Abstract
This dissertation examines the life and work experience of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland. It explores the ways in which commercial sex is conceptualised within the Finnish national project and the ways this affects the everyday lives of migrant women who engage in commercial sex.

The contemporary relationship between commercial sex, understood as a form of *intimate labour* (Boris & Parreñas, 2010), and the Finnish nation is predicated on the abrupt appearance of particular visible bodies associated with mercantile sexuality. Though the visibility of sexual commerce in public spaces in Finland is limited, it is present in political discussions, the media, and the public imagination that connect particular bodies with sexual commerce, regardless of whether any sexual acts take place. I argue that migrant women who engage in commercial sex are perceived to be *space invaders* (Puwar, 2004), as their presence exposes the limits of Finnish national values, in particular, gender equality and social equality. Analysing commercial sex through the lens of everyday as problematic (Smith, 1987), I argue that the national anxieties over the intersection of sexuality, gender, labour, and migration shape the day-to-day lives of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland. The discursive externalisation of commercial sex creates a moral system in which surveillance and control is primarily directed at migrant women (or those perceived to be migrant), forcing them to structure their everyday lives in such a way as to be invisible to state agents and society at large, but visible to their potential clients.

The thesis consists of peer-reviewed articles and the summary chapter. The data collected for this multi-sited ethnographic research includes observations conducted in clubs, *privates*, and an NGO that provides services for sex workers in Southern Finland; semi-structured interviews with key actors in the field of commercial sex, such as policymakers, police, NGO representatives, healthcare providers, experts on issues of trafficking, and migration officials (N=18); and semi-structured interviews with Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland (N=41).

Article I explores the relationship between commercial sex and the nation, focusing on the ways the nation is imagined vis-à-vis commercial sex, particularly when migrants engage in it. Article II examines the various ways in which Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland experience bordering and the consequences it has for their daily lives. In Article III, conceptualisation of home and belonging is discussed in the context of transnational commercial sex. Article IV focuses on various skills necessary in commercial sex and posits that a particular worker emerges from the discourses of the interviewees, characterised by an aptitude for commercial sex.

The study shows how commercial sex is conceptualised within the Finnish national project, the effect it has on the lives of migrant women who engage in commercial sex, and the various strategies they use to cope with it in their everyday lives.
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I dedicate this thesis to the wonderful Russian-speaking women I have interviewed.
Я посвящаю эту диссертацию замечательным русскоговорящим женщинам, у которых я брала интервью.

Helsinki, August 2019
Anastasia Diatlova
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1 Introduction

We are sitting in a cozy pub in the early afternoon with our non-alcoholic drinks resting on the table waiting for their time. My research participant, who in my notes appears succinctly as “Interview 9”, is a smartly dressed young woman. She is talking and I am frantically scribbling away. She tells me how she has been kicked out of a hotel in a Nordic country under the guise of being rescued from trafficking. I ask her why she thinks they would do things that way. She tells me:

   It’s against migration. They don’t want to see us, poor people. We spoil the view for them. (Interview 9)

In Russian, “bednyj” means “poor”, both in terms of lack of wealth, but also “unfortunate” or “pitiful”. The aptness of her explanation is striking. It makes me think of how the visibility of such “misfortune” and “poverty” seemingly seeps across the borders into a nation and cannot be entirely obliterated, as it announces its presence on the streets, in clubs, in flats, online.

Visibility and invisibility are a large part of the discussions that surround commercial sex both in public discourse and academic writing. We are told repeatedly, for instance, that human trafficking is a “hidden phenomenon”, where atrocities against people’s liberty are perpetrated on a grand scale, globally, and yet these massive acts of horror are difficult to estimate, count, and see (for discussion see Doezema, 2010). At the same time, these purported mass horrors of sexual exploitation in trafficking seem to be perpetually visible in films, news coverage, NGO campaigns, and political debates. These victims of human trafficking exist in the split second, blink-and-you-miss-it, between law enforcement’s rescue operations and the moment they morph into “illegal migrants” (see e.g. Pickering & Ham, 2014). Further, though the victim of human trafficking for sexual exploitation remains ever present in the public eye, those who are trafficked for labour exploitation are conspicuous in their invisibility, as they seem to blend seamlessly into the background (Doezema 2010). In campaigns to end commercial sex through legislative efforts, success or failure can be down to whether there is still a visible presence of commercial sex in public spaces (Vuolajärvi, 2015). Researchers point out that research among such “hidden populations” can be challenging and even stigmatizing (Hammond & Kingston, 2014), and yet, there is no shortage of research on commercial sex and on those who engage in it. When those who engage in
commercial sex do come into view and speak up, the validity of their voices is contested (O’Connell Davidson, 1998).

There is, of course, an incentive for invisibility for those who engage in commercial sex. Both the stigma and the illegal or semi-illegal status of commercial sex may compel those who engage in it to keep their activities a secret. But there are other considerations, too. As a few of the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex I interviewed pointed out, some of the appeal of commercial sex for their clients is its clandestine nature. The blending of anti-commercial sex and anti-immigration legal frameworks creates an environment in which a migrant engaged in commercial sex has even more reasons to keep out of the public eye. Yet some visibility is necessary to conduct business. Those engaged in commercial sex cannot entirely blend into the background of the social milieu, as they need to remain visible to the segment of the population who would be their potential clients. It is this amalgamation of visibility and invisibility that forms the crux of my exploration of commercial sex.

I position this research within the discussion that approaches commercial sex not as a binary of abuse (see e.g. Jeffreys, 2010) vs. empowerment (see e.g. Chapkis, 1997), but rather as a complex set of relationships of power, agency, consent, law, and labour (O’Connell Davidson, 1998; Bernstein, 1999; Kempadoo, 2001; Sanders, 2005; Sanders & Campbell, 2007; Sanders & Campbell, 2014; O’Connell Davidson, 2015). When commercial sex done by migrants is the subject of research, questions of trafficking inevitably arise. However, in my work, I do not focus on trafficking as such, nor do I speculate about it in relation to the research participants. The reason is that, firstly, trafficking in Finland has been well researched (Lehti & Aromaa, 2002; Jyrkinen, 2009; Viuhko 2010), and, second, none of the research participants in my study identified as victims of human trafficking.

I, however, consider trafficking as a discourse (Doezema, 2010) in relation to national anxieties about migration and sexuality. My research further contributes to the understanding of commercial sex as work. This is not to say that commercial sex is just like any other work, but rather that it can be understood theoretically as a form of sexual labour (Boris & Parreñas, 2010) and in terms of convergence with other forms of service work (Brents, Jackson, & Hausbeck, 2010). Furthermore, my approach to commercial sex as a form of work is meant to recognise that such an approach allows me to make claims to rights and protections that usually extend to straight work for those who engage in commercial sex. At the same time, I recognise that such protections are rarely, if
ever, extended to non-citizen workers even where commercial sex is legalised (Outshoorn, 2012; Pates, 2012). My conceptualisation of commercial sex as work is in no way an attempt to exonerate it from the forms of exploitative or abusive practices that may take place. On the contrary, by examining commercial sex as work, it is possible to understand better the exploitative nature of work more generally, and the construction of particular gendered, racialised, and sexualised labouring subjects. Much like Hardy (2013), I consider commercial sex as work, but not necessarily as good work in terms of its social value, desirability, or work conditions. Furthermore, my aim is to avoid making normative claims about the value of work as an unequivocal good (Weeks 2011). At the same time, I recognise that commercial sex can be better work than some other options (Jeffrey & MacDonald 2006). I recognise that the research participants are labouring subjects, even though I do not wish to impose on them the label of *sex worker*.

The inescapable fact of my particular local and cultural context is that as a Russian woman in Finland, I cannot be oblivious to the connection made between Russian women and commercial sex. I was well positioned in locality, background, and language skills to approach Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland and ask them about what it was like for them to live in Finland (for short periods of time or more permanently) and be Russian-speakers while engaging in commercial sex. The focus of my research is not the nitty-gritty particulars of the work of commercial sex, but rather the totality of the everyday lives of the Russian-speaking women. I asked them about their interaction with social, healthcare, and welfare services, about their encounters with law enforcement and about their experience of house-hunting in Finland, and also about their hobbies and leisure time, their overall opinions and feelings regarding commercial sex and legislation, about what they like and dislike about life in Finland and in their countries of origin, and about their plans for the future.

In my article-based dissertation I address the following questions:
- How is commercial sex and those who engage in it positioned in relation to the national project?
- How does the national legislation on commercial sex shape the everyday lives of those who engage in it?
- How do those who engage in commercial sex cope with the particular restrictions placed on them by national legislative and public discourses?
An analysis of commercial sex in relation to the nation and nationalism is not new in itself (see e.g. Stukuls 1999; Rivers-Moore 2010; Billaud & Castro 2013). However, what I propose is that within the Finnish context, commercial sex poses a particular challenge to the national project that is based on the values of social and gender equality. Consequently, commercial sex is perceived as an abnormality, inconsistent with these values. By discursively reframing it as a foreign problem, the ontological threat to the national value system can be alleviated. However, it still requires a national response to what is supposed to be the foreign problem of commercial sex, which takes the forms of extensive legislative efforts. The legislative and public discourses create the social environment in which the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex have to live and work in Finland. I explore the various tactics (De Certeau 1984) they use to cope and negotiate their place in Finland as women, labouring subjects, migrants, and people engaged in commercial sex.

In what follows, I first discuss my choice of terminology and its significance regarding commercial sex, followed by a summary of the context of commercial sex in Finland and the particular position of the Russian-speaking population. I then elucidate my theoretical approach and outline my methodology and data, followed by a summary of findings, the conclusions, and the articles.

1.1 Naming the Phenomenon, without Naming Names

In my study, I use the term commercial sex to describe acts in which some form of erotic or sexual service is exchanged for money or other goods. I am not the only one to use this terminology (see e.g. Agustín, 2006; Sanders & Campbell, 2014), but it is still less common than terms such as prostitution or sex work. As such, it becomes necessary to explain this choice of terminology in the context of the highly politicised language use in this field of research. I will start by briefly outlining the political connotations of other terms, and then explain my own choice of terminology with its advantages and disadvantages in relation to the claims I make in this work.

The choice between the terms prostitute/prostitution and sex worker/sex work can necessitate the researcher to state allegiance to either an anti-prostitution stance or a pro-sex work stance. The term prostituted women has gained some traction, often replacing the terms prostitute. Prostituted women is used to underline the harm that prostitution does to individual women and women's position in society in general, as well as putting the responsibility on the men who purchase sex (Jeffreys, 2010). This terminology may be useful in critiquing prostitution as a phenomenon (see e.g. O’Connell Davidson, 2006). However, it limits the possibility of examining the subjectivity of the
women within the practice, if their agency is denied. The terms such as “sex slaves”, “prostituted women”, “survivors”, or “victims of trafficking” invoke a subject who lacks agency (Weitzer, 2009). As such, in the feminist debates they can be cast as the “Other” – either as innocent victims or victims of false consciousness in need of rescue by their more enlightened and liberated sisters (Billaud & Castro, 2013). They can emerge only as victims, and there is no room for nuanced or complex feelings towards prostitution. In a broader perspective, this approach focuses on the power relation within patriarchy, without a serious examination of the impact that capitalist systems or racial hierarchies have on the phenomenon.

The term sex work is used to mitigate the stigma of the term prostitute as well as to highlight the work aspect of the activity (Chapkis, 1997). The proponents of this terminology suggest that it allows looking at agency and discussing consent, and opens avenues to fight for workers’ rights. Furthermore, it is a broader term that looks at a range of different forms of sexual and erotic commerce (Kontula, 2008), which makes it possible to see a wider system in which monetary exchange enters into sexual and erotic relations, instead of bracketing off a single form of exchange and analysing it as the end point of a spectrum.

Though I have used both sex worker and sex work in my published work (see Article I and Article IV), I find that this terminology may have serious drawbacks. I find sex work to be a useful way of discussing the phenomenon from the labour perspective and making claims for workers’ rights. However, the umbrella term sex worker may not be applicable to people who engage in commercial sex, or may not be accepted by them. The women interviewed for this study had different perspectives on the term, which I will outline here.

While the terms sex work and sex workers do not deny individual agency, they nonetheless call forth a particular kind of a labouring subject. The qualifier of sex in sex work positions it as a particular kind of work in relation to straight work. Consequently, discussion of sex, conditions of sex, and the uniqueness of the sex work experience become central to academic and political debates, sidestepping issues of workers’ rights and working conditions beyond sex (Maher, Pickering, & Gerard, 2012).

Some of the women I interviewed embraced both the terms sex worker and the political subjectivity that comes with it. However, others, while embracing the concepts as such, did not feel that it was applicable to them personally. Both the sex and the worker in sex worker were seen as problematic.
As a personal identity, *sex worker* was not easy to adopt because it contained the word *sex*. Though it may not carry the symbolic baggage of *prostitute*, the research participants feel it could not be used in general conversations, in mixed company, or with children present. This brings to the forefront the fact that there are limitations not only on how commercial sex, but also sex and sexuality in general can be part of a public discussion.

The *worker* aspect of *sex worker* is problematic as well. The use of *worker* brings with it the connotation of working class. Most of the research participants do not identify as working-class. Their own educational background and the commitment to respectability suggest that they see themselves as middle class (Skeggs, 1997). Furthermore, *worker* evokes for some of the research participants a routinised, factory-like activity. Research participants reject the routinised aspect of the labour and emphasise its creative and caring components. For the same reason, a term such as the *sex industry* is rejected on the grounds that it suggests a unified field and a high level of organisation.

The use of the term *commercial sex* allows me to look at a wider range of different forms of exchanges which involve intimacy, sexuality, and money. This, in turn, allows me to make a larger point about commercial sex as something embedded in the social milieu, rather than being something apart and out of the ordinary. The use of the terms a *person engaged in commercial sex* allows for a more nuanced approach to the subjectivity of those who exchange various forms of sexual and erotic acts for money. Instead of imposing an overriding subject position on the research participants, this term suggests that this is one of the activities that they engage in, and this activity does not define them as individuals. However, this terminology does have its limitation. The elasticity of the term *commercial sex* makes it difficult to pinpoint what acts precisely fall into its scope. It allows discussion of escort services, street work, and erotic dancing as one phenomenon. This approach may not be useful in every circumstance. It may not be endorsed by people who offer different forms of commercial sexual services, as they may consider their work to be very different. In terms of public discussions and activism, the stigmatising aspect of sexuality persists in *commercial sex*. Though the terms can be relatively descriptive, it may not be easily accepted by those who engage in it.
Nonetheless, in this thesis, I find commercial sex to be the most practicable term to use. It emphasises the fact that in a world marked by various forms of hierarchies and inequalities, mercantile sexualities are embedded into social relations. I do use sex work in Article I and Article IV. My first article is based on data collected with key figures in the field of commercial sex, and consequently, I did not have an opportunity to discuss terminology with those who engage in commercial sex. In my fourth article, as I am making a wider point about work and labour, I chose to use sex work along with commercial sex, to empathise the labour aspect of the phenomenon and not only its economic exchange.

2 The Finnish Context
In this section, I locate my research within the Finnish context. I outline the scope and composition of commercial sex in Finland, the legal framework regulating commercial sex, and the particular positioning of Russian-speakers in Finland.

2.1 Commercial Sex in Finland
In the field of commercial sex, accurate statistics are hard to gather due to the high mobility of people engaged in it. There is no centralised form of record keeping, and estimates vary (Skilbrei & Holmström, 2013). According to Kontula (2008, p. 607), in the early 2000s, there were approximately 8000 women working in the field each year. Other studies put the number at between 10000 and 15000 per year (Leskinen, 2003 in Kelly, Coy, & Davenport 2009). The Finnish National Bureau of Investigation gives the estimate of 500 to 1000 working in Finland on any given day, with less than 500 living in Finland permanently (Niemi & Aaltonen, 2013: 68). While some research suggests that the field of commercial sex predominately consists of migrant workers (TAMPEP 2009), other estimates suggest that approximately half are Finns (Kontula, 2008, p. 607). Estimating the numbers of workers in commercial sex is complicated by their high mobility, both internationally and within Finland, variation in definitions, as well as visibility of some groups and invisibility of others. This can be further complicated by how transactional sexual relations are understood, based on who engages in them and under what conditions (see for e.g. Taylor, 2006).

