Punters and punting:
Language, sexuality and online sex work

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Content Warning

Although we will not be discussing specific acts of sexual violence, crime or trafficking, we will be discussing:

- Sex Work/Prostitution
- Sex Acts
- Acronyms and terminology relating to specific sex acts, events and prostitution

Background

Punters and Sex Workers are marginalised, and by researching such marginalise communities we uncover more about the norms and processes of these groups and their participants.

This is especially relevant as, whilst socially taboo, paying for sex is assumed to be relatively common, with some research suggesting 1 in 10 men have done or do pay for sex (Natsal-3, 2012; House of Commons Report 26, 2017).

Past research within Psychology regarding the men who pay for sex has centred around issues such as sexual violence, intimate partner violence and the acceptance of rape myths, in sometimes dubious circumstances.

Research on men who seek out sexual interactions in exchange for money is well-established within men's studies and sociology (cf. Sanders 2008; Joseph & Black 2012; Huysamen & Boonzaier 2015).

To date, language and sexuality research has tended to focus on LGBTQ communities, in both online and offline contexts (Mottschenbacher 2018; Baker 2018).

Research context

Present study addresses gap in the literature by employing a interdisciplinary corpus linguistic approach, focusing on the online discourse between users from a punting discussion forum.

What is the punting discussion forum?

A free review site which enables sex buyers/customers (punters) to rate and discuss their experiences (field reports) with escorts/call girls (sex workers), and provides a space for both parties to share advice, reviews, and experiences (Morris, 2011).

Data collection

Web crawling/scraping

- UK and Ireland General Discussion forum

- Identify forum threads

- Download HTML

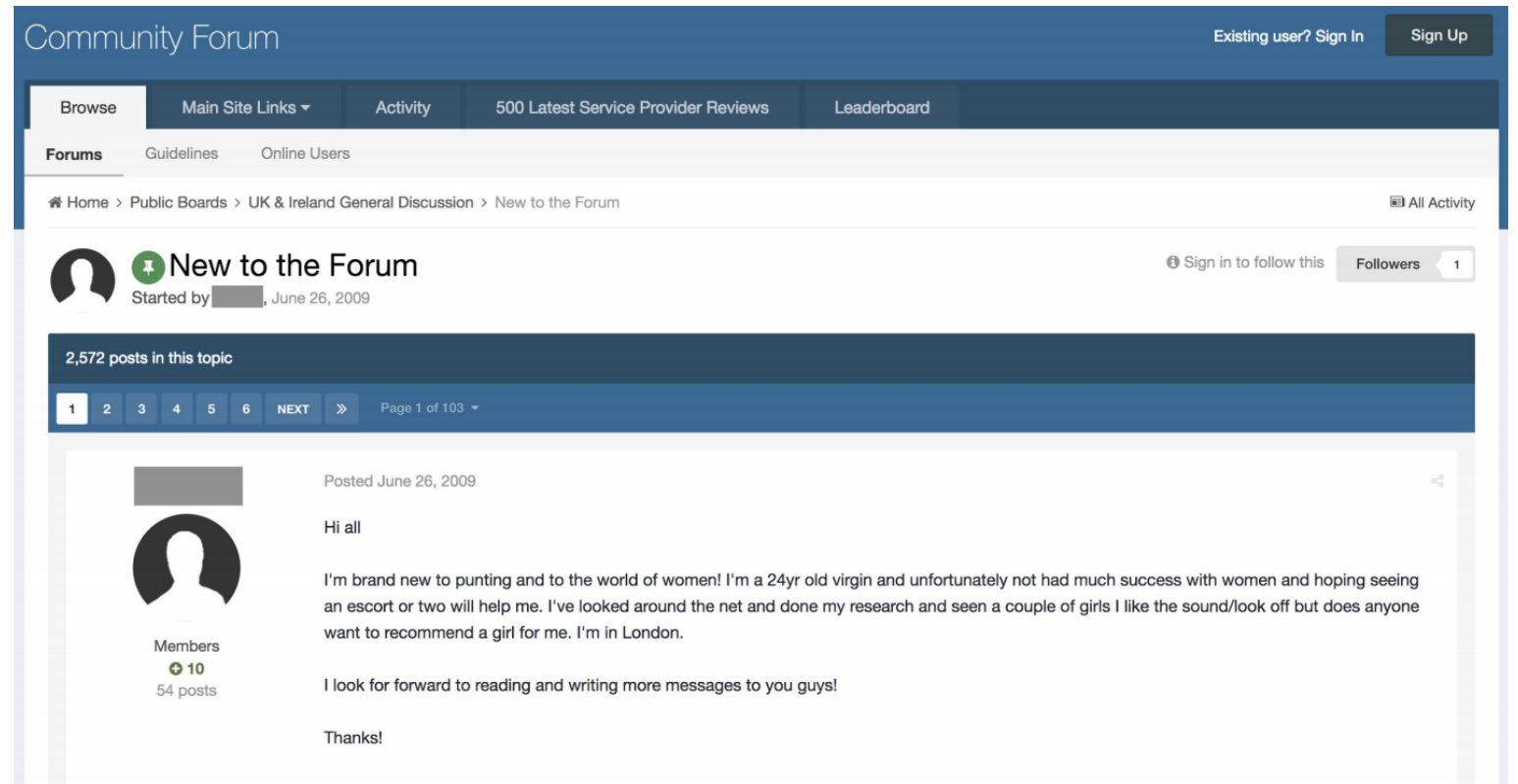- Extract data from forum posts
  - Text
  - Date
  - User Post Count

