



How Age Matters
Exploring Contemporary Dutch Debates on Age and Sex Work

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I think of age as a great universalizing force. It's the only thing we all have in common. It doesn't begin when you collect your social security benefits. Aging begins with the moment of birth, and it ends only when life itself has ended. Life is a continuum; only, we -- in our stupidity and blindness -- have chopped it up into little pieces and kept all those little pieces separate.

– *Maggie Kuhn (1905-1995), American Civil Rights Activist*

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List of Acronyms

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
HAP	Huiskamer Aanloop Prostituees (English: Living room for Prostitutes)
ICRSE	International Committee of Sex Workers Rights Europe
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SHOP	Hulp en Opvang Prostitutie en Mensenhandel (English: Support and Shelter Prostitution and Human trafficking)

Abstract

Social protection policies regarding sex work in The Netherlands use ‘age’ as an instrument to create binaries between adults and young people. The concept ‘chronological age’ assumes that age is a static feature and supports the process of categorization; however, age is a socially constructed phenomenon and has an embodied experience that is gendered. The objective of this research is to understand the role of ‘age’ in shaping social protection policies regarding sex work in The Netherlands, by analyzing how age is understood by those involved in the design and implementation of policies related to sex work in The Netherlands.

Relevance to Development Studies

Development studies has naturalized age as a simple and static category. However, age is a socially constructed and performed phenomenon. Failing to recognize the limits of a chronological definition of age creates simplified categories within policies. Moreover, age can be used as an instrument to blur reasons behind policy amendments, which is observed in policies related to sex work. Therefore, I explore the role of age in shaping social protection policies regarding sex work in The Netherlands. This research contributes to the existing literature within ‘Children & Youth Studies’ and to Dutch policy making related to young people and sex work.

Keywords

Age, Sex Work, Minimum Age Policies, Gender, Agency, Protection, Resilience, Prostitution

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

One of the most common questions asked of children in The Netherlands is: *How old are you?* Age is a number that we were told belonged to us that we have seen grow as the years passed. The number is not physically marked on our body and it is something that we, human beings, have ourselves constructed and reinforced in order to make sense of the world. While this notion of a chronological age appears to be universal, it is embedded within the modern industrial society. As described by Scott, modern can be understood as a desire for rational order that creates efficient and rationally organized cities and states (1998: 4). Chronological age is a component of an ongoing “project of legibility” in the process of state simplification that further enhances rational order and efficiency (Scott 1998: 80). This chronological way of categorizing ourselves is dominant in The Netherlands: it shapes social protection policies, determines when we are allowed to do certain things and when we deserve protection.

The legal minimum age in The Netherlands to ...

- ... earn a minimum wage = 15
- ... have consensual sex = 16
- ... marry with parental approval = 16
- ... be a client of a sex worker and pay for sex = 16
- ... enter the army = 17
- ... start your training as a pilot = 17
- ... be considered an adult = 18
- ... marry = 18
- ... engage in war operations while working in the army = 18
- ... work for the police = 18
- ... vote at elections = 18
- ... be a public bus driver = 18 (this was 21 until 2011)
- ... be a sex worker = 18 (very likely to change to 21 in 2014)
- ... work for the fire department = 20
- ... be a touring bus driver = 20 (this was 21 until 2011)
- ... be financially independent = 21

As a young Dutch female student in ‘Children & Youth Studies’, when I began this research late 2012, I had recently learned about the proposal that would increase the legal minimum age for sex workers from 18 to 21. This proposal had been discussed as a component of a larger amendment to the regulation of sex work in the Dutch Parliament since 2009. Sex work is a legal profession in The Netherlands and, from the age of 18 onwards, Dutch people are expected to be able to make decisions regarding their future and their own bodies. This proposal left me puzzled and I wanted to explore the constructs behind such a discourse.

The Parliamentary debates on this amendment must be placed in a historical perspective. Whereas the 1980s and the 1990s were characterized by the framing of sex work as profession, in line with the liberal discourse at the time, the beginning of the 21st century was characterized by a discourse that frames sex workers as young female victims (Outshoorn 2012: 242). This new framing is “compatible with the policy discourse of the current right wing government about law, order and migration” (ibid).

Being labelled as young of age is related to having a young, naïve and vulnerable body. When this young body is considered in the context of labour, bodily work and sexual pleasure it quickly becomes controversial. Although this sensitivity is constructed in society and individuals are merely part of this system, I find it worrying that policy making can be shaped by moral judgements and gut feelings.

The main argument put forward to justify an increase the legal minimum age of sex workers from 18 to 21 is that individuals aged 21 are more resilient (translated from ‘weerbaarheid’ in Dutch) (Dutch Government 2013: 15). While I do not refute the argument that resilience is shaped by experiences through time; I challenge the double standards applied when resilience is presented as a requirement to do certain activities. I think that the absence of discussion on when one can enter the army, while the legal minimum age of sex workers is easily increased is essentially problematic. Likewise, I think that the absence of discussion on the legal minimum age of the client at 16, while the legal minimum age of sex workers encounters little resistance among politicians is essentially problematic. That such trends are problematic does not mean that they cannot be explained.

1.2 Framing Research Issue

Social protection policy refers to a collective of interventions “taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society” (Norton et al. 2002: 543). Prostitution policy in The Netherlands is framed within a so-

cial protection perspective. My analysis in this Research Paper will show that the prostitution policy is also influenced by elements of control, security and economics.

While ‘age’ can appear to be a straight-forward concept to work with for developing simple categorizations within social protection policies, in reality, age is a very complex, social construct. Prostitution policy in The Netherlands is based on a chronological definition of age. From an empowerment perspective one can consider sex work as a conscious choice made by those concerned and recognize that sex work may provide more income and more control over one’s working conditions than many other jobs¹ (Weitzer 2009: 215).

While there is an increasing recognition of the idea that young people have agency (Montgomery 2010, Davidson 2005, Wihstutz 2011), youth continue to be constructed as incapable of long-term decision making. While sex work is a legal profession in The Netherlands, the legal minimum age for sex workers is determined by the mainstream argument that young people until the age of 21 cannot make long-term decisions and are not resilient (Dutch Government 2013: 15). Age is currently used as a determinant in social protection policy on sex work and interacts with concepts such as agency and resilience; therefore, I aim to provide an understanding of how age is constructed in relation to sex work.

1.3 Research Objective & Questions

The objective of this research is to understand what is the role of ‘age’ in shaping social protection policies regarding sex work in The Netherlands. I aim to do this by analyzing the discourses on the meaning of age, shaped by those involved in the design and implementation of policies related to sex work in The Netherlands. The discussion of this analysis will seek to answer the following questions:

1. *How does age function as an indicator of resilience & agency in relation to sex work?*
2. *How do the social constructions of age and gender inform each other in relation to sex work?*
3. *How does the performing age construct the attractiveness of ‘young’?*

This research will contribute to existing literature in ‘Children and Youth Studies’; moreover, the research will provide a background analysis for Dutch policy making in the domain of social protection policies related to young people and sex work.

¹ I would like to clarify that I think that sex work is best understood as an income generating activity. Sex work is special work and, like with many other jobs, not everyone is suited for this type of work. Governments must create a healthy environment in which sex workers can work safely and have the same entitlements as those working in any other job. For a more detailed definition of sex work, please refer to section 4.2.2.1.

1.4 Organization of the Research Paper

The Research Paper will be organized as follows. In chapter 2, I elaborate on the Dutch context in which this research is situated. In chapter 3, I discuss the methodology that was used in the process of generating the knowledge basis for this Research Paper. In chapter 4, I explain the conceptual model and elaborate on key concepts on which it rests; this model serves as a lens for analysis in the subsequent chapters. In chapter 5, I analyze how age functions as an indicator for resilience and agency. In chapter 6, I examine how the social constructions of age and gender inform each other in relation to sex work. In chapter 7, I look into the performing age and how it constructs the attractiveness of ‘young’. Finally, in chapter 8, I arrive at the conclusions of this Research Paper and present some forward-looking remarks.

Chapter 2

Situating Research in Dutch Context

This research is situated in The Netherlands. The reason for choosing The Netherlands as the country of analysis was threefold: 1) the political debates on changing the minimum age for sex workers from 18 to 21 presented an opportune moment for the research; 2) being based in The Netherlands, I have been able to conduct interviews over a longer period of time; 3) being Dutch, I have an understanding of the language and cultural symbols used during the conversations (interviews) for this research.

2.1 Dutch Sex Work Policy in a Historical Perspective

Prostitution policy² has a long history in The Netherlands. While sex workers have been portrayed as victims of poverty, ‘fallen’ or ‘sinful’ women or as ‘psychiatrically disturbed’ in the 1950s and 1960s – sex workers have never been criminalized under Dutch law (Outshoorn 2012: 234). Being one of the first countries to legalize sex work in 1999, The Netherlands is well known for its liberal position on sex work (ibid: 232). The legalization of sex work came at a time that sex workers were presented as modern and emancipated (Outshoorn 2012: 242). From 2000 onwards, the extensive publicity on trafficking and the ‘lover boy panic’³ changed public opinion and has led to a “renewed discourse about young female victims that eclipsed the image of the modern consenting sex worker” (ibid). The sensationalist media reporting on trafficking and the failure of the legalization of sex work has contributed to the political debate and accumulated in the proposed prostitution law (Wagenaar & Altink 2012: 285).

2.2 Background on Proposed Amendment: From 18 to 21

The proposed prostitution law is titled ‘Rules related to the regulation of prostitution and combating abuses in the sex industry’ (translated from Dutch). The title implies that the proposal is a combined effort to regulate sex work and tackle human trafficking. This research does not aim to analyze the full amendment of the law and will only consider the component that proposes increasing the legal minimum age for sex workers from 18 to 21. The debates on this amendment

² While I deliberately choose to use the term ‘sex work’ in this Research Paper, I use the term ‘prostitution policy’ when I refer to the Dutch policy on this matter; as is done within the legal context of this topic. For more information on this word choice, see to section 4.2.2.1 on ‘Sex work’.

³ ‘Lover boy’ is a term that is used within the Dutch context and refers to “young men forcing vulnerable young girls into prostitution, giving rise to new welfare projects to ‘save’ them” (Outshoorn 2012: 238).

have been fuelled by the ‘lover boy panic’ and calls for measures to address ‘youth prostitution’ (Outshoorn 2012: 240). While the definition of ‘youth’ or ‘child’ differed in the parliamentary debate, youth below age 18 are legally recognized as minors and the age of consent for sex is above 16 (ibid). The support for the amendment is primarily found among municipalities; supporters argue that people aged 21 are more mature, resilient and able to make an informed decision (Dutch Government 2013: 15). Opponents highlight that the ‘recruitment’ process of sex workers begins around the age of 14 and moving the legal minimum age from 18 to 21 will abruptly criminalize a large part of the sex workers, while facing additional barriers to access services (ibid).

2.3 Going Dutch: Liberal Climate on Sexuality & Sex Work

The Netherlands has positioned itself and has been constructed by others as a country with liberal views and policies, not only on sex work but also on sexuality in general.

Sexuality education material in The Netherlands often presents topics related to sexuality in a positive light, “including the pleasurable aspects of sex and relationships” (Ferguson et al. 2008: 100). This approach emerged from the idea that young people are “curious about sex and sexuality and that they need, want and have a right to accurate and comprehensive information about sexual health” (ibid: 103). Young people are expected to have evolving capacities to act upon their agency and make decisions in relation to their lives – which includes sexuality. This contributes to a pragmatic view of adolescent sexuality: that they are ready for sexual activity when it is safe and in the context of a relationship (Schalet 2000). Since the use of contraception is assumed as a given, adolescent sexuality is less feared (ibid). Parents are expected to openly discuss sexuality with their children and it is assumed that at a certain point adolescents become sexually active.

These approaches to sexuality have their roots in the liberalization of sexual regulation in the 1960s, which have to some extent enabled a “freeing up of sexuality” (Jackson & Scott 2004: 234). In 1999, the liberal Dutch discourse on tolerance was dominant, also referred to as “an ‘enlightened nationalism’ which included respect for gay rights, permissive drugs policy, a liberal abortion regime, legal euthanasia and since 2001 same-sex marriage” (Outshoorn 2012: 235). The legalization of sex work in 1999 fit well within this discourse and the rights of the sex worker were placed at the center of the debate: “the right to do work of their own choosing, to social insurance and to the recognition of their right to sexual self-determination”(ibid).

The dominant discourse still upholds the liberal views on sexuality, yet the reality challenges whether this is more than an image. Many parents would like to discuss sexuality openly with

their children, yet define openness in rather narrow terms (Jackson & Scott 2004: 235). Moreover, the contemporary climate of anxiety about sexual abuse, is not conducive to discuss sexuality openly – as a child who knows ‘too much’ can be labelled as a victim of sexual abuse (ibid).

While The Netherlands is still positioned as a country with liberal views on sex work, through the process of this research I saw this image crumbling into bits and pieces. Today, while sex work is seen as a legal profession in The Netherlands, it is far from being seen as a ‘normal’ profession. This is clarified by the quotes below from some of the conversations I had for this research:

If they go to the bank, they do not get a loan. Okay, they can get registered with the Chamber of Commerce, but all subsequent steps that you would like to take would not be possible. [...] I have also never seen that there was a Stepping Out program created for bakers (Sex trafficking survivor, 18/07/2013, Rotterdam, personal interview).

“People” say, we see it as a legal professional and that is how it’s seen, but it is not considered work. It is not seen as a normal way of performing your job. Look, whether or not you think it is a normal way of performing your job – it is just work where people properly pay their taxes and fully participate in society (Director Stichting Geisha, 09/09/2013, Gouda, personal interview).

Different movements influenced Dutch policy making related to sex work; however, the wide diversity in terms of positioning towards sex work challenges a unified lobby strategy. For example, the feminist movement was – and still is – strongly divided on the matter of sex work. Some feminists campaign for “women’s rights to live without sexual exploitation, whether paid or unpaid”, while framing sex work as sexual exploitation (Kilvington et al. 2001: 79). Other feminists campaign for “workers’ rights in the sex industry and de-stigmatization” (ibid).

While policy making on sex work has been shaped by Dutch pragmatism, the moral attitude of Dutch people towards sex work is no different than those of people in other Western European countries (Kilvington et al. 2001: 81). On top of that, the fear of illegal migration and the continuous publicity on victims of sexual exploitation shaped the discourse that emerged in the early 2000s (Outshoorn 2012: 235). Perhaps the position of The Netherlands as a country with liberal views on sex work was only an image after all.

