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# YOUNG BODIES FOR SALE ON THE STREETS OF THE ZONA ROSA: POWER AND RESISTANCE IN THE DIVERSE SEXUAL ENVIRONMENT

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> This study has set out to analyze the dynamics of male sex work with other men in the public space of the Zona Rosa of Mexico City, as a practice that transgresses the public sphere and its private life.

## Highlights

This year (April 2017 and September 2018) we conducted a literature review on male sex work in the public area of the Zona Rosa and approaches related to transgressive content in this activity; based on this, the following objectives were defined, which will be covered in the following year:

### **General objective:**

To explain the transgression generated by young sex workers on the streets of the Zona Rosa of Mexico City in the exercise of their activity.

### **Specific objectives:**

1. To define the relevance of youthfulness in the exercise of male sex work.
2. To understand the relevance that sex work has for the sex workers in their daily lives and as a daily practice in the Zona Rosa.
3. To identify, from the perspective of sex workers, if sex work is an activity that breaks into or transgresses public space and in what ways.
4. To identify, from the perspective of sex workers, how the activity of sex work is regulated in order to control transgressions.

## Preliminary results

In theoretical terms, given that this project seeks to understand the dynamics that derive from young sex workers who prefer to offer their sexual services to other men in the public space of the Zona Rosa in Mexico City, it has been noted in the existing literature that sex workers are young individuals (usually not older than 30 and it is common to find minors) and may or may not self-identify as gays, which depends on their own sexual experience or on positions of power that they wish to demonstrate to their clients. Due to their age, according to the existing literature, it would be expected that these individuals would have a more contentious position in the development of sex work in the street (this is the case with female sex work, whether biological or trans women, who tend to be very evident and transgressive in the public space, either because of the struggle for recognition of their work as workers before the law or to attract their clients). However, the disadvantage male sex workers suffer is due to the social prejudices that exist in Mexico: Firstly, because of the negative appreciation of sex work and, secondly, because of the general rejection of homoerotic practices, based on the prejudices of a macho culture, these men who practice sex trade seek to behave discreetly in the public space. However, upon closer attention, it can be recognized that they must have a transgressive attitude in order to be able to work and contact their clients in a highly repressive environment, given that they must overcome many personal and social barriers. In methodological terms, it has been found that semi-structured interviews with sex workers are the best way to proceed: first, because sex workers wish to remain anonymous and this is the best way to achieve this, second, because by contacting them during their work time, they can be asked to do

an interview immediately, although this means paying for their time as if they were offering a sexual service. Thus, in this period, the proposal for the semi-structured interview was developed.



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## What was done this year

1. Definition of the theoretical framework for the research, which involved approaching the understanding of sex work from the categories of analysis of young people, public space and transgression.
2. Definition of the methodology for fieldwork, which led to the use of text reading, passive level participant observation, and semi-structured interviews with sex workers (a semi-structured interview guideline was designed).
3. We participated in a workshop to discuss the proposal to be developed (within the TRYMexico working group).
4. We participated in a workshop with specialists in the different areas of the project in order to obtain feedback.
5. Participated in a seminar to present research advances with the TRYMexico team.
6. We collaborated in the recording of a video to present the case study. Rodrigo Pérez Toledo obtained a grant to support the project 1 is is currently under review by a committee).

## What is planned of the next year

1. Continue fieldwork.
2. Panel at the meeting of the American Geographical Association.
3. Research article.



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## Type of products planned for next year



> Presentation in a conference



> Scientific publication



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