The field of commercial sex is very mobile in Finland. Not only do people come to Finland to engage in commercial sex, but also Finns travel to the nearby countries (Russia, Estonia) to purchase sexual services (Marttila, 2008; Penttinen, 2008). Among migrant workers, people from Russia and the Baltic countries are the largest group engaged in commercial sex in Finland (Marttila, 2008; Vuolajärvi et al. 2017). Workers from African countries, predominately from Nigeria, tend to have
residence permits from Southern European countries, and work in various EU countries for short periods of time (Vuolajärvi et al. 2017). Though in my own research, I had no opportunity to interview Nigerian workers, my fieldwork suggests that they work predominately on the streets. Various research participants also suggested that there had been an injunction from the police to the club managers and owners not to admit African workers, as they were supposedly victims of trafficking. Vuolajärvi et al. (2017) likewise note that police encouragement of racial profiling contributes to forcing women of colour to work on the streets. Thai workers often come as marriage migrants, tourists, or residents of other EU countries, and tend to work in massage parlours (Vuolajärvi et al. 2017). During my fieldwork, there was continuous discussion of Romanian and Czech workers, who were newcomers to the field. There was a perception that these workers were younger than other workers in the field. And there were concerns expressed by some of the research participants that the “Romanian” women have poor work ethic and were being trafficked.

As I focused on the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex, I met women from Russia and the Baltic countries. This is a group with a lot of internal diversity, which many other studies have not had the opportunity to interrogate. The respondents in my study were predominantly from Russia and the “Eastern bloc” countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova) and Baltic countries. However, their ethnic identities, countries of origin, residency status, and citizenship status varied greatly. Some were Russian citizens, but did not identify as ethnically Russian; others were from the Baltic countries, but identified as Russian. There were also people who were born or grew up in Finland. Some were Finnish citizens, some were citizens of other EU countries, and some travelled with a tourist visa. Some came to Finland as marriage migrants; others were ethnic Finns who arrived in Finland during the push for return migration in the 1990s. They were predominantly middle- or lower-middle class, and had either technical or university-level education. None of the interviewees reported being trafficked to Finland or working under a pimp. One interviewee described something that sounded like a case of trafficking, but it appeared to have taken place some decades ago and not in Finland. Some of the women described getting assistance from other workers or third parties, but respondents themselves construed them as very helpful and useful rather than exploitative in nature. The respondents frequently expressed frustration with being considered trafficking victims, and while they did not doubt that there may be trafficking, they were adamant that they themselves were not victims of any individual compulsion. Most reported that they entered into commercial sex due to economic needs. However, very few reported cases of abject poverty. They rather
described either a sudden situation where money was needed, a desire to improve their economic situation, or a concrete economic project such as earning money to buy an apartment (Article III). In a few cases, the entrance into commercial sex was a combination of a desire for money but also for a particular lifestyle marked by travel, excitement, and consumption.

Women from the Baltic countries found Finland to be an attractive place to come to work or to settle in, since they did not need visas and could travel back and forth with relative ease. For those who had families, this was particularly important, as it allowed them to fulfil their care obligations. While some of the respondents identified as ethnically Baltic, others were from Baltic countries but identified as ethnically Russian. The same was true for women from Russia and other non-EU countries. Russian-speaking women with residency or citizenship in other EU counties also found coming to Finland to be convenient, as they had networks of friends and acquaintances. Besides the ease of travel to and from Finland, according to the respondents, Finland was an attractive place to work in commercial sex, because it was perceived as relatively safe. It was also suggested that working in a country where one did not live was convenient, as it allowed a person to avoid being recognised and outed as someone who engages in commercial sex. During my fieldwork, however, I was repeatedly told that business was getting worse, as there were fewer and fewer clients. The respondents attributed this to the economic downturn after the 2008 Great Recession. While it has been discussed how economic shifts, particularly in the 1990s, have prompted people to enter commercial sex (Holli, 2004; Marttila, 2008), less has been written about the effect that a decrease in spending power of a population could have on the consumption of sexual services.

Indoor commercial sex tends to be the more common form in Finland, with street work relatively uncommon and confined to Helsinki (Vuolajärvi et al. 2017). Arrangements and soliciting tend to take place on the internet (Marttila, 2008) and in certain clubs and restaurants. While previous research suggests that there is a separation between indoor and street work (see e.g. Weitzer, 2009), my research suggests that at least among some Russian-speaking women who offer escort services, a variety of soliciting methods can be used in tandem. Women work during the day using an online ad, go to the club in the evening, and after that walk along the streets. There are also erotic dance clubs that offer striptease shows and some form of socialising with the dancers. In addition, Finland has venues known colloquially as privates. These venues are similar to peep shows and offer a space for watching an erotic dance in private, getting a massage, or socialising with the performer. Privates are usually open during daytime (common working hours seem to be between
10 AM and 10 PM), can be easily identified from the street, occasionally have other forms of erotic entertainment such as films or a small sex shop, and typically consist of a few small rooms where one or more women work. These venues offer commercial sex in the broadest possible sense, with the intermingling of intimacy, nudity, and eroticism. However, they do not openly offer sex on the premises. In fact, in most of the privates and clubs I have visited, there are notices informing workers and clients that sex cannot be sold on the premises. The respondents in my study who worked in privates all stated categorically that they do not offer sexual intercourse, but some of them speculated that other workers might offer some form of sexual acts. This suggests that even if no sexual intercourse is offered in these spaces, there is an assumption, even among the workers, that it may be happening.

2.2 Legislation on Commercial Sex
Up until the 1980s, commercial sex in Finland was regulated through the Vagrancy Act, which employed regulation of brothel keeping and mandatory medical examinations in attempt to control commercial sex rather than abolish it (Vuolajärvi et al. 2017). Commercial sex was broadly perceived at the time to be an issue of morality and public health as well as poverty (Järvinen, 1990).

The current legal framework regulating commercial sex work in Finland can be found in the Public Order Act, the Criminal Code, and the Aliens Act. Selling sex is not illegal in Finland, however pandering and some aspects of buying are illegal. Selling and buying sexual services in public places is prohibited (Public Order Act [2003] 2010). This legislation was originally introduced on a local level as an attempt to curb street work, and was particularly associated with anxieties over foreign workers in public spaces and local Finnish women being mistaken for sex workers (Tani, 2002). Though most of my respondents did not work on the streets, this legislation did structure their experience of public spaces and anxiety regarding police (Article II). Other researchers have likewise noted that this legislation disproportionately affects migrant workers on the streets, eroding their trust in the police (Vuolajärvi et al. 2017).

Pandering (i.e. facilitating commercial sex and profiting from commercial sex done by others) is illegal (The Criminal Code of Finland [1889] 2012). The Criminal Code criminalises not only profiteering or direct control exerted by a third party, but also facilitation of commercial sex, such as renting out an apartment or assisting in creation of online ads. For the respondents in my research, this piece of legislation made it harder to access housing in Finland, and impaired their ability to work and live together with other women engaged in commercial sex (Article II).
significance of this legislation is that an arrangement that may be perceived by the people engaged in commercial sex as not harmful but beneficial is interpreted by the law as a crime. Consequently, such law can be interpreted as not being there to protect the people engaged in commercial sex from harm, but rather to protect the society from what is considered to be the harms of commercial sex (Kimpimäki, 2009 in Vuolajärvi et al. 2017).

Non-Finnish citizens can be refused entry if they are suspected of intending to sell sexual services (the Aliens Act ([2004] 2010), which applies both to people attempting to enter the country as well as people who are already in the country. According to Vuolajärvi et al. (2017, p. 209), the application of the Aliens Act appears to be selective, with Nigerian women being the majority of those refused entry compared to Russian women on tourist visas. In my research, none of the respondents were refused entry to Finland. However, one reported experiencing the effects of similar legislation in another Nordic country. Also, some respondents reported being subjected to intense questioning at the border, and their feelings of extreme distress related to it (Article II).

National legislation in the field of commercial sex in Finland has been closely intertwined with global legislative, political, moral, and social changes. Some have suggested that commercial sex market was practically non-existent in Finland until the 1990s, when the fall of the Soviet Union and a sharp economic downturn in Finland brought about an increase in visible commercial sex (Häkkinen, 1999). However, concerns about commercial sex and legislative initiatives regarding it have been debated in Finland since the 19th century (Järvinen, 1993; Vuolajärvi et al. 2017). In relation to this research, two particular instances of legislative change are important: Finland’s ratification of the trafficking convention, and the partial criminalisation of sex purchase styled after the Swedish model.

The United Nations 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (hereafter Palermo Protocol) was the result of negotiations between different organizations and state representatives, with very different agendas and understandings of what constitutes human trafficking (Doezema, 2010). Finland ratified the Palermo Protocol in 2006, but had already made changes to the Criminal Code to address the issues of trafficking in 2004 (Viuhko & Jokinen, 2009). Sweden introduced the criminalisation of sex purchasing in 1999. In Finland, attempts have been made to introduce similar legislation, but the push for full criminalisation of purchasing failed. This failure to fully criminalise purchasing can be understood in terms of particular internal concerns and debates in Finland. The gender equality discourse that was successful in
Sweden did not get the same level of traction in Finland, as equality was understood more in terms of social equality within the welfare state rather than an end goal in itself (Bucken-knapp, Schaffer, & Levin, 2014). The concerns over organised crime and public order, especially in relation to migration from Russia and the Baltic countries, dominated the discourse in Finland (Bucken-knapp, Schaffer, & Levin, 2014). The partial criminalisation of purchasing made it illegal to buy sexual services from victims of trafficking and pandering. Both anti-trafficking and anti-purchasing legislation has proven to be difficult to implement by both law enforcement and the courts (Vuolajärvi et al. 2017). However, the limitation of implementing this legislation may not be paramount, as the purpose of the legislation is at least partially meant to send ideological messages to the national community (Article I). The new proposal discussed in Parliament in 2014, which would have lowered the threshold of client responsibility for purchasing from victims of pandering or trafficking, was a source of consternation among the research participants. Firstly, among the research participants, insinuations of victimhood were taken as personal insults. They found it demeaning when clients asked them if they were victims of trafficking or pimping. Second, the common feeling was that the best thing that legislators could do was to leave them alone. The research participants were frustrated by the relentless attention from the lawmakers and the public.

The overall parameters of commercial sex legislation in Finland can be understood as partial criminalisation of particular segments of the field, in particular, commercial sex done by migrant women.

2.3 Russian-speakers in Finland

Due to the close proximity and a shared history, the relationship between Finland and Russia is a complex one. As Finland was part of the Russian Empire, there has always been a Russian-speaking population in Finland (Krivonos & Näre, 2019). However, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s brought about a dramatic increase in migration from Russia and other post-Soviet countries. Russian-speakers are the third largest language group in Finland after Finnish-speakers and Swedish-speakers, with over 77 000 people speaking Russian in 2018 (Official Statistics of Finland, 2018).

The attitudes towards Russians in Finland varied from fear and apprehension after World War II and during the Cold War to disdain and a sense of superiority after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Leinonen, 2012). Russian-speakers in Finland generally face high levels of discrimination, racialisation, and prejudice (Kyntäjä, 2005; Krivonos, 2018). General attitudes to Russian-speakers are among of the worst, compared to some other migrant populations (Jaakkola, 2005). For Russian-
speaking migrants, relocation to Finland often means occupational downward mobility (Liebkind et al. 2004; Krivonos 2015). Even ethnic Finns, who migrated to Finland from the former Soviet Union through return migration schemes, face high levels of discrimination and social exclusion and are often treated as “Russians” (Mannila & Reuter, 2009).

Travelling to Finland from Russia or the Baltic countries is relatively easy. The proximity of the countries makes it logistically feasible. Also, as the Baltic countries are part of the Schengen area and tourist visas for Russians are not difficult to acquire, short-term trips to Finland are possible (Vuolajärvi, 2018). However, in order to prolong one’s stay, a non-EU citizen needs to acquire a work- or study-based residence permit (Krivonos, 2015). Marriage migration is a common route for Russian women to come to Finland (Säävälä, 2010).

Even though only a small portion of migration to Finland from the former Soviet Union was specifically for the purposes of commercial sex, the concerns over this type of migration and its consequent visibility affected how Russian-speakers, and especially Russian-speaking women, were perceived and treated in Finland (Skilbrei & Holmstöm 2013). Russian women remain a highly visible group within the Finnish society, arguably more so than Russian-speaking men (Leinonen, 2012). But while Russian-speaking men have been associated with criminality, Russian-speaking women have been stereotyped as “prostitutes” and “gold-diggers” (Leinonen, 2012). This negative association between mercantile sexuality and migration may prompt Russian-speaking women to downplay their own agency in migration projects (see e.g. Säävälä, 2010). Not all stereotypes about Russian-speakers are categorically negative. Russian-speaking women are often imagined as warm, considerate, and good, willing workers (Krivonos, 2019a).

The Russian-speakers are best understood in the Finnish context not only in terms of their negative or positive stereotypes, but also in terms of overall visibility and racialisation. Though Russian-speaking migrants are predominately and ostensibly “white”, because Finland defined its own “Westernness” through its contrast to Russia, Russian-speakers become construed as a racialised minority in Finland (Krivonos, 2019b). Their proximity to “whiteness” may vary depending on the context of the discourses (Keskinen, 2013). As such, Russian-speakers are a highly visible and problematised migrant group in Finland. Their bodies are marked as possible borders between “here” and “there”, “East” and “West”. This is particularly the case for Russian-speaking women, whose sexuality as “Other” is contrasted to that of “decent” and “moral” Finnish women (Davydova & Pöllänen, 2011).
3 Theoretical Approaches

In this thesis, I am guided by Dorothy Smith’s (1987) understanding of the everyday world as problematic. This not only means that the mundane, day-to-day experiences of people are worthy of sociological inquiry, but also that by examining the everyday, we can better understand institutional power regimes, as they are intrinsically interlinked with the everyday. Thus, the everyday is not self-contained, but it can show some part of the larger mechanisms of ruling. In that sense, commercial sex cannot be examined as a separate, self-contained phenomenon. It is in the mundane, everyday routines of those who engage in it that we can see its interconnectedness with power regimes. But more than that, it is important to consider not the extraordinariness of commercial sex, but rather its mundane nature. Instead of ascribing sex and sexuality a special status of either sublime or dangerous, I consider it to be located firmly in the realm of the mundane (Jackson & Scott, 2010). Likewise, the intermingling of intimacy and economics is not a deviation from but rather a feature of everyday social relations (Zelizer, 2005). People do pay for sexual experiences in a variety of ways, and people do benefit financially from providing intimacy, sex, or love. In arguing that commercial sex is ordinary, I am not attempting to make a moral judgment. Rather, I am suggesting a particular epistemological approach to commercial sex that would allow us to see its interconnectedness with other aspects of social life and its embeddedness into a wider social milieu. In my work, I want to contribute to the research that does not treat those who engage in commercial sex as worlds apart, as a distinctive or particular group, but as individuals who have complex experiences, with commercial sex being only one of them.

I do not consider migrant commercial sex to be the result of absolute compulsion or of unbridled freedom. Like other forms of human activity, it is predicated on a range of choices that are made within particular structural limits that depend on the positions of those who make them and on regulatory frameworks (O’Connell Davidson, 1998; Maher, Pickering, & Gerard, 2012). Thus, the range of choices available to those who operate at the higher echelons of commercial sex may not only outstrip the possibilities of other people in commercial sex, but also those of many people in wage labour (O’Connell Davidson, 1998). Similarly, migration is predicated on various possibilities, economic factors, as well as personal dispositions of those who migrate (see e.g. Agustín, 2005b). However, when discussing commercial sex, I want to stress that choice cannot be reduced to rational choice (cf. Chapkis 1997, p. 67). The celebration of rationality in the neoliberal democracies overemphasises the desirability of autonomous, economically motivated subjects (Brown, 2003).
While those who engage in commercial sex can make claims to such rationality and subjectivity, these claims are frequently challenged by state and non-state agents that position those who engage in commercial sex as inherently irrational (Jacobsen & Stenvoll, 2010; Bjønness, 2012). Therefore, I suggest sidestepping the debate about the rationality of choice in commercial sex, and focusing instead on ways people adjust to their circumstances. The Russian-speaking women I have interviewed not only make decisions, big and small, about work, travel, and relationships, based on the options available to them, but also adjust their plans according to changing circumstances. It is precisely this flexibility and ability to adjust that is seen as valuable among the research participants (Article III). Thus, faced with circumstances beyond their control, they may use tactics to engage with social structures both by complying with the regulatory frameworks and by resisting them in everyday life (De Certeau, 1984). While I treat commercial sex in the context of the everyday, I also recognise that it raises social anxieties.