2.4 Child Protection & Sex Work Regulation

In this rather confusing so-called ‘liberal’ climate on sex work in The Netherlands, another layer of complications is added as the domain on child protection also interacts with sex work regulation. The child protection approach in The Netherlands is located with the policies on ‘youth care’ (translated from ‘jeugdzorg’ in Dutch), which is defined by the Dutch law as:

Support and assistance to young people, their parents, step-parents or others who take care and educate this young person in their family, with the exception of foster parents, in the case of problems related to the upbringing or the threat of such problems in the future (Wet op Jeugdzorg Artikel 1 2013).

While social protection schemes in The Netherlands ultimately support all those who require protection, the child protection provisions end at the age of 18⁴. At that point one is expected to take care of oneself and oversee the consequences of their actions. The rationale provided to increase the minimum age of sex workers implies that those of 18 would not be able to oversee the consequences of their actions and are not sufficiently resilient. In doing so, the proposed amendment creates a tension between child protection policies and sex work regulation; it implicitly challenges whether the line of protection should be at 18 or 21. Moreover, it presents new questions regarding child protection and how it relates to the evolving capacities of young people to exercise agency.

⁴ In unique circumstances child protection provisions can be extended to the age of 23.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Having discussed the research context in The Netherlands I now continue with a description of the methodology that is used for this exploratory qualitative research.

My research is rooted in the idea that knowledge is never neutral and that knowledge is created. I find it important to mention that I am not only a young Dutch female student in ‘Children & Youth Studies’, I have also been involved for many years in the youth movement that focuses on sexual and reproductive rights. Without a doubt, my political standpoints related to the sexual and reproductive rights of young people influence the process of knowledge production. Moreover, this research is not conducted in a vacuum, which means that the knowledge is co-produced by the interaction with other ideas and materials.

Within the process of knowledge production, I identify both primary and secondary data. All of these materials were analyzed through critical discourse analysis. Figure 1 illustrates this method. In the following sections I will elaborate on how the materials were collected and how this shapes the basis of the knowledge production.

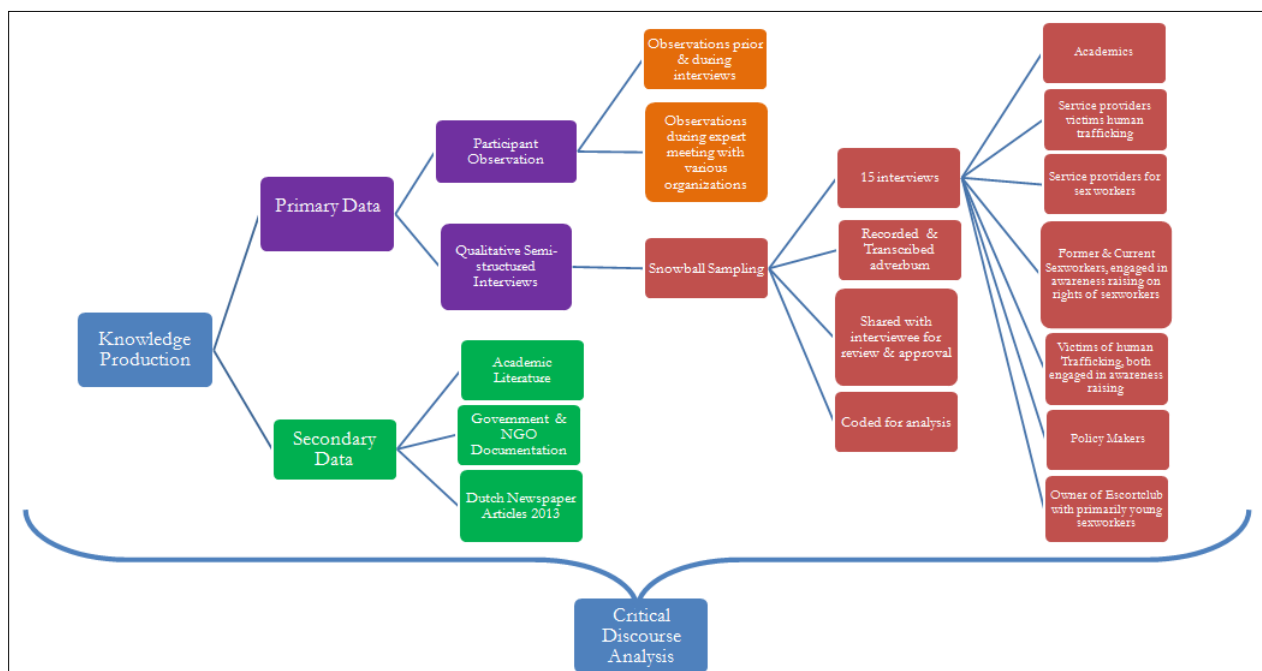


Figure 1: Visual Mapping of Research Methodology

3.1 Primary Data: Qualitative Interviews

The substantial part of this research relies on qualitative, semi-structured interviews. I conducted the interviews myself between June 25, 2013 and September 20, 2013. In total 15 interviews were completed. The interviewees were selected through a method of snowball sampling, a sampling technique through which the researcher obtains information about potential interviewees through the initial interviewees⁵.

The format of semi-structured interviews allowed me to engage with the interviewees in a conversation. As recognized by Kvale and Brinkman, knowledge is produced, conversational and relational (2009: 54). The interviewees were given the opportunity to ask me questions, which constructed a conversational process that served as the basis for the written transcripts. To build on the idea that these interviews were conversations through which knowledge was produced, I will refer to them as ‘conversations’ in the chapters following the methodology section.

The interviewees are engaged with the social policy implementation from different perspectives: policy maker, academic, awareness-raiser, sex trafficking survivor, service provider, owner of a high-class escort service, former sex worker, and member of a sex workers association. While I have interviewed some former and current sex workers, none were under the age of 21 (the proposed legal minimum age for sex workers). I recognize that this could be seen as a limitation; however, the focus of this research is analysing discourse created by those who are engaged with the social policy implementation that inform young people and sex work in various ways. This process of constructing age is not limited to a certain chronological age, which means that the chronological age of the interviewees is less relevant.

Each conversation was held in Dutch, recorded and transcribed ad verbum. The transcripts have been shared for review with the interviewees prior to finalization. The transcripts were coded, thematically organized and served as guidelines in order to identify the main sections of the Research Paper. I translated the quotes from the interviews myself in order to ensure the meaning of the quote was not lost.

The snowball sampling method provided me with a wide range of possible contacts. Within the limits of this research, I made a selection of individuals to be interviewed, listed below in no particular order. The background of the interviewees is also presented.

⁵ Methodologically I recognize that snowball sampling has its limitations as the recommendations may have been biased towards a certain direction and brought me to a select circle of acquaintances. However, this Research Paper focuses on the analysis of how age is constructed in relation to sex work and moves beyond the individuals with which I have spoken.

Overview Interviewees	
Interviewee	Background
Program Manager Sex work Projects at the <i>Aids Fonds</i>	<i>Aids Fonds</i> is an organization working on both national and international levels to combat STIs and HIV and promote sexual health. One of their programs focuses on improving the position of sex workers so that they can choose healthy and safe work.
Professor of Town and Regional Planning, from University of Sheffield	He has approximately 10 years of research experience in Sex work Policy.
Program manager Sexual Violence working at <i>MOVISIE</i>	<i>MOVISIE</i> is The Netherlands centre for social development.
Senior Policy Advisor, <i>Ministry of Security and Justice</i>	He was involved in the development of the proposed law 'Rules related to the regulation of prostitution and combating abuses in the sex industry'.
Social Worker at <i>Huiskamer Aanloop Prostituees</i>	<i>Huiskamer Aanloop Prostituees</i> is an organization in Utrecht that provides a safe space for sex workers to get in touch with other sex workers, have a conversation with a social worker, receive medical attention or just have a cup of coffee.
Founder <i>Stichting Open Ogen</i> and sex trafficking survivor	She was 20 years old when she was a victim of sexual exploitation. Based on the experiences with sexual exploitation <i>Stichting Open Ogen</i> provides advice, support, workshops and awareness raising in both in-school and out-school settings.
Social Worker at <i>SHOP, Hulp en Oprang Prostitutie en Mensenhandel</i>	<i>SHOP</i> is an organization in The Hague that aims to improve the position of (former) sex workers and victims of trafficking by providing information, advice and practical and psychosocial assistance.
Former sex worker	She worked as an escort and in brothels in Europe for years. Sex worker activist and board member of the ICRSE (International Committee of Sex Workers Rights Europe).
Policy Officer at <i>Prostitutie Maatschappelijke Werk</i>	<i>Prostitutie Maatschappelijke Werk</i> provides both practical and psychosocial assistance to (former) sex workers in the Rotterdam region.
Sex trafficking survivor	She was 20 years old when she entered as sex worker and was at that stage fully convinced that this was her choice. Years later she identified herself as sex trafficking survivor and raises awareness through classes in both schools and other settings for <i>Stichting Open Ogen</i> .
Social Worker at <i>Pretty Woman</i>	<i>Pretty Woman</i> is an organization that provides education in the form of individual and group assistance to girls and young women between the age of 12 and 23. The aim of the organization is to prevent girls from ending up in abusive relationships and provide support to break patterns that maintain these relationships.
Director <i>Stichting Geisha</i>	<i>Stichting Geisha</i> is an association for and by sex workers, which defends the position and rights of sex workers in the broadest sense.
Project Manager Center Child & Human Trafficking at <i>Fier Fryslân</i>	<i>Fier Fryslân</i> is an organization that provides support to children, young people and adults who are, or have been, confronted by violence in relationships.
Co-owner of <i>The Courtesan Club</i> ,	<i>The Courtesan Club</i> is a high-class escort service (the first Dutch agency of its kind) that is solely owned and managed by women.
Member of Parliament for the <i>Christian Union</i>	The <i>Christian Union</i> is the Dutch Centrist Christian Democratic Political Party. This Member of Parliament has Security and Justice in his portfolio, which includes sex work.

3.2 Primary Data: Participant Observation

Within the process of my research I had the opportunity to engage as a participant observer during two stages of my data collection.

First, during the 15 interviews I was not only performing the role of interviewer, but I also observed the reactions and body language of the interviewee. This supported my analysis of the interview transcripts.

Second, I attended a meeting with various organisations in this field in The Netherlands. This meeting had a strong focus on boundary-crossing sexual behaviour. This provided me with an opportunity to observe the dialogue between different individuals and organisations.

While I have not deduced main conclusions from these participant observations, these reports have supported the research process and analysis of the findings.

3.3 Secondary Data

In order to have a broader understanding of the context in which the primary materials are located I used secondary data. The secondary data can be roughly categorized into: academic literature, government and NGO documentation and Dutch newspaper articles. The academic literature inspired my thinking for the conceptual model and can be found in the bibliography. The government and NGO documentation that I have consulted and used as background information can be found in appendix 3. With regards to the Dutch newspaper articles, I have compiled 20 articles that were published within the period from January 1, 2013 to October 1, 2013, and were found through a Google search using the terms ‘minimum age prostitution’. The details of the newspaper articles can be found in appendix 4.

3.4 Critical Discourse Analysis

To analyze the primary and secondary data, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) appeared to be the most appropriate approach. I understand CDA as a method that is not only “interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena that are necessarily complex and thus require a multidisciplinary and multi-methodical approach” (Wodak & Meyer 2009: 2). Through this multi-methodical approach I have been able to combine an analysis of both text and context.

For this research I applied Critical Discourse Analysis as follows. First, I have coded the interview transcripts. This was a process in which I highlighted sections that I believed to be relevant

to the research questions and added a code that referred to a broader conversation or element of the research questions. In total 25 codes were applied, the full list of codes with their description can be found in appendix 2. Second, once all transcripts were coded, I filed the segments of the interviews according to the codes that completed the phase of categorization. Third, the categorized material offered me the possibility to analyze the relations between quotes, highlight patterns and analyze the origins of certain ideas.

On top of the analysis of the interview transcripts, the Dutch newspaper articles (see section on secondary data and appendix 4) were analyzed. While analyzing, I have highlighted linguistic units that I believed to be relevant to the research questions and unpacked what this meant in a simple analysis table. One analysis table that examines a press release by the Municipality of Amsterdam regarding the increase of the legal minimum age for sex workers can be found in appendix 5.

Chapter 4

Conceptualizing the Function of Age in Sex Work

In this chapter I lay out the multi-layered lens through which the Research Paper should to be understood. I discuss four key concepts and four paradigms, after which I examine the connections between them.

4.1 Key Concepts on Young People & Sex Work

Four important concepts highlighted across a range of literature are age, agency, gender and protection. Each has a specific function within sex work and there is also an interaction effect between each.

4.1.1 Age

4.1.1.1 Chronological Age

In the Middle Ages there was a point at which the Christian name was too imprecise as a description for the registration of human beings (Ariès et al. 1996: 15). The Christian Church began co-ordination of birth (ibid). Embedded within the Christian Calendar was the linear understanding of time and chronological age. Chronological age categorizes people into certain groups who have lived for the same amount of time. Others argue that chronological age is an outcome of the modern industrial society and that it only became a vital part of people's lives in the mid-nineteenth century (Chudacoff 1989). The chronological age definition has been subjected to much critique, as it creates an arbitrary dividing line and diminishes other ways in which age manifests itself (White 2002; Clark-Kazak 2009; Rader 1979).

4.1.1.2 Age as a Social Construct

While 'aging' has been well researched within the domain of sociology, the idea that 'age' itself is a social construct is relatively new and gained more attention in the 1990s (Laz 1998). Social age is rooted in feminist and queer theories that recognize that even "biological facts of life", such as chronological age, are socially constructed (Clark-Kazak 2009: 1310). In the 1960s and 1970s the difference was made between sex and gender, to highlight that sex can be seen as an objective fact but gender should be understood as a socially constructed framework (Laz 1998: 91). Likewise, chronological age is often treated as if it is an objective fact, while ignoring that age is "situated, contingent and negotiated, and continually constituted in interaction" (ibid: 110).

4.1.1.2 Age Categories

The dominant framework categorizes non-adult human beings into *child* (ages 0-18), *adolescent* (ages 10-19) and *youth* (ages 15-24). From a demographic perspective adolescents and youth together are referred to as *young people* (ages 10-24). However, I use the term *youth* to refer to the age category and the term *young people* when I want to stress the embodied actor with agency. While these categories reflect a certain homogeneity, individuals identify differently with each category.

Children are often seen as adults in “becoming”, in a state of incompleteness, dependent on adults and childhood as a time of innocence and vulnerability (Wihstutz 2011: 448; Such & Walker 2005: 40; Meyers 2007: 53). It is key to recognize children as ‘beings’ in the present time instead of ‘becomings’ and acknowledge them as holders of rights. When referring to children and sexuality, a morally loaded realm opens up that focuses on “maintaining the boundary between childhood innocence and adult sexuality” (Rubin 1984: 158).

Adolescents are living through a distinctive developmental stage in the human life cycle, which is characterized by changes. Adolescence can be seen as a pivotal period “in negotiating the change from childhood to adulthood”, during which the process of sexual maturation begins (Sharpe 2003: 210).

