programme' into a work personality' (also described as a remote control mode where they switch into a work mode), to manage their expectations of the sexual encounter. This also supports strategies for managing the emotionally taxing aspects of having sex with 'undesirables' (clients who are demanding, arrogant and sometimes even violent). Hochschild (1983) theorises emotional labour, stressing the importance of regulating or managing emotions in the course of professional relationships. Sex work can include intimately sharing one's body with others and therefore represents a form of emotional labour which is embodied, and has psychological implications for the sex worker. Studies of MSWers (McLean, 2012; Minichiello et al., 2000) document the use of strategies such as bodily exclusion zones (by refusing access to certain parts of their bodies or certain services such as declining to engage in receptive anal sex), or framing their activities in professional language such as work, as ways to manage emotional labour of MSW.

McLean (2012) explored issues and support networks of MSWers in Melbourne, Australia, identifying the impact of selling sex on their psychological health and wellbeing. He noted that many MSWers strove to keep their sex worker identity hidden, and felt that MSW equated to selling their sense of respect. McLean (ibid) reported that some MSWers (especially those MSWers who were gay) experienced

conflict; shame from negative views of some gay men about MSW who were their primary clients. Siegel et al. (2022) who analysed interviews with 180 men who sold sex online but did not identify as MSWs noted that many struggled with the emotional impact of engaging in a stigmatised practice. Their experiences of internalised stigma manifested in feeling dirty, guilty, embarrassed, or ashamed about selling sex. This aligns with the results of Benoit et al. (2018) whose participants reported feelings of worthlessness, shame and guilt from the stigma associated with selling sex. Using a four-factor model; “..feeling worthless because of sex work, feeling shameful or guilty about engaging in sex work, acceptance of sex work stigma, and seeing sex work as illegitimate work”, Tomko et al. (2021:716) studied the experience of internalised stigma in 367 US-based FSWers, validating significant experiences of internalised stigma in the form of feelings of worthlessness, shame and guilt. Other studies, focused more on MSWs’ experience of internalised stigma include Koken et al. (2004), Morrison and Whitehead (2007b), Benoit et al. (2020) and Salhaney et al. (2021) confirm Tomko et al.’s (ibid) findings.

The impact of this internalised stigma; the feelings of guilt, shame, worthlessness and difference has, among other things, led to a deterioration of mental health, an inability to access support services and a strain in relationships. As Probyn (2004:330-331) reminds us, shame is an embodied response to others, a double-edged sword on the threshold of the private and the public, the personal and the social:

“..shame always plays on that doubledness of the public and the private, the extraordinary and the mundane. It is perhaps the most intimate of feelings but

seemingly must be brought into being by an intimate proximity to others. Shame makes our selves intimate to our selves, and equally it is social and impersonal.”

While Goffman (1963) suggests passing and concealing as stigma management strategies, the emotional burden of not disclosing their sex worker identity strains MSWers' relationships with family and friends, including romantic partners (Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Koken et al., 2004; Kong, 2009; McLean, 2012; Morrison & Whitehead, 2005; Oliveira, 2018; Wolf, 2022). Studies have reported a high incidence of drug and alcohol misuse among MSWers, suggesting this is often used to dissociate from experiences associated with selling sex (Chandler et al., 2022; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016; McCabe, et al., 2011). The emotional burden of non-disclosure and misuse of substances and alcohol to manage the effects of stigma can result in significant challenges with mental ill-health (Chandler et al., 2022; Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Morrison, & Whitehead, 2007b; Scott et al., 2005; Treloar et al., 2021) with Macioti, Geymonat and Mai (2021) reporting that 86% of the 118 participants from their cross-national study of sex workers (Germany, Italy, Sweden, and UK), had accessed some form of support for mental ill-health. Mental ill-health associated with selling sex has included depression, anxiety and trauma (Salhaney et al., 2021), and stress and anxiety (Oliveira, 2018).

Because psychological stigma is internalised stigma, some MSWers' response to this have been to re-frame their sex worker identities, as altruism, a service, employment etc. (Koken et al., 2004; McLean, 2012; Morrison & Whitehead, 2007) to challenge

stigmatising narratives. From a psychological stigma perspective, Goffman (1963) is correct in defining stigma as 'spoiled identity' which justifies managing information about one's identity as an appropriate response. Hannem (2022) underlines the fact that each of Goffman's (1963) stigma management strategies involve some level of deception about the stigmatised individual's identity. Butler (1990) argues that identities are performative and seek to reproduce pre-determined normative or acceptable societal views. Where these views locate MSWers within stigmatised identities, as deviant, pathological, with subordinated masculinity, their identity becomes exclusionary because it does not conform to the historical specificity (Butler, 1993).

A key narrative revolves around presenting sex work as an agentic or rational viable employment choice, with financial and other advantages (Bimbi, 2007; Marques, 2011; Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2013; Parsons, Koken & Bimbi, 2007; West & Austrin 2002). Developments in technology (especially the Internet and the availability of smart devices) have seen a trend of sex workers advertising and clients procuring sex online (Argento et al., 2016; Ashford, 2009; Bar-Johnson & Weiss, 2015; Bernstein, 2007b; Cunningham & Kendall, 2011; McLean 2015). This contributes to challenging stigmatising narratives. McPhail, Scott and Minichiello (2015) submit that this technological shift has resulted in a normalisation of sex work. Studies support a view that MSWers re-frame the negative narrative of MSW as deviant, exploitative, 'gay for pay', towards a more positive and normalised employment-focused one (Benoit et al., 2018; Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Kong, 2009; Oliveira, 2018). Brents and Hausbeck (2010) have argued that this has achieved an effect of re-creating empowered sex worker

identities as entrepreneurs or having a business focus, an argument strengthened by the application of Ritzer's (1993, 2011) thesis of McDonaldization to selling sex. Brents and Hausbeck (ibid) highlight the potential for selling sex online to achieve greater efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control compared to selling in other locations, by harnessing the offer of standardised and commodified options for sellers and buyers. Some men sell sex incidentally and do not identify as MSWers (Morris, 2018, 2021) but still experience sex work stigma (Siegel et al., 2022). Re-framing MSW as employment is therefore limited as a strategy to respond to psychological stigma. Reframing MSW as employment to challenge stigmatising narratives is also limited because of the intense competition among sex workers (especially online sex workers), which contributes to reinforcing some of the stereotypical views of sex work (Logan, 2010; Tyler, 2014, 2016) that promote stigma (Ashford, 2009). In-calls and out-calls⁴ mean that anonymity and control are no longer guaranteed (Goldring, Westall & Cain, 2016) while the commodification that internet-based sex work can promote can result in dehumanisation of sex workers (Brents & Hausbeck, 2010).

As a narrative, re-constructing sex work as employment, can be empowering for sex workers experiencing psychological stigma to locate their identity in a more positive frame but this is not a guarantee. Other narratives that MSWers have adopted include altruism (Koken et al., 2004; Scambler, 2009), selling sex as an activity between two consenting adults (Smith et al., 2013) and providing a service (Kong, 2009). The experience of psychological stigma is something that MSWers have to contend with

⁴ In-calls are where the client goes to the sex workers home. Out-calls are where the sex worker meets in a location decided by the client, such as home/hotel.

and live with in their everyday lives. Even when they are not engaged in the formal acts of selling sex, the stigma of a sex worker identity stays with them, inducing shame, guilt and worthlessness. Although MSWers reframe selling sex in a more positive narrative to counter and challenge the stigma they experience, the evidence of the success of these strategies are mixed, suggesting a scope for further exploration.

The Experience of Sociological Stigma

Goffman's (1963) seminal work on stigma places an emphasis on social/symbolic interaction, and identifies information management strategies for responding to stigma within such interactions. Link and Phelan (2001:366) propose a definition of stigma which incorporates inter-related components including labelling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination, in response to the 'decidedly individualistic focus' of studies on stigma between 1980 and 1999. Link and Phelan (ibid) also highlight the importance of economic, social, and political power in stigma. For Link and Phelan (2001), and other authors (Hannem, 2012; 2022; Bruckert & Hannem, 2013; Pescosolido & Martin, 2015; Scambler, 2007), the experience of stigma transcends social/symbolic interaction, and it is therefore necessary to explore the relationship between social structures and stigma. In particular, the causal relationship between social structures (institutions, laws, policies, class) and stigma is important to understanding the nature, incidence and experience of stigma. Understanding of structurally-transmitted stigma is critical for appreciating how stigmatising narratives develop and become legitimised to provide justification for regulating stigmatised groups like sex workers (Bruckert & Hannem, 2013). Drawing on the work of Link and Phelan (2001), Hannem (2012:24) defines structural stigma in

terms of stigma's effect on the structure around the person experiencing the stigma. This results in 'interventions, regulations, and surveillance', legitimised at an institutional or bureaucratic level to manage a perceived risk arising on the basis of the person assessed as belonging to a particular group, that is, a group with stigmatised attributes. In the UK, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (SOA 2003) removed gender-specific offences and many offences targeted at homosexual activities from the legislation. Until the SOA 2003 was enacted, existing legislation weaponised interventions against male-to-male sexual relations including MSW and provided a legitimised basis for managing this particular group. Rape, which is seen as an offence committed only by a man was retained. In another UK example, the Policing and Crime Act 2009 (PCA 2009) amended the 50+-year-old Sexual Offences Act 1956 (SOA 1956) by removing the term 'common prostitute' from the legislation, a derogatory term which provided legal justification for stigmatising sex workers as an underclass. The regulation of sex work is complex and exists in a continuum ranging from decriminalisation, legalisation, limited legalisation and illegalisation. Minichiello, Scott and Cox (2017) stress the importance of understanding the difference between legalisation and decriminalisation of sex work because of the complex legal and political policies in different countries and sometimes in different parts of the same country. Legalisation is the regulation of sex work while decriminalisation is the removal of all legislation criminalising sex work. In the USA, sex work is illegal except in the state of Nevada. Cooper (2016) points out that sex work is legalised in the UK but many associated practices like soliciting and kerb crawling are criminalised. Bruckert and Hannem (2013) describe a similar situation in Canada where sex work is legalised but communicating in public for purposes of prostitution for example was prohibited. Bruckert and Hannem (2013:45) argue that this increased the vulnerability

and risk of violence for the most marginal sex workers. In Australia, legalisation is determined at state level and there are differential levels of legalisation with some states criminalising sex work and one state decriminalising sex work. Sex work is decriminalised in New Zealand.

Legalisation and decriminalisation have important implications for the regulation of sex work and consequently structural stigma. Bruckert (2012) submits that sex work stigma is distinct from all occupational stigmas because the occupational stigma it carries extends beyond the workplace into a personal attribute which gives it a type of social permanence. This means that sex workers and locations that they sell sex become subject to a regulatory framework based on those stereotypical constructions of sex work and sex workers. However, it is not simply a matter of legalisation or decriminalisation because even in countries like New Zealand where sex work is decriminalised, sex workers, especially street-based sex workers still experience stigma (Armstrong, 2019) and some forms of sex work are seen as more acceptable than others (Easterbrook-Smith, 2022).

Pescosolido and Martin (2015) developed their FINIS model to explain the sources of enacted stigma as micro, meso and macro. Benoit et al. (2018:461) built on this to identify four levels of sex work stigma, viz (a) laws, regulations, and social policies, (b) the media, (c) health care and justice systems, and (d) the public at large and sex workers themselves. As Bruckert and Hannem (2013:47-48) paint it:

The fact that it is easy to articulate a discourse about “the kind of person who is a sex worker” speaks to stigma. It is the mark of stigma that this singular trait comes to define the person so that what the individual does is read as who she is. The stereotypes come to mind quickly; they are so pervasive that it would be difficult to avoid knowing them. They are reproduced in, among others, the discourses of police services, in the media, and by neighbourhood associations.

Early academic discourse about MSWers positioned them as deficit figures (Bimbi, 2007; Scott et al., 2005); maladjusted young men, with low educational attainment, from broken homes, peer delinquents and immature (Allen, 1980; Butts, 1947; Coombs, 1974; Earls & David, 1989; Gandy & Deisher, 1970). The mark of structural stigma is the employment of a discourse of exclusion (in the case of sex workers, based on perceived notions of risks, disorder, morality) to reinforce social structures that legitimise regulation (Treloar et al., 2021). Hannem (2022) and Treloar et al., (2021) draw on the work of Douglas (1992, 1994) to argue that sex workers are located as ‘out of place’, providing justification for regulation on the basis of protecting or saving them. Male sex workers have been and continue to be framed as risks in society; through early research positioning them as deviant homosexuals and delinquent young men (Allen, 1980; Luckenbill, 1986), vectors of disease and public health risk during the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Altman, 1999, 2015; Bimbi, 2007; Calhoun & Pickering, 1988; Davies & Simpson, 1990) and their perceived risks during sexual intercourse such as barebacking, and ‘chem sex’ (Bimbi & Parsons, 2005; Blackwell & Dziegielewski, 2013; Cusick, 2006; Valente et al., 2020). This risk discourse of MSW has influenced research and understanding of MSWers and provided

justification for regulation. This is seen in all four levels of stigma identified by Benoit et al., (2018) and has translated into legislation, policies and strategies. The Prostitution Strategy for England and Wales (2006:1) is skewed towards street prostitution and premised on:

“disrupting sex markets by preventing individuals, and particularly children and young people, from being drawn into prostitution; by providing appropriate protection and routes out for those already involved; by protecting communities from the nuisance associated with prostitution; and by ensuring that those who control, coerce or abuse those in prostitution are brought to justice”.

This strategy situates sex workers as nuisances to society, vulnerable to exploitation and in need of protection. This strategy and many studies of MSWers have focused on street-based sex workers (Allen, 1980; Atkins & Laing, 2012; Calhoun, 1992; Ellison, 2017; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016; Kaye, 2007). The use of the Internet for selling sex has provided greater visibility for MSWers (Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2015), contributing to a better understanding of MSW. Scott and colleagues (2005) in their study of MSWers in Australia and Argentina report great diversity in the men who identified as MSWers and their clients, concluding that MSW should be understood as agentic people making a rational occupational choice driven by economics. This would also result in greater attention in the personal aspects of the lives of MSWers. Although MSWers still remain an ‘at risk’ group for HIV and STIs, MSW is still evolving, and not all experiences are oppressive, exploitative or violent as previously thought (Scott et al., 2005). In his recent study of MSWers and masculinity in Sweden and Italy, Bacio (2023) found that many of his participants were well-educated and middle

class men who actively chose to sell sex as employment. Bacio (ibid) developed a typology of MSWers based largely on his participants' self-definition of their sexuality, experience of stigma from sex work, whether sex work was a full or part-time activity and their masculinity. Bacio (2023) concluded that MSW stigma was a function of how MSWers perceived their sexuality; those who defined as heterosexual were more likely to consider MSW as a stigmatising experience, thus feeding into hegemonic views of masculinity (Connell, 1992, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Even for street-based MSWers, views are changing. Ellison (2017) for instance identified three types of street-based MSWers in Manchester; the drifter, the party boy and the incumbent (although there is some mobility within these categories), theorising MSW as the result of rational decision-making and the MSWer's relationship with the space and place of selling sex, the Manchester Gay Village. Drifters sell sex sporadically and their relationship with the Village is instrumental. Party boys are gay and engage in the social life of the Village, selling sex opportunistically. Incumbents also enjoy the social life of the Village but sell sex more regularly than party boys and drifters by maintaining a regular presence in the Village. Ellison's (2017) conclusions challenges the stereotypical views of MSWers as passive and victims of structural inequalities. Many MSWers have transitioned from street to online work (Argento et al., 2016, Cunningham & Kendall, 2011; McLean, 2015; Jones, 2015; Sanders et al., 2017) and the fact that some MSWers choose to continue to sell sex on the street supports arguments for diversity and agentic decision-making. Argento et al., (2016) submit that MSWers in Boystown, the main area for street-based MSW in Vancouver were displaced due to gentrification, legal and political challenges, and violent abolitionist action by residents resulting in MSWers relocating their services online. The physical

community which provided solidarity, belonging and camaraderie, and key workplace protections was lost in the transition online.

In spite of evidence to the contrary (as above), traditional understandings of MSW continue to inform policies and legislation. In England and Wales, the SOA 2003 abolished offences relating to MSW such as gross indecency between men, persistent soliciting or importuning by men, and procuring another man to commit an act of buggery with a third man. However, legislation (SOA 2003, PCA 2009) also introduced offences relating to soliciting, kerb crawling, disorderly behaviour, highway obstruction, keeping a brothel, closure order for brothels and criminalising clients of sex workers among others (Release, 2011). This new legislative framework produces new forms of structural stigma which impinge on sex workers' ability to access support services like health and the police and informs ways in which MSWers are seen and see themselves in their relationships. Even Bacio's (2023) largely positive study of MSW recognised that the experience of stigma among MSWers was an everyday reality.

Marques (2011) distinguished between regulatory frameworks (codified legislation, policies etc.) and regulation (unwritten norms, values and taboos that regulate human and social behaviour), to analyse how discourses become disciplinary regimes to control or manage MSW. Building on Foucault's (1978) argument that discourses create regulatory spaces for the formation, reinforcement and reproduction of identities, Marques (2011:161), identified how sexual, psycho-social, medical and

labour discourses are employed to maintain social control over or regulate MSW. These are sexual regulation (homosexuality as sexual deviance), psychosocial⁵ regulation (homosexuality as mental illness and individual pathology from challenging demographic backgrounds), medical regulation (MSW as transmission of venereal diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS) and labour regulation (MSW as legitimate work). While these discourses are not new and have been discussed in this review, what Marques (ibid) highlights is how these discourses have served as sources of social stigma, used to maintain social control over MSWers.

Many sex workers have a distrust of professionals and are hesitant to disclose their sex worker identity in apprehension of the stigmatic responses from these professionals. Wolf (2019) reports that many of the 304 sex workers in her New York study experienced structural stigma, described as 'stigma in the system'. Sex workers were excluded from or had restrictions around blood and organ donations, suffered physical or sexual violence from the police and other law enforcement officers, and are unlikely to report assaults against them from fear that their sex worker identity could be used against them during trial. New York rape shield law does not allow one's sexual history to be used as evidence against them in rape trials but prostitution convictions within the last three years can be admitted as evidence. Atkins and Laing (2012) describe how the local authority in Manchester intensified visible police patrols

⁵ Psychosocial in this context aligns with aetiological views of male sex work in the 1960-80s as both pathological and deviant. Some studies such as MacNamara (1965), Coombs (1974), Caukins & Coombs (1976), Allen (1980), Earls & David (1989) identified low intelligence, poor educational attainment, alcohol and drug abuse, socio-economic background including familial violence, history of crime, violence, experience of domestic abuse and violence, mental illness as predisposing factors for engaging in sex work. Many termed these factors as psychosocial and titled their studies as psychosocial studies of male sex workers. Psychosocial in this context is not analogous to the use of psycho-social as the ontological stance in this study.

and installed CCTV in locations associated with MSW. This did not only disrupt, but also resulted in making MSWers more vulnerable to violence and exploitation as they moved to areas with no cameras. Macioti, Geymonat and Mai (2021) reported that 58% of the participants in their study found that disclosing a sex worker identity to mental health professionals led to experiences of stigma and judgemental behaviour and described the care they received as damaging rather than helpful. This mirrors the experience of participants in Wolf's (2019) study who felt that healthcare providers were often judgemental, made assumptions informed by negative stereotypes of sex workers which impacted negatively on the care they received.

In this sub-section, I have reviewed the literature on the experience of structural stigma by sex workers and focused on some experiences by MSWers. I have argued that the legislative framework and regulation, have contributed to, and underpinned these experiences. I refer to the legislative and policy environment in England and Wales, and in Manchester, the geographical context of the study. In 2019, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) adopted a National Policing Sex Work and Prostitution Guidance, which attempts to recognise 'the complex nature of sex work' to focus on engagement with sex workers and address their safety while targeting those who seek to victimise and exploit them (a previous guidance was published in 2015). This guidance, at least in theory, recognises that sex work is stigmatised and evolving, and sees the role of policing in addressing vulnerability and exploitation through engagement with stakeholders to build trust and confidence. This guidance was scheduled to have been reviewed in 2021 but is yet to be updated. Manchester has had a Prostitution Forum since 1998 (becoming the Manchester Sex Work Forum –

MSWF - in 2020) and has published a strategy since 2001. The MSWF and strategy (current strategy is for 2020-2022) represents a step forward in working with pro-sex work organisations to among other objectives, understand and respond to changes that will enable it to support sex workers and, influence policy and service design. The LGBT Foundation, Manchester Action on Street Health (supporting female sex workers), National Ugly Mugs, and TMR are represented on the MSWF. The NPCC's Guidance and the Manchester Sex Work Strategy both operate within the limits of the SOA 2003 and PCA 2009.

I have argued from the literature that MSWers experience stigma on both psychological and sociological levels. This has highlighted the pervasive nature and dimensions of sex work stigma, contributing to an understanding of these experiences. In the final section of this literature review, I will make a case for a psycho-social understanding of MSW stigma, arguing that the psychological is irrevocably linked with the sociological. A psycho-social understanding of sex work stigma integrates the micro and macro in a way that supports a more holistic view of this experience.

A psycho-social understanding of sex work stigma

Sex work stigma produces a sense of shame, worthlessness and guilt. Treloar et al., (2021), and Benoit et al., (2018) position this stigma at the boundary of individual (psychological) and community (sociological) factors, as micro, meso and macro. Hannem (2012), proposes a more holistic understanding of stigma that integrates individual experience into the larger macro-structures of power, government, and

social institutions. For Probyn (2004), shame is an embodied response which is both private and public, personal and social. Conceptualising stigma (in this case, sex work stigma) and the shame and other responses the experiences produce as simultaneously private and public is a psycho-social position. Hollway (2004) locates the psycho-social position at the centre, as the liminal position between the personal and social. Stigma is thus in excess of its local expression; it is situationally and psychologically experienced at the same time, a distinctly psycho-social position. While stigma may arise externally, out of a sociological response (societally and structurally), it is internally applied and experienced.

Hoggett (2001) maintains that human agency is not always rational and knowledgeable, and people do not always act in their own best interests. Situations of powerlessness (such as self-denigration and feelings of worthlessness which arise from experiences of stigma) can result in self-destructive acts if one does not have or is able to find the resources to symbolise, give meaning to, and process these feelings. What an engagement with a psycho-social approach to research can contribute to this study, is in its claim to explore 'beneath the surface and beyond the purely discursive' (Clarke & Hoggett, 2018:1-3). By drawing on a cluster of methodologies, a psycho-social approach to research challenges traditional models of human rationality to highlight the experiences of the powerless like MSWers.

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) assert the idea of a dynamic unconscious that defends against anxiety, and significantly influences people's actions, lives and relations,

underpins all psychoanalytic thinking. Klein, (1988a, b) contends that the self is forged out of defences against anxiety. Threats to the self, create anxiety, which people actively, albeit unconsciously defend against. Hollway and Jefferson (ibid) identify investments in specific discourses (often ambiguous representations of their experiences), as defence mechanisms that people employ. Scheff (1997) characterises the epistemological assumptions behind a great deal of qualitative research through the idea of the 'cultural convention of common sense'. He suggests this affects everyone, including social scientists, in which it is assumed that:

"human behaviour is determined by isolated individuals, individuals who think clearly, are conscious of their own motives and those of others, and who mean what they say and say what they mean" (Scheff, 1997:220).

A psycho-social approach to research problematises the assumption of a rational research participant who 'tells it as it is' and who can be observed to draw transparent conclusions of their everyday lives and lived experiences. This requires an approach to research which move beyond the limits of rational explanations. Clarke (2003:3) suggests 'sociologists are very good at explaining how discrimination arises, but not why; suggesting affect is left in the sociological cupboard. A psycho-social approach, a distinct attitude towards the subject of study which considers unconscious communications, dynamics, and defences in the research environment (Clarke & Hoggett, 2018:4-5), will position MSWers as not only vulnerable to experiences of sex work stigma, but also prone to employing defensive mechanisms as response to the anxiety from this experience.

In the empirical study that follows, a psycho-social ontology that does not rely wholly on what participants say or what is observable, is applied to capture the essence of the everyday lives and lived experiences of stigma. Unconscious communication – affect, imagery, poetry and prose, autobiography – are centred as important ways of knowing.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology and methods which underpin the study. I argue why a psycho-social approach offers the methodological robustness required to answer the research questions. I set out, and justify the study's design and the importance of the data collection methods to understanding the complexities of the participants' stories, their strengths and limitations. I also discuss issues of recruitment and selection, ethics, data collection and analysis.

Lessons from The Men's Room (TMR)

This study is about the MSWers who sought support from TMR. An understanding of what TMR offers and what drew these men to the agency, their everyday experiences, challenges, motivation, hopes, and the community they shared, is important to understanding why the approach to research developed by this study was critical to eliciting and communicating their stories. Over a period of two years prior to commencing this study, I was involved with the TMR community, first as a social work student, and then as a volunteer. During this time, I gained an understanding of how to engage with this group of men who mistrusted professionals and agencies (Speed, 2016) because of their experiences of discrimination, poor treatment and outcomes. Speed, (ibid) who was TMR's head of social care for many years argued that professionals and agencies lacked an understanding of the needs of this group of MSWers. The men responded to TMR's compassionate, non-interventionist and consistent approach and the feeling of permanence it provided (Hughes, Roy &

Manley, 2014). This understanding enabled me to identify methods that offered opportunities for dialogue and that were compassionate, non-interventionist, consistent and enabled me to develop a relationship with the men (a feeling of permanence).

Additionally, my experience as an Engagement Worker (during my social work student placement) and as a volunteer allowed me to gain some insight into the lives and needs of a number of the men who engaged with TMR. For instance, this coincided with the Safer Streets Pilot Project (SSPP) and I had the opportunity to participate in several outreach sessions, facilitating the opportunities for establishing a regular and recognisable presence among many of the men who engaged with TMR. In his evaluation of the SSPP, Atkins (2014:13) concluded that outreach services were useful for developing productive relationships with 'hard-to-reach' and vulnerable people. This regular and recognisable presence gained me a hard-won trust built on mutual respect which contributed to openness during the fieldwork process. This time spent at TMR was crucial in supporting the development of research frames that would respond to the particular needs of such a participant group.

An 'Everyday' Focus

During drop-in sessions at TMR, I often 'walked and talked' with MSWers to pick up refreshments. I observed that such discussions were different to the agenda-driven or need-focused ones in the sessions. Instead, they were about home, family, friends, leisure, routines, fear, frustrations, hopes, joys etc. - everyday conversations - the kind

of conversations I would usually have outside of work with friends and family. These also gave context and greater meaning to the challenges and support needs that the men presented in the drop-in sessions, a greater level of vulnerability which enabled the delivery of targeted and a more holistic support. These interactions contributed to a different understanding of MSWers' experiences, as embodied, biographical, personalised and more complex than was presented; as homelessness, substance and alcohol dependency, sexual abuse, health needs etc. and managed on an everyday basis. Walking enabled relationships beyond the formal and created opportunities for situationally collaborative dialogue (Finlay & Bowman, 2017). This taught me that everyday practices such as walking and talking, and a focus on everyday experiences, are windows into understanding how MSWers experience and navigate stigma, as well as the discourses they invest in, to respond to stigma. The 'everyday' provides opportunities for MSWers to tell, curate and/or co-create their stories as part of an interpretive process informed by their action, thoughts, and emotions, contributing to a more holistic understanding of their experiences of stigma and marginalisation. Marginalisation, for this study, is defined in terms of how individuals and groups are pushed to the periphery by a dominant majority (Hall, 1999; Hall, Stevens & Meleis, 1994), which positions MSWers as marginalised.

The focus of this study are the MSWers who engage with TMR. In particular, it seeks to explore how they experience and navigate everyday stigma as MSWers, the meanings they attach to selling sex and how this affects their relationships. Sandywell (2004) challenges understandings of the 'everyday' as endless repetition, predictability, and a static and habitual aspect of life. Such understandings can lead

to a fetishisation of the 'everyday' as the answer to the challenges of an ever-changing and pluralistic social world founded on technocracy and bureaucracy.

Buckingham, Degen, and Marandet (2018:336), in their study with FSWers in London, demonstrated how by focusing on the 'everyday', the 'more-than-work' aspects of FSWers lives, they were able to resolve the problematic of the artificial separation between 'home' and 'work'. Through interaction with their physical and social environments, the researchers gained insight into FSWers' vulnerabilities. Česnulytė (2019) argues that the evidence for the general lies in the particular. Focusing on the everyday lives and lived experiences of FSWers in Kenya highlighted the structural inequalities within the society and strategies employed by FSWers to mitigate these.

Geertz (1973, 1983) calls for understanding the bigger picture from small facts without obscuring the particular, local, or ordinary. Drawing on Sacks' (1992) work, Silverman (2007) suggests that details of often-thought mundane aspects of everyday life can significantly contribute to understanding the lived experiences of research participants in ways that minimise the researcher's frame of relevance. Levi (1979) paints an evocative picture of the horrific experiences of the Holocaust through everyday life in the concentration camps such as getting drunk or mothers washing and feeding their children the night before they knew they were going to the gas chamber. Building on the work of Arbus (2005), Silverman (ibid) encourages setting aside our 'innumerable inscrutable habits' about the 'everyday' as mundane, random, barren and formless, to

enable us to see its remarkability. Silverman (2017:146) recognises artefacts and interaction as opportunities for data.

Goffman (1955) describes how people are at once defensive and protective within 'everyday' interactions, to save face; theirs and the other's. In this study, the 'everyday' is presented as a sphere of ambivalence and resistance that requires both inertia and inventive forms of appropriation to creatively navigate (de Certeau, 1984, 1987). This ambivalence of the 'everyday' provides scope for the animation of the heterogeneity of social life (Highmore, 2002). The everyday is therefore an arena of the psycho-social, simultaneously conscious and un-conscious, pregnant with history, conflict, politics, and is a source of transgression of contemporary culture (Sandywell, 2004).

The literature review highlighted that the experience of sex work stigma is both sociological and psychological; that in addition to loss of status, and social/societal exclusion, sex workers also experience symbolic, and internalised pain from stigma. More recent understandings of stigma including that of Hannem (2012) and sex work specific explorations of stigma (Benoit et al., 2018; Treloar et al., 2021) are beginning to recognise the experience of stigma as simultaneously sociological and psychological. My experience of the MSWers who access support from TMR presents them as men with complex and challenging backgrounds, experiences and identities which induce shame. Probyn (2004) describes shame associated with stigma as both private and public, personal and social. Woodward (2015:2) submits that it is naïve to

assume that the social context within which feelings and emotions are made can be removed from the experience and personal testimony of these feelings and emotions. Shaw and Holland (2014:3) argue that a commitment to qualitative research entails an understanding of subjective meanings. Research with people who have experienced trauma like the stigma associated with sex work that my studies participants have, means acknowledging that the research process will require them to recollect and process these difficult memories while at the same time trying to distance themselves from those painful memories. Shaw and Holland (ibid) defined knowledge in terms of direct remembering and reliving of such experiences.

This calls for an approach to research that captures the thick detail of everyday life – to animate the heterogeneity in the history, present and future – and at the same time accommodate the anxiety, conflicts, ambivalence and the tension between reliving and attempting to detach from the painful. Lee (1993) suggests that 'depth interviews' are important in research with sensitive participants. McCormick (2010) asserts that phenomenological studies strive for context and detail through an immersion in the lifeworld of others. McPhail (1995:162), contends that phenomenological studies maintain a focus on relationship structures (including imagination, affect, and remembrances) to shape meaning. By positioning the lived experience of MSWers as the unit of analysis, the individual reveals meaning through their action in a lived context. The epistemological underpinnings of this study are predicated on an understanding that the everyday lives and lived experiences of a particular group of MSWers will emerge from the contexts within which they are lived, and the structures within which they are situated. A deliberate, everyday focus is on the more personal

aspects of MSWers' lives. However, Roy (2016a) warns that some interactions can produce anxiety in research participants, resulting in defensive performances. A phenomenological approach alone cannot sufficiently accommodate these defensive performances, even with the thick descriptions that such studies unearth (Geertz, 1973). I turn to a psycho-social approach to mediate this.

Clarke and Hoggett (2009, 2018) suggest that, rather than being a specific methodology, the distinctiveness of a psycho-social approach is in its attitude or approach to the subject(s) of study. A psycho-social approach recognises that understanding the complexities of issues related to sex work are not simply about getting the right people to ask the right questions. Rather, it is about developing research frames in which it is possible to explore both conscious and unconscious aspects of communication, seeking to look beyond the limitations of rational surface-level explanations. For this study, it is about deliberately prioritising opportunities for the unstructured dialogue (free association) and different modes of expression (map-making) which are important for generating new data about and with MSWers as psycho-social research subjects. Prioritising such opportunities encourages an openness to engaging with ambivalence, ambiguity, tensions, contradictions and defences.

A Phenomenological Epistemology

Phenomenology, as an interpretivist epistemology, supports attempts to 'gain new meaning, fuller meaning or renewed meaning' through an understanding of social

reality from people's experiences of that reality (Gray, 2022:17). For McPhail (1995:162), phenomenology is about the lived experience as the unit of analysis in meaning; the individual as a meaning maker within their action and lived context; and a focus on relationship structures including imagination, affect, and remembrances to shape meaning. This study is about how MSWers make meaning of an everyday life which includes sex work and managing stigma, the sociological and the psychological and how they respond to this.

Husserl (1982,1989,1990) emphasised the importance of studying phenomena as they are 'experienced-in-consciousness' (the 'rational' or 'mental activity' and not the metaphysical or causal (re)-interpretations), and a systematic construction of meaning, revealed through of structures of consciousness (Smith & Smith, 1995). The situated nature of human experience and behaviour is critical to facilitating interpretation and understanding (Heidegger, 1927), meaning history, culture, and language are important contributory factors in descriptive and interpretive understandings of the lived life. Weber (1947) and Schultz (1962) assert that human action is meaningful and human behaviour is the result of how people interpret the world. An understanding of human behaviour therefore requires a central focus on the person at the heart of that behaviour. Methodologically, this study privileges openness in the research environment, creating opportunities for participants to make meaning of their experiences.

Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology (1962) postulates life as flowing in a circular process and meaning-making is viewed as constituted of the past, present and future. Rosenthal (1995, 2018) (in the tradition of biographical sociology that draws among other sources on hermeneutics) infers that biographies (or for the purposes of this study, MSWers lives) have a 'gestalt-like quality' and need to be understood as a unified whole. A 'Gestalt' or the meaning frame which informs a person's life (Rosenthal, 1990) is 'a unified whole which is not the "and-sum" of a number of independent elements, but which results from the configuration of these parts in their relation to each other' (Wertheimer 1938a, 1928 in Rosenthal, 2018:23). 'Gestalt' theory (Gurwitsch, 1964 in Rosenthal, 2018:161) conceives of a dialectic relationship between experiencing, remembering and narrating, such that past events are seen through the prism of the present. McPhail (1995) identifies an essential goal of phenomenological research as a deliberate attempt to create an environment of openness which promotes possibilities within which participants can develop their meaning-making structures. Phenomenology, with its thick descriptions, presents participants with opportunities and space to develop composite narratives of past, present, and future leading to an identification or emergence of a characteristic pattern – the Gestalt – a harmonised whole of MSWers lives and lived experience of sex work stigma not subsumed under themes.

However, there is a risk in biographical research for the Gestalt to be over-harmonised if informed by an assumption that participants are always able to give a full and transparent account of their lives and lived experiences. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) challenge the tradition in research that assumes that we can treat the accounts of

research participants' as transparent representations of reality, arguing instead that participants and researchers alike are 'defended' and 'fragmented' and attempt to manage any anxiety (thoughts, feelings and memories that threaten the integrity of the self). This means that participants' Gestalt may be disrupted in the face of conflict. Hollway and Jefferson (ibid) suggest that the Gestalt also emerges from anxieties and attempts to defend against them. Even so, aspects of the narratives are influenced by the research environment and actions of participants and researchers, meaning that the emergent situated Gestalt may only be partial and incoherent.

Phenomenology focuses on the 'conscious' as a window to the experiential. However, as Clarke and Hoggett (2018) emphasise, people's lives transcend the purely discursive, conscious or rational. Selling sex is negotiated at the liminal space between the private/intimate and public, the legal and illegal, the sociological and psychological, and some experiences of sex work stigma are profoundly individual and defy conscious articulation. A methodological approach is needed that is able to facilitate the emergence of these 'more-than-discursive' aspects of these experiences. O'Neill (2001) opines that it is through an emphasis on the personal and experiential aspects of sex workers lives that we can begin to make sense of it.

The study responds to this limitation of phenomenology and the possibility of over-harmonising the identification of the Gestalt through a psycho-social ontology which enables a focus on 'more than the conscious' defended and desiring nature of subjectivity.

A Psycho-social Ontology

Sex work stigma threatens a sense of self integrity. The literature is unequivocal about sex workers' experience of stigma (Kong, 2009; Weitzer, 2010; 2017a,b), the most challenging aspect of being a sex worker (Wolf, 2019), even in countries where sex work has been decriminalised (Easterbrook-Smith, 2022). The discourse of a sex worker comes to define the individual in such a way that it is difficult to maintain a separation between their identity and selling sex (Bruckert & Hannem, 2013), a discourse that speaks to stigma; exclusion, rejection, legal action, inability to access support (Atkins & Laing, 2012; Macioti, Geymonat and Mai, 2021; Phoenix, 1999; Scambler & Hopkins, 1986) as well as shame, isolation, depression, guilt and feelings of worthlessness (Tomko et al., 2021; Wolf, 2019). The pervasiveness and endemic nature of sex work stigma means it is encountered, produced, reproduced, negotiated, embraced, challenged and resisted on an everyday basis. The ascription of sex worker is socially over-determined leaving the individual with no choice other than defending against the stigmatised aspects, or fully embracing a stigmatised identity. This is experienced in their interactions with others and at the same time internalised including disassociation, disconnection and bearing the weight of secrecy.

This doubleness of the experience of sex work stigma, as both sociological/social and psychological/internalised provides a theoretical basis for situating MSWers as psycho-social research subjects. Hollway and Jefferson (2013:4) define psycho-social research subjects as those whose "inner worlds cannot be understood without knowledge of their experiences in the world, and whose experiences of the world cannot be understood without knowledge of the way in which their inner worlds allow

them to experience the outer world.” This means that research participants are simultaneously social and psychic, a perspective that is underlined in psycho-social studies. Jefferson (2008) points out that the influence of psychoanalyst Melanie Klein’s (1988a,b) work on the British tradition of psycho-social studies is in its understanding of the centrality of anxiety in our experience of the world. Klein (ibid) posits that when the self is threatened, it creates anxiety. There is a dynamic unconscious that defends against this anxiety and influences how people act, live and relate to others. In other words, the self is shaped out of our unconscious defences against anxiety. For this study, this means that when MSWers’ and the researcher’s sense/integrity of self is threatened by sex work stigma, they will most likely act to defend against the anxiety that this creates. It is out of these unconscious defences that the self emerges. Importantly, because these defences are at least partly unconscious, it means that some of these experiences are not transparent to MSWers or researchers. It also means that there is great scope for conflict, ambivalence and ambiguity, concepts I will return to in this chapter. This notion of unconscious defences against anxiety provides pathways to understanding experiences of provisional inclusion and structural exclusion (Scanlon & Adlam, 2022), and the internalisation and/or response to sex work stigma.

Melanie Klein’s (1988a, 1988b) ‘object relations’ theory, particularly her psycho-social concepts of the ‘paranoid-schizoid’ position – splitting which includes ‘idealisation’ (Klein et al., 1952) - and ‘depressive’ position - inter-subjective unconscious defences against anxiety - explain how people characterise and manage defences against anxiety. Klein’s (ibid) concepts of the ‘paranoid-schizoid’ position, where people

employ 'idealisation', or 'denigration', as defences against anxiety; and the 'depressive' position are particularly relevant. Klein's (ibid) key contribution to object relations theory, her conceptualisation of defences against anxiety as intersubjective means that the 'self' can be separated into good and bad objects "through the unconscious projection (putting out) and introjection (taking in) of mental objects" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013:18). This is also referred to as 'splitting'. Within this, the paranoid-schizoid position, the earliest and most primitive defence, and one that we revert to during threats to the self, is the development of mental binary opposites – idealisation and denigration – people as wholly good or bad. As a defence mechanism, the paranoid schizoid position allows for splitting the 'bad' off from the self and projecting it onto others, thereby defending against a threat to the self which produces anxiety. The 'good' is idealised, reflecting an unconscious striving towards the expected and which is gratifying. This also allows for a separation from the 'bad' object. In the depressive position, controlling anxiety through splitting is reduced as the mental state moves into maturity to acknowledge that the 'good' and 'bad' exist in the same object without splitting (Hollway & Jefferson, ibid). For Klein (ibid), the aim of the depressive state of mind is to overcome the split between the 'good' and 'bad' without erasing the distinctions. When ambivalent feelings, of the same mental object can be acknowledged, as good and bad, then investment in a discourse is moderated (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013:21) and more realistic. This enables reparation, an ability to feel guilt and act towards reconciliation.

Building on Klein's (ibid) work, Hollway and Jefferson (2013:17) developed the theory of a 'defended subject', how subjects position themselves or invest in a certain

discourse rather than others as a defence against anxiety (to mitigate the threat to their integrity of self). Klein (1988a,b) illustrates this conflict through the infant's two polarised emotional positions with the mother's breast; as both 'good' (fulfilled when fed) and 'bad' (frustrated when hungry), which in time the infant learns to re-organise into 'good' and 'bad', providing distance between threats and/or uncertainties and oneself to achieve safety (Craib, 2001; Ogden 1990). Klein (ibid) conceptualised this as the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions. In the former, there is 'splitting'; a psychological act of separation enabling polarised experiences of the same object to be kept separate (Klein, 1946, cited in Hinshelwood, 1989) and serve to place those difficult feelings outside oneself (Redman & Whitehouse-Hart, 2008). Repression and projection are also used in this paranoid-schizoid position. In the depressive position, there is a reconciliation of the difference between 'good' and 'bad', a transition from fear to concern, a recognition that both the 'good' and 'bad' resides within the self, and in so doing, enables a similar recognition in others (Clarke, 2003; Ogden, 1986). The depressive position is the birth of ambivalence and is important to understanding how we respond to anxiety, and protect the self from threats.