I argue that national anxieties over the intersection of sexuality, gender, labour, and migration shape the day-to-day lives of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland. I argue that migrant women who engage in commercial sex are perceived to be *space invaders* (Puwar, 2004), as their presence exposes the contradictions within the national community. The migrant women engaged in commercial sex expose the limits of Finnish national values, in particular, gender equality and social equality. Their visibility destabilises the extent to which a nation can make claims to the values of social and gender equality. To neutralise the menace posed to the national value system by the visibility of these bodies, the response takes the form of political and legal action that is framed by the national values. The national response takes the form of an attempt to eradicate migrant subjects engaged in commercial sex. Through legislation that frames them both as perpetrators (e.g. “illegal migrants”, “public nuisance”) and victims (e.g. “victims of trafficking or pimping”), conditions are created for their expulsion from the public and private spaces. This makes those who engage in commercial sex become more visible in legislation and public debates, as they take on particular legal subjectivities that are meant to facilitate their exclusion. Thus, those who engage in commercial sex are forced to become their own border guards, employing a variety of practices and behaviours in order to render themselves invisible to the scrutiny of the state, both in public and private spaces. This structure of forced obscurity shapes the everyday lives of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland. In my articles, I explore this process, and show how the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex respond to it in their daily lives.
3.1 National Community, Gender, Sexuality & Mobility

Within the nation, I conceptualise migrant women engaged in commercial sex as *space invaders*. Puwar (2004) proposes the notion of “space invader” in the context of spaces reserved for exercise of colonial white male power, and the ways in which the appearance of female and racialised bodies in these spaces exposes the hierarchies and mechanisms of power that up until that point were invisible and unacknowledged. While she focuses on the ways in which embodiment affects the position of gendered and racialised groups in particular institutions (e.g. the government, universities, civil service, etc.), her framework allows for applying the notion of space invaders to a broader context of the nation. She focuses on the entrance of historically disenfranchised bodies into positions and spaces of power, arguing that their entrance into public spaces of the Western nation more generally, as well as their destabilising effect, has already been studied extensively. However, her framework is particularly useful for conceptualisation of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in the Finnish context. As I demonstrate, migrant women engaged in commercial sex are marked by their victimhood, poverty, and gender oppression, as they enter the space of the Finnish nation that, in turn, is understood as the locus of agency, choice, welfare, and equality (Article I). In such a way, the Finnish nation is broadly understood to be the space of power, occupying the privileged position of wealth and freedom. In such a space, migrant women engaged in commercial sex can be understood as matter out of place (Puwar, 2004), as they are imagined as external to this space of power, and their attempt to enter it is seen as profoundly destabilising.

Their destabilising presence prompts what I refer to as *national anxiety*, by which I mean fears over the coherence of national identity and values, ideals, and beliefs in the face of actual or perceived changes. On an institutional level, it is what Puwar (2004, p. 11) calls “disorientation”, characterised by a low-level sense of dread when the disenfranchised bodies enter the spaces of power and disturb its particular “look”. These anxieties can find their expression in *moral panics*, where individual events are clustered in public discourses to create an impression of a particular phenomenon (Hall et al. 1978, pp. 16–17). Under certain circumstances, national anxieties can congeal into moral panics, which are then addressed in various ways, including through new legislation (Scoular, 2010). To illustrate, in Sweden, the national anxieties over EU membership, migration, and changing patterns of sexual consumption were translated into the law prohibiting the purchase of commercial sex (Scoular, 2010; Harrington, 2012). In Finland, the moral panic over migration from the former Soviet Union and economic recession of the 1990s has similarly set the
tone and parameters for the Finnish legislation on commercial sex (Holli, 2004). In both cases, it was the appearance of bodies deemed foreign that spurred the legislative response.

Though I discuss the destabilising effect of commercial sex, it is important to state that migrant women who engage in commercial sex are not actively undermining or threatening the national community. In fact, individual Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex may want to integrate and construct a sense of belonging in Finland (Article III). However, various national discourses contribute to the construction of the figure of the prostitute/sex worker who is the subject of national anxiety. I use the figure of the prostitute/sex worker to mean an emblematic repository of meanings, similar to how Kofman (2013) uses “migratory figures” or Lewis (2005) uses the figure of “the immigrant woman”. The figure of the prostitute/sex worker is conjured up through political, media, and legislative narratives, and serves as a vague, nebulous stand-in for real people engaged in commercial sex. Because it is only tentatively tethered to people engaged in commercial sex, it can be easily moulded in political or media discourse into any shape from a poor trafficking victim to an immoral deviant. Due to its plasticity, it can contain seemingly conflicting subjectivities such as reproachable victim, where sympathy for the victim intermingles with the disgust for the “whore” (Jacobsen & Skilbrei, 2010). As Doezema (2010) points out, both conservative and progressive anxieties can be expressed in this figure. While the anxieties congeal in the figure of prostitute/sex worker, it is the particular individuals who engage in commercial sex who feel its effects.

The threat that commercial sex, and commercial sex carried out by migrants, poses to the nation stems from the role gender and sexuality play in the formation of the nation. Here, the nation is understood as an imagined community united through common ideas, beliefs, and values (Cohen, 1985; Anderson, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 1993; Anderson, 2013). It does not only exist on a discursive level, but is also lived in the everyday life. Particular subjects populate the imagined community. Their race, class, gender, and sexuality structure their relation to the national project. In order to construct and sustain this community, boundaries need to be drawn between subjects who are included or excluded (Anderson, 2013). The “good citizens” exemplify the boundaries of the community of value through their commitment to particular work ethic, law, and sexual morality (Anderson, 2013). Though women are not considered to be active agents in the national project, they, collectively, form an integral part of it as symbols, reproducers, and keepers of cultural
knowledge (Nagel, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 1993). Female sexuality is closely interconnected with national honour, and therefore particular unacceptable female sexualities (e.g. prostitute, lesbian) are perceived as threatening to the nation (Mosse, 1985). The use of women as national symbols allows to introduce familial metaphor into the national project (Farris, 2017). The nation becomes a metaphorical family, and the nuclear family becomes the basic unit of the nation, while the hierarchies and loyalties expected from the members of the nation find their expression in the monogamous family (Willey 2006).

The contemporary anxieties and regulatory frameworks of commercial sex are related to this particular threat it supposedly poses to the formation and sustainability of the nation as a family. The rise of nationalism coincides with the rise of the bourgeoisie family, with respectability at its core (Mosse, 1985). This respectability requires the symbolic removal of commerce from sexual relations, replacing it with romantic and familial love as the basis of the correct, respectable family (Mosse, 1985). The economic component remains an integral part of familial relationships in the forms of inheritance, divorce settlements, the costs of running households, joint bank accounts, and the costs of raising children, but this component is obscured through prioritisation of the romantic and intimate over the economic (Zelizer, 2005). Commercial sex poses a challenge to this perception of interpersonal relations as it exposes the possibilities of economic interest in what is expected to be a non-economic exchange. This is particularly visible in such relationships on the very fringes of what is understood to be commercial sex such as “sugar dating”, “mail-order brides” or “sham marriages”. They all conjure up fears of contamination of the respectability of relationships by pecuniary interest and, to some extent, the fears of illegitimate border crossings.

Furthermore, commercial sex is seen as a disruptive agent, undermining the loyalty within the heterosexual family unit, and consequently disrupting national coherence. Even where the centrality of the family to the national project has been waning, monogamy, with its meaning of Western civilisation and Christian morality, retains its importance and even carries the stamp of gender equality (Willey, 2006). In such a way, commercial sex can be seen as undermining the monogamy of a heterosexual relationship and therefore disrupting the basic national unit. Oppression is seen not as residing in the heterosexual monogamous family formation, but in the non-monogamous arrangements such as polygamous marriages or commercial sex (Willey, 2006). The liberating impulses of the nation looks outwards to these “Others”, leaving the monogamous
heterosexual family largely out of the scope of its direct liberating intervention (Farris, 2017). As I demonstrate, when key actors demarcate migrant commercial sex as the locus of gender oppression, they symbolically extradite oppression and place it outside the physical and metaphorical national borders, thereby sustaining national identity that is purportedly based on egalitarianism (Article I).

This is not to deny that the range of acceptable sexual behaviours, practices, and identities has been expanding in Western liberal nations. Sexual self-expression, tolerance of sexual difference, and sexual freedom are incorporated into the fabric of the Western nation as if they are fundamentally and uniquely Western, which allows to build systems of exclusion and inclusion along the lines of allegiance to sexual norms (Fassin, 2010; Farris, 2017; Keskinen, 2018). Even as same-sex relationships have gained acceptance, they have been made respectable through legalisation of civil partnerships and gay marriage (Ahlm, 2017) and through commodification of public displays of non-conforming sexuality such as Gay Pride parades (Hubbard 2001). The narrowness of acceptable sexual identities and expressions becomes particularly visible in asylum cases based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In such cases, asylum seekers must not only prove their sexual preferences, but also frame them in a way that would align with Western perception of gay or lesbian identity (Fassin & Salcedo, 2015). Thus, sexuality needs to be understood as an “organizing mechanism”, creating a separation “between self and other, and between ‘here’ and ‘there’” (Schick, 1999, p. 231). In such a way, though nations are built on the premise of heterosexuality, not all heterosexualities are equally acceptable, with certain practices such as fetishism, pornography, sadomasochism, and commercial sex being condemned and excluded (Hubbard, 2001, p. 57). I argue that commercial sex is one of the excluded heterosexualities, because it disrupts monogamous heterosexuality and blurs the line between private and public, which is the basis of respectability.

Commercial sex can occupy different positions within the national imagination, and consequently prompt different legal and social responses. Under particular circumstances, a pragmatic approach to commercial sex can be taken. It becomes seen as a “necessary evil”, providing a service to young unmarried men of the nation (Pates, 2012). Tolerance of sexual difference, which has been the hallmark of Western liberalism in recent decades, can extend to commercial sex. However, it often takes the form of inconsistent and sporadic enforcement of the law with some less visible, higher-end forms of commercial sex tolerated, while more visible forms restricted (Agustín, 2005a). When
tolerance of sexual difference or pragmatic approach to sexuality is part of the national value system, it can translate into legalisation of commercial sex as a way of asserting this value (for the Dutch case see Outshoorn, 2012). However, this tolerance does not generally extend to foreigners who engage in commercial sex. Even when commercial sex is legalised or partially decriminalised, legislation disproportionately affects foreigners engaged in commercial sex (Skilbrei & Holmström, 2013; Article II). Finnish legislation directed at those who engage in commercial sex targets foreigners with precision, while leaving enough room for Finnish workers to operate (Vuolajärvi et al. 2017). While nationals who engage in commercial sex can be incorporated into the community of value (Anderson, 2013), the presence of foreigners engaged in commercial sex is too disruptive to the avowed values of liberal Western nations. As I demonstrate, the independent Finnish person engaged in commercial sex can be marginally more acceptable in comparison with her Russian-speaking migrant counterpart, as she can be incorporated into the national value system by exemplifying the independence and agency ascribed to Finnish women within the gender equality paradigm (Article I).

National anxieties over commercial sex are not only related to sexuality, but also gender. It is important to interrogate the different positions attributed to men and women within the national project. As the national women’s collective body symbolises the body of the nation, women become carriers of national honour (Yuval-Davis, 1993). As such, women are expected to conform to the national ideals of femininity and sexuality. Appropriate femininity and sexuality depend on a particular historical, political, and social context. In Western liberal democracies, female sexuality must adhere to the liberal notions with just a tint of religious dogmas (Farris, 2017). This is a woman who is expected to be sexually liberated, but not too promiscuous, aware of her own sexual pleasure, but not too focused on it, preferably heterosexual, or at least monogamous, and with her body accessible, but not too accessible. This can be observed in the construction of the acceptable Western liberal femininity between the two poles of rejected femininities marked by accessibility and inaccessibility of their gendered bodies: with the woman’s body not being too available (i.e. “sex workers”), but not too unavailable either (i.e. “veiled Muslim women”) (Billaud & Castro, 2013). While Western nations desire to unveil the figure of the “Muslim woman” (Fanon, 1965; Farris, 2017), the reverse of this is the desire to “cover up” the overly visible body of the “Eastern” woman. While this desire for unveiling often takes a very literal form with a number of laws throughout Europe prohibiting various forms of head coverings (Sauer, 2009), the “Eastern” women are not
required by law to put on more layers. Instead, a combination of immigration and criminal law together with administrative regulations define migrant women engaged in commercial sex as legal subjects, exclude them from public spaces and expel them from the national territory (Andrijasevic, 2007; Jahnsen & Skilbrei, 2017).

Here, I discuss the “East” and the “West” not as particular bounded geographical locations, but rather as constructs. “Westernness”, and, consequently, whiteness and civilisation, of particular nations are asserted through the opposition to the “Eastern” Other (McCintock, 2013; Farris, 2017; Krivonos & Näre, 2019). This most prominently appears in Said’s (1974) discussion of the Orient, which functions as depository of racial and sexual otherness. “Eastern Europe” became such a depository of otherness in the European context (Boatcă, 2007), with Russia and other “Eastern European” countries demarcated as not quite the real Europe (Krivonos, 2019b). The exotification and sexualisation of the “East” with its roots in the colonial legacies does not reside exclusively in the bodies of the colonised subjects, but can spread to other groups of people based on their gender, class, and race (McCintock, 2013). In such a way, exotification and sexualisation extend to “Eastern European” women.

Eastern European women become associated with both oppression and victimization (Andrijasevic, 2007) as well as hyper-femininity and dangerous, mercantile sexuality (Cvajner, 2011). In such a way, they are construed as the antithesis to the liberated and autonomous Western women (Jacobsen & Stenvoll, 2010). This emergence of the sexualised “Eastern European” woman can be partially traced to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent patterns of migration (Krivonos, 2019b). Due to the restrictive migration policies that prioritise highly skilled (i.e. male) migrants, for many women, marriage is one of the few pathways to migration (Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Pellander, 2014). This creates a double bind for women from post-Socialist states. On the one hand, their wish to migrate is often tempered by migration regimes that make marriage migration the only possibility. On the other hand, as foreign women marry national men, anxieties arise around the women’s motivations and the “genuineness” of these marriages (Flemmen, 2008). As such, when individuals and groups become embodiments of particular formation of gender, race, and class, they become associated with particular sexual acts, and even when these acts do not take place, their mere possibility becomes grounds for exclusion (Luibhéid, 2002). Consequently, mechanisms of containment, criminalisation, and exclusion from full citizenship rights are directed
at Eastern European women, regardless of their direct engagement in commercial sex (Andrijasevic, 2007).

In the Finnish context, the quintessential “Eastern European” woman is usually “Russian”. Here, “Russian” does not necessarily designate a particular ethnic or citizenship identity, but extends into the realm of embodiment and becomes associated with particular sartorial choices, accents, and movements through public spaces (Tani, 2002; Sverdljuk, 2009). This is predicated on the proximity between Finland and Russia, and a longstanding and complex relationship between the two countries. The Finnish national project has been closely connected with its dissociation from Russia as a way of asserting Finland’s place in Western modernity (Puuronen, 2011). In Finland, “Russianness”, in relation to women, becomes associated with mercantile sexuality, where even if the women are not engaged in commercial sex, they are still assumed to be “prostitutes” or “gold-diggers” (Leinonen, 2012). Thus, “Russianness” itself becomes imbued with the symbols of illicit sexuality. In my thesis, I focus on Russian-speaking women, to recognise that “Russianness” sticks to particular forms of embodiment and is extended to people who are perceived to be Russian, regardless of their citizenship or ethnicity. This marks the limits of acceptable sexuality and femininity, with the Russian-speaking woman cast in contrast to the supposedly self-sufficient, independent, and sexually respectable Western woman (Jacobsen & Skilbrei, 2010).

