

**The Relationship between Gender and Sexual Labor as Represented in Three Movies by  
North American Filmmaker Sean Baker**

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## GENDER AND SEXUAL LABOR REPRESENTED IN SEAN BAKER'S FILMS

**Abstract**

**Title:** The relationship between gender and sexual labor as represented in three movies by North American filmmaker Sean Baker. <sup>1</sup>

**Author:** Nhatalia Niño Márquez<sup>2</sup>

**Keywords:** *Gender, Sex work, Transgender, Women, Marginalization, Prostitution.*

**Description:** *Gender* and *sex work* are two concepts that have gained much more importance in various fields in recent years; this discussion is also relevant when approaching American cinema due to the way different communities in the United States of America have been misrepresented in such products. This study aims at identifying the relationship between sexual labor and gender and how they are represented in three films by North American filmmaker Sean Baker: *Tangerine* (2015); *The Florida Project* (2017); *Red Rocket* (2021). To achieve the objective, some fragments from each of the movies were selected and systematized in two main categories to get the required data: *Marginalization of sex workers* and *Society's view toward sexual labor*. As a result, the quality of the interactions was evidenced in the characters that represented both *gender* and *sex work*, how they dealt with the scenarios and situations when they were put under conflict, and how they reacted to those circumstances according to the American society's prejudices towards them. In conclusion, since Hollywood cinema is one of the top industries in America, it can help to shed light on significant social topics such as gender and sex work; the more characters are present in filmmaking the easier the visibility these will get.

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<sup>1</sup> Degree Work

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**Resumen**

**Título:** La relación entre género y trabajo sexual representada en tres películas del cineasta norteamericano Sean Baker.<sup>3</sup>

**Autor:** Nhatalia Niño Márquez<sup>4</sup>

**Palabras Clave:** *Género, Trabajo sexual, Transgénero, Mujer, Marginalización, Prostitución.*

**Descripción:** *Género y trabajo sexual* son dos conceptos que han cobrado mucha importancia en varios ámbitos en los últimos años; esta discusión también es relevante al abordar el cine norteamericano, debido a la forma en que diferentes comunidades de los Estados Unidos de América han sido tergiversadas en dichos productos. Este estudio tiene como objetivo identificar la relación entre el trabajo sexual y el género, y cómo se representan en tres películas del cineasta norteamericano Sean Baker: *Tangerine* (2015); *The Florida Project* (2017) y *Red Rocket* (2021). Para lograr el objetivo, se seleccionaron algunos fragmentos de cada una de las películas y se sistematizaron en dos categorías principales para obtener los datos requeridos: marginación de las trabajadoras sexuales y visión de la sociedad hacia el trabajo sexual. Como resultado, la calidad de las interacciones se manifestó en los personajes que representaban tanto el *género* como el *trabajo sexual*, en cómo afrontaban los escenarios y las situaciones cuando se les ponía en conflicto, y en cómo reaccionaban ante esas circunstancias de acuerdo con los prejuicios de la sociedad estadounidense hacia ellos. En conclusión, dado que el cine de Hollywood es una de las industrias más importantes de Estados Unidos, puede ayudar a entender temas sociales significativos como el género y el trabajo sexual; cuantos más de estos personajes estén presentes en el cine, más fácil será que éstos adquieran visibilidad.

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<sup>3</sup> Trabajo de Grado

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## GENDER AND SEXUAL LABOR REPRESENTED IN SEAN BAKER'S FILMS

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Context

This research study aims at clarifying the perception of sex work in American society specifically represented in three movies by North American filmmaker Sean Baker, bringing into discussion gender issues existent in sex work, the differences perceived among men and women with this occupation, and the problems surrounding being part of a sexual labor environment. Moreover, it is important to mention the discussion departs from the analysis of three cinematographic products that converge with specific themes in relation to sex work and gender. These three films are *Tangerine* (2015), *The Florida Project* (2017), and *Red Rocket* (2021), all directed and co-written by Sean Baker. The three movies deal with sexual labor to some extent, being one of the main topics in these since it is what the main characters do for a living, affecting the relationships woven around them. The three movies have another aspect in common, and that is the realness of the protagonist characters, being portrayed by first-timers in most cases. Regarding this choice, Baker mentions mixing more experienced actors with first-timers can bring an attractive freshness to the set, as the experienced ones can complement the first-timer's innocence bringing together nice alchemy to the movie (Wray, 2018).

Moreover, it is important to clarify that, in the present study, by sexual labor, we refer only to some specific types of it: prostitution (women and trans women prostitution), and male pornography. Hence, these two types of sexual labor are the ones mainly explored and analyzed throughout the research study. The main purpose is to identify social and cultural aspects surrounding the practice of these two while pointing out the marginalization and degradation of sex workers' image in the current North American society. Likewise, we are considering any laws or policies that might back up these practices, taking into consideration how they are perceived and whether they are acceptable or not in the context of the United

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States. Therefore, the idea is to finally arrive at a contrast of the two sexual practices at analysis, and the gender relevance of these two. In addition, this study might allow thinking about future research that englobes many areas of study, like psychology, sociology, and feminist studies, providing further opportunities to construct interdisciplinary studies that can provide a wider perspective on the issues.

### **2.2. Research question**

Considering the ideas surrounding the research study, and the intended analysis established above we have come to a question that encompasses two main concerns: *What is the relationship between sexual labor and gender, and how are these represented in three movies by North American filmmaker Sean Baker?*

### **2.3. Justification**

Gender and sexual labor are two widely discussed topics nowadays. Ever since the 1970s, with the upsurge of feminism and gay liberation in the academic context, there came an increasing wave of research conducted around sex roles and sex differences, which intended to break down the stereotypes pre-established in the American society, strengthening research made around the topic for years (Connell, 1987). The struggle that has existed for a number of years around sexual labor as a legitimate occupation, worthy of rights, and laws that respond in favor of it hasn't reached a favorable conclusion yet.

Contrarily, there are still many stigmas and beliefs around sex workers, even more so when these are not heterosexual individuals. It is the situation depicted in *Tangerine*, one of the cinematographic products to be analyzed, where two transgender women have this occupation. The purpose then is to make these issues visible and analyze specific aspects retrieved from the movie that might nurture the image constructed around transgender sex workers. In the case of *The Florida Project*, there is a character who is a single mom living a

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double life in which she is a sex worker with the intention of supporting her economic situation. Lastly, in *Red Rocket*, we get to know a male main character that is an ex-porn star who still cannot move on from those years of glory, as stated by him in the same movie. All of these issues witnessed within the films were what ultimately led this study to look for a deeper explanation of the two main concerns, gender and sex work.

These movies were chosen not only because of the topics they deal with but mainly because they provide a contemporary and independent perspective of the object of study, which is something particular in Baker's movies, where he tends to portray his own particular version of the issues. Certainly, sex work has been a widely studied topic in many fields; however, it is not very common to see it covered from a cinematographic point of view. Additionally, there is still much work to be done around Sean Baker's films, as well as on trans women sexual labor in movies in the American background.

Concerning sexual labor, there are people that might think it is not stigmatized anymore; however, as a demonstration, in the case of pornography, a poll made some years ago showed that "72% of Americans think that pornography is 'an important moral issue for the country,' and 61% believe that it leads to a 'breakdown of morals'" (Weitzer, 2010, p. 2). Another more recent clinical research study found that a majority of respondents agreed to the legalization of prostitution, whilst others manifested that prostitution was no more than a form of exploitation managed by a trafficker that controlled the women that worked from this, making it very difficult for them to "escape" from this labor (Nichols, 2015). It should be clarified that the latter study covers prostitution in the context of sex traffic, biasing it towards an anti-prostitution position. As a consequence, due to the still-going criminalization of sex work, it is very unlikely, taking into account the time frame, the percentage and the responses shown in the surveys have changed a lot during these last years, which shows the importance of discussing it even more and in different contexts.

