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Romanians and Bulgarians in Male Street Sex Work in German Cities

A comparison between their perceptions of living conditions
in the countries of origin and in Germany
as an example for a broader European migratory pattern

Dissertation

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Abstract

This thesis explores migratory patterns of Bulgarian and Romanian men who travel from their countries of origin to Germany and earn money in male sex work. The social organizations for male street sex workers in five German cities encounter annually around 1300 Bulgarians and Romanians in male sex work scenes, the group accounts for 55% of their entire clients. Further sources indicate that this group of migrants can be found in other parts of Western Europe as well. Therefore, and due to the highly flexible traveling behavior of the men themselves, the examined pattern is not limited to Germany, but described as a broader European phenomenon.

On the basis of ten semi-structured interviews with Bulgarians and Romanians in two German cities, the author compares the men's perceptions of their living conditions in the countries of origin and in Germany to find out about basic motives and benefits concerning their migration. Three main motives to migrate appear: the escape from severe poverty, the search for 'a little bit big money' and the flight from a homophobic background.

The two economic reasons are of crucial relevance for the decision to leave the country. Seven of the men describe that their living conditions in the home countries were so poor that their physical existence was endangered. In addition to this, all ten migrants wish to achieve more than just the bare necessities of life which appears to be unattainable in Bulgaria and Romania. Indeed, in the descriptions of the men, sex work is considered to be the reliable opportunity to guarantee survival in the West. Yet, extraordinary profits from sex work are highly exceptional. The rare occasions which actually do take place just legitimate to continue the narrative of the big money one can earn in prostitution, but the regular income is portrayed to be much lower and additionally very inconstant.

Different from the rest, the self-identified gay men in the sample strive to relocate their center of life towards Germany to escape discrimination in their homelands. Their economic chances through sex work appear to be higher and all of them achieved a regular residence permit due to a legal partnership in Germany. Nevertheless, to reach that aim they have to hazard the consequences of new dependency from their German partners.

After a necessary discussion on the construction of Romani ethnicities, the large number of Roma among the interviewees are seen as an indicator that the social exclusion of the group is one of the essential roots of the poor living conditions in the home countries and therefore the trigger to migrate towards Western Europe.

To cope with the stigma of male sex work, the men, who originate from a homophobic socio-cultural background, develop several strategies. Sex work is strictly seen as the last choice among a very restricted range of worse possibilities. The motive of the big money one can earn in prostitution – although not proven to be a sustainable promise - is stressed to legitimate the continuation of sex work. A policy of silence concerning prostitution towards the men's orientation families and close social environments in the countries of origin is applied. Eventually, homosexuality is constructed along the performative model, which allows self-identified heterosexual men to work in male

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prostitution without considering themselves to be gay. Although these strategies are applied by all men, the psycho-social burdens nevertheless are high, and even lead to severe psycho-somatic symptoms.

Adding to the current discussion on trafficking, the study finds indicators that men are trafficked according to the legal sense of the term. The claim is raised that further attention has to be awarded towards men, who are largely neglected in the trafficking discourse. However, to avoid a biased presentation, individual circumstances have to be examined very cautiously to find out whether a man became a victim of trafficking or decided independently to search for a better life in Western Europe, even taking into account exploitative conditions in the migration process.

Finally, the author argues that two great demands become visible in the described phenomenon: the Western European need for sexual services and the demand for labor of many migrants which even leads to an acceptance of demeaning working conditions. Due to the stigma of male sex work, both demands stay securely veiled under the cover of silence and denial.

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht rumänische und bulgarische Männer, die ihre Heimatländer verlassen haben und in Deutschland Geld in der mann-männlichen Prostitution verdienen. Die Stricherorganisationen aus fünf deutschen Städten erreichen zurzeit jährlich etwa 1300 bulgarische und rumänische Klienten, damit macht die Gruppe 55% ihrer gesamten Klientel aus. Das untersuchte Migrationsmuster ist nicht auf Deutschland begrenzt. Quellen belegen eine hohe Zahl von Bulgaren und Rumänen in der mann-männlichen Prostitution auch in anderen westeuropäischen Städten. Aus diesem Grund, und wegen des höchst flexiblen Reiseverhaltens der untersuchten Männer, wird das erforschte Migrationsmuster als ein europäisches Phänomen vorgestellt.

Auf der Basis von zehn semi-strukturierten Interviews mit Rumänen und Bulgaren in zwei deutschen Städten vergleicht der Autor die erfahrenen Lebensbedingungen in den Herkunftsländern und in Deutschland, um so bedeutende Motive und den Nutzen der Migration zu ergründen. Drei Themen erscheinen als die zentralen Motive: Die Flucht vor großer Armut, die Suche nach ein 'bisschen großem Geld' und das Entkommen aus einer schwulenfeindlichen Umgebung.

Für die Entscheidung, das Heimatland zu verlassen, sind die beiden ökonomischen Motive besonders relevant. Sieben der befragten Männer geben an, dass sie aufgrund ihrer armen Lebensbedingungen in Rumänien und Bulgarien ihre physische Existenz bedroht sahen. Alle zehn Männer erhoffen sich von ihrer Suche nach Arbeit in Westeuropa, dass sie mehr Geld verdienen als das, was zur Existenzsicherung unerlässlich ist. Eine Hoffnung, die im Herkunftsland unerfüllbar erscheint. Alle Männer beschreiben Sexarbeit als die (einzige) verlässliche Option, um das Überleben in Westeuropa zu sichern. Hohe Einnahmen oder andere Chancen bieten sexuelle Dienstleistungen dagegen sehr selten. Ihr gelegentliches Auftauchen legitimiert lediglich, auch weiterhin vom großen Geld in der Prostitution zu erzählen, während die realen Einkünfte weit niedriger zu liegen und deutlich unregelmäßiger erzielt werden.

Im Unterschied zu den anderen Befragten, versuchen die selbst-identifizierten homosexuellen Männer, ihren Lebensmittelpunkt nach Deutschland zu verlegen und so der Diskriminierung in ihren Herkunftsländern zu entkommen. Ihre ökonomischen Chancen durch Sexarbeit sind größer, und alle haben ihren Aufenthaltsstatus in Deutschland durch eine eingetragene Lebenspartnerschaft legitimiert. Allerdings nehmen sie zum Erreichen ihres Ziels neue Abhängigkeiten von den deutschen Partnern in Kauf.

Nachdem die Schwierigkeiten bei der Konstruktion von ethnischer Zugehörigkeit von Roma erörtert wurden, belegen die in der Untersuchung gefundenen Hinweise, dass ein großer Teil der befragten Männer den Roma zugeordnet werden kann. Dieser Umstand wird als ein deutlicher Beleg dafür gewertet, dass die soziale Exklusion von Roma in den Herkunftsländern eine der Hauptursachen für die erlebte Armut und damit auch einen der bedeutendsten Gründe für die Migration darstellt.

Zusammenfassung

Um das Stigma der mann-männlichen Prostitution abzumildern entwickeln die befragten Männer verschiedene Coping-Strategien. Sexarbeit wird als die letzte Einkommensmöglichkeit vor einigen wenigen anderen, die sich durch größere Ausbeutung oder polizeiliche Verfolgung auszeichnen, dargestellt. Das Motiv vom großen Geld, das man in der Prostitution verdienen kann, wird aufrechterhalten, obwohl es in der Realität sein Versprechen nicht einlösen kann. Gegenüber der Herkunftsfamilie und dem engen sozialen Umfeld in Bulgarien und Rumänien schweigen die befragten Männer über ihre Tätigkeiten in der Prostitution. Schließlich erlaubt es das strikte, performative Verständnis von Homosexualität heterosexuellen Männern in der mann-männlichen Prostitution zu arbeiten, ohne sich selber als homosexuell zu begreifen.

In Bezug auf die aktuellen Menschenhandelsdiskurse findet die Untersuchung deutliche Hinweise darauf, dass auch Männer im gesetzlichen Sinne zum Zweck der sexuellen Ausbeutung gehandelt werden. Es wird die Forderung aufgestellt, dass Männer als Opfer von Menschenhandel deutlich mehr Aufmerksamkeit in der Diskussion erhalten müssen. Dabei muss eine voreingenommene Betrachtung vermieden werden. Alleine eine genaue Analyse der individuellen Umstände kann entscheiden, ob ein Mann gegen seinen Willen Opfer sexueller Ausbeutung geworden ist oder sich für bessere Lebensbedingungen in Westeuropa entschieden hat, auch wenn das für ihn bedeutet, dass er ausbeuterische Bedingungen während der Migration in Kauf genommen hat.

Schließlich argumentiert der Autor, dass das untersuchte Phänomen zwei unbequeme Bedürfnisse offen legt. Zum einen die große Nachfrage Westeuropas nach sexuellen Dienstleistungen und zum anderen die große Nachfrage nach Arbeit von vielen Menschen, die sich ein besseres Leben in Westeuropa erhoffen und die dafür auch ausbeuterische und entwürdigende Arbeitsbedingungen in Kauf nehmen. Das Stigma mann-männlicher Prostitution sorgt dafür, dass beide Bedürfnisse unter einem Mantel von gegenseitigem Schweigen und Verleugnung verborgen bleiben.

1. Introduction

In article 2 of the EC treaty the European Union states to aim at “*the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and economic and social cohesion and solidarity among the member states*”. From its onset, the EU has tried to achieve this aim primarily by the establishment of a common market, and the free movement of citizens has always been seen as the core element of the economically integrated “*people’s Europe*” (Geddes 2000. p.3&171). Since their accession in 2007, Romania and Bulgaria have become full members in this pursuit of growing economic wealth for all European citizens and a greater social cohesion among them.

This thesis examines young Romanian and Bulgarian men who make this quest of the European Union their personal matter. Although the free movement of workers inside the EU is largely exposed for Bulgarians and Romanians, they leave their homelands to search of jobs and a better life in the wealthier regions of the Union. Along with their facilitated traveling opportunities, they seek the niches in the labor markets of Western Europe and quickly encounter the great demand for sexual services in a largely unregulated market segment. Some of them decide to enter into male sex work, despite the cultural barriers and the stigma of which prostitution and homosexuality are burdened with.

The research presented here will introduce and analyze the migratory pattern of Romanian and Bulgarian men working in male sex work in Germany. It is based on qualitative interviews conducted with ten Bulgarians and Romanians who earn money with sex work in the cities of Hamburg and Berlin. It carries out a comparison between their perception of the living conditions in the countries of origin and the countries of destination. Therefore, it reveals the basic motivations and achievements of this migration, the role of the ethnicity of the men, investigates undertaken strategies to cope with the stigma of male prostitution and furthermore researches on forcing conditions in their migrating process,.

While employed by the social organization for male sex workers, *Looks*, in Cologne from 2004-2006, I personally experienced the hardships Romanians and Bulgarians are facing in their daily struggle for survival and which hopes and needs are leading to the continuation of male sex work. In fact, Romanians and Bulgarians are at present the biggest (migrant) group in German male street sex work scenes. In their annual statistics, the social organizations for male street sex workers in Germany currently count around 1300 different contacted Bulgarian and Romanian men each year and the group constitutes around 55% of their entire clients (2.5).

The high amount of Bulgarians and Romanians in male sex work scenes cannot only be found in Germany. According to international networks and what further literature suggests (2.5), they are widely spread among the EU-15 countries. Due to the similar legal conditions across the EU for these nationalities, they also try to make a living in cities like Amsterdam, Brussels, Rome, Paris and Madrid. Therefore, this research does not only look at a particular German phenomenon, but explores characteristics of a broader European migratory pattern. Additionally, the flexible traveling behavior of the group has to be taken into account in order to understand the transnational dimension of the phenomenon.

1. Introduction

While research on male sex workers is generally sparse, almost no studies have been carried out which focus on migrants in male sex work. The only exceptions found were conducted by Mai, Gaffrey & Price (2003) and Mai (2004). The first was commissioned by the former European Network of Male Prostitution (ENMP) and recommended for further studies to concentrate on specific countries of origin in order to analyze the effects of different social-cultural backgrounds and legal situations on migrants in male prostitution.

Such a limitation is undertaken in the present report. The choice of the two nationalities is, on the one hand, based on the large numbers of both Bulgarians and Romanian in the prostitution scenes, and on the other hand, due to a number of relevant similarities between both nationalities. First, based on European legislation concerning the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, the traveling regulations for both nationalities when going to EU-15 have been widely the same. Second, the economic conditions in both countries, although slightly different when compared, are distinctively poorer than in all other EU member states. Third, although not to the same extent, both countries have been similarly affected by several historical developments and cultural influences (the Ottoman and Austrian Empire, the Soviet Block and the recent democratic transformation). Last but not least, both countries contain big minorities, particularly a large number of Roma, who are widely excluded from many areas of public life and consequently more likely to migrate (Castle-Kaněrová 2001 and further argumentation in 2.6).

Chapter 2 will introduce to current research of relevance, starting with an overview of definitions, characteristics and basic discourses regarding (male) sex work. The following subchapters 2.3 and 2.4 give an introduction to the internationalization of sex work and the trafficking discourse. 2.5 will outline what is known about the size and spread of the here examined migratory pattern. The final theoretical chapter 2.6 will bring up the connection to the exclusion of Roma in Bulgaria and Romania, particularly by presenting insights about areas and size of the experienced discrimination.

Chapter 3 displays the research design, by introducing basic considerations concerning the applied methodology, the concrete realization of conducting interviews with a hard-to-reach group and the undertaken steps to analyze the collected material.

Chapter 4 contains the results of the undertaken qualitative research on ten men in male street sex work in Germany. By comparing the men's perception of living conditions in their homelands and Germany, it will investigate basic motivations, benefits and undertaken strategies to work in a largely stigmatized labor segment.

Eventually, chapter 5 draws conclusions and gives recommendations for social practitioners, political actors and further research.

In the appendix, additional material is contained: A list of the abbreviations used (p.64), the quotations in the German original (p.67), the applied questionnaire (p.75) the bibliography (p.78) and a list of relevant addresses (p.91).

2. Literature review

2.1 Choice of literature

The literature review is based on English and German literature and research on male sex work, migrants working in prostitution, the trafficking discourse and the situation of minorities, particularly Roma, in Bulgaria and Romania. This study does not pretend to give a full overview about all research conducted, but will introduce the most important results and lines of discussion.

Compared to the research undertaken on female sex work, scientific interest in male prostitutes is - as Wright points out (2001, p.7) - retarded. Especially when regarding migrants in male prostitution this analysis is certainly true. Besides two studies carried out by Mai (Mai 2004; Mai, Gaffrey & Price 2003) no literature could be found focusing on this particular group. Instead a wide range of literature covers migrant women in prostitution (2.4). The particular interest in trafficking of women is not only due to the size of the phenomenon, but also arises from a central feminism discourse on the general character of sex work. Since the literature on male migrant sex workers is little, results on female migrants in prostitution will be introduced here and correlated to the examined topic.

Similar observations can be done on scientific sources about ethnic Roma working in prostitution. Due to serious ethical concerns and the severe difficulties of constructing ethnicities, the experiences of practitioners in the field (Kiss 2007a, Sub/Way 2007a, AKSD 2004) and the scientific discussions are far apart from each other. One of the exceptions here is the work of Geisler (2003, 2004) who is currently carrying out further research on the topic.

Due to the limited space of this research, other important analysis - for instance results from migration studies or critical evaluations of European migration policy - will not be introduced here. It will be a task for further discussion to include results from these scientific fields.

2.2 Male sex work

Most scientists and practitioners refer to sex work as the exchange of sexual services for money or other material benefits (Outshoorn 2005, p.141; AKSD 2003, p.139; Wright 2001, p.7; Gusy et al. 1994, p.1088). Therefore, male sex work is seen as the offering of sexual services by men and boys, whose services are mostly bought by male costumers (AKSD 2003; Mai, Gaffney & Price 2003). Additionally, as Fink and Werner (2005, pp. 15-28) point out, immaterial goods can be of importance as a reward for sexual services. Different authors construct sex work within the market mechanism (e.g. O'Connell Davidson 2006; Siegmund 2006; Fink & Werner, pp.26-28) to emphasize that the offering of sexual services is a reaction to an economic demand. The usage of the term *sex work* is sometimes perceived as part of a discourse in which prostitution is understood more as a positive choice instead of a forced occupation (Outshoorn 2005, p.145). In contrast, the term *prostitution* is applied by authors among all spectrums of the discourses to paid sexual services.

According to the broad approach in the above mentioned definition, many different men are engaged in male sex work and can for that reason be called sex workers. This diverse group can be differentiated by various characteristics like places of work, achieved income, age and years spent in sex work, drug use etc. (Fink & Werner 2005; Wright 2003, 2001; West & deVilliers 1992).

The most important distinction research made in the last decades is undertaken between the group of street based sex workers (*street sex workers* or simply *street worker*), who are characterized by a lack of identification with the job and mostly engaged in sex work as a temporary strategy of survival, and more professional *escorts* mostly working in indoor venues, who understand themselves as being more self-determined when offering sexual services (Koken et al. 2005, Bochow 2003, West & de Villiers 1992). While Anglo-American literature focuses mostly on, and differentiates sex work according to attributes like the place of work, German literature distinguishes from a socio-economic and socio-cultural angle. In this study the term street sex work will be used synonymously with the German *Notlagenprostitution*, both regarding a fraction of sex work where prostitution is seen as a strategy for survival. Because of this crucial accordance, the term male street sex worker is applied to describe the here studied group, although in Germany male survival prostitution does not only take place outdoors, but in indoor locations like bars and sex cinemas, too.

