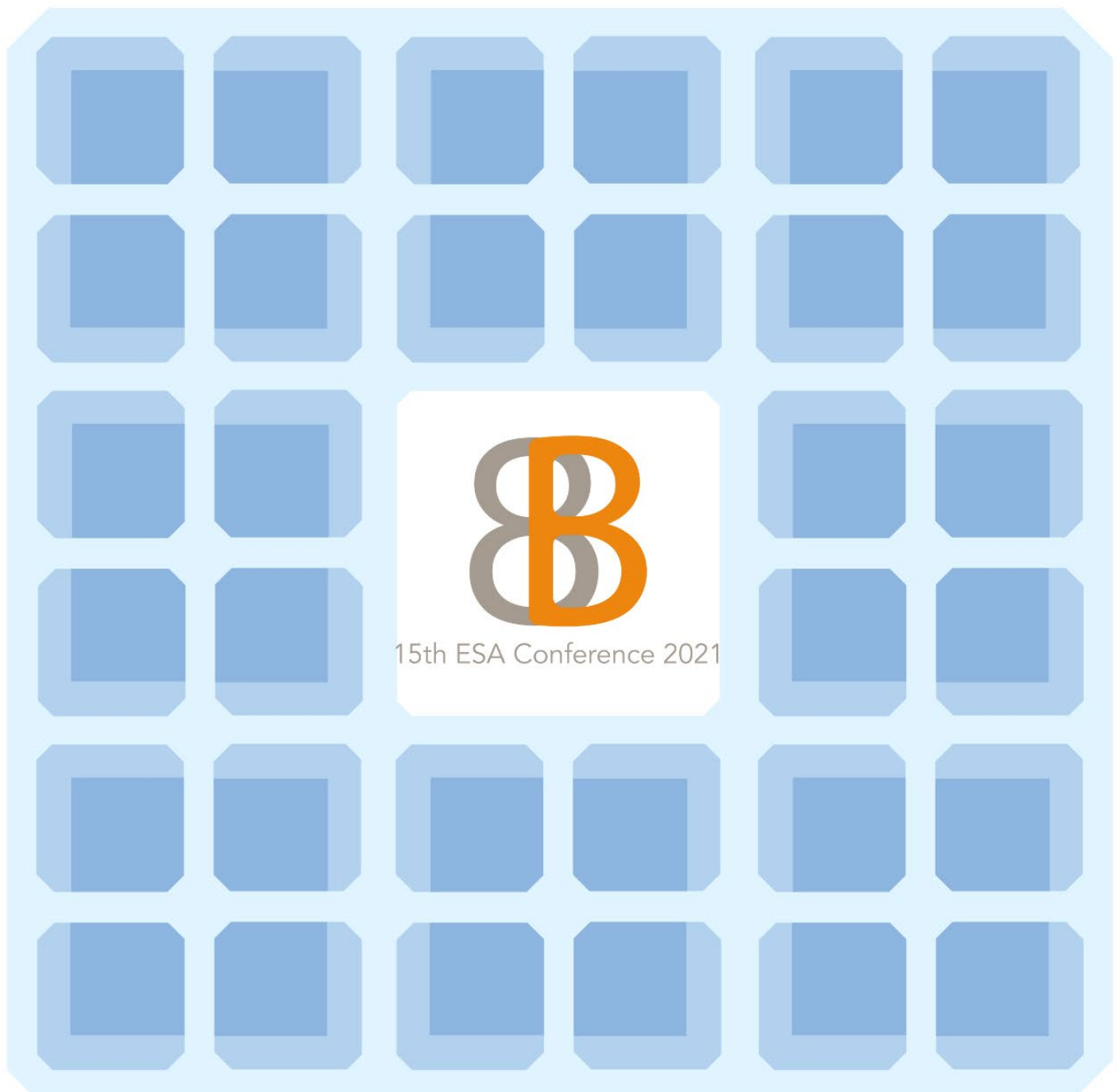


Sociological Knowledges for Alternative Futures

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RN23_T09 | Money, Sex and Work

Male Sex Working and Masculinity: Finding 'Check and Balance' Between Stigmatisation and Homosexualisation

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Despite the large and growing number of research on the topic, sex work and sex workers can be still labelled as an unresearched area of study; even more under-explored is the male side of this phenomenon. But sex work and sex workers cover many issues that go beyond the questions related to legislation, criminalisation, and feminists' debates. Indeed, studying sex work can be an essential analytical tool to understand sexuality at large. In this paper, we present two studies carried out in Italy and Sweden about male sex workers who sell sex to other men online and in public venues (such as porn cinemas and cruising areas). Our focus is on the concept of masculinity and the declinations of such term that male sex workers employ in their relationship with clients. Since selling sex and sexual services is perceived as a stigmatised activity, especially for those men who self-identified as heterosexuals, men who engage in these behaviours need to find a way to justify their presence in the market. At the same time, as recent research highlighted, it is possible to observe the growing presence of self-identified homosexuals in sex work. Then, in our analysis, we compare the behaviour of these two categories of sex workers to understand differences and commonalities about the type of masculinity employed.

'You Can't Live without Money': Economic Uncertainties of Male Sex Workers and Economic Opportunities Provided by Sex Worker-Led Organizations in Nairobi, Kenya.

Lise Woensdregt

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands, The

Research on African sex worker organizations tends to focus on their community-led approaches to reach hidden populations and promote sexual health. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork in a male sex worker-led organization in Nairobi, Kenya, this paper attempts to broaden the dialogue by focusing on the members of these organization, an underexplored but highly significant part of such community-led approaches. Male sex workers in this research, most of which identify as gay, experience multiple economic uncertainties, and increasingly limited opportunities to engage in sex work. The organisation's position in the official development aid system enables it to employ members as peer educators and offer other means of financial support, particularly through their participation in development activities. For members, this economic support sex worker organisations provides is significant. Nonetheless, the paper illustrates how development programs continue to conceptualise male sex workers primarily as volunteers when funding community-led programs, while for members their involvement in these programs has become a main source of income. The economic incentive of sex workers in relation to membership of, and involvement in, sex worker organisations is hardly addressed in academic literature. Findings suggest a need to broaden the disproportionately narrow focus on members of sex worker organizations and to include their lived realities of economic uncertainty, thus going beyond an illusion of voluntariness, in order to advance sex workers' social and economic justice.