Youth are often constructed as makers or breakers (Comaroff & Comaroff 2005). People’s youth is constructed as a period of transition, which also translates into many mixed messages in relation to young people and sexuality. On the one hand, Dutch young people are confronted with a pragmatic view of sexuality that recognizes that young people are sexually active, assuming contraception is used (Schalet 2000; Ferguson et al. 2008). On the other hand, Dutch young people are confronted with messages that present youth sexuality as risky or dangerous, if contraception is not used (Ferguson et al. 2008; Bakker & Zantinge 2010).

4.1.1.3 Minimum Age

Based on the concept of ‘age’, society has developed the term ‘minimum age’. Minimum age creates a divide between when one is ‘adult’ and when one is ‘young’; this divide is often gendered as it is experienced differently across genders. The concept minimum age can be understood in two ways. First, as a threshold shaped by social age that constructs a division between *before* and *after* a specific moment – I will refer to this as minimum age. Second, a legal concept based on a chronological age definition that assumes some universality – I will refer to this as the legal minimum age.

4.1.2 Agency

Agency is the ability of an individual to make effective choices and having a degree of free choice; in the sense that the actor could have acted otherwise (Bourdillon et al. 2010: 134; Giddens 1984). Young people have evolving capacities to act upon their agency (Cook & Dickens 2000: 14, Bourdillon 2006: 1202). The ability to exercise agency is supported by resilience. Resilience⁶ can be understood as an individual's predisposition to cope with potential negative consequences of risk (Engle et al. 1996: 622; Smith & Carlson 1997). The ability to exercise agency can be constrained due to structures in society. Agency is often more constrained for young people than it is for adults, as adults have a more powerful position in society. In The Netherlands, this power hierarchy between young people and adults is often justified by the argument that those without a fully matured brain are not capable of foreseeing the implications of their actions (Nelis & Sark 2009)

4.1.3 Gender

Gender is a key “structural framework that orders daily life, its relation, practices, institutions and discourses” (Dowsett 2009: 148). From the moment that a child is born, a socialisation process ascribes certain gender markers to the individual: either feminine or masculine (James & James 2008: 66). This gender binary is constructed from an early age, it only makes sense within a heterosexual framework and it has very little recognition for the fluidity of gender identities. Thus, ignoring trans*⁷ people and disrespecting those outside the heteronormative order (Myers & Raymond 2010). A person's gender identity is only one of many co-existing identities and should be understood as intersecting with age, ethnicity, race and class (James & James 2008: 66). Gender moves beyond the domain of how we identify ourselves, it is a social construct and is performed. According to Butler “gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender creates the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all” (1988: 522).

⁶ With resilience I refer to the Dutch word ‘weerbaarheid’. It is important to recognize that the translation from Dutch to English does not fully capture the nuances of the original language. I have chosen the term ‘resilience’, as within the context and terminology of this research I think ‘resilient’ in English is close enough to the meaning of what is implied with ‘weerbaarheid’ in Dutch.

⁷ “Trans (without the asterisk) is best applied to trans men and trans women, while the asterisk makes special note in an effort to include all non-cisgender gender identities, including transgender, transsexual, transvestite, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, genderfuck, genderless, agender, non-gendered, third gender, two-spirit, bigender and trans man and trans woman” (Killerman 2013: 229).

4.1.4 Protection

Along with the discourse that shapes children as dependent and vulnerable as discussed in the section on age, comes a framework that focuses on special provisions and protection (Liebel 2012: 3; Standing 2007). Social protection policies were first designed with the creation of the welfare state in The Netherlands at the end of the 17th century, in which ‘different’ people were supported instead of punished (Noorden 2009: 15; Edström 2007). The Western European societies are adult-centered and place young people in a subordinate power position; therefore, young people have the right to special provisions and protection.

When talking about young sex workers during this research I discovered that discussions were always structured from a protection framework. This created a binary between sex workers above and below the legal minimum age. Those above the legal minimum age were approached from an agency perspective, whereas those below the legal minimum age were approached from a protectionist perspective. This is a false dichotomy – not only can we exercise our agency at every point in life, but also we might rely on protection at every point in life. Furthermore, agency and protection are not mutually exclusive concepts; they contribute to and rely on each other as well.

4.1.5 Connecting Age, Agency, Gender & Protection

Age, agency, gender and protection are key concepts when discussing young people and sex work; they closely interact with one another. Age and gender can be constructed in many different ways, but when related to an individual, both concepts will always have an embodied reality. Based on this embodied reality, society determines the degree to which one can exercise agency and receive protection. For example, a young girl will be attributed less space to exercise her agency and receive more protection from the government than an adult man.

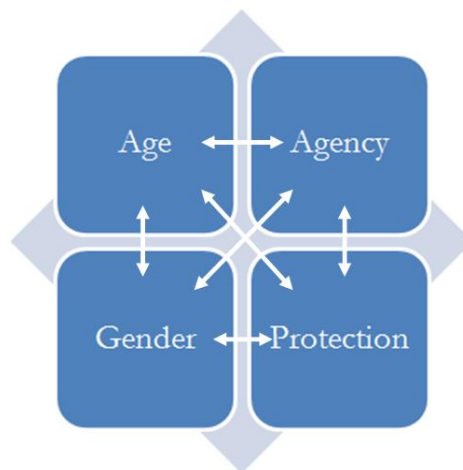


Figure 2: Connecting Age, Agency, Gender & Protection

4.2 Paradigms Interacting with Key Concepts for Young People & Sex work

In this section I will discuss four paradigms that interact with the key concepts discussed above. I refer to these as paradigms, as they should be understood as a group of ideas.

4.2.1 Sexual Bodily Exchanges

The debates related to sex work must be understood in the wider discourse of sexuality. Douglas (1966) lays out how sexuality is viewed as something dangerous. This theory is rooted in the idea that societies are structured in an interplay between form and formlessness, “many ideas about power are based on an idea of society as a series of forms contrasted with surrounding non-form” (Douglas 1966: 98). Douglas argues that by creating binary categories such as ‘form’ versus ‘formlessness’, ‘clean’ versus ‘dirty’ and, ‘pure’ versus ‘polluted’, human beings create order and meaning in a chaotic world. These binaries are supported by mythologies and defend any threats that might cross these cognitive boundaries (ibid).

Fischer (2011) builds on Douglas’ theory and explains that in this dualistic logic a person can either be pure or polluted. This logic has changed historically; Victorian upper-class white women were once the symbol of purity, but this symbol could no longer be upheld in the 20th century when women argued that society should not be organized on a sexual basis (Fischer 2011: 43). Children have now taken the place of the Victorian upper-class white women and are seen as the symbol of purity: “blank slates – unaware of the adult desires and lust” (ibid).

Sexual bodily exchanges are often viewed as something for the adult domain (Doezema 2010: 49); youth, therefore, as a phase of transition into adulthood, becomes a phase of mixed messages.

4.2.2 Bodily Work

4.2.2.1 Sex Work

Sex work is a term that is highly elastic: not only do individuals attribute very different meanings to the term, but it also changes through time and space. Within this section I lay out some key characteristics, while recognizing that there is no simple black and white description. The simplest description would include sex work is an activity through which one provides a wide range of sexual services for financial or material rewards. Like any other job, sex work is an income generating activity and a means towards gaining financial independence (Liebel 2004). Many people choose sex work because it offers flexible working hours and one can earn more money in less time than with other types of work, such as domestic work or manual labour. I choose not to

expand further on the reasons why people choose this job; as sex workers (like any other worker) have the right to self-determination.

I make a deliberate choice to use the term sex work and not prostitution. Sex work recognizes the work as an employment option, whereas prostitution tends to be associated with women selling themselves and social exclusion (Vanwesenbeeck 2001; Harding & Hamilton 2009).

Sex workers are active in all countries and represent a wide range of age groups. In The Netherlands there is a large group of sex workers between the age of 18 and 23 (Director Stichting Geisha, 09/09/2013, Gouda, personal interview; former sex worker, 26/07/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview). Whereas younger sex workers tend to be more focussed on the money that they will earn, older sex workers tend to represent themselves more as businesswomen (Social Worker, 25/07/2013, The Hague, personal interview; Director Stichting Geisha, 09/09/2013, Gouda, personal interview). Some sex workers engage in temporary or irregular work and therefore do not necessarily identify themselves as a sex worker (former sex worker, 26/07/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview).

Estimates on the number of sex workers in The Netherlands vary from 20,000 in 1994 to 30,000 in 2005 (Outshoorn 2012: 236). However, this number has always been open to debate and, due to the stigmatized nature of the work, one cannot expect that these are reliable figures. Sex workers in The Netherlands comprise a highly diverse population; estimates indicate there are 58 different nationalities of sex workers in Amsterdam, predominantly from African countries and the Dominican Republic, closely followed by Eastern European and Asian countries (Soa Aids 2013).

There is a racial hierarchy that can be recognized. Whereas Dutch sex workers are associated with “the epitome of Western libertarian sexual mores and privilege, and make ‘free’ choices to enter the trade”; those from African, Eastern European or Asian backgrounds are usually associated with human trafficking and a representation of those from the (oppressed) Global South⁸ (Shah 2004: 803). This is a false dichotomy in terms of how the agency of the sex worker is represented, as it is self-evident that in both the Global North and the Global South that there are sex workers who are forced into the sector and sex workers who enter the trade based on free choice.

Sex workers tend to be very mobile in terms of where they work, working both within and outside national borders. There is a high variety in working conditions for sex workers, which has implications on how sex work is experienced and viewed. Sex work can be very hazardous work

⁸ During my interviews this was a reoccurring theme and it is clear that such a hierarchy exists. It would be interesting to explore this further in future research as the scope of my research did not allow me to dive much deeper.

and sex workers may face life threatening health risks. Sex work as an income generating activity differs from what society finds ‘normal’; this deviance can make sex workers prone to stigmatization and can lead to exclusion, limited access to health care services and challenges in terms of opening bank accounts or finding housing (Douglas 1966; Social Worker, 25/07/2013, The Hague, personal interview; Director Stichting Geisha, 09/09/2013, Gouda, personal interview).

4.2.2.2 Childhood & Work

The discussions around children who work have been shaped by two different approaches. The first approach argues on the one hand that childhood is a period without responsibilities, a time for leisure, without a place for employment (Sebastian 1997: 208). This approach understands child labour as a moral category irrespective of the effects on a child. The second approach on the other hand views childhood as a continuum, “with children gradually moving into the activities of adults as their competences develop and opportunities arise” (Bourdillon 2006: 1202). From this approach it is argued that children do not view work only as a burden, but they often view it as a chance to gain new self-confidence and to have some independence (Liebel 2004; Wihstutz 2011).

While not being indifferent to the many negative experiences that children face while doing hazardous work, it is important to challenge some of the assumptions to have a more nuanced conversation on children and work. This conversation has opened up and within ‘Children and Youth Studies’ there is more recognition for the second approach, in which one pays attention to the agency of the individual (Bourdillon 2006, Liebel 2004). Nevertheless, there is limited recognition for the possibility that children are active agents in the decision-making process when getting involved in sex work. Davidson wrote *Children in the Global Sex Trade*, in which she explores the complexities of the children in the sex industry:

Children who are neglected, or physically and verbally abused, by their carers, or who are forced to conform to the grimly regimented, emotionally empty routine of life in a state-run orphanage, or who are consistently made the objects of homophobic bullying and denied opportunities to express their sexuality, can experience this as an extinguishing of themselves as full persons. To run away, even if that means using prostitution as a means of survival, can thus be experienced as an assertion of the self as subject, not as being transformed into an object (Davidson 2005: 55).

These perspectives on children engaged in sex work are not only relatively new, but they also remain very controversial (Davidson 2005, Montgomery 2010). Montgomery and Davidson both present a nuanced contribution to the topic and a different way of looking at children and sex work than the mainstream literature. This contribution clarifies the need for understanding chil-

dren as subjects and agents in their own right, while recognizing a continuity between the world of children and that of adults.

4.2.3 Ideology, Norms & Morality Politics

Based on the previous section 'Bodily Work' one can comprehend that sexuality, sex work and young people engaged in sex work are surrounded with a taboo that labels each as dangerous and polluted.

The binary categories, highlighted by Douglas (1966), are not only a way through which human beings make sense of the world; for policy makers a binary system is simple and avoids complexity (Bourdillon 2006: 1204). However, a binary categorization is not made without consequences:

Categorization is fundamental to knowledge, but it is a step towards understanding, not the end product. When data are forced into preconceived categories that determine our responses, these become stereotypes, impeding understanding rather than contributing to it (ibid).

Thus, while these binary categories of 'pure' versus 'polluted' are rooted deeply in society, they will contribute to stereotypes and amplify stigmatization. Within this context Wagenaar and Altink (2012) argue that sex work policy has all the characteristics of morality politics.

[...] morality politics has the effect of restricting open debate, preventing the design and implementation of effective, consistent and reasonable public policy that will ameliorate or improve social conditions and/or the positions of the actors involved and inhibit policy learning... (Wagenaar & Altink 2012: 282)

Wagenaar and Altink identify six characteristics that shape a morality policy: 1) morality is ruled by ideology; 2) morality policy is lay policy; 3) morality policy is emotionally charged; 4) morality policy is resistant to facts; 5) there is a certain impatience with the policy implementation of morality policies; and 6) morality policies are vulnerable to abrupt and drastic change (2012: 283-284). Other issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage and euthanasia belong to the domain of morality politics; all these issues are connected to the embodied personal life (ibid). By understanding the debates related to sex work policy in The Netherlands from the angle of morality politics, one can analyze these from a different level that goes beyond the morally and emotionally-shaped perspective.

4.2.4 Reality: Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation

During my research I have spoken with two survivors of human trafficking, who had identified themselves as sex worker (or prostitute) while working and only recognized the element of traf-

ficking years later. Identification as a sex worker versus a victim of trafficking for sexual exploitation can be a grey area.

Trafficking for sexual exploitation is one of the many forms of trafficking. Trafficking of human beings interacts closely with the discourse of immigration; in Western Europe this discourse has been dominated by anti-immigration agendas (Krieg 2009: 775; Westwood 2010: 27). During the last five years, in The Netherlands, the media has paid a lot of attention to cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation and shifted the public discourse⁹. Whereas previously the focus of the discourse would be primarily focused on the agency of the individual within a human-rights based approach, the discourse shifted towards a victimization approach rooted in anti-trafficking (Krieg 2009: 780; Westwood 2010: 27).

Given the different nature of trafficking for sexual exploitation and sex work, I want to state clearly that it is crucial to discuss sex work separately from trafficking for sexual exploitation. Both require a very different approach and social policy system: when one discusses sex work we need to talk about legal work status, labour unions and safety in work environments; while when one discusses trafficking for sexual exploitation we need to talk about mechanisms to trace illegal circuits and penalties for the perpetrator.