According to the results of analysis and research carried out by Wright (2003, 2001), Bochow (2003, 2000), West & deVilliers (1992) and Schickedanz (1979), male street sex workers are more likely to come from broken or rejecting families, have spent - more often - years in children's homes, have experienced little school and vocational education and are therefore less trained for regular employment compared to average men. In addition, they sometimes suffer from severe (sexual) traumata and are more likely to misuse drug. Compared to professional escorts, a gay self-identification can less often be found. These characteristics have influence on the sexual services the men offer. In contrast to professional escorts, street sex workers are less identifying with the job, make less distinction between private and professional life and accept more often other payments than just money. While escorts are more often future oriented and able to prepare themselves for quitting sex work, street sex workers engage in sexual

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services as a strategy for daily survival. Nevertheless, any categorization or generalization of male sex workers has to be undertaken very carefully, since the distinctions often remain vague or are unsuitable in individual cases.

Most scientists and practitioners still describe sex work as a stigmatized job, largely devaluated by big parts of society (e.g. AKSD 2003). Sex work can be regarded as the rejection of the ideal of romantic love, as commercialization of a profound private emotion or as a danger for societal and individual health or safety - to name just a few of the claims (Nick 2003; Ericsson 1980; Hemyunge 1967). Male sex work, as it signifies sex between men, additionally has to deal with the stigma that homosexuality still harbors today. Thus, it is considered by some to be stigmatized twice (Fink & Werner 2005; AKSD 2003).

However male sex workers describe their sexual orientation themselves, homosexuality is nowadays one of the key reference points for male prostitutes. Earlier forms of sexual contacts among men, of which some had a financial dimension, virtually eliminated during the 19th century in the West (Fink & Werner 2005, pp.29-47; Foucault 1989, p.62 et seq.; Kaye 1980) with the emergence of the concept of homosexuality as an identity formation with a specific sexual choice (Bochow 2007, p.329; Mai 2004 p.47). Subsequently, male prostitution became a category of its own and male sex workers had to find a position towards what was and sometimes still is perceived as homosexual prostitution.

Nevertheless, the exact understanding of homosexuality among male sex workers might differ within Europe. As Mai (2004) found out for the group of Albanian sex workers in Italy and Greece, their comprehension of homosexuality is orientated along the ancient Greek "*predominantly performative*" understanding of homosexuality (ibid., p.47). Albanian sex workers distinct clearly between the masculine, 'active' inserter and the 'passive' insertee, regarding the sexual identities respectively as heterosexual or homosexual. Therefore, they come in conflict with the confessional model of homosexuality which is now dominant in the countries they are working in. He argues that performative comprehensions of homosexuality are determinant for most Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Balkan societies. Similar analysis on the tension between the performative and confessional model of homosexuality was undertaken by Bochow (2003, 2007) on Turkish immigrants in Germany. The question how Bulgarian and Romanian men in male prostitution are affected by the conflict will be of importance for this research.

Most of the scientific and political debates do not regard men in prostitution, but point at female sex workers. The debate about paid sex is thereby determined by the dichotomy between *abolitionists* and *regulationists* (e.g. Allwood 2004; Matthews 2005; West 2000). While the former understand prostitution as an attack on the integrity and dignity of the human being, the latter attempt to limit certain undesired effects of prostitution (like the use of force or the spread of STIs) and regard sex work either as being a necessary evil (Corbin 1990) or a positive and rational choice (Erickson 1980). Nowadays, the abolitionist arguments are often linked to feminist discourses. From this point of view, paid sex means to fulfill male demands and reflects unequal social and economic power between the sexes (e.g. O'Neill 2001; Barry 1988). From this point of view, no sex worker, particularly no woman, would choose voluntarily for prostitution without any form of economic or social coercion (Barnhard 2006; Murray 2006, p.168). Therefore, Outshoorn (2005, p.146) describes the two poles in the discussion on prostitution as the

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“*sexual domination discourse*”, in which male power leads to exploitation of (mostly female) prostitutes, and the “*sex work discourse*”, in which sex work can be understood as a voluntary decision for a better life.

The different approaches towards sex work have a direct effect on applied politics. While France for instance applies a strict abolitionist policy (Allwood 2004, Tampep 2005), German law¹ is following a regulationist path, allowing and decriminalizing sex work as a regular occupation. The Bulgarian legislation texts consider prostitution as an act of criminality, while the sex workers themselves do not bare the responsibility for it and therefore do not get punished. The Romanian Criminal Law punishes prostitution with prison up to three years, but since it is very difficult to prove offences just few people are actually arrested. Nevertheless, repressive measures of authorities - especially by the police - are affecting prostitutes in both countries (TAMPEP 2002, p.101&303; Gille 2006).

¹ Gesetz zur Regelung der Rechtsverhältnisse der Prostituierten (ProstG)

2.3 Migrants in sex work

Under the influence of globalization, possible providers of sex work and their clients have become increasingly mobile and likely to cross borders. Currently, a big percentage of Western European sex workers are migrants, understood in this thesis as border-crossing migrants.

In 2004, *TAMPEP*² (2005, 2004) and its member organizations counted women of 50 different migrant nationalities working in prostitution, 38 more than ten years ago. According to *TAMPEP* (ibid.) up to 60-80% of the national sex business markets are foreign women. The biggest number of women come from CEE-countries, *TAMPEP* estimates about 50%.

In 1998 (Wright 2003), the German social organizations for male sex workers counted about 40% migrants among their clients, the biggest groups coming from Poland, Czech Republic and Romania. In 2007, the same German organizations counted twice as many migrants, with an average percentage among the clients of 81% (2.5). The group of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals is by far the most dominant among them.

Mai, Gaffney and Price in (2003) explored in a pilot study for the *ENMP*³ characteristics of male migrants in sex work scenes of France, the UK and Germany. Compared to non-migrant sex workers, the study found out that more migrants rely on sex work as the only occupation (48% to 72%), estimate sex work more often to be just temporary labor (52% compared to 38%), perceive themselves more often to be heterosexual (13% to 3%), and feel less positive about selling sex (56% to 70%). While 53% of non-migrants regarded sex work as choice, only 17% of migrants did the same. Due to the small and very specific sample of the research, the authors limited their quantitative ambitions and ask for further research in the field.

The development of the EU is contributing to the internationalization of sex work. Focusing on Bulgaria and Romania here, both countries became part of the EU's internal market with its enlargement in 2007. Nevertheless, severe barriers for the free movement of workers were set up, prohibiting Romanians and Bulgarians from being regularly employed in EU-15 (for critical evaluation on the EU's migration policy and the European citizenship concept: Mannitz 2006, Schneider 2005, Geddes 2000, p.101, Martiniello 1997, Rode 1997). However, the process of enlargement facilitates the opportunities for traveling, and Bulgarians and Romanians are currently able to enter EU-15 with a tourist visa. Some among them use the possibility to stay and earn illegally money in sex work (Sub/Way 2007, pp.6-8; TAMPEP 2002).

The legal dilemma of a large percentage of migrants working in prostitution refers to a phenomenon described in migration related sciences as the "*liberal paradox*" (Hollifield 2003). While interior political interest groups insist on a walling-off of national markets, economic developments and ideologies point towards a bigger opening of national

² European Network for HIV and STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Female Sex Workers

³ Former European Network of Male Prostitution (ENMP), which had to stop its activities after it received no further EU funding in 2003. Its structure has been partly transferred into the European network *Correlation*.

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economies. In this context illegal migration can be seen as a convenient solution for the nation state (Vogel 2003, p.161). Illegal immigrants search for the niches in national labor markets, which would thus not exist without the supply of illegal immigrants. A real forcing out of national citizens (and voters) does not take place in these segments of the labor market; however, economic demands are satisfied. Vogel (ibid., translation C.G.) concludes: *“Hence, an interest in tolerating illegal immigration – although a contested one – emerges.”*

Trafficking is the most dominant current discourse concerning migrants in sex work. Its focus on victimization and criminalization of migrant sex workers leads to what Agustín (2006) calls the *“disappearing of a migration category: migrants who sell sex”*. To take a look at the high percentage of migrants in sex work she is asking for a discovery of migrant sex workers as a subject for migration studies, *“allowing them to be studied as transnational migrants, as members of diasporas, as entrepreneurial women, as flexible workers and active agents participating in globalization”* (ibid., p. 43). Key aspects of the discourse will be shortly introduced in the following chapter.

2.4 The trafficking discourse

The current (inter)national legislation identifies trafficking along the lines of elements of direct force or coercion. In 2000, the UN agreed on the so called Palermo-Protocol on human trafficking and in 2002, the EU applied the same definitions in its Framework Decision on combating trafficking in human beings.

Table 1: Article 3 of the UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons (Palermo-Protocol)

- (a) *“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;*
- (b) *The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used*

Due to the clandestine nature of trafficking, no solid numbers about the size of trafficking can be given (UNODC 2006, p.45; Surtes 2005, p.417; Rodopoulos 2003). But those data which are available prove that Bulgarian and Romanian nationals are among the most often reported victims of human trafficking among all countries of origin (UNODC 2006, p.18; IOM 2005, p.418). Numbers in the IOM’s report about trafficking in persons in South-Eastern Europe give an impression of the shape and size of what has been identified.

Table 2: IOM assisted Bulgarian and Romanian victims of trafficking (according to the UN definition)

	2003	2004	Men in 2003	Men in 2004
Bulgarian Nationals	172	142		3
Romanian Nationals	194	193	4	7

*(All numbers in Surtes 2005. For Bulgaria pp.163-215; for Romania pp. 432-489
Sexual exploitation accounts to be the reason for 85-90% of the reported female cases, male victims were without exception trafficked for purposes of labor, begging or delinquency.)*

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In statistics of the German BKA⁴, Romanians and Bulgarians account for the most trafficking-cases in quantitative terms (along with Russian nationals), and are continuously the leading nationalities in terms of victims related to the population figure.

Table 3: Victims of trafficking according to German police investigation (§232 and 233 StGB)

	2003	2004	2005*
In total	1235	972	642
Romanian Nationals	143 (11.6%)	104 (10.7%)	118 (18.4%)
Bulgarian Nationals	128 (10.4%)	126 (13%)	62 (9.7%)

(In brackets: percentage of all cases.

All figures according to BKA 2006, 2005, 2004.

In 2003 the BKA counted 8 male victims, for the following years it stated that "almost all" victims were women.)

*Data basis was changed in 2005 from investigations in process towards completed investigations on trafficking. The decrease of numbers is partly regarded as an effect of that transformation.

The given figures do not distinguish between consensual and nonconsensual labor in sex business (Barnhard 2006). They follow the legal definition by the UN, which was intended to halt the argument about definitions of trafficking, but, however, did not serve this end. By leaving open what are e.g. concrete measures for "exploitation", the given definitions have remained conflictive (O'Connell Davidson 2006, p.9; Agustin 2005, p.42). An old question rose again: is sex work per se exploitation? And therefore, is all "prostitution-related migration" (Ousthoorn 2005, p.148) trafficking? (For further reading Agustín 2006; Ousthoorn 2005; Geisler 2004; Howe 2005; Thorbek 2002; Pattanaik 2002)

In recent years a tendency in scientific discussion can be observed. Migration into prostitution is less understood to be generally forced (O'Connell Davidson 2006; Murray 2006; Munk 2006, 2005; Howe 2004; Meaker 2002). Current qualitative research proves that just a small number of migrant women in sex business understand themselves as trafficking victims (Agustin 2006; Geisler 2004; Reunkaw 2002; Lisborg 2002). Geisler and Agustín (ibid., UNODC 2006, p.51) emphasize that migrant and trafficked women knew that their work would have a sexual aspect, maybe not knowing the extent or character of it. If there is a chance to escape sex work, not all women do so, but prefer stay in sex work due to differentials in pay or do return to it (O'Connell Davidson 2006, p.20). Generally, the distinction between forcing and non-forcing conditions has become vaguer.

Men as migrant sex workers play a marginal role in the whole debate (like transgender or transsexual migrants, or women as costumers of cross-border sexual services; Agustin 2005, p.30; Limanowska 2005, p.XIV; Philipps 2002). During the literature review, not a single document could be found which focuses on conditions of force when migrating into male sex work. The trafficking debate is furthered in "the intersection of sexism and racism" (Howe 2004, p.33, translation C.G.), where patriarchal structures are

⁴ Federal Criminal Police Office

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the dominating background for the discourse. In this context, male victims do not easily fit in. The data sets can be a proof of two conditions: either the male victim in fact does not exist, or he is not perceived as such. It will be an aim of this research to find out whether and if male sex workers experience force during their migratory process.

2.5 Romanians and Bulgarians in male street sex work in Germany and EU-15-countries

The following table gives an overview about Bulgarian and Romanian clients of social organizations working with male street sex workers in Germany. The numbers are based on the annual statistics of the organizations and on estimations of the employees (in interviews with the author).

Table 4: Romanian and Bulgarian clients of social organizations for male sex workers in Germany on the basis of the statistics and estimations of the organizations in 2006

	Bulgarian clients in absolute numbers	Romanian clients in absolute numbers	% of Romanian and Bulgarian clients	% of all migrants among clients	Complete annual number of clients
Sub/Way (Berlin)	200-250	300-400	52-57	80	1136
Basis (Hamburg*)	190	152	49	-	692
Looks (Cologne)	97	20	31	66	481
KISS (Frankfurt)	161	36	55	86	359
Marikas (Munich)	134	84	89	91	230

(On the basis of annual statistics from *KISS* in Frankfurt, *Looks* in Cologne and *Basis* in Hamburg, on the basis of statistics and estimations of employees of *Sub/Way* in Berlin, on the basis of estimations of employees of *Marikas* in Munich)

**Basis* introduced the distinction between different nationalities in their statistics in 2007. Therefore, the statistics for January-June 2007 are taken as the base for the Hamburg figure and doubled to approximate the numbers.

On average, Romanians and Bulgarians count for 55% of the clients of social organizations for male sex workers in Germany and are by far the biggest group among their migrant clients. Estimated that 20% of the clients are counted twice (due to their traveling behavior in two different German cities), the numbers of different clients from Bulgaria and Romania across Germany lay in between 704-749 Bulgarians and 592-627 Romanians. On this basis it can be estimated that currently at least around 1300 men from Romania and Bulgaria earn money in sex work annually in Germany. While the social organizations just reach a part of the German prostitution scene, real numbers are considered to be higher.

The *AKSD*⁵ reacted to the high percentage of migrants with the establishment of annual migration seminars in 2004 (*AKSD* 2004, 2005), in which experiences and approaches

⁵ Working Group of German Speaking Social Organizations for Male Street Sex Workers

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with migrant clients have been discussed and developed. Additionally, the organizations *Basis* (Basis, 2006) and *Looks* (Gille, 2006) undertook fact-finding tours to Romania and Bulgaria to establish international networks and get a deeper insight into the socio-cultural backgrounds of their clients.

Due to their experiences, member organizations of the *AKSD* estimate that most Bulgarian and Romanian men in sex work belong to the group of ethnic Roma (Sub/Way 2007a, p.6; Hagele 2006; AKSD 2004, 2005), but do not necessarily identify themselves as such (KISS 2007a, p.6). The fear of discrimination is mentioned for veiling a possible ethnic Romani origin. For the Bulgarian clients *AKSD* member organizations approximated in 2006 a percentage of 90-95% Turkish speaking proportion among them (Fardella & Gille 2006).

Since the legal conditions for Bulgarians and Romanians are the same across EU-15, indicators for a high percentage of both nationalities in prostitution can be found across Western Europe. In 2006, the Dutch *Boys-Project* of *AMOC* in Amsterdam estimated they had met about 150 men from Romania. Since *AMOC* only works with migrants, the group accounts for an estimated 85% of their clients. The Belgium organization *Adzon* in Brussels counted 73 clients from Eastern Europe in 2003, an estimated 60% of them Turkish speaking Bulgarians. The group accounts for 29% of their annual clients. Even in countries further away from SEE the phenomenon is known. The LGBT organization *Proghomtrans* in Madrid estimates Bulgarians and Romanians to account for 50% of the street sex work scene in the Spanish capital. All of these organizations emphasize that no other nationalities from Eastern Europe are accounting for a similar stabile and large portion of male sex workers over the last years (all numbers or estimations on the basis of annual statistics in interview with the author).

Additionally, little literature gives references on the topic. A study by *Terre des Hommes* (CDS & FRCCF 2005) was carried out in Rome to research on an increase in prostitution among Romanian minors in the Italian capital. Romanians became the biggest group among reported unaccompanied minors (around 50% in 2003 and 2004) after Romanian citizens no longer needed a visa for Italy. It is one of the few sources which explicitly mentions boys working in prostitution (ibid. p.18), additionally stating that this is a “*completely ignored*” topic in Romania (ibid. p.6). The report from Terrio (2004) deals with the legal treatment of unaccompanied minors from Romania in Paris. She states that in recent years most of the 80% Eastern European minors apprehended by the Paris police are from Romania. A few times she mentions that these minors – including the boys - are engaged in what she calls “*occasional prostitution*” (ibid. p.7).

The reports raise the question why Romanians and Bulgarians are largely represented in the male sex work scenes across Europe and particularly in Germany. The next chapter shall help to get some indications.

2.6 Ethnic minorities from Romania and Bulgaria

Besides the statements of the AKSD, some other sources contextualize the migration into sex work with the exclusion of ethnic minorities in the countries of origin. In particular, the trafficking discourse delivers some evidence. 82% of Bulgarian trafficking victims for labor, begging and delinquency, and 43% of the Bulgarian victims for sexual exploitation, who the IOM assisted in 2004, were counted as ethnic minorities (Surtees 2005, p.164). In Romania, ethnicity is not systematically recorded by the IOM, therefore the organization just estimates that “members of Roma ethnic minority are highly represented among Romanian” assisted trafficking victims (ibid, p.433). Limankowa, in her study for the UNDP (2005, pp.64-65), finds increasing hints that trafficking is conducted by and within Roma communities, but also adds that many of the sources have an anecdotal character rather than one based on concrete facts. Geisler (2005, pp.125-126) shows that Romani women are overrepresented as victims of trafficking and concludes them to be one of the central risk groups due to their multiple problems of ethnic discrimination and exclusion (further discussion in Karoly 2005).