In the literature review, I have highlighted Goffman's (1963) acknowledgement of 'anxiety' and 'ambivalence' as part of the great psychological price for stigma. However, 'anxiety' and 'ambivalence' is explored in relation to information management (temporarily in interactions with others), rather than the understanding that conflicting or polarised emotional positions resides within the self at the same time, and that a recognition that they co-exist and are more enduring is important for understanding how MSWers live with and respond to sex work stigma. The psycho-

social understanding of 'ambivalence' in this study is about how living with those emotionally polarised positions produce 'defensiveness' in the research environment. The methodological challenge is how to develop research frames that allow MSWers to narrate and share these experiences. Psycho-social researchers have developed methodologies aimed at eliciting such narratives, and for Hollway and Jefferson (2013), the key to unlocking defensive discourses is 'nearness of experience' through interaction with another, in this case the researcher.

Froggett and Briggs (2012) describe 'nearness of experience' as attempts at getting close in order to engage with actions, thoughts and emotions, making these available for thought and communication. It is an investment in investigations of forms of feelings to make them available for thought and communication. Rutter (1987) stressed that this involves acknowledging unconscious communications, dynamics and defences in the research environment, and an awareness of the affective relationship between the researcher and participant which support an identification of some of the defence mechanisms adopted by participants. It involves exploring beyond the rational and conscious; engaging with the irrational and unconscious, the affective and subjective (Trufram, 2016; Froggett & Hollway, 2010). An example is Gadd's (2000) psychosocial study of male violence against women. In this study, Gadd (ibid) used a narrative interview method originally developed by Hollway and Jefferson (1997) to elicit the participant's account. Using this method, the participant invested in defensive narratives; rational and/or available discourses of masculinity to justify his violence, of losing his temper for not being believed that he wanted to be helpful. In the story elicited, Gadd (ibid) concluded that the interview method allowed

the participant to work around his defences, projecting his childhood fears of not being believed and blamed for things, onto the situations he faced as an adult. This interview method, now known as the Free Association Narrative Interview – FANI – (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, 2013), has as its core elements; using open-ended questions, eliciting a story with a prompt, avoiding ‘why’ questions, and following responses by using the participant’s own ordering and phrasing. Holloway and Jefferson (2013) argue that free association narratives are key to the emergence of participants’ Gestalt.

Inter-subjective ontologically, the psycho-social approach that this study develops, facilitates dialogic spaces and contexts, situational and relational which allow the ‘more-than-discursive’ aspects of MSWers lives to emerge within everyday conversations (Froggett & Wengraf, 2004). This ontological position allows the research relationship to be conceived as encounters in a research environment within which the researcher can reflexively engage with ‘affective ways of knowing’ (Clarke & Hoggett, 2018; Frosh, 2003). The approach enabled acknowledging my own anxiety and capacity for defensive performances within the research environment, and developing strategies for reflexively responding to these, such as the scenic compositions and the use of interpretive data analysis panels (IDAP) which are explained more fully later in this chapter.

A cogent critique of psycho-social approaches is the danger of over-interpretation of data from relatively small numbers of participants, which can affect the quality of claims from such studies. Four MSWers were selected as the final sample for this

study. While a small sample, these men engaged in repeat sessions which included walking interviews and map making session, sometimes staged over several months. This offered the opportunity to develop a research relationship over an extended period which contributed significantly to the generation of knowledge, allowing for depth in interpretation, triangulated through the different tools of data collection and analysis. As a case study, the generalisability of the findings from this study to wider populations of MSWers is limited, but the credibility of its claims lie in the rigour of the methods and analysis and the findings have been validated through extended discussions about the findings with TMR.

The Study Design

Sex workers live precariously and are often on the edges of criminality, structural inequalities, and harm (Bruckert & Hannem, 2013; Cooper, 2016). As a result, they are likely to be anxious in their interactions with researchers and because sex work researchers also experience stigma by association (Hammond & Kingston, 2014), there is anxiety for both participant and researcher. The psycho-social approach which underpins this study, acknowledges and responds to anxiety-driven defensive performances in the research relationship and environment (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This approach draws on a cluster of methodologies (Clarke & Hoggett, 2018) to develop research frames which respond to this study's research questions. It offers a creative approach to data collection (map-making and walking interviews) that support multiple lenses for interpretation (visual, narrative, affective) through visual maps, narrative-pointed case studies, scenic compositions, and panel analysis, to co-produce knowledge with MSWers about their experiences of sex work stigma.

The distinctive psycho-social design adopted for this study is premised on knowledge as emergent, and developed within an affective relationship between participant and researcher. Map-making and walking interviews provided different ways for MSWers to re-approach, observe, reflect on, and narrate their everyday lives and experiences. The map-making process mirrored the walking interview process, becoming one of continuous improvisation, created in the moment, as the MSWers walked the researcher through the landscape of their lives. Ingold (2010a:204) argues that maps should be seen in their pre-cartographic sense, 'as an instrument for revealing the inner reality of the world, not as a representation of its outer surface'. Knowledge therefore produced and re-produced through these co-constructed research environments and inform the choice and/or development of a range of methods (Clarke, 2006; Woodward, 2015).

Map-Making

Why Map-making?

As a student and volunteer at the Men's Room, I experienced first-hand how the MSWers who engaged with the agency responded positively to arts-based projects. The informal, more democratic, artistic and playful engagement of arts-based approaches both encouraged participation in the projects and helped participants to manage anxiety. For this study therefore, map-making as an arts-based method was used to deliberately engage an artistic perception, through which participants were encouraged to re-approach their daily lives, routes and routines through an associational mode of thinking. It also offered a form of interaction which scaffolded the beginnings of a sensitive enquiry while providing an opportunity for participants to

consider routes for the subsequent walking interviews. In this sense, making maps enabled imaginative and emotional material to be symbolised, to produce data rich with visual and scenic references (Froggett et al, 2014).

I had developed trust and affection with many MSWers at TMR as a student and volunteer. During this period, I engaged with this study's potential participants in an intervention role. I used map-making to mark a definite beginning of different (research) relationship. This was important to building trust with the participants and clearly defining the nature of the research relationship.

I used map-making to minimise the possibility of defensive performances. A map-making session offers a different emotional engagement to the face-to-face interaction in traditional interviews. It does not support a 'question and answer' interaction, which could mirror previous anxiety-laden interviews with professionals and authority figures like the police and probation officers, triggering memories of previous negative experiences with authority figures (Roy, 2016a). Map-making therefore supported creating a field work experience that empowered participants to creatively present their stories in ways that did not remind them of their vulnerabilities.

Methodological Issues and Concerns

My experience with MSWers at TMR was that many of my potential participants responded to creative ways of capturing their multi-dimensional experience, which is not always easy to reduce to words. Map-making invites participants to 'do' and 'see',

a non-linguistic mode of representation which supports participants like those in this study to articulate individual or personal perspectives. Beebeejaun et al. (2013) point out that the dominance of text in academic research signals power and privilege, and excludes those outside the academy. Xavier and Bychkov (2012) argue that the visual gives expression to sensory and affective knowledge, enabling an understanding of fragmented personal and social knowledge of the past through art in ways words or verbalisation cannot achieve. This enables access to different types and levels of experience including the affective and sensory (Bagnoli, 2009; Eisner, 2008), making maps useful and novel data collection tools, a unique frame for representing participants' experiences through experiential, contextual cues (Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009). In this study, map-making enabled eliciting of emotional and affective data through opportunities they provided to stage the interviews beyond words. As a psycho-social research method, maps as rich, expressive resources, support the communication of experiences beyond the merely discursive (Woody, 2003).

Rosetto (2014:514) suggests that maps should be 'viewed and researched as contingent, relational, embodied, fluid entities that are performed and manipulated by users in their meanings...', as suspended narratives between the spatial and temporal, representations of interactions between the maps themselves and the individual making them. This view of maps is supported by Kitchin et al. (2009) who point to the ontogenetic nature of maps, as proceeding from action. For McCarthy (2006) and Weiss (2010), maps have the capacity to capture dialogue and interactions between person and space, culture and experience and should be imagined as transient and changing artefacts rather than as static, written cartographs. They have

a capacity to offer alternative ways of bringing stories to life, a rich medium to communicate, chronicle, comment, document and create important accounts (Field, 2014). Maps therefore represent a unique scope for developing and sharing MSWers' accounts of everyday sex work stigma.

Map-making offered opportunities for participant-generated and participant-determined knowledge. As a psycho-social data collection method, maps provide opportunities for assimilating mental and environmental data (Elderfield, 1971). Bolas (2000) contends that objects (in this case, maps) have the capacity to enable an engagement, and expression of pre-verbal and unconscious forms of thinking. Maps are exploratory, representing a variable journey, facilitating a 'coming to terms' kind of thinking with various explanatory possibilities (Kokanovic et al., 2013). Elkins (1996) conceives of drawing as born in blindness and evolving in its production. This captures the essence of the unique psycho-social approach in this study, where maps are seen as objects of knowledge in the hands of a 'never-fully-knowing' participant, enabling them to represent what they are unable to express verbally, the conscious and unconscious (Gauntlett, 2007; Pink & Mackley, 2012). Through map-making, MSWers define, control and produce data about their lives.

How I used map-making

In this first phase, participants were asked to think of locations that were important to their everyday lives and lived experience of selling sex, and to make maps of these. Using their own reference point of what a map was, they then drew/made maps of

these locations for the walks. The maps took different forms: some being list-like, and others pictorial or cartographical. In total, participants made/drew ten maps; four by the same participant, two each by three other participants⁶, while one participant declined the offer of a map. Participants had the option to re-make/draw maps during the research relationship; one participant made/drew a new set of maps six months after the end of his walking interviews. Participants could also retain the original or a copy of their maps; one participant opted for a copy of their map.

I have considered the limitations of map-making as a method. Most participants opted not to keep their maps. I have reflected that the maps were tangible representations of the tensions in their lives that they did not require reminders of. This could also be evidence of participants' view of their lack of artistic ability; one participant declined the option while two others minimally engaged with their first maps. This lack of engagement could also be a projection of my anxiety around map-making onto the participants. I am often anxious around artistic engagements because I do not consider myself artistically-inclined.

Data from the maps reinforced their importance as a psycho-social method; facilitating various explanatory possibilities, and the expression of pre-verbal and unconscious thinking. Participants used them to signal thematic considerations they further developed in their walks; a visual chronology of key life experiences, a representation

⁶ One participant who drew two maps was excluded from the final approved participants so only eight maps of the maps have been analysed in this thesis.

of significant experiences of sex work, a visual narrative of different aspects of everyday life etc.

Map-making also served as an initial engagement tool, enabling me to build rapport with participants, providing a common base for initiating the walking interviews. As an engagement tool, it facilitated the identification of locations for the walking interviews, and signalled the start of the research relationship. Crociani-Windland (2013) advocates a psycho-social pedagogy which uses a 'common third' as a medium to build a relationship, a window of opportunity to overcome resistance and frustrations.

Walking Interviews

Why Repeat Walking interviews?

Walking was a regular activity that staff and MSWers engaged in when I was at TMR as a student and volunteer. We walked to theatre. We walked to pick up food donations. We walked the streets taking photographs of doors and doorways as part of a 'door-themed' creative season. We walked to meet MSWers during outreach. Walking is an activity that the potential participants of this study were familiar with, responded to and enjoyed. Walking offered opportunities for engaging research participants (O'Neill & McHugh, 2017) in relationships different to those in face-to-face interviews (Rendell, 2006), for researcher and participant to share space and time, sense each other, discuss their hopes, fears, tensions, conflicts as they walk together (Anderson, 2004; Hall & Smith, 2013; Urry, 2007).

Walking is an emancipatory research practice and mitigates researcher-participant power imbalances (Murphy, 2022; Myers, 2007). O'Neill and McHugh (2017) suggest that walking side-by-side is democratic and challenges essentialist and carceral approaches to research with sex workers (FitzGerald, O'Neill, & Wylie, 2020a, 2020b), thus supporting a social justice-driven approach to research. Walking creates a certain dynamism (Anderson, 2004; Ross et al., 2009; Spinney, 2015) by facilitating spaces for different kinds of dialogue - walking, talking, observing, and participating – which enable connection; emotional, embodied and experiential (O'Neill, 2015; O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010). I had experienced first-hand at TMR how walking with MSWers facilitated spaces for dialogue that was different to those in spaces for intervention and support.

As part of this study's design, walking interviews build on map-making to offer opportunities for participants to tell their stories in an associative way through interacting with the landscapes of their lives which invoked emotions, memories and hopes. Drawing on the 'Mobilities' paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006), walking focuses on the relationship between people and places, and subjectively captures personal histories and experiences (Creswell et al., 2007). O'Neill (2001) contends that this enables an interpretive understanding of the complexities of sex workers' lives including the personal and experiential.

Walking together enables excursions into sensory and embodied experiences, mobile phenomenological approaches which facilitate a meaning-making experience on the

move (O'Neill & McHugh, 2017). Büscher and Urry (2009:110) emphasise that 'inquiries on the move' have potential to illuminate important phenomena and promote new ways of knowing. Trustram (2016) describes walking interviews as interviews with words and enactment. Walking is performative; an interaction of time, space, body, and audience. Studies of MSWers in Manchester evidence walking practices within defined local areas (Atkins & Laing, 2012; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016).

Methodological issues and concerns

'Mobilities' offers an alternative methodological landscape to deliver researcher-participant interaction, an opportunity to construct a holistic theory of the social world that draws a connection between the movement of people and the meaning of their everyday experiences (Urry, 2007). For this study, 'Mobilities' provides methodological justification for walking as a method. Anderson (2004) argues that the person-place co-ingrediency offers opportunities for personalised knowledge constructions, more equitable and collaborative forms of knowledge including emotions, beliefs, and reflections.

Walking interviews create opportunities for contextual, situational and collaborative dialogue to mediate defensive performances and support the emergence of the Gestalt. Kusenbach (2003) stressed the significance of environmental experiences and practices in enabling the phenomenological structures of the lived experience to be studied. In particular, 'Go Alongs' allow transcendent and reflexive aspects of the lived experience to be grounded in place and help to uncover meaning through

environmental perception, spatial practices, biographies, social architecture, and social realms. This 'street phenomenology' capitalises on the links between place and life history to generate meaningful understandings of everyday life (Kusenbach, 2003; Ross et al., 2009). Studies (Ferguson, 2008, 2010, 2014; Hall & Smith, 2013; Smith & Hall, 2018) have demonstrated that closeness to research participants as they navigate significant areas within their local geography enabled understandings of their everyday movements, fears, anxieties, expectations, and reflections.

Pink and Morgan (2013) claim that the value of mobile methods (for this study, walking interviews) lie in their capacity to facilitate intense and intensive (and in this study, extensive) short-term excursions into participants lives, to reveal important knowledge about their everyday lives. This study's walking interviews were underpinned by FANI, which is an intensive data collection method using open narrative questions to elicit participant stories. Pink (2009), describes walking as micro-ethnography, facilitating co-production understanding through 'being in, and with participants' in their 'ethnographic place'. The on-going ways of learning and knowing that walking facilitates (Ingold, 2008), cuts across timespans, personal tragedies, homelessness, sexuality, masculinity, stigma etc. Walking together engenders a physical and emotional environment to explore the everyday lives and lived experiences of MSWers. Walking together allows being, hearing, seeing, feeling, and experiencing together - friendships, shelter, employment, safety, resilience etc. but also homelessness, ill-health, stigma, trauma, risk environments etc.

However, Merriman (2014, 2019) cautions against fetishising mobile methods as ways of gathering accurate data at the expense of other social research methods. Overstating the methodological capabilities of walking as novel in enabling more effective engagement with participants and providing a closer account of events or practices could amount to sensationalising and valourising mobile methods. Instead, mobile methods must be positioned among a broad range of innovative and creative tools of enquiry. This, Merriman (2014) argues is because mobile methods can also be fraught with some of the challenges they seek to address: stilling, friction and entanglement with complex social, political, economic, and cultural practices in the research environment. Merriman (2014:175) concludes:

“Mobile methods clearly have their uses, but what I want to question is some of the claims which are made about the ‘power’ of these methods, less as creative or experimental tools, than the claims made about their ability to let researchers more successfully and accurately apprehend or represent certain meanings, feelings, emotions and kinaesthetic sensibilities.”

In this study, a clear rationale has been given for the choice of walking as a method, which aligns with the study’s aims and the backgrounds of participants. It is used as part of a comprehensive approach to data collection including map-making.

How I used repeat walking interviews

Participants led walks which started from locations previously identified during the map-making sessions. These walks generally followed the order on the maps

although one participant frequently altered the order. Another participant whose maps were thematic rather than locational, led walks from locations that were not pre-identified on his maps. Twelve of the sixteen walks completed are discussed in this thesis. The majority of the walks were within a mile's radius of the Manchester Gay Village although some were further afield. Two participants led walks to Sackville Gardens but their attachment to the location differed.

The interviews adopted the minimalist style FANI (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997, 2013) and the Biographic Narrative Interpretative Method -BNIM- (Wengraf 2001, 2014): a broad-based single question to elicit/induce narrative and promote depth interviewing. However, rather than the narrative follow-up of key issues in the first interview favoured by BNIM (Wengraf, 2001), the repeat interviews in this study were approached as new encounters using the same single open-ended question as previous interviews. Interviews were participant-led and participants crafted and shaped their own meaning as they told their stories' (Roy, 2016a:4). The researcher's role as a facilitator was minimalistic (Gunaratnam, 2013), enabling the participants to lead the discussion.

I introduced the interview by prompting the participant with an opening statement: "We are at xxx (location), which you have chosen for this walk. I will leave you to it". There were no further prompts and I avoided interrupting participants as much as possible, except to reflect back the participant's frame of reference in line with the FANI approach. However, some aspects of the interview in some walks became more

conversational than others, which empowered participants to lead discussions while constructing their stories. The locations were important to the emerging narratives which often focused on everyday experiences of selling sex and sex work stigma. The stories were not always chronological, much in line with Kokanovic et al. (2013)'s observation that narratives are mutable and temporally ordered stories which are not always logically ordered.

The performance (subtle gestures during the telling, a planned/unplanned stop during the walk, reactions to the physical environment and/or objects, an angry outburst, a celebratory laugh, or silence following the discussion of a difficult occurrence) regularly altered the relationship between participant and researcher and informed the story (Mitchell, 2006). The interaction between the unconscious (the affective or sensory) and conscious (the prepared or rehearsed narrative) produced a kind of spontaneity often absent in structured interviews. This gave the walks an immense capacity to create embodied knowledge of place and performative practice (Doughty, 2013:141). Casey (2001:683) underscores the importance of these 'experiential features of place'; its "subjective" or "lived" aspects, as 'an arena of action that is at once physical and historical, social and cultural'. Walking therefore supported the psycho-social approach of the study.

Reflections on the Map-making and Walking Interviews as Methods

The combined methods of map-making and walking interviews enabled different ways for MSWers to narrate their everyday lives and lived experiences of sex work stigma, and the meaning of selling sex. Wheeldon and Åhlberg (2012) note that although

maps contribute to meaning, such meaning is often not logical. In this study, this was a strength; the maps were works of continuous improvisation, supporting the participants in making sense of their lives. The maps were more about a 'becoming rather than being', intrinsically 'dynamic and temporal' (Berger, 2005:124; Bryson, 2003:149). The maps complemented the unstructured nature of the walking interviews to facilitate the emerging Gestalt of participants.

Although the maps provided a basis for some of the subsequent walks, they also represented a discursive train of thought with various explanatory possibilities (Kokanovic et al., 2013), and attempts to understand. The stories of the maps were as valuable as those on the walks, often enabling meanings which came to the fore during the walks and analysis (Froggett & Trustram, 2014). Bourdieu theorises the logic of everyday life as emergent from social and physical relationships (1977, 1990), and from negotiated encounters between actor and situation, within place and socialization that is not always enacted with a conscious aim in mind. Together, map-making and walking interviews combine a spatial and temporal sensitivity, with map-making being dominantly about spatial organisation whereas walking is led by a logic of sequence. Map-making used the two registers of the past and the present (the here and now). The map-making session facilitated a pause which allowed the participants to reflect on their lives which were characterised by considerable change and instability. The sessions encouraged a temporal sensitivity, engagement in an activity that defied logical thinking, enabling them to consider among other issues, their hopes and fears, but also the ambivalence that the complexities of their lives as MSWers represented. The physical engagement with place and socialization through walking,

placing one foot after another, represented a logic of sequence, a succession of events that facilitated meaning, or lack of meaning. Hall and Smith (2018), suggest that walking is about searching; 'looking for something' as opposed to 'looking at something' which is indicative of the end of a search. This idea of a positive correlation between mobility and perception is important for this study and the walks became arenas for the participant and researcher to find themselves by walking together through locations of experience and knowledge.

Ingold's (2010a:128) analogy of the difference between drawing and walking, convey the way map-making and walking interviews have been used as complementary and contrasting aspects of a psycho-social approach to research in this study. Ingold (ibid) argues that while an inscription and a footprint can both depict movement, these are best navigated through attention to the surface texture and outline; footprints being more distinct on soft and malleable surfaces. Inscriptions of a liberated hand can appear as continuous lines but the path requires repeated walks to appear as a continuous line. The contribution that repeat walks made to the emergent knowledge generation and participant Gestalt is emphasised by the relationships developed over several walks together, trust unevenly developing like footprints, becoming more distinct from several walks on malleable surfaces. The inscriptions on the maps also become continuous lines when viewed in line with the overall account of the participant. Together, they signal that lives are complex and not always coherent, requiring different strategies and processes to attempt to manage the discomfort of this lack of coherence. This may include the stories we tell ourselves or others, mental pictures of a hopeful or hateful future, performances exuding self-confidence,

indifference or defeat. Abbott (2007) cautions against narrative science's impulse towards explanation. What the stories in the maps and walks enable are opportunities and attempts to present fragmented accounts of participants' lives which they are still making sense of. The social aspects of the methods – making maps and walking together over familiar landscapes while sharing seemingly familiar social stories, become inscribed into the psychically painful and shame-filled, but also of humour, enjoyment and positive recollections of events and encounters that are difficult to remember and share. The psycho-social approach to research which the methods enabled, facilitated for the participants, dialogic opportunities to process the lack of coherence and explanation, which reflect the tensions and ambivalence in their lives.

Scenic Composition

Why Scenic Composition?

Building trust with the study's participants over map-making and repeat walking interviews will contribute to gaining insight into their lives. An understanding of participants' unified Gestalt, from a configuration of how the different parts of their biography relate to each other (Rosenthal, 2018) is supported by how they experience, remember and narrate the events of their life. This will help me to identify the characteristic pattern or meaning frame that underlines their overall story, leading to an understanding of the 'told' story, and lived life (Wengraf, 2014). The maps and narratives from the walks present the participants opportunities to develop meaning-making structures, and the scenic compositions are the vehicle to represent these.

Methodological issues and concerns

A scenic composition, a methodological device, represents a researcher's attempt to synthesise complex experiences during data collection in an articulable form – using literary conventions - (Froggett et al., 2014). For this study, this took the form of re-imagining, presenting as a vignette or similar literary form, a poignant occurrence, discussion, or event – a provocation - during the research experience (map-making or walking interview) which encapsulated the essence of a participant's story. When Froggett and Hollway (2010) further developed Lorenzer's concept of scenic understanding (Lorenzer, 1986; Lorenzer & Orban, 1978) as a useful data analysis strategy in psycho-social research, they argued for a focus on a vivid and visualised rendering of data by attending to the provocations or irritations. A scenic composition should retain its emotional resonance for the purposes of data analysis (Hollway & Froggett, 2012).

Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) assertion that people's Gestalt emerges from their attempts to defend against anxieties underlines the psycho-social underpinnings of this study. As I synthesise the provocations in the maps and/or narratives for articulation in the scenic compositions, the unified Gestalt, a composite of a participants maps and interviews will emerge. However, a production of participant Gestalts from scenic compositions is limited by attempts to over-harmonise accounts in the face of anxiety which disrupts the presentation of transparent accounts.

As part of the design of this study, a scenic composition contributes towards researcher reflexivity, revealing my emotional involvement in the study and my affective relationships with the participants (Clarke & Hoggett, 2018).

How I used Scenic Compositions

I developed scenic compositions for each participant, from a provocation during their map-making session and/or a walking interview, relating it to the over-arching narrative as presented in a composite of their maps and interviews. I presented this as a vignette, conversation (from the actual data or re-imagined), a scene or re-telling of a story. The scenic compositions introduce the cases of each participant and are presented as a kind of a pen-picture/profile. It is a subjective interpretation of the emerging Gestalt of the participant (Ehrenzweig, 1967), a condensed narrative/composition from a rich and complex data set.

Research Context

In Manchester, MSWers have historically been associated with the area within a mile's radius of the Gay Village. TMR, previously known as the Blue Room, have facilitated arts-based activities, regular outreach and drop-in services for MSWers since 2008/09. The immediate motivation for this study is linked to events that occurred during my social work student placement at TMR. TMR acted as a gatekeeper agency and also supported the recruitment of participants for this study.

Recruitment of Participants

I attended creative sessions at TMR to meet potential participants (four sessions over two periods, with a two-year lapse): two sessions in October/November 2016 and two sessions in January/February 2019, recruiting two participants in each period, four in total. I attended drop-in health information and sessions for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)⁷ at TMR to meet potential participants. I joined TMR staff and volunteers on outreach sessions to increase my visibility to potential participants although I did not aim to recruit during outreach sessions. TMR shared the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) with potential participants within their service. One MSWer who had attended the PrEP Health sessions and also received a PIS from TMR consented to participate in the study. I met MSWers who expressed interest individually to further explain the study's aims and go through the PIS to ensure they understood expectations and commitments. Participants were given a minimum of two weeks to consider their involvement or otherwise after which I arranged a follow-up meeting. At this follow-up meeting, I reviewed their understanding of the PIS, offering opportunities for questions to clarify anything they were unsure of. I explained the 'active consent' process before arranging the first research meeting. Meetings were arranged via telephone calls or text messaging. All map-making sessions and walking interviews took place during the working hours of TMR, who were also notified of the session for safeguarding and gatekeeping purposes. A total of five MSWers agreed to participate in the study. However, one participant advised during an interview that he was not an MSWer and was consequently removed from the study. I have represented this in Table 1 below:

⁷ PrEP is recommended for MSWers as protection against HIV risk from sex or injection drug use.

Table 1: Recruitment Table

	Summary of Recruitment Activity		
Activity	Time	Results	Notes
Creative Sessions at The Men's Room.	1 x Session – Oct. 2016 1 x Session – Nov. 2016	2 x participants recruited – Eddie & Spock.	Spock removed from final sample.
Weekly Outreach with The Men's Room staff.	Oct. 2016 - Mar. 2017.	No participants recruited.	This activity was for familiarisation with potential participants and not to recruit participants during the Outreach sessions.
Participant Information flyers displayed at The Men's Room.	Oct. 2016 - Mar. 2017.	1 x participants recruited - Cameron (see notes).	Participant also had informal discussion with researcher during PrEP Health sessions.
PrEP Health sessions.	1 x weekly – Jan. 2017.	1 x participants recruited - Cameron (see notes).	Participant also picked Participant Information flyer displayed at The Men's Room.
Participant Information flyers displayed at The Men's Room.	Sep. – Dec. 2018.	No participants directly recruited.	N/A
Weekly Outreach with The Men's Room staff.	Sep. 2018 - Feb. 2019.	No participants recruited.	This activity was for familiarisation with potential participants and not to recruit participants during the Outreach sessions.
Creative Sessions at The Men's Room.	1 x Session – Jan. 2019. 1 x Session – Feb. 2019.	2 x participants recruited – Bunny & Oliver.	N/A

My difficulty in recruiting participants is an indication of the significant change and instability that this group of MSWers experience. This makes commitment to the relatively long-term expectations of the data collection methods difficult. For instance,

none of the participants who attended the October/November 2016 creative sessions were also participants in the January 2019 session, suggesting they no longer engaged with TMR. I spent considerable time arranging and re-arranging sessions, routines, availability and phone numbers changed frequently. Participants were unable to respond to telephone calls and/or text messages and arranged sessions had to be cancelled. At other times, participants' changed personal circumstances resulted in map-making session and walking interviews being re-arranged. This meant that the fieldwork which was originally planned for six-twelve months extended to more than 24 months.

The recruitment process highlighted some of the everyday challenges of this group of MSWers, further validating the everyday focus of the study. In one creative session, the introduction of my project was met with an awkward silence after which one attendee promptly announced that he was not a MSWer. A handful of other attendees also declared their non-MSWer status and the session facilitator changed the subject by introducing an activity. Reflecting psycho-socially on this incident, I considered that publicly identifying as a MSWer even in a session run by an agency that supports MSWers potentially threatened one's self-integrity, provoking anxiety that resulted in investment in a discourse to defend against this threat. TMR staff later confirmed that the attendee who first declared he was not a MSWer had a history of selling sex. Paradoxically, two attendees approached me privately at the end of the session to consent to participate in the study, one subsequently declining the offer of vouchers for participation. I reflected on the different ways people defend against anxiety in situations that threaten their self-integrity; why they some participants publicly ruled

themselves out of the study while others responded privately. A psycho-social methodology offers different opportunities to live with and make sense of the tensions and ambivalence in their lives.

Although ethical approval was received for 6-8 participants, 5 participants were recruited, (with 1 subsequently removed for ineligibility). Recruitment was difficult and longer than originally anticipated. The period of recruitment (two phases) run from October 2016 – March 2017 and then from September 2018 – February 2019. This lengthening of field work and changing circumstances of participants enriched the quality of data collected, giving it an ethnographic quality that captured the everyday lives of MSWers as they experienced it.

Researcher Position

Beedell (2018) depicts the psycho-social research journey as one of entangling and unentangling of emotions, your own and your participants'. Hollway (2001) describes the often-unconscious process in psycho-social research where the participant can project painful emotions to the researcher who provides containment for the participant. Containment relates to an ability to receive, process, and manage emotional communication from someone without being overwhelmed (Bion, 1984; Douglas, 2007). Guest (2015) argued that her skills as a counsellor helped but was not sufficient to manage the emotional challenges in her psycho-social study of resilience in care experienced individuals because of how immersed she was in the study. In this study, containment operated in two directions, because participants and researcher were defended (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). My professional training as a

social worker, and previous experiences with MSWers were helpful but not sufficient for containment. In this section, I reflect on some of the entangling and unentangling of emotions within the research process and how I have attempted to mitigate these.

Reflexivity is not unique to psycho-social research; qualitative research encourages researchers to be aware of and manage the effects of their interpersonal relationships with their participants. Aldridge (2016) submits that reflexivity is as an imperative for addressing power imbalances and democratising research relationships in participatory research. However, certain practices create further polarity between researcher and participant, particularly when relationships are constructed in professionalised and formalised ways. How one positions oneself within the research relationship is important to becoming aware of how relationships might affect the research process. In psycho-social research, both researcher and participant are positioned as ambivalent within the research relationship and environment, and can therefore affect the content and context of interviews through their unconscious defences against anxiety. Two relevant insider categories influenced my approach and conduct within the interviews; a lived experience of selling sex, and an appreciation of a lived experience of selling sex by reason of association, support and/or advocacy. My previous roles with TMR placed me in the second category but with no lived experience of selling sex, such an insider position was limited and could be constructed as an outsider. As a Black, and male social worker (two minority positions in social work), I could infer from this lived experience of exclusion although it differed from that of MSWers. Previous PhD researchers, particularly Campbell (2016) and Ryan (2019) - activists and researchers while undertaking their PhD

studies with FSWers - reported role confusion in insider and outsider positions similar to my position in this study. My insider-outsider position, coupled with the immersion typical of a psycho-social approach to research meant a greater level of entangling and unentangling. Finlay (2002) stressed that examining the interpersonal dynamics of one's presence as a researcher and its effect on the research process helps to promote rich insight. I considered myself an In-Between, an intersection of being an insider and outsider at the same time. However, this assumes a fixed notion of positionality whereas in practice my position varied with each participant and with the relationship and environment. For instance, during one walk, a participant recounted a particularly challenging experience of a sexual assault, which resulted in the suicide of his boyfriend. I reacted by stopping involuntarily, leading the participant to also stop, which temporarily halted the interview. After this initial involuntary response, my training as a professional social worker and researcher took over, and appropriately asked the relevant questions to check if the participant was emotional ready to continue the interview. That notwithstanding, the participant observed that I had been emotionally affected by the story and we agreed a short recess (to recollect our emotions). Ordinarily, this would have been a situation where I would have been classed as an outsider. I had neither been sexually assaulted nor witnessed a suicide, but this unexpected account triggered an unconscious memory and produced anxiety that I unconsciously defended against. This story had threatened my sense of integrity of self and professional role but also affected the interview - the nature of knowledge generated. My unconscious defence truncated the flow of the story and a different story might have emerged had I been less affected emotionally. This experience also altered our research relationship with the participant attempting to mediate/censor

future accounts of an emotional nature because of his perception of my inability to contain them.

I felt I had an appreciation for 'insider' perspectives from my previous experiences with MSWers and was confident I would relate to, and present MSWers stories respectfully. I had expected the interviews to reveal personal, intimate, and difficult experiences of MSWers and felt prepared for this. I was familiar with terminologies, locations and some experiences. However, I did not have insight into how the participants' positioned me within the study. I learnt that some participants saw me as an outsider because of my lack of experiential knowledge while others regarded me as an insider because of my previous association with TMR. These positionings by participants also changed with map-making sessions and walking interviews, and was a positive learning journey but occasionally challenged the knowledge generation process and researcher-participant relationship. My relationship with one participant was a teacher-student one with the participant taking the advantage of our session and walks to educate me. His accounts were detailed and included background commentary on the historical, social and political context of MSW, and he saw his participation in the study as a contribution to knowledge.

Because the psycho-social approach assumes that 'the told story' is not always transparent (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), I sometimes found myself questioning whether participants accounts were rehearsed or exaggerated for the benefit of the study. Many of the experiences shared and stories told were emotionally difficult and

shameful. Probyn (2010:72) observed that 'shame is a painful thing to write about..', involving an exposure of intimacies of selves in public. Berlant (2010) goes further to argue that there is an even deeper shame in the inability to convey something appropriately. I have grappled with this challenge of being true to participants' stories without exposing private shame, publicly.

Killi, Moilanen and Larkins (2021) stress that researchers need to acknowledge how their shifting professional and social positions in relation to research participants (direct historical connections), can influence assumptions and practices in the research environment. They draw on Bourdieu's (1992) notion of epistemic reflexivity; how social locations are connected to the processes of knowing. My various positions as an insider, outsider, and in-betweener had implications for the research relationships, environment and knowledge production. How did any (un)conscious discomfort I may have experienced as a Black, heterosexually-identified man in the company of a White, gay and/or bisexual man in the Gay Village affect the way I conducted my interviews? What unconscious signals did I give to the participants which might have affected the production of knowledge? Did my presentation encourage a participant to adopt a position of a teacher? How did my professional values as a social worker influence my presentation? How did any previous association with a participant influence my presentation? For instance, I had considered whether or not to include Spock who I subsequently removed from the sample. Although Spock had indicated that they were not a MSWer, they had twice self-selected to participate in a study about MSWers. My previous association with Spock and recommendation by TMR suggested that they had experience of selling

sex. The psycho-social underpinning of the study framed participants as not always transparent to their own narratives, and invested in particular discourses as a defensive against anxiety. The tension between his stated position and other information led me to include Spock in the original participant sample. Killi, Moilanen and Larkins (ibid) submit that previous connections can have benefits but also occasion bias. My association with TMR allowed appreciation of the lived experiences of MSWers, and earned their trust, but could also have occasioned bias in my analysis and the issues I prioritised. An TMR client once 'appreciatively' described my volunteering role as 'stress for zero'. Like Alexander (2000), I consider such previous connections as 'hard-won trust', giving me a foothold into participants' world to hear their stories.

To minimise the impact of my positioning on the study, I designed the data collection and analysis in ways that acknowledge and respond to these. I drew on two methods which supported different ways of eliciting participants' stories. The repeat walking interviews created opportunities for stories to be constructed and re-constructed, and minimised reliance on a single narrative constructed from the researcher's frame of relevance. The Interpretive Data Analysis Panels (IDAPs) also offered opportunities for analysis beyond that of a single, invested researcher. I carefully selected data with the most provocations for the IDAPs to allow further exploration.

Ethics

Ethics is important in research with human participants, especially where there is a perceived or real possibility of vulnerability. Researchers act to ensure that participants and others are not affected negatively by studies, in line with the principle of beneficence. Psycho-social research is a fertile ground for more complex forms of beneficence because of its focus on affective and sensory knowledge, and anxiety-driven performances. Ruch (2014) recommends going beyond non-maleficence (harm) to consider how intangible and unpredictable vulnerabilities during the research process might affect participants and knowledge creation.

I confronted issues of power imbalances - vulnerability, confidentiality, anonymity, consent etc.- during the recruitment process, but also during and post-fieldwork. For instance, there was a risk that my previous roles at TMR could influence participants' decision to engage in the study as compensation for having supported them. I could also have been privy to information about participants, leaving them vulnerable.

I acknowledge my academic and professional motivations for undertaking this study. Support from TMR as a gatekeeper and reflective supervision from my research supervisory team helped me balance and manage the complex relationships and situations arising from academic, professional and other motivations. I reflect on the sufficiency of the university's formal ethics processes in addressing the challenges of 'doing research' with this group of MSWers in Manchester (Fletcher, 2017). Guillemin and Gillam (2004) point out that research's primary concern is knowledge generation,

the result of an active process of recruitment, data collection and analysis. The relationship between the researcher and participant(s) is in effect an engagement in knowledge production. All our efforts, well-intended and guided by the principle of beneficence as they may be, are aimed at generating rich data. Acknowledging that our motivations are driven by personal, professional and academic interests to generate knowledge, and how these may predispose us to act, consciously and unconsciously is important. Psycho-social research recognises that relationships and actions are intrinsic to knowledge generation. However, our motivations are not always transparent, even to ourselves, meaning our ability to explicitly acknowledge self-interests in knowledge production is limited (Fletcher, *ibid*). During 'ethically important moments', - those unpredictable situations in the field which require real-life ethical decision-making (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004) - this is particularly important. It is important to reflect on how emotional aspects of fieldwork impact on the knowledge generation process and decision-making in the face of participants' pain (Gunaratnam, 2012; Kara, 2018). The tensions between our knowledge production interests and beneficence can be difficult to assess at the early stage of the project when ethical applications are submitted for approval (Fletcher, *ibid*). For instance, I anticipated the practitioner-researcher conflict from both participant and researcher perspectives and received ethical approval for TMR to act as a gatekeeper in response to this. However, I could not have pre-empted and planned for a participant's disclosure of suicide and how to respond to this within the formal ethics application process. I adopted Dingwall's (2008) recommendation of an ethics of care, based on foundational principles of trust and care; following participants' lead to determine risk, as much as possible. However, this was not always possible as in the example discussed. It is important that in the unpredictability of the everyday, especially within a research

context that is affected by the space and place of interaction, and the temporalities that the framework for data collection has sources of support such as the gatekeeper role of TMR to contain such eventualities.

Financial Compensation for Participants

Views on financial compensation (cash payments as well as vouchers) for participation in research is divided. Financial compensation in qualitative research can be problematic because of the potential implications for participant recruitment, motivation, coercion and ultimately research integrity (Head, 2009). However, Edwards et al. (2002) and (Thompson, 1996) argue that financial compensation has a positive effect on recruitment and participation, and Nordling (2023) concurs that even small financial compensations have a positive effect. Descartes, Asencio, and Blank (2011), agree that some participants in their study with low-income marginalised men about the effects of prostate cancer on sexuality and relationships, were motivated by the financial compensation. Head (2009) reports that financial compensation was instrumental in recruiting participants for her study with lone parents. For studies with vulnerable participants, financial compensation needs to be critically examined because such populations can be more susceptible to influence (Crow et al., 2006; Ripley, 2006). However, Largent and Lynch (2017b) conclude that while influence from payments is a legitimate concern, this is only applicable in limited instances, and payment-related coercion, if properly understood, is not a legitimate concern. Together with Grady (2019), Largent and Lynch (2017a) call for Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) to consider higher payments to mitigate exploitation and make research fairer.

All participants in this study received a £5 supermarket voucher for every interaction (map-making, walking interview). I argue with Grady (2019) that financially compensating research participants is both ethically acceptable and consistent with principles of social justice through promoting fairness and respect of participants. Including marginalised populations like MSWers in research means considering the financial and other implications of their participation. Participants need to be compensated for inconvenience and time spent, loss of earnings etc. without such compensation influencing their motivation for participation in studies. Warnock, Taylor and Horton (2022), using a Feminist Political Economy (FPE) lens, argued for an 'ethics of care' which explores an understanding of the contexts, and intersubjective vulnerabilities of researcher and participant (embodied needs and relationships) within which decisions are made. They argue that researchers and participants share a sense of precarious interdependence with PhD/Early Career Researchers having limited support for their studies, while participants like MSWers may have unpredictable or irregular wages, financial insecurity from high costs of living and low wages and/or welfare within geographies of austerity and precarity.

An option, chosen by this study, is to consider using vouchers instead of cash. Neale et al.'s (2017) informal study with a Service User Research Group (SURG) on the subject indicated although there was an overall preference for cash, participants felt that vouchers removed the temptation to spend money unwisely and to spend them on everyday needs. For this study, participants were already familiar with both the method and amount as TMR had an established system of compensating participants at creative and other sessions via supermarket vouchers. Retaining this practice

promoted an 'ethics of respect' within which participants felt 'compensated but not paid' for their time. The £5 value of vouchers meant they were tokenistic; insignificant in comparison to potential loss of earnings of MSWers for the same duration. They represent a way of minimising risks to the integrity of the study as participants were unlikely to have been financially motivated by such a tokenistic value.