4.3 Visualizing How Key Concepts Interact with Paradigms

Above I have first presented four key concepts: age, agency, gender and protection; subsequently, I discussed four paradigms that interact with these concepts: sexual bodily exchanges, bodily work, ideology & norms, and the reality of exploitation. The first four key concepts are aspects that can each be emphasized *more* or *less* within a specific context or type of policy implementation. For example, in a certain situation age is emphasized more than agency, or in another context a case is approached differently according to gender. The way in which these concepts are approached is influenced by the four paradigms. This creates an inner circle with the key concepts and an outer circle with the paradigms; both circles ought to be understood as moving circles that are influencing each other.

⁹ For example, the Snee case in 2008 that was led by Saban Baran and shocked the general public (Outshoorn 2012: 239).

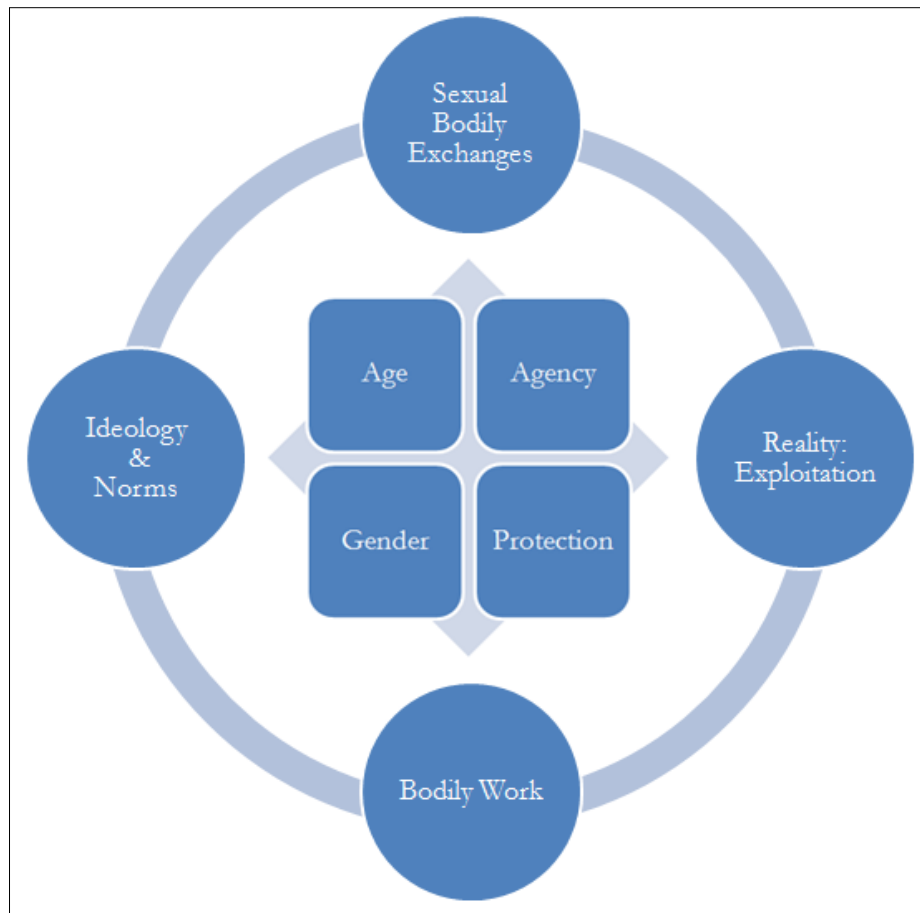


Figure 3: Conceptual Model

I have used this model as a lens for analysis within this research; in the following chapters I use this conceptual model in order to apply it to specific cases.

This model has informed the remainder of this Research Paper, the following chapters are: chapter 5 'Age as an Indicator of Resilience & Agency', chapter 6 'Embodied Realities of Age', and chapter 7 'Forever Young & Sex Work'.

Chapter 5

Age as an Indicator of Resilience & Agency

In this chapter, I seek to answer the research question: *How does age function as an indicator of resilience & agency in relation to sex work?* I do this by exploring how adult intervention is validated within the proposal to increase the legal minimum age from sex work from 18 to 21 and I analyze how resilience and agency are used within the argumentation.

5.1 Resilience as Justification to Increase Legal Minimum Age

As mentioned in the introduction, the Dutch government argues that people aged 21 are more resilient than those aged 18, which is used to justify the increase of the legal minimum age of sex workers from 18 to 21 (Dutch Government 2013: 15). Interestingly, while young people in The Netherlands are allowed to work from the age of 15 years old, the domain on sex work is governed differently; it is likely that in the near future one will have to be 21 years old to work as a sex worker.

From the perspective of practical realities and administrative efficiency I recognize the need for a legal minimum age within policies; and I want to clarify that I do not argue that the legal minimum age should be lower than 18 years of age. However, I do argue that the reasoning behind increasing the legal minimum age is flawed, as it is based on the assumption that sex workers of 21 will be more resilient.

As mentioned earlier, ‘resilience’ is translated from ‘weerbaarheid’ in Dutch, a term that has many connotations and can be understood differently in varying contexts. For this reason, I asked some of the people with whom I spoke for their understanding of the term ‘weerbaarheid’,

Well, the moment that you are an adult and independent, you will have more life experience and take decisions in a more convinced manner. That is when you know, this is what I want and this is what I do not want. And, this will automatically make you more resilient (Senior Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Security and Justice, 15/07/2013, The Hague, personal interview).

Resilience means being able to make choices and define your own limits [...] You have to be able to assess the consequences of your actions, you need to be able to do this very well. So, you need to have a little power and life experience, to know that if you take step A, that you can foresee what step B will look like. You have to know what the potential consequences are and you have to be able to smell danger (former sex worker, 26/07/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview).

At that point, I think that people are just not resilient enough. I think that at that stage people have not had the opportunities yet to discover their own weaknesses. I think people are just too young (Project Manager Center Child & Human Trafficking, 11/09/2013, Leeuwarden, personal interview).

These quotes illustrate to me, that resilience has many facets and is not a one-dimensional attribute that an individual may or may not possess (Zolkoski & Bullock 2012: 2296). Resilience can be understood as “the possession of several skills, in varying degrees, that help a person cope” (ibid). While some attribute resilience to adults and believe that non-adults are still in the process of becoming resilient; I think that the highly individual character of resilience is overlooked. The following question then remains: how can an individually developed attribute, such as resilience, be framed as the main reason to change a policy that is based on a numeric one-size fits all assumption? This was also challenged by some of the people with whom I spoke:

In any case, the one 18 year old is not the same as the other 18 year old. I think it differs a lot from person to person. One time I had a girl who was 25, who I thought was incredibly naïve. Whereas, I also had a girl once who was 19 and I thought she was incredibly sophisticated. Look, I do not really mind that the minimum age went to 21 and for my business it does not really matter. But I do find it a bit strange that you are expected to make every other decision about your life. Apparently your brains are developed enough to decide what you will study, to go on a mission with the army, to enter the police force and all that stuff. Apparently, you are old and wise enough for all those aspects – but when it comes to prostitution, then you are not mature enough. Well, I think that this is a bit odd (co-owner The Courtesan Club, 11/09/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview).

More resilient? Will you be more resilient at 21 than at 18, against the power of prostitution? No. I do not think so. [...] You know, I was 21 when I was a prostitute, was I resilient? No. I believe that if you are 26 you will not be resilient if you are beaten up”(Sex trafficking survivor, 18/07/2013, Rotterdam, personal interview).

Building on these and other conversations, I argue that the argumentation to increase the legal minimum age for sex workers is an example of how double standards are set in policy making where sex work is concerned. In all other areas in the Dutch policy system, young people are expected to be resilient enough to take certain actions at the age of 18: you are allowed to go on a mission with the army, enter the police force, vote for national elections and formally be held accountable for the decisions that you make. The legal minimum age for these activities, viewed as ‘normal’ within society, is hardly ever questioned. Given that the minimum age for most of such activities in The Netherlands is set at 18, these discussions are positioned as unnecessary and redundant, as one is expected to be an adult by then. However, when sex work – bodily work – enters the equation the debate shifts and other angles are emphasized. Suddenly the predominant

age requirement is no longer taken for granted and resilience is brought into the debate as a measure to justify the questioning. This leads to double standards in how the debate on the legal minimum age is approached differently for certain activities. On the one hand, with regards to ‘normal’ activities there is a focus on agency. On the other hand, with regards to ‘bodily work’ the claim is made that this is only meant for certain age groups.

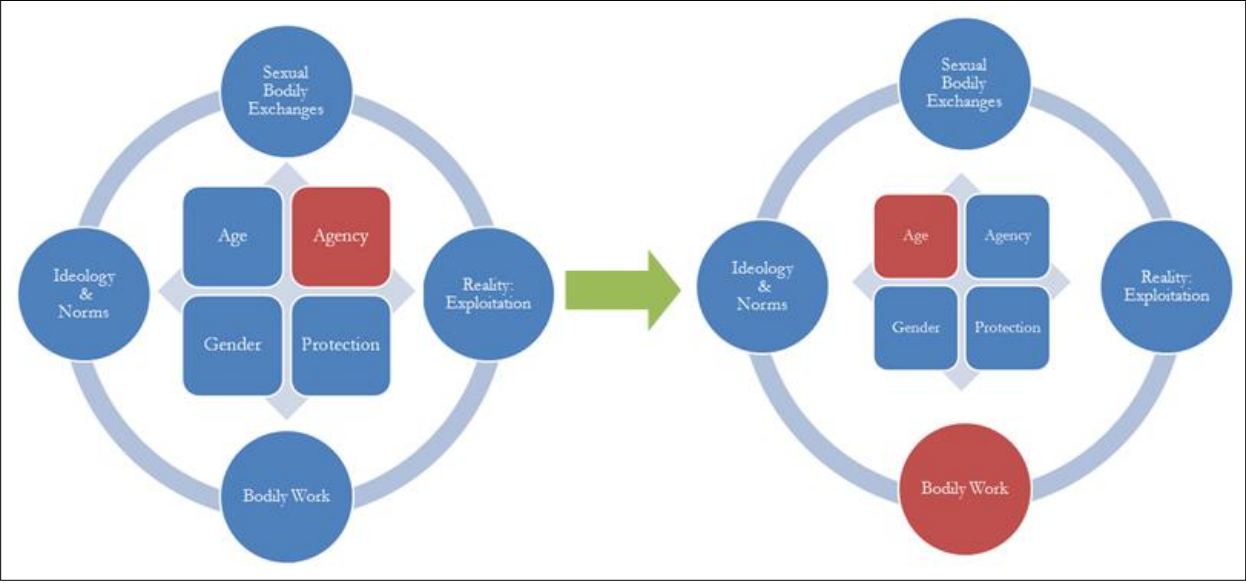


Figure 4: Illustrating shifts in *Conceptual Model* from a situation in which ‘normal’ activities are discussed in terms of legal minimum age towards a situation in which sex work is discussed in terms of legal minimum age. The components highlighted in red refer to the angle that is taken in the approach.

5.2 State of Brain Development and Agency

When I challenged the notion of ‘lack of resilience’, the majority of the people with whom I spoke used arguments within the domain of medical biology. This argument was presented as follows: young people are not able to make long-term decisions, nor are they able to oversee the consequences of their actions due to the developmental state of their brain. The following three quotes illustrate this argument further:

Your brains have only fully matured at the age of 22 or 23, which means that fully overseeing things – you simply cannot do that before that stage yet. I think your age matters because you have not fully matured physically and mentally yet. Even if you ask a teenager, would you like to do this or that the day after tomorrow, then this is simply difficult. Maybe you would like to do something different that day. It’s just difficult to plan (Social Worker, 09/09/2013, Utrecht, personal interview).

Recently we know that this assumption is correct, this has do with their brain development; that the brains of young people are only fully developed between the ages of 23-

25. It is only at that point that the brains have matured sufficiently to oversee the long-term implications of certain choices. For me this is the most essential difference as to why minors need more protection than adults (Program manager Sexual Violence, 01/07/2013, Utrecht, personal interview).

If they could make a CT scan for everybody and tell us with the results: 'okay your brains are ready', then that would work for me as well. But well, that is obviously not possible. If we have to link it to an age anyway and research indicates the age of 23. Well, then we have to keep ourselves to that I guess (Sex trafficking survivor, 05/09/2013, anonymous location, personal interview).

It was striking how interviewees from very different professional backgrounds presented a very consistent and almost unanimous argument, with limited references. While doing some background research, I found the main source behind their arguments: the book 'Puberbrein' published in 2009 by Huub Nelis and Yvonne van Sark.

We have written this book because we think that adults overestimate young people, as if they know everything through the Internet about sex, alcohol and drugs – and from the age of 12 we expect young people to deal with this by themselves. We think that young people need more structure and support (Yvonne van Sark, YouTube 2009).

The argument presented in this book has not only been echoed by many others and shaped the dominant discourse, it also reinforces adult intervention into children's and young people's lives (Cole & Durham 2007: 8).

While this appears to be a dominant way of approaching young people's decision-making; I argue that this moves away from a human rights-based approach and towards a medical domain of the state of the human being. This is problematic as it ignores the agency that young people have. While young people's agency is more restricted than that of adults, diminishing their agency based on medical arguments is inappropriate. The need for acknowledging agency and the need for adequate protection go hand in hand and are not mutually exclusive. Children and youth have evolving capacities in terms of how they act upon their agency (Cook & Dickens 2000: 14, Bourdillon 2006: 1202).

Interestingly, when I asked some people how they would explain the influence of the state of a person's brain development on other major life choices, most of them reacted in a confused manner. Subsequently, they would argue that the impact of the choice to work as a sex worker is more profound than other choices in life. As an example, I refer to the quote below from the interview with a Member of Parliament for the Christian Union:

In many ways ... I cannot imagine an area in which you are more vulnerable than in the area of sexuality. And I think that there is nothing more that interferes with your own

limits, as integrity has to do with boundaries. We are dealing with a group where every day people literally cross those personal boundaries. To expose your body and to have sex with people as a profession, that has much more impact than a choice to go into the army, which you can always leave, where you agree on a contract and where you can do a study and realize that this does not suit me. That has less profound consequences than to choose to become a sex worker and to have to deal with people crossing your boundaries on a daily basis. That has so much more impact (Member of Parliament for the Christian Union, 20/09/2013, Amersfoort, personal interview).

While sex workers indeed use their body to generate income, it is interesting to reflect on how other professions use their bodies is hardly ever challenged. Soldiers use their bodies to kill for a cause that often is not even their personal decision; government diplomats use their bodies and brains to represent arguments that are decided upon by politicians they often have never met and sometimes disagree with; and, professional athletes use their bodies to compete against other bodies to gain international acknowledgement for their nation. Bodies are always, in one way or the other involved in how one generates income. However, when this bodily work is related to sexual bodily exchanges it is regarded as non-appropriate.