Generally, sources about prostitution related migration are reserved to drawing connections to specific ethnic backgrounds of migrants, especially in respect to the Roma. After all, scientists and practitioners face an ethical dilemma here: On the one hand, when constructing ethnic minorities in the context of sex work, one runs into the danger of contributing to the stigma of already discriminated groups, as in the case of Roma. On the other hand, by avoiding the ethnical background, it is possible to overlook or avoid the fact that existing discriminations cause the deeper root for the migration towards the West (further discussion in Bubasik 2004 and Farkas 2004).

Both countries, Bulgaria and Romania, enclose big minority ethnicities. Ethnicity, in this regard, pertains to common racial, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics. The concept implicates that a degree of continuity in an ethnic group can be found across historical time (Jackson-Preece 2005, p.136).

Such a historical continuity can be estimated for the Romani community (Hancock 2002, pp.70-79). Nevertheless, to speak about Roma only makes sense as a separation from non-Roma. Inside there is a great diversity of different groups, which includes differences of language and dialect, history, culture, religion and social class, educational and occupational status (for further reading on the history and diversity of Roma in Bulgaria and Romania: Achim 2004; Fosztó & Anăstăsoaie 2001; Marushiakova & Popov 2001a, 2001b; Guy 2001; Grevemeyer 1998; Marushiakova & Popov 1997; Rimmel 1993).

According to the last census data, 370 980 Roma were counted in Bulgaria and 535 250 in Romania (figures from 2001 and 2002, according to UNICEF 2007a, pp.16/17). While many Roma do not wish to be considered as such, real numbers are assumed to be much higher (e.g. UNICEF 2007a, pp.16/17; Marushiakova & Popov 2001a, p.34). On the basis of these estimations both countries contain in absolute numbers by far the largest population of Roma in Europe, and display (together with Slovakia) the highest percentage of Romani population (EC 2004, p.6; BIVS 2000, p.9).

Table 5: Estimated numbers of Roma in Bulgaria and Romania

	Total population	Roma population	% of Roma
Bulgaria	7 700 000	700 000-800 000	9.0-10.4
Romania	21 600 000	1 800 000-2 500 000	8.3-11.6

(Unicef 2007a, p.6)

Since Bulgaria belonged for almost five centuries to the Ottoman Empire, ethnic Turks account for the other important minority in the country. Up to 9,4% of the population are estimated to be of Turkish origin, while Pomaks (ethnic Bulgarian Muslims) and Muslim Roma sometimes also refer to themselves as being Turks. The group was targeted by threat and punishment during the Zhovkov regime between 1984-1989, were about 350000 left the country. After the change of regime in 1989, ethnic relations towards the Turks improved considerably. However, large emigration to Turkey is still common, this time the low standard of living in Bulgaria is motivating Bulgarian Turks to continue to migrate to Turkey (Warhola & Boteva 2003, Pekova 2002).

Yet, the distinction between both minorities, Turkish and Romani Bulgarians, is not easily done. The Turkish influenced large parts of the Roma community in Bulgaria. Especially Muslim Roma have been experiencing processes of identity change. According to Marushiakova & Popov (2001a, p.37; 2001b, p.371) most of them are bilingual (using both Turkish and Romani) and “*pretend to be Turks*” or entirely monolingual (speaking only Turkish) and “*prefer to introduce themselves as Turks or only as milliet*”.

The stigma of being Roma influences the self descriptions of Romanian Roma, too. Marushiakova & Popov (2001a, p.38) say about the Romanian meta-group of Vatrashi Roma: “*Most of this group speak only Romanian and many prefer to affirm a Romanian identity*”. Milcher et al. (2004, p.8) stated for the UNDP that “*Roma [in SEE, C.G.] often opt not to self-identify, for fear of discrimination*”.

When considering discrimination, the difference between *hetero-representation* and *auto-representation* (Fosztó & Anăstăsoaie 2001, p.353) might not be of importance. According to Preece (2005, p.93), “*race is primarily about the way other people see us and not necessarily the way we see ourselves*”. In this sense, Roma have been always differentiated from the surrounding population by an associated appearance, language and cultural behavior (Guy 2001, pp.6-7; Hancock 2002, pp.56-58). Regarding the ethnicity of Romanians and Bulgarians in male sex work, it will therefore be important to find indicators for both, the hetero- and the auto-representation.

In accordance with long historic roots, Roma are grossly over-represented among the poorest and most excluded people in Bulgaria and Romania, as well as across whole Europe⁶. A range of scientific data gives strong evidence on the severe exclusion the

⁶ It shall be explicitly mentioned here, that social exclusion is not a Bulgarian or Romanian issue alone. Roma face discrimination all across Europe, particularly in German history Roma were repeatedly victims of racial prosecution. In the genocide of Roma during WWII at least 15 000 from an estimated 20 000-25 000 German Roma and Sinti were killed. All over Europe about 500 000 Roma were killed by German or cooperating country's policies. That the situation of Roma in Germany is still shaped by severe exclusion can be seen in a current research of UNICEF (2007b). For more information about Roma in Germany see Giere 1996, Leidgeb & Horn 1994, BMJFG 1982, Zülch 1979.

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group faces. Although big efforts are undertaken to improve the situation, exclusion from education, employment, health, housing and public administration are among the most pressing issues, poverty and experiences of violence being the further consequences of discrimination. Due to the space restriction, this study will introduce just limited results from the fields of education, poverty and housing in Romania and Bulgaria. Further data can be found particularly in UNICEF 2007a, ERRC 2007c, OSI 2007; Schüler 2005, EC 2004 and Zoon 2001.

- Education

Romani children attend school far less and for a shorter time. Only very few Romani children attend secondary school in both countries. Additionally, Romani children often get taught in segregated schools with substandard levels (OSI 2007, pp.5-14 and 25-37, UNICEF 2007a, p.53)

Table 6: Enrolment gap of Roma compared to non-Roma in age groups

Age	Bulgarian Roma	Romanian Roma
7-10	12.2%	6.7%
11-15	28.7%	26%

(UNDP data, according to UNICEF 2007a, pp.50-58)

Table 7: Percentage of Roma and non-Roma visiting education-institutions

Age	Bulg non-Roma	Bulg. Roma	Rom. non-Roma	Rom. Roma
(before 6)	76%	16%	76%	17%
16-19	81%	12.2%	68%	17%
20+		1%		1%

(UNDP data, according to UNICEF 2007a, pp.50-58)

- Poverty

Partly as a result of high unemployment rates (ERRC 2007, p.15; ERRC 2007c, p.23-24), the general economic situation of Roma falls harshly behind the average. According to the National Statistical Institute in Bulgaria, the poverty rate was 6.7 times greater for Roma than for Non-Roma in 2003, and Roma poverty was far considerably larger (according to UNICEF 2007a, p.20-22). A research done by the UNDP identified the poverty rates among Roma and Non-Roma living in the same neighborhoods. In table 7, results of this study are presented.

Table 8: Roma / non-Roma poverty in % of population living in the same locality

	Roma	Non-Roma
Bulgaria	46%	5%
Romania	66%	25%

(To be poor is defined as having less than 4,3\$ per day in the study. UNDP 2006, quoted in UNICEF 2007a, p.21).

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- Housing

Segregated housing is proved to be a reality for many of the Roma living in Romania and Bulgaria. About one third (29%) of Romanian Roma are estimated to live in compact homogenous communities. In Bulgaria, ghetto-like Roma neighborhoods (called mahalas) are widespread in both urban and rural areas. More than 500 of such settlements are identified, with an unknown percentage of Roma living there (all data UNICEF 2007, pp.27-30). Table 8 will give an impression on other elements of housing conditions:

Table 9: Housing conditions for Roma and non-Roma in Bulgaria and Romania

	qm ² living space per household member	Household with access to water	Household with access to electricity
Bulg. Roma	15	50%	95%
Bulg. Non-Roma	34	-	-
Rom. Roma	14	30%	88%
Rom. non-Roma	32	-	-

(all data in UNICEF 2007a, pp.27-30)

Partly seen as a result of the century old persecution, Roma have preserved distinct ways of life to maintain their identity against forces of cultural assimilation (EC 2004, p.12; Hancock 2002, pp.59-62; Acton et al. 1997, p.169). Strong and conservative patriarchal norms are historically seen as party of it (Rasidova 2005; Kelly et al. 2004 p.233; Kabakchieva et al. 2002, p.185). Current research by Kelly et al. (2004) shows that sexual freedom for Romani men are still widely accepted cultural norms for Bulgarian Roma. The same study finds that most Romani men disapprove homosexuality, do regard same sex behavior as “*not real sex*” (ibid. p.238) and do not acknowledge personal engaging in homosexual activities. The research by Kabakchieva (2002) on HIV/STI risk behavior among 324 Roma men in Bulgaria found different results. 27% of the sample reported having sex with other men during their lifetimes and 10% had same-sex anal intercourse partners in the past three months. Although prostitution according to common Romani cultural norms is strictly perceived to be immoral (Hancock 2002, p.103), the same study found that 16% of the men reported they had been selling sex earlier. Even if these numbers give evidence that sexual intercourses among men take place, a study in Romania spotted that 79% of Romani respondents stated they “*do not accept*” homosexuality (as quoted in UNDP Bucharest 2003, p.25).

Insofar as the in this study interviewed men consider themselves to be Roma, their approach towards having sex with men will be subject of the qualitative research.

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3.1 Basic considerations

Four considerations are crucial for the research design of this study: First, since almost no studies were undertaken in the field of migrants working in male sex work, and none about the specific group of Romanians and Bulgarians, this research has a largely explorative character (Robson 2005, p.59; Friedrichs 1990, p.226). Approaches towards the topic as well as the methodology were mainly developed on the basis of my own experiences while working for the social organization *Looks* (Fardella & Gille 2006; Gille 2005), and on the knowledge of the working group of social organizations for male street sex workers *AKSD* (Hagele 2006; Fink & Werner 2005; AKSD 2004, 2005).

Second, Bulgarians and Romanians in male sex work are a hard to reach group for scientific studies. The men work in a field which is fundamentally stigmatized, and their origin from patriarchal societies intensifies their fear of devaluation because of their occupation (compare 2.2 and 2.6; Fink & Werner 2005, pp.273-276). Additionally, due to their legal status as irregular migrants and the lack of work permits, the men are not allowed to offer sexual services and are therefore afraid of police persecution. Consequently, Romanians and Bulgarians try to hide their work in prostitution in order to protect their auto- and hetero-perception from devaluation and prevent legal persecution. One of the biggest challenges of this research was to find access to the focus group in the first place. As for social work with male prostitutes (AKSD 2003), the outreaching character and the importance of ascertaining trust were vital fundamentals for an appropriate methodology to contact the group.

Third, the migratory pattern is examined on a qualitative basis. This approach serves the aim not only to understand what is observable, but also to comprehend what their migratory behavior means to the focus group itself (Grix 2004, pp.84-87; Robson 2002, pp.29-55; May 2001, pp.15-16). For this critical view on reality, the men's particular socio-cultural apprehensions have to be regarded, as, for instance, for the economic situations and for morals concerning prostitution. For some of the issues examined, like Romani ethnicity and homosexuality, the analyses of the men's underlying ideas of certain categories are of special relevance (Robson 2005, pp.22-26). The collected qualitative data tries to ensure that the men display their own interpretation of their structural context. Consequently, the research emphasizes the perception of the examined focus group.

Additionally, the qualitative approach particularly accounts for the explorative character of this study. The hypothesis gained from literature review and practical experiences could be examined and validated, and new contexts and topics for further research acquired (Friedrichs 1990, S.226 ff.). By doing so, the method is open to both, deductive and inductive cognitions (McNeill & Chapman 2005, pp.69-71; Grix 2004, pp.113-114). It could be the task of further research to achieve results on a quantitative base. Though, as the men experience the stigma of male sex work themselves, it is unlikely that research with a statistically representative group will be achieved in the near future

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(compare the discussion about representative results when researching on homosexual men: Bochow 2001, p.35; Biechele, 1996; Berger 1996, p.2).

Fourth, the study was designed in a comparative way (Jacobson 2006; Wallimann 2005, pp.114-115; Grix 2004, pp.53-55). Bulgarian and Romanian men working in prostitution in Germany experience different societies and their living conditions within them. The benefits and disadvantages of their migration, as well as their understanding and valuing of different issues like prostitution or homosexuality is grounded on the perception of both living situations. In comparing them, the men's basic motivations, explanations and strategies concerning their migratory behavior and work in prostitution can be examined.

3.2 Central question, aims and hypothesis of the research

The central question of the research is: How do men from Bulgaria and Romania who work in male prostitution in Germany experience their living conditions in their country of origin and in Germany, in comparison?

By researching this question, the study's objects are to explore and document findings on basic motivations as well as on the essential effects of the men's migration. The focus group's own valuing of their migratory behavior and their stigma-management while working in male prostitution are of special interest, when comparing their perceptions of living conditions in the different countries.

According to current scientific and political discussions, three topics within their experiences and perceptions are of special interest. First, the research intends to find data on the focus group's perception of their ethnic belonging (2.5, 2.6). Second, the research aims to find out about experienced force factors within their migration process (2.4). Third, it endeavors to learn about the values and mechanisms that the men display considering working in male sex work, coming perhaps from a homophobic cultural background themselves (2.2, 2.6).

Three central underlying hypotheses correspond with these research aims. First, a large number of Romanian and Bulgarian men working in male prostitution in German cities are ethnic Roma, who are trying to escape living conditions which are shaped by exclusion and poverty due to the discrimination of the group in their country of origin. Second, direct elements of force do not apply to the men during their migration process; instead, the socio-economic conditions initiate to migrate to EU-15. Third, the examined men do have a homophobic cultural background and therefore, the conducted work is perceived to be particularly encumbering.

These hypotheses modified in form and developed throughout the research process as will be seen in the analytical chapter 4.

3.3 How to get in touch with a hard-to-reach group: realization

Since Bulgarians and Romanians in male sex work are a difficult group to reach for scientific research, the methodology had to be designed in an outreaching way in order to get in contact with the target group at all. Additionally, necessary trust had to be established to be able to lead qualitative interviews. Thus, I asked the social organizations for male sex workers in Germany to introduce me to the group. This approach had two advantages. On the one hand, the organizations are in continuous contact with the sex work scenes. On the other, since the establishment of trust is the basis for their work (Jungs 2005; AKSD 2003), to be introduced by the organizations helped to advance the confidence towards me.

My first plan, to conduct interviews at my former workplace in Cologne, failed after a surprising personnel turnover of the cultural mediator there. Consequently, after contacting and discussing my research plan, the organizations *Basis* in Hamburg and *Sub/Way* in Berlin supported the study by inviting me to conduct interviews in their organizations.

The time frame for the development of the thesis allowed me two weeks to conduct the interviews. Consequently, I stayed for one week at *Basis* in Hamburg and for another one at *Sub/Way* in Berlin. I participated in the daily structures of the organization's drop-in centers for male prostitutes, which consisted, for instance, of taking part in the meals, playing table football or simply making conversation.

This approach enabled me to introduce myself to the current present Bulgarian and Romanian clients. Another advantage of my presence in the drop-in centers was the possibility to conduct interviews directly and on the spot. From personal experiences with researchers and journalists during my time at *Looks*, I regarded this as the most effective way to obtain requested interviews due to the very unstable lives of men working in prostitution.

With the support of the employees, I explained my research request openly to the Bulgarian and Romanian men to avoid increasing asymmetry which is inherent in any interview situation (Bourdieu et al. 1999, p.612). Some men were explicitly asked by the social workers to partake in the interviews, as they assumed them to be self-assured enough and have sufficient language skills to conduct an interview.

Since no cultural mediator worked at *Basis* during that time and I could not speak Bulgarian, Romanian or Turkish, the men had to know a little German, which limited the choice of men I could interview. After I started interviewing, I soon discovered that the interviews had an unexpected depth, even though the men spoke a very broken German (additionally, one interview was conducted in English). The interviewee's experiences and opinions became clear and moreover, were not influenced by the presence of a third person. The situation was different at *Sub/Way*, where a simultaneous translation by one of the employees was available and used for two interviews. Although interviews without the presence of an interpreter were my favored choice, these interviews were conducted since they give an insight into the thoughts of men who recently entered male prostitution in Germany and were therefore not able to speak German yet.

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Eventually, five interviews were conducted in Berlin and another five in Hamburg; these are enclosed in the analysis. This number accounts for an estimated third of Bulgarian and Romanian clients who I met in the drop-in centers and asked for an interview. The high number of refusals reflects the fear of disadvantages by talking openly about their lives in connection with prostitution work. While some of the men refused openly, others tried to avoid meeting me during my stay. Due to the accepting approach when working with male prostitutes (AKSD 2003, p.150; Fink & Werner 2005, p.213) and the enhanced quality of an interview with a motivated rather than pushed interviewee (May 2001, p.129), I did not try to convince those men who rejected my request, but accepted their decision.

The smaller number of Bulgarians in the sample (three out of ten) was not intended, but an outcome of the rapid change in the research location from Cologne to Hamburg due to different percentages of Romanian and Bulgarian clients in the different cities.

As Bochow argues for his research on homosexual men (2000a; 2001, p.35), it can be assumed that the sample reached here is more skilled and has a higher self-esteem concerning their biographies and their work than other Romanians and Bulgarians in male sex work. Their motivation to conduct an interview and (for the interviews in Hamburg) their knowledge of German distinguishes them from the rest of the group. This limitation has to be kept in mind when reading the analysis or trying to generalize the achieved results.

3.4 The development of the questionnaire and the conducting of the interviews

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way. The semi-structured questionnaire, on the one hand, offered the possibility of a widely individual commentary. On the other hand, the comparability of the interviews was secured and the design gave the possibility to achieve results in accordance with the aims of the research (Robson 2005, pp.270-280; May 2001, p.121).