In relation to my discussion of migrant women engaged in commercial sex, it is important to make a broader point about the inexorable connection between commercial sex and mobility. Mobility is one of the defining characteristics of commercial sex (Sanders, 2005; Maher, Pickering, & Gerard, 2012). I, therefore, examine commercial sex within the mobility turn, where transnational migration is just one type of mobility (Sheller & Urry, 2006). Geographical mobility is interconnected with social mobility and is profoundly gendered, creating both obstacles and resources for those who are on the move (Näre, 2014). In turn, migrancy is understood as a social category of stratification that is ascribed to certain subjects regardless of their movement across borders (Näre, 2012; Näre, 2013). Those who engage in commercial sex not only move across national borders, but also within countries and cities, between private and public spaces, and in and out of spaces designated as spaces of commercial sex.

I argue that mobility is an important response to the containment and exclusion that the legislative and social practices impose on those who engage in commercial sex. By moving across borders and through spaces, the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex can escape the
surveillance of authorities. This mobility is partially necessitated by legislation that does not allow them to stay in one place. Migration legislation places restrictions on the amount of time non-citizens and non-residents can spend in Finland. Furthermore, exclusionary housing regulations and public order regulations effectively restrict the possibilities of renting housing or selling sexual services in public places. Though other scholars have noted the importance of mobility for those who engage in commercial sex in their work (Sanders, 2005; Maher, Pickering, & Gerard, 2012), I highlight how mobility is more than just a work strategy. It permeates all aspects of the lives of the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex, including their leisure time and interpersonal relationships (Article III). It is this mobility that structures their relationship to both their countries of origin and to Finland.

Mobility is, therefore, a response to excessive visibility of the person engaged in commercial sex as a legal subject. Through legislation, a person engaged in commercial sex is constructed as a particular subject who is excluded from public and private spaces and expunged from the nation. At the same time, those who engage in commercial sex seek to reduce their visibility to state and non-state agents and, therefore, must stay mobile or engage outside assistance to mask their presence (Article II). Thus, I argue that migrant women who engage in commercial sex need to structure their everyday lives in such a way as to be invisible to state agents and society at large, but visible to their potential clients. In many Western liberal nations, including Finland, migrant women engaged in commercial sex are the ones who bear the burden of criminalisation and restriction (Skilbrei & Holmström, 2013; Vuolajärvi, 2018). Criminalisation of migrants in commercial sex extends to countries where commercial sex itself is not criminalised (Outshoorn, 2001; Pates, 2012). Containment of more visible forms of commercial sex, while less visible forms are marginally more acceptable, can be understood as a form of gentrification of the sex industry (Bernstein, 2001) or part of the stratification of outdoor and indoor work (Maher, Pickering, & Gerard, 2012). Yet criminalisation extends to migrant workers regardless of their work place. In fact, as I demonstrate, legislation actively excludes them from accessing less visible forms of commercial sex through restriction their ability to rent flats (Article III). I, thus, postulate that the exclusionary legal framework directed at commercial sex is a form of nation building, as it demarcates the moral limits of acceptable sexuality, but also targets migrants engaged in commercial sex in particular.
3.2 Commercial Sex as (Anti)Work

As migrant commercial sex poses a challenge to the national project, it also poses a particular challenge to the neoliberal capitalist system. Here, the nationalist project and the process of neoliberalisation are understood in conjunction with each other, as neoliberal processes can take on nationalistic elements, while nationalist projects can include neoliberal conceptions of citizenship (Mäkinen, 2017, p. 221). I am not suggesting that everyone who participates in commercial sex in every context is consciously challenging this neoliberal system. On the contrary, commercial sex can be successfully, if not seamlessly, incorporated into the market economy. Instead, I argue that commercial sex can destabilise the narrow margins of acceptable forms of labour designated to gendered, racialised, and classed subjects, and disrupt the established flows of profits.

I approach commercial sex as a form of *intimate labour* (Boris & Parreñas, 2010). This form of labour encompasses a wide range of activities that include intimacy in the sense of proximity of human bodies, work in private spaces, and relationships built on trust and emotional closeness, where sharing information may cause shame or distress to the recipients of the intimate labour or the labourers. The *intimate labour* approach recognises the fluidity of labour, allowing for a more comprehensive discussion of work that incorporates waged and non-waged labour. I broadly understand commercial sex as a form of work, as this approach allows making claims for better work conditions for those who participate in it. However, as my data show, those who engage in commercial sex do not necessarily consider themselves workers, and can understand commercial sex as categorically different from straight work (Article IV). Thus, conceptualising commercial sex as a form of intimate labour is particularly fruitful, as it encompasses unpaid activities that may be performed within heterosexual relationships as well as the same activities performed as paid work (Boris & Parreñas, 2010).

Even as commercial sex can be conceptualised as a form of labour, it is profoundly disruptive as a form of work, as it challenges the symbolic boundaries between private and public. The normative approach to sex and intimacy is that they should not be contaminated by market forces, and that the market forces should not be diluted by sex and sexuality (Zelizer, 2005). That is not to say that sex and intimacy cannot be commodified. On the contrary, in neoliberal, capitalist economies, sexuality and intimacy enter the market in many forms and at different levels. If the exchange of
sexuality and intimacy for money are discreet and intertwined with regularised labour market, this exchange can become accepted or even celebrated. Even bypassing the commodification of sexuality in entertainment and hospitality industry, commodification of love, passion, and intimacy can be observed in the corporate culture, which celebrates the redirection of affection from interpersonal relationships towards the corporation itself (Weeks 2017). Since the line between private and public is blurred in other forms of work, this suggests that the effect commercial sex has on the private/public divide is not its only destabilizing aspect.

Sexuality, particular performance of gender identity, and intimacy are routinely put to work in the domestic and care work and in various sectors of the service industry (McDowell, 2009; Boris & Parreñas, 2010). However, they are put to work as if they are natural attributes of certain bodies, which allows for their obfuscation and poor compensation (Twigg, 2000; Boris & Parreñas, 2010). The naturalisation of sex and intimacy as well as their separation or deprecation in the market results in a construction of commercial sex as an activity where those who are engaged in it are seemingly paid for doing nothing. Even when commercial sex is legalised, it is not fully integrated into the labour market (O’Connell Davidson, 2015). The earnings of commercial sex constitute a different kind of money and are imbued with moral judgment, becoming designated as easy money.

The meaning of easy money in relation to commercial sex is manifold. It implies that the money is acquired without effort of labour and economic or educational investment. However, as I demonstrate, commercial sex requires a variety of skills and application in order to yield economic benefits (Article IV). The day-to-day engagement in commercial sex is not necessarily easy, as workers need to navigate complex legal frameworks, client expectations, and stigma. However, those who engage in commercial sex point out that though commercial sex is not always easy, it is often easier and more lucrative than straight work (Jeffrey & MacDonald, 2006). The crux of the value judgment of easy money is, thus, the underlying rational that money should not come easily. Within the capitalist system, the gender, class, race, and migration status of those who engage in commercial sex would usually preclude them from having access to a good income. Yet, commercial sex requires relatively low initial investment (Day, 2007), but can offer a relatively high hourly wage that people would not be able to command in other forms of employment due to their race, gender, class, and education (Bernstein, 1999). Thus, commercial sex disrupts the normative relationship...
between what qualifies as work and what is appropriate work for particular individuals and groups of people.

Easy money should also be understood as loose money. Commercial sex disturbs the hierarchies and channels of flow of profits established within the capitalist system. Resources and labour are extracted from women, migrants, and poorer countries, and are expected to flow as capital to men, citizens, and wealthier nations (Federici, 2004). Yet in commercial sex, profits can flow from men to women, from citizens to migrants, from the wealthy nations to the poorer ones (Hoang, 2015). As I demonstrate, Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex can channel the income earned through commercial sex in Finland into material expressions of power and belonging by buying private property in their countries of origin (Article III). Some of these patterns of flow can be observed in other forms of gendered labour migration, such as domestic and care work (Näre, 2012). What makes commercial sex different is that the income earned from it can be significantly higher than other forms of work available to migrant women, even when accounting for possibilities of exploitation and other disadvantages of the field (Agustín, 2005a), but also the aforementioned designation of commercial sex as non-work and its association with different forms of illegal activities.

The looseness of easy money of commercial sex also relates to the way it is spent. It has been noted that money earned through commercial sex is spent more erratically than the money received through more regularised channels (Hoigard & Finstad, 1992). This is interpreted as designation of easy money as “dirty money” (Zelizer, 1997). However, as I demonstrate, loose money is untethered from the regularised forms of flow such as the banking system, which makes it difficult to convert easy money into savings (Article II). Money earned from commercial sex can be converted into property or investment, but this is often easier to do in countries that have a larger cash economy, and the meaning of these capital investments may differ. Investing in property can give migrant women engaged in commercial sex a sense of home, power, and personal pleasure (Article III), or a source of pride and respect that they otherwise may not have due to their age, gender, and occupation (Walters, 2016; Hoang, 2015). Therefore, I suggest researchers should be wary of attributing moral value to money earned through commercial sex without taking into account the particular socio-economic systems in which the money is earned.

I argue that the discomfort which commercial sex often elicits, in public debates and the media, is at least partially connected to it being a way for people to earn a living without doing what is deemed
to be proper work. In this case, proper work implies waged labour that is designated as being in line with a certain skill set, which is predicated on gender, race, class, migration status, and education. The idea that people would be able to sustain their lives without engaging in waged labour can be disruptive and disturbing, and often elicits a strong response from the public, the media, and politicians (Jensen & Tyler, 2015). Consequently, I propose conceptualizing commercial sex not only in terms of its relationship to waged labour, but also to welfare benefits. There is a conceptual resemblance between welfare beneficiaries and those engaged in commercial sex in terms of how they are presented in national discourses. Welfare recipients are frequently discursively constructed as particular gendered, racialised, and sexualised subjects (e.g. “welfare queens”) (Weeks, 2011), in terms of their position as social outcasts (Anderson, 2013) and as highly stigmatised individuals (Jensen & Tyler, 2015). Both can be construed as reproachable victims (Jacobsen & Skilbrei, 2010). There is sympathy for the condition of those on welfare benefits, but also condemnation of their “dependency” (Fraser & Gordon, 2013). The rhetoric of temptation, “easy money”, and unbridled sexuality is often present in discourses on recipients of public assistance, especially women and mothers (Breheny & Stephens, 2009).

My data also suggest that there is a convergence (Brents, Jackson, & Hausbeck, 2010) between commercial sex and welfare benefits, as those who engage in commercial sex can also be recipients of welfare or other forms of public assistance. Russian-speaking women who engage in commercial sex and have the right to claim welfare assistance in Finland are steered towards the forms of intimate labour that are deemed appropriate for them. However, I am not attempting to make a one-to-one comparison between individuals who engage in commercial sex and those who receive welfare benefits. I argue that the stigmatisation of easy money and its relationship to moral outrage over sexuality of those who seem to have access to it is not unique to commercial sex.

As such, commercial sex can be understood as a form of anti-work (Colosi, 2010), both as resistance to waged labour and resistance to the disciplining practices of straight work or organised commercial sex (Jeffrey & MacDonald, 2006). I posit that while the position of those who engage in commercial sex can be interpreted as a direct resistance to neoliberal forces, all those engaged in commercial sex are not necessarily labour dissidents (Article IV). In fact, Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex may seek out straight work, even if it is more labour-intensive than commercial sex and poorly paid. I am, nonetheless, suggesting that commercial sex, as it gives access
to easy money, presents a challenge to a system that connects individual worth and morality to work ethic (Weeks, 2017).

This is not to say that commercial sex is categorically anti-capitalist. The expansion and normalisation of the sex industry would suggest otherwise (Breits & Sanders, 2010). Yet within the context of Western liberal nations, this expansion takes on a particular gentrified turn. It is the visible forms of commercial sex and those deemed to be most problematic that are targeted by legislators and law enforcement, while the higher-end, that is the less visible forms, are allowed, if reluctantly, to remain (Bernstein, 2001). As I demonstrate, commercial sex can provide the means to pursue particular economic projects (Article III) or to achieve economic advantages that would otherwise be out of reach for people due to their gender, ethnicity, migration status, and education (Article IV). Thus, even when those who engage in commercial sex are not consciously and directly resisting waged labour, their presence and visibility presents a challenge to work ethic expected from neoliberal subjects, but particularly from subjects within the welfare state.

3.3 Commercial Sex Caught Between Social and Gender Equality
I have already discussed the relationship between migrant commercial sex, the national project, and work. Here, I conceptualise how they are related in the Finnish context. Within the Finnish context, the figure of the Russian-speaking woman engaged in commercial sex exists between the dual pillars of national values of gender equality and social equality, and posing a challenge to both of them (Article I). This shapes the exclusionary legislation directed at migrant women engaged in commercial sex, where migrant women engaged in commercial sex are controlled, contained, and expelled. The Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex have to contend with this legislative approach in their everyday lives, and structure their work and life to mitigate it.

As I demonstrate, commercial sex itself is disruptive to the national project built around values of gender equality and social equality that are rooted in the welfare state (Article I). The Nordic countries, including Finland, construct their national identity through claims to achievements in gender and social equality, tolerance of sexual minorities, work ethic, and the welfare state (Keskinen, 2018; Mäkinen, 2017; Krivonos 2018). In this context, commercial sex presents a particular set of challenges to the nation, as it stands in contradiction to these avowed values. It serves as a litmus test for social equality: if commercial sex exists, then equality has not been
achieved in the Nordic nations (Skilbrei & Holmström, 2013). Commercial sex exposes the limits of
gender equality as it is understood in the Finnish context, as well as the limits of the welfare state.
In national debates, both media and political, commercial sex is discursively constructed as
abnormal and foreign to Finland (Holli, 2004). This allows to obviate some of its ontological threat
to the nation. Thus, Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland constitute space
invaders (Puwar, 2004), as their presence within the nation demarcates the limits of discourses of
gender and social equality.

Gender equality as a national value is not unique to Finland and its national project. But gender
equality may be conceptualised in very different terms, depending on the national context (Farris,
2017). In Finland, gender equality exists as an extension of social equality, rooted in consensus
politics and the welfare state, which suggests that gender equality is not necessarily seen as a goal
in itself, but rather as being symptomatic of an equal society, and is interlinked with the welfare
state, as the guarantor of this equality (Saari, 2013). Gender equality is conceptualised in terms of
“sameness” between men and women, as it is meant to erase difference rather than bring attention
to it. Commercial sex began to be seen as an issue of gender equality in the 1990s, not least because
of the visibility of purportedly foreign bodies in public spaces (Marttila, 2009 in Bucken-knapp,
Schaffer, & Levin, 2014). It was the visibility of street work, in particular, that played an important
role in bringing attention to male and female bodies in public spaces and their sexual difference in
these spaces (Tani, 2002). Thus, commercial sex in its most visible form disrupted the gender
equality narrative that relied on the obfuscation of gender and sexual difference, particularly in
public spaces.

The Nordic welfare state has been viewed as being marked by egalitarian and universalist values
(Esping-Andersen, 1990), and, though in principle, the welfare system is considered to be a
 guarantor of a good life for all people, there are particular moral limits to this universalism. The
public perception that work or citizenship should be the basis of welfare entitlement has been
growing in Finland (Keskinen, 2016; Mäkinen, 2017). As my data explicate, the separation between
the acceptable and unacceptable migrant is not necessarily drawn along the lines of labour, but
rather along the lines of paying taxes (Article I). At the same time, the universalism of the Finnish
welfare system has turned to workfare, where beneficiaries need to prove their willingness to
participate in waged labour and their willingness to be flexible regarding what work they are
prepared to take (see e.g. Kananen, 2012; Krivonos, 2019a). Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex pose particular problems for this version of the welfare system. They do not fit into it, either as non-workers or as non-citizens. If they are entitled to public assistance, they may be directed to the types of straight work that they themselves do not necessarily want to perform. Regardless of their eligibility for welfare assistance, their visibility and presence in public spaces brings forth the reality of economic inequality that exists in Finland. Even if commercial sex can be discursively constructed as a foreign problem, drawing attention away from internal social inequality and highlighting the inequality between Finland and other countries, it still requires the national community to grapple with issues of visibility of poverty (Article I). Much like street begging, (Tervonen & Enache, 2017), the visibility of particular forms of commercial sex in public spaces and public discourses, brings the national community face-to-face with social inequality and forms of poverty that have been discursively eliminated from the welfare state.