Thus, when ‘normal’ professions, including bodily work, are discussed in relation to whether one is capable of making choices about these – then agency is the entry point of the discussion. However, when sex work is discussed – which is not only bodily work, but also involves sexual bodily exchanges – then protection is the entry point of the discussion. The rationale for protection is then framed in relation to the absence of a fully matured brain. This process is illustrated by figure 5.

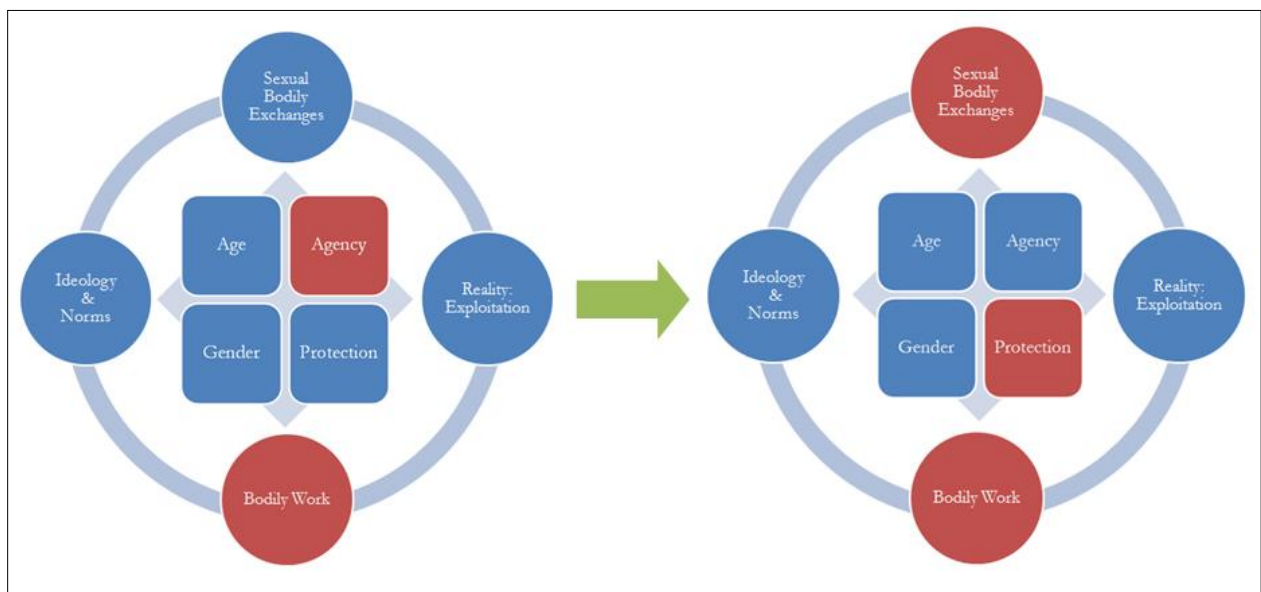


Figure 5: Illustrating shifts in *Conceptual Model* from a situation in which ‘normal’ activities are discussed in relation to a person’s brain development towards a situation in which sex work is discussed in relation to a person’s brain development. The components highlighted in red refer to the angle that is taken in the approach.

The key component that changes the model, in the context of whether agency or protection is emphasized in the approach, is ‘sexual bodily exchanges’. Dutch culture is rooted in ideas that ‘sexual bodily exchanges’ ought to be within a context of reproduction and the nuclear family. Therefore, it is not surprising that when this is connected to ‘bodily work’ the issue becomes more controversial; and when it relates to young people, the conversation is not even considered appropriate.

5.3 Reflections on Age as an Indicator of Resilience & Agency

During the process of all the conversations in this research, I recognized a process of confusion and struggle. On the one hand, there was recognition by those with whom I had conversations that a numeric threshold such as the age of 18 or 21 is arbitrary and does not capture individual characteristics such as resilience and agency. On the other hand, during many of these conversations people had a deeper gut feeling in search of a justification for the need for a minimum chronological age. In the process of justifying gut feelings, arguments such as the ‘lack of resilience’ or ‘lack of fully developed brain’ were brought into the conversation.

This is also a result of a broader process of state simplification. Scott explains that state simplifications can be considered as a component of an ongoing “project of legibility” employed by the modern state (1998: 80). The process of simplification does not refer to anything simple-minded, but rather that knowledge should give a synoptic view and lose their particularity (ibid: 81). State simplification does not allow individual characteristics of resilience or agency to be discussed, but rather it requires categories and avoids complexity, which ignoring distinctions that could have been relevant (Scott 1998; Bourdillon 2006: 1204). I recognize the realities and limitations of the state system that pushes us towards categorization and simplification. However, I believe that double standards within the process of simplification can open space for legal discrepancies in legal minimum age requirements, which could potentially limit the agency of young people in the future¹⁰.

¹⁰ It would be interesting for future research to investigate this further.

Chapter 6

Embodied Realities of Age

Gender and age are socially constructed and shaped through a process of performance (Butler 1988). Gender and age interact with each other and are much more fluid than we often imagine. The embodied experience of age has a gendered element; and vice versa, the embodied experience of gender has an age element.

The aim of this chapter is to seek an answer to the research question: *How do the social constructions of age and gender inform each other in relation to sex work?* First, I will look into how the sex worker is usually presented as a female body. Second, I will discuss how age and gender inform each other. Third, I will explore how the legal minimum age of the client and the sex worker create a gendered domain.

6.1 The Sex Worker: A Female Body

In The Netherlands, you will find that generally speaking the sex worker is presented as a female body and the client as a male body. While the female body is projected as the victim, the male body is projected as the one in control. While there seems to be growing recognition, male and trans* sex workers still tend to go unnoticed in the public debates around sex work (Van Gelder 2011). I spoke to a Social Worker at *SHOP* about her experiences with male sex workers:

This is also related to what I just said, that boys cannot be a victim. That is what many people think. How could you have become a victim as a boy? Because a male is supposed to be strong, the boss, the human trafficker and the client. No one thinks about the male sex worker. And for boys it is 20,000 times more difficult to come to us for support or services. And it is even more difficult to talk about it (Social Worker, 25/07/2013, The Hague, personal interview).

Ignoring gender diversity among sex workers can potentially result in: denying political agency of male and trans* sex workers, perpetuate a larger stigma, reinforce heteronormative ideas in society, and pushing male and trans* sex workers into illegal networks. While both trans* and male sex workers tend to be overlooked in the public debate¹¹, trans* sex workers seem to be more accepted than male sex workers. In a context where gender is constructed as two simple binaries, the idea that those boundaries can be crossed is yet to be accepted (Lacsamana 2013). Therefore,

¹¹ None of the newspaper articles I reviewed touched upon male and transgender sex workers, the list of articles can be found in appendix 4.

for society to make sense of the world, trans* sex workers are ‘pushed’ back into the binary categories: feminine body or masculine body. As most trans* sex workers, have changed from men to women, there is a stronger linkage to the feminine body (Lacsamana, private conversation, 24/10/2013). Given the connection with the feminine body, thus connected with the image of a victim, it is easier to accept trans* sex workers than male sex workers.

The lack of recognition for male and trans* sex workers reinforces that the sex worker is defined as a “distinct female body” (Smith 2012: 590). Nonetheless, there are also tensions in how sex work is related to the female body. Davidson explains how the perception of how a female ‘should be’ differs from how sex workers are seen: namely, “sexually continent, pure, modest and passive” versus “sexually indiscriminate, voracious, immodest and active” (2005: 26). These perceptions of what a female should be clash with each other. Davidson elaborates on this by illustrating that sex workers are not seen as ‘real’ females, they are born as a ‘whore’, which takes away the anxiety and the confusion on her place in the social order (ibid: 27). Moreover, the idea that sex workers are not ‘real’ women re-emphasizes their position as polluted and takes away the risk that they can change the pure women (Davidson 2005: 27; Douglas 1966).

6.2 How Age & Gender Inform Each Other

Based on the conversations I had in the context of this research, I noticed that sex workers from different gender identities seem to be categorized within different age groups. Several of the people with whom I spoke explained that while there is a large market for both female and male young sex workers; there appears to be a larger demand for *younger* male sex workers.

Well, there is a market for young women and young men. Especially for young men. The ‘expiry date’ for men in the business is very short. Young boys are simply very attractive. Young boys are quite popular in homosexual contacts (former sex worker, 26/07/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview).

While female sex workers do not necessarily have an age at which they are moving out of the business; male sex workers tend to lose their jobs when they are around the chronological age of 30. Trans* sex workers in The Netherlands are generally speaking somewhat older, as they take more time to develop their identity (social worker, 17/07/2013, Utrecht, personal interview).

Thus, gendered ideas are shaping when sex workers enter or leave the business. An attempt to visualize differences in when female, male and trans* bodies enter or leave the business is included in figure 6.

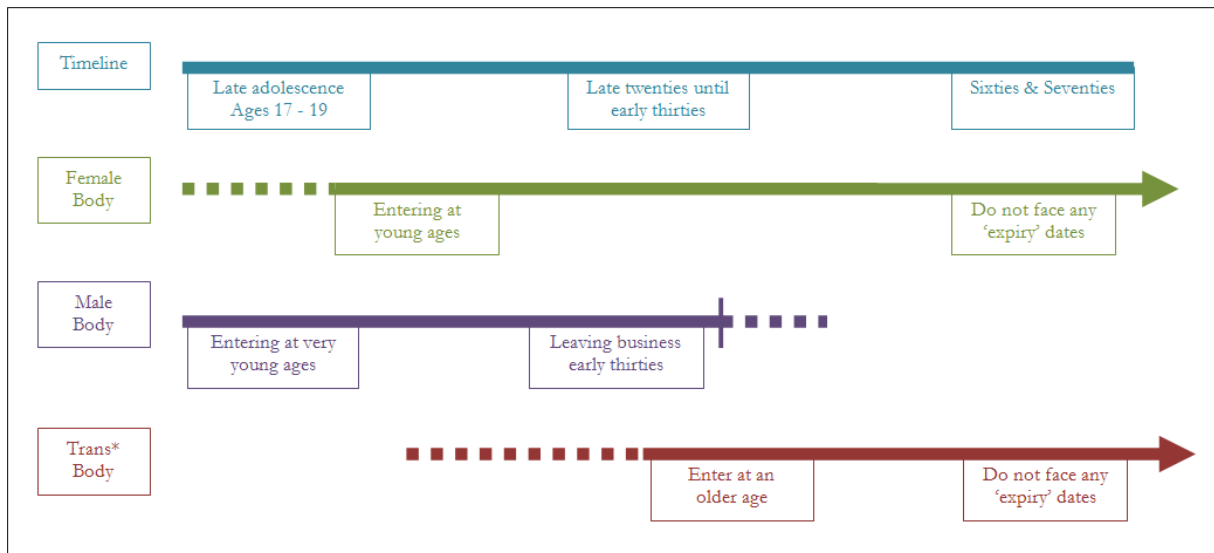


Figure 6: Timeline illustrating differences when female, male and trans* bodies enter or leave the business.

For the analysis I keep into consideration that most trans* sex workers in The Netherlands are male to female sex workers. I observed that both female and trans* sex workers do not have a maximum age at which they work. Thus, the differences in timelines are not only rooted in the idea of a female, male or trans* body, but also to the idea of a feminine versus a masculine performance of the body. As both female and trans* bodies are connected to feminine characteristics.

Masculinity is not necessarily specific to the male body, masculinity is “an identity expressed through sexual discourses and practices that indicate dominance and control” (Pascoe 2007: 13). Kulick goes beyond this notion of masculinity, and describes the relevance of the act of penetration for understanding how gender is performed:

The locus of gender difference is the act of penetration – if one only penetrates, one is a ‘man’, if one gets penetrated, one is something other than a man – one is either a viado, a fagot; or a mulher, a woman (Kulick 1998: 227).

In the context of sex work, Pascoe’s and Kulick’s understanding of masculinity is helpful in understanding when sex workers enter or leave the business. On the one hand, sex workers in a feminine body are usually constructed as the dominated and powerless, which is not bounded to age and therefore does not restrict sex workers to work when they are older. Moreover, there seem to be clients who want to realize certain fantasies in which they have sexual relations with their mothers or teachers, which would also explain why the demand for older sex workers in a feminine body exists (Lacsamana, private conversation, 25/09/2013). On the other hand, sex workers in a masculine body will only be constructed as the dominated and powerless if they are the ones being penetrated. However, even within homosexual contacts, there appears to be a strong preference for *young* sex workers. Apparently the construction of the powerful male body

by itself is not strong enough and there is a need for a generational hierarchy to reinforce that the sex worker is constructed as the powerless. Thus, when sex workers in a masculine body shift to the category of adult males, this constructs them as more powerful and dominant, which no longer fits within the image of a powerless sex worker. It is at this point that age suddenly determines that sex workers in a male body ‘expire’.

6.3 Gendered Minimum Age: Client *versus* Sex Worker

It honestly took me by surprise when I had to put substantial effort in figuring out the legal minimum age for the clients of sex workers; while the legal minimum age of sex workers was discussed all over the news. While the law for the legal minimum age of the sex worker is clear, Dutch law falls short in terms of specifying a legal minimum age of the client. In practice, given that the age of consent is 16, the legal minimum age of the client is 16 as well. While clubs, brothels or escort services are allowed to define their own regulations, it is striking that in the same country where the legal minimum age of the sex worker is highly debated, the legal minimum age of the client is hardly questioned. When I discussed this during conversations for this research, there were two types of responses that I recognized in my analysis.

On the one hand, some people argued that this discrepancy is normal as the impact of being a sex worker is more profound than the experience of being a client:

Look, the consequences of making a choice to go to a prostitute when you are 16 is different than when you offer yourself as prostitute. As the one is a moment of 15 minutes, while the other is 24 hours a day for a longer period. So I think that’s a difference (Senior Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Security and Justice, 15/07/2013, The Hague, personal interview).

Yes I think it actually makes sense because, as I just said, the impact to go to a prostitute is very different than it is to work in prostitution. Because, if you went to a prostitute once when you were 16 this is not the same as the huge secret that you carry with you all the time... the taboo on going to a prostitute is much less (social worker, 17/07/2013, Utrecht, personal interview).

Well, because the client obviously has much more freedom of choice than someone who is forced into the prostitution. You will first have to go to the victim, and that is in this case someone who is forced into the prostitution... (Member of Parliament for the Christian Union, 20/09/2013, Amersfoort, personal interview).¹²

¹² It is important to take into account that within the context of the interview, the Member of Parliament for the Christian Union did argue that it is important to open a political discussion about the minimum age of the client and that it ideally should be the same as the minimum age of the sex worker. However, at that stage he was not in the position to share any ideas or initiatives that his party has in mind with regards to this topic.