Ethics Committee Application and Approval

An ethics application was submitted to, reviewed and approved by the independent University of Central Lancashire Ethics Committee for Psychology and Social Work (PSYSOC). Ethical approval was granted for 6-8 participants.

Additionally, the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form (CF) were discussed with and approved by the Gatekeeper agency, TMR. Both the PIS and CF are attached in the appendices A and B respectively of this thesis.

Confidentiality, Anonymity, and Consent

MSWers encounter significant stigma, shame, and violence, some linked to disclosure (accidental or intentional) of selling sex. Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity were therefore crucial to knowledge production, protection of participants' interests and research integrity. However, achieving complete anonymity is often impossible (Clark, 2006; Singleton & Strait, 1999). This challenge goes to the heart of the integrity and authenticity of data collection. Informed readers know the Gay Village is central

in male-to-male sexual relationships in Manchester (including sex work) because this is documented in the city's cultural and tourist information. Academic research (Atkins, 2013; Atkins & Laing, 2012; Ellison, 2017; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016) has identified TMR as a key agency supporting MSWers in Manchester. To protect participants against the dangers of disclosure, participant-selected pseudonyms have been used throughout this thesis. Other identifiable details like related persons, venues and events have been anonymised (where possible without unduly altering the narrative). For instance, when a participant wanted to use a friend's name in their story to eulogise them, this was declined.

All participants were adults (18 years+ with mental capacity) and provided a signed consent. Participants were briefed on the active consent process; their right to withdraw consent up to six months after the last engagement, and provisions beyond. Signed consent forms containing personal information were kept secure and separate from transcribed interviews and participants were notified of this arrangement. Prior to consenting, the role of TMR as gatekeeper was explained to ensure that participants understood that their participation/non-participation in the study would not affect their ability to receive support from TMR. Participants were briefed individually, and had opportunities to clarify any issues. Consent was gained and signed individually.

Participants had the option to proofread, edit and approve transcripts from both the map-making sessions and walking interviews to ensure that they agreed with final versions of their stories. No participant did this although one participant indicated that

he had digitally recorded all had walking interviews. While meaningful in principle, the fact that participants declined to proofread, edit and approve transcripts questions the practicalities of such practices in the face of emotionally challenging interviews and the ability to read and understand transcripts.

All sessions were audio-recorded with a digital voice recorder. I manually transcribed all interviews to ensure that all identifying information were removed from the transcript or anonymised. In addition to the supervisory team who read drafts of the participant case studies and discussions, panel members of IDAPs were given access to selected chunks of interviews and maps as part of the data analysis process. However, identifying features in transcripts and maps were removed prior to being made available to IDAP members. Panel members had no access to audio recordings, full interview transcripts or complete maps.

Vulnerability

Turner and Webb (2014) contend that research participants are often constructed within 'Procedural Ethics' applications as vulnerable, especially in situations where prior professional relationships between researcher and participants could disadvantage participants. However, within the context of this study, this binarised view is unhelpful and does not reflect the more nuanced and subtle reality of the field encounter. While it is important to acknowledge, and plan for physical, emotional, and other risks to the participant during the research process, it is also important to emphasise the psycho-social position of both researcher and participant as defended,

situating both as vulnerable within field encounters. Participants were self-selecting and informed of the active consent process. Map-making sessions and walking interviews were participant-led, and participant-defined. For instance, a participant curtailed the discussion and ended the interview during a walk when they felt that they had said enough. A follow-up call established that they had chosen not to participate in further interviews but still wanted all the recorded interviews to be included in the study. On another occasion, a participant advised that they had been admitted to the hospital since the last interview, were receiving continuing support and were well enough to participate in the interview; TMR were notified to ensure effective follow-up. I concur with Gunaratnam (2012) that receiving and acting as a psychological container for emotionally difficult stories was challenging. Constructions of participants as vulnerable and researchers as empowered in fieldwork do not adequately address containment in fieldwork encounters, and how the pendulum of vulnerability swings between participant and researcher in such encounters.

Data Analysis

There were three levels of analysis; scenic compositions, IDAPs, and phenomenological whole text, non-fragmented reading and interpretation of the transcribed recordings (McCormick, 2010), with these complementing each other. These supported bringing broader life experience and sets of viewpoints to bear on the data, as well as working to unpick the defended subjectivity of the researcher and participants (Roy, 2016a).

In all, eight maps from three map-making sessions have been analysed in this thesis. The map-making sessions were an average of 30 minutes each although two sessions were more than an hour long. Twelve walking interviews from four participants have been analysed. These averaged an hour each with the shortest being about 40 minutes.

Interpretive Data Analysis Panels (IDAPs)

The IDAPs were the beginning of the data analysis. IDAPs are used in Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) research to augment data interpretation; by small research teams (Corbally & O'Neill, 2014), support initial analysis in large datasets (Roseneil, 2012), and promote broader interpretation of data and minimise researcher bias from narrow interpretation (Roy, 2016a; Wengraf, 2014). IDAPs have also been used to explore the impact the relationship between the lone researcher and participant can have on interpretation (Froggett & Wengraf, 2004; Roy, 2016a), which is of particular interest to this study.

I convened six (6) IDAPs to support the analysis of data: one set of participant maps, and five separate walking interviews. There were 3-4 members in each IDAP which I facilitated without guiding discussions. Each IDAP was 1-2 hours long, and there were two in-person and four online (Zoom) panels. I made notes during the IDAPs, and panel members gave me their notes at the end of the in-person panels. I received permission from members to record the online IDAPs which supported notes taken and those emailed to me by members post-panel. Panel members included people

with similar and dissimilar interests and experiences to the participants to give a broad perspective to the interpretation. Panel membership included a previous MSWer, academics with(out) research interests in sex work, staff and volunteers of TMR including those working for other agencies supporting MSWers, and a student on placement with TMR.

In line with the BNIM interpretation process (Wengraf, 2001:258-9), chunks of data were presented to and analysed by panel members, with the data presented chunk by chunk. Text selections were based on provocations and ambiguities in the data and/or maps; panel analysis therefore supported a wider interpretation process beyond the researcher, to unpick the provocation and ambiguity. As a lone researcher, I am immersed in the data through extended association with participants over map-making and repeat walks. There is danger of limited analysis from partial understandings filtered through personal history and experiences within and outside the map-making and walking interviews. The IDAPs offer extended and broader interpretation; arguments and counter arguments to enrich the possible narrow, associative or over interpretation from a lone, immersed and invested researcher. In BNIM, IDAPs are presented with three hypotheses; original, counter and tangential (Wengraf, 2001). I did not present the panels with hypotheses, allowing each panel to develop and lead its own discussions which informed my overall analysis.

The maps were presented to the panel, one after the other. The interview data was also presented by the chunks sequentially, enabling members to analyse topical

discussions from interviews. Panel members were privy to one chunk at a time and made inferences on these. A protocol for the IDAPs was adapted from Salling Olesen & Weber (2012), grounded in a psycho-societal methodology as described below. The analysis of the maps followed the pattern: the 'obvious' referential content (what is seen), the meta-communicative content (the emotions and feelings evoked) and the understanding gained by theoretical and background factual knowledge (why the maps might be important to their maker). The analysis of the walking interview chunks followed a similar pattern: the 'obvious' referential content (what is said), the meta-communicative content (how it is said), the emotions and feelings evoked (the rhythm and tenor of the account and/or exchange) and the understanding gained by theoretical and background factual knowledge (why it was said in that particular way).

Understanding my investment in MSWers' discourses and how such investment impacted on the research process (data collection as well as analysis) supported an analysis which recognised my influence on meaning-making. The IDAPs provided opportunities for more nuanced and critical analysis than I would have achieved as a lone researcher. It also enabled a self-reflexive understanding of 'my stance in the research and of my choices in the construction of the narrative' (Blumenreich, 2004:84).

I have summarised the IDAP process in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Interpretive Data Analysis Table

	Summary of Field Work		
Participant	Maps	Walking Interviews	IDAP
Eddie	1 x Map – Feb. 2017: 30 mins 1 x Map – March 2018: 70 mins.	Walk 1: Canal Street, Mar. 2017: 60 mins. Walk 2: Chorlton Street Car Park, Apr. 2017: 65 mins. Walk 3: Sackville Gardens, Jul. 2017: 45 mins. Walk 4.1: Tariff Street Car Park, Jul. 2017: 60 mins. Walk 4.2: Tariff Street Car Park, Aug. 2017: 60 mins Walk 5: Piccadilly Gardens, Sep. 2017: 65 mins	1 x IDAP on walking interview, via Zoom, May 2020: 85 mins. IDAP participants: - 2 x PhD student members of the Sex Work Research Hub (SWRH). Both were researching FSW. - Facilitation: GD
Cameron	N/A Pre-walk meeting at Flat, Feb. 2019: 40 mins.	Walk 1: Debdale Park, Mar. 2017: 60 mins. Walk 2: Debdale Park, Mar. 2017: 60 mins.	1 x IDAP on walking interview via Zoom, May 2020: 75 mins. IDAP participants: - 1 x PhD student member of the Sex Work Research Hub (SWRH). FSW researcher. - 2 x academic members of the Sex Work Research Hub (SWRH). - Facilitation: GD
Bunny	1 x Map – Feb. 2019: 45 mins	Walk 1: Sackville Gardens, Feb. 2019: 60 mins. Walk 1: Sackville Gardens, Feb. 2019: 85 mins.	1 x IDAP on walking interview via Zoom, May 2020: 100 mins. - 2 x PhD student members of the Sex Work Research Hub (SWRH). Both were researching FSW. - Facilitation: GD
Oliver	1 x Map – Feb. 2019: 110 mins	Walk 1: Major Street Car Park, Feb. 2019: 70 mins. Walk 2: Piccadilly Gardens, Feb. 2019: 75 mins.	1 x IDAP on maps, TMR, May 2019: 130 mins. IDAP participants: - 1 x staff member of TMR. - 1 x student social worker on Placement at TMR. - 1 x volunteer at TMR. Also employed by an LGBT charity. - Facilitation: GD 1 x IDAP on walking interview, UCLan, Apr, 2019: 120 mins. IDAP participants: - 2 x academic – non sex work researchers. - GD. - Facilitation: Supervisory Team Member. 1 x IDAP on walking interview, via Zoom, Apr. 2020: 90 mins. IDAP participants: - 1 x PhD student member of the Sex Work Research Hub (SWRH). FSW researcher. - 1 x student social worker on Placement at TMR. - Facilitation: GD.

Analysis of Recordings

McCormick (2010) describes the phenomenological project as seeking a comprehensive exploration of meaning; not fragmented or collapsed in the process. The interviews and maps (including commentaries during map-making sessions) of individual participants were analysed as a whole and not as separate interviews. There were three levels of analysis: (a) audio recordings without written transcripts, (b) audio recordings with written transcripts (c) written transcripts without audio recordings. Where applicable, the maps were analysed at the three levels to gain an appreciation of their links with transcripts. Where no clear links were established between written transcripts from the walks and maps, the maps were analysed as part of the whole account of the individual. All interviews from the same participant were transcribed verbatim and saved in a password protected computer folder with their chosen pseudonym. The folders (four in total), of participant maps and interviews were analysed separately and developed into four separate case studies.

Case studies were developed from the maps (where applicable) and walking interviews. There is also a case study of TMR's model of support for MSWers which is important to the findings of this study. Yin (2018) notes a trilogy of usage in case studies; case study research (mode of inquiry), case studies (method of inquiry) and case (unit of inquiry), usefully highlighting the relationship between qualitative research and case study research as dependent on disciplinary and methodological underpinnings. For this study, case studies are used, in line with Yin's (2018:15) view, to enable an in-depth focus on the everyday lives and lived experiences of MSWers, drawing on multiple sources of evidence in a triangulating fashion. Stake's (1995)

understanding of case studies centre on the affordances they enable for studying the particularity and complexity within a context for interpretation. Stake (2006) argues that multicase studies (such as those of the four participants in this study) allow a cross-case analysis to support interpretation.

Blumenreich (2004) cautions against totalizing interpretations and encourages attempts to capture the complex and fluid identities of participants. The cases developed drew out the peculiarities and complexities of the lives of the participants. While exploring cross-case analysis, the focus on peculiarities in the cases studies ensured that the participants' stories were not seen as homogenous accounts. This supported a view away from totalising discourses which are reductionist and simplistic, contributing to the essentialising views of MSWers that this study challenges. A discussion chapter explores key findings, seeking to answer the central questions of the study but also addressing the unexpected, emergent themes in a phenomenological search for essence that the associative nature of this study enables.

Challenges

Undertaking fieldwork by mobile methods, particularly walking interviews is challenging in terms of recording the interviews due to background sounds. Many of the locations for the walks with the study's participants were public places such as Piccadilly Gardens, Canal Street and Sackville Gardens. This meant that one could not control background sounds as it was difficult to anticipate the number of people

within the location, what they were engaging in and how these affected the sound that filtered into the recording. This was further complicated by the need to record interviews in as discreet a way as possible to avoid drawing attention to the participant and researcher alike by holding a recording device close to them. As the walks were side-by-side rather than face-to-face, there was risk of distortion in the recording which made transcription more challenging than it would have been in a controlled/contained environment such as a room.

The public location of the walks also meant that there was always the possibility that either the participant or researcher could be recognised by a member of the public which could interrupt or affect the flow of the interview. This was minimal during the walks in this study with participants and researcher alike being able to 'wave off' acquaintances without interruptions to the interviews. However, on one interview, a participant was distracted towards the end by engagement in Pokémon Go, an augmented reality game which involve locating items within the player's physical environment. These are important consideration for future studies using walking interviews.

Recruitment for this study was long and challenging due to the lifestyles of participants and the study design. Many of the MSWers who engage with TMR present with challenging needs and circumstances which mean that aspects of their lives are transitory. For instance, many experienced a form of homelessness which meant that commitment to the 'long-term' nature of this study (repeat walking interviews rather

than a single interview) was a challenge. During the two periods of recruitment, many MSWers expressed interest in participating in the study but changed their minds on finding out about the level of commitment required. This affected the number of participants recruited for the study.

Conclusion

The methodology developed for this study was informed in part by my experience with the group of MSWers supported by TMR. During a short but intensive period at TMR as a student engagement worker and volunteer, I found that TMR's non-judgemental and open-door approach to supporting MSWers was both humanising and empowering. This transcended a needs and resource-led intervention driven by eligibility, compliance and progress towards pre-determined outcomes. The MSWers who returned to TMR week after week did so because of TMR's focus on more-than-intervention and MSWers were empowered to choose engagement on their terms. I learnt through the TMR approach that a methodology that focused beyond the formal aspects of selling sex was most likely to engage this group of MSWers in the study. The methodology was also underpinned by a psycho-social ontology to bridge the sociological-psychological divide in the experience of stigma.

This chapter has provided the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this study as well as the theoretical, ethical, practical justification for the methods and how they were used in the study. I developed a unique methodology that combined map-making and repeat walking interviews to create a collage of maps, stories, experiences

and performances that reflected lives rich in ordinariness and complexity. These have been summarised and provided the foundation for the case studies of 'Four Men, Four Lives' presented in the next chapter. The inextricable connectedness between the social and psychic is evident in these accounts of everyday lives, contributing to answering the research questions but also posing new questions.

CHAPTER 4

FOUR MEN, FOUR LIVES

Introduction

“All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts...”

(As you Like It, Act 2, Scene 7).

The cases presented in this chapter are a synthesis of the walking interviews, and in most cases, the maps created by the four participants. Although there are aspects of the participants biography, they are not written as biographical accounts and serve to support the identification of the emergent Gestalt of each participant as a unique individual. The lives of the participants presented in these case studies have a psycho-social quality; simultaneously produced by their psychic worlds and a shared social world (Gadd & Jefferson, 2007:4), the particularities of the participants' unique experiences of family, friendships, hopes, and also their disappointments, loss, psychic conflicts and ambivalences' (Roseneil, 2006: 847), and a shared experience of their interaction with others. Such psycho-social subjects are those 'whose inner worlds cannot be understood without knowledge of their experiences in the world, and whose experiences of the world cannot be understood without knowledge of the way in which their inner worlds allow them to experience the outer worlds (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013:4). The case studies are therefore episodes which contribute to eliciting that overall account of the life lived as it is presented. I have introduced each

case with a scenic composition, a subjective experience or scene from the research relationship (Hollway & Froggett, 2012). A 'Case Overview' concludes and highlights some key points arising from the participant's stories, which are further addressed in the 'Discussion' chapter. This is introduced with a brief pen picture of the participant, summarising key events from their biography that emerged from the map-making and walks.

Eddie

Before I knew....

Eddie was more animated than I remembered. It had been six months since I last saw him and as we sat down with two mugs of hot drinks, paper, pencils, and pens between us on the table, Eddie seemed eager to talk. This table at Costa Coffee was very different to enclosed office space at TMR where we met for the first map-making session. We must have looked like two friends or colleagues catching up over a working lunch but it was clear that Eddie wanted more than just a catch-up. Afterall, he never asked for a copy of the first map. But this was his venue, his time, his maps, his agenda. There was no walk, no Dictaphone, no recording; just Eddie and I with two mugs of hot drinks, paper, pencils, pens, and a table between us.

Eddie created a new set of maps, piecing the sheets of paper together to capture key locations in our walks together. He did not make eye contact and focused on making his maps, all the while talking about his ex-boyfriend. This was all about his ex-boyfriend; his sexual assault, his suicide which was part of why Eddie said he began selling sex. Yet, his ex-boyfriend's real name can't appear in the research because of confidentiality. Eddie was animated again as he questioned why he didn't have the choice to eulogise his ex-boyfriend and said he felt robbed of his own story.

It hit me that in many of his stories, Eddie frequently introduced key events or decisions with the phrase "Before I knew...", a sense that choices had been foisted on him and the outcomes were accidental or incidental. Eddie now felt muted of the opportunity

to celebrate his ex-boyfriend, which 'before he knew it...', had been decided by the university's ethics process. This time, Eddie took charge of the decision to make the maps, chose the venue and time, reclaiming control over the decisions of his life as well as his own account. This time, the boot was on the other foot. 'Before I knew...', I was in the middle of a discussion about research ethics, the importance of anonymity, and co-production. Before I knew....

Eddie's Maps and Walks

Eddie completed two sets of maps and six walks over a period of thirteen months, starting with the first map-making session at TMR's offices in mid-February 2017 and ending with the final map-making session at Costa Coffee in mid-March 2018. Over these thirteen months, I got to know Eddie during a period in which he experienced significant changes in his life including attempting to take his own life and spending a significant time in hospital with mental ill-health. I had previously supported Eddie as a student at TMR and anticipated that we would both be guarded in this different (researcher-participant) relationship. This lengthy relationship was therefore important to enabling him to share his story. Eddie identified and led walks to five locations: Canal Street, Chorlton Street Coach Station Car Park, Sackville Gardens, Piccadilly Gardens, and two walks to Tariff Street. These locations were all within a mile's radius of Manchester's Gay Village, which was central in Eddie's last set of maps.

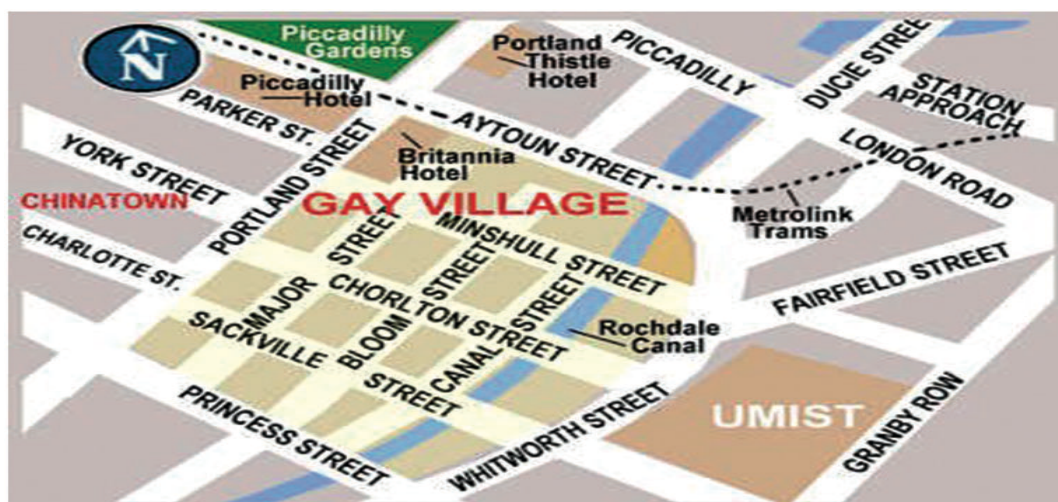


Fig. 1. Street map of the Gay Village Manchester showing Sackville Street, Canal Street, Chorlton Street, Piccadilly Gardens and Dulcie Street which leads up to Tariff Street. Credit: John Moss, Papillon Graphics.

Map-Making Session 1: Mid-February 2017

Eddie was waiting for me at TMR in a room allocated to us for the map-making session. He responded formally to my attempts to build rapport with monosyllabic and non-committal answers to questions intended to generate conversation, and wanted to get on with the map-making. I thought Eddie adopted this 'business-like' manner to hide his anxiety about the session. I explained the plan for the session and brought out different sizes and colours of paper, pencils, and pens for the map-making. Eddie identified a sheet of paper and then proceeded to direct me to write the names of five locations. He then asked me to use arrows to link them directionally according to his proposed order of the walks, with himself at the centre. I numbered the locations according to the order Eddie had chosen. All of Eddie's locations, with their proximity to the Gay Village and connected to MSW, suggested that both selling sex and his connection to the Village were important to Eddie's life as a Gay, sex-selling young man.

Eddie had decided on his locations ahead of the session which meant the session lasted about 30 minutes. There was an awkward silence after the locations had been identified and mapped onto the paper. Being the very first session of the research project, I had not anticipated such a short session. We spent a few minutes to plan the first walk and finished the session.

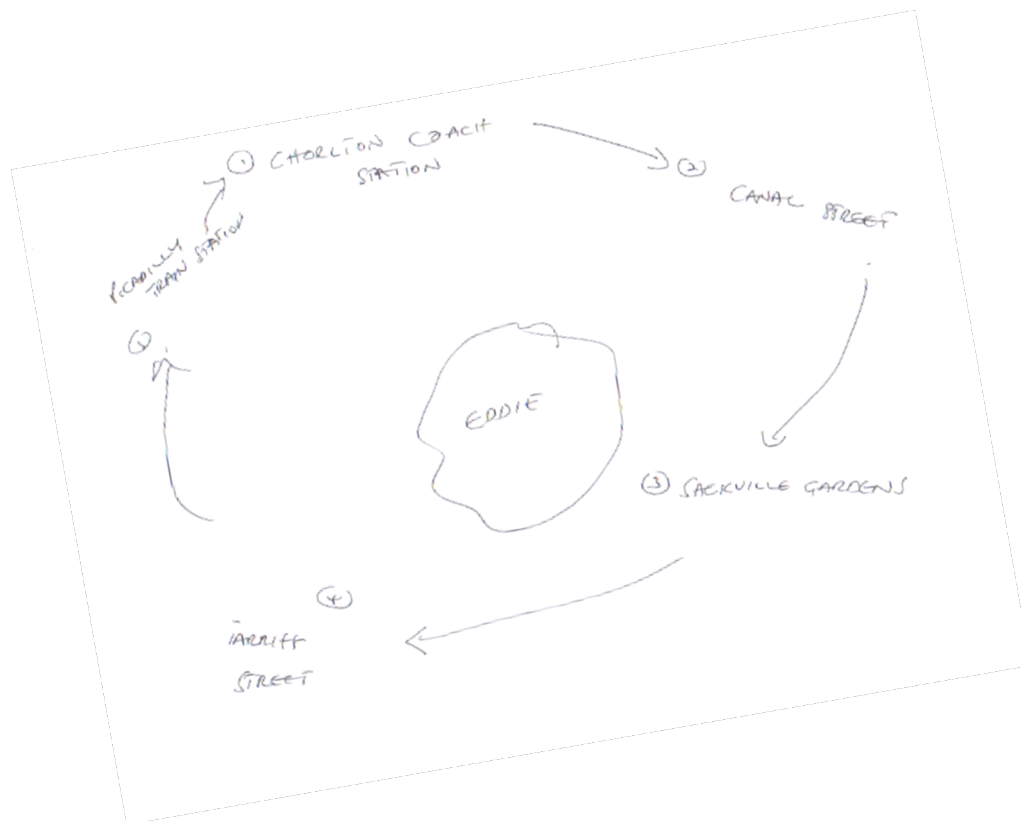


Fig. 2: Map from Initial Map-making session. Credit: Eddie/G. Dake

Having completed the activity, Eddie became relaxed and chatty. He told me that many of the 'old lads' no longer attended the TMR creative sessions or drop-ins and as he did not know many of the new ones, he had not been attending as much as he used to. He said he hoped the sessions would return to 'Shena Simon', a campus of the Manchester College which had previously hosted the weekly MSWer-specific drop-

in sessions when I was a student or volunteered with TMR. Eddie said when he walked into Shena Simon for the drop-ins, he imagined himself as a college student and felt he was doing something worthwhile with his life. As we parted, I wondered why he had not chosen Shena Simon as a location and pondered over Eddie's need to do something worthwhile with his life.

Walk 1, Canal Street: Early-March 2017

Canal Street is at the heart of Manchester's Gay Village, lined with bars and restaurants which are Gay-friendly. A pedestrianised street, it is popular with visitors to Manchester including the LGBT community and regarded as the centre of the LGBT culture in Manchester. It is linked to the North to Minshull Street, which houses Manchester's crown courts. Walking through Canal Street, one looks across the Rochdale Canal to Sackville Gardens on the one side, and to the Chorlton Street Coach Station on the other, two of Eddie's locations.

I met Eddie at the Minshull Street end of Canal Street and walked up and down the street for about an hour. We often paused, stopped and stood momentarily as Eddie pointed out why a point on the location was important to him and his life as a MSWer. On this bright March afternoon, three weeks after we had originally planned the walk, with a few people having drinks on the outdoor tables of the bars and restaurants overlooking the canal, Eddie walked and talked me through (re-lived and re-enacted) a walk he had undertaken four or five years earlier.

*Eddie: Yeah, this is where it all started. ... So, **before I knew where I was**, because I was due at court, I decided the night before to come down, so I was here; to fall asleep outside the court and get up early the next morning, but it didn't work out that way. So, I come down here, and that's when I first got asked. ... **Out of the twenty or thirty lads that were out at the time, someone had chosen me. Someone decided that they wanted me** rather than the other lads...*

(Extract from Walk 1: Canal Street – emphasis mine).

A pragmatic decision to arrive in court on time and the coincidence of 'being chosen' culminates in a decision to sell sex. As a Gay man, the significance of the Village as a social space especially at night would not have been lost on Eddie. Eddie's animated performance as he gave a detailed account of the encounter with his first 'client', of being 'chosen' and being 'wanted' suggested that he was re-living and re-enacting this experience. During this time, we stopped and paused on many occasions in response to an unconscious tempo of the storytelling.

An appreciation of Eddie's emotional state is important for understanding why 'being wanted' and 'being asked' was critical to his motivation for selling sex. Eddie, together with his ex-boyfriend had been sexually assaulted which directly led to his boyfriend's suicide. Being wanted and asked reversed the experience of being sexually abused and sex taken forcibly rather than been requested; it was a different, more positive sexual experience, one that placed Eddie in control.

Eddie: To be honest with you, I have just lost me boyfriend cos me and Dave were just more than just fucking homeless together. We used to sit at the street corners with a blanket over our head and before long we started engaging sexually. And then.... And then... the rape happened?

George: What rape?

Eddie: We were both raped in Newton Heath park. Dave didn't want to go to the police, I didn't want to go to the police at the time. There was a hosepipe out there, so we just went out and just scrubbed ourselves. It was freezing cold that night and we stood out there under the cold water supply, trying to scrub ourselves clean, burned the clothing. Three days later, I went out to restock the food, come back, no sign of Dave, and when I looked up the shoot, he was hanging from there.

(Extract from Walk 1: Canal Street – Dave is a pseudonym).

Eddie's description is raw, almost harrowing and was emotive. Although this happened over five years ago, Eddie's memory of this was vivid. The difference between the sexual assault and being wanted was stark and would explain why Eddie would respond to being propositioned the way he did. Eddie and Dave's efforts to be 'clean' after deciding not to report the incident to the police were unsuccessful leading to Dave's suicide. Eddie needed a way to resolve this – sex which had been a 'good' object, in a romantic relationship with Dave was now a 'bad' object in the sexual assault. The experience on Canal Street therefore would have enabled Eddie to achieve the depressive position where he could locate 'good' and 'bad' in the same object – sexual relationship with men he did not have a romantic relationship with. This is why he continues to be motivated by being 'wanted'.

*Eddie: Since I started escorting, I've tried to leave it many times, but I can't. **I don't always like it, feel great about myself, but I can't help it if people still want me.***

(Extract from Walk 1: Canal Street – emphasis mine).



Fig. 3: A view of Canal Street. Photo Credit: G. Dake, 2017 @ Walking Interview.

Eddie explained that attitudes towards MSWers were not always positive and as we walked down Canal Street, I noticed that the 'C' has been painted off the street sign, leaving it as '.anal Street' to confirm Eddie's views. Sometimes, this negative attitude came from the most unlikely sources, and Eddie shared some examples including a residential trip with TMR.

Eddie: There used to be a Greggs where they use to put us all out. Most of these clubs down here apart from the occasional number, I'm barred from them because I was a rent boy.

George: Do they bar all the rent boys from the clubs?

Eddie: Yeah, most of them, once they found out that you were a working lad and they find you out with an ‘embellished gentleman’, they still think, ‘hang on a minute, you are not allowed in’. I am not allowed in Downing Street, because one of my clients took me there and I got a text saying he doesn’t appreciate having lower class citizens in his restaurant, cos it downgrades the place..

George: What does he mean by that?

Eddie: Rent boys. He didn’t like the idea that I was there,.. in his bar. You get called a tart for sleeping around, nobody even knows your story but most people are quick to judge you and yet, ... so, I remember going on a residential once with the Men’s Room, and there was about three gay lads in one room and the other lads decided they weren’t sharing with us. They took the mattresses off beds and went and slept in a different room.

George: Right?

Eddie: So they all wanted sorting in a different room. Me, Simon and Paul all stayed in a room. I used to stand over there and watch this street, watch for hours on end. I would watch this street. So say, if I found someone was in trouble, I would go over.

(Extract from Walk 1: Canal Street – Simon and Paul are pseudonyms).

Walk 2, Chorlton Street Car Park: Early April 2017

The Chorlton Street Coach station is an inner-city bus station in central Manchester which operates National Express and other inter-city bus services. It is a short to walk to Canal Street, Piccadilly Gardens and Sackville Gardens, all locations of Eddie’s other walks. The station’s multi-storey car park rather than the station itself, is the point of significance for Eddie. At the time of our walk, a newly installed security access system meant that only ticket-holding patrons could access the car park. Eddie

described how this recent change to access conditions had stood between him and a suicide attempt the weekend before our walk.



Fig. 4: A view of Chorlton Street Coach Station showing the 'security access point'. Photo Credit: G. Dake, 2017 @ Walking Interview.

We were unable to access the car park and spent our 65 or so minutes together walking up and down Chorlton Street, occasionally going into the station or sitting at a bus stop across the station. It had been four weeks since our last walk to Canal Street and I thought that Eddie looked somewhat subdued. He had re-arranged this second walk several times and explained some of the current challenges in his life as well as the significance of the location.

Eddie: See! This place now, it has a lot of bad memories, the amount of times I have been at the top at the wrong side and something stopped me jumping.

George: When you say you were on the wrong side...

Eddie: I didn't see any purpose to life... I used to have like regular dreams that I would go out and it would be like, I would be sat there with blood over all me hands and like, it would be like I'd stabbed someone or something like and I would be like 'fucking hell'. I mean, how many people have dreams stabbing someone?

George: I don't know of anybody who's told me that...

Eddie: Yeah! I got to the point where I lost all hope; I give up on life; it was like life give up on me like, I mean the other night, I started thinking of (names a partner from a previous relationship) and that's when things hit a head and that's when I decided I was coming back here to my partner's. I got the key to the medicine cabinet, so I went there, got the morphine, came here, and my intention was, climb up, take the morphine and jump over; I will be drunk, dead before I even hit the ground.

(Extract from Walk 2: Chorlton Street Coach Station).

Eddie describes harbouring suicidal thoughts on many occasions and being able to stop himself but his account is graphic, and embodied a sense of his fragile mental health. His everyday challenge of living with and managing mental illness is uninhibited. Eddie recounted being detained in mental health wards, misusing his and other people's prescription drugs to manage his symptoms, and his difficult relationships with mental health professionals. Eddie said there was a time that he

would have preferred a custodial prison sentence as a safer alternative to mental health wards.

Eddie regularly sought refuge at this car park when he needed a 'container' for difficult feelings. He referred to Chorlton Street Car Park as 'home', and seem to associate it with stability and respite, a place of safety. Following his ex-boyfriend's suicide, he slept here for many days to avoid returning to the flat they shared. He also retreated here to escape threats from his neighbours following an allegation of paedophilia. In a previous study with young men who accessed support from TMR, Roy et al. (2015) argued that the solidity and immovability of structures such as the one described by Eddie provided a retreat, temporary relief and respite, a safe space to express intense emotions. Although Eddie has described himself as being 'at the top at the wrong side', something has stopped him from following through with his suicide ideation. I suggest that something similar to the experience of the participants of Roy et al.'s (2015:164) study is happening here, where the solidity and immovability of the physical structure of the car park "provides an environment infused with the resistant material, distance and anonymity necessary for containing destructive feelings".

Eddie: Yeah! I used to be here all the time. I used to be here all the time. This street used to be my home. So, when I was homeless, I used to sleep on the 3rd floor and night-time, I'd venture up to the 4th floor and stand there watching about, and it looked like people were just like ants init? acting like silly, got few free beers and stuff.

(Extract from Walk 2: Chorlton Street Coach Station).

A Dictaphone used as an audio diary to record his medical appointments also served as a way of re-imagining his connection to his family.

George: What do you need that for?

Eddie: For notes and stuff, say like something I need to remember, so with that say if I spoke to someone like an appointment, I record it onto that and it goes in the diary later.... It goes into the diary so I don't forget... Say like, I've got my nephew on my mother side I am quite close with and the other day... gave it him to play with and when I was going through the folders and that, he was going wan wan wan ... you used up all your storage and I said, no I fucking haven't. He was just sat there blabbing to himself while he's playing with it.

(Extract from Walk 2: Chorlton Street Coach Station).

In our first walk (Canal Street), Eddie explained that he had become estranged from his parents following being charged with a sexual crime and outed as Gay. On this walk, Eddie alluded to re-involvement with his family, the Dictaphone, re-purposed as toy for his nephew appeared important in achieving this. Eddie described playing with his nephew, giving him a horse-ride on his back and the fun they had together. Eddie's re-integration into his family is focused on his relationship with a new generation rather than his parents who did not support his choices around his sexuality. Psycho-socially, we see Eddie's ambivalence in his family relationships where there is a conflict; tension with his parents on the one hand and a positive playfulness with his nephew on the other.

In our first walk (Canal Street), Eddie extensively discussed how he became a MSWer; his motivations and experiences. On this walk, he shifted his focused from MSW to highlight three areas of vulnerability; mental ill-health, homelessness, and family relations, and the importance of finding strategies to contain difficult feelings and experiences in the absence of caring human relationships. As we ended the walk, Eddie sounded optimistic and discussed an up-coming appointment with his clinical practice nurse and therapy worker respectively. I concluded that although selling sex was important to Eddie, those aspects of his life that he prioritised on this walk were equally important.



Fig. 5: A view of Chorlton Street Coach Station showing the four storeys of 'the multi-storey car park'. Photo Credit: G. Dake, 2017 @ Walking Interview.

Walk 3, Sackville Gardens: Mid-July 2017

Sackville Gardens borders Canal Street and the Shena Simon campus of the Manchester College. The Alan Turing Memorial with his statue, the National Transgender Memorial and the 'Beacon of Hope (BoH)' are located here. The BoH is a memorial for people living with HIV/AIDS and hosts vigils commemorating lives lost through HIV/AIDS, especially on World AIDS Day and at the end of the annual Manchester Pride Festival. A statue depicting the Manchester Bee with a pictorial history of Manchester had recently been installed in the gardens.



Fig. 6: A view of Sackville Gardens showing the 'Beacon of Hope'. Photo Credit: G. Dake, 2017 @ Walking Interview.

When I arrived at Sackville Gardens, Eddie was sitting at the base of the 'BoH' monument, and because he made no attempt to move, I joined him and we spent most of our 45 minutes sitting together here. We also walked through the Gardens, stopping at Alan Turing Memorial from where we could see the room at Shena Simon campus where TMR used to hold the drop-in sessions. The Gardens looked quiet to me at lunchtime when I expected people would be meeting friends of lunch and taking a break. Eddie suggested that it was early for patrons which could explain why he may have chosen this time to manage interruptions. Eddie appeared quiet and pensive throughout this walk. Three months has elapsed since our last walk, most of which Eddie had spent in hospital recovering from mental ill-health. Eddie advised that he was re-building his life and Sackville Gardens was a place of 'hope' for him. The places where we paused during the walk - the BoH, the Alan Turing Memorial including where we could see the drop-in venue at the College - seemed to symbolise this sense of hope. Eddie had previously indicated that 'walking into the College' symbolised possibilities he could explore, which aligned with his theme of hope during this walk. It made sense to stop here to re-envision this, and also to have a reflective stop at the Alan Turing Memorial. While Eddie was not as animated as on previous walks, I imagined that standing before the statue of Alan Turing would have been particularly evocative. Roy et al. (2015) pointed out how one of their study's participants would regularly visit Alan Turing's statue at challenging times in their life, because the statue offered a listening ear without talking back. As a Gay man, Eddie would identify with, and find the hope for his own pain and suffering in Alan Turing's story. I considered that Eddie's pensiveness at the various memorials reflected the pragmatic hope he conveyed during this walk. Eddie's preoccupations were similar to those on our last walk (Chorlton Street Car Park), Sackville Gardens represented Eddie's ambivalence

about the current challenges in his life, seeking and receiving support; it was at once a place of difficult memories but also one of hope.

Eddie: I mean don't get me wrong, I've been attacked on here several times, here, but this is still home for me.... Hope! It brings hope to me.

George: In what way?

Eddie: Because it's like, I've come from this place here and yet I've managed to get back on my feet and get back out there. I've managed to secure a flat. I mean, yeah, my health is still not well, but I have managed to secure a property, I'm working on my medication...

(Extract from Walk 3: Sackville Gardens).

Sackville Gardens is a place of contradictions; hope and frustration, of attacks and also of dreams of a better future. Sackville Gardens was also associated with MSW, where again there is ambivalence in his relationships with 'clients' and 'punters'. There were relationships that transcended commercial transactions and which were difficult to manage emotionally. There were other commercial transactions which were exploitative and took advantage of Eddie's circumstances. This tension between 'clients' and 'punters' shows the ambivalent position that MSWers like Eddie can find themselves in, but also rich continuum of relationships within MSW which needs careful management.

*Eddie: We normally just sit here, **wait for a punter** to approach you, and you usually get quite a good deal out of it down here... especially Friday or Saturday night. Occasionally, **you got one punter, brings outs 20 quid and he'll buy himself something to drink and something to eat and you get the change... so you could end up with 15 quid for a shag. That's how, that's how much people sort of downgrade you, you need that money and you're sat there thinking, hang on there, I need the money, you've got access to it but yet you're sort of spending it even before you get it.** So, if you've got a shit night or you're just cold and want to get in someone's car and have the heating on for a bit and to have someone downgrading you by giving you just 15 quid... when the normal charging rate's 20 quid upwards. Most lads charge 30 quid for a blow job and 40 quid for a full-on sex whereas I just charge 20 quid for a blow job and 30 quid for full-on sex.*

(Extract from Walk 3: Sackville Gardens, emphasis mine).

This account of exploitation is part of a longer excerpts I selected for an Interpretive Data Analysis Panel (IDAP). A panel member noted that Eddie's choice of the word 'punter' instead of 'client' was intentional and reflected his emotional (dis)connection in this encounter. In the interview itself, Eddie seemed detached, the account presented like a third-party report which supports the analysis from the IDAP about his emotional disconnection from the experience.

Eddie's ambivalence is underscored in the tension between his understanding and response to 'being wanted' on the one hand, and being disrespected, downgraded and taken advantage of, on the other. This is important in understanding Eddie's pre-occupation and engagement with MSW; he appears to be looking for more than

commercial transactions, which is consistent to his motivation of 'being wanted' and 'providing a service', and in the process sets himself up for mistreatment, disappointment and disrespect. He chooses to lower his prices but is pre-occupied with being disrespected and downgraded. He chooses to be a confidante and provide more than selling sex but is pre-occupied with a lack of boundaries that this produces.

In this walk, we see Eddie's psychic conflicts and ambivalent pre-occupations about MSW, and also the particular character of his disappointments, losses, and hopes for the future. That his reference points on this walk are immovable and solid edifices (the BoH, the Alan Turing Memorial, the Shena Simon campus) suggests that he finds these non-interventionist forms of support as more responsive and reliable containers than people, whether these are 'punters', 'clients', or mental health professionals. Eddie had spent most of the last 3 months prior to this walk in hospital due to mental ill-health.



Fig. 7: A view of Sackville Gardens showing the Alan Turing Memorial. Photo Credit: Internet @ www.visitmanchester.com

Walk 4, Tariff Street Car Park 1: Late July 2017

Tariff Street, in the northern quarter of Manchester's city centre, has a multi-storey car park serving the business district of Manchester. It has a male only sauna popular with MSWers, and a section on the footpath along the Rochdale Canal and Tariff Street, affectionately referred to as the 'Gay Beach', frequented by a section of the LGBT Community who lounge there during the summer months.