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Finally, the topic of study accomplishes what is expected from the graduate profile for this undergraduate program, by encouraging analysis of social and cultural aspects, in this case, of three audiovisual products, embedded in the North American context.

### **1.4. Research objectives**

The main objective of this research study is *to analyze how gender and sexual labor are related and represented in three movies by North American filmmaker Sean Baker*. Correspondingly, the subsidiary objectives supporting the achievement of the main one are: to establish, with the help of social theory, how gender and sex work are marginalized in North American society, based on specific categories of analysis. Then, to delimit a corpus of scenes in which gender and sex work are depicted. Finally, to analyze, based on gender and sex work, how they are represented in the delimited corpus.

## **2. Literature review**

Gender issues have been greatly discussed in relation to artistic products for many years all around the world. Then, it used to be a quieter discussion, but now it seems to be more common to see different perspectives reflected in the film industry. In the history of filmmaking, it is believed that women's role has been underrepresented and stereotypically treated throughout the years. A study made by Bleakley et al. (2012) created a compilation of more than eight hundred (800) movies in which the authors analyzed two main aspects, sexual content and violent content present in movies; two elements that at certain points seemed to be matched with a specific gender (female and male, respectively). By doing a thorough analysis, the study concludes "that popular films since the 1950s have featured sexual and violent behavior in a way that is inextricably linked with gender stereotypes and roles" being women the ones extremely associated with sexual content, and men the formidable perpetrators of violence. (2012).

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With regard to the issues surrounding gender in cinema, some filmmakers have dedicated their filmography to movies where gender stereotypes and roles are completely challenged and rethought. In Spain, there is a director who caused a lot of controversy in the 1980s when his first works started coming to light, Pedro Almodóvar. Even up to this day, Almodóvar has constructed characters with different sexuality and gender to illustrate cultural aspects that need to be reevaluated, to make visible what our culture tries to make invisible: the marginality of 'inverted' individuals (sexually and generically) and, also, to highlight that sexuality and gender are flexible concepts and, therefore, subject to change (Pastor, 2007). Definitely, this has been an inspiration for contemporary directors, as well as Ingmar Bergman, who, according to the work of Blackwell (1997) cited in Humphrey (2013) "in his films' savage critique of the workings of patriarchy, he has constructed an impressive, if still a very problematic vision, one that ultimately expresses the untenability of Western patriarchal ideology" (p. 4). Therefore, it is important to remark on the importance the director has had in the understanding of sexuality and gender. However, in a study made by Humphrey (2013), this author argues that some movies from the first twenty-five years of Bergman's career, and some others from his last years are the ones that attributed his filmography with a favorable and recognized role in modifying what was understood when discussing sexuality and gender roles, a role that did not intend for praise, but for a renewed debate on these topics.

Meanwhile, in South Korea, there were some movies being released during the 80s. movies that ended up challenging the conventional view of a sex worker, a view encouraged by Hollywood movies. These were hostess movies, which gained a lot of popularity in that decade. Throughout an article written by Kim (2014), noticeable differences can be perceived that appear between Korean hostess films and Hollywood movies that cover the topic of prostitution (at least during this very same time). "While conventional Hollywood films

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portray sexually fallen women as immoral and eroticized, hostess films, instead, focus on their extremely selfless and inherently good natures” (2014, p. 455). It is interesting to see how the image of the prostitute in movies is perceived differently, making it look almost like a heroine, who sacrifices for her loved ones and ultimately gets a tragic ending. This ending is perceived as what she deserves, and being a common narrative in multiple movies (2014). The filmography of these directors contributes to Sean Baker's cinema depiction of the ongoing stigmatization of sex workers in American society.

Nowadays, there are filmmakers such as Sean Baker, whose filmography has not been widely explored and studied, at least, not much in his latest movies, *The Florida Project* and *Red Rocket*. In fact, the author has admitted in some interviews having made *Red Rocket* as a possibility to embrace what he calls his “heterosexual male gaze” showing a character that can potentially be unredeemable and upsetting for the audience, but who ultimately portrays the decadence of a male porn star (Kaufman, 2021). Nevertheless, his movie *Tangerine* did have more impact when it was released because it proposed a whole different perspective for visualizing sexual labor. In the words of the director, it was an agreed decision to treat friendship as one of the main topics, allowing the audience to connect with the main characters' experiences. His main goal was to show a strong friendship between two trans women that could overcome many societal adversities thanks to their unbreakable bond (Kinser, 2015).

### **3. Theoretical framework**

This research study intends to analyze and understand the importance and relevance of three films by Sean Baker: *The Florida Project*, *Tangerine*, and *Red Rocket*. It is also designed to contrast these three products by identifying the gender representation, and how sexual labor is portrayed and perceived in each. The categories initially proposed to proceed

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with this analysis are *Society's view toward Sexual labor* and *The Marginalization of sex workers*, but it is crucial to depart from the conceptualization of some key terms in the first place.

### 3.1. Gender conceptualization or concepts

There are a couple of concepts that are important to fully comprehend the study and the movies that will be analyzed for this purpose. Hence, hereunder, some of the crucial concepts to take into consideration are listed.

*Gender identity:* This has been one of the most discussed terms when first approaching an understanding of what gender is. According to Butler (1988), who was one of the first that identified and conceived gender as changing:

Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure. Still, if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performances of various kinds. (p. 531)

*Sexual orientation:* This is a concept that has been profoundly misunderstood along with gender identity, making it difficult to recognize the difference between these two. However, sexual orientation “refers to each person’s capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to (and intimate and sexual relations with) individuals of any sex” (Blondeel et al., 2018, p. 30).

*Cisnormativity:* This is a concept that will eventually appear when talking about what is perceived as the norm for society in the terms of gender identity. Cisnormativity is “a

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discourse based on the assumption that cisgender is the norm and privileges this over any other form of gender identity” (Heteronormativity & Cisnormativity, 2022, para. 2).

*Heteronormativity:* This term tends to be widely confused with the one defined above, once again because of the confusion arising from gender identity and sexual orientation. However, heteronormativity is “a discourse based on the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm and privileges this over any other form of sexual orientation” (Heteronormativity & Cisnormativity, 2022, para. 1).

*Transgender:* Finally, this is a term of great importance in this study, since it is approached completely in one of the films, and it might be a little understudied and underrepresented when it comes to academia, especially around audiovisual products. Transgender can be defined as “people whose gender identity and expression does not conform to the norms and expectations traditionally associated with their sex at birth” (Blondeel et al., 2018, p. 30).

### **3.2. Marginalization of sex workers**

To start talking about marginalization inflicted on sex workers, it is important to have the concept in mind. “Marginalization is defined as the process through which persons are peripheralized on the basis of their identities, associations, experiences, and environments” (Hall et al., 1994, p. 25). Hence, when qualifying a specific group as marginalized or stigmatized we are implying that that group does not have the same opportunities as others in different aspects of society. Hence, the FINIS framework established by Pescosolido et al. (2008), might be useful to understand the different aspects of social life that can be affected by stigma. These are the “micro or psychological and socio-cultural level or individual factors; meso or social network or organizational level factors; and macro or societal-wide factors – set the normative expectations that play out in the process of stigmatization” (p. 433). Regarding sex work, there was a specific research study that took into account the

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different levels worked by Pescosolido et al., and explored the possible aspects that might take place talking about sex work. Benoit et al. (2017, p. 461) identified “four broad sources of prostitution stigma within the sex work literature operating at these different levels: (a) laws, regulations, and social policies, (b) the media, (c) health care and justice systems, and (d) the public at large and sex workers themselves”. Being (a) and (b) the macro level, (c) the meso level, and (d) the micro level.