On the other hand, some responses reflected on the hypocrisy in the double standards that are being set between the sex worker and the client:

I think that minimum age should at least be set at 18 or 21. I think you should place supply and demand on an equal level and on the same age. I find it very odd that that it is officially still at 16 (Director Stichting Geisha, 09/09/2013, Gouda, personal interview).

The distinction within the current law, is not of this time anymore. On your 16th you can go to the prostitutes, from your 18th onwards you can be a prostitute and only from your 21st you can open a brothel. From this distinction you can conclude that we protect economic values more than the personal integrity of our youth [...] There is another discrepancy between the active sexual partner and the passive sexual partner, reflecting the male and female sexuality. If we have all the reasons to change the minimum age of sex workers from 18 to 21, then it is strange that these reasons do not apply to the client. A 16 year old is, too, not able to realize what it will do to him if he pays for sex (Program manager Sexual Violence, 01/07/2013, Utrecht, personal interview).

While I do not want to disregard the first type of responses, as being a client or a sex worker is indeed reflected in different experiences and realities, I think that the double standards are a reflection of deeper and more systematic inconsistencies in Dutch law.

In an attempt to clarify these inconsistencies I have visualized them in figure 7 below. In both cases, sex work is the common denominator. This is reflected in the red circles ‘sexual bodily exchanges’ and ‘bodily work’. The first diagram reflects someone paying for sexual bodily exchanges. Here ‘agency’ is the entry point of the discussion; a 16 year old is expected to make a choice. The second diagram depicts someone receiving money in exchange for sexual bodily exchanges. ‘Protection’ is here the entry point of the discussion; the choice that this person makes presumably has a more profound effect on their life.

In the second scenario, I have shaded the ‘reality: exploitation’ circle light red to reflect my observation that conversations I had on this topic were colored by the assumption that the sex worker is a victim of exploitation whom requires protection. Lastly, I have also colored both ‘gender’ boxes light red to illustrate the influence of deeper gendered notions creating inconsistencies in that the client is a male body and the sex worker a female body. Within a male-dominated society a male body will be acknowledged for their choices at an earlier point in life than a female body.

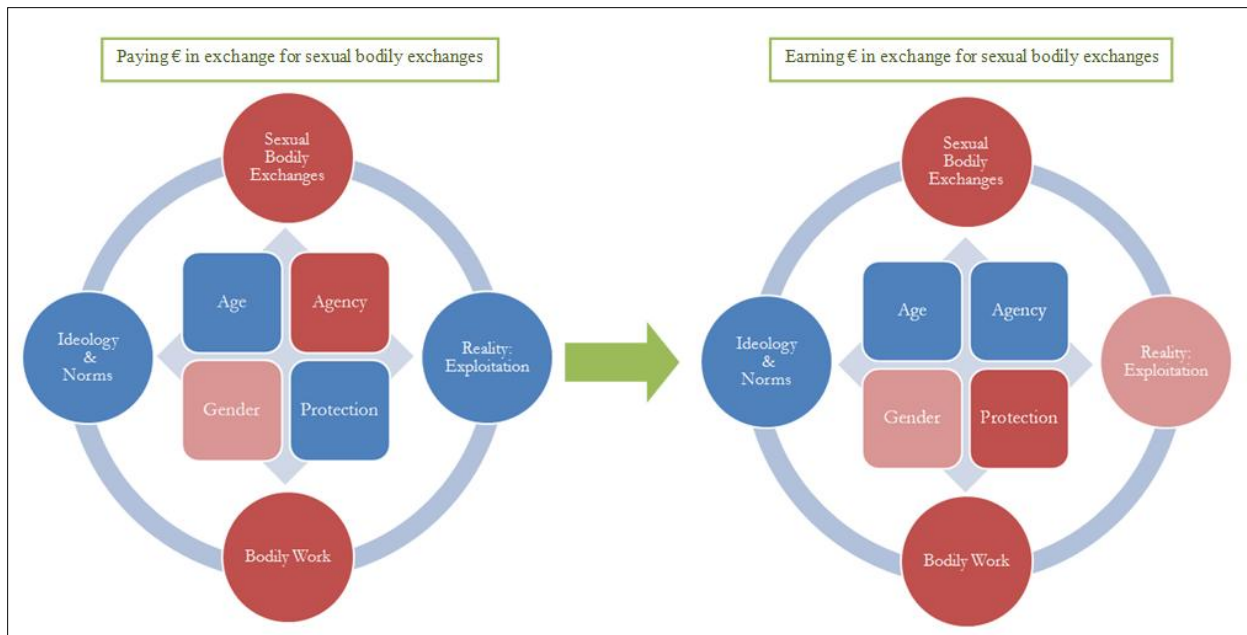


Figure 7: Illustrating shifts in *Conceptual Model* from a situation in which someone pays for sexual bodily exchanges to a situation where someone receives payment for sexual bodily exchanges.

These inconsistencies illustrate gender-blindness within the design of policies related to sex work. This leaves me with the following question: would the situation and the model look the same if the client were to be a female and the sex worker a male?

Chapter 7

Forever Young & Sex Work



Illustration 1: Picture from website homepage of *The Courtesan Club* 2013

The illustration above is part of the website homepage of *The Courtesan Club*, a high-class escort service in Amsterdam. The illustration presents a quote from Oscar Wilde: “An inordinate passion for *pleasure* is the secret of remaining *young*”. This illustration nicely captures the desire for remaining young within contemporary society. Beyond the chronological and social age, age also manifests itself in a performing manner: the performing age. Performing age is often done through the act of passing; “passing as older and passing as young [...] passing depends on erasing the marks of performing an assumed identity” (Woodward 2006: 185).

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the research question: *How does the performing age construct the attractiveness of ‘young’?* I will explore how the performing age constructs the attractiveness of ‘young’ by unpacking the ideas around the attractiveness of young and unpacking the values attached to ‘young’ and ‘old’.

7.1 Attractiveness of Young Sex Workers

Well, I think men just prefer going to bed with a young inexperienced woman, than someone who is 50 and for whom you have to pay. Younger ones are all tighter and more beautiful. On top of that, you can achieve much more with a younger girl than with someone who is older. Because someone who is older will say ‘no’ earlier, or say that she does not want that. But a young girl will just have to do it. Of course there is also a difference in power, as you are not equal in age. Such a girl will not be inclined to quickly say ‘no, I don’t want this’. There are many men that just like that more (Social Worker, 09/09/2013, Utrecht, personal interview)

Based on my research conversations there appears to be a vast market for young sex workers; so I started to question what makes young sex workers appealing? Some of those with whom I spoke shed a light on this question and provided interesting insights. The following quote is from a sex trafficking survivor who was 20 years old when she first was sexually exploited, she recognized that clients often prefer younger sex workers, but added the following:

Well, in the beginning I did not have to do much to attract clients. As clients feast on new meat. You simply don't have to do much if you are new. You just need to stand there and, in any case, your curtains will close very often. The clients that go there often are simply waiting for you (Sex trafficking survivor, 18/07/2013, Rotterdam, personal interview).¹³

Thus, from the perspective of someone who had a relatively young chronological age at that point, it was not only her performance as 'young', but also the aspect of being 'new' that she experienced as attractive for the clients. I also interviewed a former sex worker who entered the business when she was around 30 years old, as well as the co-owner The Courtesan Club, to discuss the type of features that are considered attractive.

I had many colleagues who were much younger and who presented themselves in a way that men always find very sexy. With good boobs and round buttocks. They were sexy according to this classical model of the female body. And they were younger than me. They had much nicer hair and a beautiful skin. I had neither of those. Those are all key qualities that make a person stand out more (Former sex worker, 26/07/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview).

Well the important thing is that someone looks presentable and yes ... certain aspects that one associates with 'young'; for example, a glowing skin and all that stuff, those are aspects we pay attention to in our selection. But we also pay attention to their full physical appearance, for example if someone is not too heavy. Or if someone is too heavy, whether it is in good proportions. For us, it is not so much whether or not someone looks young, but whether someone looks presentable and healthy, that is what we actually find the most important (co-owner The Courtesan Club, 11/09/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview).

One of my first observations was that, while those who I interviewed recognize that there are many male sex workers, there is still a tendency to refer to the female body when explaining features of the young sex worker. From the quotes shared above there are a few components that are key in the process of performing the 'young' age that I explore further in the figure below.

¹³ In the same interview she explained to me that the situation is more nuanced in terms of the preference of the client, as there are also clients who actually prefer older sex workers of whom they are regular clients and know what to expect (Sex trafficking survivor, 18/07/2013, Rotterdam, personal interview). I recognize that there is much more to discuss in terms of the different preferences and how they are constructed; however, I have not conducted interviews with clients and this would move beyond the scope of my research.

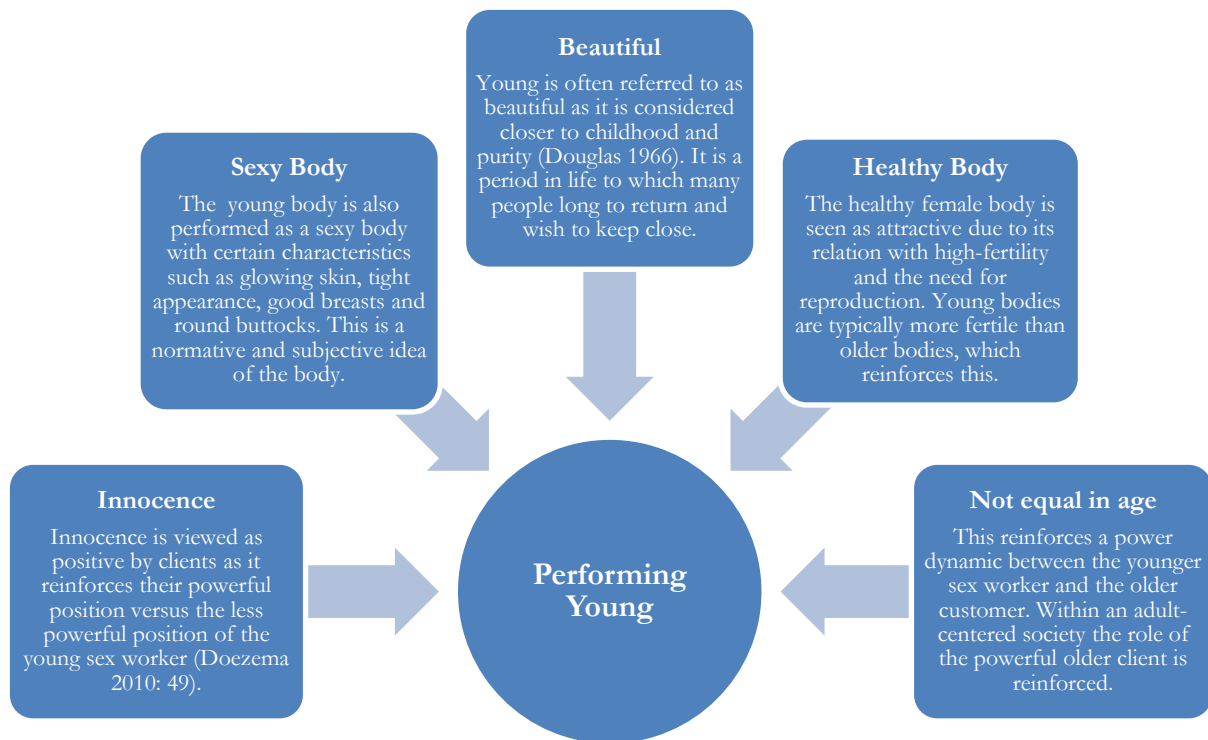


Figure 8: Key components derived from the conversations held for this research, which construct the performance of 'young'

Based on these conversations I argue that young sex workers are seen as attractive because of the positive associations of Dutch culture with 'young'. In this context 'young' is manifested in a way that moves beyond the physical features captured by chronological and social age and extends towards characteristics captured by performed age.

The young sex worker and the client both participate in constructing the 'young' performing age, as both have an interest to do so. Features such as 'innocence', 'beautiful', a 'sexy body', a 'healthy body' and young sex workers as 'not equal in age' are just a few components that contribute to the process of the 'young' performing age. Nonetheless, these features illustrate that while young is perceived as pure and desirable, it also has connotations of a fertile body and a less experienced body that reinforce power and gender inequalities.

7.2 Values Attached to 'Young' versus 'Old'

Well, I do not think that this is something that relates to only sex workers, I think that many women make an effort to have a young appearance. Yes, I think that this is not any different with sex workers. Well, maybe not to only make an effort to have a young appearance but just to make sure you do not age too much, maybe it is more related to that. To erase the signs of aging. But well, with escort services and sex work in general, you will be judged on your physical appearance, you can have a great character but if you look on the websites you will not be judged on your character based on a picture – so on

what do you select? Clients select based on an appearance that they find attractive (co-owner The Courtesan Club, 11/09/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview).

The co-owner of The Courtesan Club illustrates here that there is a lot more to discuss and that the roots of performance of age and how attractiveness is constructed lie very deep in society and move beyond the domain of sex work. I want to further explore these roots in order to understand this process of construction.

First, I need to acknowledge that seeing the 'young' body as more attractive than the 'old' body is not universal. In many countries people receive more respect, authority and prestige when they age; in The Netherlands, however, being within a Western European culture, aging is often seen as a burden. In my interview with a former sex worker, she illustrated this clearly:

In the West you are 'old' so quickly. In other countries you gain more respect. But in Europe, you are old when you are 35. Really, you are out. Then you will have to look for your success elsewhere, but you will not find it through your body, you will have to find it through your career. Or you need to become famous or write a book (Former sex worker, 26/07/2013, Amsterdam, personal interview).

In order to understand why 'old' bodies in the West are 'out' at a certain point in their life, it needs to be placed in the context of the dominant capitalist system that focuses on productivity (Wood 2000). This system attributes more importance to the productive body than to the non-productive body. Productivity can be understood in the context of economics, but also in the context of fertility. Entrenched in this medical view of 'old' age is the idea that elderly people represented an economic challenge to the modern society (Haber 2004: 518). The elderly are constructed as dependent and weak; yet this weakness is "not simply an individual medical problem but seemed to challenge the prosperity and progress of the nation" (ibid: 519). This discourse has a long history and has brought along a dominant anti-aging culture (Kampf & Botelho 2009: 190). It is a culture that is deeply rooted in the way in which Dutch people see themselves and others; and similarly in the way in which they construct the 'young' body as more attractive than the 'old' aging body.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This research started with the desire to understand the role of ‘age’ in shaping social protection policies regarding sex work in The Netherlands; this desire was shaped by the double standards that I observed in the debates related to increasing the minimum age for sex workers. Throughout this research, I came to realize that age itself is a social construct and that sex work is a prime example in which the construction of age through the body is realized. In this Research Paper, I have opened up an area in ‘Children and Youth Studies’ in which age can be deconstructed; an area that is shaped by the complex interconnections between sex work and the young body.