The externalisation of commercial sex as a foreign issue allows the national community to alleviate some of the anxiety that the presence of these disruptive bodies has on the national values. This allows for an interpretation of commercial sex as an issue of national security or an issue of trafficking. In this context, commercial sex is addressed through legislation which is framed through national values, though these values are framed differently by different interest groups. Thus, in the Finnish context, the gender equality discourse intermingles with discourses of respect for privacy and sexual expression, producing partial criminalisation of purchasing (Bucken-knapp, Schaffer, & Levin, 2014). I argue that the discursive externalisation of commercial sex creates a moral system in which surveillance and control is primarily directed at migrant women (or those perceived to be migrant), while leaving Finnish women engaged in commercial sex outside the scope of direct intervention of the law (see also Skilbrei & Holmström, 2013).

I understand this in terms of bordering practices, which refers to the expansion of the exclusionary practices from being enacted by state agents at the physical border of a nation-state into the national territory, where ordinary citizens begin to participate in their enforcement (Balibar, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 2013). Bordering practices make border controls ubiquitous, as they exist on the level of political and social discourses, surveillance technologies, and everyday practices (Yuval-Davis, 2013). Where commercial sex is partially decriminalised or legalised, those who engage in commercial sex can also participate in bordering practices. Citizens who engage in commercial sex
can act as police informants, helping to restrict migrant workers’ access to the field of commercial sex (Pates, 2012). Thus, bordering practices continue to occur at the border, barring the entrance of those who may engage in commercial sex, but also become part of everyday life within the nation, restricting access to public and private places for bodies that are associated with mercantile sexuality (Article II).

Within Western liberal nations, sexual minorities may attempt to claim greater acceptance of their sexual identities through different forms of public visibility, yet visibility does not necessarily lead to acceptance (Hubbard, 2001). The visibility of those who engage in commercial sex disrupts the normative heterosexual values of the nation, but it does not lead to re-evaluation of these values. Rather, it prompts surveillance and expulsion from public spaces and intrusion into private spaces. Conceptualisation of commercial sex as a foreign issue in Finland and the consequent legislative approach to it structure the lives of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex, through various forms of bordering practices imposed on them both in public and private (Article II, Article III). It is precisely the right to privacy both in public and private spaces that Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex lack.

The exclusionary nature of bordering practices can be best understood in relation to the deportability turn (De Genova, 2002). Though many of the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex have citizenship or a residence permit in Finland and cannot be physically extradited from the national territory, the surveillance and control of bordering practices affects them as well. They become visible to the state and non-state agents, and must consider the consequences of this visibility in terms of their future employment and housing opportunities. As a consequence, bordering practices may compel particular migrant subjects to internalise the bordering practices and become their own border guards, policing their behaviour and strategising to minimise their visibility. Thus, Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex negotiate their place in Finland through attempts to remain invisible to the state and non-state agents, while still being visible to their potential clients.

The gendered aspects of the exchange within commercial sex and the deviation from national ideals of masculinity and, especially, femininity destabilises assertions of gender equality within the nation. As commercial sex is imagined as a transaction that takes place between people with very
different social and economic opportunities, it undermines the promise of the welfare state to remove economic disparities that would make such an exchange necessary. By conceptualising commercial sex as almost exclusively a foreign issue, it is partially possible to obviate the threat it poses to the values of gender equality and social equality. In addition, by framing the responses to commercial sex as expressions of these national values, these values can be reasserted. In what follows, I describe method of data collection and analysis, and present the summary of my findings as they relate to the relationship between commercial sex and the national project, the areas and effect of bordering practices on Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex, their conceptualisation of home and belonging vis-à-vis their engagement in commercial sex and their ability to access housing, and skills necessary to economically benefit from engagement in commercial sex.

4 Methods and Data
In this section, I define the parameters of the research field and describe data collection and data analysis methods. I discuss the ethical questions that arose in the field and address the issues regarding whose voices are heard and silenced when social research is conducted with groups that may not have opportunities or venues to speak and be heard, and the role translations play in social research.

4.1 Defining the field
Before I could conduct my research and collect my data, it was necessary to establish the parameters of the field. The aim of the research was to elucidate the multifaceted aspects of life of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex from the perspective of everyday as problematic (Smith, 1987). This necessitated interviews not only with the women engaged in commercial sex, but also the state and non-state agents they encounter in Finland. This led me to identify the key actors in the field of commercial sex. In this case, the key actors are policymakers, police, NGO representatives, healthcare providers, experts on issues of trafficking, and migration officials. I refer to these state and non-state agents as key actors, in order to highlight their importance in shaping the field of commercial sex in Finland, as well as the direct and indirect ways in which they affect the everyday lives of those who engage in commercial sex. While those who engage in commercial sex constitute the field of commercial sex itself and are the experts on their own lives, the key actors are the ones who predominantly shape the public discourses on commercial sex. By referring to them as key actors, I also discursively distinguish them from the general public or the clients.
The commercial sex scene in Finland is not very large, but is relatively diverse. Since I was interested in a particular group of people (i.e. Russian-speaking women), I have chosen to identify the most likely sites and spaces where I could meet them. The interviews with key actors played an important part in that process, as they provided me with background information on the field of commercial sex in Finland. The NGO that offers services to people who engage in commercial sex was identified as the main site in the field. This was the space where I could reach research participants and engage in some aspects of their day-to-day life. I also identified and visited a number of clubs and *privates*, where potential research participants work.

Commercial sex has largely moved into online spaces globally (see e.g. Jeffreys, 2010), and my research confirms that that is the case in Finland as well. Consequently, I searched for websites that serve as online platforms to advertise and share information for those engaged in commercial sex. I was able to place an ad for my research on one such website. I have also made an attempt to reach some of the women who advertised on the website, but after careful consideration, I decided that such approach would be ethically dubious. In my early interviews with key actors, I found out that street work is not very common in Finland, and Russian-speaking women do not usually participate in it. I decided not to actively pursue research on the streets. From my interviews with the women engaged in commercial sex, I found out that while some Russian-speaking women do occasionally work on the streets, it appears that this form of work is fairly dynamic, with the workers walking around a number of particular streets, rather than being confined to a specific street or area. This would have made research on the streets difficult to conduct. Thus, I identified the NGO and a number of clubs and *privates* as the main sites, and the online space as a supplementary space, of my multi-sited ethnography.

4.2 Access – granted, access – denied

Certain fields of research are considered to be particularly volatile and difficult to access as they are “characterised by danger and crisis” (Belousov et al. 2007, 156), associated with illegal activity (see e.g. Wong, 2015) or high vulnerability of the people involved (Ellard-Gray et al. 2015). This is not to say that only these fields are difficult to access. Spaces associated with high social status and economic prosperity may likewise be closed off to researchers, and even fewer avenues of accessing them are available (see e.g. Brown, 2017).

The field of commercial sex can be difficult to access for a number of reasons. First, commercial sex operates under different levels of legality and illegality in different contexts. Legislation is often
ambiguous, leading to a sense of uncertainty among the workers. The importance of being invisible to the general population and especially to the authorities is an important part of the field of commercial sex (Article II). Second, even when commercial sex enjoys a legal status and a degree of protection, there is the *whore stigma* (Pheterson, 1993) associated with commercial sex (e.g. Weitzer, 2007; Garofalo, 2010). The stigma contributes to the reluctance of the workers to engage in candid discussions about their work or their personal lives. Finally, the fields related to migration can be difficult to access, as people are hesitant to talk about their migration history, especially if there are any irregularities in this process (Dahinden & Efionayi-Mäder, 2009).

My credentials as an academic, my prepared speeches about the nature of my research, discussions of confidentiality and anonymity, or remuneration had varying effect on my acceptance into the field. With key actors, my credentials seemed to open some doors and allowed me to interview people who saw their participation in research as a mark of transparency of their work as well as their own contribution to production of valuable social knowledge. However, with people engaged in commercial sex, while my credentials did not seem to hinder me, they did not appear to sway the potential research participants one way or another. While offering remuneration to their participants is not an uncommon practice in research (see e.g. Walby, 2010), remuneration for research participation can create ethical issues such as turning participants into paid informants who have to sell their stories to researchers (for discussion see McKeganey, 2001). While offering money for research participation may acknowledge the value of people’s time, it also contributes to creating an even more unequal relationship between the researcher and research participant. In such situations, the participant may feel that the exchange of money obliges them to be more open than they want to be, or to give the researcher the best story for their money (Cook & Nunkoosing, 2008). My decision not to offer remuneration was further strengthened in the field, as the research participants seemed to express almost no interest in it. On one occasion, I was told that another researcher offered some form of remuneration, but still no one wanted to talk to them.

While I did not offer any remuneration to my respondents, I always insisted on buying them coffee if we were meeting in a café, or brought a hot drink and pastries, if we had our meeting at the NGO office. I would also give a chocolate bar after the interviews as a more tangible expression of my gratitude for their participation. However, the chocolate bar was not always accepted. The reason for declining the chocolate was related to the participants’ emphasis on healthy eating and dieting.
This suggests that in certain fields where food consumption and food in general has a complex social meaning, researchers should be cautious in how they employ food in their research.

When I asked the research participants why they agreed to speak to me, some said that they wanted to have their thoughts, ideas, and opinions heard. However, a large part of participants stated that their decision to speak to me was guided by their sympathy towards me. For example, one of my respondents adamantly refused to let me buy her coffee, insisting that as a student, I was too poor. All my attempts to convince her that it is part of my research budget had no effect. She stated that she wanted to help me because she knew that finding people to interview in the field of commercial sex could be difficult. It has been noted before that people agree to participate in research due to feelings of altruism or desire to help others. This altruism could take the form of giving back and helping others who are in similar circumstances (see e.g. Fry & Dwyer, 2001; Peel et al. 2006), but my interviewees expressed the desire to help me personally. In fact, most of them expressed doubt, and occasional contempt, regarding any effect my study could have on policies or social attitudes. Their motivations were often about helping me, the person, rather than me as a researcher. They stated that they were mostly motivated by the fact that I looked like a nice person, and like a person who needed help. Thus, I was granted access not because I was perceived as trustworthy, but because I was perceived as in need of sympathy and help.

This could also be seen in terms of a wider power dynamic within research. While the researcher has a lot of power in presenting research and bringing forth or silencing voices, the research participants can exert their own power through various methods: denial, not talking, lying (see e.g. Agustín, 2004). My research suggests that there is a positive way in which research participants can assert their power through positioning the researcher as helpless. By granting their time, narratives, and attention, they can assert their position of knowledge and power, even if only temporarily.

Gatekeepers played a very important role in my research. This is not unusual in research conducted among what can be referred to as “hidden” or “marginalised” populations in general, and in research in the field of commercial sex in particular (see e.g. Sanders & Campbell 2007; Dahinden & Efionayi-Mäder, 2009). The role of gatekeepers and their position to open or close access to the field to the researcher cannot be overemphasised (see e.g. Belousov et al. 2007, Whyte, 2012). Thus, before I could reach some of the respondents, I had to negotiate with the gatekeepers.
My primary gatekeeper was the NGO that offers services to people engaged in commercial sex and participates in advocacy work. I had an acquaintance who was working at the NGO in an administrative capacity, who made the initial introduction. I then had a meeting with the NGO representatives, where I outlined the scope and aims of the project, as well as my own personal position concerning commercial sex and why I wanted to do this research. Though they did not state so outright, since I received permission to conduct research with them, it can be assumed that the NGO found that my research design as well as my goals align with the aims of their organization.

As clubs and privates constituted my other point of entry, the managers and proprietors of these places were also gatekeepers. In my negotiations with the manager of a private I refer to as The Swan, the manager was very clear that the reason I was granted access and assistance was because of their wish that my research would elevate the status of the workers and to show the workers in a favourable light. In our conversations, the manager kept coming back to the point that almost all of the women who work there are highly educated. And the manager reiterated several times that the women working at The Swan are not “prostitutes”. My introduction of my research as one being motivated by a desire to give voice and to push back against harmful stereotypes was what allowed me access to The Swan. Furthermore, the manager, by highlighting the higher education of the workers and distancing them from “prostitution”, repeatedly drew me in to be an advocate.

When I approached the owner of a private The Curtain, the owner reiterated in our discussions that I would not be able to get access and that my research could lead to problems both for them and for me. The manager did not specify what these problems would be. However, despite this insistence that I cannot get access, when asked to be interviewed, the manager did not decline, and when I asked to speak to the employees at the private, though she assured me that no one would talk to me, she still made the introductions.

This involvement of the managers, enthusiastic in the case of The Swan and reluctant in the case of The Curtain, was very valuable in introducing me to the workers at the privates. In one of the privates, when I asked the interviewee why she agreed to speak to me she directly referred to the fact that the manager told her about me. Though she did not indicate that there was any direct pressure on her to speak to me, it was clear that the manager’s intervention was what made her agree to the interview. I had met this same respondent a few weeks before at an adult industry event and had asked her for an interview, but she had refused to talk to me. During our second meeting, she did not indicate in any way that she had any recollection of our original meeting. The
manager of the *private*, who acted as the gatekeeper, knew nothing of our previous encounter, and suggested I talk to her when she comes for her shift. Thus, while my request was rejected, when the request was delivered by the manager, it met with a favourable answer, if not a particularly enthusiastic one.

This makes the use of gatekeepers in the field of commercial sex particularly problematic. By involving management or employers, the unequal power relationship in the field can be exacerbated. However, the amount of pressure the manager could feasibly put on the respondent in this case is hard to estimate. While the inner-workings of the *privates* could be hard to evaluate as an outsider, on the face of it, the manager’s role in the *privates* I had visited was to rent out the rooms to the women and put together a weekly work schedule. The women would work for a week at a time, and there seems to be quite a lot of negotiation and flexibility when it comes to the work schedules. Thus, while the manager cannot necessarily force the respondent to do anything, a request may carry more weight than from someone who has no influence on the respondent’s livelihood.

There could be entirely unanticipated obstacles to access. One of my key gatekeepers had been negotiating access with a group of erotic dancers, who were initially interested in my research. However, a few weeks later my gatekeeper informed me that they all declined to participate. The reason that they gave was the internal political situation in Russia and current relationship between Russia and Europe (this was around the time of the Crimean Crisis). The gatekeeper said that they did not want to expose themselves in any way that may have a potentially hazardous effect on their lives in Finland or in Russia. They also expressed suspicion regarding the use and purpose of the data that I was collecting. Other researchers have noted how a sudden dramatic or violent change in the political environment may influence the willingness of people to participate in the research and their level of trust in the researchers (see e.g. Belousov et al. 2007). The rapidly deteriorating relationship between Russia and the EU at the early stages of my fieldwork (2014-2015) and the growing suspicion within Russia about their own citizens living abroad destabilised the lives of the respondents even further. In such an environment, I, as a researcher, was perceived as a potential spy, and my allegiance was assumed to be with the powers that could potentially harm the respondents. Once again, my credentials as a researcher and my promise of confidentiality and anonymity were of little relevance to the respondents, yet the wider socio-political changes were influential.
In this context, the access to the NGO was particularly valuable. It allowed me to come in contact with some participants, whom I later encountered in their work environment at a club I call The Fortune. At The Fortune, they were able to introduce me to other workers whom I had no opportunity to meet at the NGO, and even without introductions, some of the workers at the club, seeing me interacting with their acquaintances, were less reluctant to talk to me. The Fortune and The Globe were two venues I identified to be within the scope of my field. I considered them important spaces where I could encounter potential research participants. I visited The Globe accompanied by another researcher (Daria Krivonos). There, we were approached by a man who introduced himself as a lawyer friend of the owner, and chatted to us during the evening. Though this interaction was in no way hostile, and the man we had spoken to was vocal in granting access to the club, it made me reluctant to go back to The Globe.

During the fieldwork at the NGO, one of the women there suggested that I come to The Fortune, where she herself occasionally worked. Since this was a more direct invitation and given to me by one of the workers rather than the management, I felt more comfortable going there. At The Fortune, I asked to speak to the manager to whom I described my research project. While the manager was a little impatient with me, I was told there were no objections to my presence there. This lack of interest from the management made me feel more at ease in The Fortune. This club became my primary site of reaching out to potential participants I could not hope to meet at the NGO.