Websites with HTML Pages → Web Scraping Technology → Structured Data

Data

The Corpus

- 14,232 forum threads
- 255,891 forum posts
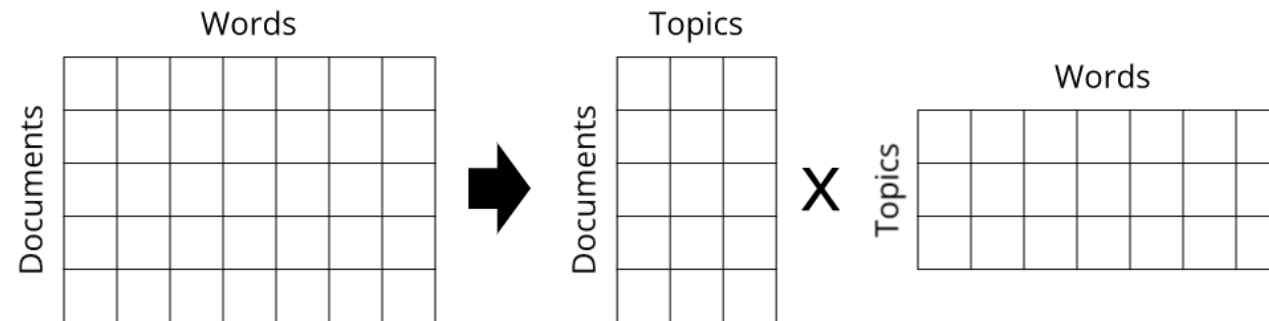- 16,472,006 words

Period of data collected

- 2009 - 2015

Analytical procedure: Topic Modelling

Non-negative Matrix Factorisation (NMF)

- Construct two matrices that best approximate the input matrix (Lee & Seung 1999)

- Implementation in the SciKit Learn Python library

- Stop words (grammatical words) removed; TF-IDF and document length normalisation applied

- NNDSVD initialiser used (Boutsidis & Gallopoulos 2008) – deterministic

- Used the procedure from Greene et al. (2014) to choose the number of topics (stability of the model)

Topics	Top ranked words
1	punt punting year years punts girl good regular time girls week now last back day first new month days
2	sex wife men relationship married partner marriage love relationships affair single husband cheating guilt
3	bb bareback condom condoms risk hiv sex owo unprotected offer health risks offering gum clinic
4	pics pictures face looks size site look photo natural breasts boobs picture girl slim website
5	prices pay hour charge rate money service girls market paying charging extra offer paid business fee afford
6	kissing cum oral orgasm cim mouth owo tongue girl massage just kiss anal gfe enjoy ro lady cock dfk porn
7	reports review write field negative bad read lady punters writing punternet post author site service board
8	police prostitution brothel law illegal people trafficking work government drugs local tax country girls forced
9	think know see people get time really good said feel clients punter take life
10	welcome hi forum hello new site thanks board hope post forward x enjoy punternet newbie join now first
11	age older younger old young mature s years ladies year women men ages girls prefer olds experience
12	shower clean fresh smell bath wash water soap bathroom washing room parlour bed shared home wipes
13	hotel room reception door outcall card home bar walk incalls security check london just lifts key floor girl
14	agencies girls parlour indie london independent fee owner business bookings incall get maid just work
15	hour time booking hours minutes day bookings mins book overnight booked longer appointment clock
16	black race white racist asian men girls women see english indian colour racism thai british european ethnic
17	phone call number email booking texts emails contact numbers mobile reply messages appointment texting
18	feedback aw profile site reviews profiles booking girls negative system positive review good number
19	hair shaved shave hairy trimmed shaven bush shaving pubes pubic natural trim smooth stubble prefer
20	name real names use called surname first know used Facebook remember details personal friends
21	wear stockings heels dress wearing sexy lingerie suspenders clothes knickers dressed outfit boots