In this concluding chapter I reflect on the research process, discuss three main conclusions and end with some forward looking remarks.

8.1 Reflections

This research journey gave me the opportunity to unpack many assumptions related to age and sex work. It was an inspiring journey marked by conversations with people who are involved in the design and implementation of sex work policies in The Netherlands. It was also a demanding process, as I felt continuously challenged by others to justify why I was doing this research. As a young Dutch female student, with no experience with sex work on any level, I often felt labelled as someone who did not have the right to explore this further. This was no easy task and challenged me to question why I could not have simply focused on the function of age for education, a topic with presumably fewer controversies.

Looking back, I feel the fact that the domain of age, young people and sex work in The Netherlands is full of controversy and contradiction, is exactly what has kept me interested. While focusing on how age is constructed in relation to sex work I recognized the strong prevalence of age as a determinant in all social policy structures. It was at this point that I recognized that I too am part of the construction of age; in everyday activities my interactions with society also contribute to the process of constructing ‘age’.

8.2 Moving Beyond Age as a Given

Age needs to be understood as an act that is situated, negotiated and continually constructed through interaction (Laz 1998: 110). The idea that age can be ‘done’ and not simply an objective fact, is not recognized within the Dutch social protection policy discourse on age. This discourse

can be understood as one of the results from the modern industrial society that has developed chronological age as a measure (ibid: 92). This dominant framework on the understanding of age makes it very difficult to accept the fluidity of age.

Human beings create order and meaning through binary categories; fluidity is something that we find difficult to comprehend and do not easily accept (Douglas 1966: 98). This explains why the chronological understanding of age is generally accepted and rarely challenged. The domain of social protection policy on sex work is no exception: the concept of age in relation to the Dutch Prostitution Policy is assumed as a given, something that simply is and does not need to be questioned.

Within policy making, age is often used to explain certain phenomena, such as voting behaviour or labour force participation (Laz 1998: 95). In relation to sex work, I recognized that age is used to *describe* that there are many sex workers working at a young age. This ignores the need for an analysis of the processes underlying such descriptive outcomes. Such an analysis would have to move beyond the chronological definition of age and recognize that individuals have other characteristics in common that are far more complex than the numeric value of their chronological age.

The tendency to describe phenomena based on age without looking at the complexities underneath, has led to a lack of attention to the construction of the young body in relation to sex work. The preference or even admiration of the young body illustrates how age also creates hierarchies. First, hierarchies between the 'young' and 'old' body, shaped by the preference of the healthy & productive body over the non-productive body – rooted in the modern capitalist notions of society (Wood 2000). Second, hierarchies between the powerful older client and the powerless younger sex worker. The latter should also be understood as a gender hierarchy, as the age element becomes less important when a feminine body is concerned; someone who is not penetrating is generally understood as powerless in the first place (Kulíck 1998: 227).

If age is constructed, then the body is the prime entity to actively engage within this process of construction. Sex work is an activity through which the performance of our identity through our bodies becomes highly visible. Age is one of the features used in the process of performance. The experience of age in relation to sex work is constructed and creates a fluid domain of how age can be understood; a domain with which policy makers do not easily engage. Thus, the way in which age works for sex work in The Netherlands illustrates that social protection policies on sex work uncover a tension between how age is understood, on the one hand, in an objective chronological manner and, on the other hand, in a fluid manner.

8.3 Age as an Instrument for Control

Age is redefined and reinforced by social protection policies that create binaries based on chronological age definitions. Whenever age is used within a context of social protection policies, it always signifies a measure to indicate what is possible *before* and *after* that particular moment. The linear understanding of time has the ultimate power in determining when social protection policies apply.

Within the Dutch adult-centered society, age is used through social protection policies to redefine the life phase of young people separate from adulthood; implying that those who yet have to enter adulthood are rendered incapable of make long-term decisions. The legal minimum age for sex workers is an example through which this subordination is reinforced. The increase from the age of 18 to 21 implicitly ignores the age of majority, which allows people to make their own decisions about their futures and bodies at the age of 18. While deflecting from the need to acknowledge the evolving capacities of young people to act on their agency, this approach makes generalizations about the capabilities of young people.

Beneath this process of reinforcing subordinate categories by means of age, lays the need to exercise control over young people and, in particular, over their sexualities. In The Netherlands, there are many different messages directed to young people in relation to sexuality, I claim that it is these mixed messages that amplify the control over young people's sexuality. This claim would not be swiftly accepted from a Dutch liberal perspective, as it does not fit within the ideals of the Dutch liberal open society. Only when one dives deeper and moves towards the edges of what is thought to be acceptable, it is that control elements come to the surface. If one would like to visualize where different domains would be located, sex work would probably be located just before you fall off the edge of what is thought to be acceptable.

As explained earlier, Dutch sex work policy is not only concerned with sex work – the policy mixes elements of sex work regulation with tackling human trafficking. Based on my analysis I argue that, while protecting (potential) young victims of human trafficking, the disproportionate control over young sex workers is seen by policy makers as an additional benefit. If the latter claim were not the case, then specific measures would have been proposed to ensure that those young sex workers above the age of 18 could continue to exercise their agency, like anyone else above the age of 18.

This tendency to control young people's sexuality and, in particular, that of young sex workers must be understood as a gendered control process. Within the general debates in The Netherlands there remains a tendency to position the sex worker as a female body and the client as a

male body. Female sexuality is seen as something that needs to be controlled in order to remain pure, modest and passive (Davidson 2005: 26). The sex worker is viewed as the complete opposite of this ideal female representation; the ideal young, innocent, pure, female body must be kept away from this pollution as long as possible – which explains the desire to increase the legal minimum age from 18 to 21 (Douglas 1966). Evidently, this control mechanism is directed at the female sexuality – had it been directed at the male sexuality, there would have been much more discussion regarding the minimum age of the client.

8.4 A Backlash from the Dutch Liberal Approach

While the Dutch Prostitution Policy appears to be located in a framework of social protection policies, the implementation of these policies is connected to elements of control, security and economics. *Control*, as these policies uphold a strong division between the adult-body with the capability to make long-term decisions versus the young-body without those capabilities. *Security*, as these policies have been framed from the anti-trafficking discourse that is intertwined with the anti-immigration approaches in The Netherlands. *Economics*, as these policies implicitly prioritize the paying client of sex workers over the sex worker who earns the money.

Throughout this research I recognized a wide range of contradictions within the so-called Dutch liberal approach related to sex work. These contradictions are an outcome of confusions among the general public concerning their position on key elements of the Dutch liberal approach; some argue that this confusion has even led to a state of panic (Smith 2005).

The Dutch liberal approach has its roots in the 1960s. The following decades were shaped by a dominant framework of ‘political correctness’; and the 1990s by progressive laws on topics such as drugs, abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage and sex work (Outshoorn 2012: 235). The panic that we recognize from the past decade, with the commencement of the 21st century, is perhaps best understood as a backlash from that what started in the 1960s.

This backlash moves beyond policies related to sex work. Also immigration and drug policies have been approached from a more restrictive perspective during the last decade. The lens of morality politics contributes to understanding these connections. A key feature of morality politics is the connection to embodied aspects of life, such as using drugs, abortion, euthanasia and sex work (Wagenaar & Altink 2012: 281). While embodiment is a key feature, Wagenaar and Altink recognized the broader facets of morality politics and argue that it should be understood as a realm of deep and seemingly irresolvable conflict which restricts open debate and prevents effective policy design & implementation (ibid: 282). In a state of confusion and panic, it is those

issues within the domain of morality politics that further exacerbate a backlash. This backlash is fed by a so-called ‘silent-counter-revolution’, led by the rightist movements and parties that emerged in the 1980s who countered the “morally individualist and non-conformist values” of the counter-culture in the 1960s and 1970s (Mascini & Houtman 2011: 1).

The mixed messages that have shaped the Dutch Prostitution Policy during the past decade need to be understood within this wider backlash from the Dutch liberal approach in the 1960s. The Netherlands appears to be in an identity crisis when it comes to its position towards their liberal approach. In such a situation, those issues within the domain of morality politics will be the first to surface and further emphasize tensions. Dutch Prostitution Policy has been a clear example of these tensions that have changed policy making within a relatively short timeframe. Whether these trends should be understood as cyclical waves remains difficult to gauge and would require more historical research.

8.5 Looking Forward & Concluding Thoughts

This Research Paper is only a first page in a book that can further explore how age functions in relation to sex work. I think future research should further explore the function of age in relation to young people’s sexuality in a broader sense.

Existing literature presents chronological age as a western notion and some highlight the connections with modern and industrial societies (Laz 1998; Clark-Kazak 2009). However, these authors often fail to pinpoint which features actually contribute to the process of making it a western notion. Now that there is more recognition for the idea for age as a construction, I think that future research needs to focus on how age has been shaped historically and providing an understanding of age as it is presented in different contexts.

If there would be more clarity on how age is connected to notions within modern and industrial societies, it would be interesting to examine why it is that a healthy and fertile body is viewed as attractive. In relation to sex work, such research should specifically include an analysis of the demand for young pregnant sex workers.

I mentioned that the embodied age has a gendered element; it is important to recognize that the embodied age also has a race element. People from different racial backgrounds appear to be viewed as younger or older than their chronological age would suggest. Future research needs to look at race, sex and age and explore which ideas are constructing these differences.

To conclude, from this research process I have learned that many of us take chronological age for granted. I hope that this Research Paper has contributed conceptually to the understanding of

age in relation to sex work policies in The Netherlands. I argue that age is understood in The Netherlands in a chronological manner and is used as an instrument of categorization that contributes to the “project of legibility” in the process of state simplification to further enhance rational order and efficiency (Scott 1998: 80). Chronological age overshadows the actual reasons behind changes in social protection policies regarding sex work while upholding and reinforcing gender binaries and age hierarchies.

Life is a continuum and the division according to age as separate categories is a human construction within specific ages and cultures. Given the construction of age as a certain number of chronological years it is difficult to go beyond the number and look at the issue of rights of individuals. Increasing the minimum age for sex workers from 18 to 21 only looks at the number and ignores the social construction of the age. There is a need to deconstruct age and prioritize the realities and the rights of young sex workers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Conversations

Name	Function	Organization	Date	Location	Number of words in transcript ¹⁴
M. Ridder	Program Manager Sex work Projects	Aids Fonds	20/12/2012, 22/05/2013, 18/09/2013	Amsterdam	Not applicable, various non-recorded conversations
H. Wagenaar	Professor of Town and Regional Planning	University of Sheffield	25/06/2013	The Hague	6.035 words
L. Repetur	Program manager Sexual Violence	MOVISIE	01/07/2013	Utrecht	3.815 words
J.A. W. Verbruggen	Senior Policy Advisor	Ministry of Security and Justice	15/07/2013	The Hague	7.806 words
K. Stock	Social Worker	Huiskamer Aanloop Prostituees (HAP)	17/07/2013	Utrecht	5.780 words
L. Futa van Goch,	Founder Stichting Open Ogen and sex trafficking survivor	Stichting Open Ogen	18/07/2013	Rotterdam	15.666 words
N. Harms	Social Worker	SHOP	25/07/2013	The Hague	6.089 words

¹⁴ In this table the number of words in the transcripts are presented instead of the number of minutes of the interview. Accounting for how quickly an interviewee speaks, this is a more valid way of quantifying the amount that was discussed during the interview. Nevertheless, I realize that the content of the interview will never be quantifiable. The number of words includes the questions, my responses and a few words that were inserted as codes.

Marianne	Former sex worker	Not applicable	26/07/2013	Amsterdam	6.531 words
M. Stempvoort	Policy Officer	Prostitutie Maatschappelijk Werk.	29/07/2013	Rotterdam	7.209 words
Jasmijn	Sex Trafficking Survivor	Stichting Open Ogen	05/09/2013	Anonymous location	7.870 words
Anonymous	Social Worker	Pretty Woman	09/09/2013	Utrecht	4.551 words
I. Stakelborough	Director	Stichting Geisha	09/09/2013	Gouda	6.304 words
I. van Buren	Project Manager Center Child & Human Trafficking	Fier Friesland	11/09/2013	Leeuwarden	4.871 words
Esther	Co-owner	The Courtesan Club	11/09/2013	Amsterdam	6.879 words
G. Seegers	Member of Parliament	Christian Union	20/09/2013	Amersfoort	6.249 words
M. Lacsamana	Researcher on Trans* sex workers in The Hague	ISS Masters Student	25/09/2013 24/10/2013	The Hague	Not applicable, various non-recorded conversations

Appendix 2: List of Codes

#	Code	Number of quotes in this category ¹⁵	Description ¹⁶
1.	Dutch Context	6	Reference made to how sex work is located in Dutch society.
2.	Morality Politics	5	Reference made to one of the components of Morality Politics identified by Wagenaar and Altink: 1) morality is ruled by ideology; 2) morality policy is lay policy; 3) morality policy is emotionally charged; 4) morality policy is resistant to facts; 5) there is a certain impatience with the policy implementation of morality policies; and, 6) morality policies are vulnerable to abrupt and drastic change (2012: 283-284).
3.	Defining Sex work	14	Reference made to how one can understand sex work.
4.	Racial & Class hierarchy in sex work	6	Reference made to racial or class hierarchies that influence the experiences of sex workers.
5.	Not Normal Job	15	Reference made to how sex work is a legal profession, but not a normal job in The Netherlands.
6.	Not My Daughter	7	Reference made to description that Dutch people will say sex work is a normal job but will never agree with someone close to their family or neighbourhood becoming a sex worker. Related to the 'Not in My Backyard' phenomenon (NIMBY).
7.	Sexual Abuse History	5	Reference to how sex workers have some background with sexual abuse their past. Which constructs their choice for being a sex worker as being a victim a priori.
8.	Selling an Illusion	4	Reference to how sex work has no relation with sexuality, that it is merely the process of selling an illusion.
9.	Stigma	17	Reference to many consequences of the stigmatization of sex workers in The

¹⁵ This gives an indication of how many ideas were shared on that particular topic; usually revolving around one or two ideas. Per code there have been multiple quotes from the same interview. Thus, this number does not relate in any way to how many people touched upon the same concept.

¹⁶ These descriptions do not imply that the quotes related to this code are in line with the argument in the description. It is merely a description of the topic to which that the quote is related; which can be in the context of full agreement, disagreement or simply descriptive.