The questionnaire (the whole template can be found in the appendix, p.111) was developed on the basis of the literature review, my personal experiences with the focus group and the goals of the research. Fundamental for the comparative character of the thesis were four key questions: What did or does the life of the men back in Bulgaria/Romania look like? How do they describe their migration processes? How do they perceive their living conditions in Germany? What do they think about their future?

With each of the four parts of the questionnaire there were further questions and topics of interest, when the interviewees raised one or another issue. An introductory part and a final question rounded the interviews up.

The developed questions did not only try to explore concrete living conditions but did additionally refer to theoretical concepts, which can also be found in the appendix. Due to the aims of the research, the questions aimed, among others, at the circumstances, motivations and benefits of the migratory process, as well as the men's valuing of male prostitution and the undertaken stigma management.

Basic considerations regarding the development of the questionnaire determined that the questions be short, open, non-directive, comprehensible and should enable the interviewees to respond in their own words and set own topics (Robson 2005, pp.273-277; Bamberger 2001; May 2001, pp.128-129; Krueger 1998, Bandler & Grindler 1981). The developed questionnaire allowed for considerable freedom in the sequencing of queries, for their exact wording and the attention given to the different topics. The guideline also facilitated the interviewer to ask questions along the language and topics which were introduced by the interviewees. Particularly the intimacy of some topics and the language skills of both, interviewer and interviewees, made it important to react individually and differently.

The general asymmetry and the mutual perception of interviewer and interviewee always set limits to the insights one can gain from an interview (Bourdieu et al. 1999, p.607-626). In this context in particular my age, my nationality, my race and my estimated sexual orientation might have had an influence on the interviewees' answers. A Bulgarian or Romanian man might have got different answers to questions on ethnic belonging. If the men had known my sexual orientation, that might have changed their way of answering questions about opinions on homosexuality. Beside one interviewee who identified himself as being gay, before the interview, no one knew about my own homosexuality and did not inquire about it during the interview.

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In response to the general asymmetry in an interview situation, effort was made to apply the method of a "*generic and genetic comprehension*" (ibid., p.613) towards the interviewee and to follow the individual with a high level of concentration in order to at least partly understand the interviewee's perception of his life. In order to establish this kind of "*intersubjective understanding*" (May 2001, p.127), techniques from active and methodological listening and different practices from non-directive and goal-focused counseling were applied during the interviews (Bamberger 2001; Maple 1998, Culley 1996; Rogers 1986). Additionally, exact inquiring (Bandler & Grinder 1981) was often applied. Especially when interviewees only spoke a little German, the interviews frequently adopted a more dialogical nature in order to get to know the exact meaning of the men's narratives.

3.5 Transcription and analysis of the interviews

The interviews were recorded on an MP3-player and afterwards transcribed. Since each transcription means “*a translation or even an interpretation*” (Bourdieu et al. 1999, p.621), the undertaken principles will be introduced in order to reveal the applied techniques. Though the usage of the German or English language was in most cases grammatically incorrect, the spoken language was written down word by word. To enhance the quality of the interview reproduction, additional punctuation was used to mark pauses and intonations. In order to make the text readable and comprehensible, certain confused words, verbal expletives or linguistic tics (like “ers” etc.) were deleted or explicitly marked as such (Bourdieu et al. 1999, pp.621-626; Fichte 1972).

For the analytical chapter 4 the German quotations were translated into English; the collection of the used original quotes used can be found in the annex (p.103). An effort was made to translate the quotations as close to the originals as possible. Therefore, grammatical and verbal mistakes were copied or translated as suitably as possible. This translation should help to get as closely as possible to the interviewee’s language.

The analysis of the interviews was processed in different steps. Firstly, the experiences and attitudes of the single interviewees were studied and specific relevant incidents, thoughts and feelings identified. Basic attitudes and characteristics of the individual perception were classified, e.g. the general satisfaction with their migratory decision.

Afterwards, a range of 26 categories concerning the men’s living situations in the country of origin and in Germany, their migrating process and their reflection on the future was developed. Some of the generated categories originated more from the theoretical insights and practical experiences (like the category concerning their ethnic identity), while others emerged from the reappearance and importance of the topic in the different interviews (like experiences concerning homosexuality in the country of origin). The categories were placed in a matrix, which gave an overview over converging and diverging perceptions and made it possible to interconnect between different categories (Jacobson 2006; Walliman 2005, pp.310-315).

Out of the comparison of the perception of the living situations in the country of origin and in Germany, the next step of data analysis was undertaken. Codes for different migration motives, ethnicities, coping strategies for working in male sex work in Germany and elements of force (4.2-4.5) were developed and ascribed to the men’s biographies (Walliman 2005, pp.311-315). For these codes both, deductive and inductive approaches were applied (ibid. pp.189-197; Grix 2004, pp.113-114). While outcomes on the ethnicity of the focus group were at the center of attention from the beginning of the research process, the importance of elements of force throughout the migration process emerged during the evaluation of the interviews. The results concerning the motives for migration and the coping strategies comprise elements of both, deductive and inductive elements, which arise from hypotheses as well as from the interviews themselves. Also, the categories themselves were built on the base of both, deductive findings and inductive observations. Since the developed categories were partly based on deductive approaches, the described way of proceeding would not be classed among the

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grounded theory analysis. However, the process of steady comparison and ongoing verification contains elements of it (Robson 2005, pp.493-497; Grix 2004, pp.111-113).

For further editing in the frame of this thesis, in particular research undertaken by Bochow (2000a, 2005) served as a role model. His method of integrating biographical life stages with central motives was applied in chapter 4.2, where biographies of selected men are attached to the central migration motives. Although the length of this work is limited by the criteria of the MACCESS course to 20.000 words, it was decided to provide many quotations from the interviews in the whole empirical chapter 4. This approach is chosen to enhance the introduction of the men's own understanding and explanations (Grix 2004, pp.84-87; Robson 2002, pp.29-55) and therefore give voice to a largely invisible group, instead of just speaking about them.

3.6 Ethical considerations

When researching on male prostitutes, ethical considerations play an important role throughout all stages of the process. In order not to increase the stigma or to do harm to the individuals researched on, the aims of the study, the way of approaching and the analysis of data have to be undertaken carefully and in keeping with a scientific interest (Walliman 2005, pp.340-369; Ryen 2004; Grix 2004, pp.142-148). Three examples will be given here.

To ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, names of persons and places were changed or excluded. The same applied to biographical information which became too detailed. These changes were especially undertaken when the interviewees were talking about clients, partners or family members.

No private contacts took place between the researcher and the interviewed men, before, during or after the research, especially none of a sexual nature. Additionally, the researcher did not provide any contacts to clients of sex workers or supply any other kind of advantage connected to sexual services (AKSD 2003, p.152).

In analyzing ethnic affiliation and sexual orientations the auto-representation of the men is introduced. In some relevant cases, a discussion of a possible different hetero-representations is undertaken. The considerations do not take place without the indication that these definitions are constructions of the outside world and not of the men themselves.

4. Analysis of the interviews

4.1 Introduction

This analysis bases on ten interviews with men who migrated from Bulgaria and Romania to Germany and were, or are, currently working in male prostitution in Germany. The interviews were conducted in May 2007 and lasted between 24 minutes and 1 hour 24 minutes, on average 51 minutes. Two of the interviews were conducted with a simultaneous interpretation from Romanian into German; one interview was carried out in English.

The different lengths of the interviews resulted from two aspects. First, the better the men's German or English language skills were, the longer the interviews lasted. Second and more relevant, the less comfortable the men felt about working in prostitution, the shorter the interviews were. Especially those men with a gay or bisexual self-identification, spoke more openly about their experiences, not only concerning sex work but on their overall living conditions, too.

A few introductory remarks shall be given on the general life situation of the consulted men. For all men, the family of origin is the basic social network in their home countries. Only marriage or the move abroad is a reason to get separated from the parent's or grandparent's place. Five of the men were, or are, currently married, while three have their own children. On average, the men attended school for 7.4 years; additionally, two men received a vocational training. Most of the interviewees started to travel to EU-15 after the facilitated visa regulations from 2002 on. The men did not in particular aim to go to Germany, but were heading to any of the EU-15 countries; most of the men were following a friend or relative who were already in Western Europe. In the last years, most of the men commuted regularly between their country of origin and EU-15 along the legal rules. Seven men have been traveling to other EU-15 countries, too. Whenever the men assessed that their living conditions in EU-15 had worsened, they searched for another place to continue making money.

The following table gives an overview about the interviewed men with a selection of relevant characteristics.

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Table 10: The 10 interviewees in the order of the dates of their first journey to one of the EU-15 countries

	Aleksij (AL)	Wassili (W)	Nicolaie (N)	Luca (L)	Ovidio (O)	Darius (D)	Georgi (G)	Florin (F)	Krasimir (K)	Abel (AB)
country of origin	Bulgaria	Romania	Romania	Romania	Romania	Romania	Bulgaria	Romania	Bulgaria	Romania
Age	22	15	19	26	22	26	36	27	28	24
first stay in EU-15	2006	2006	2005	2004	2003 (2007)*	2002	2002 (2004)*	2001	1998 (2003)*	1996
stays in other EU countries	-	-	Belgium, Netherlands	Italy	Italy, France	Belgium, Netherlands, France, Denmark	Spain, Austria, Italy, France, Switzerland Netherlands	Netherlands	Greece, Belgium, Netherlands	-
family status	married, one child	Single	Single	married	married twice, one child	married, two children	Legal partnership in Germany	married	legal partnership in Germany	legal partnership in Germany
Sexual orientation – self description	heterosexual	heterosexual	heterosexual	heterosexual	heterosexual	heterosexual	Gay	“bisexual” “70, 80% gay”	gay	“gay” (using the English term), “bisexual”
Ethnic belonging – self description	“You can call me Bulgarian, you can call me Turkish.”	“Romanian Gypsy”	“Romanian”	“orginal gypsy”, “Romanian Gypsy”	“normal Gypsy”	Romanian Gypsy	Bulgarian, “everybody is a mixture”	“normal Romanian Gypsy”	“Bulgarian”	“Romanian”

* in brackets: year of arrival in Germany when different from the year of their first journey to EU-15

4.2 Migration motives as the result of the comparison of perceived living conditions in the countries of origin and in Germany

When comparing the perception of living conditions of the men in the query, three main motives to migrate become visible: The *escape from severe poverty*, the *wish for "a little bit big money"* (Florin) and *the flight from a homophobic environment*.

The two economic motives bear a particular weight, for most of the interviewees they are the reasons for deciding to leave the country. Seven men are escaping severe poverty in the sense outlined below, i.e. the risk of a continued existence is the trigger to go abroad. All the ten men hope to find *"a little bit big money"* when migrating to Western Europe. The motive signifies different wishes of the single men, but is generally understood as the quest for goods which enrich life but are not necessary for survival. Partaking in cultural life and attaining ones own houses, are frequently mentioned wishes in this category.

The third motive applies to the self-identified homosexual or bisexual men in the sample and denotes the wish to live in an environment which is less straining and violent than the social surrounding they experienced in Romania and Bulgaria.

For some of the men just one motive might be crucial, for others all three are of importance. Additionally, the weight of the motives does shift over time. While at the beginning of the migration process one motive can dominate, others do emerge or can lose their importance.

The following subchapters will outline these main motives, and additionally illustrate them by chosen biographies to depict the basic considerations. These examples will display what is perceived as a key element in the men's choice to migrate. Nonetheless, every decision to migrate contains more dimensions and usually more than one motive. The introduction of individual life stories will help to understand the overlapping and the ambivalences. Whenever necessary, important experiences from other interviewees will be inserted to add to the understanding.

4.2.1 Escape from severe poverty

Severe poverty shapes the living conditions in Romania and Bulgaria for a large number of the interviewees. For some men poverty is a steady state, while others experience it occasionally. Severe poverty, according to the perception of the interviewees, signifies here the concrete threat that physical, basic needs like food or housing are in danger.

For some men, a supply of these basics is already critical, for others, a concrete danger is foreseeable at the time of migration. Luca, Florin and Wassili describe the living conditions of their orientation families as a steady struggle for survival. Aleksij and Krasimir – unemployed and without hope for a new job – found themselves in an acute financial crisis and unable to provide the daily basics, decided to go to Western Europe. Nicolaie experiences severe poverty as a concrete threat, he is worried what will happen if his grandmother dies as she is currently providing the only regular income for the whole family. Finally, Abel was sent away from his nine siblings by his parents for adoption in Germany in order to ease the family's financial situation.

For all these seven men even the necessities of life are perceived to be in danger, so the motive of escaping severe poverty plays a crucial role for their decision to migrate and to enter male sex work. In the following, Luca's biography will be introduced to depict this motive. The escape from severe poverty is the recurrent and primary theme in his interview, and even though it does not constitute the only motive, others remain secondary.

The example of Luca: *“The advantage is that we here cop some money every day.”*

Luca, aged 26 at the time of the interview, describes himself as having originated from a very poor background. He has continued his search for survival in Western Europe, thus, he already experienced it in his home country Romania. For him, survival signifies overcoming a concrete threat to maintain his physical existence. Regarding his economic situation in Romania, Luca states: „*And we have days when we don't have the money to buy bread*“.

Luca grew up with five siblings in a family of “*original Romanian Gypsies*”. he explicitly distinguishes his family from other, less assimilated Romani groups by stressing that during his life he has always been in contact with ethnic Romanians. This might contribute to his subsequent entering into male sex work. According to their strict morals, a more traditional Romani group would regard prostitution to be a greater taboo.

When Luca became 13 years old, he started working to supplement the family income. His leaving school so early is directly related to this: „*I attended school for six years and broke it off, because then I drove 300, 400 kilometers away from my village to make bricks*“. The described work is a traditional Romani occupation, undertaken by the Romani group of *Cărămizari/Cărămidari*, but does not require any formal job training.

4. Analysis of the interviews

Therefore, Luca's early departure from school can be regarded as the continuation of the circle of poverty and exclusion, his family has been living in.

Additionally, Luca worked in a range of different occupations as a day laborer in Romania, predominantly in agriculture. *"We cleared the weeds in the corn and wine fields and then, during the harvest, what the people needed help for, we did."* With this work he earned about 6€ a day, the scarcity of life essentials emerging once more: *"I earned exactly the amount of money that I had enough for eating"*.

Since the 90s he had always heard about people living as asylum seekers or irregular migrants in the EU-15. When traveling opportunities became easier, he considered going to the West himself for economic reasons: *"I heard, you can make some money here"*. He knew about three opportunities to earn money: Begging, stealing and male prostitution. Like almost all men in the sample, Luca knew about male sex work before he came to Western Europe: *"There are people who I do know well. We grew up together. And we don't have any secrets"*. Here, the ambiguity between the policy of silence (4.4.3) and the common knowledge of male sex work as an income option becomes visible.

He traveled to Germany for the first time in 2004 and describes how he entered sex work: *"The first time I came here for begging. At this time, my colleagues who were walking the streets told me: But we do hooking. And then I said: I will do it, too. And the first time that I got in contact with a punter, my skin, I got goose bumps. (...) But that was really terrible. I was shivering badly. Afterwards I was somehow on a swimming line. However, nothing afforded pleasure anymore, nothing in life. I just beard the money in my mind. No fun"*. The quote indicates which strain male sex work has had on him. The psycho-social burden of the stigma of prostitution had a direct effect on his health, the symptoms he describes even justify the assumption that he suffered from depression.

As a consequence, he has always tried to earn money in what he describes as *"normal work"*. When he first took up a different occupation, he got immediately caught by the police and deported to Bulgaria. He had 300€ with him which he had earned in Germany, and was able to live on it for a while.

Afterwards, Luca returned to the EU. So far, he has been commuting five times between Romania and the two countries Germany and Italy. He continues prostitution as the last income option, but improved his stigma management. He has brought his wife with him, and regards her as his *"support"* and *"help"* within the stressful conditions of an unregulated migrant's life. Additionally, he has progressed his consorting with customers. However, his view on prostitution remains loaded with devaluation, observable in the following dialogue concerning his wife:

C: And has your wife ever worked in prostitution here?

L: No, for heaven's sake! No. What do you think?

C: Well, it could be possible.

L: Yes, it could be possible. But at our place women don't do such a thing. With this, we are very strict.

C: What does that mean, at our place?

L: With us gypsies.

C: It does not belong to the culture.

L: No. We don't do such a thing. But we like to do pimping. We are allowed to do that.

C: What would happen if a wife would go hooking?

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L: We would then become very jealous. And we hit her. And then, we leave her.

C: But the rule doesn't apply to men?

L: No. It doesn't apply to men. And I am going with men, too."

His dominant position regarding sexuality, originating in his gender role, becomes visible. Although Luca is pointing at it, no indicators were found that he did pimping himself. Indicators for this were not found in any other interview either.

For Luca, sex work as an income option remains the last of a bad lot. During the time of the interview, Luca is earning money with selling newspapers for 20-30€ a day. As long as that is enough to survive on, he does not offer sexual services.

In Luca's opinion, borders are meaningless when one's life essentials are in danger. Therefore, he refuses to determine where he will live in the future. However, borders remain a threat for him as an irregular migrant. Both views are indicated in the following quote: *„In Romania, many Gypsies are well off. That I want to say. There are other Gypsies who are really wealthy. And there are other Gypsies who don't know what to do to find another place where they are better off. It doesn't play a role whether it would be in your country or somewhere else. (...) In Romania, you hardly earn any money if you are an unskilled worker. It is nice in Germany. It's a rich country, you can see that everywhere. But it is dangerous to live here“.*

When he compares his living situation in Romania and Germany, he comes to the conclusion: *“The advantage is that we here cop some money every day. And we can live on this money”.* His decision to go to the EU-15 can be regarded as the continued struggle for survival in an economically enhanced environment. For him, sex work is the last reliable income option among the very few alternatives, some of them even more dangerous due to police persecution.

4.2.2 The quest for a 'little bit big money'

The second motive applies to all the ten men in the sample. The interviewees pursue an income that allows the financing of more than the bare necessities. Or - as Florin describes - to „*have a little bit big money*”.