It was a late summer afternoon when Eddie and I walked through the 'Gay Beach' to the entrance of the multi-storey car park. Eddie arrived prepared, wearing a hi-visibility jacket and carrying a truncheon, and his agenda for this was to talk me through what

I have captioned 'The Idiots Guide to Selling Sex on the Street', a sort of initiation to the rudiments of MSW.

*Eddie: A client wanted me to put on a police hi-vis jacket, and bat the f**k out of him, with a proper truncheon and I'm stood there, 'Right, just one minute, let me record this and he went wha? And I said, I've got to record you saying what you want me to do, because that way, I said, if you try and say I beat you up without the wotsit, I said I've got it recorded, and I also want your signature, so I signed it and everything, just to state that he won't prosecute me for beating him up, so it was what he got.*

George: So, where did you get that form from, or did you just get a piece of paper for him to sign?

Eddie: We type them out, every so often we type so many out and that way they're always there, so generally when you take a booking off a client, you ask them what they're after first. Now, we get all sorts of weird clients, especially you get the people that are into piss, you get them all into the water sports and everything. Then you get the odd ones that like playing daddy, so like, you can get up to 450 quid a night, just doing the daddy one where you get dressed up in nappies and shit, they dress you up like a baby and you've got to do all that daddy tells you to, sort of thing.

(Extract from Walk 4.1: Tariff Street).

Whether Eddie's accounts were factual or were his vision for a future where MSWers had more control, this presented MSW as a complex set of negotiated risks, managed on an everyday case-by-case basis. Eddie presents MSWers as having agency

around selling sex, which is different from his previous accounts of exploitation by 'punters' and 'clients'. MSW has elaborately organised systems for consent, protection against punters, police and public, risk assessment, levels of charges for different services, and an informal peer support system to manage violence and legality. During the winter, Eddie and other MSWers could opt for sauna memberships instead of cash payments.

Eddie confirmed Atkins & Laing's (2012) view of MSW as a choreography involving planned and timed strolls; from Canal Street through to Tariff Street with designated stops including the 'undercroft' (beneath the Canal walkway) to engage clients.

Eddie: I go each evening, I go from Canal Street, do me loop round town and come back and go under there, give up to Tariff street, stand round there for a bit and come back...

(Extract from Walk 4.1: Tariff Street).

As we stood in front of the refurbished multi-storey car park, Eddie points out his mixed feelings. It had more lighting than before and the visibility made it less attractive for clients but provided some protection for MSWers. There was also an increase in men seeking casual, consensual (unpaid) sex at the undercroft, which threatened and/or limited opportunities for men like Eddie who sold sex.

Eddie: We are getting pushed from under the Undercroft, if we went down there, and we were selling sex, then generally, you get dipped in the canal because you not supposed to be down there

George: Who? The police?

Eddie: No, punters! because they wanted it for free and we were selling the service, then they see us as, 'hang on a minute, you're getting paid for it, you can fuck off, this bit is the free bit', and before I knew where I was, I ended up down here...

(Extract from Walk 4.1: Tariff Street).

Eddie appears to have invested in a discourse of MSW as a well-organised set of relations which places him above the exploitation and situations of vulnerability while selling sex, contradictions within his family relationships, and mental ill-health. His story reveals his pre-occupation of MSW where he is in control, not exploited or disrespected, feeling wanted and valued. Psycho-socially, this could be a form of idealisation, serving a defensive function which provides Eddie distance from his anxieties.

Walk 5, Tariff Street Car Park 2: Late August 2017

Eddie agreed to a second walk to Tariff Street after I inadvertently deleted the recording from the first. At the end of this second walk, Eddie informed me he had a copy of the recording from the first which he subsequently shared with me, so it seemed clear that Eddie wanted a second walk to Tariff Street. Reflecting on the research relationship, I found that Eddie became more candid in his accounts from the

first walk to Tariff Street. I had been meeting with Eddie for about six months by this time. Eddie was leaning against a wall and looking into the canal as I joined him in front of the car park, and we took short strolls on the street for the hour duration of the walk. Eddie was pensive and appeared to be reviewing 'out aloud' his 5-6 years as a MSWer, and it was a far cry from the stories of creative risk management and agentic decision-making from our last walk. Instead, it was a story of alcohol and drug misuse, of low self-worth and desperation, of alienation and isolation from his family. MSW was presented as mechanical, a dulling of the senses and passing of the time, a paradise lost.

Eddie: The way I've seen it, life was not worth shit anyway when I first started here. I din't (didn't) give a shit about life, I din't (didn't) give a shit about anyone, When I've come down here... I was under investigation..., and it was like when I was proven not guilty, even though I've proven my innocence my life's not worth shit, they don't give a shit about me. The way I see it, it's 43 runs a night... in the summertime we get on that grass, have a Pimm's, have a laugh, whereas these days there's none of that...

(Extract from Walk 4.2: Tariff Street – words in brackets added).

Eddie seemed to suggest that when he started selling sex, his personal circumstances were hopeless and he had nothing to lose. Selling sex was his way of dulling the pain. Even in this bleak viewpoint however, Eddie recollects lighter moments and a community with whom he could have a laugh and a drink in the summertime, although this too is in the past. MSW is presented as a story of contradictions: the bleak and

mechanical realities (43 runs a night) and the conviviality of the community he shared with other MSWers. This picture is significant psycho-socially. Eddie's '43 runs a night' characterises his unreflexive relation to the trauma he describes. Because he could not symbolise or make sense of it (Bion, 1962; Frost & Hoggett, 2008), it is enacted as traumatic repetitions (Bion, 1962; Butler, 1997). Such suffering is enacted, embodied or projected until one can find a container to symbolise it. Eddie compares selling sex to an addiction, describing an attempt to re-live and re-kindle the first experience in spite of the inherent dangers and disappointments. This may be his way of symbolising it or a sense of his ambivalent relationship with MSW.

Eddie: I have had loads of dodgy punters on here. I ended up one time in the canal, I've ended up in the canal, I've ended up being beat up, I've had clients that's thrown me out of the vehicle and everything, just trying to get out of paying me, whereas now I look back at it, I mean, the way I see things now is I don't need to sell sex, I've got the money, I don't need to do it. It's just like, it's kind of like, you know like when you have cocaine and you sat down and you want it again and again and again but you never get that first time hit, that's more or less what this is about. It's now, it's more or less an addiction for me now, it's not about the work, it's about seeing how many guys actually want me, you can never change that.

(Extract from Walk 4.2: Tariff Street).

There is a realisation that selling sex is not as fulfilling as Eddie has imagined it in the beginning. However, he feels unable to control his need to be 'wanted'. His continuing attachment to 'being wanted' finds expression in ideas of addiction, an apt description of his motivation as akin to the addict pursuing something lost (the high of the first hit),

a futile pursuit, but one that the addict is without agency to change. Eddie also holds on to the partial but diminished fulfilment from the friendship, camaraderie, and sense of belonging from his relationships within the community of MSWers. Eddie's recollection of the 'good times' relate to when the lines between selling sex and friendship became somewhat blurred, when MSW felt less transactional, and when he got on the grass at the Gay Beach with other MSWers for a social mix. This inscribes Eddie's position of ambivalence; idealisation around his own agency to affect change to continue to relive the experience of 'being wanted', and while also articulating the realisation that MSW is not all he had hoped it to be.



Fig. 8: A view of Tariff Street showing the walk to the Car Park. Photo Credit: Internet @ www.confidentials.com

Walk 6, Piccadilly Gardens: Early September 2017

Piccadilly Gardens is at the heart of Manchester's City centre. A central hub of Manchester's public transport system, shops, and businesses, it also has an open

green space with a fountain for families and benches for workers on lunch breaks. In recent years, Piccadilly Gardens has been associated with anti-social behaviour, drug use and trafficking, as well as selling sex.

Eddie had identified Piccadilly Train Station on his map but led a walk through Piccadilly Gardens, about 500 metres away. Eddie's one reference to the train station during our walk related to when he slept there, saying that he sometimes had to lie on the tracks to avoid detection by the British Transport Police. Eddie played on the phrase 'light at the end of the tunnel', often used to signal optimism in the face of 'difficult situations' to refer to danger from an on-coming train. Apart from this reference to precarity, Eddie's account on this walk was largely positive.

We met at the bus terminal and walked through Piccadilly Gardens and nearby streets as far as Chorlton Street Car Park and back, occasionally resting on the benches facing the family area of the park. Eddie talked about how the police's attempt to 'move working lads on' fostered a sense of community and friendship among MSWers.

Eddie: We used to pick up punters here all the time but they used to come here at night time. We used to come here, we'll all get together, all of us and have a couple of beers. I used to enjoy down here.

George: What did you enjoy about it?

Eddie: It was the one place that when the police get down at Tariff, we'll either get here and leave or get back to Tariff.

George: Back to Tariff?

Eddie: Yeah! So we'll look out for each other. One time, we'd gone back to Tariff and one of the lads radio when off and in a short time, six or so lads were down at Tib Street, but sometimes when the boot is on the other foot, they don't respond, so we'll say, if you not going to respond, why have the radio?

(Extract from Walk 5: Piccadilly Gardens).



Fig. 9: A view of Piccadilly Gardens. Photo Credit: Internet @ www.tourofbritain.co.uk

Eddie spoke about a network of MSWers which operated status updates for mutual protection. In one example, someone became aware of an HIV+ client maliciously engaging in unprotected sex with MSWers and the network was immediately alerted. Eddie's view was that MSWers were less likely to engage with schemes like the National Ugly Mugs (NUM) because although these were anonymous in theory, they felt that reports could be traced back to them.

Eddie: Because they are embarrassed for people to know that they are working lads, and they don't even want people to know they've been in trouble.

George: So, is this like Ugly Mugs?

Eddie: Yeah, most lads won't report it to Ugly Mugs either.

George: Correct me if I'm wrong, but as far as I am aware, with Ugly Mugs, you don't need to give any personal details, you just have to report the assault.

Eddie: Yes, but these guys, they don't report it because even when they don't give their names, saying that this happened and here, they think people know, and I used to say what's the point in having a service to protect working lads and women if you are not going to use it.

(Extract from Walk 5: Piccadilly Gardens).

Eddie described a community built on mutual trust, solidarity, camaraderie and affinity among MSWers, building on the image he introduced of a summertime on the grass drinking Pimm's with the lads during our last walk.

Eddie: Yeah, when the clubs kicked them out ... they would either go down the bridge or come down here. We used to muck about here, we would get moved on by the police because we'll be sat here playing about, drink a lot, smoking a bit of spliff, playing around with the equipment for our own fun.

George: Right?

Eddie: So now they never know where to find the lads, they used to be all around here, near Paddy's Goose, but now I've started taking more punters home, I've put myself on Grindr because now it's too overcrowded or the police are moving you on.

George: Are you saying then that street work is drying out because of the police? I recall you saying that you prefer street work.

Eddie: It's easier now to use the app. We used to go down to Tariff and keep walking around and moving about, that way the police can't get you.

(Extract from Walk 5: Piccadilly Gardens).

Walking through Piccadilly Gardens seemed to remind Eddie of the loss over time, of the community of MSWers, the fun and friendship, partly due to online MSW.

Map-Making Session 2: Mid-March 2018

I have captured much of this session in the Scenic Composition at the beginning of this case study. Eddie used two A5 sheets and pencils to make his maps, which were multi-locational, piecing together the sheets to capture the landscape, portraying how the locations of our first three walks (Canal Street, Chorlton Street Car Park and Sackville Gardens) were connected to each other. Eddie used the session to raise his objection to anonymising his account within the study. He had hoped his participation would have provided an opportunity to set the records straight about his involvement with MSW and to eulogise his ex-boyfriend. Eddie consequently felt silenced by ethics process and used the session to vocalise this. I have further discussed the case for confidentiality and anonymity in my reflections on Eddie's case.

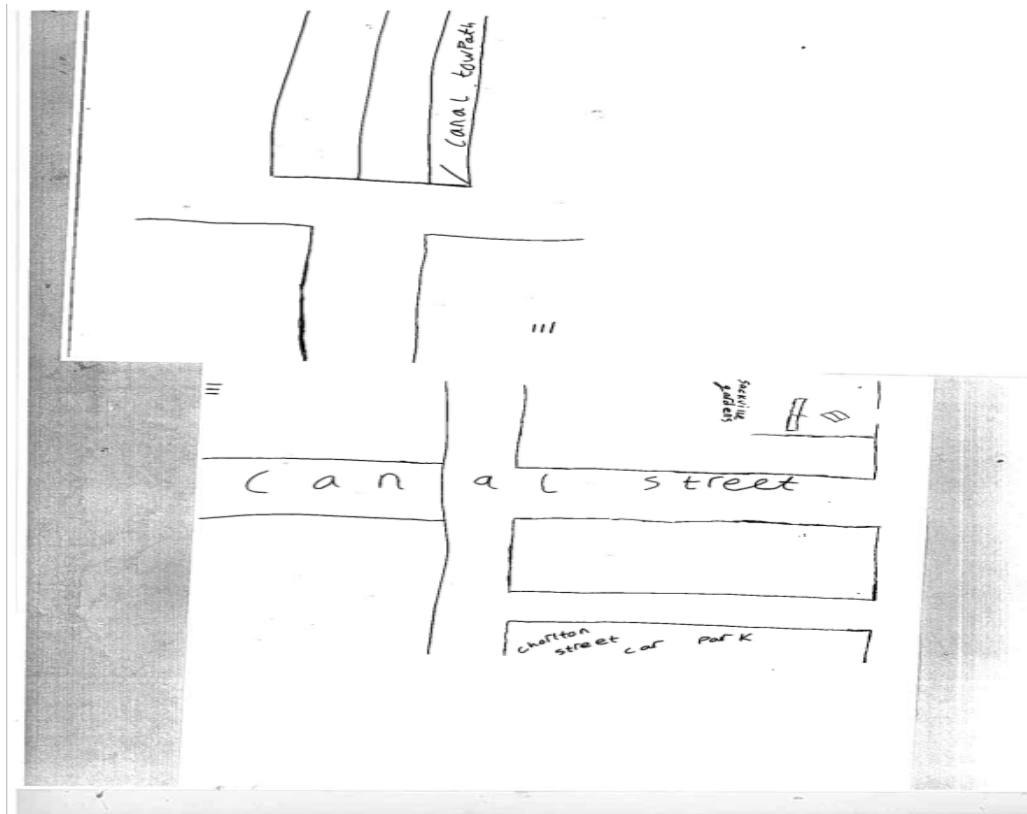


Fig. 10: Map from Final Map-making session. Credit: Eddie/G. Dake

Case overview

Pen Picture of Eddie

Eddie disclosed very little of his early life experiences except that he grew up in Manchester. His story starts from his relationship with his ex-boyfriend who he had shared a flat with and who took his own life following a sexual assault. Eddie himself was charged with a sexual crime shortly after this, the publicity of this legal action leading to his parents becoming aware that he was a Gay man, and resulting in estrangement from his family and further isolation. Eddie became voluntarily homeless to manage perceived threats from his neighbours. Eddie started selling sex during this period after he was propositioned one night on Canal Street and has

continued to sell sex. Eddie has a history of mental ill-health and has been known to services for some time. His relationship with his family has improved and he reported spending time with family members including his nephew. Eddie has also returned to his flat where he lives alone. He is not as actively involved with TMR as he used to, partly because the existing men who engage with TMR are new and many of the men he knew had moved on. He advised that he still enjoyed the drop-in and creative sessions, and attended when he could.

Reflections

I met Eddie eight times over 13 months, completing six interviews and two map-making sessions. In this time the situation of his day-to-day life changed significantly, in particular due to his attempted suicide, his struggles with mental ill health, as well as the shortcomings of the mental health system. Over the eight contacts, he also presented quite diverging accounts of his relationship to selling sex, to those who procure sex from him to the MSWer community in Manchester, and with TMR. In this respect, it is not easy to provide a single cohering narrative of the sort that might have been provided in a one-off interview. However, what is interesting is that many themes appear several times during these sessions and these offer rich opportunities to understand Eddie's pre-occupations as an individual and the particular character of his hopes, disappointments, losses and ambivalences.

Eddie consistently locates the agency at the heart of his entry into selling sex outside of himself and he tells a story which provides a different rationale for being in the Gay

Village on the night when he first sold sex. The notions of being 'chosen' and feeling 'wanted' and 'needed' provide important and consistent elements to his sex-selling narrative. One important question is how we should understand such an account whilst avoiding the binaries of 'individual' (psychological) and 'social' (sociological) explanations. It is perhaps also important to highlight that in Eddie's account of the early phases of selling sex, he chooses relationships with clients which are more than merely transactional in a financial sense. He describes how they choose him and that some of them also share aspects of their personal lives and problems with him, adding additional layers of emotional labour into the work.

Eddie also talks quite a lot about his mental health difficulties, his battles with the mental health system and the ways in which he tries to contain difficult feelings; and he describes his different strategies to feel emotionally safe and find a sense of home in his life. It is clear that the loss of his ex-boyfriend by suicide made this even more difficult and in many ways the concrete and metal facades of the city including the Beacon of Hope and Alan Turing Memorial in Sackville Gardens, and the Chorlton Street car park in particular seem to provide important spaces above the city, away from direct human contact, which help him to contain difficult emotions and handle destructive feelings.

Eddie's narrative also suggests that the sense of community he found when he first started selling sex has dissipated and this may partly be because he, and other young men now sell sex more online than on the street. It is also clear that his sex work

relationships have become more transactional. In one respect, viewed through an employment discourse of sex work, this might be viewed as more realistic and hopeful, but Eddie's account suggests he finds it more alienating ('43 runs a night') because he is attached to a past when it felt more than work. It also appears that selling sex online had led him to feel more isolated from the community of sex-selling lads he used to socialise and have fun with. In this respect, selling sex does not seem to be delivering what he hoped and he presents it in terms of a dependent relationship which can never quite recapture that first time. He is able to be more open and honest in later interviews about some of the disappointments and exploitations he experiences in the work, although he is still highly attached to feeling 'wanted' and 'needed' and cannot quite wrestle control from this impulse. What seems to be clear is that human connection and belonging appear to be important to Eddie who although admits that he is unable to re-capture that initial experience, endures humiliation and disrespect in the Village and exploitation by clients and punters.

Eddie relationship with sex work, particularly his need to be wanted is interesting for a man who discusses almost nothing about his family in eight sessions. His, is an ambivalent relationship with his family; difficult yet hopeful. He experiences estrangement earlier on when his parents became aware of this Gay identity. However, he is now accepted back in the family where he is close to his nephew and plays with him. His relationship with his parents is still unclear and he emphasises his closeness with his nephew. Eddie seems to be idealising his relationship with his family where he chooses to avoid or not to discuss the challenges and focuses on the more positive relationships.

There are important, albeit marginal, elements of hope in some of the sites that Eddie chooses to visit in the walks. The college provides a symbol of possibility, through the idea of imagining a worthwhile future for himself. Winnicott's (1951, 1971) idea of creative illusion captures the idea of the mental act that precipitates action for personal change in the world. When Eddie walks into the college, he imagines himself as a college student which he sees as a symbol of a 'worthwhile' future. It is also clear that the monuments in Sackville Gardens provide a sense of hope and identification with the struggles of other LGBT+ people. Eddie's relationship with TMR is also important to his sense of self and well-being. This is symbolic of his need for acceptance and community within a wider society that disrespects and alienates him as a Gay man and a MSWer. Eddie emphasises the connection and sense of belonging he found with two other Gay men during the TMR residential when other participants refused to share a room with them. TMR also created the environment for Eddie to aspire to, and imagine a positive future as a college student. It stands to reason that Eddie's engagement with TMR has reduced as the 'old lads' moved on and the venue for the drop-in sessions moved from the Shena Simon campus.

What is also worth noting is Eddie's motivation to have a final interview and to take control of the story. Eddie regularly used the preface 'Before I knew...' in discussing key decisions, suggesting a lack of agency or that these decisions were accidental occurrences he had no control over. In this final chapter of our research journey, Eddie is more assertive, sets the agenda and is at the centre of significant events in his life as they happen. Indeed, Eddie's account is replete with incomplete stories and events that do not lend themselves to easy explanation. What emerges are two 'Eddies' or

two versions of Eddie; the Eddie who has no control over key events in his life, and the Eddie who has agency and makes the decisions. The psycho-social idea of a non-unitary nature of the self (Frost & Hoggett, 2008; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), presents this fragmented and defended Eddie, whose attempts to manage and/or live with the tensions and contradictions in his life are seen through emotional and symbolic re-enactments of his place in society. The map-making session and walking interviews offer opportunities for these dialogic forms of knowledge to emerge.

Cameron

Walking on Water

Used McDonalds sandwiches boxes and empty juice cartons littered the floor where the paved platform began to merge with the rough earth and dirt trodden grass that led to the edge of the water. From the raised platform leading to the reservoir where we stood behind the wooden bench, we could see the still water which flowed over from the reservoir to look like a man-made lake. The serenity of this scene with the rafts, canoes, and dinghies from Water Sports Centre on the horizon was only disturbed by the debris from burst balloons, twigs, and rubbish from the kind of McDonalds waste lying near our feet. The stillness was occasionally broken by the graceful glides of a few birds. As we took in the peaceful scene, Cameron's demeanour became livelier than it had been from the beginning of our walk from Hyde Road through the entrance to the Debdale Park and through the park itself to the reservoir where we have been standing and looking at the water.

This walk was a familiar and frequent one for Cameron, who described his walks to the park as what he does to 'clear my head when things get too much for me'. Cameron's challenges with his mental ill-health is a central theme in our two walks to Debdale Park, and this park is one of the few places that he would get out of his flat to go to. Cameron described the calmness of flowing water as therapeutic, enabling him to achieve a level of peace he is not able to manage in his flat, because it conjures a sense of hope in the continuity and permanence it brings but also speaks to the complexities of seemingly unimportant actions. Cameron used the image of the

ripples from dropping a small stone in water to explain the complications of seemingly mundane things. Cameron also told me that he used to be a very strong swimmer when he was younger, and water was always held a meaningful and positive association for him; he would go for walks around the canal in his old accommodation before he moved closer to the Debdale reservoir. The pattern of walking in the park and 'clearing his head' by the water was a familiar practice and enabled Cameron to attempt to make sense of his life experiences, including selling sex. The sequence of leaving his flat and walking through the park in challenging times before walking back was again familiar, a sense of physically moving away from the problem to resolve it. He was walking on the water to reach the stillness.

Debdale Park

Debdale Park is one of the largest inner-city parks in Manchester, covering a space of about 45 acres. Among other things, it has a bowling green, children's play area, multi-use games area, skate park, tennis courts, football pitch and a community centre. Close to the park are two reservoirs for licensed fishing, where we spent some time during our first walk and which Cameron described as 'therapeutic'.

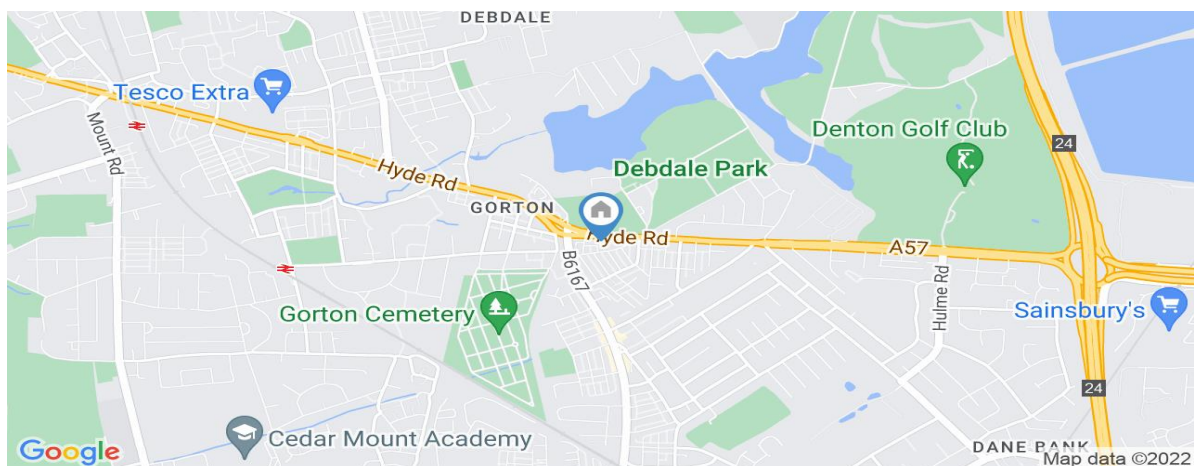


Fig. 11. Area Map of Debdale Park. Photo Credit: Open Rent.

Pre-Walk Meeting: End of February 2017

Cameron presented as a calm young man, trying to make sense of circumstances beyond his control and how to respond to them. At our first meeting during which I spent close to 40 minutes with him, Cameron declined the offer of a map-making session. He advised that he felt anxious around people and places he was not familiar with and could commit to a walk to Debdale Park because he regularly walked there to clear his head. Cameron described his everyday routine as phoning the doctors, completing job searches, going to meetings and taking walks to Debdale Park.

This pre-walk meeting was in Cameron's flat and he was relaxed and chatty although he had pre-warned me that he did not like talking about himself. Cameron intimated that he had always liked art, particularly photography and recounted his experiences of a photography project with TMR during which he was allowed to keep the camera for a long period of time. Cameron confirmed his interest in the project and said that although he would have preferred chats in his flat, he looked forward to the walks to Debdale Park as he also liked walking, especially to Debdale. We agreed the time and meeting point for the first walk.

We completed two walks over a two-week period, walking from an agreed meeting point to the park and then walking in the park as we talked. On both walks, Cameron talked mainly about his mental ill-health and homosexuality, and how these two issues had affected key life decisions including the decision to sell sex.

Walk 1, Debdale Park: Mid-March 2017

Meeting at an agreed location on Hyde Road, we walked in silence to Debdale Park. Cameron appeared apprehensive and withdrawn and I decided to give him some time to get his thoughts together. I also considered that the planned location of this walk was Debdale Park so it was appropriate to start our chat from there. As we entered the park, Cameron became more relaxed and started talking about the importance of walking to him. Walking was an everyday activity but Cameron described how it allowed him to confront challenges, frustrations, and helped him to make decisions during significant periods of his life. He talked about walking for exercise, walking his dog, walking to school, walking to meetings and walking to improve his mental health.

Cameron: Sometimes, I'll be sat at home, depends on if I've got stuff to do, say like if I have a meeting in town or something, I'll exercise by walking. I used to walk to town as well. I used to walk everywhere. When I was younger, I didn't use to take the bus, just used to walk, sometimes walk to school, I used to walk miles sometimes, I walk to town, walk to my friend's house. I'll walk to the end of the water, this takes you all the way to the back, do you see where we start, down there, back to the water, that's the end of the water, yeah..

(Extract from Walk 1: Debdale Park)

Cameron directed the walk through the park to the platform of the reservoir where we stood over and looked at the water. This felt like a place that he was familiar with and comfortable at. As we watched the birds gliding over the water, Cameron told me about an encounter with 'an old man' during a walk. It had been raining and Cameron

remembered enjoying the feel of the rain on his head when the old man approached him to talk. Cameron liked the story about the old man's life and experiences in the war and linked this to 'clearing his head'.

George: I don't get the rain bit...

Cameron: Cos it clears your head,

George: How? getting wet?

Cameron: Yeah, no, like walking in the rain with my head phones and like, not, I won't go like continuously, like, do you know what I mean?, like I was out here like a week or two ago and it started raining and a man came and spoke to me, this elderly man and started speaking about his life in the 70s or something, his life in the war, and I was speaking to him while it was raining and then I had to walk home but I was speaking to him and I like it. What do you do to clear your head?

(Extract from Walk 1: Debdale Park)

I found it significant that Cameron's story about his encounter with the old man preceded a discussion about his family relationships. In this encounter, there is warmth, a sense of the familial, a grandfather figure sharing his experiences of war with his grandchild. It seemed to serve as a precipitation to Cameron's complicated relationships with his family. His older brother and his mother's boyfriend were hostile and violent (homophobic) towards him, causing him to decide to leave home at about

age 15, travelling 250 miles to Manchester from London. After about a decade, he was now planning to return to visit his family for the first time. This visit makes Cameron 'excited' and 'anxious' at the same time; excited about seeing his big sister, mother and younger siblings but anxious that his mother's boyfriend could be violent. Concerned about his mother being caught in between her son and partner, Cameron carefully plans the visit around a time that his mother's boyfriend would not be available.

Cameron: I'm going down to London next week to see my mother, cos I haven't seen my mum since I was like 14, say about 15, 16, I'm 23 years old now and I've not seen my mum for that long or any of my family from down in London for that long but some of my family are homophobic; my big brother is homophobic, my mum's boyfriend is homophobic, so I've got to like balance it out, so I plan to go down to London and see my big sister, who I've not seen her since I was like 14, younger than that. My mum says her boyfriend's not going to be there otherwise there's going to be a fight, cos my mum doesn't want that, cos my mum she lives in South London and she's quite ghetto and she won't like none of that happening to me (Cameron giggles as he says this)

George: That's good.

Cameron: I'm excited and anxious at the same time

(Extract from Walk 1: Debdale Park)

It is not clear how, how frequently or even whether Cameron's contact with his mother is reciprocal but he presents her as an inspirational figure and a confidante, someone he looked up to, and could share his frustrations and hopes, fears and loves with. Cameron called her 'quite ghetto', someone who had experienced a difficult life, and was not easily intimidated. Cameron was animated and perhaps unconscious that he was loud when he talked about their shared experiences; a shared history of dependence on non-prescription drugs and selling sex. He described how she was therefore 'not judgemental' of him.

Cameron: There are people which I sometimes tell. Like my mum knows everything, I tell my mum everything cos my mum has been there and done that, she's done that herself, she's done drugs, done prostitution, she's done absolutely everything, but now she's turned her life around, she's not touched drugs for 10 years, she got two little twins now she's looking after.

George: That's massive!

(Extract from Walk 1: Debdale Park)

During the course of our hour-long walk, we paused, stopped, walked slowly, walked in silence, sometimes standing to observe a reservoir or activity in the park and on occasion Cameron stepping away to take a photo as part of a 'Pokémon Go' game (an augmented reality game where players use mobile devices with GPS to locate, capture, train, and battle virtual creatures, called Pokémon, which appear as if they

are in the player's real-world location). I wondered whether Cameron was drawn to this game as an extension of his lived experience of being caught between a subjective, preferred reality and his objective challenging reality. The game would then be an escape from a difficult reality such as his mental ill-health. Some of the breaks were in response to a change in the topography or to take a rest on a bench. At other times, it reflected a change in emotion in response to the story such as when Cameron talked about his family and his planned visit to London and it felt like he was taking a break. Cameron appeared hesitant, his steps faltering, seemingly matching his thoughts, almost like a literal enactment of the excitement and anxiety he described the visit to hold for him.

Sexuality was the main reason Cameron gave for leaving home and he talked about how many of his friends were worried about disclosing and discussing their sexuality with their friends and family. As a younger person, Cameron himself had taken a girlfriend to give the impression that he was heterosexual, a practice he referred to as having an 'undercover girlfriend' to stop people thinking you are Gay, is still popular with some Gay young men. Cameron gave an example of his previous boyfriend who was only comfortable as Gay when he was with him (Cameron), or when selling sex, pretending to be heterosexual at other times and having an 'undercover girlfriend'.

Cameron: They've probably got an undercover girlfriend. When I say undercover girlfriend, I mean it's a girlfriend [they use] to hide [their sexuality], so they don't know what they were doing so they are not outed, they're not out to everyone... when I used

to see a guy, he had a girlfriend as well. His girlfriend used to do the same thing we did, just the girl bit and we did the boy bit. He will do stuff with me and then go home to her.

George: Is that not just because they are bisexual?

Cameron: Yeah, bisexual but I think he was undercover, I don't know actually, but I think he wanted that girlfriend just for other people to see, so they are not asking questions.

George: It's very complicated.

Cameron: It's very complicated and sometimes people don't make things easy for themselves. I am quite happy to answer if people asked me if I am Gay cos I don't actually care about what people think cos I know what I am and you can't ask someone 'are you Gay?' without them asking what you are. I am not really bothered about talking to people about bisexuality.

(Extract from Walk 1: Debdale Park)

Cameron explained that when he relocated to Manchester, he moved in with a friend and his mother and has lived around the same area for a long time. He did not explain his relationship with his friend/host or the details of the arrangements but indicated that he was deciding on his future; what to do with his life and where to live and hinted that he wanted a 'proper job' and to possibly leave Manchester all together.

Cameron: I've been in Gorton since I moved to Manchester. It was 2011/12 and when I first moved here, I moved to Gorton with my friend, to my mate's mum's house for about a year till I got myself sorted, so I have lived in Gorton most of the time... but I really want to get out now.

George: Right.

Cameron: I don't know. I've had enough, I don't even know if I've had enough of Manchester. This is what I'm trying to figure out if I've done with this place and I want to move somewhere else, I've been trying to work this out now for a year, I'm also struggling with what I want to do, what I want to do for the future, cos I don't want to be on benefits for the rest of my life, I've not worked now for a while, I've not had a proper job since, since long going now, for years

(Extract from Walk 1: Debdale Park)

Cameron ended the walk with this reflection on life, excused himself as his eye caught something he wanted to capture for Pokémon Go.



Fig. 12: A view of the entrance to Debdale Park, showing a walking path (Internet Photo @ [friendsofdebdalepark.co.uk](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofdebdalepark))

Walk 2, Debdale Park: Late March 2017

Like the first walk, we met at the agreed spot and walked to Debdale Park. This was a little over a week since our last walk and Cameron was more relaxed and conversational as we walked up to Debdale Park. We walked past a McDonalds restaurant and Cameron told me that he would often stop there when returning to his flat from his walks. I assumed that because this was my third meeting with Cameron in the space of about 4 weeks, he had gotten used to me enough to relax and have a conversation with me. This hour-long walk was generally convivial but towards the end, Cameron appeared uncomfortable and taciturn. I felt the ending was abrupt with Cameron telling me that he had said everything he wanted to and re-iterating that he planned to relocate away from Manchester. At the pre-walk meeting, Cameron had indicated that he did not like talking about himself and I felt that the walks, single question, open-ended interview style and the interaction with a location he felt

comfortable with, had contributed to stories which showed his circumstances as more vulnerable than he had intended. Cameron had vocalised his frustrations and fears, making his circumstances look helpless and I think that he became aware that he may have said too much and decided to guard his privacy. He later confirmed that he still wanted to be included in the project but did not want to proofread any of the transcripts.

Cameron had been trying to confirm a medical appointment and as we entered Debdale Park, the call connected and he excused himself to finish it. When he resumed the walk, Cameron explained that his daily routine revolved around managing his mental ill-health and included phone calls, appointments and pharmacy visits. Cameron disclosed that he had a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder which affects his confidence, including the confidence to sell sex.

Cameron: Yeah... I am not saying I couldn't cos I probably could, but I am not as confident now like I used to... and I would walk up to people and ask them and stuff.

George: What do you think has affected your confidence?

Cameron: A lot of things, cos I have a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder where I am up and down all the time. It's like cos my mum's got bipolar, it's a bit like that but it's like my new version and also anxiety's got a lot to do with it, like when you don't feel right inside.

(Extract from Walk 2: Debdale Park)

Cameron makes another connection to his mother, an added complication of anxiety and a sense of not feeling right inside. Cameron sounded desperate and frustrated about his inability to secure employment other than selling sex, which he referred to as depressing.

Cameron: Yeah, well because I've not worked for the past few years and all I've been doing is sex working and stuff like that, it'll be hard for guys like me to get a job because we haven't worked for a long time. It's very hard, there's nothing out there for people like me, because we haven't worked for that long because we haven't got the experience. That's why I find it very hard, no one's going to take someone who's not got experience, they might do to train them up. I find it really, really, hard... but my friend said start small, work for a charity, a charity like Oxfam, like a charity shop, and do volunteering for a bit, for a few months to get eh, what do you call it, get a reference, get eh a reference, build your CV. That what I'll need to do, build it up, cos now I have no references from no one. It's very depressing George, it's very depressing, it really is...

George: Not working will be ...

Cameron: This situation is, it is quite depressing, I'm not going to make any fun of it George, it's very depressing sometimes.

(Extract from Walk 2: Debdale Park)

Having previously worked as an employment advisor, this conversation felt familiar but it was clear that Cameron's frustration went beyond securing employment, as vicious a cycle as the reality he presented with was. For Cameron, this was a complex mix of mental ill-health, frustration about his employment situation, sex work and what he described as 'the situation', which I understood to mean his everyday life and lived experience.

Cameron: I took myself off at the beginning of the year. I did do it for 4 months straight. Cos it was my birthday last year November, I put myself on November time, I take myself off after 2 months. I need to have a break; I've had a break for about 2 months.

Say like, coming up to summer time, I will probably do it again; but that's only to clear debts and stuff like that. I do make a lot of money when I do it but I ask myself where's it gone because I've been buying drugs, been buying clothes, food, little things but I'm sometimes not thinking about the main reasons why, what I need to move on with my life like paying off the arrears and stuff like that.

(Extract from Walk 2: Debdale Park)

Cameron's pre-occupation about selling sex appears to be focused on making money on a short-term basis and dependent on his mental health. Although no longer selling sex on the street, Cameron would somewhat be described as a drifter (Ellison, 2018), drifting in and out of sex work, MSW perceived only in instrumental terms as a means of earning money quickly. However, Cameron would not fit the typical definition of a

'drifter' because he is also limited by his mental health, further indicating the diversity in the continuum of MSW. Even this option is for Cameron, who at 23 already saw himself as old and therefore less appealing to clients who preferred younger, *'inexperienced, easily led'* men.

Cameron: In the Gay community, you do get proper old people, and they are into the chickens they call them, which are basically the guys which are maybe the age of 18 and it's their first time... they just like that fresh looking person who doesn't know nothing about the Gay scene, inexperienced in sex life and that, that's who they go for. Even though I am 23, I am old, those guys get more attention like I got more attention when I was that age, because people knew I was inexperienced, easily led, not naïve but inexperienced, easily led...

(Extract from Walk 2: Debdale Park)

For Cameron, this was part of the attraction of selling sex online. He had initially sold sex on the street but now only did online because of the disadvantage of age. Additionally, online MSW attracted more money, guaranteed clients, not talking to uninterested people, getting into strangers' cars or waiting in the cold or rain. Street-based MSW also came with more stigma within an LGBT community where people knew each other, It was therefore important to Cameron that he avoids embarrassment while trying to make money.

Cameron: When you are on the street, you don't want people seeing you. People know me and I don't want people seeing me and going 'oh it's him again, he's fucking there again, he's having a bad time', like cos it's really embarrassing.

George: Is it?

Cameron: Cos it's embarrassing (quite animated), it's fucking embarrassing.

George: The people who know you, know what you do, what's embarrassing?

Cameron: Yeah, it's really embarrassing, cos people talk, they'll talk to their friends in the car, they'll chat badly about you.

George: Who are these people?

Cameron: Could be anyone from the village, from the Gay Village, I just know a lot of people from the Village. I won't want to be seen round there, it's quite degrading, and they know that you're doing it for not a standard fare, doing it for a cheap fare, only pay like £20, £40 while online you gonna get £120 for an hour worth of what you do.

(Extract from Walk 2: Debdale Park)

Cameron gives the impression that there are standard fares for MSW and that there was a significant difference in these fares as one moves to sell sex online. This also confirms his pre-occupation with an employment discourse of MSW. However, Cameron alludes to the fact that reputational loss was critical regardless of the location one sells sex. Cameron is mindful of what other people think because of the implications for his relationships and he tried to manage these while selling sex.

Cameron: Even online has its downfalls cos when you are online, you are online for everyone to see. People go online to have a look, have a nosey, to see who's on there. Plus, it's harder to find a relationship in the Gay community if you are online and doing escorting cos people are gonna think and say, 'look at you', cos they know what you are about, do you know what I mean? So sometimes you just have to keep to yourself and that's what I've been doing. I don't want to bring up that, you won't be able to say that. People look down on you, just been trying to, you know what I mean?

(Extract from Walk 2: Debdale Park)

As we approached the reservoir, Cameron's despondency turns to hope, which appeared to be linked to water. Cameron conjured up for me an image of the flow of water, rippling away, and of a raindrop or a petal falling into water. Having talked about his estrangement from his family, mental ill-health, the challenges of finding non-sex selling jobs, his diminishing prospects of selling sex, and the embarrassment from being seen and known for selling sex, Cameron's story takes a positive turn and this hope breaks through the pain in his voice as he becomes philosophical about his future.

Cameron: Yeah, I like looking at the water though. For some reason I am attracted to water I think. Even when I was in town, I liked to chill by the canal and stuff like that, or like there's a reservoir by, not a reservoir or man-made lake like you said, where my doctors used to be in town...

George: Right.

Cameron: Do you know like Ancoats? Do you know that nice little bit where yeah erm. Just like looking at it ... flowing, like see the ripples, basically it means life goes on (giggles), 'cos like it does, no matter what happens, like a rain drop or petal could fall in the water and it ripples out .. so, also sort of means that when you do something there is a consequence spirit, cos it ripples out

George: Very philosophical

Cameron: It's quite big, isn't it?

(Extract from Walk 2: Debdale Park)



Fig. 13: A view of the Debdale Reservoir showing the edge of the water (Photo: G Dake, 2017 @ Walking Interview)

We again spent some time at the Reservoir and it was clear that both the image and experience of being close to water was key to understanding Cameron's hope for a better future. Cameron reminisced that he used to belong to a community of street-based MSWers, and they would spend nights together when he used to live in town and sold sex on the street. This felt important for a young man who seemed quite isolated and whose routine was now consumed with meetings, medical appointments or walks to 'clear his head'. While Cameron became philosophical, optimistic and aspirational, something suddenly changed and he ended the walk. Although I was wary that the walk seemed truncated, Cameron had taken charge and had talked with hope about his future and as I left, I had the image of the pebble dropping into the water and rippling away.