4.3 Data Collection

The data I collected for this multi-sited ethnographic study consist of three parts. First, I conducted semi-structured interviews with key actors, that is policymakers, police, NGO representatives, healthcare providers, experts on issues of trafficking, and migration officials (N=18). Second, I did semi-structured interviews with Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland (N=41). Third, I engaged in participant observation in clubs and privates in Southern Finland (N=4), as well as in an NGO that provides services for sex workers.

I started my research by identifying the key actors to be interviewed. This approach allowed me not only to collect data, but also to gather background information about an unfamiliar field and establish access to the field. As I chose to speak to a very wide range of actors, some interviews were more pertinent to my research than others. I interviewed police (N=2); policymakers (N=2); healthcare providers (N=1); representatives from three NGOs (N=8); experts on the issue of
trafficking (N=2); migration officials (N=1); and industry insiders (N=2). Industry insiders were actors who had organizational or managerial role in commercial sex. While two of the three NGOs were branches of the same organization, I chose to count them as separate NGOs as their location, mode of operation, and clientele were very different. Some of the interviews were group interviews, with two people present (N=3). I used snowball sampling (Tracy 2013) to identify key actors. While I identified a number of key actors through background research, during interviews, I asked them to suggest other potential interviewees. I conducted three interviews with key actors in Russian, the rest were in English. I recorded and transcribed all of these interviews.

I have also conducted two interviews with NGO representatives from two different large cities in Russia. I wanted to conduct these interviews in order to establish whether the Russian NGOs play a role in the experience of cross-border work of Russian-speaking women, and whether there is a relation between Russian and Finnish NGOs working with people in commercial sex. However, I found no such connections through the interviews. As these interviews did not directly answer the aims of my research, I did not include them in the analysis. They did, however, provide some background information for my research.

Interviews with Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex consist of initial interviews (N=31) and follow-up interviews (N=10) with participants who were willing and able to meet for a second interview. These follow-up interviews were conducted between 6 to 12 months after the initial interviews. I conducted the follow-up interviews in order to see any changes in the life situation or alterations in opinions of the research participants. Due to a high turnover of people and difficulty in keeping in touch with them, as well as lack of time or interest on the part of the research participants, not all of them could participate in follow-up interviews. The follow-up interviews revealed a consistency of life situation and opinions of the research participants. In all but one interview, the research participants told me that nothing substantial had changed in their lives. One interviewee, however, reported achieving her goal of gaining a more secure status in Finland through marriage. The follow-up interviews also gave me an opportunity to discuss topics and themes from the original interviews in more depth, providing richer data.

I conducted all but one of the interviews in Russian. One interviewee did not feel that her Russian was good enough, and preferred to have both the initial and the follow-up interview conducted in English. I recorded and then transcribed some of the interviews (N=21), while the rest I took down in shorthand and then transcribed immediately after the interview had taken place. This allowed
me to decrease loss of data. Due to the sensitive nature of the field, many interviewees refused to have their voices recorded. Though the use of shorthand notes affected the data collection process, the ethical considerations had to take precedence. Furthermore, in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, I agreed with the interviewees that all interview data with Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex, including recordings, shorthand notes, and transcripts, will be destroyed after the completion of this study. However, I will keep all of the field notes and the interview transcripts from key actors.

I interviewed Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex about their experience of living and working in Finland. The questions focused on their experience of accessing housing, social benefits, healthcare as well as their experience of dealing with social workers, migration services, and the police. The particulars of their work were of marginal importance.

In addition, Finnish-speaking sex workers (N=3) were interviewed. However, these interviews were outside the scope of the present study, and were conducted in order to provide context and allow for a better understanding of the field.

Finally, I conducted participant observation in clubs, *privates*, and NGOs. The level of access I had achieved varied and, consequently, the data collected varied as well. The NGO that provides services and a space for socializing for people engaged in commercial sex was the most accessible of the spaces. After negotiating with them, I was granted access to their open social space, and I was allowed to participate in a few general social activities and outings, including visiting their drop-in days. On certain weekdays, they had a space where people could come, socialise with each other, have some food, and talk to social or health care workers. My time at the NGO was divided into two parts. During my initial time there (Autumn-Winter 2015), I focused on observing the inner workings of the NGO, distributed information about my research project to their clients, and got to know the people there, both the NGO workers and the NGO clients. During this time, I did not make detailed notes on my interactions with the NGO clients. It was imperative that before I start making notes of our conversations, they would know who I was and would give consent to being participants in my research. During the second phase of my time at the NGO (Spring-Summer 2016), I was participating more actively in events and conversations with the NGO clients. I still exercised caution in how I approached the clients at the NGO and which observations I included in my data. I avoided writing down overheard conversations, though I did make mental notes of them in order to guide my interviews. I tried not to impose or intrude on conversations, and preferred to focus my attention
on the data gathered from conversations that were directed at me, or when I was specifically invited to join a group conversation.

I also visited another branch of the same NGO in a different city, and participated in their version of the drop-in (Spring 2016). However, the clientele of the two branches was very different. While in the first NGO branch, the clients at the drop-in were primarily women with a foreign background, all clients during my visits to the second branch were of Finnish origin. This dynamic was also confirmed in the key actor interviews with the representatives of these NGOs.

I visited a number of clubs (N=4) and *privates* (N=4). In order to anonymise these places, I named them after Elizabethan theatres. These names are in no way related the actual names of these places. In the privates *The Curtain* and *The Swan*, I managed to establish a rapport with the managers and, therefore, was allowed to visit on several occasions to interview some of the workers and make observations while I was there. One of the managers also allowed me to visit one of their other privates, *The Hope*, in another city. I managed to visit a *private*, *Covent Garden* only twice. I visited four clubs in total. Three of them were primarily designated as erotic dance clubs. One of them, *The Fortune*, was known to be a space where those offering escort services could find clients. I only visited *The Globe* once due to access issues. I visited *The Rose* and *The Blackfriars* only once each, as the set up at the clubs was not very conductive to my research. The Fortune was the club I visited the most.

However, since my research was not focused on the work aspect of commercial sex *per se*, ethnographic work in the clubs was not very productive. While the workers in the clubs had a lot of downtime, especially early in the evenings when there were very few clients, the women were usually very focused on their work. Even when they had free time, they did not want to waste their energy talking to me. Many of the women I had met at the NGO went to *The Fortune*, and there they could introduce me to some of their acquaintances who did not visit the NGO that frequently or at all. My observations in these spaces were meticulously recorded into my field journal and then transcribed.

I also took detailed notes of my communications with key actors and potential research participants, wrote down descriptions of places I visited, and recorded my reflections in the field.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The interview transcripts and field notes were read repeatedly, until patterns began to emerge (Boyatzis, 1998). These patterns were organised into
themes, and relevant themes were identified based on the research questions. The data were considered in tandem with parallel reading of literature on commercial sex and migration, identifying thematic similarities and differences with other texts. The emerging themes were considered not only in relation to existing research on commercial sex, but also with wider theoretical frameworks, encompassing issues of intimacy and work (Boris & Parreñas, 2010), intimacy and money (Zelizer, 2005), gender and nation (Yuval-Davis, 1993), and bordering practices (Balibar, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 2013).

4.4 Ethical Questions
All the people who were interviewed, both the key actors and the women engaged in commercial sex, were given informed consent forms. However, the format of how informed consent was solicited differed due to the nature of the field. The consent forms outlined the scope and focus of the research project and listed my contact information. The key actors were asked to read and sign the forms. I also provided verbal explanation of the form in addition to the written text. One copy of the form was left with the key actor interviewee, while the other copy was kept by me in a secure place.

A signed consent form was not an option with the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex. They would categorically refuse to sign anything. Instead, they were given a one-page information sheet that outlined the scope of the research, the principles of free participation and privacy, and my contact details. The paper was supplemented by a verbal explanation of the research, and that they are free to refuse to participate and to withdraw from the project at any time. My contact details were specifically pointed out to them, so they could reach me in case they decided to withdraw from the project. They were also told that they are free not to answer any question that they do not like, to ask me questions and to steer the conversation to things that they find interesting or relevant, as well as no one else having access to the data, and that the interview data would only be used for the duration of my doctoral project. They were likewise informed that the data from these interviews will be destroyed after the research project has ended.

Some Russian-speaking interviewees said that they have no objection to the data being stored indefinitely. However, while I will keep the data of the interviewees who insisted on their data not being destroyed, I made a decision to destroy the rest of this particular set of data. Even if the data are anonymised, there is still the possibility of identification. For the participants, the consequences of discovery of their engagement in commercial sex, especially as some are making transitions into
straight work, could be dire. In my view, this consideration greatly outweighs the scholarly value of the data, especially long-term. Much of the interview data constitute opinions, perspectives, and particular life circumstances in a field that is at once dynamic and volatile. I consider it unfair to the participants to ascribe these opinions and beliefs to them long after they may cease to think so, without any way of ascertaining that these opinions have changed. Furthermore, as the field of commercial sex is very dynamic, shifting quickly due to global, legislative, and technological changes, the practical information within these interviews would not stay relevant for very long.

Anonymization of the data was one the most important parts of preparing it for publication. The process was different for interviews conducted with key actors in the field and with the women engaged in commercial sex. As the field of commercial sex in Finland is not large, it was important to ensure that as little of the identifying information as possible would appear in the final work. I decided against the use of pseudonyms.

Even in my field notes, I chose not to write down any names, not even the work pseudonyms that the interviewees gave themselves. Likewise, if I wrote down their phone numbers, I made no marks regarding whose phone number it was and relied primarily on memory to keep track of this information. To those participants I met only briefly in the field, I chose to designate in my notes a moniker based on some non-permanent aspect of their appearance. These precautions, which perhaps were not entirely necessary, were made to ensure that if my notes were lost, misplaced, or taken while in the field, their content would be difficult to decipher for anyone but me. Furthermore, when visiting some of the clubs, I was concerned that during a police raid my notes could be taken, and I wanted to make sure that they would contain no information that would make identification possible. This approach, however, created some difficulties for me, as I had to rely on my memory and some vital information was inevitably lost. And since there were no situations where my notes were seen by anyone else, these precautions proved excessive. However, in the fields where exposure can cause serious harm to participants, I chose to err on the side of caution.

All interviews were numbered chronologically from one to thirty-one, and the follow-up interviews were marked one to ten. While ten of the interviewees were interviewed twice, I have avoided linking these interviews when presenting my data, as that could make the interviewees more identifiable. I decided against the use of pseudonyms early on, because the use of popular Russian names would contribute to entrenching the association between Russianness and commercial sex, as well as because not all of my interviewees were Russian. It would have been possible to ask
interviewees to suggest their own preferred pseudonyms for the research, but since none of the interviews were group interviews, identifying particular people was not necessary.

Another part of anonymization involved redacting place names. This required more careful consideration as this information was often important for the analysis. Names of cities were redacted, with only names of some countries (e.g. “large city in Russia”) or regions (e.g. “a Nordic country” or “a Baltic country”) presented. When the interviewees spoke about their children, the gender of the children was redacted. When interview participants asked me not to include a particular piece of information they had shared with me during the interview, this piece of information was excluded from the transcripts.

The data from interviews with key actors in the field was more difficult to redact, as it was relevant for the analysis. In this case, the interviews were identified by the organizations or institutions they belonged to (e.g. police, NGO, etc.), while their role and position in the organisation’s hierarchy was obscured. However, this method of anonymization is far from perfect, as identification is relatively easy considering Finland’s small population and the small number of organizations and actors in the field of commercial sex.

The erotic clubs and privates were given names of Elizabethan theatres. Elizabethan theatres were chosen, because it allowed me to draw on an extensive list of non-descript names that I could randomly assign to different clubs and privates. These names were also easy for me to remember, and they introduced a hint of whimsy into a serious and sometimes challenging fieldwork.

4.5 Whose Voice? Interrogating the Insider/Outsider Dilemma in Social Research

In this thesis, I add to the ongoing debate in commercial sex research, as well as in other areas of research that focus on “disadvantaged” or otherwise “marginalised” groups, regarding who has the position that allows for ethical production of knowledge about these groups (see e.g. Smith, 2012). As Oakley (2007) writes, for those who do commercial sex “self-representation is a luxury we are denied” (p. 12). As such, some commercial sex researchers and activists argue that knowledge about commercial sex should only be produced by those who engage in it. It is absolutely crucial that more texts should be produced by those who have first-hand and heterogeneous experiences of commercial sex, but that does not mean that texts produced by those who do not have experience of commercial sex have no value or place in the discussion. As Maher, Pickering, and Gerard (2012) point out, those who engage in commercial sex should not be treated as a group entirely apart,
whose voices cannot be mediated. An insider’s ability to express the voices of the group is not absolute, as the voices of those who have first-hand experience of commercial sex are also constantly contested (Bjønness, 2012). Further, there are debates over how embedded in a group one has to be in order to call oneself an insider, and what that entails for the research (see e.g. Kusow, 2004; Markova, 2009; Leigh, 2013).

The aim of my research is to examine the mundane, daily aspects of lives of Russian-speaking women who engage in commercial sex. Thus, I do not set out to investigate their lives as “sex workers”, but rather, as people with complex and varied identities who navigate a multifarious web of experiences as Russian-speakers, women, migrants, children of migrants, those who do commercial sex, foreign wives, etc.

I do not have the first-hand experience of someone who engages in commercial sex, while at the same time, I occupy a privileged position as a middle-class, educated white woman and researcher. Thus, I am positioned as an outsider in the context of commercial sex. However, I am also a Russian-speaking female migrant in Finland, who moved to Finland around the same time my research participants were coming to Finland for the first time. As the stigma of association with commercialised sexuality extends to Russian-speaking women in Finland in general (Leinonen, 2012), I cannot be entirely outside the stigmatisation experience, even if the experience of day-to-day life as someone who does commercial sex is not my own. Yet, due to my own personal history, I do not participate in the cultural and social life of the Russian-speaking people in Finland. Yet, I am equally isolated from the wider Finnish society. I do not speak the language fluently, have a heavy Russian accent, my name is recognizably Russian, and I do not participate in the mainstream Finnish cultural and social milieu.

Thus, my insider/outsider position is greatly complicated by my own personal history. This led to apparent illegibility of my identity to my research participants in the field. When describing myself in the field, I would say that I was studying at the University of Helsinki, but was not Finnish and did not speak Finnish. I moved through spaces freely – from the street to the NGO’s drop-in to The Fortune club – and, yet, I was not in my right place in any of those. I was too overdressed for the NGO and too underdressed for the club. Instances of misrecognition were frequent. It made me consider how this habitual misrecognition by the people around me shaped their perception of my trustworthiness, and consequently affected my access to the field. Here, trustworthiness means “the ways we work to meet the criteria of validity, credibility, and believability of our research—as
assessed by the academy, our communities, and our participants.” (Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001, p. 324).

As my trustworthiness was not a given, I had to perform a recognizable Russian identity with the resources that were at my disposal. I grasped at random bits of our presumably shared cultural heritage to establish rapport and establish my trustworthiness. As I am not exposed to more contemporary forms of Russian language and slang (I do not take part in the wider Russian culture – I don’t watch Russian TV or movies, I do not listen to current Russian music), I have a somewhat antiquated way of speaking Russian. I could not perform Russian femininity in a way that would be recognizable to my interviewees, but I could still perform Russianness in a broader way. I used my lack of connection to the modern Russian culture as a resource, drawing instead on old Soviet film quotes, old-fashioned proverbs, and superstitious gestures to prove that we shared a mutually recognizable set of cultural codes, even if not more contemporary references.

I was keenly aware of this use of cultural knowledge as a toolbox to establish rapport, but this awareness was due to the introspective nature of ethnographic research, rather than to my conscious or strategic use of the toolbox. This performativity (Butler, 1988) was directly related to my insider position as a Russian-speaking woman in Finland with a history of migration. Though I could not speak from an insider position as it relates to commercial sex, I could still mediate some of their experiences from the position of a partial insider.