Example Topic – Clothing

Top ranked words: wear stockings heels dress wearing sexy lingerie suspenders clothes knickers shoes dressed outfit lady look love skirt jeans naked pair

I love the eye candy of	**stockings**	and suspenders but prefer the feel of smooth skin
a cute pair of cuban heeled stockings and a classy	**dress**	
I like ladies to	**dress**	and look like they're going on a night out, but in a
ggressive, I'm not into that. Heels usually make the	**lady**	taller than me
c on should the nickers be worn over or under the	**suspenders**	If I recall the general opinion was under was corre
ngerie I've bought for a regular to wear, stockings,	**knickers**	, suspender belts, lacy outfits and a sexy peek-a-bo
area initially (which in itself is an added turn on) I	**love**	Stockings and Suspenders. However the suspende
k just fine and could go even higher if I wanted too	**Stockings**	and suspenders are meant to be hidden from view
yself because of it. Had a girl before that who was	**wearing**	the usual stockings etc and looked nice but to ber
I'm easy. I usually prefer WGs	**naked**	or with very few clothes on. I'm very turned on by

Topics	Top ranked words
Frequency of Punting	punt punting year years punts girl good regular time girls week now last back day first new month days
Relationships / Marriage	sex wife men relationship married partner marriage love relationships affair single husband cheating guilt
Sexual Health	bb bareback condom condoms risk hiv sex owo unprotected offer health risks offering gum clinic
Profile Photos / Looks	pics pictures face looks size site look photo natural breasts boobs picture girl slim website
Price	prices pay hour charge rate money service girls market paying charging extra offer paid business fee afford
Sexual Acts / Desires	kissing cum oral orgasm cim mouth owo tongue girl massage just kiss anal gfe enjoy ro lady cock dfk porn
Field Reports	reports review write field negative bad read lady punters writing punternet post author site service board
Legality / Crime	police prostitution brothel law illegal people trafficking work government drugs local tax country girls forced
Emotions / Attachment	think know see people get time really good said feel clients punter take life
New Members	welcome hi forum hello new site thanks board hope post forward x enjoy punternet newbie join now first
Age	age older younger old young mature s years ladies year women men ages girls prefer olds experience
Hygiene	shower clean fresh smell bath wash water soap bathroom washing room parlour bed shared home wipes
Location / Hotels	hotel room reception door outcall card home bar walk incalls security check london just lifts key floor girl
Agency / Parlour / Independent	agencies girls parlour indie london independent fee owner business bookings incall get maid just work
Logistics of Punting / Duration	hour time booking hours minutes day bookings mins book overnight booked longer appointment clock
Ethnicity & Discrimination	black race white racist asian men girls women see english indian colour racism thai british european ethnic
Making Contact / Booking	phone call number email booking texts emails contact numbers mobile reply messages appointment texting
Reviews / Feedback	feedback aw profile site reviews profiles booking girls negative system positive review good number
Hair Grooming	hair shaved shave hairy trimmed shaven bush shaving pubes pubic natural trim smooth stubble prefer
Names / Anonymity	name real names use called surname first know used Facebook remember details personal friends
Clothing	wear stockings heels dress wearing sexy lingerie suspenders clothes knickers dressed outfit boots

Focus for this paper

Partner Preferences

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Looks & body type
- Clothing
- Hair Grooming

Sexual Acts / Desires

Focus on punters

All users with more than 100 comments were coded (445 users)