Concerning marginalization and how sex workers have had to face it throughout history, there are definitely some studies that cover some of their ongoing struggles. Especially when we talk about the criminalization of sex work and the laws that advocate in favor of these individuals, there is virtually nothing. For years, the criminalization of this occupation has led to a bad working environment and violence infringed by everyday citizens and police officers (Lyons et al., 2019). Also, experiences shared by trans people from a specific study applied in the United States detailed violent behaviors that have taken place while working merely founded on transphobia (2019).

Another way of marginalization, and one that may be overlooked when referring to the struggle for better working conditions, is the case of male sex workers. In a study applied by Dennis (2008) cited in Koken et al. (2014), it was found that:

Men working in the sex industry are vulnerable to victimization at the hands of clients, law enforcement, or other parties, contrary to the masculinist narrative of MSWs (Male Sex Workers) as agentic, and thus less vulnerable than female sex workers. (p. 232)

Hence, marginalization affects many sex workers, regardless of their gender and sexual orientation. Moreover, we can point out the concept of “whore stigma”, which “may additionally be layered with homophobic and transphobic stigmas, leaving marginalized sex

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workers economically and socially sidelined, and further exposed to mistreatment” (Lyons et al., 2020; Roche & Keith, 2014; Sanders, 2018 cited in Benoit & Unsworth, 2021, p. 332). Consequently, marginalization can affect in a more significant way any sex worker that fits into different categories of diminishment.

### **3.3. Society's view toward sexual labor**

Regarding the view conceived by society when talking about sex work and all its forms, some studies have collected surveys made to different citizens, especially in the American context, which is the one that concerns this study. In a poll applied by Crockett (2016, para. 6), it was found that “More Republicans (52%) than Democrats (45%) or Independents (37%) think it should be illegal to accept money for sex”. However, the same poll came to the conclusion that there was no evident discrepancy among people of different ages, more likely a big majority of the surveyed individuals agreed that prostitution works as a form of exploitation, hence it should not be decriminalized (2016). Additionally, according to feminists against such ‘labor’, sex work is an inappropriate way of referring to prostitution (Koken, 2010). To broaden this point of view, Farley (2005) cited in Koken (2010) mentions that:

In that one word –work– the sexism and the physical and psychological violence of prostitution are made invisible. A battle is being waged by those who promote prostitution as a good-enough job for poor women against those of us who consider prostitution an institution that is so intrinsically unjust, discriminatory, and violent that it can't be fixed. (p. 34)

In order to complement the idea around the lack of support and stigmatization there is from radical feminists towards the prostitutes' community, a couple of studies have focused on dealing with the term “whore”, the perception society has of it, and its implications for sex workers. According to Pheterson (1993), whores are often seen as a dishonor for the female

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figure, and a reason for shame for those men who have come to their services. Moreover, as for the feminists' view of prostitutes, there have been additional comments made by the very same sex workers who have felt attacked and marginalized by these. For example, “An ex-whore who has been active in the women's movement for twelve years said, ‘I wouldn't dare tell my feminist friends that I developed the film skills I now use in the movement in hard porn’” (p.58). Hence, the concept of “whore stigma” emerges to pigeonhole the different aspects that cause the marginalization of sex workers. Weitzer (2017) mentions that the stigma towards sex workers starts from the very names these are given, names such as “whore, hooker, harlot, john, and punter have to be replaced with names such as worker, provider, client, and manager” (p. 720). Then, It goes without saying these mostly pejorative qualifiers are given by society regarding sex workers.

### **4. Methodology**

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative analysis is carried out, specifically hermeneutic content analysis since it can look for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at study, in this case, the three films by Sean Baker. The purpose is to go beyond a descriptive analysis and to take into account other aspects such as the historical and social context behind the author and his work. Moreover, this type of analysis encourages going beyond the superficial aspects of the movie by considering the author's motivations and reasons behind the making of the story (Vieira et al., 2017). In the case of Sean Baker, there are reasons why he decided to develop these three products, and those reasons included making different realities around sex work visible. He wanted to show more than the victim's face as he did in *Tangerine*, he wanted to show the reality of a mother who is not especially politically correct in *The Florida Project*, or as he did in *Red Rocket*, the reality of a man whose methods are not quite respectable whatsoever. Anyhow, without the context and the understanding behind

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each movie or each character, there is no analysis that can be made. The intention when applying a qualitative analysis is to get deeply immersed in the message of the movies, and the hidden symbols or implications that can be found. Hence, the process of gathering the data is meticulous and done in a way that each frame can be ultimately put through analysis. The design of the research is also a comparative design since it also attempts to bring together different recurrent aspects from the three products in order to see if there is coherence in Baker's treatment of the characters and the story as such.

The process followed for the study takes as a first step theoretically establishing how gender and sex work are related in societies such as in North America, based on specific categories of analysis. Then, the aim is to delimit a corpus of scenes in which gender and sex work are related. Finally, an analysis based on the categories takes place, as well as examining how these categories are represented in the delimited corpus. Therefore, what the study intends to do is to take the two categories established in the theoretical framework (*Society's view toward Sexual labor* and *Marginalization of Sex workers*) and retrieve scenes, dialogues, and frames from the movies in order to make a comparison between those regarding the treatment of female, male, and trans characters.

### **4.1. Corpus**

The three products to be analyzed are three films directed and co-written by Sean Baker, a North American filmmaker that has dedicated his career to showing realities and parts of the story that are not often treated in Hollywood. The analysis departs with *Tangerine*, a movie in which we get to know two transgender women and their reality, not focusing that much on them as victims of their reality, but on friendship and loyalty as the main topics in the movie. There are many aspects regarding gender and sexuality that are included in the movie and that require analysis. The second film to be analyzed is *The Florida Project*, that in the words of Baker himself had the purpose of "shining a light on the

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hidden homeless in the United States, and the fact that we have families, individuals, and children using budget hotels as their last refuge before having to resort to the streets” (Wray, 2018, para. 13). This is just one of the topics the movie explores, also giving importance to the relationship of a mother and her kid, the joy of childhood no matter what, and the adversities mothers have to go through to preserve that joy, in this particular case, prostitution as a path to survival. Finally, the third product to be analyzed is Baker's most recent film, *Red Rocket*, a movie about oblivion and ambition, that portrays in a very real way how it is to be a man who once had it all in the porn industry, and out of the sudden lost everything. *Red Rocket* might be Baker's “straightest” piece of work, showing a heterosexual man that wants to go back to his good old days by using a minor and her potential for adult movies.

### **4.2. Criteria to choose the different scenes**

In general terms, the three products have aspects in common intended to be put in contrast, however, the scenes need to be particularly selected for such purpose. Therefore, the goal is to take scenes, dialogues, and frames from each movie that can be contrasted with each other because of the topics they deal with and how they do it. These can be frames or chunks of dialogues where reality regarding sex work is portrayed, and also where gender issues are being shown and included as an important theme in the movie. Other elements that can bring depth to the analysis can be dialogues where stereotypes, discrimination, marginalization, or any type of gender or sexual issue are being considered. All these criteria will ultimately leave us with a wide selection of material that could be contrasted and put into analysis.