This mediation is further complicated by the issues of language and translation. All the interviewees spoke Russian, but their proficiency varied greatly. For some, Russian was their mother tongue, for others, one of their mother tongues, for still others, their second or third language. Thus, mediation of the interviewees’ voices is not only filtered through my perceptions as a researcher and my analysis, but also through my translations and their own relations to the language. For example, one interviewee asked me not to record the interview because Russian was not her mother tongue, and she was too embarrassed to have a recording of her voice speaking what she believed to be imperfect Russian. Thus, she had to express her ideas in a language with which she was not entirely comfortable, which was then written down by me as I understood it in shorthand. These notes were then deciphered and written out in full to the best of my ability. The transcript was analysed and excerpts were translated into English for publication. The voice of the interviewee went through several metamorphoses before it arrived in the pages of a journal. Though at every stage, I as a researcher performed the task in good faith, there was an inevitable loss of nuance and information.
Even when the interview was recorded and transcribed, the translation inevitably stripped it of some of its meanings, as there was no possibility of expressing certain tones and ideas in English.

This can be particularly clearly observed in Article III, which discusses home and belonging. The Russian word “dom” has three separate meanings in English: home, house, and building. When interviewees talked about their “dom” they could mean any one of those three things or all three at once. Context was not always helpful in understanding the meanings. Thus, the limitations of mediated and translated voices are obvious. Drawing attention to the issues of language and interpretation may be unpopular, as it could undermine the credibility of the work (for discussion see Borchgrevink, 2003). Yet it is essential to discuss this issue, particularly where the audibility of voices of the participants is important.

5 Summary of Findings
This dissertation is based on four research articles. In what follows, I outline my research findings.

5.1 Article I – Constructing the Nation through Managing Sex: Discourses on Nationhood and Commercial Sex in Finland
In this article, I explore the discursive strategies, employed by key actors in the field of commercial sex, to reconcile the existence of commercial sex in Finland with national values, such as social and gender equality. The article is based on interviews with non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives, policymakers, law enforcers, social service workers, and experts on issues of trafficking in Finland, who deal with commercial sex, migration, or both. Here, I refer to these interviewees as key actors in the field of commercial sex, emphasising the important role they play in the lives of those who engage in commercial sex as well as their influence on how commercial sex is conceptualised in Finland. In this article, I use the terms sex work and sex worker to refer to the practice of exchanging sexual or erotic services for money or other compensation, and to people who engage in this practice. As the article was written before I started interviewing people engaged in commercial sex, I chose those terms based on previous reading. However, during my fieldwork, I altered my terminology. In this summary, I use the term commercial sex instead of sex work, as explained in the introductory chapter.

While the regulation of commercial sex and the legislation on commercial sex in relation to nation building has been analysed (see e.g. Rivers-Moore, 2010; Billaud & Castro, 2013; Bucken-Knapp, Schaffer, & Levin, 2014), I examine the ways in which governmental and non-governmental agents who write, implement, or work within limits of the legislation understand commercial sex in relation
to the national project. Though these actors have different positions in relation to commercial sex, they employ similar discourses to account for their views and practices. Here, discourse refers to “a form of social practice that both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices” (Jørgensen & Philipps, 2002, p. 61).

The nation is understood as a community of value, which consists of individuals, the good citizens, who share and live according to a set of ideals and values; and those who appear to fail to live up to these values are symbolically and formally excluded (Anderson 2013). Finland, as a community of value, rests on the principles of personal freedom, social and gender equality, and the welfare as the guarantor of this equality (Keskinen, 2012; Huttunen, 2009; Tuori, 2007). For the actors interviewed, commercial sex presented a site where the battle for the core Finnish values is being waged. Gender equality is sometimes presented as something that has been already achieved in the Finnish context (Holli & Kantola, 2007; Kantola, Norocel, & Repo, 2011). The interviewees did not subscribe to such a view and, instead, considered Finland to have more gender equality than other countries, while at the same time seeing continuous striving for more gender equality as a particular element of the Finnish nation. This striving for gender equality was understood to manifest itself in particular practices enacted in the field of commercial sex.

The discourse of gender equality was generally used in conjunction with social equality discourse. It has been noted that in the Finnish context, gender equality is sometimes viewed as too divisive and is, therefore, used as one form of broader social equality (Bucken-Knapp, Schaffer, & Levin, 2014). Commercial sex was understood as a threat to gender equality, and by extension, to social equality. Its presence in Finland was therefore perceived as undermining national values. This emphasis on social equality not only allows the interviewees to set Finland apart from other, supposedly less egalitarian countries, but also to assert its individual character among the Nordic countries. In relation to commercial sex, unlike other Nordic countries that aim to eradicate commercial sex in the name of gender equality, in the Finnish context, the goal is purportedly to improve the social position of those engaged in it. Commercial sex would, therefore, disappear not because of gender equality, but because those who are engaged in it would be successfully dealt with by the welfare state.

The welfare state is an important part of the value system in Finland, as it is meant to provide the material basis for the egalitarian values. However, it also gives a degree of plasticity to the equality discourse. As the equality is supposed to be sustained by the welfare state, those who do not
contribute to it through taxes can be symbolically and formally excluded from it. Thus, the expulsion or the exclusion of those who do not contribute to this system, such as asylum seekers (see e.g. Keskinen, 2016) or people engaged in commercial sex, becomes justified in the name of preserving equality.

There was a general agreement among the key actors that the regulation of commercial sex in Finland should be based on national values. However, while they did appeal to the same set of values, they saw different forms of regulation as being reflective of these values. This suggests that not only contradictory forms of legislation and regulation can result in similar practices (Scoular, 2010), but also similar sets of values can be used as justification for opposing legislative initiatives.

As the interviewees discursively construct Finland as a nation of equality and freedom, it still leaves them with the need to account for the existence of commercial sex in an ostensibly free and egalitarian society. One such strategy is the construction of commercial sex as an external issue. Commercial sex is conceptualised in relation to foreign bodies in the context of poverty. This way, not only sexual acts for money are externalised, maintaining the sexual purity of the nation (Yuval-Davis, 1993), but so is poverty. This maintains the idea of Finland as a nation of equality and welfare, where no one would be compelled to engage in commercial sex by poverty. When it is necessary to account for the existence of Finnish women engaged in commercial sex, they are either discursively excluded from being real citizens, or endowed with social power and agency and contrasted with purportedly victimised, poor foreign women engaged in commercial sex. Such thinking creates a two-tier attitude to commercial sex. The Finnish workers are positioned as powerful, and can therefore be left to shift for themselves, while foreign workers are positioned as powerless, and their surveillance and regulation is justified in the name of promoting Finnish values.

Interviewees discursively construct Finland as a nation based on the value of equality. Consequently, non-Finnish people engaged in commercial sex are excluded from Finnishness and positioned as the targets of regulation and management, ostensibly for their own good. As the key actors have the authority to shape legislation and implement it, their construction of commercial sex vis-à-vis the nation is important, as they have a direct effect on the lives of those who engage in commercial sex. There is, however, a difference between how the actors approach commercial sex based on their position. It is notable that law enforcement officers and NGO representatives have very different ways in which they approach commercial sex, yet they still appeal to the same set of values to account for these approaches.
In Article II, co-authored with Lena Näre, we discuss how the process of enforcement of national borders has changed, and how new forms of border control come to affect the everyday lives of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex. We examine their encounters with the rental market, the banking system, and the police. These encounters illustrate the everyday bordering practices the research participants experience and the way they negotiate and navigate them.

We situate our discussion of bordering practices in the context of transformations of national borders due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the EU enlargement. Border enforcement is not confined to the physical border, but instead, seeps into the national territory (Balibar, 1998), turning ordinary citizens, state and non-state agents into border guards. The bordering practices go much further than individual encounters and become embedded in “ideology, discourses, and everyday forms of transnationalism” (Yuval-Davis, 2013, p. 10). In order to emphasise the dynamic nature of the practices and their detachment from any fixed locality, we talk about *bordering* instead of *border practices* (see also Rumford, 2011).

The rental market is regulated by legislation on pandering, and places the burden of responsibility on property owners to avoid renting places out for the purpose of commercial sex. These laws are difficult to enforce in the courts, but they nonetheless encourage property owners to engage in screening of their prospective tenants, who they assume could be engaging in commercial sex. The data suggest that the police assist in this process, as there is information exchange between property owners and police. As a result, the women who come to Finland and engage in commercial sex experience difficulty in finding housing. This structures the everyday lives of the research participants in a particular way, as they face exclusion or expulsion from the formal rental market, which increases their dependence on personal and informal networks. In addition, it forces them to adjust their behaviour and negotiate the behaviour of their clients, by adopting a variety of methods of being discreet inside their rented spaces. This is done in the hope of avoiding being identified as someone who engages in commercial sex.

The banking system is also part of the bordering practices, as it monitors the money flow of the banks’ clients. Navigating and accessing the banking system is difficult for migrants (see e.g. Könönen, 2018), but for those who engage in commercial sex, it presents a particular set of challenges. When migrant women engaged in commercial sex encounter the banking system, the
probing of the legitimacy of the money leads to the scrutiny of their identity. The research participants rely on cash income from commercial sex, but they need to formalise their income through banks, in order to be able to pay their rent or utility bills in Finland. These encounters with the banks force visibility and surveillance onto them. They have to rely on informal economy, enlist the help of their clients, or face the banks directly and engage in small acts of resistance by deriding the banks’ procedures.

The research participants view the police with ambivalence. They generally have a high level of trust in the police, but, at the same time, there is general desire to avoid any encounters with them. This is the result of the ambiguous role the police play in the everyday lives of the research participants. The legislation, enforced by the police, confers a dual status of victim and perpetrator onto those who engage in commercial sex. The anti-trafficking and anti-pimping legislation makes those who engage in commercial sex into victims or potential victims of crime, while the immigration legislation and various public nuisance regulations turn them into perpetrators. However, it manifests itself in the lives of the research participants in a uniform way as a heightened state of surveillance.

Based on these results, we suggest the need to expand what is meant by deportability (De Genova, 2002). We show that bordering practices function in such a way that the deportability turn subsumes all migrants, even if they cannot be deported. Immigration controls create particular migrant identities (Luibhéid, 2002, p. xxii), and these identities are then imposed on individuals and groups and allow for continued surveillance and regulation. This is the case for the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland. Though many of them are citizens or have residence permits that make their removal difficult, in their encounters with the police, the assumption of deportability is projected onto them as “migrants” and “prostitutes”. Though they may be formal citizens, these imposed identities exclude them from the category of Good Citizen (Anderson, 2013) and make their surveillance and regulation possible. They are assumed to be deportable, until proven otherwise.

The police, the banking system, and the rental market are encouraged to scrutinise them and exclude them. This suggests that deportability turn has an adverse effect on the people who are not deportable, as well as on those who can be deported. However, it is not experienced in the same way. Even when the research participants have no fear of deportation, they are wary of encountering state and non-state agents, as they could not be sure how the information about them is going to be used in the future. Those who could be deported are worried that the result would
not only be an injunction to leave the country, but also that their information would be shared with other agencies, and they would be denied visas or entry into the country in the future. Those who could not be deported fear that the encounter with the police would affect their future ability to get housing and jobs in Finland. Some interviewees expressed concerns that they may lose custody of their children, if the authorities find out about their engagement in commercial sex.

It is difficult to estimate whether the anxieties of the research participants are justified. However, the data show that at least in relation to the rental market and its information sharing with the police, these concerns are not groundless. As already mentioned, this introduces difficulties, ambiguities, and anxieties into research participants’ daily lives, when they need to interact with landlords, the banks, or the police. It requires the research participants to internalise bordering practices. As they fear the consequences of the encounters with the state and non-stage agents, they attempt to adjust their behaviour to pre-empt these encounters and become invisible to these agents. However, similar to racialised migrant groups and racialised groups in general, who carry the border on their bodies (Chang, 1997), the Russian-speaking women cannot become entirely invisible. Their perceived “Russianness” makes them visible, even if they are not engaging in commercial sex. Those who engage in commercial sex need to remain visible to their potential clients, while remaining invisible to those who would enact bordering practices. This need to oscillate between invisibility and visibility shapes their daily lives and existence in different spaces, as they navigate city streets, clubs, and flats, and enlist assistance of others to mitigate the threat of the encounters. In effect, they become their own border guards, policing their use of public and private spaces and monitoring their own visibility.

Legislation on commercial sex and its enforcement allows for surveillance and regulation of migrants, regardless of their legal status. The bordering practices effectively exclude those migrants who engage in commercial sex from citizenship. The research participants report that they feel frustrated by the lack of accountability of the police, the banks, border guards, and landlords. Thus, bordering practices not only create possibilities of surveillance and exclusion, but also impose onto the research participants the need to police their own behaviour in everyday life.

5.3 Article III - Conceptualisation of home among Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland
In Article III, I examine how mobility and engagement in commercial sex shape conceptualisation of home and belonging among Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland. I move
away from problematisation of transnational commercial sex exclusively in terms of exploitation or trafficking. Instead, I delve into the everyday experiences of the research participants in relation to home, private ownership, and self-care. I show how the Russian-speaking women who engage in commercial sex in Finland conceptualise home in relation to laws and regulations that govern their access to housing in Finland and their ownership of property in their countries of origin.

Though I chose to speak about *country of origin*, this term is neither straightforward nor unproblematic. For the most part, I use it to mean the country of birth of the research participant. However, due to the complex juncture of locations of birth, citizenships, residence permits, and ethnicities, not all of the research participants have a straightforward relationship to their countries of birth. Some of them are ethnic minorities in the countries of their birth, and had experienced some hostility from the majority population. As a result, they do not necessarily have a strong connection to that country. Early childhood migration and particular geopolitical changes cause some of them to have no connection with the countries of their birth. Such cases are not numerous, but they, nonetheless, prompt me to designate the country with which particular respondent reports having the stronger connection as their *country of origin*.

I examine the formation of a sense of home and belonging in the context of the mobility turn (Sheller & Urry, 2006), where migration (i.e. crossing of national borders) constitutes only one type of mobility. By using *mobility*, I emphasise the broad spectrum of moving and relocation that is central to the lives of the research participants. This mobility encompasses countries, cities, flats, streets, clubs, and social service offices. Such mobility provides tangible economic advantages and serves as a hobby, a way of relaxing and maintaining contacts with family and friends around the world. At the same time, this mobility is a necessary response to immigration controls and laws regulating commercial sex.

In the lives of the research participants, home can be understood as a project, achieved through temporary relocation and engagement in commercial sex, which provides the economic capital needed to acquire private property in their country of origin. I find that for many research participants, initial entry into commercial sex was based on a desire to buy a flat. Alternatively, acquisition of a flat was the direct consequence of successful engagement in commercial sex. I illustrate how mobility can disrupt the connections to the country of origin, and the ownership of private property can establish a material connection to a place in the absence of a person. This aspect of migration and home ownership has been noted before (Mand, 2010). However, what I
add to it is that private ownership can be an important dimension in conceptualisation of a material space as a home. While such ownership is often construed in terms of family ownership and is integrated into transnational networks of care and remittances (King, Dalipaj, & Mai, 2006; Datta, 2008), I show that it can also be a source of pride and a symbol of personal autonomy and comfort, when it is understood as one’s individual property, even if the family shares the space.

I draw on the theorization of home as a material space under one’s control, a space of care, where it is possible to establish routines (Douglas, 1991; Wardhaugh, 1999; Ahmed, 2000; Scott, 2009). Yet not all domestic spaces of care can constitute homes. Since women engage in paid care and intimate labour in other people’s homes, care and domestic routines are not exclusive attributes of home. Routines of self-care and rest have to be incorporated into theorization of home. Thus, home does not only constitute the private in the private vs. public dichotomy, but also constitutes the self in the self vs. other. For the research participants, home is a space that belongs to them, and as such, is a location where they have control over not only their environment, but also their own comfort, desires, and pleasure. Such as a space could be established in their countries of origin, because they have the material means, acquired through commercial sex, to purchase a flat or a house.