Case Overview

Pen Picture of Cameron

Cameron was born and grew up in London to a mother who like him, had sold sex, misused drugs and experienced mental ill-health. He has at least one older sister, an older brother and twin younger siblings that he is yet to meet. Cameron identified as Gay when he was fairly young person and left home in his early teens because of the homophobia within his family and he left to escape possible violence from his older brother and mother's boyfriend. Cameron relocated to Manchester where he lived with a friend's family and began to sell sex on the street. He has not returned to London since moving to Manchester although he indicates that he has maintained contact with his mother. Cameron currently sells sex only online. He suffers with

mental ill-health and receives extensive support for this. Cameron has engaged with TMR's creative sessions/arts-based practices which appealed to his creative side but he also stressed that he liked that he was trusted with a camera for a long time.

Reflections

I met Cameron three times over a period of a month, completing a pre-walk discussion in his flat and two walking interviews in Debdale park. During this time, Cameron discusses his experience of homophobia from his family, leading to physical estrangement and relocation to Manchester. He also talks extensively about his mental ill-health and how his daily routine, sex work and other aspects of his life seem to be dependent on the state of his mental health. Managing his sexuality, homelessness, mental ill-health and need for employment finds a compromise in selling sex but this comes with tensions and compromises. There are aspects of hopefulness in Cameron's story; he appears to have re-connected with his mother who he describes as his confidante and a role model for him, he has support for his mental ill-health through his GP, he is able to manage his mental ill-health through walks in Debdale Park to clear his head and regular breaks from selling sex, he had a group of other sex workers he regularly socialised with when he was living in town and he has a community in TMR where he feels trusted to engage in creative activities.

Cameron's relationship to selling sex is complex. There was an earlier phase when he was younger, felt more desirable, and was immersed in a community of young men who sold sex on the street. Over time, he considers himself less desirable compared to younger men and feels stigmatised within the LGBT community for selling sex, and selling sex online has not minimised his visibility as a sex worker within the LGBT

community. He manages this stigma and also his mental ill-health through self-imposed breaks from selling sex, but returns to selling sex to settle debts and make money. Although he makes good money when selling sex, he suggests that he doesn't spend it wisely. Cameron's story presents selling sex as a form of 'edge work', where decisions reflect liminality in making choices. These choices are often mundane and liminal; informed by changing practical, personal and emotional circumstances such as a pressing need to pay rent, a break to manage mental ill-health or a self-imposed break to manage one's reputation.

Cameron's relationship with his family reveal defences against anxiety. He idealises his mother as a caring and protective parent, drawing lines of biographical connection, and a shared experience of sex work, mental ill-health, and substance misuse. He denigrates his older brother and mother's boyfriend who are described as homophobic and possibly violent. Cameron appears to have a positive relationship with the female members of his family (mother and sister) and a hostile relationship with the male members of his family (brother and mother's boyfriend), which may reflect his own defences against his masculinity.

When explored in the context of Cameron's fractured relationship with his family, his encounter with an old man in Debdale Park is significant. Cameron tells this story prior to his discussion about his plan to visit his family after a decade of physical estrangement. Then, it is akin to a typical family history passed down through generations. The experience of having a family member at war is challenging, and

one that has to be confronted with hope. This is a position that Cameron finds himself in as he looks forward to his visit home with excitement and anxiety.

The image of water in Cameron's story is evocative as a symbol of well-being and hope, a vision of his preferred future. His walks to the water enable him to find containment for his challenges and frustrations, and temporary relief for his mental ill-health. There is both a therapeutic association with water, where Cameron metaphorically 'clears his head' (removing unwanted thoughts in his head or gain a more lucid perspective) and also of choices and their implications. Cameron uses the image of a raindrop falling in the water and rippling out, indicating that small choices have far-reaching implications, but also the continuity of life even if these do not fold neatly into a resolution. While life remains difficult, Cameron will 'walk to the end of the water' and he would walk 'back to the water', meaning there was always hope even in the challenging situations he found himself in.

Cameron emphasises 'head' in his description - he had headphones on his 'head', the rain fell on his 'head' and his walks allow him to 'clear his head'. This emphasis on the physicality of contact with his 'head' suggests the significance of the corporeal in the healing process. He physically blocks out the sound with his headphones and his 'head' is physical washed or cleared. Cameron indicated that he had 'walked' all his life and finds walking therapeutic, another corporeal practice. Debdale Park as a physical location was important to Cameron's well-being, for managing his conflicting

emotions of excitement and anxiety, of deciding whether to relocate from Manchester, and deciding his future as a sex worker.

Cameron has been involved with TMR for a long time but his engagement was less frequent than it used to be. It offered him the opportunity of a community he no longer had with other sex workers. It was also an opportunity to demonstrate that he is able to achieve positive outcomes through his involvement in the arts-based projects. Cameron referred to a photography project he was involved in with TMR; there was artistic appeal but Cameron highlighted in particular the importance of being trusted with a camera for several weeks. Being trusted was important to Cameron's sense of self and underscores the importance of TMR's relational approach which fosters an accepting environment and a voice to articulate his views.



Fig. 14: A view of Debdale Outdoor Centre showing part of the reservoir (Photo: G Dake, 2017 @ Walking Interview)

Oliver

Red Pain, Pink Pain...

Oliver was in the garden area of the Origin8 Art Club waiting for me. We enjoyed the privacy away from the main restaurant area and Oliver was ready with his art equipment (pens, pencils, tips, brushes, paints, and sketchpad). He decided to use the A3 papers I brought and went straight into drawing his maps. I was apprehensive about this first session because in our last meeting, I felt introducing the project during the TMR creative session had left Oliver uncomfortable about being a MSWer. I was therefore relieved to see that he was ready for the session.

Oliver quickly told me about his successful job interview with Origin8, a subject that punctuated his commentary during the map-making session. This was a regular job with reliable income and part-time hours to support his development as an artist. Oliver had developed his art into booklets of postcards for sale online and at fairs, but felt he still needed to sell sex to make ends meet.

Oliver: I'm holding the red, the pink and the blue, there is this pain, there is this I shouldn't have to be doing sex work to get by. There's some of that, that pink, there is that, you know it's not as bad as what I sometimes think it to be, you know, it gets me by, it's a legitimate work in the UK, it is accepted, but to even have to or not have to, but to discuss it with friends, that yes, I occasionally do sex work, it causes me

pain, it causes me to be like I don't really want to have to say this... so that's where I'm like conflicted between red pain and pink pain...

Throughout my research relationship with Oliver, this image of red and pink pain, the 'to do or not to do' question of selling sex, its merits and demerits seem to be a central pre-occupation for him.

Oliver's Maps and Walks

Oliver drew four maps and completed two walks with me over a two and a half-week period. During the map-making session, he chose the Major Street Car Park and Piccadilly Gardens as the locations for his walks. Oliver's maps were themed rather than location-based, with various locations linked to the themes etched onto the maps.

Walks to the Major Street Car Park and Piccadilly Gardens completed our research relationship. Both locations were linked to the themes in the maps and allowed to me gain a more comprehensive understanding of Oliver's everyday life and lived experience as a MSWer. Oliver's case study has been structured as a series of episodes or interventions around the maps and walks to emphasise the key themes as well as the overall story.

Map-Making: Early February 2019

Map 1: Home Base

The map-making session was an art project for Oliver and he attended with a full set of coloured pencils, complete with different shades of colours. Over a two-hour period, he drew four maps, expressing 'true colours'; choosing warmer colours to depict more positive experiences and colder colours for the less positive. He explained this during drawing the first map.

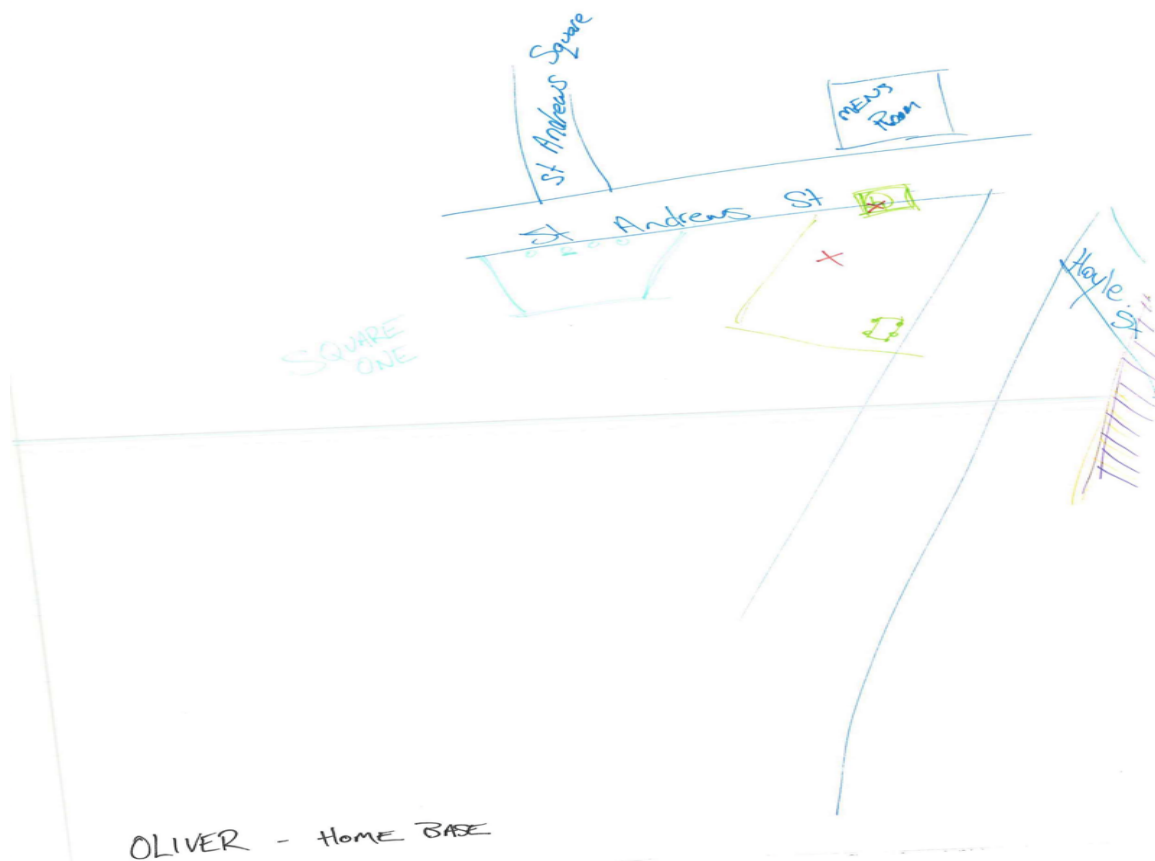


Fig.15: Home Base from Map-making session. Credit: Oliver/G. Dake, 2019.

Oliver: That train line is actually quite noisy, it is terrible to be honest, so that's where my orange and my purple. Again, I've got this cold, it's, it's, it's providing the shelter but it's also not helping with my mind, because of the noise. I've bought ear plugs so that I can continue to be parked under there, using it to stop further water into the van,

so that's kind of what I consider as my home base. Yeah! Well, the purple is more to do with my illness at the moment; my lungs, my breathing, unable to breathe, that's the lack of the blood flow, so, sorry the lack of the oxygen in my blood will be the deep purple colour whereas the orange is actually my mind. It's that noise of the train, it's that irritating that is just causing me agony ...

(Extract from Map-Making Session).

The 'Home Base' map centred on the immediate environment where Oliver parked his van. He portrayed the warmth, privacy, and refuge of this location with warmer colours. There are more locational details in this map than the other three - street names and landmarks pointing to an actual, identifiable location. Oliver refers to this as 'the centre of my life' and as the place for feelings and emotions. This is his 'backyard', where he had the privacy to look for work without intrusion from others. This is where he made his first ever snow angel and streamed it on his phone to friends in his home country.

Oliver: So that area, I mean, that all represents normal day, and it represents home. From that I actually have an important section, in particular of St Andrew's Street,...that represents our recent snow, and that was my backyard, that is where I had my snow woman, that is where I had my snow angel, that's the first snow person I have been able to make, so with that whole area being like home,

George: Hmm

Oliver: I do think of that little area like my yard. It was somewhere I could just go out, feel free to be there and I actually used my mobile phone so I could stream live on Facebook while I did my snow person. ...And I mean with all this, when I am browsing websites, when I am looking at sleepy boy and stuff like that to try and see if there's any work available, this would be, I guess my home, this would be where I'm doing most of that, because I can't do it anywhere else...

(Extract from Map-Making Session).

Oliver uses 'Home' and 'Home Base' almost interchangeably. However, his choice of 'Home Base' for this map seemed to reflect the tensions within his circumstances. While not street-homeless, Oliver lives in a leaky van parked under a railway bridge, which provides some respite from the rain but this is at the expense of the noise from trains and poor ventilation. Oliver's home base allows him some separation between home and work, some comfort from the weather but it is not the home he can wash in or have as a mailing address. It is a 'base', a starting point or a centre of operations, and he still needs to use a café to charge his electronic equipment and he keeps a virtual address.

Maps 2 & 3: Warmth/Hot Drinks

The Warmth and Hot Drinks maps are thematically similar and focus on Oliver's daily routine. Key locations on these maps are Wetherspoons Piccadilly, Paramount Wetherspoons, Spar and Mail Boxes Etc (MBE).

In the Warmth map, Oliver visually presents his daily routine, showing how he purposefully plans his day to ensure that he is economical and purposeful as he moves from venue to venue to generate warmth (physically and emotionally) for his survival.

Fig.16: Warmth Map from Map-making session. Credit: Oliver/G. Dake, 2019.

Oliver: My virtual address conveniently from Wetherspoons, right, we've got, just trying to pick where I am on Piccadilly, it's different when I walk there. Right, my virtual address, my address is up here and that's actually Mailboxes Etcetera, that's the company there, and that's where I, that's as far as my identity, all my insurance everything is concerned, that's where I live. I live in a very small, a very small postal box, which we actually call unit 341, that is, instead of me having a PO Box,

George: OK

Oliver: I actually have a unit 341 at Mailboxes Etcetera. So that is important to me, again in my coping strategies, whilst I can't hold down, I can't rent anywhere, I don't have the money, but I need somewhere to base myself, as much as Men's Room and

*LGBT Foundation are important to me, I don't want my life to be based in a charity and so that's why I spend £25 a month to have an address, up here , as well as that they will sign for all parcels and everything for me and I've got 24 hours access, **so from Wetherspoons, leaving, leaving when they shut, at midnight, I then often am checking my mail, that's close time for me, it's midnight there.** See, I'm a very back-to-basics person, instead of writing midnight, I've an analogue clock*

George: I love that

Oliver: It's, it's, I mean I wear a Fitbit, I've got digital time on there but a lot of people can't tell analogue time, and it's just again like I said it's back to basics for me, it's, I'll live how I can when I can, if it takes an analogue clock, it takes an analogue clock ..

(Extract from Map-Making Session – emphasis mine).

Oliver meticulously plans his routine, ensuring that he leaves Wetherspoons at midnight to go his 'very small' address at MBE for his mail. Oliver also uses the image of an analogue clock to symbolise the necessity of orienting himself to situations to meet his needs. His creative adjustment is further evidenced on the map with details of his big breakfast at Spar, noting both the price (£3.50) and the menu; if it takes an analogue clock, it takes an analogue clock, even if Oliver has a Fitbit. This idea of creativity for survival is seen in both the 'Warmth' and 'Hot Drinks'.

The 'Hot Drinks' map speaks to Oliver's resilience; finding creative solutions to everyday challenges in ways that draw the least attention to him while participating

within a community oblivious to his homelessness and MSWer identity. Oliver times his arrival at Wetherspoons to secure the right table with charging points (8, 71 and 72), staying long enough to maximise the opportunity for unlimited refills of coffee for £1.45, shaving, and using the Internet to look for clients.

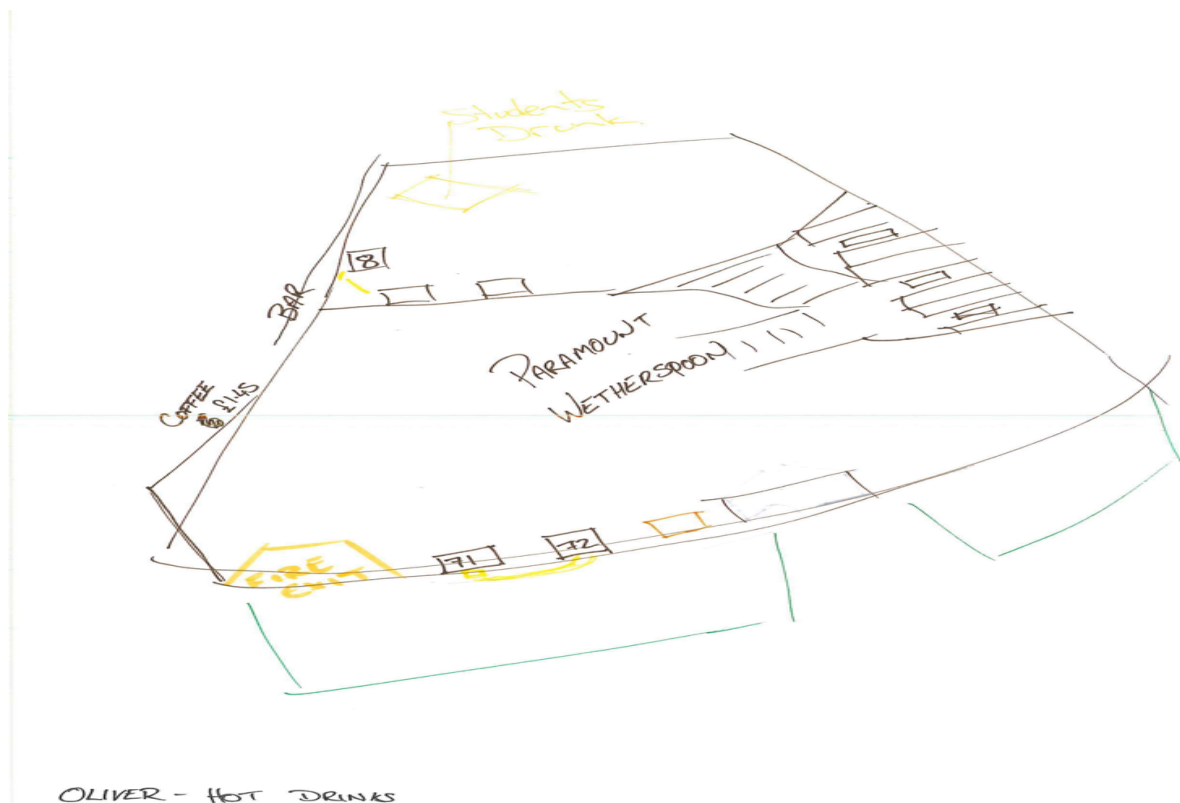


Fig.17: Hot Drinks Map from Map-making session. Credit: Oliver/G. Dake

Oliver highlights the cost of the coffee, location of tables, exits and 'drunk students', using a yellow colour. Tables 71 and 72 are particularly important because they are near the fire exit and enable Oliver see people as they come in, giving him a sense of security. The students sit near table 8 and make a lot of noise, which Oliver found disconcerting because it is a subtle reminder that unlike Oliver, the students could fraternise at Wetherspoons, get drunk and rowdy.

Oliver: I do have that with the front wall, it is a glass wall but there is actually a bit of a protective barrier for me with that...

George: OK

Oliver: and so that to me because there's, there's the bollards, there's the, the security type screen fencing, or whatever, that actually protects me there from I know whether there's people there before they come in

George: OK

Oliver: There's that kind of guardedness, you can see whether there's someone in your front yard before they get to your front door, it's the same with this...

(Extract from Map-Making Session)

The familiarity of Wetherspoons gives Oliver an experience of protectiveness which he referred to later in his commentary as a 'homely feeling'. It is a combination of physical protection, privacy to look for work and the practical sustenance from unlimited refills of coffee that gives Oliver a sense of safety in spite of the irritations of drunk and rowdy students. These bring an experience of warmth; a fragile sense of belonging and connectedness, of security and homeliness to a man who is homeless, domiciled in a foreign country and spends his nights alone in his campervan.

Oliver: Usually, it's in the evenings, usually, somewhere, if I can get there around 4 o'clock it's good because I can often get, I suppose there's only one table with a power

socket nearby, you go along, in the middle, yeah, so that's something. I normally like around 4 o'clock, I could get a table usually with a pocket socket. If I can go much later than that, I can, until about 9 or 10 o'clock but by that stage it's not worth going there and spending £1.45 for coffee, when I've only got an hour left, of having coffee, an hour to an hour and half, which sounds a bit silly for most people, like £1.45 for an hour and half of coffee, it's like that's great, but for myself in this survival mode, it's not, really not viable.

(Extract from Map-Making Session)

Timing is important for Wetherspoons to be 'viable' for Oliver. There is a deliberateness about his approach to going to the pub; in his timing and choice of table, reminding himself that he is not just another social patron and that arriving at a certain time and having access to a certain table is a matter of survival.

Map 4: Work

Oliver's fourth map is the most minimal in detail; with a street name, a business name, a puddle and three 'pound' signs. The two shades of red around the square enclosure are Oliver's pink and red pains.

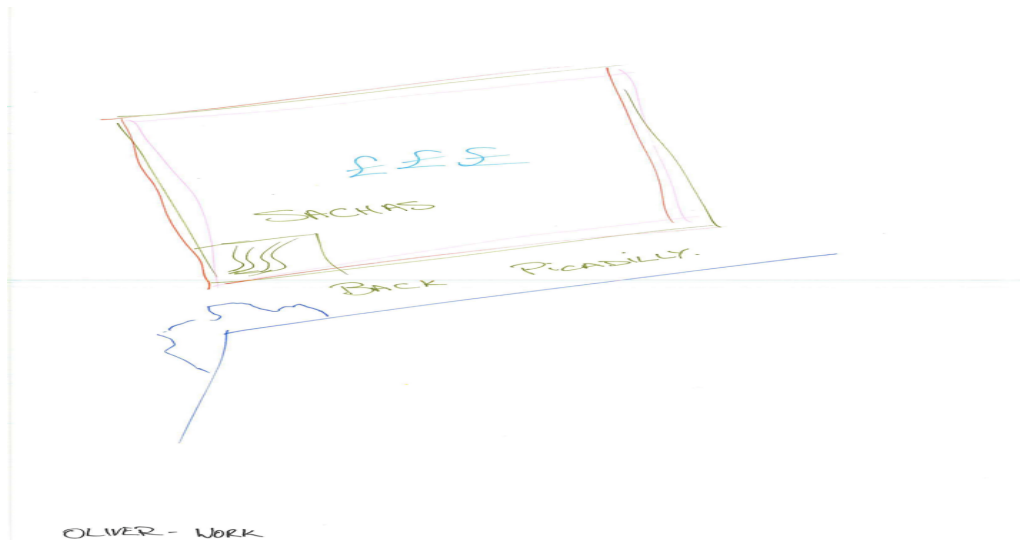


Fig.18: Work Map from Map-making session. Credit: Oliver/G. Dake

Oliver: I'm holding the red, the pink and the blue, there is this pain... you know, it gets me by, it's a legitimate work in the UK, it is accepted, but to even have to or not have to, but to discuss it with friends, that yes, I occasionally do sex work, it causes me pain, it causes me to be like I don't really want to have to say this. Even when I was saying to friends at lunch today that like I've got a meeting and they were saying, so what's your meeting? And I was saying well, I'm going to talk about the sex work that I do with someone who's researching on the lives of sex workers, and I had to look around the buffet area where we were walking at that time, we were walking and chatting, walking around the buffet, but I had to look around several times to see whether there were other people around me, to know whether I felt safe saying it or not, so that's where I'm like conflicted between red pain and pink pain there ...

(Extract from Map-Making Session).

Oliver recounted his experience with a client which made him question his justification for selling sex. There is a tension: selling sex is a legitimate and viable source of income but negatively affects his relationships and everyday life like having to explain our meeting to friends. Oliver used the Internet and digital platforms to sell sex - Sleepy Boy, Adult Work, Squirts, Grindr – which enables Oliver to procure work and earn income but also makes him visible to the LGBT community as a MSWer. Grindr, a location-based application amplifies this tension between selling sex and managing one's reputation within one's community.

Oliver: I've done paid work... in various places while I have been travelling and I felt better about doing it in those areas because if I've jumped on Grindr and I say that I'm doing sex work, it's not a community where they're gonna see me popping up on Grindr all the time. It's not somewhere where yeah my face will get the rounders and yeah, he's a sex worker. It's been yeah, for a night or two or I'm in the area for a few hours, whereas Manchester, I am a lot [more] careful about it because I like to think of Manchester as my home. I like to think of Manchester as where I'm comfortable but I also don't want that impression, well not the impression but I don't want other people to look at me and go 'oh that's Oliver, he's a sex worker. I want them to go 'that's Oliver', so that's you know, I try to restrict, you know, I've limited myself, as far as what I do...

(Extract from Map-Making Session).

Oliver's everyday life included participating in Dry January, celebrating his birthday with friends, and charity volunteering. This can feel threatened if he is recognised online or in person as 'Oliver the sex worker'. Oliver would have to balance selling sex as a viable employment option with the implications of recognition as a MSWer.

Walking Interviews: February 2019

Walk 1, Major Street Car Park: Early February 2019

Major Street Car Park is strategically located close to and provides easy access to Manchester City Centre and its immediate environs including Piccadilly Gardens and the Village. Oliver volunteers one weekend each month, transporting equipment to support a charity event, and his parking costs are reimbursed.

Most of the hour we spent at the Major Street Car Park was at the entrance although we also walked round the car park to stretch our legs. Oliver described this location as safe and close enough to the Village to look for work on Grindr without people actually knowing where he is. However, Oliver also had negative experiences here.

Oliver: yeah well, so this, this area is home to me on one weekend a month. This is, it's a safety place for me, it's a place where when I go to events in the Village, I park in this car park.

George: Right!

Oliver: I park my van in this car park, sleep in the car park, in the van. It's also why I'm sick at the moment though because this is where I discovered my bed was a puddle after my birthday, so that wasn't the greatest but, I mean it's, it's a car park where I've got space.

(Extract from Walk 1: Major Street Car Park)

A group of men Oliver thinks recognised him as a MSWer tried to force him into their car one night when Oliver parked his van. Oliver complained to the police who Oliver felt were apathetic and did not do enough to investigate or support him. Village Angels, an LGBT charity helped him charge his phone, ensured that he was safe and followed up his complaint with the police and Oliver felt they were more responsive than the police. Oliver had also been assaulted three times within a month, and all the assaults were linked to the Village, a supposedly safe place for the LGBT community.

Oliver: And again, that's still having a lot of interactions with my daily life, like it's those three assaults are the reasons I've ended up having to live in a van because I'm not fit for working. I'm struggling to get to things on time, let alone work. My mental health, day-to-day is, some days it's OK, and other days I'm just a complete mess, so I'm wanting to work but not feeling the possibility of it. I'm trying to do something, but yeah it's, it's a real struggle. It's also the reason, those 3 assaults are the reason I've ended up having to move to doing sex work more than what I was, because it's, I mean in the past, it's been maybe once every few months, I might do a job in order to pay a debt, pay a big bill, something like that, but then now, it's I've got no income, I'm not

eligible for any government funds in the UK, I'm not eligible for any housing assistance either, so whilst I need to stand on my own two feet, but the general public of Manchester have put me in this position.

(Extract from Walk 1: Major Street Car Park)

Oliver described himself as in 'survival mode'; his UK bank account was overdrawn and attracting charges, and he had defaulted on his mortgage in his home country. Oliver indicated that he had contemplated suicide on occasions but found reasons to carry on including an invitation to his friends' wedding. Oliver stresses that the general public is unaware of his challenges because these are not readily visible. Oliver enacts this survival through everyday routine activities and mundane practices such as getting a shave, charging his phones, and having breakfast.

Oliver: I'm definitely in survival mode..., it's not a fun time but I am doing everything I can to actually survive, and this where with Wetherspoons, I know that for a £1.45 having coffee, even if I'm not eating in that day, I'm having coffee, I'm getting that filling feeling from the milk in the coffee. I'm having unlimited coffee, I've got their heat, their power and it's costing me a £1.45 a day, and I could be there from open to right through close, and I can keep having coffee or tea the whole day. It's also, it's where just this past month when I've had my events for this past weekend, I've gone to have a shave in the morning and my clippers have actually died on me after about 30 seconds of using them, so I've ended up with this patch of hair gone but the rest is still there, so again in survival mode, I've gone 'OK, I'm going to Wetherspoons, I'm going to charge

my clippers there. Not only that but because it's still morning time, between 7 and 12, it's breakfast menu, so if I spend a little bit more, for £2.95, I can have scrambled eggs on toast and a coffee, so it's costing me £1.50 more but I'm getting some food that day as well, and I'm still charging all my devices, and I'm having my unlimited coffees. I think that morning I had 5 coffees, I had my breakfast, I charged my phone, I charged my clippers, and I was able to go back to my van, and which was here in this car park and have a shave before going to the event, so I could at least feel, for my birthday celebrations, at the event, that I actually felt better. I felt I was clean shaven, I looked better, felt better, but for the general public in those events, they've got no idea.

(Extract from Walk 1: Major Street Car Park)

We see in Oliver's account the necessity of creatively exploiting opportunities in 'survival mode', how utterly exhausting it must be for him just to manage a liveable life, and the 'invisible' labour involved in achieving this.



Fig. 19: Major Street Car Park, Manchester (Internet Photo)

Selling sex for Oliver is contingent on many things including his physical and mental health, and therefore varies greatly. Like the other participants, Oliver's engagement with sex work is a function of other aspects of his life. This makes identifying these men wholly in terms of sex work essentialising and completely unhelpful.

Oliver: My work is very fluctuating because it's very much dependent on my headspace. It's dependent on my appointments with different support organisations who are helping keep me alive, keep me going, but then my general health as well, because I am in the position I am. Living in a van, I'm often not feeling great, I'm often not feeling energetic enough, so yeah, my work does greatly vary. There's no regularity to my work because also some of my work has been when I've been on holidays in the south, in the south of England, around London, the south coast...

(Extract from Walk 1: Major Street Car Park)

Oliver key message in this walk is survival, and this location Major Street Car Park enables him to tell this story. This location is also about Oliver's volunteering which stands tall in his survival narrative. Despite his challenges, Oliver emphasises this positive contribution to society; he is not so dominated by his challenges that he is unable to make meaningful contributions to humanity's cause.

Oliver: It's why I'm having to come to charities to actually rely on their help, rely on them, giving me those extra supports to my feet, and going yes, you can do this, you can survive, I have

been close to suicide and self-harm several times since, but what's kept me going is knowing that I've got friends getting married, friends that've been there for me all the time at home, and so I've really wanted to be there to celebrate their weddings with, they've invited me, they doing everything they can to help me with that, so I've managed to pull together every scrap of money that I've got. It does mean that I have had 2 mortgage payments now for a house that I have, not actually go through because I don't actually have the money for because the rent from tenants doesn't actually cover it, it does mean that I've defaulted on mortgage payments even now, I've also then been charged, I've charged for the payments not going through, I've got my bank in the UK, I've re-drawn over what my re-draw limit is, and I'm definitely in survival mode, for me, it is not a nice time, it's not a fun time but I am doing everything I can to actually survive, and this where with Wetherspoons, I know that for a £1.45 having coffee, even if I'm not eating in that day, I'm having coffee, I'm getting that filling feeling from the milk in the coffee, I'm having unlimited coffee, I've got their heat, their power and it's costing me a £1.45 a day, and I could be there from open to right through close, and I can keep having coffee or tea the whole day, it's also is where just this past month when I've had my events for this past weekend, I've gone to have a shave in the morning and my clippers have actually died on me after about 30 seconds of using them, so I've ended up with this patch of hair gone but the rest is still there, so again in survival mode, I've gone 'OK, I'm going to Wetherspoons, I'm going to charge my clippers there, not only that but because it's still morning time, between 7 and 12, its' breakfast menu, so if I spend a little bit more, for £2.95, I can have scrambled eggs on toast and a coffee, so it's costing me £1.50 more but I'm getting some food that day as well, and I'm still charging all my devices, and I'm having my unlimited coffees, I think that morning I had 5 coffees, I had my breakfast, I charged my phone, I charged my clippers, and I was able to go back to my van, and which was here in this car park and have a shave before going to the event, so I could at least feel, for my birthday celebrations, at the event, that I actually felt better, I felt I was clean shaven, I looked better, felt better, but for the general public in those events, they've got no idea. Even one of them, because we had missed some equipment for the events when I had picked it up the night before from where it

*was stored it, so we had to go for a drive to pick up more equipment, **and that person said to me, ‘Ah! so this is your van,’ I said ‘yeah’, and he goes ‘so where is it you live’? I said, ‘Well, this is my home, you are now sitting in my home’, he went ‘what do you mean?’ I said ‘Well I don’t have a home, I can’t afford rent, I can’t afford anything, this is everything, everything I own is here in this van, and this is my life’, and that really took him by struck, but then he also divulged that he’s been on the streets in the past and so he understands all that whole survival mode..***

(Extract from Walk 1: Major Street Car Park – emphasis mine)

Walk 2, Piccadilly Gardens: Mid-February 2019

Piccadilly Gardens is at the heart of Manchester’s City centre. A central hub of Manchester’s public transport system, shops, and businesses, it is also an open green space with a fountain for families and workers on lunch breaks.

Oliver led the walk through Piccadilly Gardens, pointing out key places on his maps like Piccadilly Wetherspoons, Spar and MBE. We walked past Piccadilly Wetherspoons and Oliver pointed out the tables with power sockets captured on the maps. For about one hour, Oliver led me through some of the landscapes of his maps, pausing and stopping to comment on these, the tempo of the walk matching the stories.

Oliver: This area in general, Piccadilly Gardens is what feels, bit like home to me as well. This is very regularly where I spend a lot of time, between the noise of water,

which keeps me calm... If we, if we move over this way a bit, we've got on the left here, so we've got the Wetherspoons, just through here, with blue and gold signage, so that's where cos I spend a lot of time getting my teas, my coffees, charging my devices. This one is not as homely feeling. I can't see my devices from the coffee machine, I need to kind of stretch to see over everyone, to see what's happening, make sure my devices isn't going missing etc, but there is a little bit of privacy in this one being, where the power sockets are, on the wall, I've actually got that bit of privacy to use my devices, look at what I need..

George: OK..

Oliver: So, again with this park here, this is when I was walking, when I was in a Shared House out of the city, I'd walk from the Village, I'd walk basically along the edge of Piccadilly Gardens, I'd walk past the Arndale, and continue onto my shared house, so again, it's had that significance throughout my time in Manchester, that it's something that's very regular, I suppose, something that I know, it's been basically a daily place to be.

(Extract from Walk 2: Piccadilly Gardens).

Oliver defaults to the themes of home, work, warmth and hot drinks that feature in his maps but in addition to this, Oliver describes in detail his daily routine and the quiet assurance and confidence that comes from his familiarity with these locations (space, place, sights and sounds) and regularity, and the comfort of knowing what to expect each day.

Oliver: yeah, so when I walk from the Men's Room and I come up to here to sit and spend my day, basically I come straight up from Piccadilly station. I come straight up, I've got Wetherspoons here, and then I've got my address, basically what's on all my ID, it's just the street here, it's just on Lever Street, so, that's good for me, that, if I pick up bills or whatever I pick up from there, I come back and I sit at Spoons, and it's kind of my back, and it's that homely thing...

(Extract from Walk 2: Piccadilly Gardens)

Oliver refers to Wetherspoons using an affectionate diminutive - 'Spoons' – signalling his emotional attachment to this location and the security it provides. In addition to unlimited coffees, charging his devices, and heating, Wetherspoons are about managing uncertainty and unexpected disruption, offering Oliver 'containment' such as when he finds that his Grindr account had been banned.

Oliver: So I mean, this is where I also re-downloaded Grindr the other day, after realising that my profile had been banned, and I don't really know why I was banned... the only thing I can think about is that for a short while, I did have a diamond emoji on my profile, which does generally represent being a sex worker, or offering services of any kind, so that's what I feel it must have been but I wanted them to actually identify whether that's what it was, whether that was why I was banned but they wouldn't do that...

(Extract from Walk 2: Piccadilly Gardens)

Oliver's frustration with Grindr banning his profile was more about the app's double standards than his potential loss of income. He argued that Grindr's refusal to acknowledge sex work(ers) on the platform increased risks of exploitation of MSWers because they had less protection. For Oliver, Grindr's decision to ban MSWer profiles meant that agencies like TMR which supported MSWers could not have a presence on the platform. This was tantamount to Grindr preventing many MSWers from engaging in legitimate work.

Oliver: Sex work is legitimate work, it is something that, you know, without sex work, what will there be? There's going to be millions of people around the world without a job, there's going to be millions of people around the world that can't survive, but also I think that it's, if it were to be accepted, that stigma would be reduced, but also it would allow it to be a safer work, because people wouldn't have to be making an excuse for where they're going. You know, if I go and do this job at the weekend and I'm going out past Blackpool, I don't know how I can in general terms tell people that I'm going away for the weekend. Is it just going to be that I'm going away for a weekend or is it going to be that I'm going away and I'm doing work? Therefore, people will realise that if they don't hear from me, something with work probably has gone wrong. Instead, if I'm going away for the weekend and they don't hear from me, they're probably going to think that my mental health is playing up, and I'm not responding for that reason, so the whole safety aspect could be improved by society. It doesn't even need to be embracing but accepting properly and Apps accepting that people are working...

(Extract from Walk 2: Piccadilly Gardens)

Oliver described in detail how he scrutinised each potential client many times over; matching images on Google, other websites, social media sites, and checking on the National Ugly Mugs database multiple times to verify that they are genuine and that there are no risks, but even this does not guarantee safety, and Oliver sometimes declined jobs, meaning financial loss.

Oliver navigates a life of precarity while appearing as an activist and advocate for MSWers. He replays some of his stories from our previous walk about creatively manipulating opportunities to his advantage to present a front that obscured his real challenges to the public including people close to him. Oliver illustrates this with a story about a visit to a homeless charity.

Oliver: It's the same today like heading into Companion homeless service. I've walked in with a support worker and the support worker had said we are here to speak to a staff member. All the volunteers are like, we are staff, everyone just looking at the two of us dressed fairly nicely, and they're like, what's the deal? We spoke with a manager, and in private, I was able to divulge my situation but while I'm up in a room full of other service users, other homeless people, people who need, because they need the service, they are there having breakfast, and it's like yeah, I need those things as well but I don't have the same appearance as the rest of the room, and that's why the volunteers and the workers in the room were looking going, what's the problem? But then in that, like I've been able to discuss with the manager doing some volunteer work there and being there not just as a service user but a volunteer. I could have my

breakfast and my shower, then I could volunteer during the breakfast service, I could come back in evenings, I could have a meal. They can then give me a reference, they can assist me to be able to further my career, to work again... build my confidence back up, and because that's where a lot of this lack for me happens is the confidence isn't there because of the assaults and because of the being messed around with clients in sex work. It's been a big rolling thing where at the moment, I'm just not getting by, so yeah, to have those opportunities coming up is something that's really empowering me, and that's something that I've said with Men's Room as well, is that whilst they provide practical support to me and other people, I feel that it is the empowering of me to do things, having a worker go with me today to Companion, because I don't feel the ability to go in and say what I need, so having someone there to support me is empowering me to do things, just with a guiding person, so yeah, that's the type of thing that I'm looking highly on them for...

(Extract from Walk 2: Piccadilly Gardens)

Oliver's validation of the difference that being supported to attend this homeless charity by a TMR staff member is significant. It is not enough to provide practical support or even a referral to charities like this; Oliver equates being accompanied by a staff member to empowerment. He also speaks to the importance of maintaining his dignity while seeking help, and describes himself as not the same as the other service users but as someone who can contribute to the charity while receiving help.



Fig. 20: Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester (Internet Photo)

Case Overview

Pen Picture of Oliver

Oliver, who is in his thirties, was born outside Europe but has lived in Manchester for the last 3-4 years. He has no recourse to public funds, and survives on income from sex work, other occasional work, and the support of different charities including TMR. He presented as intelligent; informed about historical and current world affairs and was able to analyse situations with a good level of criticality. He told me that he had a house in his home country that he was paying a mortgage on. Oliver did not discuss his reasons for relocating to Manchester or whether he intended to return to live in his home country. He has maintained regular contact with friends in his home country including building a snow angel and sharing this with them via a livestream, and plans to attend a wedding. Oliver also has a group of friends in Manchester but only three of them know that he sells sex. Oliver lives in a van parked under the train lines near to TMR's offices. His mental health has deteriorated following three physically assaults in a month while in Manchester, and he says he is not always motivated to

do things. His immigration status, housing situation and mental ill-health means that sex work is a viable option for earning income and Oliver primarily sells sex online. Oliver identifies as an artist and therefore connects with the creative sessions at TMR but also seeks practical and emotional support from TMR.

Reflections

Within Oliver's case study are issues that relate to all four of the objectives of this study, which I reflect on briefly. Oliver's pre-occupation with survival is both about navigating the everyday experience of stigma and his changing relationships with sex work. He also discusses the importance of his changing relationships with his friends and the difference that his engagement with TMR makes to his present and future needs.

Survival is a key theme in Oliver's story and this relates to the place of sex work in his life, and how to negotiate the stigma that it occasions. The red pain, pink pain tension is about maintaining a good enough sense of self while earning money to meet his needs. In doing this, Oliver has to contend with the challenge of navigating his image as a MSWer on platforms such as Grindr and being recognised in his 'backyard' of Manchester as a MSWer. Such recognitions can come with threats like the one he encountered on Major Street Car Park or actual violence like his three attacks within the space of a month. While arguing for the legitimacy of sex work as a form of employment, Oliver is actively working towards seeking non-sex work roles – an interview at Origin8, seeking to build his confidence through volunteering at

Companion homeless charity and hoping to get a work reference from them to build his career, and developing his art for sale online and in bazaars.