### **4.3. Data Collection Instruments**

For the analysis to take place there was a selection of movie fragments, which were eventually organized in a chart and were classified into one of the two categories

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*(Marginalization of sex workers & Society's view towards sexual labor)* established in the theoretical framework, which can be found in *Annex 1*. The chart in which the movie fragments are classified into one of the categories is divided into fragment number, the title of the movie, TCR (Time Clock Report), script, transcription from the movie<sup>5</sup>, category, and comments. The purpose of the chart was to illustrate in a more systematized way the different elements found in the movies which represent different gender aspects that can be later considered for the analysis and the findings report.

### 5. Analysis and Findings

Sean Baker's films display an array of scenes that nurture the subject/topics of study following the rules of cinematic storytelling and character development. We have selected a handful of those scenes that depict gender and sex work in order to point out their plausibility and buildup.

#### 5.1. Tangerine

The fragments from *Tangerine* that were collected focus on gender and sex-work-related conversations and scenarios. Even when the movie attempts to give more importance to other topics besides gender and sex work, it is unavoidable not to notice the relevance that is given to the stigmatization of sex work and more specifically with trans sex workers. In the beginning, the two main characters, Sin-Dee and Alexandra are talking in a restaurant right after Sin-Dee got out of jail for a felony that is not very clear to the audience. The conversation leads to Alexandra telling Sin-Dee that her boyfriend (Chester) cheated on her while she was imprisoned with a white cisgender girl. They refer to her as "white fish".

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<sup>5</sup> The reason why the script and the transcription were considered separate items is because of the difference that could be found between these two in the three movies. However, the possible explanation for the contrast between these elements goes beyond our scope, hence, it can be considered in further research for narratological studies of the script or intermediality studies.

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This term originated in the 1970s and is employed for cis women sex workers by trans women.

In order to make the characters believable, the film portrays the jargon employed by sex workers located in Santa Mónica, CA. This allows the audience to get to know how intricate that culture can be. The reference helps to identify the use of language to both protect and stultify a community; the code behind the language employed in the film relates to how close the characters are by the way they speak to each other. A byproduct of including actual sex work jargon leads to understanding an apparently invisible social group. Trans characters in the film are constantly debating about being an actual woman. There are three instances. First, we have the use of hormones to transition their male bodies to female bodies; second, the status trans characters have in a relationship with cisgender characters; and third, the way they have to hold back their male attributes when in confrontation with other characters (Baker, 2015, 0:02:04).

That being said, the fragment where they refer to the girl Chester is cheating with matches with both the category of *Society's view towards sex workers* and the *Marginalization of sex workers*. Mainly because there are denigrating comments towards a specific type of prostitute from other prostitutes that belong to a different community. There can also be considered the concept of *Whore stigma* mentioned above which deals with the treatment given to prostitutes as if they were somewhere below in regard to status and honor.

There is another fragment that could be embedded in the Society's view category since the chatter among the three trans sex workers illustrates their demeanor, slang, and other mannerisms in their community. There are also some aspects of marginalization identified in the way they refer to other trans sex workers with insulting terms, e.g.: fat bitch, ugly ass bitch. It can be interesting to mention that this scene was fully improvised for the movie, and it can be considered that Baker's choice of using natural actors can bring more

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reliability to the dialogues and topics dealt with within those conversations since they have the freedom to behave in the way they normally do (Baker, 2015, 00:19:34).

Another fragment retrieved from the movie connects directly with the *Marginalization of sex workers* since the scene portrays, very realistically, the way trans sex workers are mistreated and abused when working. In the scene, Alexandra meets a client in his car, and she tells him that with the money he is offering, she can only masturbate him, he agrees and she does it, but since he did not ejaculate, he decides not to pay her, which evidently infuriates Alexandra. They start to argue and Alexandra tries to get her money, but he insists on not paying which ends up in a more physical fight (Baker, 2015, 00:23:35).

According to Cohan et al. (2006) cited in Nuttbrock (2019):

Studying sex workers who accessed care at a San Francisco clinic, reported that 53.2% of transgender sex workers experienced sex-work-related violence, and 57.9% experienced violence from a partner or family member. These rates of violence were higher than those faced by cisgender male and female sex workers. (p. 397)

Violence in the workplace thus seems like a tangible fear, and these situations may be very triggering for sex workers when doing their job just as happened to Alexandra. The scene continues, and there is another aspect that comes to light, the criminalization of sex work, which we can notice in the way police officers make fun of Alexandra's situation and do nothing. When they see her fighting with her client, they don't take the situation seriously, instead, they approach it as something that is common on a daily basis but not worth the effort of intervening properly. Also, when asked about what was going on, Alexandra wasn't able to speak the truth since what she was doing was illegal as well. "Research consistently shows that many street prostitutes are victims of violent crime, including assault and rape, much of which is never reported to police" (Weitzer, 2009, p. 243). There is no intervention

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whatsoever that benefits Alexandra and the situation which she is in. Evidently, she cannot address the actual issue behind the situation since sex work is criminalized (Baker, 2015, 00:25:25).

Nearly passed the hour, the movie shows a scene that can be classified in both of the categories established. This scene is illustrated differently in the movie, as it is originally written in English, but spoken in Armenian in the final cut, allowing actors to improvise over the dialogues originally scripted. This happens a lot during the film and also, we have a couple of scenes added in the movie that were not originally covered in the script. In this scene, Razmik's mother-in-law's reaction to the sex workers, their clothing, and how they behave is an excellent portrait of how old conservative women tend to react toward them. The scene takes place at the donut shop (Baker, 2015, 01:10:00) where Razmik is looking for Sin-dee while she is facing off Chester. The film points out another angle of emasculation. Traditionally, emasculation is seen as the power exerted by women over men that grants men total control of their decisions. This can be approached as emasculation by choice. In the film, the actions of Razmik's mother-in-law are based on the traditional Armenian family, where men are head of the house and have the duty to provide and protect. Her criticism towards Razmik (his job, his lifestyle, his absence) makes her question the actual role he has got in the family. On the other hand, Razmik's adoption of the American lifestyle can be taken as a sign of escaping that traditional cultural role he has got to live by. Prejudice is the factor to understand emasculation, as it is depicted as the choice of a man for having sexual intercourse with transgender women. In Armenia, transgender people are not fully protected, they are even subjects of abuse and violence (Mirzoyan, 2020). The fact that Razmik has found in America a place to explore his sexual orientation speaks volumes of the weight he has had to carry for being identified as a cis male back in Armenia (Baker, 2015, 01:10:00).

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Finally, there is the fragment that portrays the *Marginalization of sex workers* at its best, specifically trans women hate-based behaviors that affect this community when performing their jobs. Sin-Dee is about to start her working routine when some men pass by in their car and throw her a bucket of urine leaving her in an embarrassing scenario. Sin-Dee continues to be humiliated right after she finds out her best friend was hooking up with his boyfriend while she was in jail. This scene ends up breaking Sin-Dee down. She finds herself being fully vulnerable in front of Alexandra. On the other hand, physical appearance is a trait that is given importance in the film; since it can be pointed out as both an individual and social construct for trans people, Sin-Dee ends in a place of vulnerability even when throughout the whole movie she showed herself as strong and reckless no matter the circumstances (Baker, 2015, 01:23:19).

*Tangerine* is a film that deals with aspects that overlap the specific traits of gender, and trans women struggle to belong to a community that sometimes disregards them. However, the movie does a great job showing the way trans women naturally behave without ridiculing or mocking them, which makes it even more engaging for the audience. Despite the fact the film's main goal is not to victimize the trans community, but rather focus on other aspects such as friendship and relationships in general, it still does a substantial job when including those situations that portray trans sex workers' stigmatization and marginalization in general.