Compared to EU-15 standards, the wishes of the men are rather modest. This is why Florin's term a *little bit big money* seems so appropriate to signify the motive. For Darius, for example, a little bit big money implies affording a drink or an ice-cream in town, cigarettes or additional clothing. With his income in Bulgaria – around 150€ per month - he could just afford the most essentials of life, basically food, for him, his wife and his two children. The idea of being able to have enough money for some pleasure appeals also to Abel, Nicolaie and Ovidio, who mention they would like to afford to go on the town and have parties. Back in Romania, Nicolaie says, he doesn't have “*money just left, for fun*”. For Aleksij, this “*little bit of luxury*” consists of a car for 500€. “*Saving money, you take a car. That is super Bulgaria. You know, in Bulgaria you must work, one, two years and then you take a car for 500€. (...) Here: Working one, two months, taking a car, that works, doesn't it?*”

The wish to own a house in Bulgaria or Romania is of special relevance in this category. All interviewees mention this particular aim. In this regard, a house or flat should not be estimated with EU-15 prices. In Nicolaie's hometown, a flat would be affordable for around 16.000€. Moreover, this wish has a particular meaning within the described socio-economical backgrounds. First, an own house guarantees an independent life and creates privacy by enabling the men to move out of their parent's place. Second, on the background of poor living conditions, a house implies a stabilization of living conditions and serves as an economic guarantor.

The example of Ovidio: “*Here, I make 700€ each night. With hooking. I certainly won't slog a whole month for it.*”

Compared to the other men in the sample, Ovidio is in some regards exceptional. He has the richest background of all the men, with his father receiving a disability rent of around 350€. Additionally, he enjoyed one of the longest education among the interviewees with eight years of school attendance and a complete job training as a plasterer. He never suffered from severe poverty, and his decision to migrate has more the character of the search for a better life instead of a continued struggle for survival. Ovidio has by far the biggest expectations if it comes to the 'little bit of big money'. Nevertheless, Ovidio is chosen as an example to depict how, although the least dependent on it, he entered into sex work.

Ovidio, like Luca, grew up in a family of “*normal gypsies*” - referring to an assimilated part of Romani population - with two sisters and three brothers. When Ovidio left school, he started to work on construction sites in Romania. He first heard about the possibility to earn money in the EU-15 in 1998, when his brother went to Italy and earned 1500€ in

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agriculture there. Attracted by these prospects, Ovidio *“could hardly wait for leaving the country”*.

When he turned 18 in 2003, his first way led to Italy where he worked on construction sites. *“When I worked in Italy, I earned 18.000€ in nine months. And with this money I did two weddings. I celebrated weddings (one after the other in two years, C.G.)”*. He had to ransom his brides and describes that custom to be a Romani duty: *„I only do that so that the Gypsies can't laugh at me, so that I stand to the rules. That's an obligation, because then one sticks to the tradition.”* Obviously, Ovidio's needs are distinct from the pure achievements of life essentials. The money he earned consolidates his position inside his social community.

Ovidio left both wives and the child who originated from the second marriage and has continued to travel to Italy, France and Germany. From the beginning of his traveling, he knew about the option to earn money with male sex work. *„I always knew about it. In Italy, too. But in Italy, I did not want to do it. Because I had work. I went home at 9 o'clock at night, I did not have time for something like this. And I simply did not think about it.”*

As long as he had other income options, he did not offer sexual services himself. The situation, however, was different when he entered Germany for the first time. He could not find work and his survival seemed to be no longer assured: *“The first three days I was refusing to go hooking. Just on the fourth day, I went out on the streets. Because I had no money”*. Despite his wealthier background, Ovidio, too, enters sex work in a situation where it appears to be the only strategy of survival left.

Like Luca, entering male sex work caused physical symptoms for Ovidio. *„I prayed to the Lord that I'll survive that! Because I had the feeling that something's wrong with what I am doing. (...) Actually, I did not feel anything anymore. I just felt miserable.”* His attitude towards having sex with men is crucial for his reaction: *“It isn't normal to permanently have sex with men. God said: Here, I give the women to you”*.

Although he feels disgusted with his income option, its financial attraction causes its continuation. At the moment of the interview, he has been working just a couple of weeks in prostitution and it is noticeable, how impressed he is by the money he can currently earn. He estimates his income in good nights at up to 500-600€. While other men state that they do not earn more than 50€ for their sexual services, this amount of money has to be regarded as extraordinary. Ovidio currently experiences the economic success which many interviewees came to know at the very beginning of prostitution (4.4.2).

Ovidio's view on same sex intercourse is very strict. He disapproves of homosexuality several times during the interview, but there is a sense of ambiguity detectable. *“Once I'm away from this place, I will never do it again. (Ovidio falters) I saw a lot of people who became from contact with homosexuals homosexual themselves. (...) I know, if I continue like this – (Ovidio pauses). For me this thing goes another month, one and a half month. Then I have to stop it.”* Ovidio is afraid of himself becoming homosexual, if he continues to do male sex work. It seems possible that Ovidio senses an attraction when having sex with men. On this background, his statement *“Who, anyway, does have sex with men? We are doing that because we have to!”*, gets a different meaning. While Ovidio is in fact the man with the largest array of options to finance his life, his comment

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appears rather to legitimize working in the stigmatized field (4.4.1) than to prove the actual necessity to finance his survival.

However, Ovidio regards the decision to remain in sex work primarily as the result of weighing up the financial advantages of sex work and the available alternatives. *“Here, you earn 700€ in construction. I earn that in two weeks in Romania and I should slog a whole month for it, here? Here, I make 700 each night. With hooking. I certainly won’t slog a whole month for it. I came here to work. But there was nothing good and proper. What I found was very little money. And I do not work below my value.”* He chooses prostitution as the most lucrative option among a limited range of other opportunities. Different from other interviewees, Ovidio’s economic considerations point less in the direction of survival. With his migration to the West, he tries to fulfill a lifestyle which he describes the following: *“Having fun. Trips, holidays. To go to the mountains, go to the sea!”*

Eventually, Ovidio is a good example of the multidimensionality of a migratory decision and the reasons to enter sex work. Although the quest for a better life and some luxury is the basic motive for Ovidio, others appear besides this. He enters sex work during a period of hardship to finance his survival. Due to its financial advantages, he remains in prostitution while experiencing some sense of attraction to homosexuality might contribute to this decision. Ovidio – due to his higher level of education and wealthier background – has more options to pay for his living than the other men in the sample. He can be regarded as an example that good socio-economic conditions are the best prevention to save men from having to offer sexual services against their will. Ovidio’s entering into prostitution has more the character of a choice due to his currently better profits in sex work.

4.2.3 The flight from a homophobic environment

The third motive describes the flight from a homophobic and the search for a gay-friendly society. Apparently, this motive applies to those men who have a gay self-identification: Georgi, Krasimir and Abel. Additionally, a fourth man is affected. Florin, a married, bisexual man elaborates: *„Better for me: Germany for gays. There, in Romania, there are a lot of pretty guys. I can't approach immediately, do you understand? Here, if somebody looks at me and I am looking at him and he says: What do you want, I can tell him: I like you. But in Romania ...”*.

For the three self-identified homosexual men, the migratory process displays some characteristics, which are accordingly distinct from the rest of the group. First, all of them try to relocate their centre of living to Germany and do not want to return to Romania or Bulgaria. Second, they all have reached that aim by marrying a German man due to the Civil Partnership⁷ in Germany. In all three cases their partners are former customers and all interviewees accept partly strained dependencies to acquire the desired legal permit to stay in Germany. Third, their chances through male sex work - in an economic sense and beyond - appear to be higher than for the other men. All three have already bought a house in their home countries, which also increases their independence from their orientation families. Their homosexuality can be regarded as being crucial for their economic success. Although also effected by the stigma of sex work, it is easier for the gay men to cross the line towards having sex with men. Therefore, their achieved income in male sex work is more constant than in the other cases. Due to their partnerships, they achieve permits for a regulated stay in EU-15. Consequently, while the gay men are similarly affected by the other described motives, these men present an additional reason to leave their homelands and at the same time display more opportunities in the country of destination.

The example of Georgi: “Why did I not come earlier?”

At the time of the interview, Georgi is 36 years old and thus, the oldest man in the sample. His identification as a homosexual man was crucial for his decision to migrate. Georgi grew up in a family with one brother and defines his ethnicity as Bulgarian, stating that everybody in Bulgaria is an ethnical mix (4.3). With his family, Georgi speaks Turkish. He attended school for nine years and displays the longest period of school education among the interviewees. His father earns around 250€ a month and with his mother unemployed, Georgi describes the family resources as always having been scarce, but survival was assured.

While Georgi attended school, he was already aware of his homosexuality. For his social environment, he describes that his sexual orientation was an open secret: *“Who understands, understands (...) But who doesn't understand, okay, okay. Doesn't want*

⁷ The German Civil Partnership (“eingetragene Lebenspartnerschaft” due to the LPartG from 16 February 2001) allows same-sex couples to get a marriage-like status, which allows a foreign partner to get a legal stay and a work permission in Germany.

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then“. Relating to his homosexuality, he states that the first 21 years of his life were „*only stress*“. His father, who he describes as an alcoholic, left him no privacy and beat him up several times because of his suspected homosexuality. At the time of his military service, the suffering from discrimination reached its peak. In the first six months, he experienced daily offences from the other draftees because of his homosexuality. Consequently, he began losing weight until he went down to 42 kilo. He then took a decision:

„And then I appointed a date with the captain. I said: I have to talk to you. If you don't understand me, I will immediately go four floors up and when I'm up I will go kaput.

C: You will commit suicide?

G: Yes. He said: What's up? - I am afraid, all people say: You are gay, come and have sex with me. In a room with 20, 30 people and I'm right in between.”

His army chief took remedial action. Georgi started to work in the office and got a single room which saved him from further molestations.

When he left the army, he tried out various occupations, most of them self-employed. He continued to live at his parent's place, always in conflict with his father. Thus, the homophobic atmosphere was not only rampant in Georgi's family, but in wide realms of societies in both, Bulgaria and Romania, as all interviewees proved. Georgi: *„Bulgaria also has gays. But all gays live in fear. Fear of mother, father, brother or sister or brother-in-law or sister-in-law, the whole family.*” The fear of discrimination affected the entire everyday life of the gay men in the sample. They describe consistently that they were afraid to go to gay venues or meeting points and that they refused to display any kind of attraction towards men. The threat also contained a concrete physical dimension. Krasimir, for example, was beaten up several times because of his homosexuality.

In 2002, Georgi tried to overcome the concealment. *“When I was in Bulgaria I said (...) I have to talk to all. And then, everybody came, brother came, sister-in-law (...). And then, I prepares coffee, cookies, too, I said: I have to say that: I am gay. I am only having sex – I am active, passive, but I just want men. No women. Mother cried, father said: No. (...) I don't want to have gays in my home. I said: Okay, I know, it's hard for you, but it's hard for me, too. I want to do it like a normal man, too. But it's, I don't know, it's ill. He said: It's not ill, you want to do it. I said: Yes, I want to do it, but it's difficult for me. He said: Okay, take your bag. And I took it immediately. Mother cried and said: Why are you doing that to my son, it's normal. Not only my son is gay, in the whole world they have gay people. (...) He said: No. I don't accept it. I said: Okay, I won't stay in your house. (...) When you are dead, I will return home. He said: It doesn't matter. Out! (...) And my mother cried, cried, so so so. I said: I love you, mother; father, too, but now I won't have a father anymore.”* He left his family's place, fleeing first to Sofia and then taking the first bus to Western Europe, where he assumed the living conditions for homosexual men to be better. From the story of Georgi's coming out it becomes particularly visible, how stressful homosexuality is for one's self-perception and the perceptions by others.

Different from most other men in the sample, Georgi did not know anybody in Western Europe he could follow. He heard, however, about male prostitution as an income possibility several times in the Bulgarian gay scene. Indeed, for Georgi, this promise became true. He could make a living with the money he had earned in prostitution and could afford some additional goods, too. Furthermore, he has experienced the freedom of the gay scene in the big cities of Western Europe. In permanent strife with his family and his father in particular, Georgi has commuted several times to Bulgaria and traveled to almost all countries of the EU, with longer stays in Spain, Austria and Germany.

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Sex work has been Georgi's reliable income option, but whenever he had another opportunity, he opted for it. Among them were some exploitative jobs; one time he worked eight months for just his board and lodging. Also for Georgi, who describes himself as an experienced sex worker, prostitution remains the last income option from among worse and exploitative ones. His job opportunities increased when he met a costumer who asked him to marry him. With the partnership, Georgi got the legal possibility to search for what he perceives as a "good job", meaning any other occupation than sex work. Now, since he recently stopped doing prostitution, he describes sex work as "awful".

Georgi's wish for a peaceful life emerges repeatedly during the interview. He finally wants to settle down and live "without stress". He regards his legal partnership as a means to this end. For this goal, he accepts the consequences of dependency on his German partner, an experience he shares with the other homosexual men in the sample. His partner has a big influence on his private life, determining his social contacts, his place of living and his occupation. Additionally, he forbids sex work as an income option. Georgi accepts this rules, the advantages of the legal partnership weighing more. His ambivalent feelings towards his partner - affection on the one hand, but doubts about his powerful position on the other hand – are observable.

Georgi's flight from the homophobic environment does not constitute the only motive for his migration. Economic reasons contribute to it. However, the economic advantages have a secondary meaning. He emphasizes how much stress the life as an irregular migrant caused, like, for example, finding a flat, the psychosocial burden of prostitution and the difficulties to find non-exploitative employment. In this regard, his flight from a homophobic environment becomes the crucial aspect for his migration. He escaped from the psychosocial burden which his homosexuality meant to him in Bulgaria and arrived in Western Europe, where he has been surviving and earning money with male sex work. He has experienced greater freedom as a gay man and finally found a way to legalize his residence, hazarding the consequences of new dependency. Asked whether he thinks he wants to stay in Germany, Georgi replies: "I think it will be better until the end. Until I die here. (...) In Germany everything is better! It's better for gays".

4.3 Ethnicity as structural background for excluding socio-economic living conditions in the country of origin

As introduced in chapter 2.6, living conditions for the Romani population in Bulgaria and Romania are marked by severe exclusion and socio-economic disadvantages. Insofar German social practitioners in the field of male sex work describe their clients as being Roma, it is of special relevance for the exploratory character of this study to find indications for the ethnicity of the interviewees in order to explore the deeper roots behind migratory motives. Regarding the difficulties when constructing (stigmatized) ethnicities, both the auto- and the hetero-representation will be analyzed here.

Five of the Romanian men in the sample define themselves as Roma: Wassili, Luca, Ovidio, Darius and Florin. Repeatedly, these men emphasize that they belong to an assimilated part of the Roma population (to the “normal” or the “Romanian Gypsies”) – and prove that by speaking Romanian, having Romanian friends or living in Romanian neighborhoods. Additionally, some of the men draw a clear distinction line to other, less assimilated Romani groups. Wassili: *„So my language Zigeunisch is 60% Romanian. And we not have problems with Romanian. We live normal. I live only Romanian, normal. But other Zigeunisch, Caldera or something like that, they live a bit difficult.”*

The three Bulgarians in the sample describe themselves as being Turkish or ethnic mixtures. Krasimir gives the following self-definition: *“I am originally a Turk. Well, I am not a Turk, well, I am a Turk, but from Ottoman Empire we stood. And my father, my mother is Turk and my nationality is Turkey. I am born in Bulgaria and I was at school in Bulgaria.”* Aleksij’s family speaks Turkish, but with his wife and his child he is speaking Bulgarian. *„I don’t care at all. You can call me Bulgarian; you can call me Turkish.”* It is remarkable, how Georgi refuses to give any distinct classification of his ethnic belonging. *“I am from Bulgaria, but I don’t say I am Turkey or Turkish. I am Bulgarian! (...) Everything a mixture in Bulgaria. Everybody! Without normal Turks or others. That is not another republic. One Gypsy nation, one Turkish, everything is a mixture!”*

Although their self-definitions are closer to Bulgarian or Turkish ethnicity, the hetero-perception might look different, as all the three Bulgarians experienced. Aleksij was refused admittance to a public swimming pool and to discos, because he was told he was “black” - an adjective used in Bulgaria to describe Romani people. Questioned, whether Krasimir has experienced disadvantages from being a Turk in Bulgaria, he elaborates: *“Sometimes I do. Because some people in their mind they still have problems with Turkish people in Bulgaria. They simply say, they didn’t understand yet, that Gypsy people are completely different, Turkish people are completely different. (...) Gypsy language is completely different, you can’t understand at all Gypsy language. And Turk completely different. They come to us and say: Gypsy!”* To understand that deviating hetero-perception, Marushiakova’s and Popov’s statements on the group of Muslim Roma in Romania and Bulgaria (2.6) have to be taken into account. Partly in fear of discrimination, Roma in Bulgaria and Romania went through processes of identity change and describe themselves nowadays frequently as Turks. Whether or not the interviewed Bulgarians would genetically count to the Romani group plays no role in their exclusionary experiences, since racial discrimination is primarily enforced by the perception from the outer world.

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Additionally to the discussion on the ethnicity of the Bulgarian men, it can be questioned whether the auto-perception of the two self-identified ethnic Romanians (Nicolaie and Abel) would conform to the hetero-perceptions in their societies of origin. Abel grew up in a village where the mayor is Romani, which can be understood as a sign that he comes from a Roma settlement. Nicolaie describes the lifestyle of the inhabitants of his village as follows: *“My town is so small and the people always go away. Always! Spain, Netherlands, Turkey. Many people from my town make music. On the street or on the market or wherever. (...) And they send money to the family”*. Nicolaie plays accordion himself. It can be assumed that many people would perceive the described lifestyle as typical Romani.

Eventually, while five interviewees have a Romani self-identification, indications can be found that all ten interviewees could be perceived by others as being Roma.