Friendships and fraternising is important to Oliver and he invests a lot to sustain these relationships both in the UK and beyond. Oliver has local friends he joins to participate in Dry January and celebrate his birthday although only three of them know that he is a MSWer. He goes to great lengths to maintain his friendships in his home country, building and sharing images and plans to attend a wedding. This contrasts sharply with Oliver's regular visits to Wetherspoons and other places which he carefully plans to ensure he has privacy. Oliver is keen to volunteer and be seen as contributing to society. His story is also full of examples of routine activities and mundane practices which describe a highly organised and micro-managed daily schedule rooted in detailed knowledge and use of the city. These efforts are also about negotiating everyday stigma.

That Oliver parks his van within close proximity of TMR indicates his attachment to the agency and its importance for him. His example of the kind of support he receives from TMR suggests that both his immediate (practical) and future needs (empowering to build his confidence for his future career) are met by TMR.

Bunny

20-Stone Henrietta...

There she is across the dancefloor, twenty-stone Henrietta in big glasses. She stands out in her dress and she is energetic for her size. She moves well but does not have a dance partner. Next to her is the most beautiful girl on the dance floor. Takes your breath away....

The teacher walks into the story; the story, his story, their story, the unfolding story. This teacher joins as a narrator and chronicler of history; an expositor and activist; a social commentator reflecting on the past and pointing the way to the future. For him, it is more than a story; it is compelling and needs to be heard as much as told. The student is ready but not quite ready; he has been told other stories which taint his understanding. The teacher's task is not an easy one; he needs to make the student understand the real story by unwriting the old one and writing the new one. It has to start from the present, but its beginnings are in the past; and there is yet a future that is unclear.

Twenty-stone Henrietta with big glasses. That's the reality; not the beautiful slim girl on the dance floor. The story about twenty-stone Henrietta with the big glasses is the story about men selling sex, the good, the bad and the not so good. The reality is harsh but the fantasy is harsher. Still, it is what it is; there are good bits but also bits one would not want to remember in a hurry. And one can only contemplate the future. It was good while it lasted but... this is the here and now.

So, hello, twenty-stone Henrietta with big glasses; roll on!

'The Old Major'⁸

For both of our walking interviews, I met Bunny at the Old Major with other patrons and we walked to the Sackville Gardens. Bunny explained that he would always be a patron of the pub because it had shaped his early life in Manchester and restored his faith in humanity. Sitting on a bench in Sackville Gardens next to Alan's Turing's statue, we admired a new sculpture of the Manchester Bee embossed with key locations and agencies associated with the LGBT Community. Bunny told me about his connection to the Old Major.

Bunny worked at the Old Major soon after moving to Manchester but the pub also held memories of his earlier experiences of selling sex. Although Bunny had a troubled relationship with alcohol, he perceives this pub that sells alcohol as a place of positive memories and the centre of a welcoming community. He explained that he had spent most of his working life (non-sex work) at the Old Major and still had good friends he regularly met there. Bunny described the landlords as 'like family' to him and his regular presence here was cathartic, enabling him to feel a sense of acceptance within the LGBT community. Sackville Gardens, the destination of both walks was across

⁸ The Old Major is a pseudonym for a public house in the Gay Village that Bunny is associated with. His close association with this pub means that it needs to be anonymised to protect Bunny's identity. It's importance to Bunny's account means a sub-section is helpful to understanding his narrative.

from the Old Major and appeared to provide some psychological comfort for Bunny who retreated there after our walks.

Bunny's Map and Walks

Bunny drew a two-page map, akin to a concept map, a diagrammatic chronology of his life spanning his teenage years till he stopped selling sex, when he entered into a long-term relationship. We also completed two walks to Sackville Gardens. Bunny's case study has been developed from his map and walks.

Map-Making: Mid-February 2019

I met Bunny at the Origin8 Art Café, where I had previously completed a map-making session with Oliver. Bunny took charge of the session in what felt to me like a student-teacher relationship. Bunny had previously told me that his involvement in the study was his contribution to knowledge and declined the offer of vouchers for participation. For about the 45 minutes that the session lasted, Bunny re-constructed his life chronologically over two age bands: a shorter period spanning his teenage years before moving to Manchester, and a longer period from age 17, mainly in Manchester. He made these maps on two sides of a piece of paper, using lines and arrows to represent the links and connections. Bunny's factual commentary complemented the information in his maps, presenting a detailed account of his life.

*Bunny: The maps I want to do really; there's a shorter period of right about 5 years through my teenage years when I lived in St Helens so for that one, **there's only a***

few little things to put out. From there I moved to Manchester **about the age of 17-18, so there's a lot more information** from then anyway...

(Extract from Map-Making Session: emphasis mine)

That Bunny chooses 'only a few little things to put out' about his early life and 'growing up' in St Helens is a significant hint towards his strained family relationship. It is not until our second and final walk that some sketchy details emerge about his family life. Bunny's focus in this first part of the map was his exploration of his sexuality as a teenager.

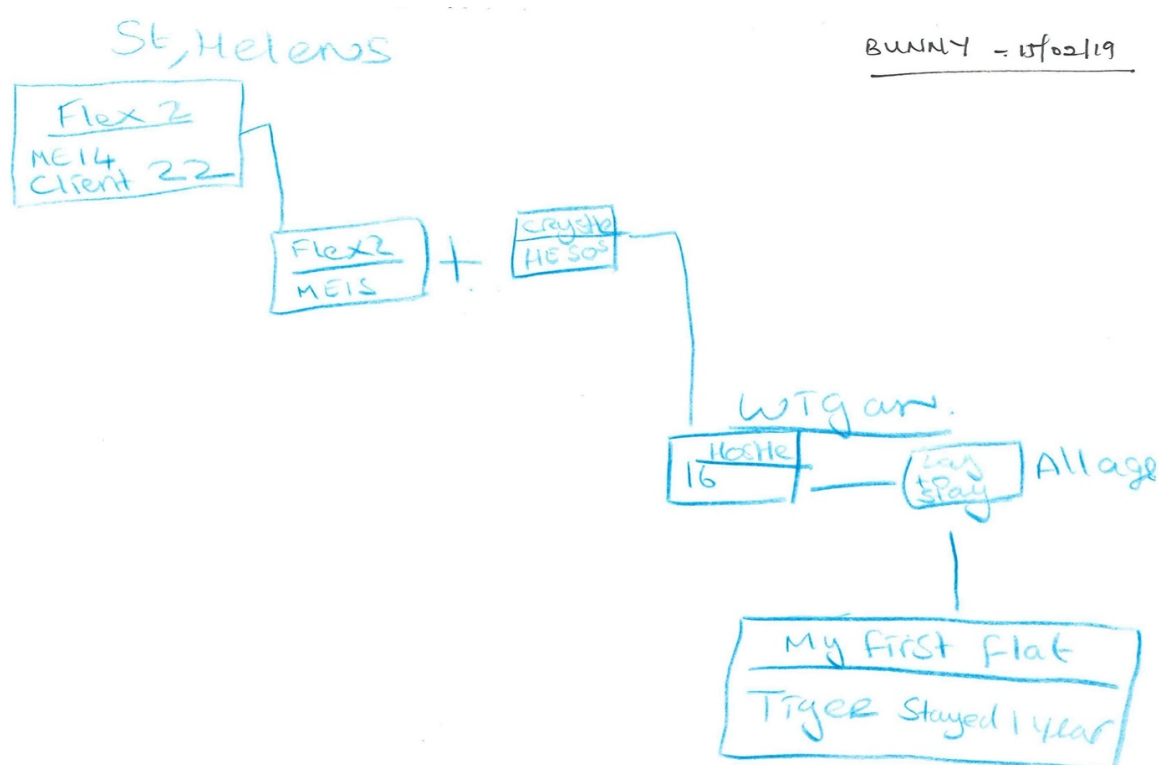


Fig. 21: Part 1 of Map: Pre-17: Wigan/St. Helens. Credit: Bunny/G. Dake

Bunny's 'coming of age' story is told with the excitement of reminiscence; finding himself as Gay in his mid-teens, he describes exploring gay bars as a positive and empowering experience. The excitement of being allowed to go to gay bars, starting off with hooch (a low alcohol lemon brew) and eventually losing 'his virginity for the price of cigarettes and a few beers'. He had consensual sex with much older men, which Bunny did not consider as exploitation or selling sex, although he identified one sexual partner as a client in his map. However, he was sexually assaulted during one of these activities.

Bunny: So, I would have been 15, and we went to another place called Gems. The guy that took me from Flex 2 to Gems, he was in his 50s, so he was a lot older. Again, this was all for the price of beer and cigarettes but there was a huge event there which maybe we would need a bit more time to talk about that but basically the guy attacked me, and I ended up in hospital, I was unconscious for 5 days.

George: Right?

Bunny: At the same time as that, another guy cut my neck open, I had a facelift so it's on my beard line now, but he cut my neck open with the intention of killing me, because he found out what I was up to with this other guy but Gems was a straight club, so. I'm gonna have to anonymise this person by law, cos he was convicted, but I'd just put 'he' at the moment, but he was in his 50s.

(Extract from Map-Making Session)

There is some overlap in the two parts of the map but the second part mainly relates to the period when Bunny moved to Manchester till he met his partner and stopped selling sex. Bunny's focus is on independence; financially and from parental control, which he reflected on as an empowering time in his life as a gay young man when Section 28⁹ was still in effect. However, there were aspects of this experience that were not as positive as Bunny would have wanted it. Bunny explained how he was coerced into having sex by his manager to keep his job.

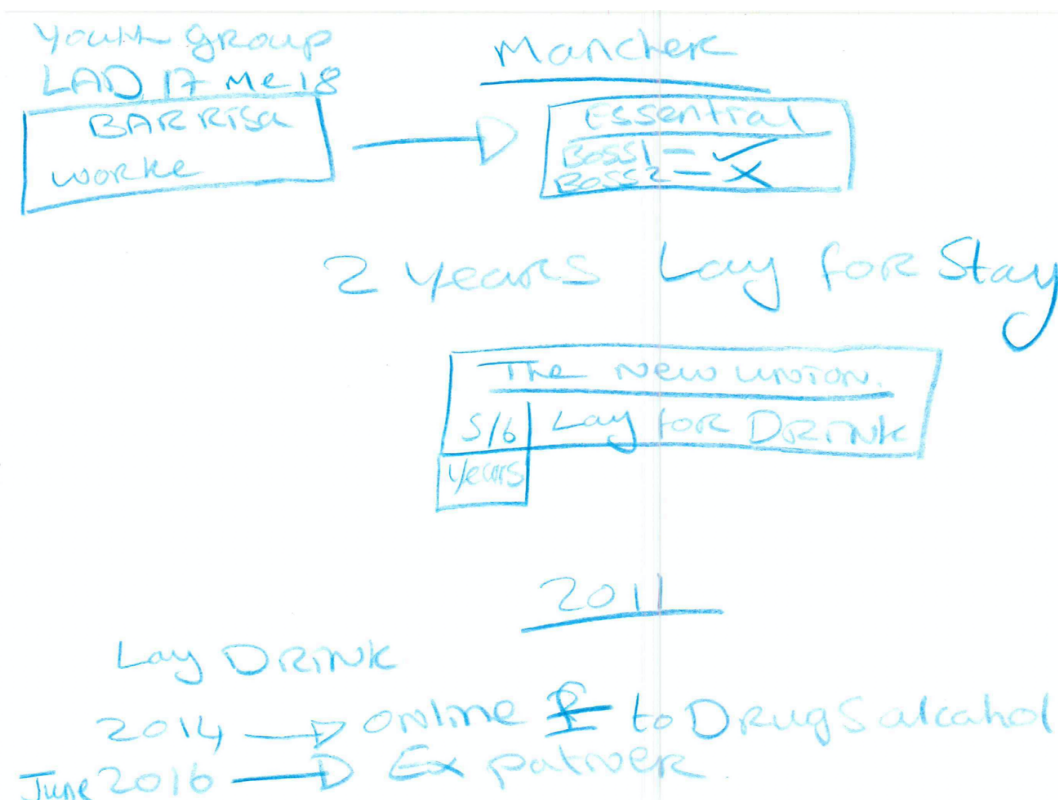


Fig. 22: Part 2 of Map: Post-17: Manchester. Credit: Bunny/G. Dake

⁹ Section 28 or Clause 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, which affected England, Wales and Scotland, stated that a local authority "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship". The law's existence caused many groups to close or limit their activities or self-censor. It was enacted on 24 May 1988, repealed on 21 June 2000 and on 18 November 2003 in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Bunny: My first job in the Village was at Club Pizza. There was an occasion, I'd only been there a couple of weeks, but there was an occasion where my boss, sort of like intimidated me into sleeping with him, so to keep my job, I slept with my boss. This caused quite a bit of problem with another boss who also had the same intentions. We were on a night out, at where it's called now, Everything. This is where I worked and I was at Everything with my boss, who basically took me out, gave me lots and lots of drinks. He made his intentions clear before this, what we were going out for, so I ended up sleeping with my one boss, Boss 1 basically. So, Boss 1, I did sleep with, Boss 2 got very jealous, gave me a black eye, punched me off the stage, so Boss1 took me home, did what his intentions were, and then the following day I had no job.

(Extract from Map-Making Session)

Bunny does not describe these early experiences of 'transactional sex' as sex work, preferring 'lay for drink' and 'lay for sleep'. This is perhaps because Bunny was in full-time employment and his primary motivation for selling sex was not to earn an income but rather to support his other needs such as alcohol. For about a 5-year period, he was in waged employment, did not have to pay rent but suggested that he engaged in 'lay for drinks' to fund his alcohol dependency.

*Bunny: That's again in the Village yeah.. I worked there for about 5, 6 years anyway, and I went back working later on but at this time I was working there for 5, 6 years. I was an alcoholic, I basically drunk all of my wages. I wasn't paying any rent anywhere, running out of money within 2-3 days, so again **I started sleeping with people for drink as opposed to money. I used to have lots of regular people who would take***

me out and get me drunk for the day and that would cost me just one session, I suppose it's 'lay for drinks' really, 'lay for drinks' and that lasted for 5, 6 years...

(Extract from Map-Making Session: emphasis mine)

At the very end of his map, Bunny notes the distinction between 'lay for drink' and sex work that involves the exchange of money. This is denoted with a pound sign (£), online, alcohol and drugs. It is important to note that this is a retrospective account on circumstances that happened more than two years before our session. Bunny cited two experiences of physical violence or aggression, 'dark sides, dark world' as the reason he decided to stop selling sex. When confronted with the prospect of having to sell sex again to meet his everyday needs, Bunny breaks down. Bunny used the phrase 'sell myself' rather than 'lay for drink/sleep', during this encounter reflecting a certain change of perspective which associated 'commercial sex' with violence as opposed to the 'lots of regular people' who he engaged in 'lay for drink'.

*Bunny:...he took me to a private room, he beat me around, he made me do what he wanted to do basically, and then he wasn't going to pay me, and things just didn't go right that day. In the end I got my money, and he stayed in the sauna. ...**something changed in my head at that time, and I thought I don't wanna to go down that road... but getting the aggression with the lad in American Hotel and getting the aggression from the one at the sauna, changed my mindset completely. I didn't want to go down, dark sides, dark world and then fortunately I met a good man 2 years ago, well 2 and half years ago. We're no longer together now but he has***

*changed my mindset, my outlook on the world, that I do thank him for, because going back to this, or this, wasn't an option this time, so when I split with my partner in, when did we split up? We split up December last year, about 3 months ago now. I had no money, I had nowhere to live, I was struggling for everything, that's when I became part of the Men's Room, but the idea of getting me into the Men's Room was because I broke down in front of my LGBT worker, and basically said **"I'm going to have to go and sell myself"**, and she said "No, you have other options". In my head at the time, I didn't have any other options, obviously she led me to the Men's Room, hence why I'm here.*

(Extract from Map-Making Session: emphasis mine)

Bunny introduces the role of TMR as important to his options, to meeting his needs so that he did not have to sell sex again. Bunny saw his engagement with TMR as important to imagining a future away from selling sex, indicating particularly support around his sexual abuse and alcohol dependency.

Sackville Gardens

Sackville Gardens borders Canal Street (the centre of Manchester's Gay Village) and the Shena Simon campus of the Manchester College. Within its grounds is the statue of Alan Turing, an iconic figure for many in the LGBT community. It is also home to the National Transgender Memorial and the 'Beacon of Hope', a memorial for people living with HIV and AIDS and site for vigils commemorating lives lost through HIV/AIDS, especially on World AIDS Day. The annual Manchester Pride Festival

closes with a candlelit vigil to remember lives lost to HIV/AIDS, which is held at the Beacon of Hope. In recent times, a statue depicting the Manchester Bee has been erected in Sackville Gardens with a pictorial history of Manchester.



Fig. 23: A view of Sackville Gardens showing a portrait of Alan Turing on the head, and key venues associated with the LGBT community on the wings of the 'Manchester Bee', with the Shena Simon campus of the Manchester College in the backdrop (Photo: G Dake @ Walking Interview, Feb., 2019).

Walk 1, Sackville Gardens: Late February 2019

Unlike some of the participants who identified locations for their walks during the map-making session, Bunny's walk was not pre-planned. On the agreed day, we met at the Old Major, walked to and sat down on one of the benches of Sackville Gardens. Bunny told me that this was because he realised the importance of the location to his life.

Bunny: This park was very significant in my life. I've fallen asleep here a few times, woke up in the middle of the night, just gone back to my bed, come down here crying,

depressed, upset. I've come down here because I've been elated, I've come down here just to get drunk but whenever I was here, there was a means to an end, either it's because I was drunk and wanted to get that fix or because I wanted to get drunk, and the way to get drunk was by getting a fix and getting some.

(Extract from Walk 1: Sackville Gardens)

Bunny presents Sackville Gardens as a place linked to his everyday life. It was the place of emotions; crying and elation alike, a place of refuge at night or during the day, and a place to go to when he was drunk or wanted to get drunk. Bunny's relationship with this location was about managing his emotions, about friendships and about sex work. Laughing almost hysterically, Bunny recounted a story of how together with his friends, they had set up a tent, camped, got drunk and smoked cannabis one afternoon in the Gardens until the police dispersed them, ironically thinking they were selling sex. Bunny said that the incident was funny because if the police was not overly focused on male-to-male sex, they would have been arrested for the possession and use of drugs. He used this story to shed light on the experience of everyday sex work stigma. On this walk, Bunny shared his experience of selling sex.

*Bunny: But yeah, this park itself, I couldn't even count, I won't have a clue how many people I've actually been with in the park. Don't know the names or never even seen them again, **but there used to be regular people that come down here**, and you know when they will be hanging around on Saturday night, you know what time they come down. **It was old style cruising, you went along, and you just seen who***

was here, whereas this day and age, we all know it's moved on to Grindr, and Snapchat and whatever else. It's pre-arranged, but back then, I'll say it was a different language and different culture about it at the time. You would speak to somebody, and you would know whether they will be interested and what they will be interested in. I mean I've come along, long after the days of the hanky code, people used to wear different colours in their pocket to tell you what they were interested in. This was the days of Polari as well. Polari used to be gay talk.

George: OK

Bunny: So back when the bars were all illegal and it wasn't acceptable to be gay, they developed their own language, like so, we still use a lot of it now, like we called a young lad a chicken.

George: OK

Bunny: That was a way of saying they wanted a young lad, so they were looking for a chicken, but if the Police were overhearing that, then that would be fine, they'll get away with that, but if they said I'm looking for a young lad, they could get arrested, or even just society's opinions in general, so then after that, the hanky code came in, so you didn't have to speak to anybody then, you just walk around and people will know what you are interested in. So, for example, black would be fisting, yellow would be water sports, so everybody had different colours on, so you knew what they were interested in before you even approach them.

George: Right?

Bunny: I don't really have that sense of feeling about this park anymore because like I say, it's been a long time for me but the younger people that are coming in now, they haven't got the appreciation for what actually went on here, and people's stories, about what they went through really.

(Extract from Walk 1: Sackville Gardens: emphasis mine)

Bunny's experience of selling sex, the 'old style cruising', was one of 'regular people', a community beyond a commercial transaction, a shared understanding of the oppression that led to creative communication such as Polari and the 'Hanky Code'. There was an appreciation of people's stories and a sense of connection with people that Bunny points out has been lost to selling sex online. Bunny laments the death of an epoch of selling sex which he was part of, a culture where it was about people and not just money, when you spoke to people instead of pre-arranging selling sex on Grindr and Snapchat. Bunny also draws attention to an age divide; there is a new, younger generation of sex workers who no longer connected to the history of people like him.

Bunny: I think that younger people are feeling the need to put this persona on and dress up. Some people are dressing up as women that wouldn't feel they have a preference to dress up as women. Because their clients feel they will look better as a woman, so they are doing it on a regular basis and selling themselves as a woman but in their own private life they might not have the desire to dress as a woman. Or they are down in the gym for 20 hours a week because they need to have the muscles,

they need to have that body and that's 20 hours a week that they are missing out on real life, it's also 20 hours a week that they are not getting clients.

George: OK

*Bunny: These days online, I think people's expectations, I think kids, well young people's expectations have been soured by seeing pictures of big buff men and seeing the fact that men should be tanned and have their eyebrows plucked, if you don't have that or you don't fit into that category, they can be disrespectful to you... **if I was still in that environment and was still looking for regular clients**, it would impact on me because I won't get them clients in the first place. **Emotionally, it impacts on me anyway because I feel as though that I'm fat, I'm ugly, I'm old and all the rest of it**, but psychologically I feel it is impacting on everybody whether they are in sex work or not, that they feel like they need to reach this level to get appreciation from other guys, and especially like I say, in the online world, people are putting fake pictures everywhere, people are fake but they feel like they need to be and that's a shame.*

(Extract from Walk 1: Sackville Gardens: emphasis mine)

Bunny makes a distinction between the past and present nature of sex work. There were 'regular clients' but now people 'can be disrespectful to you', big buff men, with tanned bodies, eyes plucked and dressed up like women and in ways that would make people like Bunny consider themselves fat, ugly and old. Bunny suggested that many MSWers now lacked the agency to make decisions about the personas they projected online and merely responded to the whims of their clients. They invested significant time and effort to measure up to the standards of their clients at significant physical,

social, and emotional expense to themselves so that they could remain competitive. Bunny felt that men like himself had been pushed out of selling sex and would be a last choice for clients because they could not adhere to those standards. They are the '20-stone Henriettas with big glasses' of sex work that Bunny refers to below.

Bunny: Yeah! Basically, it's like imagine you are in a night club, and you see the most beautiful girl across the dancefloor, and you go and dance with her and you get ignored. She's just not interested, you then lower your standard a bit, move to the next one and you, by the end of the evening, you could be taking home 20-stone Henrietta with big glasses, but at the beginning of the night you were looking at a pretty little blond.

(Extract from Walk 1: Sackville Gardens)

Bunny's journey with selling sex shows a graduation from non-money related exchanges; alcohol and time (companionship), to technology-facilitated sex work which he described as a secondary and later experience. Bunny laments the impact of technology-facilitated sex work like the permanence of pictures and profiles uploaded to escorting websites.

Bunny: And again, a lot of the time I would come down here looking for individuals that I know if I went with them, they will buy me a drink or two. Very rare that cash actually exchanged hands, it was more for time and money, more for time and beer than money

sorry. But yeah them days, I would definitely not want to go back to. From that point on though, I very much went to the social media world myself. I'll say I've got profiles on different escorting sites that I am unaware of where they are, what pictures are up, so that could come back to bite me in the ass at some point in my life. I'd say I'm never going to be prime minister, but it can still come back and bite you, can't it?

(Extract from Walk 1: Sackville Gardens)

Bunny's expressed concern about his reputation is not limited to his profiles online. Bunny, who currently spends time in the Village was also concerned about his reputation in the Village as a 'slag'. Although he had not sold sex for at least two years, he was still worried about his reputation in the Village and he may need to rebuild his image away from sex work or learn to live with this as part of his identity.

Bunny: I suppose I've got myself a reputation with the Village. Because I worked as a hotel manager down at the Old Major for well, years, and I worked on the bar before, and I've worked at Mona Lisa. I worked at Bar Queen, which is around the corner, worked at Downstairs, been all over the Village and my face is well known, but there's that reputation that comes with 'oh that's Bunny, he's a slag'. I suppose I'm trying to get away from that these days, it's, but I am less ashamed of it these days. You are who you are.

(Extract from Walk 1: Sackville Gardens)

Walk 2, Sackville Gardens (End of February 2019)

In our second walk, Bunny was more composed and prepared than the first, and had already planned what to focus on.

Bunny: I wanted to speak about poverty, about how I've struggled to carry on since leaving school at 15 when I should have left at 16 anyway, which links into the event we were talking about last week where I was attacked at 15. I basically missed my GCSEs, so I didn't get the opportunity to go back and do that either because of the event that happened, it was in the local newspapers and everything. The school had found out what had happened and had asked that I didn't attend because I was a bad influence on the other pupils. Mainly because I had open wounds on my hands, but they also didn't want my story bringing back to school, so yeah, I think the school was socially embarrassed about it. Anyway, lo and behold my recovery period took about 6 months, maybe up to a year for certain things especially mental. I just missed that stage of my life...

(Extract from Walk 2: Sackville Gardens)

The effect of a sexual assault while selling sex meant that Bunny left school without any qualifications, which contributed to the poverty he experienced. Bunny missed out on 'that stage of my life'; education, financial literacy but also the social, emotional and mental development and support of being in school at that age. He left home early and relocated to Manchester for work. Bunny described how this assault affected

his mental health and resulted in him becoming an alcoholic, recently being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Bunny: Left over from that though, I've struggled with depression, anxiety, I've been agoraphobic at times as well. I finally, only last year, I finally got diagnosed with PTSD related to the abuse, but it took me 16 years to get that diagnosis, and mentally I'm in a better place now I've had that diagnosis, and I've had support with Men's Survivors, Manchester Men's Survivors. They've been fantastic for me last year but up until then, I've gone through some mental health inside my head and my way of reacting to that was to becoming an alcoholic, which is still an issue for me today. Obviously, you know I've come from RAMP (Reduction and Motivation Programme), and try as I might, I've done all different kinds of sessions, been to different kinds of AA, but my depression and anxiety still manifest itself as alcoholism, and I truly, I believe if I didn't go through that experience as a young person, I wouldn't be as messed up as I am now, but again if I didn't go through that as a young person, I would have been less confident to do the things I've done since, like selling my body, or like getting into promiscuous situations, but it gave me the confidence to do that, which is probably something you don't want to have confidence in really....

(Extract from Walk 2: Sackville Gardens)

An unexpected loss of employment led to a decision to sell sex, which Bunny described as getting involved in 'negative sexual experiences'. Having moved to Manchester, Bunny was independent of his family, who he described as abusive

‘physically, emotionally, sexually, financially’, calling himself ‘basically just a punching bag for anybody that wanted to hit me’. Work was important to Bunny’s financial independence and independence from his family, which Bunny referred to as an escape.

Bunny: That was the first time that I realised that ‘shit, I’ve got no money in my pocket’. I didn’t get so much for warehouse and manual work anyway, but I won’t say it’s so easy for people to do that these days. Especially young people, but when I was 16, I think we were very fortunate, we could walk out of one job and into another. I found work pretty quickly, I managed to escape my mum and dad’s home and the rest of it. I felt that I was really, really, poor. I was always poor growing up anyway, we never really had a lot anyway, but from the age of 16, I had a little bit of money, so I really did panic and I suppose that’s when I got more involved with negative sexual experiences, some of them positive but generally negative....

(Extract from Walk 2: Sackville Gardens)

Bunny placed his loss of income at the heart of his motivation for sex work. Growing up poor, and having experienced some financial independence, he panicked at the idea of being poor again. Selling sex was therefore opportune, a pragmatic solution to his immediate or short-term needs but this experience was largely negative. This is different from Bunny’s description of meeting his other short-term need (alcohol) through ‘lay for drink’, an experience he never described as negative.

Bunny: Old Major was paying more than anyone else. If you go in as glass collector at 17, and living indoors there, not having any rent to pay, having plenty of money in my pocket but it was still all gone by the middle of the week.

George: Right?

Bunny: So yeah, there was a need for money and drink elsewhere. But I suppose I feel very privileged to have had that as well because without that environment, drinking and smoking and taking so many drugs, and the money not lasting, I could have become homeless again. Well, I had a roof over my head for free.

(Extract from Walk 2: Sackville Gardens)

Working at the Old Major secured Bunny both an income and accommodation (and a lot more). He described his employers as a ‘mother’ and ‘father’ figure who helped him to furnish his property, looked after him, stood by him in court, paid his debt and supported him to repay this in manageable way. They had an appreciation of his challenges with alcohol and substance dependency and knew how to ‘handle him’. They were the father and mother Bunny could trust and who filled the void he had. Bunny alludes to the nature of the relationship he had with his parents in his teens and the difference that his employers made in his life in the capacity of parenting.

*Bunny: From there, I moved over to Whitworth Street here, further down, and India House. It was a lovely little flat. **My boss from the Old Major helped me get furniture when I moved in, whenever I had a problem, they come and fix it for me, she just***

looked after me, and her husband just looked after me. So again, I feel privileged to have that support. That was like my first real property of mine, I had one at 17 but it was always my mates coming round taking drugs and all that, but this was my first real opportunity at having my own property, and I did get myself into debt. I was dragged into court, I owed I think about £2000 worth of debt or something on the rent. They were ready to kick me out anyway. They'd gone through all the processes they needed to, but my boss from the Old Major went to court with me and she basically paid it off. She paid a big chunk of it off, I had a bit to pay myself, which I made a payment plan, and I had to pay her back. She'll take money out of my wages each week before I even seen it, so I didn't feel the loss, and again without that support, would have become homeless.

George: That's very good of her. Not many employers would do that even now.

Bunny: I feel very fortunate to have had her in my 20s. And even back then though, she knew I was a big smoker of cannabis, a big drinker. She'll say, "Take 20 minutes, go to the pub and have a quick drink, and go back to the back and have a smoke, Put a smile on your face". **She knew how to handle me. Very much a mother and father figure for me at the time, and I suppose it links in to what we were speaking about last week as well. I don't really have a mother and father figure in that regard, especially not one that I could trust, but they sort of fill that void in my 20s that I didn't have in my teens.**

(Extract from Walk 2: Sackville Gardens: emphasis mine)

More than once during our research relationship, Bunny refers to the risk of homelessness in his account. During the period of the study, Bunny was homeless, living in temporary accommodation and this was therefore an important and poignant issue for him.

Case Overview

Pen Picture of Bunny

Bunny is a White British, male, identifying as Gay, born at a time when Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 was still in effect. As a Gay young man, he described himself as fortunate to have a family that allowed him to visit Gay clubs and experiment with male-male sexual relations in exchange for drinks and cigarettes which Bunny referred to as 'lay for drinks/cigarettes'. After a particularly violent sexual assault for which he was hospitalised for more than six months, he left home at 16 and moved to Manchester. Bunny was sexually assaulted during a sex work session arranged by a close family member. Bunny's school refused to allow him to return to his studies because they felt he was a bad influence on the other students and would also attract a negative public image of the school. Bunny subsequently missed out on taking his GCSEs and left school with no qualifications. After relocating to Manchester, Bunny found work in warehousing and later in hospitality venues in the Village. During this time, Bunny continued to exchange sex for drinks/cigarettes' and accommodation, and very occasionally for money until he entered into a long-term relationship with another man. When this relationship ended, Bunny became homeless and unemployed. This is when he was referred to TMR and started engaging with the agency. Bunny continues to be an active part of the LGBT community, regularly socialising within the

Village. Bunny described himself as having been dependent on alcohol for a long time and has attended sundry support programmes and sought help from agencies to manage this. He was diagnosed with PTSD in the last year, which was linked his alcohol dependency to the sexual assault during his early life experiences.

Reflections

Bunny case give insight into all four objectives of the study. His story highlights the experience of everyday sex work stigma, a changing relationship with sex work, his relationships with people including his family and the support he receives from TMR.

Within his story, Bunny gives examples of encountering stigma from professionals as well as from the LGBT community. His two encounters with the police stand out; where he reports the theft of his passport but the attention was turned on him when the officer realised he was a MSWer. In another encounter, he escapes possible arrest for drug offenses because the police officer was more interested about sex work than crime. Locations such as Sackville Garden which supports Bunny manage his emotions and the Old Major pub where he has a good group of friends are ways he navigates this sex work stigma.

Bunny presents a conflicted view of sex work. There is a clear tension in Bunny's consideration of what sex work is; he distinguishes between commercial sex where he receives money for sex, and sex exchanged for drinks, cigarettes and accommodation

which he does not consider as sex work. Bunny had engaged sexually with other men he was not romantically involved with since the age of 14 but at the time of this study, his relationship with selling sex was changing. This is partially because Bunny of changes in the way sex was now procured which was increasingly through digital means but also the changing demands of clients. Bunny distinguished between what he described as 'old style cruising' and having to 'sell his body', the former associated with MSWers' identification with the emancipation struggles of an oppressed LGBT community, and the latter a technology-facilitated sex work driven by commodification. Bunny finds himself not as competitive in this new sex work market and has to imagine for himself a future beyond selling sex. There is a tension; Bunny rejects notions of commodification in the old-style cruising, arguing that although he was neither attracted to many of the people he had sex with, not could remember them, this was more about a preference for a type of sexual experience and not a type of man.

Another key theme in Bunny's story are about his relationships, with his family and friends. Having experienced abuse from his family, Bunny turns to his previous employers at the Old Major as a kind of substitute family in the absence of a relationship with his biological family. At the heart of Bunny's experiences of 'lay for drink/cigarettes/sleep' appear to be his need for relationships, describing the many times he went to the Village as 'more for time and beer'. Bunny was also concerned about his reputation in the Village, something he indicates he is less concerned about now. Bunny appear to have a deep-seated need for acceptance, to belong and to be in community.

TMR's model of support is critical to Bunny in addressing all his needs as framed within the research objectives. He finds community within TMR where he is accepted, and belongs. He joins in creative and other activities and within the experimentation, can imagine a future beyond selling sex. Perhaps, this has contributed to his changing attitude about his reputation in the Village.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study is about the everyday lives and lived experiences of a group of male sex workers (MSWers) who engaged with The Men's Room (TMR). The specific objectives were to:

- Explore how male sex workers navigate the everyday experience of stigma.
- Examine their changing relationships to selling sex.
- Explore how men in contact with TMR negotiate, sustain and re-build relationships over time.
- Consider the Men's Room (TMR) model of support and how it attends to the needs of the male sex workers that engage with it.

In his evaluation of the Safer Streets Pilot in Manchester, Atkins (2014)¹⁰ argues that unlike other professional escorts, the MSWers that TMR supports present with a set of complex needs arising from housing, mental ill-health, alcohol and substance dependency. There are also challenges arising from biographical and more personal factors. I argue that taken together, these needs and personal circumstances of male sex workers are intensified by the everyday experience of sex work stigma. This study's findings support the evidence from previous studies (Armstrong, 2019, 2022; Benoit et al., 2018; Easterbrook-Smith, 2022; Oliveira, 2018; Salhaney et al., 2021;

¹⁰ The Safer Streets Pilot Project (1 August 2013 – 31 March 2014) was a seven-month outreach project, co-designed/co-produced by Survivors Manchester, The Men's Room and Mancunian Way to address concerns of community safety along an identified route in the City Centre of Manchester.

Weitzer, 2017a; Wolf, 2019) which demonstrate that sex work stigma is pervasive, and has far-reaching implications on everyday lives, as well as on identities, self-concepts and self-esteem of sex workers. In addition, this study provides new knowledge about the everyday lives of the participants – their routines, practices and mundane activities, navigating their way in and at the edge of the city – and how their habits and practices enables them to render life liveable. It also provides new understandings of how the men in this study invest in certain narratives or discourses to defend against anxieties provoked by sex work stigma and other challenges, and in so doing achieve a good enough sense of self. This is revealed in how they construct understandings of their relationships with families, friends and social groups, as well as activities such as acts of volunteering. Finally, I will explore TMR's model of support, which combines a relational approach (Hughes, Roy & Manley, 2014) with arts-based practises (Batsleer, 2011), arguing that the needs and challenges of the men in this study require support that attends to both their immediate needs (as manifest in the present) and is also attuned to a future that can't be seen or known but can still be cared about (Gunaratnam, 2012). The findings of this study illuminate the everyday lives and lived experiences of a group of men which are linked to, and influenced by selling sex with its associated stigma and the welfare support available to them, but also operate beyond these. I argue that this exploration provides new insights into living with the vulnerabilities of sex work stigma, structural inequalities and personal biography as an everyday experience, and the pathways of support that help MSWers mediate these.

After an outline of the individual and structural circumstances of the men in this study, this discussion is focused on three key points:

Firstly, an exploration of the ordinary daily lives and lived experiences of the men in this study. The accounts that the men gave of their experiences are complex and rich in detail, presenting a window on how they navigate different opportunities, desires and challenges in their lives. This exploration helps to show that, whilst stigma is an important concern for the men in this study, their lives are not entirely dominated or determined by it. This focus on the wider lives of men who sell sex is one important element of originality in this study, and allows them to be seen as full human subjects and not merely in terms of their sex work identity.

Secondly, I develop a psycho-social analysis to discuss how the men in this study invest in particular narratives, as part of both conscious and unconscious attempts to defend against anxiety, and to mediate, manage and resist sex work stigma. I describe how these investments are used in the service of maintaining a good sense of self, as well as managing their relationships, including those aspects implicated and impacted by a sex worker identity. This is a second element of originality because no study has previously developed a psychosocial analysis of sex work and these forms of self-defence are currently poorly understood and documented in the literature.

Thirdly, the points above suggest that the circumstances of the group of men in this study require a particular model of support; one which operates to provide immediate acts of care in the present, whilst also attending to future needs. I argue that the TMR's non-durational model of support which provides care, relationships, peer-to-peer connections, and access to social spaces and a cultural life is a central facet of

how this group of MSWers survive and hope to thrive. I also argue that this approach has implications for developing models of support for marginalised groups of MSWers experiencing a particular set of circumstances, like those who engage with TMR.

The Participants

The stories of the men in my study support an argument that there are possibly positive aspects of selling sex, which includes the flexible employment options it offers for people with mental ill-health which restricts their availability for non-sex work jobs. It is also an available form of employment for migrant workers who may also have restrictions on their ability to work. There are also positive relationships with other MSWers. Bernstein (2007a) argues that some sex workers including middle class women and men embrace sexual experimentation and freedom, and in so doing reframe sex work as respectable. Bacio (2023) also argues that male sex work is a way of performing masculinity for the men in his study. The findings of from my study therefore confirm this positive view of sex work that these studies report. However, the men in this study are largely a group of MSWers in circumstances which also render them vulnerable. While there are commonalities in some of these circumstances, their ways of understanding and personal responses to these differ. My findings document that individual attempts to address, cope with and resolve personal challenges are a function of unique biographies, contexts, as well as the ability to seek, locate and receive relevant support and care. All the participants in this study have varying diagnoses of mental ill-health and have on-going involvement with different support services; their experiences of receiving support from mental health services varied, emphasising the importance of the paying heed to their unique

biographies. The participants were also experiencing or had all recently experienced one form of homelessness or another, and their experiences of seeking and receiving help around housing also varied. The individual specificity of the experiences of the men in this study is important to understanding their unique pathways of support. However, collectively, their stories paint a picture of the vulnerability of a group of MSWers who access support from TMR and how the organisation's model of support attends to their varying but also collective needs.

The men in this study have all felt themselves to be vulnerable emotionally, socially, and circumstantially. This vulnerability has led them to seek out and sustain contact with the particular kinds of support that TMR provides. An important finding of this study is that paying attention to their unique biographies, as well societal factors, is particularly important for this group of men because it provides insight into the vulnerabilities that can adversely affect their lives. What emerges from offering them opportunities to talk about their past and present lives, is an understanding of why they find a particular model of support helpful.

Relationships with Spaces and Places: The Lives of Male Sex Workers.

In the previous section, I highlighted how the emotional, social, and circumstantial vulnerability of the men mean that opportunities to talk about their past and present lives is an important aspect of the support they find helpful. In this section, I focus on the men's relationships with spaces and places, arguing that attending to their mundane practices and routine activities illuminates the strategies they use to maintain

a good sense of self, and the importance of other aspects of their lives. The lives of the men in this study are complex and complicated by selling sex, and exploring their social, emotional and mundane practices for everyday self-maintenance sheds light on their lives as a whole and the resources they draw on to mediate their challenges.

There are different approaches to understanding the 'self', although there appears to be a common understanding that the relationships human beings encounter during the 'early life' and throughout their lives contribute to the development of their sense of self (Trevithick, 2018). A positive sense of self builds the resilience, self-worth, self-confidence and concern for others, enabling you to engage in, and sustain meaningful, reciprocal and mutually satisfying relationships. On the other hand, an inability to develop a positive sense of self inhibits the capacity to build and sustain those meaningful, reciprocal and mutually satisfying relationships. My argument is that part of achieving a good enough sense of self relates to maintaining a coherent and positive perception of your identity, and that mundane practices and relationships to places are sustaining of that sense of a positive identity because they allow feelings of normalcy in the everyday and belonging.

I explore these ideas in the sub-sections on the 'Mundane Practices and Routine Activities' and 'Being in and at the edge of City'.

Mundane Practices and Routine Activities

Attending to the mundane practices and routine activities of the men in this study reveals a deeper search for 'normalcy' and a sense of belonging that is important to understanding their broader and how they confront and counter life's challenges. The men's ordinary practices such as queueing to buy breakfast at Spar, going on a night out with your boyfriend, joining friends for an alcohol-free month as a 'Dry January' challenge, or volunteering for a charity are therefore opportunities for understanding the tempo and practices of their daily lives. Silverman (2007; 2017) argues that this attention to day-to-day practices and events illuminates the lived experiences of research participants as they navigate life, and contributes to understandings informed by the experiences and perspectives of participants rather than those of the researcher.