### **5.2. The Florida Project**

*The Florida Project* is the second movie that was selected to be part of the fragments collected with the purpose of identifying different elements that could illustrate issues concerning gender and sex work. In this movie, Baker explores the matters of sex work within vulnerable social conditions and young motherhood. One of the main characters in the movie is Halley, Moonee's mother, a young mother who's lost institutional financial support

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and has to tumble around in order to make ends meet. Among the different options to overcome her precarious financial situation is reselling perfumes to tourists and leaning on her best friend Ashley's solidarity.

The first scene from *The Florida Project* (Baker, 2017, 00:12:20) can be classified in the category of *Society's view towards sex work* as we have some comments that diminish Halley and remark on her situation as a mother doing an "inappropriate" job. This scene displays the legal framework, and the implications of Halley being the one responsible for Moonee, as a single parent. The caseworker remarks on the need for Halley to find at least 30 hours in a regular job, so she can have access to financial assistance; during the interaction, it is implicit that Moonee's father is in jail, and that Halley is not aware of his bailout. As a matter of fact, there are also a couple of references to sex work as something that has taken place in the past and has been a constant issue for Halley to keep Moonee's custody. It is implied that she has been given a proper warning for her behavior considering she is the one responsible for the child's support. In spite of being a stripper, it is important for the counselor to make sure Halley gets the message across: she has to get a job that guarantees Moonee's welfare.

Even though the movie shows us how Halley is eventually judged for her performance as a mother offering sexual services, at the same time, there is a couple of studies done that have proved how sex work seems to be acceptable when it is carried out to financially support the workers' children. For instance, Dodsworth (2014) could retrieve from some participants in a study applied that "women felt that sex work enabled them to be 'good mothers' and being 'good mothers' enabled them to cope with being sex workers" (p. 104). Hence, the fact that Halley is a sex worker is not the reason for her signaling, but rather the way that she performs it, by not taking into account the possible repercussions.

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In the second scene, to understand the matters around sex work, we can notice how Halley is crossing borders apropos to the way she is handling her job as a sex worker. She is making her own daughter collateral to the situation and does not even bother on hiding what is going on. The scene shows us how one of her clients is now aware of her having a daughter, and how it scandalizes him due to the fact that later in the film, we find out this client's discomfort was triggered because he had a daughter as well. However, because he is paying a sex worker for a *service*, he feels entitled to demand control over the situation and its consequences (Baker, 2017, 01:17:11). His case is similar to *Tangerine's* Razmik and one of Alexandra's clients, men who access these services tend to be married men who are not necessarily sexually aroused anymore, but rather have reached a place of curiosity and discovery that leads them to look for sexual services, be it with trans women as in *Tangerine*, or with cisgender women who can fulfill those lacks in their married lives.

After some minutes, we see the reaction to the previous scene since Halley did something inappropriate, that crosses the border of offering sexual services. Once again, the category that best fits what is displayed here is *Society's view towards sexual labor*. In this scene, we see how Halley is off-limits when it comes to what she is willing to do for getting money. She is now stealing from her clients and does not seem to think about the possible implications of doing it, including what might happen to Moonee if this was discovered. We also see how Bobby (the hotel manager) intervenes and makes John (the man who paid for her services) go away by threatening him describing the hypothetical situation in which his wife and children knew about his treason. Of course, there is an unavoidable signaling towards an unfaithful husband, much more if the treason was committed with a prostitute. Ultimately, John walks away frustrated after the warning given by Bobby because there is not much to fight for when being involved in an illegal matter<sup>6</sup> (Baker, 2017, 01:21:33).

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<sup>6</sup> Here, it might also be considered as a matter of protection for clients when accessing sexual services that do not have any type of guarantee, mostly putting at risk their possessions.

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Moving forward in the movie, Halley finds herself in a difficult situation that seems to be out of control. Both of the categories fit with the situation that is shown, *Society's view of sex work* and the *Marginalization of sex workers*. In this scene, Halley's work is put into evidence, and the fact that she is a mother makes it even more difficult for that behavior to be acceptable. At this particular stage, Halley is confronted by Ashley (her best friend), who tells her that her photos offering her sexual services are all over the internet, and Halley denies that she is the one in the photos when it is evident that it is her because of the tattoos. Ashley reacts in rage when Halley denies it because she starts wondering whether Halley ever did anything inappropriate while her son, Scooty, was in her room. Right there, Halley is exposed and she reaches rock bottom when she overreacts, hitting the only person that she had left, Ashley, and she makes things worse by allowing Scooty to witness the scene. Halley surpassed the moral limits that were always present for Ashley, and these included involving the children in their businesses. At this point, it is not only about being a sex worker, the issue that is discussed throughout the entire movie is the fact that Halley is a mom; she is in different circumstances and has other responsibilities because as a mom, she should care way more about her daughter. At least that seems to be the right thing to do and during the movie we are able to appreciate how Moonee's raising was not the most proper since she grew up listening and learning things that should not be within reach for a child, hence her behavior seems very adult-like and the movie is constantly making us aware of that (Baker, 2017, 01:27:09).

Eventually, Halley faces the consequences of her decision being humiliated by the Florida Department of Children and Families taking her child away. These two last fragments both consider the two categories previously mentioned, given that it is noticeable the judgment that appears due to the perception of sex workers in society and how their miserable economical situations lead them to do things that are signaled and rejected by

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people. At this point, there is enough evidence backing up the investigation, which means there is not much to do for Halley anymore rather than feeling defeated and agreeing to leave Moonee to another family (Baker, 2017, 01:39:39). Due to Halley's behavior and lack of commitment toward being a mom, Moonee is going to be taken away. The movie allows us to understand she is probably going with a foster family temporarily (at least that is what the DCF<sup>7</sup> workers say).

When Halley asks Bobby if he had called the DCF on her, it's like she's appealing to an untold truth about support. Like a certain kind of agreement between both parties, a "*don't be a telltale because you're also part of this, though*". Gender comes into action when that sense of fatherhood hits Bobby, being protective of his customers, especially those in need of better opportunities.

Throughout the film, the relationship with Halley is taking a toll on him. There's a set of diverse circumstances that make the audience get a feeling of relief once the DCF arrives on the scene. Besides rent, implied/implicit parenting of Moonee, and the fact of dealing with alleged/possible prostitution practices, Bobby keeps himself put as he's done all along the film. The fact that he's caught Halley in irregular practices that would've meant kicking her out of *Magic Castle*<sup>8</sup> gives him the benefit of taking advantage of his managerial position, but he chooses not to instead.

On the other hand, Halley is a character that reacts as if the ones that interact with her should cope with her current situation, being a single parent, unemployed, and police record. In spite of not being attacked gender-wise, she reacts by taking everything personally, forgetting about the context where the actions take place. Once the DCF takes apparent control of the situation, Moonee runs away, giving Halley more reasons to not trust an institution, an institution that doesn't see beyond the circumstances that make a woman

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<sup>7</sup> Florida Department of Children and Families

<sup>8</sup> The actual motel is located on U.S. Highway 192 in Kissimmee, which is nearly six miles from Walt Disney World. This was the setting for the movie.

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choose a way to make a living. The scene makes the audience question institutions about what to do when a sex worker is a mother too. What's the protocol to follow in order to provide a child with proper assistance.

According to Weitzer (2010), some prostitutes interviewed during a study applied to African-American prostitutes manifested feeling guilty about being "bad mothers" for not keeping a lot of contact with their children and on many occasions simply leaving them with family relatives and in other cases with foster families as there wasn't any other way. Halley's situation is likely to happen for the mere fact of being a sex worker with poor living conditions. Here the issue is that as a result of not knowing how to carry out life as a sex worker, a child is getting the consequences for her mom's mistakes, in this case, Moonee (Baker, 2017, 01:42:22).