Beside the statements of the Bulgarians, various other interview quotes describe that the men experienced direct discrimination on the grounds of a perceived Romani ethnicity or that direct discrimination was for them a possible danger. Darius, for instance, got mocked in school by other children because of his ethnicity. Georgi gives examples of discrimination concerning employment. Also Darius and Florin describe that they had to overcome typical prejudices against Roma when they looked for jobs. *“Romanians also think that Gypsy is always stealing or lying or whatever. (...) To me, many people give work for me. (...) When you are honest, if you are a Gypsy, then it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter so much.”*

More important for the men's decisions to migrate are the indirect discriminations Bulgarian and Romanian Roma face. It can be assumed that these structures have affected the living conditions of the interviewees. Direct proofs of indirect discrimination are hard to attain when looking at individuals. One of the exceptions can be found in Darius interview who describes that he visited a segregated school for Roma. Some other men (Florin, Aleksij, Luca) know about the excluding living conditions of Roma in their countries of origin and relate that to their lives. Asked why there are many Roma working in male prostitution in Germany, Ovidio answers: *“Because they don't have any school, no education. (...) And if you don't have education, you don't have work.”* Indeed, the average school attendance of the men in the sample is 7.4 years, significantly below the average of school attendance in both countries. Moreover, the living conditions of the seven men escaping from severe poverty are described to be well below the standards in Bulgaria and Romania (4.2.1). Both aspects can be regarded as results of the structural exclusion of Roma in Bulgaria and Romania.

Nevertheless, some of the men (Wassili, Darius, Abel, Aleksij) show a strong desire to overcome exclusionary living conditions by creating their own opportunities and earning their own money. In this context it is noteworthy that the men in the sample do not belong to the poorest or most excluded section of Bulgarian and Romanian societies. Although there is a high rate of school drop-outs at a very early age among Romani people in Bulgaria and Romania (2.6), none of the interviewees attended school for less than six years. This observation implies that some education is a precondition for a decision to migrate in search of better living conditions.

Eventually, the research found five self-identified Romani Romanians, while all ten men in the sample might be perceived by others to be Roma. Direct discrimination based on a perceived Romani ethnicity is experienced by at least six men in the sample and

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indications can be found that the exclusionary structures for Romani people in Bulgaria and Romania contribute to the decision to search for a better life in Western Europe.

4.4 Strategies to cope with the stigma of male sex work

As was already outlined in chapter 4.2, male sex work is regarded with repugnance and degradation by the men in the sample. The stigma of prostitution affects all interviewees. For the self-identified heterosexual men the burden of having sex with other men is of special relevance. Three of them (Dario, Ovidio, Luca) actually suffer from significant psychosomatic symptoms since entering into male sex work. To understand the strong degradation, the different approaches towards homosexuality in the home countries and in Germany have to be considered.

As all men describe, homosexuality is strongly devalued in Bulgaria and Romania. Krasimir: *„If you are homosexual in Bulgaria, that was terrible. The people think completely different“*. In comparison, the men experience the subculture they are part of in Germany to be much more positive towards gay men. Darius: *“You must know, in Romania gays are crazy. And Germany for Romanians is a little bit crazy. There are some gays in Romania, too, but not many. Here are many“*. The culturally anchored homophobic attitude is adapted by the heterosexual interviewees, their opinions and feelings about gays are widely negative. Even though all of them reflect on homosexuality as being *“normal”* (in the sense of an innate sexual desire), a range of different quotes in the interviews testify a profound disgust. One other example from Darius' interview here: *„You know, for me a lesbian, a gay: big catastrophe. (...) God did not create that. When two men are having sex this is very diabolic“*.

The described double stigma of male sex work endangers both, the self-image and the hetero-perception of the interviewees. In response, all interviews display elements which justify the work in male prostitution. In the following chapters, four key elements which can be found in striking congruity throughout all the interviews will be introduced. As these central themes signify a legitimation to work in the stigmatized field and therefore mitigate the psycho-social burden of male sex work, they are introduced as coping-strategies. On the one hand, these strategies display concrete reasons for working in prostitution and on the other hand, show how male sex work is represented by the men in order to legitimate earning money with it.

4.4.1 Sex work as the last choice

All the men interviewed consider sex work as a substitute for other “normal” (Krasimir, Georgi, Aleksij, Abel) work. Prostitution is described as a temporary source of income and as the consequence of a lack of other opportunities due to the status as an irregular migrant without a work permit. The men in the sample claim that as soon as they find other jobs they stop prostitution. This observation also applies to the homosexual men who display more economic success in sex work than the other interviewees.

A high number of other jobs which were tried or are currently undertaken show the men’s flexibility and search for alternatives. Nicolaie and Wassili have been playing music on the streets; Florin and Ovidio worked in construction and renovation. Begging is mentioned by Luca and Abel, cleaning business by Georgi, Abel and Florin. Selling fast food or newspapers has been undertaken by Georgi, Abel and Luca, agriculture by Ovidio and Florin. The conditions of other labor segments are described to be highly unstable and sometimes more exploitative than prostitution. Additionally, the risk of police persecution is higher. Georgi did not get paid after weeks of working for an Austrian employer. Abel and Luca got caught by the police when working on the black market (other than sex business) and were immediately deported to Romania. Aleksij is currently working for an employer who calls him whenever he needs his support. Questioned whether he will return to Germany, Aleksij regards this situation: *“I don’t know. No. What shall I do? And not a whole week of work. What shall I do? No work for the whole month. It doesn’t work like this, you know! Like two days of work and three days of sleep”*.

Consequently, in assessing the alternatives to sex work, the men weigh the disadvantages of male prostitution and compare them to their chances in other segments of the (black) labor market. Ovidio and Darius are the only men in the sample who explicitly outbalance the financial advantages of male sex work compared to its negative sides. Ovidio currently prefers prostitution due to his economic success (4.2.2). Also for Darius, other possibilities to earn money appear to be worse. He is the only interviewee who did not work in other parts of the job market. Nevertheless, in other passages of the interview, both men describe sex work to be the only option left to earn money. Darius: *„I don’t like what I have to do, but I must do that. You know, why? I must make money”*. Since both men know or experienced other opportunities, these statements can be understood as part of their stigma management. They might be less affected by devaluation when doing prostitution on the ground of an economic hardship.

For the interviewees, the lack of (legal) alternatives legitimates working in the stigmatized field of male prostitution. Evidence could be found that the remaining opportunities are shaped by exploitative and unstable conditions and by the danger of police prosecution. Even if there are alternatives to sex work, a lack of opportunities is emphasized in order to justify working in the stigmatized sex business.

4.4.2 The motive of the big money

Sex work is regarded by the interviewees as a chance to earn “*big money*” (Wassili), a motive which frequently emerges throughout the interviews. All men talk about prostitution as a business where one can receive extraordinary remunerations, whether they experienced it personally or simply estimate it due to stories which they heard.

Indeed, a few times some of the men themselves witnessed a high income from prostitution. Four men describe a particular economic success in the first days of starting with sex work. Three others experienced exceptional financial allowances later on. Georgi tells that he once received 10.000€ from a client as a present to buy his own flat in Bulgaria. He also talks about a night with a cocaine-client in which he earned 1.700€. Darius reports he regularly sees a client who pays some 5.000€ for his services. Wassili obtained support for a medical treatment, a client paid 4.500€ in an emergency. Although these occasions are exceptions, the promise of the “*very rich man*” (Wassili) and the “*good business*” (Darius) appear as frequent reference points in the interviews and motivates the men to offer sexual services.

Besides the outlined occasions, outstanding remunerations do not appear to be common. The regular income achieved with sex work is portrayed to be much lower and additionally very inconstant. Georgi, being one of the most experienced sex workers in the sample, describes his income independent of which sexual service he offers as currently 50€. With these earnings, valuable items or spending beyond the bare necessities are out of reach. The only exceptions are the flats which the homosexual interviewees have bought in Romania and Bulgaria, due to their very constant work in prostitution and the additional financial support of their partners. Besides this, no other indications for bigger economic profits could be found. The observation that none of the men without children regularly supports his orientation family can be seen as another indicator for a rather small income. The men report repeatedly that their earnings have to be spent on their living expenditures in Germany. Wassili expresses his disappointment: *“It is not same what I think. I make some, I make much money and I make my life. I think some money but not much. It’s better here because I make money. But in Romania I cannot make money. In Romania – good, my friends ask me: How is it in Germany? When I tell it’s a bit bad, then: No, no, no, they don’t believe me. In Germany it’s nice, I am sure. But it’s not right.”*

The recurring topic of the “*big money*” one can earn with prostitution is regarded to be more a motivation for remaining in sex work than an actual benefit of it. These high financial remunerations that exceptionally take place uphold the continuance of the narrative of the good income from prostitution but have not been proven true. Therefore, the motive of the big money continuously promises only to achieve a better life and appears as a strategy to legitimate working in the stigmatized field.

4.4.3 Policy of silence

A strict policy of silence towards the families and the close social surrounding in Bulgaria and Romania belongs to the interviewee's stigma management. None of the men talk with their parents about working in prostitution. Ovidio: *"But for my family this is not good. Not saying, I am doing prostitution. My family says that is crazy. My mother, she doesn't know what that is, a gay. But I was back home, in Romania, I had to tell, okay, what is there in Germany? What do you do in Germany? I say – anything. I work, I have a lot of colleagues, but not say what and where"*. Although Wassili's older brothers work in prostitution, too, his parents seem not to know about their sons source of income and do not need to react to it: *"C: What would happen if you would tell them that you work in prostitution? W: Ah, I don't know. But I not tell. I not tell. If I tell, I cannot come back. Definitely, my mother say, or my father."*

Different strategies are undertaken to conceal sex work. The men say that they work in the cleaning and construction business, or earn money with begging or playing music. Abel even prefers to tell his parents and friends that he deals in drugs in Western Europe; an explanation which is accepted by everyone.

Just very few persons from the men's close social environment are excluded from the silence. While Luca's and Florin's wives know about it - both of them are in Germany, too-, Aleksij's and Darius' wives do not. Besides relatives who also work in the sex business, only a sister of Krasimir and a brother of Ovidio know about them earning money with prostitution. All of them promised to keep silent.

The policy of silence contradicts with the observation that - with the exceptions of Nicolaie and Abel - all men knew about male sex work as an income option when they decided to go to Western Europe. The interviewees got openly told about it by (usually more distant) selected friends or relatives. This finding indicates a wide knowledge in the countries of origin about the possibility to earn money with male sex work. Ovidio is most expressive about it: *"Actually, everybody knows it. The whole town was in sex business somewhere. One knows, everybody knows. Even if you did not do it, you know you can always make money with the gays"*. On the other hand, the men's close social environments are neither told nor ask about conducted sexual services. Whether close family members and friends suspect the interviewees of earning money with male sex work, cannot be testified here. The silence could also be the result of a mutual but not open agreement not to touch on the issue. Such an agreement would serve the ends of both, the families and the men themselves, from revealing a stigmatizing truth.

4.4.4 Performative construction of homosexuality

Throughout the interviews, the distinction between homo- and heterosexual identities are constructed along specific sexual practices. In accordance with analysis undertaken by May on Balkan societies (2.2), the Bulgarian and Romanian men relate homosexuality to a certain performative sexual behavior. A lot of different excerpts from the interviews illustrate that kissing a man, touching another man's penis to masturbate it, giving a blow job and insertive anal intercourse belong to it. Some of the men refer to these practices as "passive" sexual roles (Ovidio, Darius, Florin).

The distinction between homo- and heterosexuality is also evident for the homo- and bisexual men in the sample. For them, the experience of enjoying passive anal intercourse is the experience of being gay.

F: I think being passive [in anal intercourse, C.G.] turns me on. I can come very quickly. (...)

C: Is that important for the question whether you are gay or not?

F: I think I am 70, 80% gay.

C: I have often heard (...) as long as you are still active you aren't yet gay. But if you –

F: Get fucked –

C: Then you are gay.

F: Yes. Yes, I am certainly 80% gay. 70, 80."

As long as the self-identified heterosexual men do not perform any of these "gay" sex techniques, or at least do not confess to offering any of it, they are able to work in prostitution without considering being homosexual themselves. Ovidio: *"I do not kiss them. I never take a cock in my mouth. (...) If I go away with a man [for anal intercourse, C.G.] I tell him in advance: I am active. "* Darius: *"I tell you: I am not gay. Pardon me, I am not gay. Sucking me, always that. I am not kissing, I am not wanking. (...) I know, other bisexuals are kissing, wanking, but I don't do that. I am not bisexual. I am hetero 100 percent. I make sex with men for money. Always for money. There is nothing with me. And when the men suck me (he turns his head to the side) – okay, finished."*

The construction of homosexuality along a specific performative behavior therefore facilitates work in male prostitution for those men who consider themselves to be heterosexual.

4.5 Elements of force and exploitation during the process of migration – the cases of Krasimir, Florin and Abel

Since the scientific and political interest concerning migrants in prostitution in recent years especially focused on trafficking, special attention in this study has been paid to forcing conditions in the process of migration concerning the focus group. In three cases, such indications could be found.

Krasimir came to Germany with a “pimp”. *“He told me, I bring you Germany, you can go there to work.”* Since Krasimir did not earn any money at this time in Bulgaria, he agreed. He paid 2000€ for the transport and had to pay 50% of the earnings from prostitution in the first 6 weeks. Krasimir additionally indicated that he got treated violently: *“Sometimes you maybe get a punch from your pimp, and then you don’t work. Or when he wants the whole money.”* Nevertheless, Krasimir is ambivalent about the role of his trafficker: *“But that was bad. That was good, that was bad, too. Because the pimp introduced me to Germany.”* While Krasimir passes in review, he is grateful towards his pimp although he had to work under exploitative circumstances.

Florin was brought into the begging business by a far relative: *“And he asked me, whether I want to come with him to Germany to do begging for him. (...) But I told him: Okay, you want to go with me, but me, what do I earn? And he said: If I earn 1000€, 800, 700 is his money, 300 mine. I said, I am content. But I wanted to come to Germany”.* Additionally, for the transport Florin has to pay off 3000€ in debts to his relative. Florin describes additional disadvantages included in the deal: *“This man was a little bad to me, always bad. Make money! You have to get 50€ each day. You must! I had to get 50€ each day”.* He escaped from his relative after he got beaten by him and asked the police for help. Afterwards, Florin traveled to Germany alone.

The circumstances of Abel’s migration, the words he uses to describe his foster-father and the strong emotions he faces presume traumatic experiences, although Abel himself stresses that he is very grateful for what happened.

“A: It was actually a big dream to go to – (Abel stops) yes, to come to Germany.

C: Is it difficult for you to speak about it?

A: No. But it is an old wound which gets open again.”

Abel came to Germany because his parents sent him to a “friend”, who – as they wished – would adopt Abel. Abel was smuggled under a railway-wagon with three other persons in 1996, when he was 13 years old. His parents paid for the transport. He remembers: *“It was a hard time. I almost died because it was so dangerous. Below the train. Where are all the things of the train, the electricity and all of that.”* Abel reports on his arrival at the potential foster father: *“My foster father was gay himself. He was with me, he was, he did not something from me, I was not a victim or something like this. (...) And I was living in his place. That was nice, that was sad, too. It was a lot to think about, too. Though I grew up in a big family and suddenly I was an only child. (...) There I had to shed a lot of tears. (...) And he saw my character: I was very diligently and very young and I was already able to cook. I surprised him. I won him. That a child was able to do so already. And this is how he got the idea to help me with an adoption.”* Abel’s report gives strong

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indications for pedosexual motives of the "*foster father*" and exploitative labor conditions in his household.

Eventually, evidence can be found that three of the men in the sample were trafficked in the legal sense of the term (compare UN 2006, p.51). In Krasimir's and Florin's cases, in particular, the exploratory conditions concerning their income from begging and prostitution have to be taken into account. Regarding Abel, his very young age, the conditions in his "*foster father's*" household, a possible illegal adoption and the indications on sexual abuse legitimate the conclusion.

Although the legal validation is clear, all three men emphasize that they are glad about their migration and partly grateful to their traffickers. The economic and social advantages of coming to Germany accordingly outweigh the forced circumstances of the migratory processes in present perceptions of Krasimir, Florin and Abel. A result which concurs with other research on women as trafficking victims. In order not to victimize the men, a biased presentation must be avoided. While the process itself displays coercive conditions, the men themselves regard it after all as having brought them advantages to their living conditions.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

- Three key motives for migration

Due to the individual backgrounds, every generalization on Bulgarians and Romanians working in male prostitution has to be undertaken carefully. However, three reasons appear to be the main motives to migrate: The escape from severe poverty, the pursuit of a little bit of luxury and the flight from a homophobic surrounding. While some of the motives apply to all men, others are only relevant to some, and the weight of the motives shifts over time.

The two economic motives are of crucial relevance. Seven of the men in the sample escaped from persistent or current severe poverty, which is understood as the concrete threat that the physical existence is endangered. All ten interviewees relate their migration decision to the wish to achieve more than just the bare necessities of life, something which appears unattainable in the country of origin. The third reason is particularly responsible for the attempt to relocate the center of life towards Germany. Due to their homophobic experiences, none of the homosexual interviewees wants to return to Romania or Bulgaria.

- Sex work as “double” strategy to survival

For the focus group, sex work is principally understood as a strategy of survival. The result corresponds with other research on street sex workers (Wright 2001; Bochow 2000; West & deVilliers 1992; Schickedanz 1979). Survival contains a double meaning here: With their migration, most men flee from an endangered existence in the country of origin, and by entering into sex work, the men guarantee their daily survival in the country of destination.

Sex work is regarded to be the most reliable option to serve this aim. With the income from sex work, most men are able to pay their living in EU-15. Although the rewards are too unstable and small to support the orientation families, the men's migration helps to decrease the family's spending and therefore can be seen as a stabilizer of their economic situation. Regular financial remittances just apply to those men who already have own wives and children. Then, sex work assures the survival of the whole family.