In Finland, their engagement in commercial sex and their migrant status makes it difficult for them to establish similar spaces of personal comfort. When spaces of residence in Finland double as spaces of work, the material aspects of such flats serve to establish a safe and inconspicuous working environment. Material attributes such as the location of the flat, a door phone, whether the flat is known to the police, and flatmates can take precedence over other considerations. Commercial sex does not provide them with high enough earnings to be able to buy property in Finland, and they cannot easily convert their cash earnings into property. Consequently, research participants predominately depend on short-term rentals. However, legislation in Finland is designed to discourage landlords from renting out their flats to people who may engage in commercial sex. This makes renting in Finland expensive and precarious. Daily habits and interactions with customers have to be conducted in a particular way that make the worker herself and the space she inhabits inconspicuous. The ability to see and assess the client, while, simultaneously, remaining imperceptible to neighbours, landlords, and law enforcement inside the flats is paramount. All these aspects of housing in Finland make it difficult to form daily routines of rest and self-care, as energy has to be directed into performing intimate and emotional labour for the clients and remaining invisible to everyone else.
In the article, I show that constant mobility can be disruptive to a sense of home and belonging. It disrupts the emotional and undermines the material connections to the country of origin. Material connections such as ownership of a flat or a house can provide a tangible connection to the country of origin, even when such a connection is fragile. Many of the research participants spend a substantial amount of time in Finland, but that in itself does not lead to a sense of home or belonging. The connections with the country of origin has to be disrupted in order for Finland to be associated with home. This is not to dispute the possibility of multiple sites becoming conceptualised as home to different degrees (see e.g. Mand, 2010; Kochan, 2016; Nuga, Leetmaa, & Tammaru, 2016; Mejia & Pink, 2017). A strong personal commitment and admiration of the Finnish national values (e.g. welfare, appreciation of nature, etc.) gives research participants a sense of home in Finland. However, in the absence of a reciprocal acceptance by the national community, such a sense of belonging is transient. Research participants, who were not EU-nationals and who wanted to make Finland their home, noted that a more permanent relocation to Finland was only possible through marriage migration. What constitutes a sense of belonging is not only an adherence to values and ideals of a community and a reciprocal acceptance from the community, but also its material aspect. People feel that they belong in a place where something belongs to them. Consequently, legal and economic barriers to forming these material bonds of belonging can affect how attached people feel to spaces and communities.

Here, I show the importance of taking a broader view of the experiences of those who engage in commercial sex across borders. To view it exclusively in terms of trafficking and exploitation may miss the more general anxieties and concerns that people who move to engage in commercial sex experience. At the same time, the particularity of their engagement in commercial sex structures their experience of mobility in a way that can be different from other mobile people and groups. Thus, I suggest that it is important to conceptualise home as a gendered space where domestic routines of rest and self-care, as well as a sense of autonomy found through ownership, are important. In addition, I argue that belonging has a material component, and legislation and regulation of migration and commercial sex undermine the possibility of creating these material ties which would support the sense of belonging.

5.4 Article IV - Will Any Body Really Do? Investigating Skills in Commercial Sex

In this article, I examine the skills and abilities needed for commercial sex and the process of their acquisition. I argue that commercial sex, far from being the kind of work that anybody can do,
requires particular skills that can be drawn from formal and informal sources. By discussing the skills in the informal sector of commercial sex, I show the possibilities of examining skills from the point of view of workers rather than that of employers. In this article, I use sex worker and sex work to refer to broader understanding of commercial sex as paid work. However, when referring to the research participants, I use the term people engaged in commercial sex, as discussed in the introduction.

I discuss commercial sex as a form of intimate labour (Boris & Parreñas, 2010). Intimate labour is a form of work that involves taking care of physical and emotional needs of another person and contact with intimate body parts, as well as a relationship of intimacy and trust, where disclosures can lead to shame or embarrassment. This category of work involves labour that women are generally expected to provide for free and, as such, is considered to be low in value and low in skill. I use intimate labour as an expansion on bodywork (Twigg, 2000), but find it more useful for discussion of commercial sex, as it includes trust and intimacy as well as shame as important aspects of the relationship between the service provider and the service recipient. Commercial sex and service work in general are best understood in terms of convergence, which involves the expansion of the leisure industry to include more intimate forms of services and, at the same time, the fluidity of the workforce between commercial sex and other forms of service and care work (Brents, Jackson, & Hausbeck, 2010; Grant, 2014). As such, skills are transferable between commercial sex and other forms of service and care work.

In this article, I show that commercial sex cannot be understood in terms of purchasing the body. As other scholars have noted, clients rarely want the workers to be passive or unresponsive and the work requires a lot of emotional labour in order to perform excitement and interest (Sanders, 2005; Hoang, 2010; Brents & Jackson, 2013). I add that those who engage in commercial sex not only provide a physical act, but also emotional support to the client. This aspect of commercial sex can be especially taxing for the worker, as it requires processing someone else’s complex emotions as well as managing time and remuneration, since this emotional labour may become the unpaid part of commercial sex.

My data show that for the research participants, commercial sex is not about having a body, but possessing a particular mind-set and emotional proclivity for the work. They often express an opinion that commercial sex can be damaging to the worker, though they disagreed whether this is due to the peculiar nature of commercial sex or is related to the work conditions created by
criminalisation and stigmatization. There is, nonetheless, a general consensus that not everyone is suited for commercial sex, and only those who have a particular mental and emotional stamina for it can do it successfully. While researchers have argued that those who begin to do commercial sex are emotionally damaged and unstable (Raymond, 1998; for discussion see Pheterson, 1993), the research participants offer a strong counter-narrative, which makes a case for resilience and mental stability as the best base on which to build one’s successful engagement in commercial sex. This constructs the possible damaging effects of commercial sex as the consequence of a mismatch between the worker and the work, rather than the precondition that leads a person to engage in commercial sex.

Based on the interview data with the research participants, I argue that remuneration in itself does not make a sexual act into commercial sex as it is understood in relation to street work, escort services, erotic dancing, etc. Various forms of intimacy and sexual activity are accompanied by or are predicated on economic exchange (Zelizer, 2005). In order for such an exchange to constitute commercial sex, it needs to involve the process of professionalisation where skills play an important part. The skill sets differ based on the form of commercial sex one does, and these skills tend to be acquired through informal channels and assisted by peers. For those working in clubs and offering escort services, language skills as well as knowledge of logistics are very important. The ability to navigate the spaces of work and managing time successfully constitutes the basis of such work. For those who perform erotic dancing, technical dance skills as well as language skills are important. These skills are acquired on the job and through peer support. Time is required to gain necessary experience. The research participants note that in order to attract clients, they constantly need to engage in personal improvement and acquire new knowledge.

Moreover, the research participants not only acquired specific skills for commercial sex through informal training, they also had formal training and work experience. However, these skills and training were either not recognised in Finland, or had become devalued in their countries of origin due to economic changes. Due to their gender or ethnicity, their formal training acquired through lengthy education process would not necessarily translate into high enough earning potential or social status. Thus, making use of their education and social capital in the field of commercial sex could yield better economic outcomes.

Language skills were particularly important to the interviewees, not only as part of their engagement in commercial sex, but also in their migration projects. However, formal language
training was not perceived to be as important as aptitude for languages and the ability to acquire them through practice. The language skills allowed to facilitate smooth communication with clients, but also provided the research participants with alternative, more socially acceptable, identities and sources of income.

Since commercial sex is not recognised as legitimate work in Finland, and when it is (e.g. erotic dancing), it is stigmatising, the research participants’ engagement in commercial sex makes them invisible as workers. The research participants experience devaluation or misrecognition of their formal skills and work experience due to their gender, perceived ethnicity, or migration status (Krivonos, 2018). Consequently, they become visible as workers only insofar as they need to be disciplined and channelled into forms of work deemed appropriate for them. The skills that are misrecognised by the formal labour market can nonetheless be utilised in the field of commercial sex to gain better economic outcomes. Together with particular emotional and mental fitness, these skills can produce a successful “sex worker” who navigates the various pressures of commercial sex and reaps economic rewards. As independent workers, the research participants are less reliant on the skill demands and definitions of employers, as they apply their various skills and abilities in the informal market.

In this article, I show that far from being unskilled, commercial sex requires utilisation of existing skill and acquisition of new ones in order to yield better economic outcomes. Furthermore, a strong emphasis on aptitude for the work emerges, which suggests that in order to be successful in commercial sex, one not only needs a body endowed with particular skills, but also emotional and mental fitness for the work.

6 Conclusions
In this thesis, my aim was to elucidate how commercial sex is conceptualised within the Finnish national project, how this affects the lives of migrant women who engage in commercial sex, and how they cope with it in their everyday lives. In order to answer these questions, I conducted ethnographic observations and interviews with Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex, as well as interviews with key actors (i.e. policymakers, police, NGO representatives, healthcare providers, experts on issues of trafficking, and migration officials) in the field of commercial sex in Finland.
Commercial sex presents a particular ontological threat to the Finnish national project, as it poses a challenge to the core national values of gender equality and social equality. Its visibility calls into question the extent to which claims to achievements in eradication of gender and social inequality can be made. Though the visibility of sexual commerce in public spaces in Finland is limited, it is present in political discussions, the media, and the public imagination that connect particular bodies with sexual commerce, regardless of whether any sexual acts take place. The legislative frameworks that address commercial sex have been discussed before in relation to the Finnish national project (see e.g. Nassif, 2011; Bucken-knapp, Schaffer, & Levin, 2014). My contribution is the analysis of the discourses employed by various key actors in the field of commercial sex and migration. While analysis of the legislation is important, it is these key actors who negotiate, evaluate, and enact the legislative framework. In their everyday life, Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex come in contact with the legislative framework as it is mediated by the key actors. The key actors, in turn, have some degree of discretion as to how the legislation is implemented (see e.g. Article II).

I do not deny the symbolic value of laws and regulations. However, I recognise that this legislation is created and enacted by key actors, who draw on particular discourses to make sense of this legislation in their own way. It is, therefore, notable that commercial sex emerges in the discourses of the key actors as a battleground, where the struggle for the national values takes place. There is a general agreement among the interviewed key actors that social and gender equality are constitutive of the Finnish nation, yet how these values are to be applied to commercial sex varies greatly, depending on personal and institutional relationship the key actors have to the field of commercial sex. What remains constant is the externalisation of commercial sex in relation to a nation that is meant to be built on gender equality and social equality, with the welfare state as the guarantor of both.

Those who engage in commercial sex can be understood as space invaders (Puwar, 2004) who demarcate the limits of social and gender equality, exposing the contradictions within a society purportedly built around those values. The contemporary relationship between commercial sex and the Finnish nation is predicated on the abrupt appearance of particular visible bodies associated with mercantile sexuality. The visibility of the bodies of those who engage in commercial sex poses a challenge to the values of gender and social equality. Commercial sex does not fit seamlessly into a nation that is purportedly built on social equality and gender equality. Through the discursive externalisation of commercial sex, the key actors problematise it as a foreign issue, mitigating some
of its disruptive visibility. The externalisation of commercial sex alleviates some of the pressure on the national values. But even when commercial sex becomes reinterpreted as an issue of migration, it still needs to be addressed within the national context. The ways in which commercial sex is then addressed is largely framed by the same national values. However, as I have noted, different key actors have different understanding of both what the values of gender and social equality mean in relation to commercial sex and how to best enact them. There is a discordance of various discourses (Bucken-knapp, Schaffer, & Levin, 2014), which translates into a legislative framework that makes people engaged in commercial sex visible as both victimised and criminalised subjects.

Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex oscillate between visibility and invisibility. Even when surrounded by markers of respectability (child, grandmother, male companion, participation in national pastimes), Russian-speaking women are visible as sexual “Other” connected with mercantile sexuality. Racialisation of the Russian-speaking people in Finland (Krivonos 2018) makes Russian-speaking women into particular sexualised subjects, even prior to any particular sexual act they may engage in. As such, they are visible within the Finnish nation as racialised, gendered, and sexual subjects. Bordering practices impose additional visibility. As the Russian-speaking women navigate their border-crossings, the rental market in Finland, the banking system, and the public and semi-public spaces of clubs and streets, they come face to face with surveillance and scrutiny that they must either address or dodge. In this environment, the Russian-speaking women internalise the bordering practices and begin to police themselves. They attempt to premeditate the instances of encounter with the state and non-state agents and remain invisible to them, while still being visible to the clients. The consequence of this self-surveillance is that those who engage in commercial sex experience high levels of uncertainty and anxiety in both private and public spaces.

Mobility is an important aspect of everyday life for the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex. It serves as an economic strategy and as a form of leisure, and a way to maintain interpersonal contacts. At the same time, it is the inevitable response to the scrutiny and surveillance that they face in Finland. It is necessary to remain mobile to avoid being seen by the state and non-state agents and being identified as someone who does commercial sex. This mobility takes a toll on the research participants, as it deteriorates their sense of belonging in their countries of origin and disrupts the possibilities of developing a sense of belonging in Finland. At the same time, commercial sex gives them the economic means of establishing a connection to their countries.
of origin through the purchase of private property. This both establishes a material presence when they themselves are absent, but also provides them with a space of comfort, peace, and self-care that they cannot establish in Finland. As commercial sex raises national anxieties regarding the disruption of the private/public divide, the legislative response precludes the possibility of privacy and invisibility for the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex. The need to remain invisible in Finland shapes their movements through the private spaces of rented apartments. In the material spaces of private homes in their countries of origin that they purchase with the earnings from commercial sex, there is no need for invisibility. In these spaces, they can establish their own preferred routines of self-care and power.

Unlike other labouring female migrants, who can be more successfully hidden from view in the domestic sphere or subsumed by institutions, those who engage in commercial sex are relentlessly visible as women, as migrants, and as particular labouring subjects. As commercial sex is not recognised as a legitimate form of employment in Finland, and when it is, there is a persistent fear of stigma and possible legal consequences, those who engage in commercial sex disappear as workers. Those who are recognised as eligible for welfare benefits within Finland are reintegrated into the welfare state as migrant labourers who need to be disciplined and directed to the forms of work that are deemed proper for them, based on their perceived skill set. This skill set is predicated on gender, age, and the migrant status. While some of the research participants are willing to be directed to these forms of straight work, others resist it or find it unsatisfactory.

The national values are undermined by the visibility of the supposedly poor and unfortunate migrant women engaged in commercial sex within the nation. But in order to address their visibility and its disruptive nature, they are made even more visible in legal and public discourses. This alleviates some of the national anxiety over the disruptions commercial sex has for the national values, but creates new anxieties about the foreign infiltration. The separation of commercial sex into visible and not tolerated and invisible and tolerated forms of commercial sex is meaningless, as soon as we consider the position of migrants within the field. For migrants engaged in commercial sex, there is no separation between public and private spaces, as surveillance, regulation, and exclusion make them visible wherever they are. As those who engage in commercial sex need to retain some degree of visibility in order to do business, they also need to find ways to remain invisible to various state and non-state agents. Internalisation of bordering practices allows them to structure their everyday lives in Finland to minimise their visibility. They pre-empt interactions with state and non-state
agents through avoiding particular public spaces, modifying their own behaviour in private spaces, and enlisting assistance of clients to remain out-of-sight. Thus, the daily lives of the Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex are riddled with anxiety and uncertainty. This disrupts their ability to develop a sense of belonging in Finland. The economic benefits of commercial sex do give them an opportunity of establishing a material space for themselves in their countries of origin, where no such invisibility is needed and where they can enact their own desires and pleasures.

In this dissertation, I bring attention to the embeddedness of commercial sex in the wider social milieu. Commercial sex cannot be bracketed off as a separate phenomenon. Its place within the nation and the surrounding discourses can elucidate the national anxieties that are broader than the phenomenon itself. Even within the globalised world, the particularities of the national contexts are important (Farris, 2017). When researching the experience and lives of those who engage in commercial sex, the multiplicity of their subjectivities need to be examined. This would not only aid in knowledge production and allow us to move away from debating the legitimacy of individual voices within the field of commercial sex, but would also explicate that the concerns of those who engage in commercial sex are multifaceted and, therefore, require multifaceted responses.

NOTES

1. I borrow the notion of *straight work* from Jeffrey and MacDonald (2006), who use it to designate forms of organised and legal waged labour and juxtaposition it to *sex work*.
2. My research is informed by the ethnographic approach, yet, due to the sensitive nature of the field, I am unable to engage in the straightforward ethnographic analysis and writing. As I spent time in the filed with my research participants, it became clear that any “thick” description may expose the details of research participants’ lives to the point that they would be too identifiable.
3. There is a slight difference between interview and site visit numbers give in the summary chapter and in the articles. Due to the nature of the field, data collection took place over a long period of time. Consequently, articles were written concurrently with data collection. In the summary chapter, I give the final tally of interviews and site visits.
7 References


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