*The Florida Project* showcases a variety of characters that face different situations because of having unfortunate financial issues that lead them to work on different things that might not be well-perceived by society. In the movie, there are two characters that have contrasting perceptions of proceeding in their lives: Halley and Ashley. They both are young mothers that have to deal with raising a child, but the way they approach it and the limits that are set by each character are opposed, meanwhile, Halley expects everything to be on her side, and Ashley works hard to get what is needed to live in *Magic Castle*. This contrast is treated throughout the whole movie and represented in the kids' characters as well (Moonee, Scooty, and Jancey).

### **5.3. Red Rocket**

Baker's last movie might be the most different and controversial the filmmaker has ever made, mainly because it deals with manly issues that had never been approached in depth previously by the director. Even with that, *Red Rocket* discusses some gender issues that concern us and that are displayed in the selection of fragments considered. In one of the

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first scenes of the movie, we see how Mikey is trying to find a job once he is back in Texas, after a stint of seventeen years in Los Angeles. Even though being a porn actor might be seen as an interesting feature for conversation, and Mikey brags about it, it is not very well seen in the employment he is applying for (Baker, 2021, 00:11:58).

There's a blur legal framework for sex workers. In the film, Mikey is held against the wall due to image issues instead of competency. Despite applying for a position where he had previous experience and notions for performing under pressure and in a regular work environment, both managers do not count him as a feasible candidate. They point out the long gap in his résumé but in the end, it turns out to be his profile as a former porn actor that hinders his chances to get a regular job. In the scene, they even mention the chance of him being a felon under parole, giving him a better chance of getting hired because his legal situation would be well documented, providing a hint of how the porn industry is perceived in conservative communities. Since the story takes place in Texas City, TX. The Political Climate in Texas City, TX is Leaning conservative: 37.9% of the people voted Democrat in the last presidential election, 60.6% voted for the Republican Party, and the remaining 1.5% voted Independent (Best Places, n.d.).

Hence, this first fragment can be classified as an issue that encompasses both of the categories, *Society's view of sex workers* and the *Marginalization of sex workers*. The different managers he meets agree on the fact it is impressive and appealing to be a porn actor for conversation, but certainly, it is a disqualifying feature for a serious employee. Porn is seen as entertainment only, something to watch and discuss under the shadows, but it is still a taboo topic for society to speak about. In the film, Mikey does not find another option besides resuming his life in Texas City, selling marijuana.

Later on, we see Mikey on the road with Lonnie telling him about his glorious years back in the day when he was a porn star. It is important to mention that Mikey is going to

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repeat the pattern of bragging and remembering things from his past career throughout the whole movie. This particular aspect which is recurrent could be considered as a part of *Society's view of sex workers*, however, due to some denigrating expressions sometimes used by Mikey to refer to porn actresses and women in general, it might also be integrated into *the Marginalization of female sex workers*. Mikey does not see himself as a *pimp* for making Lexi -his wife- or other women *porn starlets*, but once they get away from him, he rants about them. Particularly in this extract, he states that he was very famous and won a couple of prizes for being a porn star. Funnily enough, he is now back where he thought he would never come back. According to the dialogue, he plans on staying in Texas with Lexi (soon we will see that intention changes, or was never there in the first place). Mikey is constantly putting Lexi and the rest of the women he has come across in his life in a lower position than his, showing how there have always been personal interests in each of the decisions he has made, and how it is an untrustworthy character. Mikey keeps making promises to every character in the movie, and he is ultimately incapable of fulfilling those each time (Baker, 2021, 00:24:30).

A trait in Mikey's way to address his situation is delusional when he is spending time with Lonnie. His lines are filled with narcissism and victim-playing. His demeanor leans towards patronizing, mansplaining, and emasculating Lonnie in order for him to clean his image before his inner circle. The interaction between both characters sums up the perception of gender and sex work linked to success and failure: on one hand, Mikey is successful to Lonnie, because he has got the appeal and has been in the porn industry; on the other hand, Mikey is a failure to Lonnie because he wasn't smart enough to capitalize on his opportunities during his stint as a male performer. In the film, sex work is not presented as a taboo topic. In Mikey's case, gender is not enough for him to get a regular job or start a new life from scratch.

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Moving on, Mikey keeps bragging about his position back in the day and how he got involved with many porn actresses and puts them down constantly when he is talking (Baker, 2021, 00:44:50). This fragment is related directly to the *Marginalization of sex workers*, specifically female porn actresses. The side of female performers in the sex industry is only given away by the demeanor of Lexi and the stories of Mikey. The depiction of female porn actresses is derogatory, objectified, and soulless; the fact that Mikey wants to find redemption by making Strawberry his new starlet, points out the fact that inside the industry anyone can be as good as they want, but once outside of it, their lives are ruined.

A sample of it is Lexi, who is living out of her mother, turning on Mikey in spite of him making ends meet. He also mentions the term “bottom bitches” as a recurrent catchphrase. In American pimp culture, a bottom girl, bottom woman, or bottom bitch is a term for a prostitute who sits atop the hierarchy of prostitutes working for a particular pimp (Urban Dictionary, “bottom girl”, 2009). Mikey claims that once girls get what they want from the industry they become unbearable, making an indirect for Lexi, and predicting what is possibly going to happen with Strawberry since he is taking the same path with her, which is encouraging her to become a porn actress and consequently get a payback for it. Mikey feels entitled to “discover” potential talents for the porn industry and do whatever he wishes to ultimately get what he wants and regain the so-called prestige he says he had.

When Mikey is talking to June about his awards for being a porn actor, specifically winning an AVN<sup>9</sup> for best oral, this shocks June a little because she wonders why it is him getting the award and not the girl. Here we are able to see an evident aspect of gender inequality in the porn industry. Therefore, this last scene can be easily classified as a matter of *Marginalization of female sex workers*. Even when some studies have shown that porn actresses are more likely to gain recognition faster and easily be nominated during the first

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<sup>9</sup> Adult Video News awards.

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year for different awards in comparison to men (Weitzer et al., 2010), in this particular fragment we can notice that women are not getting what they deserve when they are doing the hard job, but men are the ones receiving acknowledgment for their work, in this case, Mikey. Having that in mind, either Mikey is lying about having won that award, or simply there is an exception in the way women are treated depending on different factors such as the production company, managers, or category in which the actress is classified (Baker, 2021, 00:53:35).

A gender trait depicted in the film is the one related to what being a man really means. Lonnie is harassed by two men at the mall for wearing a jacket that suggests he is an army veteran. The Army is highly regarded in American society; the fact that Lonnie is wearing a symbol of pride without actually being part of the Army links it up to masculinity by force and service to the homeland. Lonnie goes through two types of emasculation: first, being a man is only valid if he belongs to a clique that backs him up; second, being a man means wearing according to his social status. At the same time, he is chastised by Mikey as if he had corrupted/disrespected/betrayed his confidence: friendship by convenience (Baker, 2021, 00:59:15).

There's a take on toxic masculinity depicted in the film. Strawberry's former boyfriend at the time she meets Mikey, Nash, belongs to a family based on the core of tradition, where men can exert certain control over women. Once Mikey comes to understand that Strawberry is his way back into the porn industry, he decides to face Nash in order to push him away, however, he does not use any leverage based on strength, appearance, or social status, he appeals to internet popularity in a subworld that he assumes Nash knows well. The fact that Mikey plays the "man card" on a college student shows how immature of a character he is -another feature of toxic masculinity- thinking that his background in the porn industry is enough to earn Nash's respect. Even though Strawberry witnesses their

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conversation, she condones Mikey's attitude (Baker, 2021, 01:04:10). Things get out of hand when Nash takes both of her parents to confront Strawberry and ends up with Mikey being hurt by Nash's family. The interaction between the characters includes slut shaming and the objectification of the female figure. This time, Mikey's porn history does not seem to matter, what matters is family respect.