- Other benefits from sex work

The examined men regard sex work as the chance to gain extraordinary financial profits and other opportunities, particularly a residence permit in the EU-15. While high financial revenues remain rare exceptions, occasions which actually do happen only justify continuing the narration of the good money, but do not account for an economic benefit which means far more than guaranteeing survival. The regular income achieved with sex work is portrayed to be much lower and additionally very inconstant. To some extent,

economic chances of the self-identified homosexual men seem to be higher due to their very constant work in prostitution and the additional support from their partners. Furthermore, on the base of Civil Partnerships with former clients, they all legalized their stay in Germany, but had to accept new dependencies in order not to return to the homophobic living conditions in their country of origin.

- Lack of professional identification

The men in the sample do not consider sex work as a regular occupation. This lack of professional identification is founded in the stigma of male sex work. All men emphasize that they want to leave prostitution as soon as possible.

Consequently, an opening up of the EU-15 labor markets for prostitutes (as is required by some, compare Munk 2005) would not reach the here described focus group. While this measure certainly would mean a step towards further de-stigmatizing of sex work and a relief for professional migrant sex workers, the group examined here could not profit from any such progressive legislation. What Wright reveals for the overall group of male street sex workers is certainly the case for the Bulgarian and Romanian migrants among them (2005, p.133, translation C.G.): *„Neither the male street sex workers nor their clients are interested in any such professionalization of sex work. Street sex work presents a form of poverty prostitution which exists on the base of the social hardship of the prostitutes.”*

- Strategies to cope with the stigma of male sex work

Male sex work means a psycho-social burden for all interviewees, while the heterosexual men suffer particularly from the stigma of homosexuality. Three of them even experience severe somatic symptoms after they entered male prostitution. In response, a number of coping-strategies are congruently identified which facilitate working in the stigmatized field: Sex work is described to be the last choice for employment among worse others, the motive of the big money is emphasized, a policy of silence applied and the performative construction of homosexuality stressed. These strategies have to be regarded when working with the focus group in order to gain access to the men and develop a trustful relationship and successful prevention strategies.

- Romanians and Bulgarians as flexible workers

Primarily, Bulgarian and Romanian men understand themselves as flexible workers and a high number of undertaken jobs prove this attitude. The result accords with analysis by Agustín on young women from developing countries in sex work (following Outshoorn 2005, p.148): *“They are in fact travelers, working around the world, sometimes that includes sex work”*. The men individually weigh the stigma of sex work in comparison to its possible profits, to their chances in other parts of the labor market and to the economic need from which they are fleeing. Hence, they often come to the conclusion that sex work accords easy access for irregular migrants, while other segments on the black labor market are more exploitative, unstable and open to police persecution. The undertaken research backs the results of Mai on the group of Albanians in Greek and Italian male sex work (2004, p.54): *“Sex work is not celebrated as a choice, but justified*

and experienced as the least intolerable strategy of survival among a very restricted range of much worse possibilities, characterized by a higher level of exploitation and considerably less profit. “

- Roma exclusion as one root for migration into male sex work

The study gives further evidence (Surtees 2005, Geisler 2004) that Roma are in particular motivated to migrate from CEE to EU-15. Five of the men in the sample identify themselves as Romanian Roma, while indications are found that all ten get perceived by others as being Roma. Direct discrimination on the ground of a perceived Romani ethnicity is experienced by at least six men in the sample and indications can be found that the exclusionary structures for Romani people in Bulgaria and Romania contribute to the decision to search for a better life or simply for survival in Western Europe.

Although the danger of contributing to negative stereotypes is understandable, Romani migrants working in prostitution should not be denied. Further research can help to center the real roots of the phenomenon, of which the exclusion of Roma is the central aspect.

- Men as victims of trafficking

According to (inter-)national legislation, three interviewees can be categorized as trafficking victims. This astonishing high number - taking into account that the sample was randomly chosen – legitimizes the conclusion that more men become victims of trafficking than is known or discussed by the public. Two considerations comply:

First, scientists, social and political actors in the field lack the awareness to regard men – in accordance with the common construction of manhood – as victims, and especially not of sexual exploitation. Institutions like the German BKA do not pay attention to male victims at all (BKA 2006, p.4); and the UN – although aware of an underreporting of trafficked men - only imagines men to become “*trafficked for the purpose of labor exploitation*” (Limanowska 2005, p.66). Civil and political actors as well as scientists should overcome a simplified gender construction in order to support men who become victims of sexual exploitation.

Second, those organizations and actors familiar with the field do not take on the domination discourse’s point of view (Outshoorn 2005), but understand migration into sex work as a possible deliberate strategy for survival. Indeed, almost all the interviewees knew about sex work before they migrated. Additionally, all three men who were trafficked according to the legal definition emphasize that they are grateful to their traffickers and value their chance to migrate positively. The living conditions in the country of origin are perceived to be the greater threat in comparison to the exploitative conditions of trafficking. The distinction between trafficking and an autonomous quest for a better life surely is a tightrope walk. To avoid victimization and a biased political presentation which fosters stricter immigration regulations (Trappolin 2005), actors in the field have to look carefully at the individual circumstances, and have to consider that men can be both, independent migrants in search for a better life and victims of exploitation.

- Transnational migrants

With the men's common commuting between different countries in line with the legal regulations and their range of destinations within EU-15, they can be described as transnational migrants. While some data already gives evidence that the group of Romanians and Bulgarians in sex work can be found all over Western Europe (2.5), it would be the task of further research to find out more about size, spread and characteristics of the phenomenon throughout the Europe.

- Enhancing intercultural skills and international networking

To reach the described focus group, social organizations in the field have to further enhance their intercultural skills and methods. Moreover, international networking can contribute to increase understanding of the socio-cultural backgrounds of specific groups working in prostitution in the countries of destination and improve the knowledge of the realistic chances and dangers in the countries of origin. Especially with regard to an efficient HIV, STI and trafficking prevention, such an intercultural exchange might be crucial for successful work. Therefore, the decision to finish the financial support for the *European Network for Male Prostitution* in 2003 can be questioned, and the necessity for its partial successor the *Correlation Network* has to be emphasized.

- Functional system of denial

The analyzed phenomenon is a highly functional system of denial. Bulgarian and Romanian men working in prostitution in Western Europe avoid to be identified as sex workers - partly as part of their own stigma management. Consequently, the EU-15 must not face its need for migratory workers in the sex business. Agustin characterizes the covering of glaring facts concerning migrants in prostitution as a hyper-interest in the discourse (2005, p.34). On the one hand, no confrontation takes place with Europe's great demand for sexual services. On the other, the great demand for labor, which many people leads to work deliberately under semi-feudalistic conditions in a stigmatized occupation, does not need to get revealed.

- Prevention of involuntary migration into male sex work

To prevent men from an involuntary migration towards male sex work in EU-15, the most important step is the improvement of economic living conditions in the countries of origin. Especially, the further improvement of the living conditions for the Roma minority has to be paid attention to. Additionally, homophobia has to be overcome in the countries of origin, to enable self-identified gay men to continue their lives in their home countries. Without these changes, men will maintain to search for a better life in the EU-15. And even though migration towards male sex work is not regulated and the market for sexual services is largely stigmatized, the men's search for a better life will contribute to the politically desired rise in the quality of life among the population of the EU member states.

APPENDIX

Words and abbreviations

AKSD	International Working Group of German Speaking Social Organizations for Male Street Sex Workers (Arbeitskreis deutschsprachiger Stricherorganisationen), consists currently out of members from Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands.
BIVS	Berliner Institut für vergleichende Sozialforschung
BKA	Bundeskriminalamt, German Federal Criminal Police Office
BMJFG	Bundesminister für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit – Federal Minister of Youth, Family and Health (German Ministry in 1982)
Bulg.	Bulgarian
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe. The term refers to the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia and the UN administered Province of Kosovo.
ENMP	European Network Male Prostitution, existed from 1997-2003. Had to stop its activities after an ending of EU-funding and has been partly transferred into the European network Correlation.
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EU-15	Group of member states of the EU from 1995-2004, comprising the following 15 countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
Mahala	Bulgarian/Turkish term for the segregated quarters of Roma settlement in Bulgaria
Migrant	In this thesis understood as border-crossing migrants
Pomaks	Ethnic Bulgarian Muslims

ProstG	German Prostitution Law - Gesetz zur Regelung der Rechtsverhältnisse der Prostituierten
Rom.	Romanian
Romani	Used in this study as an adjective and refers additionally to the original language Roma speak.
Roma	This study uses the term Roma as the plural noun form, as well as to name the ethnic group as a whole. The term Gypsy is not used in this research, basically because of his racist background in many European countries. Nevertheless, those groups who refer to themselves being Gypsies (as some groups do in Bulgaria and gets visible in the interview excerpts) shall be included in the term Roma for the purposes of this study. The use of the term Roma only makes sense as a separation from non-Roma. Inside the ethnicity a great variety of different groups with dissimilar history, culture and language can be found. Here, the term Roma has to be strictly understood as a viable terminology for this research, but not to homogenize a very divers group. The name refers to the Romani word for men.
OSI	Open Society Institute
SEE	South Eastern Europe. The term refers to the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and the UN administered Province of Kosovo.
STI	sexually transmitted infections
TAMPEP	European Network for HIV and STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Female Sex Workers
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
Western Europe	In this study used synonymously for the EU-15 countries plus Switzerland and Norway, which conform in most legal provision concerning migration with the EU-15. Yet, the geographical attribution is rather chosen because of historical and economical distinctions from other European areas, than due to a physical characteristic.
WWII	Second World War

Special punctuation used in the transcriptions of the interviews

..	pause (less than four seconds)
...	longer pause (more than four seconds)
,	not only marking different parts of a sentence, additionally used to mark a break in the oral fluency of the interviewee
!	marks the intonation of the sentence
?	marks the intonation of the sentence
(...)	omission
()	in brackets: non verbal, relevant behavior
C:	the interviewer

Quotes in the German original – Deutsche Originalzitate

4.2 Migration motives as the result of the comparison of perceived living conditions in the countries of origin and in Germany

„ein bisschen großes Geld“ (F9)

4.2.1 Escape from severe poverty

The example of Luca

„Der Vorteil ist, dass wir hier jeden Tag an etwas Geld heran kommen“ (L5)

„Und wir haben Tage, an denen wir nicht das Geld haben, um Brot zu kaufen“. (L6)

„Originalzigeuner (...) romanisierte Zigeuener“ (L1-2)

„Ich war 6 Jahre zur Schule und habe die Schule unterbrochen, weil ich dann von dort 300, 400 Kilometer weiter von meiner Ortschaft zum Ziegelformen weg gefahren bin“. (L1)

„Wir haben auf den Maisfeldern und im Wein das Unkraut gejätet und dann bei der Ernte, was Leute bei der Ernte für Hilfe brauchten, haben wir gemacht.“ (L1)

„Ich habe genau soviel verdient, dass ich essen kann.“ (L1)

„Ich hörte, hier lässt sich Geld machen.“ (L2)

„Es gibt Leute, die ich gut kenne. Wir sind zusammen aufgewachsen. Und wir haben keine Geheimnisse.“ (L3)

„Ich bin erstmal zum Betteln gekommen. Ja. Meine Kollegen, die damals anschaffen gingen, haben mir erzählt: Wir gehen aber Anschaffen. Und dann habe ich gesagt: Ich gehe auch. Und das erste Mal, dass ich in Kontakt getreten bin mit einem Freier, meine Haut ist auch, ich habe Gänsehaut bekommen. (...). Aber das war wirklich schlimm. Ich habe richtig gezittert. Ja. Danach bin ich irgendwie auf einer Schwimmlinie gewesen. Aber ich habe überhaupt kein Vergnügen gefunden, an nichts im Leben: Ich habe nur das mit dem Geld vor den Augen gehabt. Kein Spaß.“ (L3/L5)

„normale Arbeit“ (L6)

„Stütze“, „Hilfe“ (L6)

„C: Und hat deine Frau hier jemals in der Prostitution gearbeitet?

L: Nein, um Gottes willen. Nee. Was stellen sie sich vor?

C: Naja, möglich ist es.

L: Ja, möglich ist es. Aber bei uns die Frauen machen so was nicht. Hier sind wir sehr genau.

C: Was heißt bei uns?

L: Bei uns Zigeunern.

C: Das gehört nicht zur Kultur dazu.

L: Nee. Wir machen das nicht. Wir machen aber gerne Zuhälterei. Das können wir machen.

C: Was würde passieren, wenn eine Frau auf den Strich geht?

L: Wir sind dann sehr eifersüchtig. Und wir schlagen sie. Und wir verlassen sie dann.

C: Aber für Männer gilt die Regel nicht?

L: Nein. Für Männer gilt das nicht. Ich gehe ja auch mit Männern.“ (L5)

„In Rumänien geht es vielen Zigeunern sehr gut. Das möchte ich ihnen sagen. Es gibt andere Zigeuner, die wirklich wohlhabend sind. Es gibt auch andere Zigeuner, die wissen nicht, was sie machen, damit sie einen anderen Platz suchen, wo es ihnen besser geht. Das spielt keine Rolle ob das jetzt in ihrem Land ist oder woanders. Es gibt andere, die viele Kinder haben und große Familie. Und sie wussten es so. In Rumänien verdient man als Ungelernter sehr schwer das Geld. In Deutschland ist schön. Es ist ein reiches Land, das sieht man überall. Aber es ist gefährlich hier zu leben.“ (L6)

„Vorteil ist, dass wir hier täglich an etwas Geld heran kommen. Von diesem Geld können wir leben.“ (L5)

4.2.2 The quest for ‘a little bit big money’

„bisschen große Geld“ (F9)

„Vorteil ist, dass wir hier täglich an etwas Geld heran kommen. Von diesem Geld können wir leben. Um später ein Haus zu bauen, oder irgendwas eigenes“ (L5)

„Geld nicht so, für Spaß“ (N5)

„Bisschen Luxus“ (AL5)

„Machen, sparen Geld, nimmst du eine Auto. Das ist bulgarisch super. Weißt du. In Bulgarien musst arbeiten und 1, 2 Jahre und nehmen für dich eine Auto für 500 Euro. Machst du sparen dieses Geld. Und nehmen eine Auto. Hier: Arbeiten 1, 2 Monat nehmen ein Auto, muss gehen, ne? In Deutschland funktionieren anders. Bulgarien funktionieren anders.“ (AL5)

The example of Ovidio

„Ich mache hier 700€ pro Abend. Beim Anschaffen. Ich werde doch nicht einen Monat dafür schuftet.“ (O4)

„Sind normale Zigeuner, sind alles Zigeuner.“ (O1)

“(…) habe ich kaum erwartet, dass ich wegfahre.“ (O2)

„Als ich in Italien gearbeitet habe, habe ich 18.000 Euro in 9 Monaten verdient. Und mit diesem Geld habe ich 2 Hochzeiten gemacht. Ich habe Hochzeiten gefeiert.“ (O2)

„Das mache ich nur, damit die Zigeuner mich nicht auslachen, dass ich mich nicht an die Regeln halte. Das macht man aus Verpflichtung, damit man in der Tradition ist.“ (O2)

„Ich habe schon immer gewusst. Auch in Italien. Aber in Italien wollte ich nicht. Weil ich Arbeit hatte. Ich kam um 9 Uhr nach Hause, ich hatte keine Zeit für so was. Und ich habe einfach nicht daran gedacht.“ (O2)

“Die ersten drei Tage habe ich mich geweigert, anschaffen zu gehen. Am vierten Tag bin ich erst auf die Meile hier heraus gegangen. Weil ich kein Geld hatte. ..“ (O3)

„Als ich hier angekommen bin, ich habe richtig gezittert. (...) .. Ich habe an Gott gebetet, dass ich das überstehe! Weil ich hatte das Gefühl, irgendwas stimmt nicht bei dem, was ich mache. (...) Eigentlich habe ich gar nichts mehr gespürt. Ich habe mich nur schlecht gefühlt.“ (O2-3)

“Es ist nicht normal auf Dauer mit Männern Sex zu haben! Gott hat gesagt: Hier gebe ich euch die Frau.“ (O5)

„Wenn ich einmal von diesem Fleck weg bin, dann mache ich das nie wieder (Ovidio stockt). Ich habe viele gesehen, die vom Umgang mit Homosexuellen selber homosexuell geworden sind. Es gibt bei unseren Leuten, die Rumänen. Ich weiß, wenn ich weiter so mache - (Ovidio macht eine Pause). Für mich geht die Sache noch für einen Monat, anderthalb Monate. Dann muss ich aufhören. ..“ (O5)

“Wer macht schon Sex mit Männern? Wir machen das, weil wir es müssen!“ (O5)

“Hier verdient man 700 Euro auf dem Bau. Das verdiene ich in 2 Wochen in Rumänien und hier soll ich einen Monat dafür arbeiten? Ich mache hier 700 pro Abend. Beim Anschaffen. Ich werde doch nicht einen Monat für 700 Euro schuffen. (...) Ich bin eigentlich zum Arbeiten hierhin gekommen. Aber es hat sich nichts Vernünftiges ergeben auf dieser Suche. Also das, was ich gefunden habe, war sehr wenig Geld. Und ich arbeite nicht unter meinem Wert.“ (O4)

“Hier verdiene ich sehr viel Geld. Aber ich fange mit dem Geld nichts an. .. Ich habe schon zuhause 4000 Euro zur Seite gelegt. Meine Mutter fasst dieses Geld gar nicht an. Ich muss noch Fenster, Isofenster einbauen beim Haus.“ (O2)

“Spaß haben. Ausflüge, Reisen. In die Berge, zum Meer!“ (O6)