Categories: Type (punter, escort, other), Gender, Age (0-19, 20-39, 40-59, 60+)
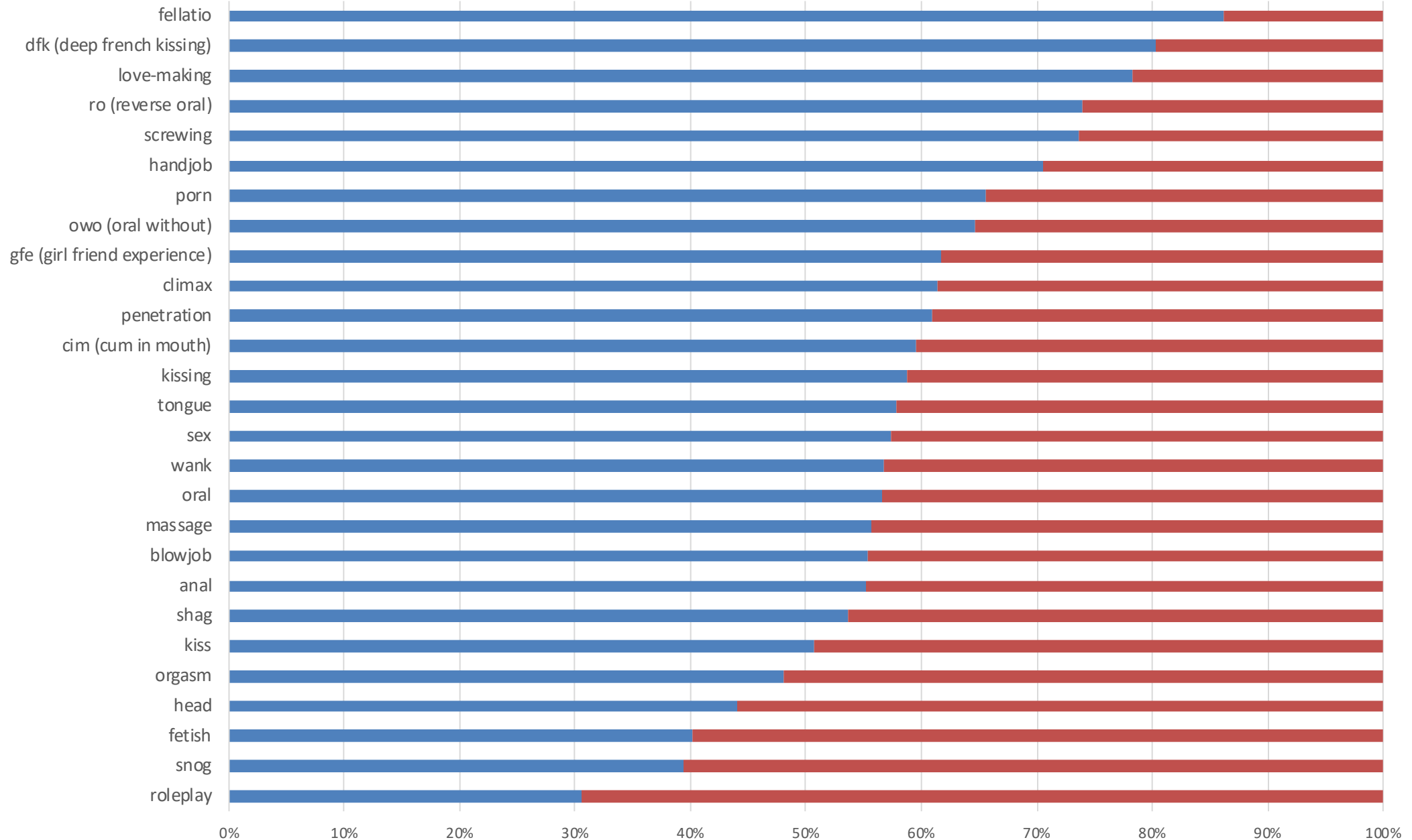
Following examples are taken from comments by punters

Sub-Corpora Size

	Posts	Words
Punters	134,863	7,999,941
Escorts	57,541	4,137,245

Words related to sexual acts & desires

■ Punters (fpm)   ■ Escorts (fpm)

Term	
fellatio	
dfk (deep french kissing)	
love-making	
ro (reverse oral)	
screwing	
handjob	
porn	
owo (oral without)	
gfe (girl friend experience)	
climax	
penetration	
cim (cum in mouth)	
kissing	
tongue	
sex	
wank	
oral	
massage	
blowjob	
anal	
shag	
kiss	
orgasm	
head	
fetish	
snog	
roleplay	

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

Punters: sexual desires

"I would not see a girl who advertises BB openly"

"I'm definitely more interested in the 'girlfriend experience' than the 'pornstar experience'."

"I look for DFK in all my punts"

"I've been thinking of attending a party at LMP for some time now, the thought of having sex with multiple women turns me on"

"Excellent OWO and ball licking, RO, Prostate massage, toys used on her by you, multiple positions, cum twice and lots of passionate French Kissing. Anal for an extra £40 if you want too. "

Punters: sexual desires

Although all the men on the site are seeking intimate sexual relations, many will not have unprotected 'BB' sex with an escort

- Risk of catching STD and passing in on to their wife/girlfriend – not so much a desire but more so a way to not get caught out

DFK and 'Girlfriend Experience' are seemingly popular requests from punters

- A more realistic experience than a fabricated one
- Do not want it to feel like a transaction

However, group sex, threesomes and LMP are also greatly desired

- The idea of having sex with more than one woman at a time is appealing to many punters
- If they are paying for the interaction, they may as well get the most out of it?