We can see that Mikey is definitely an unredeemable character who is constantly putting himself in a higher position throughout the entire movie. He brags about his porn career and seems incapable of moving on from those days. He looks for a new *muse*, who ends up being Strawberry, and he decides to take her to be a porn star. Evidently, by the beginning of the movie, and the different crumbs the movie drops we can imply this is not the first time Mikey goes through this process. Actually, Lexi's character is proof of it. The validity male porn actors have is way enduring, in comparison to women porn actresses, who are dismissed sooner. In the adult film industry, it is common to see those male actors are older than their female counterparts, who tend to have a successful career mostly while they are young and then are replaced, whereas men are allowed to age (Weitzer et al., 2010). This evidently depends on many aspects, as Weitzer (2010) points out:

For actresses, one means to achieve a career in pornography is to make themselves consistently desirable and available (at least visually) to the public. This includes erotic dancing, modeling, being photographed, granting interviews, responding to fan groups, appearing at award shows, and signing autographs at trade shows (such as the Video Software Dealers' Association and the Consumer Electronics Show). (p. 60)

Hence, even if it may be possible for women to remain in the industry, for men it is just a matter of finding young talents which they can take advantage of to continue in the industry taking the role of 'talent scouts' or agents. In the end, the movie reveals a kind of revenge towards Mikey taken by most of the female characters that appear in the film, and

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somehow, he gets what he deserves by being thrown to the street fully naked and with no money. Nevertheless, ultimately, he restarts his cycle with another girl, in this case, Strawberry, once again with no real punishment or lesson learned whatsoever.

### **6. Discussion and conclusions**

Generally, for the purpose of this research study three movies by Sean Baker were taken into account: *Tangerine* (2015), *The Florida Project* (2017), and *Red Rocket* (2021), which were respectively presented and analyzed. It is important to highlight these films are a nice and well-structured representation of different issues that are present in vulnerable and marginalized communities when talking about sex work depicted in three communities: transgender prostitution; casual prostitution; professional pornography. Having that in mind, the three films were analyzed in regard to gender and sexual labor representation. Once identified, the goal was to compare them and check if there is coherence in the message transmitted regarding the sex work depiction, or if, on the contrary, there is a clash of perspectives around sex work established by the director. In that regard, the comparative approach of this research allowed us to evidence and envision the nature of each film.

In *Tangerine*, the director Sean Baker deals with the different aspects that surround the daily basis of an African-American L.A based trans sex worker in such a way that the main plot angle is not focused on the victimization of sex workers, but rather allows the audience to delve into other aspects such as friendship and identity at the same time. Nonetheless, the issues related to being a sex worker are considered in the movie and are not downplayed at any moment, which helps us to witness the perspective Baker has on sex labor and the implications it has for the characters' lives. This is later complemented and widened with the making of *The Florida Project*, which portrays the life of Halley, a mother with a difficult economic situation whose only way of having economic relief requires her to access

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different inappropriate jobs. The most remarkable one is the one that is narrated during the movie, and it is when Halley makes the decision to start offering sexual services online to economically support herself and her daughter while renting a hotel room, getting no institutional assistance of any kind. The movie explores the development of Halley as a character which seems to go down throughout the film, leading her into doing things she never thought of doing, even sacrificing the custody of her daughter and the different relationships that she had established at the beginning of the film. Halley ends up in a humiliating position where she is questioned as a mother and is ultimately separated from Moonee, her daughter, leaving her completely vulnerable.

On the other hand, Sin-Dee's character in *Tangerine* sacrifices many things and puts herself and other people at risk for the sake of her revenge on Chester since he cheated on her. Sin-Dee is shown as a confident character with an embraced and accepted identity, however, everything she does to take revenge on Chester leads her into betraying herself, letting herself be driven by insecurities and a lack of self-esteem. Ultimately, after different circumstances such as being deceived by her best friend and the humiliation suffered when being thrown a bucket of urine, Sin-Dee reconciles with her true self and forgives Alexandra.

In *Red Rocket*, which is focused on the male angle of sex work and pornography, there are also elements that can showcase the perspective the director has on the porn industry from a male perspective, without making it the only possible way of perceiving it. In the same way, as happens with the two main characters from the previous two movies, *Red Rocket's* main character, Mikey, also finds himself in places of susceptibility by the end of the movie, all of his earnings are taken from him, he is thrown to the streets fully naked and he is finally banished from Texas city for good; all of this as a consequence of his different decisions, such as taking advantage of young women to sell them to the porn industry for his own reputation, gaslighting his marijuana supplier, his neighbor-friend, and his ex-wife, and

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breaking up empty promises. Even with all the security reflected by Mikey throughout the film, in the end when he is stripped, he feels vulnerable and humiliated. Apparently, what seems to be something so natural for a porn actor ends up being an act of humiliation. After all of that, Mikey finishes the movie when he goes to look for Strawberry to start his new life<sup>10</sup>.

In the light of the three films analyzed for the purpose of this study, it can be retrieved that all three approach different gender problems in the workplace when being a sex worker. The three main characters Sin-Dee, Halley, and Mikey are the ones that represent these issues the most. However, there are other supporting characters that are involved in situations that are required to be taken into consideration when elaborating on the research study. For instance, there are Alexandra and Ashley's characters as the counterparts of Sin-Dee and Halley, correspondingly, who appear as the voice of reason on many occasions and try to prevent the protagonists from doing certain things that can have future consequences. *Red Rocket* characters such as Lexi and Strawberry portray the female gaze in a very masculine film, expanding Mikey's regard of what coming back to life means.

Moreover, there are different aspects of marginalization or stigmatization laid out throughout the movies that can be considered public health and social justice issues, also the different laws and regulations operating for sex workers, and the existent exclusion there might be towards sex workers from clients, and other sex workers putting in evidence the hustle there is in this life.

In order to bring clarity to different aspects of gender and sex work represented and subsequently identified in three movies set in the North American context set by filmmaker Sean Baker, making use of different elements such as natural actors and staging that bring the audience closer to the circumstances the characters are facing, Baker achieves to create a

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<sup>10</sup> The scene is displayed in a way that it looks like a dream or a hallucination, putting in doubt whether this actually happened or if it is just in Mikey's mind.

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bond between the audience and with the issues and consequences that are confronted throughout their three stories. Regardless of the importance these movies can have to build awareness around the different stigmatization faced by sex workers and the different gender implications there might be, it is important to mention that these fictional characters can be helpful in order to shed a light over what actual trans, prostitutes, and porn actors would go through for bringing themselves up. Even when there is a very well-made research process made by the director before the entire writing process, there are still aspects that might be left out, some of the different elements identified within the study, taking them as part of one take on sexual labor in the North American context under the eye of one filmmaker.

Research in this field can go further by taking movies from different contexts where sex work is depicted and gender issues are also identified. The results might be very different only by changing the country and the filmmaker. Also, it can be considered to work further on the movies displayed in this study by making a full analysis of the screenwriting in comparison with the product, or the way the dialogues and the situations are portrayed in the final cut taking into account the contribution actors might provide to the script making use of improvisation and other resources. Also, for deeper research to fully break down the director's style, one should consider other films by Sean Baker. As for the work done in the North American context, it can be widened as well by including more contemporary products such as TV shows that have dealt with different gender and sexual labor matters. The analysis that can be done with different audiovisual products can be really significant if it is confronted with actual situations that take place outside of fiction.