4.2.3 The flight from a homophobic environment

„Besser für mich: Deutschland für Schwule. Dort Rumänien ist bisschen, es gibt viele hübsche Jungen. Ich kann nicht reden sofort, verstehst du? Wenn hier guckt einer, und ich gucke wieder und er sagt, was willst du, kann ich sagen, gefällt mir. Aber Rumänien - (Florin bricht ab).“ (F9)

The example of Georgi

“Warum bin ich nicht früher gekommen?” (G10)

“Wer versteht, versteht (...) Aber wer nicht versteht, okay, auch gut. Nicht will, nicht will.“ (G7)

„Aber mein Vater zu dieser Zeit nur Stress gemacht für mich. Nur Stress. Nur Stress, Und schlagen mich.“ (G10)

„Und dann ich gemacht eine Termin bei dieses Kapitän. Ich habe gesagt: Ich muss sprechen mit dir. Oder ich du nicht verstehen mir, ich sofort 4 Stock so und dann ich oben und kaputt machen. C: Du bringst dich um? G: Ja. Er gesagt: Was ist? – Ich habe Angst, alle Leute sprechen: Du bist schwul, komm, mach Sex mit mir. Eine so Raum mit 20, 30 Personen, alle zusammen, ich dazwischen bin.“ (G8)

“Bulgarien auch haben Schwule. Aber jede Schwule hat Angst: Angst vor Mutter, Vater, Bruder oder Schwester oder Schwager oder Schwägerin, alle Familie.“ (G8)

“Ich gesagt wann in Bulgarien: (...) ich muss sprechen mit alle. Und dann alle kommen, Bruder kommen, Schwägerin, (...) und dann, bisschen Kaffee, bisschen Gebäck auch gemacht, ich gesagt: Ich muss sagen das: Ich bin schwul. Ich machen nur Sex - ich bin aktiv, passiv, aber ich will nur Männer. Frauen nicht. Mutter geweint, Vater gesagt: Nein. (...) Vater gesagt: Ich will schwul zuhause nicht. Ich gesagt: Okay, ich weiß, das ist schwer für dich, aber das ist schwer für mich auch. Ich auch will so wie eine normale Mann so machen. Aber das, keine Ahnung, das ist eine Krank, keine Ahnung. Er gesagt: Das ist nicht krank, du willst du das machen. Ich gesagt: Ja, ich will das machen, aber das ist schwer für mich. Er gesagt: Okay, du nimmst du deine Tasche. Und sofort ich meine Tasche. Mutter geweint und sagen: Warum du machen meine Sohn, das ist normal. Nicht nur meine Sohn ist schwul, ganze Welt haben sie schwule Leute (...) Er gesagt: Nein. Ich nicht will nicht. Ich gesagt: Okay. Und dann nächste Mal, ich gesagt: Okay, ich nicht bleiben deine Haus. (...) Du wann tot, gestorben, und dann komme ich wieder hierhin. Er hat gesagt: Egal was passiert. Raus! (...) Und meine Mutter weinen, weinen und so so so. Ich gesagt: Nein, ich liebe dir, Mutter, Vater auch, aber jetzt ich habe Vater nicht mehr.“ (G4)

„Und dann vielleicht bekommen eine gute Job, egal irgendwelche Job, eine Arbeit und dann perfekt.“ (G11)

„Aber Prostitution ist schrecklich. Für mich jetzt. Ich gemacht habe, aber für mich jetzt ist schrecklich.“ (G4)

„Kein Stress.“ (G11)

“Aber in Bulgarien gibt es Lohn wenig. Kein Geld so für Miete, Essen, so so so. Ich habe früher gearbeitet in Bulgarien, aber Bulgarien ist anderes System. (...) Alles ist teuer.“ (G1)

„Denken Deutschland eine Traum für Geld. Nicht so. Früher vielleicht, aber jetzt -“ (G13)

„Ich auch denke bis Ende für mich besser. Bis gestorben hier. (...) Deutschland alles ist besser! Besser ist für Schwule“. (G11)

4.3 Ethnicity as structural background for excluding socio-economic living conditions in the countries of origin

„So my language Zigeunisch is 60% Romanian. And we not have problems with Romanian. We live normal. I live only Romanian, normal. But other Zigeunisch, Kaldera or something like that, they live a bit difficult.“ (W4-5)

„Also ich bin ursprünglich ein Türke. Also ich bin kein Türke, also ich bin Türke, aber Osmanische Reich wir bleiben. Und meine Vater, meine Mutter ist Türke und meine Nationalität ist Türkei. Ich bin geboren in Bulgarien und ich habe zur Schule gegangen in Bulgarien.“ (K1)

„Meine Mutter ist Türke. Mein Papa auch. Aber für mich scheißegal. Du kannst mir sagen bulgarisch, bulgarisch; du kannst mir sagen türkisch, türkisch.“ (AL4)

„Ich bin aus Bulgarien, aber ich nicht sagen ich bin Türkei oder Türkische. Ich bin bulgarisch! Ja. Ich bin bulgarisch. Ich spreche Türkisch, ja, aber viele Jahre Bulgarische Kolonie von Türkei. 500 Jahre! (...) Alles Mischung Bulgarien! Alle! Ohne normale türkische, oder andere. Das ist nicht andere Republik! Zigeunerrepublik, türkische, alles Mischung! (...) Ein Bezirk leben türkische, bulgarische, zigeunische und dann sagen: Na, ich bin Türkei. Oder ich bin Zigeuner. Oder ich bin nur Bulgare? Nein, alles ist so! Du sprichst Bulgarisch, Türkisch, Zigeunisch. Oder Zigeuner spricht: Zigeunisch, Türkisch, Bulgarisch. Oder Türke: Zigeunisch, Bulgarisch, Türkisch gemischt.“ (G9)

„schwarz“ (AL4)

“Manchmal schon. Weil einige Leute von ihrem Kopf, sie haben noch Probleme mit Türkische Leute in Bulgarien. Sie sagen einfach, sie haben noch nicht begriffen, dass Zigeunerleute sind ganz anders, Türkische Leute sind ganz anders. Weil wir, zigeunische Sprache ist ganz anders, kannst du überhaupt nicht verstehen das, zigeunische Sprache. Und Türke ganz anders. Kommen sie zu uns und sagen: Zigeuner!“ (K6)

“Meine Stadt ist so klein, und meine Stadt immer Leute weg. Immer! Spanien, Holland, Türkei. Viele Leute in meiner Stadt Musik machen. Auf der Straße oder Markt oder ich weiß nicht (...). So. Musik. Und sie Geld schicken zur Familie.“ (N3)

“Rumäne denken auch von Zigeuner immer klaut oder lügen oder was weiß ich. (...) Bei mir viele Leute geben Arbeit für mich. Bei uns, bei Rumänien .. manchmal zu Zigeuner gut so. Wann du bist ehrlich, wann du bist faul oder so, wenn du ein Zigeuner bist, macht dann nichts. Macht nicht viel.“ (F10)

“Weil sie keine Schule haben, keine Bildung. (...) Und wenn man keine Bildung hat, hat man keine Arbeit.“ (O6)

“Difficult is when you don’t have money. You can be Zigeunisch, you can be whatever you like, (...) [if you are looking for a job and you have money, C.G.] you give some money the chef and you say: Maybe next time then.” (W5)

4.4 Strategies to cope with the stigma of male sex work

“Wenn du bist homosexuell in Bulgarien, das war schlimm. Die Leute ganz anders denken.“ (K1)

„Weißt du, in Rumänien Schwule sind verrückt. Aber Deutschland für Rumänien ist ein bisschen verrückt. In Rumänien auch Schwule, aber nicht viele. Hier ist viel.“ (D3)

„normal“ (D6)

„Weißt du für mich eine lesbisch, ein schwuler: Große Katastrophe. (...) Mein Kollege ist schwul. Ich habe viele Kollegen hier in Deutschland. Ich mache viele Diskutieren hier in Deutschland. Aber die sagen: Ach nein, du bist rumänisch, du hast Verstand, du bist ein bisschen klüger. Okay, ich bin ein bisschen klüger. Aber für mich ist diese Katastrophe! (...) Vor Gott, Gott nicht geben diese. Wann machen zwei Männer Sex das ist große Diabolik. Das ist –

C: teuflisch.

D: Ja. Katastrophe!“ (D6)

„I think here in Germany too many gays, I think. And normally I look one gay normal. Okay, with man he is. He is for God, or God, the god make him gay. Something like this. And I must accept. But, ehm, the truth is, I am not that so much” (W3)

4.4.1 Sex work as the last choice

“Weiß nicht. Nein. Was machen? Und keine, ehm, ganze Woche Arbeit. Was machen? Alle Monate nix arbeiten. Das geht nicht so, weißt du! So 2 Tage arbeiten, 3 Tage schläfst du.“ (AL4)

”Ich nicht liebe das, was ich machen, aber muss machen das. Weißt du, warum? Ich muss machen Geld.” (D6)

4.4.2 The motive of the big money

“very rich man” (W6)

“gutes Geschäft” (D8)

“It is not same what I think. I make some, I make much money and I make my life. I think some money but not much. It’s better here because I make money. But in Romania I cannot make money. In Romania – good, my friends ask me: How is it in Germany? When I tell it’s a bit bad, then: No, no, no, they don’t believe me. In Germany it’s nice, I am sure. But it’s not right.” (W2)

4.4.3 Policy of silence

“Aber für meine Familie nicht gut. Nicht sagen, ich mache Prostitution. Meine Familie sagen, das ist verrückt. Meine Mutter, sie weiß nicht, was das ist eine Schwul. Aber ich war fahren nach Hause, Rumänien, da muss ich sagen, okay, was ist in Germany? Was machen du in Germany? Ich sage – irgendwas. Ich arbeite, ich habe viele Kollegen, aber nicht sagen, was und wo.“ (D4)

C: What would happen if you would tell them that you work in prostitution? W: Ah, I don't know. But I not tell. I not tell. If I tell, I cannot come back. Definitely, my mother say, or my father.” (W3)

“F: Und (seine Frau, C.G.) hat gefragt. So. Wenn ich Männer machen. Ich machen für Geld. So. Und da, ich habe Mund zugemacht. C: Du hast es ihr nicht erzählt? F: Nein. Sie, meine Freundin hat Mund zugemacht. Ist okay. C: Dass du nicht weiter drüber reden musst. F: Ja. Und ehm hat akzeptiert. Sie hat akzeptiert.“ (F11)

“Also alle wissen. Die ganze Stadt hat irgendwo angeschafft. Man weiss, jeder weiß. Auch wenn man es nicht gemacht hat, weiß man, dass man bei den Schwulen immer Geld verdienen kann“. (O6)

4.4.4 Performative construction of homosexuality

“Ich küsse mich mit ihnen nicht. Ich nehme nie einen Schwanz in meinen Mund. (...) Wenn ich mit einem Mann weggehe (zum Ficken, C.G.), sage ich ihm im Voraus: Ich bin aktiv.“ (O5)

„Ich sage dir: ich bin nicht schwul. Tschuldigung, ich bin nicht schwul. Blasen bei mir, immer das. Ich nicht küssen, ich nicht wichsen. (...) Ja, ich bin bisschen bisexual. Das sagen andere Leute in Bar. Aber ich weiß, andere Bisexual Küssen, Wichsen, aber ich nicht machen das. Ich bin nicht bisexual. Ich bin hetero 100 Prozent. Ich machen Sex mit Männer für Geld. Immer für Geld. Bei mir ist nix! Und wenn Männer mir einen blasen (dreht seine Kopf weit zur Seite) – okay fertig.“ (D6)

“F: Ich glaube passiv macht mich ein bisschen geil. Ich kann schnell spritzen. (...) C: Ist das wichtig dafür, ob du jetzt schwul bist oder nicht schwul bist? F: Ich glaube, ich bin 70, 80% schwul. C: Ich habe häufig gehört, (...) solange wie du aktiv bist, bist du auch noch nicht schwul. Aber wenn du dich – F: Ficken lässt C: dann bist du schwul. F: Ja. Ja, ich bin bestimmt 80% schwul. 70, 80.“ (F12)

4.5 Elements of force and exploitation during the migration process

„Zuhälter“ (K2)

“Er hat mir gesagt, ich bringe dich Deutschland, kannst du arbeiten kommen.“ (K3)

“Aber das war schlimm. Das war gut, auch schlimm. Weil die Zuhälter hat mir gezeigt Deutschland“ (K3)

„Vielleicht auch manchmal bekommst du eine Schlägerei von Zuhälter, dann arbeitest du nicht. Oder wenn er will das ganze Geld.“ (K4)

„Und er hat gefragt, wenn ich will mit ihm nach Deutschland kommen, dann ich machen für ihn (...) betteln. (...) Aber ich habe zu ihm gesagt: Okay, du willst mit mir gehen, aber ich, was ich verdienen? Und er hat gesagt: wenn ich verdiene, wenn ich verdiene 1000 Euro, hat gesagt 800, 700 ist sein Geld, 300 meine. Ich habe gesagt, ich bin zufrieden. Aber ich wollte Deutschland kommen.“ (F1)

„Dieser Mann war ein bisschen schlecht mit mir, Immer schlecht. Mach Geld! Du musst jeden Tag 50 Euro kriegen. Musst du. Ich musste jeden Tag 50 Euro bekommen.“ (F1)

„A: Ein großer Traum war eigentlich auch nach .. (Abel stockt) ja, nach Deutschland auch zu kommen.

C: Fällt dir das schwer darüber zu reden?

A: Nee. Aber es ist eine, eine alte Wunde, die wird wieder aufgemacht.“ (AB1)

“Das war eine harte Zeit. Beinahe bin ich gestorben, Weil das war sehr gefährlich. Unter dem Zug. Wo die ganzen Sachen da beim Zug, die Elektronik und das alles.“ (AB2)

„Freund“ (AB2)

“Mein Adoptivvater war selber schwul. Der war bei mir, der war, der hat nicht was von mir, ich war kein Opfer von so was. (...) Ja und ich habe bei ihm gelebt. Das war auch schön, das war auch traurig, das war einsam. Es war, es war auch viel nachzudenken. Obwohl ich war aufgewachsen in der großen Familie und auf einmal war ich ein Einzelkind. (...)Da musste ich viele Tränen fließen. Und das zu vergessen, und mich einstellen auf das Leben. (...)Dann hat er sich entschlossen, weil er hat mich kennen gelernt, hat er gesehen, ein gläubischer, ein, war sofort klar, bin von einer gut gläubischen Familie kommt, das ist auch kategorisch, noch mal dass das Kind auch gläubisch ist. Und hat er gesehen meine Art: Ich war sehr fleißig und sehr jung und ich konnte schon kochen, ich konnte schon. Das, ich habe ihn überrascht. Ich hab ihn erobert. Das ein Kind so was kann machen. Und er kam so auf die Idee mit der Adoption mir zu helfen.“ (AB2-3)

Questionnaire Men

Topic	Function	Possible concrete questions	Conceptual link
	Introduction	Confidentiality / anonymity: Changing of names, places, other recognizable data, limited access to the data Personal introduction: Former work at Looks, current study, content and aims of the research Interview: Recording, approximate length, raised topics	
	Warm up Warm up	Where do you come from exactly in Bulgaria/Romania? Since when have you been in Hamburg/Berlin? <i>first time, how many times</i> Did you travel to other destinations as well?	traveling behavior, European dimension, transnationalism
I. Living conditions in country of origin	Key question	I would like to talk with you about your life in Romania and Bulgaria. I imagine it to be very different. Please, describe how your life looked/looks in Bulgaria/Romania. <i>family situation</i> <i>housing situation</i> <i>education</i> <i>employment</i> <i>spoken language</i> To which ethnic group do you belong to? Bulgarians, Romanians, Turks, Roma, Gypsies, Pomaks, ... What do other Bulgarians or Romanians say about your ethnic belonging? How did your ethnicity affect your life?	vulnerability social exclusion push factors ethnicity: auto-perception ethnicity: hetero-perception discrimination

<p>II. Migratory process</p>	<p>Transition</p> <p>Key</p>	<p>When did you get the idea to go to the West for the first time?</p> <p>How did you get the idea? <i>other persons involved</i></p> <p>Please, describe how your first journey to the West looked like concretely? <i>elements of force, further traveling behavior</i></p> <p>When you look back to your life in Romania and Bulgaria now, what were your reasons to leave Romania and Bulgaria and go to Western Europe?</p> <p>What did you think what your life in the EU would look like? <i>knowledge about sex work</i></p>	<p>irregular migration role of social networks trafficking</p> <p>motives, push factors</p> <p>pull factors</p>
<p>III. Living conditions in Germany</p>	<p>Transition</p> <p>Key</p> <p>Transition</p> <p>Reassuring</p>	<p>And now, with your experiences here, did your expectations get fulfilled?</p> <p>I would like to talk with you more about your life in Germany. Please, tell me how your life looks like here in Germany. <i>housing situation</i> <i>working situation</i> <i>social contacts</i> <i>girlfriends/boyfriend/husbands/wives</i> <i>pimping</i></p> <p>What do you think about the prostitution scene here? <i>approach towards homosexuality</i></p> <p>Please, tell me what your own experiences in the prostitution scene are. What comes naturally to you and what do you regard to be difficult?</p> <p>What do you tell your friends and relative about your life in Germany?</p> <p>Now that we talked about both, your life in Bulgaria/Romania and your life in Germany, what is the advantage of your stay here?</p>	<p>pull factors flexible workers vulnerability informal/formal networks</p> <p>stigma prostitution / homosexuality Benefit of sex work</p> <p>stigma</p> <p>motives and results of migration</p>

IV.Future	Key	After we talked about your life in Bulgaria/ Romania and in Germany, I would like to know: what are your plans are for the future? <i>Where?</i> <i>sex work / other employment</i>	benefits and disadvantages from migration
	Reassuring	If somebody from your hometown asks you about going to Germany himself, what would you tell him?	
	Ending	I don't have any questions left. But maybe there is something that you want to add? Maybe something that you wanted to say or that came up during the interview?	

BOLD = Central questions
ITALICS = Topics of further interest and request

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