Punters: sexual desires

Many punters also reveal their desire to pleasure the escort through RO and providing orgasms

- Again, to make the experience more realistic
- Could also be to make themselves feel good – especially if the punter does not have successful relationships with women outside punting

Punters: partner preference

"I'm attracted to women of all physical types from fine-featured freckled redheads [...] to the darkest bootylicious ebony. I love variety and would punt with any of them, ticking them off the list as I go."

"After this exchange though I think I will visit a Thai girl if possible next year"

"Age: 18-40 Build: Sexy slim figure of size 8-10, breast size should be natural A-F cup, no enhanced ones, no tattoos, belly button should be pierced"

"I've had a few Thai girls and they have been very enthusiastic, East European girls well, I've been with at least 20"

"I'm 51 too, but unlike most others my age, I prefer a completely smooth and hairless pussy. I'm not a fan of getting hairs in my mouth"

Punters: partner preference

Generally speaking, punters seem to seek interactions with escorts they believe to be 'unattainable'

The data suggests that punters seem to prefer 'natural' looking escorts with little-to-no plastic surgery and minimal make-up and fake tan

- This could suggest that, although they want to have sex with an escort who they deem to be 'out of their league', punters also want their experience to be realistic and believable – 'girlfriend experience'

However, the data also suggests that many punters may seek out escorts who look different to their wife/girlfriend

- Punters tend to interact with younger escorts (aged 18-28) with slim body types (size 8-10), natural breast size and shaven pubic hair

Punters: partner preference

There is a trend towards punters detailing their interactions with Thai and Eastern European girls

These women, and women of other ethnicities, are discussed as if they are experiences to 'tick off' or 'achieve' as opposed to people they're sexually attracted to

- Objectifying these escorts and treating them as 'off shelf commodities'

An aspect of 'gloating' when sharing experiences

Porn influencing their reality

- The way women who are not caucasian are described in porn bears similarity to how they're described by the punters
- E.g. 'bootilicious ebony', 'enthusiastic Thai'

Key words

Punters		Escorts	
punt	london	he	man
punting	great	clients	appointment
her	sex	x	booking
she	certainly	him	work
wg	wg's	client	emails
wgs	seems	guys	people
punts	thai	they	email
punters	bb	guy	gents
lady	ee	men	day
punter	imo	his	gent
punted	dfk	not	job
girl	hobby	xx	ha
frs	experiences	lol	website
fr	seen	kisses	haha
good	interest	because	call
view	lmp	do	oh
great	pussy	someone	ask
experience	overall	xxx	calls

Punters
- Address terms: wg(s), lady, girl(s)
- Sexual acts / desires: bb, dfk, lmp
- Partner preference: thai, ee
- Interests: experience(s), hobby, interest
- Reviews: fr(s)

Escorts
- Address terms: client(s), guy(s), gent(s), man/men
- Logistics: appointment, booking, email(s), call(s)
- Politeness strategies: kisses, x, xx, xxx
- Laughter: lol, haha

WG = working girl
IMO = in my opinion
FR = field report
BB = bareback
EE = Eastern European
DFK = deep French kissing
LMP = Lady Marmalade Parties

Future Work

- Community reaction to topics discussed

- Development of the community - change in language over time

- Joining the community - differences between long term and new members (or peripheral vs. core members)

- Cultural differences - the impact of legal differences and social norms

- This research (which is ongoing) aims to explore perceptions, motivations, constructions and rationalisation in a way that could have **potential real world impact with health and risk being a prime example that could impact on policy and well-being.**

Thank you

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Analytical procedure: Topic Modelling

Data-driven

- Produces clusters of words and documents from the corpus – each cluster represents a 'topic'

- Based on document-level word co-occurrence

Typically use Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA)

- Psychology – Concept of courage (Santilli, Nota, and Pilato, 2017); Tourist satisfaction (Guo, Barnes, and Jia, 2017)

- Linguistics – Exploring a specialised corpus of academic writing (Murakami et al. 2017); in combination with Critical Discourse Analysis (Törnberg & Törnberg 2016)

Issues remain

- LDA is non-deterministic (different results every time) – studies not replicable

- Choosing the number of topics can be arbitrary and interpreting the topics can be challenging