There is much at stake in the participants' mundane practices and routine activities. There are momentary triumphs; building a snow person and streaming it on the phone to friends at home on the other side of the world for a man who lives in the UK, thus maintaining a connection with friends at home ; a romantic night out in the Gay Village, joining friends at a pub in the Gay Village; summer parties at the 'Gay Beach'; 'messaging around' with the lads at night after selling sex; leisurely walks through Debdale Park; birthday celebrations with friends; meeting friends on Grindr and attending weekly creative sessions at TMR. These stories from the map-making sessions and walking interviews speak to the importance of the everyday in supporting understandings of the preoccupations of the men in this study. These experiences underline how important it is to seek to achieve a sense of belonging, community and recognition for

these men, and I argue that in the face of their challenges and needs (some of which they have no control over), these opportunities for affirmation, to be recognised, to feel part of a community, and to belong, are critical to the participants' sense of self.

Everyday interactions and ordinary practices create and maintain connections between people, space and place, revealing deliberately crafted strategies to achieve a good sense of self in the face of complex challenges. In so doing, the men seek to render their lives liveable and meaningful. A routine walk from Oliver's 'homebase' to Piccadilly Gardens goes through TMR, each of which is a homebase associated with positive affirmation and/or recognition. The visit to the Wetherspoons pub is timed so preferred tables are available (to ensure privacy to relax, to communicate with friends online, to procure online sex work and also charge gadgets too), and leaving in time to pick up the post from Mail Boxes Etcetera (MBE). By choosing to pay for a post box at MBE, Oliver indicated that he considered this significant financial investment that he could hardly afford as important in maintaining a sense of dignity. He did not want to manage his affairs through a charity address, a decision which signifies the importance of a seemingly mundane practice of being in control of his post and able to collect it independently to his sense of self. In another example, Cameron plans his daily walk through Debdale Park to include calling his doctor (like others making calls on a walk) and stopping at McDonalds (achieving invisibility like other customers, and for a treat). Fine and Glendinning (2005) observed that such mundane interactions and ordinary practices render life liveable. Plummer (2013:506) describes our everyday life as dripping "...with stories of how people live and love, work and play, hate and die". In this study, the routine practices and everyday activities of the men

foreground deliberate attempts to live above situations that make them vulnerable to being visible as marginalised and different.

While the study documents examples of momentary triumphs, it also opens out many moments which threaten to disrupt and cast shadows on them, evoking temporary or long-term feelings of isolation, despair and social damage. There are sundry examples of these in the men's lives. Seeking a social connection on Grindr (a routine activity for seeking community as a Gay man) is threatened by the possibility of being recognised as a MSWer. A romantic evening out in the Gay Village (a routine activity in an LGBT community space) is disrupted when Eddie is recognised as a MSWer and propositioned for sex work. When Bunny reports a theft at a police station (a routine activity), he ends up answering questions about sex work not connected to the crime. Eddie is evicted from a café in the Gay Village when he is recognised as a MSWer and referred to as a 'lower class citizen'. These examples give meaning to why the men invest so much emotional and physical labour in developing routines and mundane practices designed to maintain a good sense of self. At times these routines seemed quite exhausting to sustain and it is also clear that these strategies were fragile and could unravel very quickly for reasons beyond their control. Oliver for instance invests a lot of time and planning into volunteering for a social club one weekend every month. He uses his van to move equipment for the social club and parks his van close enough to the Village to procure sex work on Grindr. When he is threatened by a group of men at the car park, he has to travel with another volunteer for security and in the process disclosing his homelessness. Hence, the men continually shape, shift and change their behaviours and actions to get by, to maintain

a sense of agency and dignity, seeking to feel part of society, part of Manchester's gay community and hoping to sustain a sense of feeling good enough within their own lives.

Such activities and practices are not reducible to the strategies identified by Goffman (1963) for managing stigma which he identified as including passing, concealing and covering. Some previous studies have argued that sex workers engage in these strategies (Aggleton & Parker, 2015; Koken et al., 2004; Mclean, 2012; Scambler, 2007). Other studies have identified status manoeuvring and identity talk as ways of countering stigma (Oselin, 2018; Oselin & Barber, 2018). These could also be ways in which MSWs negotiate and seek to sustain a good sense of self.

For the men in this study, negotiating 'invisibility' and 'visibility' in daily encounters is key to maintaining a good sense of self. The liminality between visibility and invisibility means this negotiation is both necessary and important. Being visible could mean being recognised and accepted (inclusion) as a volunteer, friend, or partner, which is important for a good sense of self. Both Bunny and Eddie for describe themselves as well known in the Village; Bunny for having been employed in some of the venues (bars and restaurants) and also as a sex worker, and Eddie as a patron of these venues and as a sex worker. However, being visible could also mean being misrecognised and rejected (exclusion) which has adverse consequences for one's sense of self. Bunny rues his reputation in the Village as a slag for instance and Eddie experiences being evicted from a venue because of being recognised as a sex worker.

In the same way, being invisible could mean being unnoticed, blending in and not feeling different (inclusion) which contributes to a good sense of self. Oliver, as a customer in Wetherspoons could blend in with other customers without feeling different. It could also mean being ignored because of difference and being treated as inconsequential (exclusion) which does not make for a good sense of self. Oliver recounted being threatened at a car park because he was recognised by a group of men. Attending to these everyday encounters and the negotiation of 'visibility' and 'invisibility' contributes to an appreciation of the weight of the challenges that they are confronted with. Reflecting on the importance of mundane practices, Back (2015:821) concludes:

"...it makes us take the mundane seriously and ask what is at stake in our daily encounters with neighbours or the people we brush past at the bus stop. It also means we have to think about the wider spectrum of life experiences from the despair and social damage to the ordinary triumphs of getting by."

In this sub-section, I have explored the lives of the men in this study, seen through their mundane practices and routine activities. There are opportunities for achieving a good enough and also situations of uncomfortable recognition which can negatively impacts one's self of self. Within the men's routine activities and mundane practices therefore, is an intricate dance of visibility, invisibility and (mis)recognition that is about the need for, and attempts to maintain a good enough sense of self in their relationships with others. This has implications for how they need to be supported to successfully navigate this. That these men access support from TMR voluntarily over

many years suggests that its model of support offers them opportunities to do this. I will further discuss how the TMR model responds to these needs in the final section.

This sub-section of the discussion has provided evidence to answer the first research objective on how male sex workers navigate the everyday experience of stigma. This is through investing significant emotional labour in negotiating invisibility and visibility in their everyday encounters to achieve and sustain a good sense of self.

Being in and at the edge of the City.

That this study was based in Manchester is significant. As a city, Manchester has a long association with the LGBT community. It is home to Manchester Pride, a charity that campaigns for LGBT equality. The Manchester Gay Village, with bars and clubs is seen as the centre of the LGBT community and has hosted the annual Pride Festival since 1985. Section 28, of the Local Government Act 1988, was repealed in 2000 in Scotland and 2003 in England and Wales respectively.

Manchester is therefore 'home' to many Gay men including MSWers. It is also significant that all the study's participants had either precarious housing arrangements or a history of homelessness. The idea of 'home', and navigating the city as a representation of 'home' through the locations identified during the map-making sessions and which formed the basis of the walking interviews seemed particularly important to the participants. Oliver described Manchester as the place he considers

as home and prefers not to sell sex there. When Bunny's relationship ended, he returned to Manchester and now regularly visits the pub he previously worked because of its association with the couple he referred to as parent figures for him. Eddie returns to Sackville Gardens and the Beacon of Hope when he needs to reset his life after a particularly challenging period of mental ill-health. The men's relationships with these locations conjure themes of 'home', as spaces and places associated with a sense of belonging, acceptance, connection, attachment, hope, and also the container for intense emotions. The mobile methods used in this study, a form of micro-ethnography (Pink, 2009), facilitated short-term excursions into the men's lives (Pink & Morgan, 2013); 'being in, and with the participants', to create opportunities for contextual, situational and collaborative learning emerging from the social and physical relationships, and from negotiated encounters within place (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990).

In his reflection on racism in two parts of London, Back (2007:51-52) presents racism as both spatial and territorial in nature and expression, a 'chequerboard of hatreds and violence' and a 'patchwork of no-go and go areas' drawing from other studies (Calvino, 1997; Keith, 1993; Kureishi, 2003; Lewis, 1985; Moretti, 1998 all cited in Back, 2007). Back (2007:52) not only maps out a London divided spatially and territorially by racial difference but also crucially argues that stories emerge from one's interaction with and in these spaces and territories; to wit, spaces make stories. Achieving a sense of belonging goes beyond moments of identification with some political manifesto, rallying call or perceived ideology. Instead, they are times of:

“...quiet transformations and fleeting moments in which living with and through difference are realized; or put another way, which make bearable what might be otherwise unbearable”.

In my own study, the men present Manchester as a city of both fleeting and enduring moments of acceptance and belonging, but also of rejection and hostility. Their choice of, and interaction with particular locations generates stories of Manchester as a tale of two cities; not a chequerboard but a chessboard requiring the skills of a grandmaster to navigate. For Oliver, locations like the Wetherspoons public houses are spaces and places of fragile sanctuary and possibility in the city, where he can stay warm, eat and drink at reasonable prices, have the use of the Internet, and the ability to charge devices and to look for work in privacy. However, Oliver was also reminded of his difference when he encountered students who used the venue for hedonic pleasure, describing them as ‘noisy’ and ‘grinding his ears’ or shattering his perceived sense of warmth, sanctuary and privacy to look for work. For Eddie, the BoH monument and Alan Turing Memorial in Sackville Gardens were spaces and places of acceptance and connection, which allowed him reflection but were also historic monuments which held meaning for him and enabled identification with his own story.

The city was also mapped out along lines of spatial and territorial divisions of sexuality and gender that were represented in locations highlighted by the men in my study. These revealed reference points for different aspects of their lives; selling sex, community or fraternity with friends, places to seek and receive support, spaces for

survival and resilience. The men were encouraged to make maps of locations they identified for the walking interviews which many did but even when no maps were made, it was clear that each man had mapped out the city mentally, with different locations having meaningful associations to their lives. Cameron did not make a physical map but appeared to have followed mental reference points during our walks, through a defined mental route with stops at key places related to his survival and resilience, and managing his mental ill-health and intense emotions. In effect, the stories that emerged from our walks indicated that the men used their knowledge of the city in deliberate and meaningful ways, to perform belonging, survival and friendships. The map-making used in this study deliberately engaged an artistic perception, which encouraged the participants to re-approach their daily lives, routes and routines through an associational mode of thinking (Dake & Roy, 2017:13). Ingold (2010a:204) claims that maps are instruments for revealing the inner reality of the world and not merely representations of its outer surface. In this study, both physical and mental maps revealed important knowledge about the men's challenges and how they used spaces and places to attempt to mediate these. This raises questions about the particular needs of these men, the less tangible needs such as emotional, belonging and resilience which transcend the more measurable ones routinely met by welfare agencies.

It is significant that many of the maps in my study highlighted locations within a mile's radius of the Manchester Gay Village; all the men self-identified as Gay, making this a location for self-expression and social connection. To this end, the dialogues during the map-making and the subsequent walks to these locations (Canal Street, Sackville

Gardens, Major Street Car Park, Chorlton Street Car Park, Piccadilly Gardens) revealed some of their ruminations about their sexuality and the place of the Village in facilitating MSW. However, this was also about the importance of the Village as a space and place of acceptance and belonging, of identity, community, solidarity, mutuality and camaraderie. It was also a space for managing difficult emotions, making difficult decisions and dealing with challenging issues. In their study of TMR, Roy et al. (2015) connect the links between place and life history to generating meaningful understandings of men who sell sex in Manchester. In the original research report from their study, Hughes, Roy & Manley (2014) pointed out that the human condition was profoundly influenced by place and space, and that identities, experiences and behaviours are embedded in the places people inhabit. The men in this study used their knowledge of the city and sometimes spaces within the same location to perform and accomplish acceptance, belonging and manage challenging situations, even if this was sometimes short-lived. I refer to Bourgois and Schonberg's (2009) graphic and emotionally challenging photo-ethnography of the Egdwatwater Homeless (Righteous Dopefiends), a group of homeless, heroin injectors. Having subordinated everything - shelter, sustenance and family – to injecting heroin, they retreated to living away from a society that had rejected them, often achieving mutual solidarity and a sense of acceptance and belonging by living together in dead-end alleyways, vacant factories and overgrown highway embankments. Like the Righteous Dopefiends, the men in this study struggle for self-respect, but in contrast, they have not retreated or withdrawn from society. Instead, they seek a sense of meaning in society and in this study they have identified locations, spaces and places within the city that serve as 'Home from Home' (Back, 2015), places where they experience a sense of belonging, community, respect, and are able to manage their

difficulties. For Eddie, two of these places are the Gay Beach during the summer and Piccadilly Gardens in the night time after selling sex, while for another Cameron, it is meeting with other MSWers at the weekend in a flat. In these examples, the men find acceptance, respect, participation, and a sense of belonging among a community of MSWers, where they don't have to be too careful about saying or doing the wrong thing, where social conventions can be taken for granted because they knew the rules of inclusion - 'messaging about' and 'having fun'. These were not just geographical locations; they signalled a certain sense of belonging, mutuality and respect, although in the re-telling of these stories, they reminisce about how this sense of community had been lost over time. TMR's creative sessions enable the men in this study to develop an informal community, and therefore provide a 'home from home' for them where they are accepted and respected. From this place of belonging, they are able to develop the resilience to counter their challenges.

The men in my study led me to structures with various levels of fixity during periods when they were managing intense emotions and difficult decisions, dealing with or recovering from mental ill-health, making decisions about future employment and life choices. The fixity and immovability of these structures appeared to symbolise for these men, the stability they sought in periods of uncertainty, thus providing refuge, and a sense of calm in an emotional storm. For some of the men, the stories associated with the monuments and locations represented the solutions, or at least the hope for the solutions they sought because of their identification with the challenges represented in the monuments and locations. Both Bunny and Eddie led walks to the BoH monument in Sackville Gardens. For Eddie, this was after a period

of in-patient treatment for mental ill-health. He told me that he looked to the BoH structure for hope, for a fresh start and that the structure symbolised and reminded him of previous periods in his life that he had made a fresh and successful start. For Bunny, the BoH monument allowed him to reflect on his challenging circumstances of homelessness with a sense of gratitude. He paid homage to a friend who had died from HIV/AIDS, acknowledging that he was still alive and hopeful that things would improve. Cameron led a walk to a reservoir, pointing out that the stillness of the water was calming to him at a time when he needed to clear his head. Eddie, who slept on the top floor of the Chorlton Street Car Park during a period of homelessness spoke about how he saw the busyness of people on the ground as akin to ants being silly. In this, he appeared to be alluding to the futility of experiencing stress over his personal situation in relation to what he had considered better. Roy et al. (2015) in a study with marginalised young men, inferred that the solidity and immovability of concrete structures and metal facades represented for their participants, moments of relief and respite, providing important ways of containing overwhelming feelings. For the men in this study, the fixity of structures did more than provide physical and psychological distance from their challenges; it also gave them a realistic perspective of things enabling them to make reparation.

However, the locations are also about living with and managing the stigma of homosexuality associated with MSW. Homosexuality continues to be conflated with MSW, and I have addressed in the literature review. Because many of the walks with the men in my study were within a mile's radius of the Village, its significance as a location and what it represented for the men, cannot be overlooked. For instance, the

letter 'C' on the street sign of Canal Street has been scraped off, leaving it as 'anal street'; whether this is a crude joke or a homophobic attack on the Gay community, the relevance of this conspicuous reference to homosexuality and male-to-male sex was not lost on me as the men told stories of being stigmatised by professionals and law enforcement agencies. Bunny recalled the 'days of section 28' when people came to the Village to 'beat up the Gays'. I have argued in Cameron's case study that MSW is a form of 'edge work', reflecting extreme liminality in continually changing choices. Perhaps, the Village more than any other physical location, epitomises this liminality and edge work; it is where the men can sell sex in relative safety without attacks on their sexuality but also one where they can experience extreme discomfort and irritation because of their sexuality and MSWer identity. On weekends that Oliver parks his van close to the Village, this enhances his opportunities for selling sex on the location-based Grindr app. Bunny, Cameron and Eddie all indicated that being in or in physical proximity of the Village increases one's opportunities to sell sex. However, Oliver was attacked three times in the Village in the space of a month. Eddie was evicted from a venue in the Village for being a MSWer. Bunny suggests his discomfort in the Village because he is known as a slag, and Cameron transitions away from selling sex on the street because of the embarrassment from being seen by people who know him in the LGBT community.

Male sex work's complicated history with homosexuality is well documented including important work by Kerwin Kaye (2004) tracing the history of homosexuality and MSW, and Olga Marques (2011) who has looked at how homosexuality became a regulatory discourse for managing or controlling MSW. The men's relationships with this are

complex and complicated, and speak to inclusion and exclusion, acceptance and belonging, but also rejection and inhospitality. The men use their knowledge of this space to perform inclusion and belonging, demarcating intricately and liminally drawn spatial, territorial, social and psychological boundaries to balance inclusion and exclusion in relation to their sexuality and selling sex.

Being in and at the edge of the city is about how the men use their knowledge of spaces and places to manage their challenges. The relationships to these spaces and places are those of containment, negotiating inclusion and selling sex. From a psycho-social point of view, this is indicative of a sense of spatial containment; that is, the men in this study seek physical spaces and places that can contain and stabilise the precarity and vulnerability that they experience in their lives. Some of these relate to relief from homelessness but extends beyond this to include managing difficult emotions and making difficult decisions. However, this spatial containment that they find in physical spaces and places are also subject to changes and disruption, due to circumstances beyond the control of the men in this study. This risk of disruption and possible loss of this sense of containment further increases the men's vulnerability, meaning they have to seek out a more sustainable form of support. This sub-section also responds to the first research objective. Through using their knowledge of spaces and places within the city to perform and accomplish acceptance, belonging and manage challenging situations, it address how male sex workers navigate the everyday experience of stigma.

Relationships with People: Psycho-social narratives

In this section, I focus on the participants' relationships with other people; their families, friends, and other MSWers, discussing how these relationships over time show patterns of loss, transformation, and re-connection. These offer new understandings of how the participants' investment in narratives which help make meaning of their (changing) relationships with people, sometimes as a defence against anxiety (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). They also show how the men's relationships with people add further elements of 'belonging' that are important to maintaining a good enough sense of self. Although there are also investments in existing narratives about motivations for selling sex such as employment (Ellison, 2017; Minichiello, Scott & Callander, 2013), altruism (Koken et al., 2004; Scambler, 2009), and providing a service (Kong, 2009), exploring the meanings that the MSWers in this study attach to their relationships with people, as a way of defending against anxiety, is poorly understood and contributes to identifying models of support that will meet the needs of these men. Klein's (1988a,b) position that 'the self' emerges from defences against anxiety (see also the Methodology), is particularly relevant here. Anxieties or threats to integrity of self which influence how people act, and relate to others. Scanlon and Adlam (2022) infer that defences against threats to self from experiences of provisional inclusion and structural exclusion result in internalisation and increase the scope for conflict and ambivalence in relationships. For the men in this study, these structural exclusions have comprised, amongst other things, estrangement and violence from family (Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Oga et al. 2020) and disrespect from professionals and agencies (Macioti, Geymonat & Mai, 2021; Wolf, 2019).

In the sub-sections that follow, I will discuss the participants' relationships with families, as well as friendships and fraternity. I will draw on a psycho-social analysis (Clarke, 2008) to enable an exploration of why the men in my study respond to challenges in particular ways; their preoccupations, resolutions, as well as the discourses they draw on or identify with (whether consciously or unconsciously). I argue that this psycho-social analysis has implications for particular pathways that professionals and agencies might adopt in order to develop strategies to support MSWers.

Relationships with Family

The findings show that family relationships are intensely complex and important to the men in this study. All but Oliver indicated that family relationships are important but often fragile, fractured and in need of repair. Some of the men idealised aspects of their family relationships as a psychic defence against anxiety, indicating a search for containment. Cameron presented his mother as protective, a confidante and a role model, choosing not to dwell on his mother's complicity in the events that led him to leave home because of homophobic threats from his mother's boyfriend. Others, over time, became more realistic about the difficulties of family relationships and were able to acknowledge ambivalent feelings about family members. When Eddie re-engaged with his family after years of estrangement, he deliberately focused on his babysitting role with his nephew rather than the strained relationship with his parents, but was able to acknowledge the difficulties in his relationship with some family members. Sex workers' experiences of stigma and estrangement within their relationships with families is documented in the literature. Current understandings present these

relationships as characterised by tensions and fears of discovery, and a resultant breakdown and/or experiences of stigma following discovery (Benoit et al., 2018; Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Koken et al., 2004; Ryan, 2016; Scambler, 2007; Stockton et al., 2023; Wong, Holroyd & Bingham, 2011).

The men in this study had experienced periods of estrangement from their families, which is consistent with existing knowledge about the relationships MSWers have with their families. The fact that nearly all of them were investing in seeking to re-connect with families and to transform family relationships is important. However, doing so involved complex emotional work as they re-engaged with experiences of rejection and mistreatment which evoked difficult feelings and in some a tendency to idealisation (Klein, 1988a, b).

Eddie's anxiety around family reconnection manifests in the idealisation of his relationship with his nephew. Re-ordering family relations through de-centring the negative and re-centring the positive suggests a search for connection and belonging to counter the pain of rejection (Roseneil, 2006). Bunny had severed ties with his family at the time of the study but described himself to have been fortunate to have parents whose 'permissiveness' enabled him to explore his sexuality as a child at a time when homosexuality was frowned on by many parents. He later described himself as a punching bag for members of the family indicating his anxiety around his family relationships.

These acts of repair and/or restoration with families require mutual acts of re-engagement and reparation, which makes the men less defended and capable of more realistic views of their families. Cameron plans to return home after a decade and suggests that he is both excited and anxious. He looks forward to seeing his mother and sister but was wary of his brother and mother's boyfriend. Cameron acknowledges, and seems to accept that he needs to manage the tensions in his family to repair or restore the relationship with his mother. He therefore plans his trip to avoid possible confrontation with his brother and mother's boyfriend. Achieving reparation is emotionally complex and necessitates the lived experience of models of caring, stable and reliable relationship that can be replicated in building respectful and positive family relationships, often for the first time. The findings from my study suggest that other relationships (see sub-section on Friendship, Fraternity and the 'social lives' of Male Sex Workers) are central to facilitating and supporting these transitions. However, some of the relationships described have changed over time, with some no longer available to the men. This makes the non-judgemental, consistent, reliable and stable environment of TMR important to achieving a personally acceptable sense of reparation. Cameron idealises female members of his family and denigrates the male. Psycho-socially, this could be an unconscious defence against masculine vulnerability. TMR facilitates a community where Cameron can make sense of his relationship with the men in his family, where he could come to a realistic understanding of his brother's and mother's boyfriend homophobic violence towards him without having to resort to denigrating them.

This sub-section address the concerns of the third research objective. It highlights the relationships that the men in study have with their families and what they need to do to negotiate, sustain and re-build these relationships over time, and TMR's role in this.

Friendships and Fraternity

The findings from this study show that friendship, both within and beyond the community of MSWers is important to the men in this study. They demonstrate that these social connections are important in and of themselves, and transcend mutual support for selling sex. Friendship and fraternity are vital ways in which the men feel able to participate more fully in society, to maintain a good sense of self and to have liveable lives. Within the literature on MSWers, especially those on street-based MSWers, there is evidence of communities for mutual support, including engagement in social activities within defined geographical locations such as the Manchester Gay Village, which offer additional benefits of opportunities to sell sex (Ellison & Weitzer, 2017). In exploring the 'authentic romantic relationships' between the MSWer and their client, Walby (2012) appears to support the view that MSW is both about friendship and mutuality, as well as about power and commerce. Although Walby's conclusions add to our understanding of the nature of MSW and the men who engage in it, his focus was on relationships between MSWers and their clients. Whilst I consider this in my analysis, I also explore relationships among MSWers and others who have no connection to sex work, including friendships, romantic relationships, camaraderie and social connections. My findings also document the changing nature of MSW, particularly the transition from street-based to online and digital procurement and how this has resulted in the breakdown of many relationships and the mutuality

and sense of community, something also reported in other studies (Argento et al., 2016; Mclean, 2012). My study suggests that this means that the friendships, fraternity and social connections that the men in this study invest in are now increasingly important beyond selling sex. Experiences the men report with warmth and fondness – drinking together with other men in the Village, sleeping in a tent in Sackville Gardens, planning and preparing to attend weddings, building and sharing snow angels with friends on the other side of the world, volunteering with charities, romantic relationships – are opportunities to do normal things that other men do, for hedonic pleasure, for feeling a sense of belonging and connection to others, and beyond the weight of their challenges. These experiences and relationships are important for the men's self-worth.

The reported loss of friendships over time is significant in terms of feeling more isolated day-to-day, as well as in terms of mutual support and safety. Ellison and Weitzer (2017) identified how such socialisation among street-based MSWers in Manchester Gay Village allowed men to enjoy the social environment while taking advantage of this to sell sex opportunistically. Argento et al. (2016) also identified that an established tight-knit community of sex workers in Boystown, Vancouver, Canada offered mutual support to each other. The MSWers from Boystown were displaced following urban planning and gentrification ahead of the 2010 Winter Olympics while a transition to selling sex online has meant that many of these MSWer communities have been lost. The mutuality from the examples of friendship in the literature are shared by the men in my study, especially those who sell sex on the street, where the participants described an example of a network for supporting each other; reporting

dangerous clients, sharing locations with each other for safety and walking the stroll together for support. However, the friendships and social connections described by the men in this study differ from those described in the literature above in the sense that they do not serve the furtherance of selling sex even when they are with other MSWers, and any decision to sell is incidental. There are weekend parties in flats, 'messaging about in Piccadilly Gardens' or drinking Pimm's during the Summer at the Gay Beach. The loss of friendships with other MSWers mean that other friendships become more important and necessary to the sense of self of the men in this study.

There are also social activities and friendships with people who are not MSWers; Dry January activities with other friends, meeting friends in a pub in the Village for a drink, re-connecting with an old friend on Grindr and travelling to meet in person and spending a Summer day with friends in a tent in Sackville Gardens. There are moments of tenderness and personal encounters like making and streaming a snow angel to friends overseas, a night out with a boyfriend and or sitting at a street corner with a boyfriend begging together. These offer opportunities to laugh, celebrate life and enjoy being together for its own sake regardless of any challenging personal circumstances they might be experiencing. There is a focus on the friendships and social connections themselves rather than any mutual support or advantages that this may bring to selling sex; on making and enjoying friendships, on being part of the wider experience of life.

In his remarkable presentation of one family's lavish festive decoration, Back (2015:832) draws attention to how thinking about people's wider experiences allows us to move beyond a sociology of despair and social damage, to envision "moments of the repair and hope in which a livable life is made possible". In what appeared to be an indulgent and over-extravagant display by a family who could ill-afford it during a period of financial crisis for many residents on the New Addington council estate, the festive celebration brought together a community to imagine a different, hopeful possibility, to admire the glow of the Christmas lights, while laughing, dreaming, and refusing to be crushed by their circumstances. The friendships, social connections and the parties of the MSWers that I have described in this study offer opportunities for normality, hedonic pleasure, fun and fraternity and in these acts the men also subtly resist, and refuse being dominated by their day-to-day struggles, even if these enjoyable experiences are fleeting. The value of such a focus on the wider experiences is in celebrating these relationships with people which offer opportunities to rise above the weight of challenges, enabling them to achieve and maintain a positive sense of self which is important for countering the sex work stigma and structural inequalities they also experience.

This sub-section also responds to the first and third research objectives. It demonstrates how the men in the study engage in various relationships as ways to enact normalcy, and to navigate everyday stigma.

Volunteering

In this sub-section, I also explore the volunteering experiences of MSWers as another form of their relationships with people and the meaning(s) of this. This aspect of MSWers lives is poorly understood in the literature and offers insight into the more personal and psychosocial aspects of their lives that Friedman (2014) suggests has been missing in studies. This exploration is important to constructing a theory of MSW which does not present MSWers as deficit figures or define them only in terms of selling sex but one that is both personal and humanising (Walby, 2012). By personal and humanising, I refer to those human qualities that are common to all people and activities that humans engage in, whether they are academics or sex workers, such as volunteering.

Male sex workers' engagement in volunteering reveals a lot about their preoccupations. This is because unlike spontaneous prosocial behaviour, volunteering is proactive and requires the commitment of time and effort in the medium or long-term (Wilson, 2000). People from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less connected to institutions, have fewer financial resources and are therefore less likely to volunteer (Hustinx, Cnaan & Handy, 2010; Pancer et al., 2007; Oesterle et al., 2004). When people from marginalised backgrounds like the men in this study therefore engage in volunteering, it suggests a certain deliberateness to commit time and effort to an activity they consider important or of important benefit to them. Carlton (2015) and Camia, Zimmermann and Lischke (2024) provide evidence that volunteering by people from marginalised backgrounds results in a sense of acceptance and belonging, overcoming previous rejection and isolation, confidence

and agency to better participate in society and gaining an overall positive sense of self. In my study, opportunities for volunteering for MSWers contribute to overcoming a sense of difference and marginalisation. This also contributed to enjoyment, learning, commitment to a cause, and self-regard, promoting the development of a more positive sense of self. Rochester et al. (2010) identify three main paradigms underpinning volunteering, those of activism (altruism and philanthropy); civil society (self-help and mutuality); and serious leisure (enthusiasm for a specific activity). The examples of volunteering activity by the men in this study align more closely with the civil society (Lyons et al., 1998) and serious leisure (Stebbins, 2004; Stebbins & Graham, 2004) paradigms. There are examples of volunteering in recovery programmes and homeless charities to contribute to supporting others with similar experiences, or working together to address common problems or to meet shared needs. There is also a commitment to, and enthusiasm for a specific activity such as kink sex and voluntary action to promote it. For the men in this study, a marginalised group traditionally excluded from volunteering, this contributes towards developing a positive sense of self. In doing this, it positions them as fully human, not just MSWers, giving of their time, effort and skills as other men their age, skill and interests do.

This sub-section also responds to the first and third research objectives. It demonstrates how the men in the study engage in volunteering to achieve a sense of normalcy which supports efforts to counter everyday sex work stigma, thus contributing towards the development of a good sense of self.

Having explored the participants relationships with spaces and places in the first section, I have focused on their relationships with people in this section. These deliberate investments that reveal the importance they attach to relationships, changes in these relationships and the implications of the changing environment and nature of MSW for the everyday lives and lived experiences of this group of MSWers. These also model the kind of caring, positive relationships that the men need to replicate with their families to repair and transform the fractured and fragile relationships they currently experience with family members. This enables them to move away from idealisation or denigration towards ambivalence and reparation. The place of TMR as an organisation and its model of support that offers elements of consistency, stability and reliability in a non-judgemental community is critical to attaining this sense of ambivalence and living liveable lives.

Models of Support

In the two previous sections, I have highlighted the significance of the men's relationships with space and place, and with people respectively. I have argued that these reveal them to be a group of men with specific needs which require a particular model of support; one which attends to more than their practical and immediate needs, or to certain defined objectives. In this final section, I argue that the peculiarities and affordances of the model of support operated by the Men's Room, Manchester (TMR), has specific strengths which help to meet the needs of this group of men. In her research with terminally ill migrants in hospice care, Gunaratnam (2015:160) makes the important point that:

“Ethics is not only about what we do (and what we fail to do). It is also about the timing of what we do. It is about responding to and negotiating two distinct but related times: the compelling urgency of acting in the now, together with a patient respect and openness to a future that can never be adequately known or planned for, but must still be cared for and oriented to”.

I contend that TMR's model of support, which is underpinned by its relational approach and arts-based practice simultaneously responds to the needs of the men across these two distinct but related times. However, this is constantly under threat due to funding concerns within a welfare system which tends to measure the success of social welfare agencies through their success in delivering social outcomes (Hall & Smith, 2014; Hoggett, 2008b). This is particularly important for the group of men at the heart of this study because many of them indicate that they are at the threshold of transitioning out of their MSW identity. The complex emotional work that is involved in supporting them manage this transition requires specific forms of care and support (practical, emotional, inclusion, belonging, a good enough sense of self), which need a simultaneous navigation of both temporalities of care. In the next few sub-sections, I draw together elements of TMR's unique model and how it responds to the needs of the men, and in doing this, argue for the importance of this type of support for vulnerable populations. I will focus on its capacity to demonstrate Ethics of Care, Developing Community, Partnership Work and Re-imagining Lives.

The Men's Room Model

I have discussed key aspects of the TMR model of support in the Introductory Chapter (Chapter 1) of this thesis. Within this section, I emphasise that TMR has primarily, and continues to work with a client group who live outside of normative social and familial networks, present with forms of severe and multiple disadvantage, and are unlikely to access support from available services. TMR's work with this client group; acknowledging and addressing personal, social, emotional, affective, creative and practical immediate needs, is an important example of the kind of care which the men in my study value, need and respond positively to. This points to important ways of structuring support for groups of people who have complex needs, and are disaffected with existing services.

Hall and Smith (2014), and Scanlon and Adlam (2008) underline the importance of the support provided by agencies like TMR when they highlight the tensions involved in working with populations on the extreme margins of society such as those supported by TMR. These agencies must balance meeting the expectations of commissioners of social welfare agencies for outcome-led practice with the more emotional and psychic aspects of care of the populations they serve. Cooper and Lousada (2005) argue that outcome-led practice is not always sufficient, particularly for people whose prognosis is socially or physically (and for this study, emotionally and psychically) poor. Instead, they advocate for affective and dynamic client-worker relationships which are critical to the continuity of care needed for people to work through complex issues and move forward in their lives. In the next four sub-sections, I highlight key elements of TMR's model of support.

Ethics of Care

TMR's model is grounded in an ethics of care that is neither time-limited nor outcome-based but focused on a response to the men, their overall lives and situations. The emphasis of this support is on engaging the men through care, instead of interventions aimed to achieve specific outcomes. As a social work student placed with TMR, my title was Engagement Worker reflecting the agency's focus. TMR's engagement with the men was on their 'terms', whether this was to engage with the creative sessions, drop-ins, outreach, one-to-one support or a mix of these. There was fluidity around engagement with men choosing to engage with one activity or more at any one time, and there were no time or other restrictions on this flexibility of choice. For instance, at the time of the study, Bunny and Oliver engaged with both the creative sessions and one-to-one support. Cameron had previously engaged with outreach and creative sessions but not with one-to-one, while Eddie now engaged occasionally with creative sessions although he had previously engaged with outreach, drop-ins and one-to-one support.

Underpinned by its relational approach (discussed in the Introduction), TMR's ethics of care is premised on engaging the men to build trust and developing solidarity with their clients rather than attempting to 'fix them or their problems'. The literature highlights that sex workers distrust statutory services, professionals and agencies (Macioti, Geymonat & Mai, 2021; Wolf, 2019). However, if agencies are to succeed in working with the most vulnerable populations, then trust is crucial. Scanlon and Adlam (2008) point out that regardless of how well-intentioned outcome-based policies may be and how sophisticated the methods or tools of meeting them may be, there will

always be some members of groups on the margins of society who refuse to engage or respond to these. The challenge for the agencies providing this care and the individual workers is how to relate to these refusals without becoming offended. For Scanlon and Adlam (ibid), this epitomises the limitations of the formal system of care and those who work within it, as far as they relate to caring for the 'socially excluded' who may refuse to be shamed, humiliated and accommodated by the formal structures of the system. TMR's ethics of care deliberately empowers its clients to decide what is important to them and be supported to achieve on their own terms. This engenders the trust that agencies working with socially excluded groups like MSWers so desperately need to continue to provide the care that they seek to offer. This is what TMR offers to its clients. Bunny started engaging with TMR after he broke up with his boyfriend of more than 2 years, rendering him homeless and without income. He looked to TMR to support him to mitigate those situations initially and then felt ready to accept support with his alcohol dependency and eventually with his sexual abuse as a teenager. Oliver on the other hand, attended creative sessions for a while before choosing to be supported to access further help with housing issues.

TMR's ethics of care enables a form of advocacy that is akin to what Hall and Smith (2014) refer to as a 'politics' of care, repair, and maintenance', those acts of care, kindness and compassion that attend to the immediate as well as the future, making a difference in the lives of vulnerable people. Drawing on the work of urban outreach workers supporting street homeless inhabitants of a UK city, Hall and Smith (ibid) point out how everyday acts of kindness - walking the streets and delivering hot drinks, needle exchange packs, bandages and gels, blankets and sleeping bags - contribute

towards the repair and maintenance in the service of the client and presents them in a positive way. TMR's approach incorporates this form of direct everyday care through the supply of items such as toiletries, food parcels, safety kits, bus passes and supermarket vouchers, but goes beyond this to deliver a personalised form of advocacy and care that places the needs of the client at the centre of its work. I draw on an example from my study to further explain this personal advocacy and care which prioritises the client. Oliver described the difference in his outcome when a member of staff from TMR accompanied him to a homeless charity that he had been referred to. He emphasised that being accompanied to this appointment gave him the boldness to present his unique case of homelessness, and to receive more attention that he would have otherwise received. This enabled Oliver to receive help while retaining his dignity, a process that Brownlie and Spandler (2018) argue is about holding one's own, which is important to maintaining a good sense of self for vulnerable people. Oliver also pointed out that because the TMR member of staff demonstrated respect for him by the way he related to him, staff from the homeless charity mirrored this respectful treatment and relationship. This is because this demonstrated to all, including Oliver himself that he is not merely a recipient of charity or a needy supplicant but a human subject worthy of care and respect. This example combines affect and personal advocacy to achieve continuity of care that is critical in supporting vulnerable populations is an important contribution to knowledge about supporting MSWers. As a social work student with TMR, I experienced firsthand the difference that this approach made to Ludlum during his housing application and preparation for a job interview. Accompanying him to these interviews enabled him to be more confident in presenting his case. The presence of a professional advocating in meetings with other professionals served as an external container for Oliver and

Ludlum, to the extent that it enable them to deal with the anxiety inherent in these situations but also mirror back to them an image of themselves as worthy of respect and assistance.

TMR's approach to care responds to the needs of its clients at the time they require such care, and not just what has been assessed as their perceived needs. The excellent and important work of psychoanalyst and social work educator Margot Waddell (1989) on the relationship between 'activity' and 'passivity' in good care is most relevant here. Underpinned by the psycho-social approach that informs this study, Waddell (ibid) drew on 10 years of observing the work of staff in a care home for clients with high care needs such as those like her mother, with a diagnosis of dementia. Waddell (ibid) distinguished between 'servicing' and 'serving'. Servicing is 'to be active', to engage in the frenetic activities of providing meals, medicine and acts of physical care. This is the more measurable, process-driven action that underpins outcome-led practice. Serving on the other hand is 'to be passive', to be emotionally available to people and to allow them to feel able to express frustrations, distress, anger and pain. This is the kind of care that provides the answer to those vulnerable and disaffected clients that refuse to engage or respond to outcome-led care (Scanlon and Adlam, 2008). TMR's ethics of care responds to both the servicing and serving needs of its clients, dealing with the practical needs as well as containing their uncertainties and anxieties, further enhancing their sense of agency and self-worth.

This sub-section responds to the first, third and fourth research objectives. It shows how TMR's ethics of care responds to the wider needs of the men in this study, enabling them to contain the everyday experience of stigma, develop belonging and manage challenging situations; and it address how male sex workers navigate the everyday experience of stigma.

Developing Community

TMR's model shows a commitment to the development of a community for the men it works with. Combining its relational approach with its arts-based practices, TMR uses its creative sessions in particular, but also drop-in sessions, one-to-one support and an outreach programme, to facilitate community. The function of this community is to provide a safe space for the MSWers it supports to experience a sense of belonging, peer support and a space for reflection. Typically, TMR's creative sessions enable the men to meet regularly, usually weekly, to engage in meaningful arts-based activities, which provide an important break from the pressures of everyday life, as well as fun and meaning. The creative sessions conclude with participants and staff sitting together around tables to share a meal cooked by participants, staff and volunteers. This experience of 'normalcy'; eating with other people on a regular basis, engaging in activities together, being part of something bigger than yourself, opportunities to relate to staff, volunteers and other men as part of the same positive community, fosters conversations and a great sense of affinity among the men and with the staff. This is important for among other things, managing difficult emotions and making important decisions. Following the end of a long, stable relationship, Bunny needed new friendships and also to explore his options. Finding a community who had a sense

of appreciation of his experiences and challenges was important in supporting him make some difficult decisions. For Cameron, being trusted during a creative project was crucial to him. It was clear from the interviews that Bunny, Cameron, Eddie and Oliver all wanted a community within common experiences and therefore understood their fears and frustrations, and shared their hopes and aspirations. Both Cameron and Eddie reminisced about a time when they regularly met with other MSWers socially while Bunny described his experiences of 'Lay for Drinks' as always for the time and drinks and not about money, suggesting his need for community. Oliver emphasised his extreme discomfort having to explain that he sold sex to his friends because they did not understand him and he had only three friends he could tell. Among these three, he indicated that only one understood because that friend had himself previously sold sex. Being part of a community of people with shared experiences was important to the well-being of the men because it offered a sense of belonging, and a mutuality which promoted a shared identity and care for one another.

The importance of the community TMR facilitates for men who have experienced hostility from family, friends, other individuals, professionals and services, is that it provides the space and place for managing intense emotions and making difficult decisions in their own time. The solidity and immovable of this space and peer support within a community that accepts and affirms them is important for modelling relationships with their families and friendships. In a recent evaluation of TMR's creative project 'The Social Script' (Imogen Blood & Associates Ltd, 2024:7), participants described the sessions as providing "...a safe, welcoming, non-judgemental place and space". The routine of the sessions helped to create stability;

“...offering time and a place where people could be themselves as well as part of a group...” This confirms Hughes, Roy and Manley (2014:18) earlier evaluation which highlighted its relational approach as a key strength, offering the men it supports “a stop ... that counters the ‘craziness’ of the city”. I also refer to a few testimonials from TMR’s clients on its website that validate the experiences of the men in this study:

“Coming here on Wednesday evenings – meeting familiar friends and faces – that’s the most exciting. We carry on where we’ve left off, you become known to the group, it’s like our own family. It makes me feel a sense of belonging. as if you are wanted. I find that very moving”.