			Netherlands.
10.	Sexuality & Media	1	Reference to how young people nowadays are more inclined to enter sex work due to the sexualisation of the media.
11.	Safety Net	3	Reference to the need for stronger rights based approach towards sex work that facilitates a safety net and protection for those involved.
12.	Arbitrary Line based on moral / gut feelings	3	Reference to how the minimum age of sex workers is an arbitrary line and influenced by moral judgements & gut feelings.
13.	Resilience	21	Reference to the meaning of resilience ('weerbaarheid' in Dutch) and how this relates to increasing the minimum age
14.	Agency	5	Reference to how young people exercise their agency.
15.	Brain Development & Seeing Risks	14	Reference to how the lack of a fully matured brain limits young people to see risks.
16.	Protection	7	Reference to how young people are in need of more protection than adults.
17.	Law 18 → 21	38	Reference to the amendment that proposes that the minimum age for sex workers goes from 18 to 21.
18.	Difference in making choice when younger versus older	14	Reference to how young people make follow different process of making choices in comparison to older people, when it comes to entering sex work.
19.	Age	4	Reference to how age plays a role in relation to sex work.
20.	Young Male Sex Workers	11	Reference to young male sex workers.
21.	Client 16 <i>versus</i> 18 Sex worker	19	Reference to discrepancy in Dutch law that allows the 16 year old to be a client of a sex worker, while the minimum age for sex workers is 18.
22.	Trans*	1	Reference to the age groups in which transgender are most common.
23.	Gendering Sexuality	2	Reference to how sexuality (in general) is gendered and leads to differing experiences between the masculine and feminine body.
24.	Attractiveness of Young	15	Reference to why 'young' is experienced and viewed as attractive.
25.	Liking the idea of young more than old	4	Reference to why 'young' is viewed as more attractive than 'old'.

Appendix 3: List of Government & NGO Documents

Title in Dutch		Source	Date	Accessed URL
1.	Report on the mission of the Special Rapporteur to Belgium and The Netherlands on the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children	UNHCHR	Dec. 1999	http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/eee276066375879b8025689600531c70?Opendocument
2.	Memorie van Toelichting	Rijksoverheid	Nov. 2009	http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/prostitutie/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2009/11/11/memorie-van-toelichting.html
3.	Wetsvoorstel Regulering prostitutie en bestrijding misstanden seksbranche	Rijksoverheid	Nov. 2009	http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/prostitutie/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2009/11/11/wetsvoorstel-regulering-prostitutie-en-bestrijding-misstanden-seksbranche.html
4.	Wetgeving Prostitutie	Movisie	April 2010	http://www.jeugdprostitutie.nu/beleid/landelijkbeleid/minimumleeftijd_prostitutie
5.	Legale prostituees minstens 21 jaar	Rijksoverheid	April 2010	http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/persberichten/2010/04/15/legale-prostituees-minstens-21-jaar.html
6.	Jong – Ik heb betaalde seks	EO, TV Blik	March 2011	http://tvblik.nl/jong/ik-heb-betaalde-seks
7.	Stof tot discussie: Verhoging leeftijdsgrens van prostitutie van 18 naar 21 jaar	Fier Fryslân	Nov. 2011	http://www.ckm-fier.nl//upload/c60befd2-572e-487e-b457-8498d69a21a8.pdf
8.	Heleen Lamm: wetsvoorstel prostitutie niet rijp om aangenomen te worden	Projects on Women's Rights	Nov. 2011	http://www.projectsonwomensrights.nl/afstudeerscriptie-regulering-prostitutie.html
9.	Landelijke gegevens	Movisie	Jan. 2012	http://www.jeugdprostitutie.nu/feiten/landelijkegegevens
10.	Infodossier en 'Manifest tegen het prostitutiesysteem'	Vrouwenraad	June 2012	http://www.vrouwenraad.be/media/docs/standpunten/mensenrechten/vrouwenhandel_prostitutie.pdf

11.	Dutch anti-trafficking policy	Ministry of Security & Justice	July 2012	http://www.defenceforchildren.nl/images/13/1900.pdf
12.	Misstanden seksbranche bestrijden	Rijksoverheid	Jan. 2013	http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/prostitutie/misstanden-seksbranche-bestrijden
13.	Prostitutie in Nederland	Soa Aids Nederland	Feb. 2013	http://www.soaids.nl/nl/prostitutie/prostitutie-in-nederland
14.	Aanpak Criminaliteit in Prostitutie	Gemma van der Kamp	March 2013	https://www.mattermap.nl/bekijk/Vyt9U/aanpak-criminaliteit-in-prostitutie-
15.	Mensenhandel toestemmend aan banden gelegd	Lisanne den Hartog	March 2013	http://www.sgpj.nl/statements/1054/Mensenhandel+toestemmen+aan+banden+gelegd
16.	HAP Europalaan	De Tussenvoorziening	May 2013	http://www.tussenvoorziening.nl/MS/10_HAP-/34_HAP-Europalaan-
17.	Verhoging prostitutieleeftijd verdeelt Kamer	Movisie	June 2013	http://www.jeugdprostitutie.nu/minimumleeftijd_prostitutie
18.	Ook Soa-Aids Nederland pleit voor Nieuw-Zeelands prostitutiemodel	Dirkje van Bennekom	July 2013	http://powervrouwen.blog.nl/politiek/2013/07/09/ook-soa-aids-nederland-pleit-voor-nieuw-zeelands-prostitutiemodel
19.	Eerste Kamer stelt verkeerde prioriteiten bij prostitutie wet	Gert-Jan Seegers	July 2013	http://www.gertjanseegers.nl/k/n31819/news/view/564642/535699/eerste-kamer-stelt-verkeerde-prioriteiten-bij-prostitutiewet.html
20.	Hoe hoog is het minimumloon?	Rijksoverheid	July 2013	http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/minimumloon/vragen-antwoord/hoe-hoog-is-het-minimumloon.html
21.	Which work is forbidden for youth under the age of 18?	Rijksoverheid	July 2013	http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/jongeren-en-werk/vraag-en-antwoord/welk-werk-is-verboden-voor-jongeren-tot-18-jaar.html

Appendix 4: List of Dutch Newspaper Articles

Google Search: Minimum Age Prostitution ¹⁷ – from 01/01/2013 until 01/10/2013				
Title in Dutch		Newspaper	Date	Weblink
22.	Ruim 1000 jongeren in prostitutie Rotterdam	Algemeen Dagblad	8/3/2013	http://www.ad.nl/ad/nl/1012/Nederland/article/detail/3406227/2013/03/08/Ruim-1000-jongeren-in-prostitutie-Rotterdam.dhtml
23.	Nieuwe vorm prostitutie in Rotterdam	Hart van Nederland	8/3/2013	http://www.hartvannederland.nl/nederland/zuid-holland/2013/nieuwe-vorm-prostitutie-in-rotterdam/
24.	Leeftijdsgrens prostitutie omhoog	Nu	16/04/2013	http://www.nu.nl/binnenland/2226572/leeftijdsgrens-prostitutie-omhoog.html
25.	Prostitutie-expert: Vergeet Zweden	Trouw	12/3/2013	http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4496/Buitenland/article/detail/3407877/2013/03/12/Prostitutie-expert-Vergeet-Zweden.dhtml
26.	Burgemeester Haarlem wil minimumleeftijd prostituees niet verhogen naar 21 jaar	Haarlems Dagblad	07/02/2013	http://www.haarlemsdagblad.nl/regionaal/haarlemeo/article20555183.ece
27.	Persbericht - Amsterdam verhoogt leeftijd voor prostitutie	Gemeente Amsterdam	28/04/2013	http://www.amsterdam.nl/zorg-welzijn/programma/nieuws/persbericht/
28.	Geen prostitutie in Amsterdam in diepst van de nacht	Parool	26/02/2013	http://www.parool.nl/parool/nl/224/BINNENLAND/article/detail/3400384/2013/02/26/Geen-prostitutie-in-Amsterdam-in-diepst-van-de-nacht.dhtml
29.	Amsterdam scherpt prostitutieregels aan: ochtendstop wordt verplicht	NRC	26/02/2013	http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2013/02/26/amsterdam-scherpt-prostitutieregels-aan-ochtendstop-wordt-verplicht/
30.	Aanscherping prostitutieregels drukt	BNR	09/03/2013	http://www.bnr.nl/nieuws/politiek/230904-1303/aanscherping-

¹⁷ Translated from Dutch: *minimum leeftijd prostitutie*. I choose the term prostitution instead of sex work, as it is more common in Dutch language and would reveal more results in the Google Search.

	sekswerkers illegaliteit in			prostitutieregels-drukt-sekswerkers-illegaliteit-in
31.	Illegale prostitutie verplaatst zich naar huizen	Elsevier	17/06/2013	http://www.elsevier.nl/Nederland/nieuws/2013/6/Illegale-prostitutie-verplaatst-zich-naar-huizen-1285545W/
32.	Overheden op de bres voor prostituees	Telegraaf	09/09/2013	http://www.telegraaf.nl/binnenland/21876606/_Op_de_bres_voor_prostituees_.html
33.	Rapporteur Mensenhandel: stel bezoek aan 'gedwongen prostituee' strafbaar	Trouw	10/09/2013	http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4492/Nederland/article/detail/3507057/2013/09/10/Rapporteur-Mensenhandel-stel-bezoek-aan-gedwongen-prostituee-strafbaar.dhtml
34.	Minimum leeftijd prostituees naar 21	Omroep West	22/01/2013	http://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/22-01-2013/minimumleeftijd-prostituees-naar-21-jaar
35.	Amsterdam: Minimum leeftijd prostituees naar 21	RTL Nieuws	20/02/2013	http://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/binnenland/amsterdam-minimum-leeftijd-prostituees-naar-21
36.	Sluitingstijd voor bordelen Amsterdam	Trouw	27/02/2013	http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/5009/Archief/archief/article/detail/3400703/2013/02/27/Sluitingstijd-voor-bordelen-Amsterdam.dhtml
37.	Opstelten en Gemeenten bespreken prostitutie beleid	Nieuws.nl	09/09/2013	http://www.nieuws.nl/algemeen/20130909/opstelten-en-gemeenten-bespreken-prostitutiebeleid
38.	Utrecht sluit seksboten Zandpad en ramen Hardebollenstraat	RTV Utrecht	28/06/2013	http://www.rtvutrecht.nl/nieuws/1025545/utercht-sluit-alle-seksboten-en-ramen-hardebollenstraat.html
39.	Gehavende prostitutiewet in 2014 in werking	Volkskrant	08/07/2013	http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2686/Binnenland/article/detail/3472462/2013/07/08/Gehavende-prostitutiewet-in-2014-in-werking.dhtml
40.	'Gemeente moet zelf prostituees registreren'	Trouw	03/08/2013	http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4500/Politiek/article/detail/3486542/2013/08/03/Gemeente-moet-zelf-prostituees-registreren.dhtml
41.	Minimum leeftijd prostituees naar 21	AT5	20/02/2013	http://www.at5.nl/artikelen/96955/toch-strenger-toezicht-op-prostitutie

Appendix 5: Analysis Table Dutch Newspaper Article

Title Article	Amsterdam increases age for prostitution (translated from: Amsterdam verhoogt leeftijd voor prostitutie)		
Type of Article	Press release		
Source	Municipality of Amsterdam ¹⁸		
Date	28/04/2013		
Background Analysis Table	The first two paragraphs, discussing the minimum age, have been included. The text has been translated from Dutch to English prior to analysis.		
Components	Identified Meanings of terms	Identified Conclusions	Identified Assumptions
As the first municipality in Netherlands, Amsterdam officially increases the age for prostitutes.	<i>First</i> = this is a new step <i>Prostitutes</i> = Uses a term that emphasizes victimization and not the element of work, that is recognized in the term sex work.	This is a unique moment in relation to laws on prostitution that require media attention.	That changes in the official laws on the age of prostitution will lead to substantial changes.
The minimum age for a prostitute will go from 18 to 21 years.	<i>Minimum age</i> = this implies that it concerns an activity that not everyone is allowed to do. <i>18 to 21</i> = chronological meanings of age are applied as reference point.	The change that will happen in Amsterdam is decided and non-negotiable.	That there is a substantial difference in age between those of 18 and 21 that justifies this increase.
This age increase is part of a package of measures...	<i>Package</i> = this is part of a collective of more interventions and not a standalone measure.	More changes will be implemented at the same time.	-
...to counter abuses in prostitution and to support the position of prostitutes.	<i>Abuses</i> = something terrible that needs to be abandoned. <i>Support</i> = prostitutes are in need of help.	The Municipality needs to take an active role in countering abuses and strengthening the position of prostitutes.	That prostitutes are always the victim and that things need to change to counter abuses.

¹⁸ The original article in Dutch is accessible through the URL: <http://www.amsterdam.nl/zorg-welzijn/programma/nieuws/persbericht/>

For example, owners of brothels will soon have to indicate that they maintain adequate supervision...	<p><i>Owners of brothels</i> = apparently someone different that the prostitutes themselves who have more power over them.</p> <p><i>Supervision</i> = the current situation requires that prostitutes cannot defend themselves and need some for supervision.</p>	Owners of brothels play a key role in guaranteeing the safety of the prostitutes.	Reinforces the idea that prostitutes are victims and that they need to be controlled and managed by someone else; without recognizing that sex workers would also be able to lead this themselves if the environment was less stigmatizing.
...and will the prostitution windows, like all other businesses, closing during night hours.	<i>Like all other</i> = there should be no differences	Prostitution needs to be seen as a business and structured in the same way like all other businesses.	That prostitution is a business that does not differ from other domains.
It has been decided to increase the age because research shows that especially young women are more often the victims of abuses such as forced prostitution...	<p><i>Research</i> = justifying their argument with a fallacy of authority without actual references.</p> <p><i>Young</i> = these prostitutes are different because they are young.</p> <p><i>Women</i> = prostitutes are women</p> <p><i>Victim</i> = reinforces that young is connected to easy victimization and that young people are not strong enough.</p>	There is a need to protect young women in prostitution; this amendment will do that.	<p>That the word 'research' alone justifies the approach and does not require further explanation.</p> <p>That prostitutes are women, without recognizing male and trans* sex workers.</p> <p>That young prostitutes are more often victims than older prostitutes.</p>
...and other forms of (financial) exploitation.	<i>Other</i> = it moves beyond this topic.	There are other forms of exploitation that young women are confronted with that require attention.	-
In addition, the nature of the work also requires a certain degree of ma-	<p><i>Work</i> = recognizing prostitution as work.</p> <p><i>Maturity</i> = Something that is linked to adult domain and not to young people.</p>	Prostitution should not be connected to young people.	Bodily work, in relation to sexual bodily exchanges is only for the adult domain and

turity.			should not interfere with the idea we have of youth.
Some companies already follow a minimum-age, but now this will apply to all brothels in Amsterdam.	<i>Some → All</i>	This law amendment did not come from nowhere, it already existed in some places; now is the time to apply to all.	-