“All I’ve known all my life is hostels... and hostels... and hostels and prison. At the moment I’m in the hostel surrounded by idiots. Coming here gives you space to get away from where all the trouble is. You chill out, you destress. It stops my mind from wandering”.

“I love coming here, especially on Wednesdays, I’m not going to lie. It just funny, we just have banter and I just love it. I started coming here before Covid. I’ve changed a lot since then...my confidence...I talk to a lot more people. I’m not shy to speak to people. I’m not scared to talk about my life and stuff”.

Many agencies supporting sex workers recognise the importance of developing community and a sense of belonging, peer support and safe spaces for their clients, and incorporate this in their models of support. For instance, Changing Lives, a charity based in the North East of England which supports sex workers among other vulnerable groups, operate a framework informed by the principles of ‘Being,

Becoming, Belonging, Beyond (BBBB). These recognise the need for people to feel safe and accepted, to be supported to understand and overcome trauma and other experiences, belong in spaces, ensure that other services and the wider system support people's progress, eventually moving away from services and finding long term support networks (Changing Lives, 2024; Changing Lives, n.d.). Both Basis Yorkshire, an agency working to end stigma, create safety and promote empowerment for women who sell sex living and working in Leeds (Basis Yorkshire, n.d.), and Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH), an agency which supports women who sell sex in Manchester, offer drop-in services where their clients can access support within a safe space (MASH, n.d.). Lifeshare, an agency based in Manchester who supports homeless, vulnerable and marginalised people also facilitates art workshops where their clients can explore their creativity, and in the process have the opportunity to build their self-confidence and esteem, and engender feelings of empowerment and an air of reinvention (Lifeshare, n.d.). The difference at TMR is in how it facilitates the development of an authentic community through routine, regularity, and a joined-up way of working that allows clients, staff and volunteers to collaborate and co-curate the creative space and co-create the community including cooking and eating together. This engenders trust, a shared identity and a sense of normalcy that the recent evaluation (Imogen Blood and Associates Ltd, 2024:7) concluded was “..more than a service...a trauma-informed approach in a physical form that offered flexibility, fun, interest, and new experiences”. The approach TMR offers is dialogic; an approach to knowing that recognises that the client and professional alike are both knowing and inquiring and defended, and that effective professional practice is dependent on the quality of inter-dependence between the client and the professional

(Froggett, 2002). This is a psycho-social position which underpins TMR's relational approach.

The community and dialogic approach produces a space that allows difficult feelings to be recognised and worked with and through. Frost and Hoggett (2008) argue that some experiences threaten to go beyond our capacity to digest them. These are more likely to be experiences that have been forced upon us, those experiences we face as powerless objects rather than as active agents such as feelings of humiliation, anger, despair, and resentment. This is because, like food that we cannot digest, these experiences either get stuck in the system or we will try to evacuate them. In other words, we have a non-reflexive response to these experiences; we cannot critically think about them because we lack the resources to symbolise and give meaning to them. Psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion (1962) described noxious experiences in similar terms, as stuck in our system as psychic toxins (most vividly in terms of traumatic repetitions). A particular strength of TMR's model of support is that it allows its clients the opportunity in different ways to symbolise and give meaning to their difficult experiences. Within the familiarity and regularity of the TMR community, the men are affirmed and affirm others, as they pause, retreat, seek refuge, and reflect together, supporting each other to manage the tensions and ambivalences in their lives, which would otherwise be overwhelming and challenging to manage individually.

This sub-section also responds to the first, third and fourth research objectives. Through the opportunities offered by the TMR's model of support, the men in the study

are able to develop and sustain relationships which allow them to re-build their own fractured relationships. This also allows them to counter the everyday experience of stigma as the relationships support the development of a good sense of self.

Partnership Working

TMR's approach to partnership with other agencies to meet the needs of the men who engage with it provides us with an important model for working with groups that are on the margins of society. This approach to partnership is not one that I have come across in the literature, and enables the development of relationships between its clients and its partners in ways that go beyond the usual referrals and signposting that most agencies engage with. TMR has key partnerships with other agencies who have varying expertise relevant to the needs of their clients including support with alcohol and substance misuse, homelessness, mental health, physical and sexual health, employment and training. TMR's approach to partnership includes working with these agencies to identify key staff from the agencies who are empathetic to TMR's client group. These are usually staff who have experience of outreach and therefore have some experience of supporting some of the most vulnerable people. These key members of staff participate and co-facilitate creative sessions together with TMR's members of staff and volunteers. By participating and co-facilitating the creative sessions and some drop-in sessions, they co-create this community with TMR's clients, staff and volunteers, developing client-professional relationships with the men. When TMR's clients are ready to engage with the services provided by these partners, the co-facilitating member(s) of staff become the points of contact for them with appointments often agreed during the creative and/or drop-in sessions to meet this

particular member of staff. Because TMR's model of care is not time-restricted, its clients are not under pressure to be 'fixed', partners have the opportunity to nurture this relationship over a long time period until they are ready. Bunny discussed links with Survivors Manchester (now known as 'We are Survivors') who 'have been great for him' in helping him gain a diagnosis for PTSD. Survivors Manchester has a long association with TMR and was one of the three agencies who co-designed and co-produced the Safer Street Pilot Project (which I have previously discussed). During the time I was a social work student and later volunteer with TMR, Survivors regularly co-facilitated creative sessions. I also witnessed firsthand many other partner agencies co-facilitate sessions and clients eventually arranging meetings with the key member of staff who was part of the sessions. Although he did not specifically indicate this, Oliver's referral to the homeless charity (which I discussed in the Ethics of Care sub-session) is likely to have been initiated during a creative session. This approach of TMR's partners co-facilitating allows the men to overcome the critical issue of mistrust of professionals by sex workers (Macioti, Geymonat & Mai, 2021; Wolf, 2019) as the men know that they are engaging with someone they already have a positive relationship with. Like other voluntary sector organisations including those supporting sex workers such as Basis Yorkshire, Changing Lives and MASH, partnership working is crucial to ensuring that the needs of their clients are met. However, many usually achieve this through referrals and signposting to their partners, enabling clients to access support in areas where the agency itself may not have expertise. TMR, on the other hand, has developed an approach to partnership with other agencies facilitated by co-locating their partners within session, thus building trusting relationships between its clients and partners to promote continuity of care.

Co-locating staff members of its partner agencies within the creative sessions to co-facilitate the sessions and developing positive and nurturing relationships with clients contributes to enabling its clients to hold their own. This allows them to seek and receive help in ways that allow them to retain their dignity. Having developed positive and dialogic relationships with staff from TMR's partners, clients have a sense of familiarity and acceptance, empowering them to seek and accept help without feeling dependent on professionals and support agencies, but rather making agentic decisions. I have previously argued (in the sub-section on Ethics of Care) about the importance of being able to hold one's own while seeking help, especially for people like the men in my study. I re-iterate Brownlie and Spandler's (2018) argument that seeking and receiving help is about holding one's own; maintaining a delicate balance between the need to seek and accept help while retaining one's dignity in the process. By enabling its clients to feel able to seek and receive help from its partners through the model described, TMR enables the men to hold their own within situations that they would otherwise not be able to receive help due to 'paternalistic' approaches of some welfare agencies.

This model of partnership working is also to the transition journeys of the men that TMR support. At the beginning of their engagement with TMR, the men typically spend a lot of time with the agency; developing community, building confidence, managing their emotions and making difficult decisions, which mean they are actively involved in the life of TMR. At this stage, TMR is a vital part of their survival, enabling them to think about, and develop trust, which in turn allows them to re-build their relationships with family, friends, professionals and other agencies. Once this has been achieved,

the men outgrow the need for such intensive support and although many retain relationships with TMR, this is often now in the periphery. This is the case of Cameron and Eddie who remain connected to TMR, but no longer attend as regularly as they used to. Eddie explained that many of his friends had moved on and he only attended sessions from time to time. Cameron has fond memories of TMR from when he used to stay in town and would like to return and engage in creative projects, suggesting that his engagement with TMR was no longer as active as previously. Bunny and Oliver on the other hand were still actively involved in the TMR community and regularly attended sessions.

This sub-section also responds to the first, second and fourth research objectives. TMR's unique way of working with its partners empowers the men in this study to examine their changing relationships with sex work with support from TMR and their partners. The approach to partnership also helps the men to rise about their mistrust of professionals and agencies resulting from the everyday experience of stigma.

Re-imagining Lives

I argue that TMR's arts-based practices are important for imagining future meaningful possibilities for the men in this study whose identities are often framed in a language of disadvantage and failure. This is particularly important for the men in this study because many of them are in positions where they are considering different options to selling sex. The 'playfulness' and creative inventiveness of TMR's arts-based practices such as drama, photography, film-making, music, designing a website

empowers participants to explore the possibility of new identities in the roles they take on. Oliver who had argued that a combination of his mental ill-health, immigration status and housing situation gives him little choice around employment options beyond selling sex connected to the arts-based practice in a positive way. During the map-making session, he described himself as an artist, brought a set of pencils and brushes into the session and made four maps. He also discussed a plan of developing a new form of art that he intended to make into postcards and sell in bazaars and community events. Eddie aspired to returning to college to do something related to art which he was interested in. Cameron remembers a photography project over several weeks where he kept the camera and took photographs that he defined as picture-worthy. In sharing this story, Cameron who had declined the offer of a map-making session at the start of his engagement with this study, described himself as artistic and loved taking photographs. I do not consider it to be a coincidence that all the three men whose stories I have discussed above (Oliver, Eddie, and Cameron) shared have explored identities related to the arts, and the influence of TMR's arts-based practices is likely to have something to do with this. For Cameron, the fact that the recollection of a past involvement in a photography project allowed him to reflect on an identity beyond selling sex is indicative of the power of arts-based practice to support imagining meaningful possibilities for transitioning out of sex work. This is important because Cameron had indicated his frustration because at age 23, he felt he was becoming too old to continue to attract sex work clients but argued that he was limited in his options for non-sex work employment. Similarly, Bunny also had reservations about his ability to get back into sex work due to his age.

The issue of exploring new identities is a critical one especially because all the men in my study had indicated that are at periods in their lives when they are considering transitioning from selling sex. The MSWers participants in Ellison and Weitzer's (2016) study of the dynamics of male and female street prostitution in Manchester felt that they would be too old at 23 or 24 to attract clients except those MSWers who had 'baby' faces. This supports Eddie's assertion that he shaved daily to look young and attractive to his clients and punters. All the men in my study were at least 23 years which would put them in this category of MSWers who would be considering transitioning out of sex work with Bunny and Cameron stating this within their stories, although Oliver who predominantly sold sex online did not appear to have any age-related reservations around selling sex. For him (Oliver), Eddie who sold sex both online and on the street, and Cameron who migrated to online sex work to manage his mental ill-health, selling sex was no longer as fulfilling and motivating as when they first starting engaging in it. The challenge of managing the changing expectations of clients, and the difficulty in achieving a realistic separation between selling sex and their personal their lives contributed to this decision. All these make it important for these men to be able to explore identities beyond selling sex and TMR's art-based practices provide a model which facilitates this.

I argue that it is not merely the arts-based practices in themselves that facilitate the space for re-imagining different lives but rather TMR's approach to using the practices to serve specific purposes. Agencies like Lifeshare, Manchester and MASH who both support sex workers offer arts workshops and creative workshops respectively to their clients. For Lifeshare, this is a healthy way for their clients to express their personality

and circumstances, offering opportunities for building self-confidence and esteem, and empowerment (Lifeshare, n.d). For MASH, it is about feeding the creativity of their clients (MASH, n.d). I have participated in many of TMR's creative sessions as a social work student, volunteer and more recently as a researcher during the recruitment phase of this study. Hughes, Roy and Manley (2014:4) capture the essence of the TMR model when they refer to the creative inventiveness of TMR's art-based practices as "a paradoxical and transgressive space, one in which 'acting out' is literally and metaphorically part of the work". Because this 'acting out' occurs in non-formal spaces and through forms of communication not encumbered with the formality of a question and answer session, it facilitates the needed space for participants to reflect on the meaning of experiences, both collectively and individually. The sessions are carefully themed to respond to identified needs of the community of men who engage with the agency. For instance, I joined a creative session on the opening night of an exhibition of their work in a gallery space during the recruitment process of this study. I walked with the group from TMR's offices to the gallery space including two of the men who subsequently volunteered to participate in this study. I observed the excitement, sense of accomplishment and pride as they were met at the gallery and saw their work displayed, many of them experiencing the achievement of being exhibitors for the first time. They were not seen as sex workers participating in a creative project week after week but artists whose work hung on the wall of an art gallery. Many of the participants in this study referred to the creative sessions and the ability to experiment with various arts practices as memorable aspects of their engagement with TMR. Many of TMR's creative projects would often lead to exhibitions, publications, public walks and performances like this, as part of the agency's activism, which allow the men to imagine themselves differently, as artists,

performers, published authors and also to empower them to know that their voices were worth hearing and listening to.

As a volunteer, I was involved in a photography project which was themed around doors. Although doors are generally thought to symbolise 'transitions', participants were not prompted to think about transitions; they were encouraged to take photographs of doors/doorways and then share their reasons for the choices. This promoted individual choice and reflection and informed the collective discussion each evening. On a particular evening, a participant who had taken a picture of a revolving door explained that this represented the futility in aspects of their own life. Another participant who had captured the door of a public house (pub), reflected on their past challenges with alcohol dependency and how TMR and other agencies had supported them to move beyond that door. A third participant who presented a picture of the door of a mini cooper, confidently announced that this symbolised the progress they aimed for, which though a small start, would become bigger than a mini cooper. The symbolic importance of the theme of doors for this group of men who were all at different stages of transition was significant; the themed photography project provided the enabling environment; the paradoxical and transgressive space, for the men to explore and reflect meaningfully on an important subject in a non-formal and non-confrontational way. In another project, a website design co-created by the participants, the group collectively named the website 'Rebels without Applause', aptly and humourously representing their assessment of their place in society, where their achievements were rarely, if ever celebrated. This project therefore presented them the opportunity to celebrate – give themselves the recognition they felt they deserved.

Froggett (2008:108) highlights the inter-subjective nature of arts-based practices and their capacity as inter-subjective third element - a space of the third between two people - to generate a kind of communicative relationship that encourages a 'sensual exchange unmediated by conceptual thought'. Because arts-based activities involve creation, Froggett (ibid) argues that they embody the self, in the process acquiring the imprint of the creator and are animated by it. Crociani-Windland (2013) explores the idea of arts-based practices as elements of thirdness, arguing that it provides opportunities for confronting one's limitations, reawaken forgotten capacities, experiencing satisfaction, and putting one in touch with discomfort or joy. In other words, TMR's arts-based practices facilitate risk-taking within a safe space, which enables the exploration of experiences but also the trying out new skills and ideas. They are also a celebration of the artistic skills of the participants through the accomplishment of creative projects, many of which are new to them. For the men in my study, many of whose biographies have few celebratory stories, this experimentation, success and celebration of new artistic skills, is important to their sense of self. Because TMR's arts-based practices allow experimentation and taking on of different identities, they support the men in this study to explore the possibilities of identities beyond selling sex. This is important for those who are coming to the end of selling sex and considering a transition from sex work.

This sub-section also responds to all four but particularly the second and fourth research objectives. As the men begin to examine their relationships with sex work over the years, TMR's model of support provides the opportunities through its creative projects for them to imagine alternatives to selling sex.

In this section, I have made a case for the TMR model of support, as one that exemplifies the commitment to the holistic needs of the men in this study, practical, physical, emotional, affective and attends to the present and beyond. In the first two sections, I highlighted how the men's lives – their mundane practices, relationships with spaces, places and people – reveal vulnerabilities that need more than the measurable social outcomes delivered by many welfare agencies (although many of them have these needs too). Their fractured and often traumatic familial and social relationships mean that they need a container to moderate anxiety. Experiences of exclusion from sex work stigma and other challenges mean a poor sense of self and an important, if not urgent need to be recognized as fully human, worthy of respect and care. TMR's relational model of support, engages the men within a community within which they can experience the stability, reliability and care that enables them to conceive of, and then replicate in their own relationships. The acceptance, inclusion, sense of belonging positively affects their sense of self, enabling them to recognise each other as fully human. TMR's arts-based practices offer a creative community which supports self and peer reflection, representation, and imaginatively stimulates the sense of a future that could be different.

In this chapter, I have explored the men's relationships; with spaces and places, and with people, highlighting how these provide insight into their pre-occupations and needs. I have also highlighted how TMR's model of support responds to these identified needs. In doing this, I have discussed how an exploration of these sections and sub-sections have supported me to respond to the stated objectives of the

research. In concluding this chapter, I summarise the main contributions that this study has made to our understanding of MSW and the men who engage in it, as below:

Exploring the wider lives of male sex workers such those in this study allows us to see them as fully human and not only sex workers. This is one way that the men counter the experience of everyday stigma.

A psycho-social understanding of the relationships that the men engage in reveal investments in narratives to defend against their anxieties. TMR's support enable them to symbolise and contain these anxieties to repair, sustain and re-build these.

The Men's Room (TMR) offers a model of support which provides care, relationships, peer-to-peer connections, and access to social spaces and a cultural life, and attends to both immediate and future needs of the men.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this last chapter I summarise the thesis, describe how the findings address the research objectives and clarify the original contributions to knowledge. I explore some of the policy and practice implications, acknowledge the limitations of the study and then make recommendations for future studies.

Summary

As a social work student and later as a volunteer, I was part of the TMR community for about 2 years, closely supporting the men who engaged with the agency including Ludlum. Ludlum tragically took his own life at a time that many professionals and peers deemed that he was making good progress on many levels. Ludlum's suicide highlighted for me the difficulties that men like those seeking support from TMR confront as they seek to progress from the challenges which bring them to the organisation. This is because this process of moving on requires explicit recognition and engagement with their vulnerabilities, past and present hurts, as well as their marginalisation and hopes for the future. Attempts at moving forward therefore not only result in progress but also bring insight and distress. As a result of the sustained and close working relationship I had with Ludlum, my search for answers to how men like him could be supported to successfully manage the process of moving on without

being overwhelmed, found expression in this study. At the same time, I saw how TMR's model of support for clients: its compassionate, non-interventionist and consistent approach, enabled them to overcome the mistrust that many of them had of professionals and agencies, to engage with TMR and feel part of its community. This also motivated me to want to investigate how TMR achieved this and to explore what lessons can be learnt and applied to support other groups of vulnerable people.

This PhD thesis was structured into six inter-related chapters. Following a chapter that introduced the background to the study and a plan for the work, a review of relevant literature provided the foundation for the research questions and the methodological choices. The methodology was outlined, followed by a chapter which presented the four cases that are at the heart of this thesis. The findings were discussed in relation to the existing literature, outlining key contributions my research makes to knowledge. The conclusion chapter summarised these contributions and highlights the areas of originality of this study.

The relevant literature on MSW evidenced the pervasive, (Armstrong, 2019, 2022; Oliveira, 2018; Weitzer, 2017a) multi-layered, (Benoit et al., 2018; Lyons et al., 2021; Salhaney et al., 2021), and endemic nature (Easterbrook-Smith, 2022; Kong, 2009; Wolf, 2019) of sex work stigma. Different groups of MSWs experience sex work stigma differently; street-based workers are thought to experience more stigma while some groups such as those in Bacio's (2023) study have reported a positive experience of MSW. This stigma is both psychological (internalised, felt) and

sociological (societal, structural), with emergent researchers proposing a more comprehensive understanding which integrates both aspects. I argue for a psycho-social understanding of sex work stigma, which informs the methodological approach of this study.

Underpinned by this approach, I used map-making and repeat walking interviews as data collection methods to investigate the experiences of the MSWers who seek support from TMR. In total, there were 17 research contacts including 5 map-making sessions and 12 walking interviews with 4 men. Two further maps and 3 walks undertaken have been excluded from the data because the participant in question was removed from the final sample. Three levels of data analysis were completed; development of scenic compositions, Interpretive Data Analysis Panels (IDAPs) and phenomenological whole text, non-fragmented reading and interpretation of the transcribed recordings.

Case studies from the maps and walks were developed for each participant. Each case study was introduced by a scenic composition drawn from a contact with the participant in question, a subjective interpretation of the emerging Gestalt of the participant. This was presented as a vignette, conversation, a scene or re-telling of a story which also served as a kind of a pen-picture/profile. The cases themselves were structured by the maps and walks with an overview and reflection at the end which summarised its contribution to responding to the research objectives.

The Discussion presented a cross-case analysis of the findings. There were three broad sections on Relationships with Spaces and Places (Mundane Practice and Routine Activities, Being in and at the Edge of the City); Relationships with People (Relationships with Family, Friendships and Fraternity, Volunteering); and Models of Support (The TMR Model). The men's routine activities and mundane practices speak to deliberate efforts they undertake to make liveable lives, to hold their own (Brownlie & Spandler 2018) and to counter the everyday experiences of stigma, while their relationships with the city suggests efforts to contain complex emotional challenges. The men develop and sustain a series of distinctive routines, pastimes, practices and relationships to help to maintain a good enough sense of self in the face of life's day-to-day challenges. The lives of these men also document how these all need to be adapted as life and their relationships to sex work change and bring new challenges and opportunities. The TMR model which is underpinned by a relational approach and arts-based practices, offers care, supportive relationships, peer-to-peer connections, and access to social spaces and a cultural life, and attends to both immediate and future needs of the men.

Original Contributions

In this section, I show how the thesis makes original contributions in relation to each of the specific objectives set out for the research in the introduction.

Explore how male sex workers navigate the everyday experience of stigma

This study provides new knowledge about how an understanding of the wider lives of the participants allows them to be seen as fully human and not objectified solely through the lens of their sex work activities and/or their vulnerabilities. The study documents how routines and mundane practices are developed as deliberate strategies which seek to render life liveable, as well as to navigate the everyday experience of stigma. The literature on sex work highlights the ubiquity and problematic nature of stigma among sex workers (Armstrong, 2019; Easterbrook-Smith, 2022; Koken et al., 2004; Morrison & Whitehead, 2005; Oliveira, 2018; Valente et al., 2020; Weitzer; Wolf, 2019). This experience among MSWers is at once sociological and psychological which, among other effects, puts a strain on their relationships (Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Kong, 2009; McLean, 2012; Oliveira, 2018), and negatively impacts on their mental well-being (Chandler et al., 2022; Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Morrison, & Whitehead, 2007b; Oliveira, 2018; Salhaney et al., 2021; Scott et al., 2005). Male sex workers are known to adopt strategies such as bodily exclusion zones (McLean, 2012; Minichiello et al., 2000), and misuse drugs and alcohol to dissociate from the emotional effects of sex work stigma (Chandler et al., 2022; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016; Jiao & Bungay, 2019; McCabe, et al., 2011). Male sex workers also re-frame their sex worker identities, as forms of altruism, service provision, and employment (Koken et al., 2004; McLean, 2012; Morrison & Whitehead, 2007) to cope with and challenge stigmatising narratives. They also perform masculinity through presenting with body types that portray hegemonic masculine ideals (Blackwell & Dziegielewski, 2013; Logan, 2010; Tyler, 2014, 2016) or a preference for traditional masculine positions during sex (Atkins & Laing 2012; Ellison, 2017; Kumar, Scott & Minichiello, 2017; McPhail, Scott & Minichiello, 2015; Ravenhill & de Visser, 2018).

My study is the first to highlight how male sex workers may deliberately develop bespoke everyday routines and mundane practices to have unexceptional experiences alongside other people, to make liveable lives, to feel good about themselves and to counter sex work stigma. As most of the stigma that sex workers experience occurs in their daily interactions and in situations unrelated to selling sex, this is important to developing understanding about how to support MSWers to counter stigma. It also supports understandings of how MSWers' everyday actions are meaningful ways to resist stigma.

Taking part in the life of a community that offers acceptance, belonging and peer-to-peer support is important for attaining and maintaining a good enough sense of self and this study's participant's lives and stories document how this contributes positively to their lives. There is evidence that sex work stigma disrupts MSWers' relationships including those with family, friends and romantic partners (Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Kong, 2009; McLean, 2012; Oliveira, 2018), which then affects their sense of self and ability to seek support. My study demonstrates through the TMR's model of support that a community that facilitates stability, reliability and care, can enable MSWers like this study's participants to conceive of, and then replicate these acts of care in their relationships with themselves and with other important people in their lives. This study's participants have shown a desire and capacity to re-build fractured relationships as a result of accessing the long-term support of TMR. This is an original contribution to understanding the forms of support which can help MSWers to re-build the lives and relationships over time as part of moving forward with their lives.

Examine their changing relationships to selling sex

My study documents the lives of a group of men whose conceptions of sex work have altered over time. Many started selling sex in locations on the street as teenagers and while there were some challenges such as verbal abuse, hostility and managing the effects of the weather, they also looked back on these times as enjoyable because of friendships and a community of MSWers who socialised, looked out for, and partied together. This study has developed understandings of MSW as linked to a positive sense of self as being wanted, as an identification with the emancipation struggle of Gay men, as a social transaction in exchange for drinks, cigarettes and accommodation, but also as a source of employment. With the passage of time, many of the men have, in common with current trends in MSW, transitioned to selling sex online. This has led to the men in this study feeling more isolated and tending to view sex work more as employment, considering transitioning from selling sex as a consequence of these changes.

The breakdown over time of a physically-based community of MSWers that offered mutual support, friendship and fun, has implications for how MSWers support each other and continue to be supported by professionals and services. However, this is a subject that few researchers have ventured into (Argento et al., 2016; Mclean, 2012 are exceptions). As far as I am aware, my study is the first to explore MSWers changing relationships to sex work over time, partly as a result of this transition to online sex work. How these men respond to the community facilitated by TMR indicates the value of a community that offers mutuality, friendship and care and models how such a community can be structured to meet the needs of MSWers like

those in my study. It also underscores the value that such a long-term overview of men's relationship with sex work over time can contribute to a transition from sex work.

Explore how men in contact with TMR negotiate, sustain and re-build relationships over time

The depth approach of this study had documented how this group of men manage, maintain and re-build relationships over time. As younger men, many became estranged from their families when their sex worker and/or Gay-identity became known. Many heavily invested in peer-to-peer relationships with other MSWers and socialised together. Over time, their lives, sex work practices, relationships and priorities have changed, with many becoming more socially isolated, more reliant on TMR for community and socialisation, and many have chosen to repair, re-build, and transform their relationships with family.

Male sex workers' experiences of difficulties in their relationships has been documented in the literature. These have been characterised by tensions and fears of discovery, and a resultant breakdown and/or experiences of stigma following discovery (Jiao & Bungay, 2019; Koken et al., 2004; Ryan, 2016). However, there are no studies which have explored how MSWers seek to re-build these relationships over time. My study is therefore the first to document how MSWers relationships change over time, the experiences of re-building these relationships, and the complex emotional work involved in doing this. The men have to manage visibility of their sex work identities in their relationships and sometimes live with the knowledge that their

family and friends thought of them differently because they are sex worker. The importance of TMR as a source of care, support and containment as the men re-engage with experiences of rejection and mistreatment is an important model for supporting MSWers in similar situations. The characteristics of this model are described below.

Consider the Men's Room (TMR) model of support and how it attends to the needs of the male sex workers that engage with it

This study highlights that the TMR's model which is designed to creatively and informally support MSWers allows them a safe space to explore their options. This model of support is long-term, flexible, non-formal and non-confrontational which is important because it enables this group of MSWers to balance seeking and receiving help, with holding their own and maintaining their own sense of autonomy and dignity in a way that is both empowering and effective. TMR's example of co-locating partners within sessions and/or supporting clients to access support from their partners achieves this balance, allowing clients to have an image of themselves as worthy of care and respect, as able to deliver these things to other men in the space and hence not just needy and in need of support.

In November 2023, TMR changed its name to Our Room (OR) as part of its response to the more inclusive groups of sex workers it continues to support. During this period, I was able to share the findings of this study with key staff of the agency including the CEO and the Research Lead. This has contributed to the agency's review of its

support and plan for future research. The Manchester Sex Work Forum's (MSWF) most recent strategy (2020-2022) is due to be reviewed and will benefit from the insights that this study brings. TMR (now OR) as an agency is a member of the MSWF and I will work with them to bring insights from the study to this review. I will also share this study's findings with the MSWF to inform the review of its strategy. My research may also provide insight into effective models of support for similar client groups in different locations, as the research has been able to develop a sufficiently strong understanding of who the model might serve.

Limitations of Study

This study used a small sample, which is consistent with its psycho-social underpinnings. Ethical approval was given for 6-8 participants and 5 participants were recruited, of which 1 was removed from the final sample. The strength of this study is in its depth rather than breadth and the sample, although small, enabled an in-depth exploration of the everyday lives and lived experiences of a group of MSWers who use a single organisation. Seventeen (17) contacts of an average of an hour each were made with the participants during the map-making sessions and repeat walking interviews, sometimes staged over several months. There was also reasonable diversity in the men who engaged with the study in terms of demography such as their age-range and locations where they sold sex. This was backed with an analysis robust in rigour (depth in interpretation and triangulated through the different tools of data collection and analysis), and validated through extended discussions (Interpretive Data Analysis Panels) including with TMR. I have discussed these more comprehensively in the Methodology and summarised this in Table 2 (Interpretive

Data Analysis Table). The data collection methods of this study, akin to an ethnographic study is another strength, enabling opportunities for a researcher-participants relationship over multiple contacts. This allowed for trust to be built and for stories to develop over more than a single interview. This allowed several short-term incursions into the men's lives from different locations and temporalities shaping the overall narrative. The value of the maps as a third element to mediate participant anxiety in a sensitive study like this and the side-by-side nature of the walking interviews contributed to stories developing in a more natural way than in face to face interviews.

The study is also limited by its focus on MSWers in Manchester, seeking support from a single agency, TMR. There was opportunity to have extended the study to other MSWers who did not seek support from TMR which would have enabled a more comprehensive discussion of the distinctiveness of the TMR model beyond the maps and interviews of the participants (who all engaged with TMR).

The North of England alone has at least two other cities – Liverpool and Newcastle – with a history of agencies who support MSWers. Including MSWers from these cities would have allowed a bigger sample size and also a comparative analysis to strengthen the claims made in this thesis. This would have also strengthened the case for theory building.

Future Research

The Internet and digital spaces including social media platforms have become important for procuring MSW with many MSWers and trans sex workers transitioning from street-based sex work (Argento et al., 2016; Cunningham & Kendall, 2011; Hausbeck & Brents, 2010; Mclean, 2015). This has made MSW more visible (Kumar et al., 2017) and 'normal' (McPhail, Scott & Minichiello, 2015). However, studies (Argento et al., 2016; Mclean, 2012) have begun to question the isolation, lack of community and support for men who sell sex this way. Some of the men in this study sold sex online and highlighted this as a concern, or at the very least, double-edged. For the men in this study however, TMR provided the community and support they required. A better understanding of pathways of support for MSWers who sell sex online is needed to develop models of support that respond to their needs.

There is limited understanding of the experience of Black MSWers in the UK. Hester et al.'s (2019) study concluded that only 7% of MSWers in England and Wales identified as Black, of which 40% were based in London. This is broadly in line with the ethnicity breakdown in England and Wales from the 2021 census (ONS, 2021). In my own study, one out of the four participants was Black with the other three being Caucasian. This makes Black MSWers a minority group among MSWers and these may have additional support needs as a result of their minority ethnic identity and culture. For instance, as a Black researcher, I felt that ethnicity and cultural sensitivity limited Cameron's ability to fully share his story. There was a sense that Cameron felt uncomfortable with me as another Black man and was keen to end the research

relationship. Further exploration of the experiences of Black MSWers will contribute to understanding this experience and how to support them.

Concluding statement

Recent studies of MSW show a more positive view of the subject and the men involved in it (Aggleton & Parker, 2015; Ellison, 2017; Ellison & Weitzer, 2016; McCabe, 2011; McPhail, Scott & Minichiello, 2015; Minichiello, Scott, & Cox, 2017). However, stigma remains an important concern for the men in this study, although they navigate it in more ways than has been identified in previous studies. Focusing on the everyday lives and lived experiences of MSWers who access support from TMR, this study has demonstrated the importance of relationships to people and places, fitting in and maintaining a strong sense of self, together with a model of support that offers them opportunities to participate in collective and cultural activities. Together these features enable the men in this study to feel recognised as fully human. The TMR model is an example of the value of a long-term, non-interventionist model of support which models care, and helps men to get by, as well as to pursue small and consistent changes which help them to confront the future with a realistic view of their options.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

My name is George and I am undertaking a research project as a student at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston. I am grateful that you are considering whether to be part of this project and hope that you will be able to be part of it.

What is the research about?

As you know, the Men's Room (TMR) supports men in Manchester. This research wants to understand how some of these men live every day and what they experience.

What are the reasons for taking part?

1. This research will help the Men's Room (TMR) to find new ways of working with men like you.
2. It will also help other men who will learn from your experiences and stories.
3. We are interested in your experience and often people enjoy sharing their stories.

What will we do?

If you agree to be part of the project, I will arrange to meet you at a place and time convenient to you. I will contact you by text message or phone. In our first meeting, we will agree on how we will do things. You will have the option to complete map(s) and walking interview(s) or only walking interview(s). You can choose up to six (6) locations or places which will help you talk about your experience as a male sex worker and what it means to you. You will then draw or make a map of the locations or places you have chosen to go. I will then contact you again by phone or text to agree days and times convenient for you to go to these places. We will talk as we walk to these places, and I will record these talks to help understand your story.

Do I have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part in this project.

It is up to you if you want to take part. No one should make you take part in it if you don't want to. Even if you don't take part, you can still go to the Men's Room and do everything that you now do with them.

You will have up to two weeks to decide if you want to take part.

If you choose to take part in the project, this is great. However, you can still change your mind about taking part at any time during the project till 31st March 2019. If you still change your mind after 31st March 2019, this can still be discussed.

Who will know what I've said in the research?

I will listen to the recordings to type them, so I will know what you have said. The original recordings and typed scripts will be stored on a password protected computer at the university. The typed scripts will also be kept in locked cabinets at the university and only people who have permission can see them.

Actual names will not be used in any report. However, the things we will talk about are personal to you, so someone who knows you very well and your story may be able to guess who you are if they read the actual notes of the complete interviews. This is why I will ensure that both the recordings and the typed scripts are well protected. They will be kept safe in the university's computer systems for five (5) years and everyone will need a password and permission to be able to look at them.

What will happen if I choose to take part

There are two parts of the project.

Part 1 – As described above, this will involve choosing the locations and mapmaking. We can have a chat about the maps afterward if you agree. You will decide if you want to keep the original map or not.

Part 2 – This will involve walking interview(s) of the location(s) and place(s) you choose. You will decide the order of the walks, the days and times and you can change these to suit you.

The sessions will be recorded using a Dictaphone the size of a mobile phone, and it will therefore not be very easy for someone to tell that our discussion is being recorded. Both the times and sessions will be chosen by you. I will listen to the recordings and other recordings which are part of the project and type them up. After these have been typed up, I will talk to you about your interview so that we can both agree that it is correct before it is used in any report.

Do I need permission from my parents?

As you are over 18, you do not need anyone's permission to take part in the project. However, it will be wise to talk to people you trust who may help you decide, before making up your mind about whether you want to take part in this project.

If you would like to take part, please tell Hayley at the Men's Room on 0161 834 1827/07582 243 701. Email: hayley@mroom.co.uk

If you are not happy with anything that happens during the research please contact the University Officer for Ethics (OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk) who is not part of the research team, and will handle your complaint.

**Thank you,
George Dake.**

January 2019.

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent Form

Male Sex workers in Manchester: everyday life, lived experience and marginalisation: 'Map-Making' and 'Walking Interviews'.

Please tick the box by each statement you agree with. I understand that:

- ☐ I have read the Participant Information Sheet dated January 2019 or had it read to me - and I have had the chance to ask questions.
- ☐ I have chosen to take part in this project. I understand that I can decide to stop at any time before 31st March 2019 and I don't have to say why.
- ☐ I agree that the maps I make will be used in this research and I will keep a copy if I want to.
- ☐ I agree that the interviews will be audio recorded and I give permission for this to be done.
- ☐ I don't have to answer any questions I don't want to and there are no right or wrong answers.
- ☐ If I say something that indicates that I or someone else is in danger, this cannot be kept confidential or secret. I agree that this has been explained to me.
- ☐ I agree that what I say can be used as part of a book, a report, an article online and, also in conferences, seminars and workshops. This can include direct quotes - words that I have said. If this happens, I can choose my own pseudonym (fake name) so that it will be difficult for people to know if it is me.
- ☐ The research has been fully explained to me and I can ask questions at any time.
- ☐ It has been explained to me that I don't need to take part in this project to still go to the Men's Room and even if I don't take

part, I can still go to the Men's Room and do everything that I now do with them.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Age:

Appendix C: Debriefing Sheet



Male Sex workers in Manchester: everyday life, lived experience and marginalisation.

Debriefing Sheet.

We have talked about some things today, which may mean that you may need to talk to other people about some of these things. It is important that you do not go away with things still on your mind that you need to talk about. I would want to be able to put you in touch with people who can support you now or in the future and we can do that now if you want us to. I have also put together a list of people who can help you with different things.

If you need immediate help, please contact the Police or the Ambulance Service on 999 from any phone. You can call this number even if you do not have credit.

Useful contacts

The Men's Room (TMR) 0161 834 1827 **Hayley** - 07582 243 701.

TMR works to empower marginalised young men in Manchester through creative engagement to take control of their own lives.

The UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UKNSWP) - 0161 629 9861

UKNSWP is a non-profit, voluntary association of agencies and individuals working with sex workers. Supporting sex work projects, networks and academics to work together, share practice and learning across the UK and advocate to policy makers.

Survivors Manchester (Survivors) - 0161 236 2182.

Survivors supports boys and men who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation. They offer various support including online, telephone and face to face support.

Addiction Dependency Solutions (ADS) – 0161 831 2400

ADS is a progressive 21st Century addiction charity. ADS runs a number of Drug, Alcohol and prescription Drug addiction services across the North and Midlands of England.

The LGBT Foundation (LGBT) - 0345 3 30 30 30.

LGBT supports LGBT people nationally. Their Manchester office is based at Richmond Street where they run various programmes.

Young People Support Foundation (YPSF) – 0161 228 7654

YPSF's aim is to help young people (up to 25 years) to find and maintain a home life that's safe and secure, with the means to support themselves, live healthily and be free from harm. They provide a wide range of services to support young people towards an independent life as an adult including practical support and advice for those at immediate risk of homelessness.

George House Trust (George House) - 0161 274 4499

George House supports people living with HIV across the North West of England. They offer a very wide range of services including one to one support, information, advice and advocacy, financial help and money advice, counselling, and a range of peer support services.

The Samaritans - 0161 236 8000.

The Samaritans is a national organisation that you can phone if you want to talk about anything that is troubling you. They are open 24 hours every day of the year.

42nd Street - 0161 228 1888 (office hours) and 0161 288 7321 (out of hours)

42nd Street is based in central Manchester and supports young people up to 25 years who are experiencing stress.

The Hathersage Integrated Contraception, Sexual Health & HIV Service - 0161 276 5200 or 0161 701 5081

Manchester Centre for Sexual Health (MCSH) and Palatine Contraception and Sexual Health Service (CASH) have now joined up as one service. It provides high quality, open access, walk-in Contraception and Sexual Health services to men and women of all ages across six sites in Manchester including FRESH, a specialized service for under 25 year-olds.

George Dake

gdake@uclan.ac.uk

Appendix D: IDAP

Protocol for Analysis of Walking Interviews

Interpretive Data Analysis Panels - Protocol for Data Analysis of Walking Interviews. Adapted from Hollway & Volmerg (2010)

Introduction to Panel (Facilitator).

PART 1 – INDIVIDUAL WORK

Go through the questions below and note down (in writing) your answers to each question. We will give ourselves five (5) minutes for each question. **Do not start on the next question until we have all agreed to start.**

1. What is said? (Note here the facts only as you read them. **Do not** attempt any interpretation, meaning-making, suggestions or conjectures).

2. How is it said? (Note here tone, mood, emphasis, repetition, manner etc. Again, **Do not** attempt any interpretation, meaning-making, suggestions or conjectures).

3. Why do you think it is said in this particular way? (This is where you can begin to delve into interpretation, meaning-making, suggestions).

PART 2 (GROUP WORK)

Each member of the group to read out their response and to respond to those of other members responses.

Collective responses are discussed, and notes made by facilitator.

Appendix E: IDAP Protocol for Analysis of Maps

Interpretive Data Analysis Panels - Protocol for Data Analysis of Maps. Adapted from Hollway & Volmerg (2010)

PART 1 (VISUAL - MAPS) – INDIVIDUAL WORK

1. Describe what you see in the map – please describe in as much detail as you can, the map you are presented with.

2. Note down how the map makes you feel – please avoid description or interpretation and stick with the feelings the map evokes in you.

3. Please write why you think this map might be important to the person who made it.

PART 2 (GROUP WORK)

Each member of the group to read out their response and to respond to those of other members responses.

Collective responses are discussed, and notes made by facilitator.

Appendix F: Ethical Approval



10th August 2016

Ali Roy/George Dake
School of Social Work, Care and Community University of Central Lancashire

Dear Ali/George,

Re: PSYSOC Ethics Committee Application Unique Reference Number: PSYSOC 295

The PSYSOC ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'Male Sex workers in Manchester: everyday life, lived experience and marginalisation'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date* or for 5 years from the date of this letter, whichever is the longer.

It is your responsibility to ensure that:

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee
- you notify roffice@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing

paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use [e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma](#)).

Yours sincerely,

Gayle Brewer
Vice-Chair
PSYSOC Ethics Committee

* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date

NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed, and necessary approvals as a result of gained.