In order to dive deeper into the topics at study, one might take into consideration the different references that were employed by Sean Baker to write and to produce his films, meaning his sources of inspiration and what led him to explore these topics and characters in his movies. On the other hand, it might be interesting to take into account that the films

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released after that possibly have Sean Baker's movies as a source of inspiration. Cinema can help to shed light on significant social topics such as gender and sex work. The more characters are present in filmmaking the easier they are going to be accepted/visible in actual society. The three films analyzed are good source material for further approach.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Collection of fragments chart.

Number	Title	TCR	Script	Transcription from the movie	Category	Comments
1	Tangerine	0:02:04	<p><b>ALEXANDRA</b> You don't know?</p> <p><b>SIN-DEE</b> Know what, Alexandra? How the fuck would I know what, I just got out--</p> <p><b>ALEXANDRA</b> You must be talking to Pinky and Squirt out there on the block on the block about the girl that he's been with obviously.</p> <p><b>SIN-DEE</b> You're the first person I'm seeing out here, girl. (beat) Who is she?</p> <p><b>ALEXANDRA</b> She's some fish, I don't know. Some white fish. Nasty.</p> <p><b>SIN-DEE</b> Chester's cheating on me with A FISH?! No, I didn't just hear that shit. Uh-uh. I'm away 28 days and he goes and fucks himself a fish?</p> <p><b>ALEXANDRA</b></p>	Same	<p><b>Society's view (perception of cisgender sex workers by transgender sex workers)</b></p> <p><b>Marginalization of cisgender sex workers</b></p>	<p>In this fragment, we can notice how a cisgender girl has been referenced as white fish, a denigrating term, mainly because of the context in which it is being used. According to the Urban dictionary, it means: "An attractive flirty female that you would want to have relations with, but is completely off limits" The fact that Chester cheated on Sin-Dee with a cis girl hurts even more, and it's perceived as a bigger treason.</p>

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			Yeah. With vagina and everything.			
2	Tangerine	00:19:34	Inexistent	<p><b>TRANS GIRLS AT THE CORNER (3 voices)</b></p> <p>-I wanna ride it  -He is gonna pay for it  -Like a trick nigger  -I wanna ride it!  -Like a trick nigger!  -He's gonna pay for it!  -Go in, Bitch!  - I heard his dick is little!  -Is it little?  -I mean, damn  -Wow, what the fuck is going on?  -Going in, mommy... Oh my</p> <p>-I make silicone boobs, what do you need?</p>	<p><b>Society's view of transgender sex workers-Marginalization towards other trans workers</b></p>	<p>This scene is fully improvised for the movie. The chatter among the three trans sex workers illustrates their behavior, slang, and other mannerisms that are proper in their community. It can be identified the way they refer to other trans sex workers with insulting terms, e.g: fat bitch, ugly ass bitch.</p>

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				<p>- You don't have a baby daddy though          - Bitch...          - You better go get fight, honey          - I was fucking your piece the other night.          - Tell him to run me those diapers, bitch.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>          -Don't forget my performance at seven.          -Oh, yeah.          -That bitch looks two months pregnant.          - How she going to come out here looking like a shitty ass.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>          -Ugly ass bitches.</p>		
3	Tangerine	00:23:35	<p><b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b>          Fuck this. It's not fucking working. We're done. The john sits up and grabs the money off the dash.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b></p>	Same	<b>Marginalization of sex workers</b>	This scene portrays in a very realistic way the way trans sex workers are mistreated and

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		<p>Okay but give me my money.  <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b>  Just get the fuck out. No deal.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>  I'm not going anywhere until you give me my money.  <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b>  Look, I didn't cum. You didn't get paid. It's all cool, just get out.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>  No not cool. You didn't cum, but because I had to touch that thing, you give me that money or-  <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b>  Well, you're not doing your job correctly so no-  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>  Give me my shit!  <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b>  Get the fuck out of my car.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>  Give me my shit. I'm not playing.  <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b>  Get the fuck out!  Alexandra grabs the keys out of the ignition.  <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN (cont'd)</b>  Give me my fucking keys.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>  Nope.  Alexandra bolts out of the car. The john hobbles onto the street, half undressed.</p>			<p>abused when working. The fear caused by these situations may be very triggering for sex workers when doing their job.</p>
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			<p><b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b> Not funny. Give me the keys. <b>ALEXANDRA</b> You’re not getting these back.</p> <p>The john lunges at Alexandra. He knocks the keys out of her hand onto the asphalt. He grabs them a second before she can retrieve them. Hellfire in her eyes. Alexandra attacks!</p>			
4	Tangerine	00:25:25	<p><b>OFFICER JULES</b> What seems to be the problem here? <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b> I’m being accosted. <b>OFFICER JULES</b> Evening, Alexander. Oh, I’m sorry, Alexan-DRAAA. So is this true? <b>ALEXANDRA</b> I’m doing no such thing, Jules. I’m just trying to get what I’m owed. <b>OFFICER JULES</b> (back to John) Owe her a little money, do ya? <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b> I don’t owe her anything. Why would I owe her money? <b>OFFICER JULES</b> Well it’s just that I find it strange because of how often you seem to be owing people money on</p>	Same	<b>Marginalization of sex workers</b>	In this scene we can notice the way police officers make fun of Alexandra’s situation. There is no intervention whatsoever that benefits Alexandra and the situation in which she is. Evidently, she can’t address the actual issue behind the situation since sex work is criminalized.

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			<p>this street lately.  <b>PARSIMONIOUS JOHN</b>  C'mon, she's hustling me.  <b>OFFICER RAY</b>  (through loudspeaker from inside car)  Check the pulse.  Jules checks Alexandra's pulse.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>  What the fuck? You know I don't do that shit.  <b>OFFICER JULES</b>  I don't know.  Jules is satisfied with the results of the pulse test.  <b>OFFICER JULES (cont'd)</b>  So I'm thinking that whatever you owe her is a much cheaper price than spending Christmas Eve trying to explain to your families why they need to post bail for you.  <b>ALEXANDRA</b>  (under her breath)  What family?</p>			
5	Tangerine	01:10:00	<p><b>ASHKEN</b>  What are you doing here? You said you were working?  <b>RAZMIK</b>  I am working. And getting coffee.  <b>ASHKEN</b>  Who are these people? How did you get here?</p>	The scene develops in Armenian in the final movie version. In the fragment from the movie there are some	<b>Society's view of sex workers-Marginalization of trans sex workers</b>	This scene is illustrated differently in the movie, as it is originally written in English, but spoken in Armenian. We have a couple of scenes added.

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		<p><b>RAZMIK</b> Is Yeva here? Did Yeva bring you?</p> <p><b>ASHKEN</b> No. Karo brought me here.</p> <p><b>RAZMIK</b> Which Karo? Come on, you have to go home, we are getting out of here.</p> <p><b>ASHKEN</b> I'm not going anywhere. I want an explanation. Are you cheating on my daughter?</p> <p><b>RAZMIK</b> It's Christmas Eve. Why are you not home? You shouldn't be out now.</p> <p><b>ASHKEN</b> I thought you were cheating but I am starting to understand... my Son-In-Law is a drugee. You do marijuana with these people!</p> <p><b>RAZMIK</b> I do no drugs. (to Chester) She thinks I'm buying drugs. Tell her I buy no drugs from you.</p> <p><b>CHESTER</b> (to Ashken) He don't buy no drugs from me...</p> <p><b>RAZMIK</b> See?</p> <p><b>CHESTER</b> He just fucks my bitches.</p> <p><b>RAZMIK</b> No!! Are you crazy!</p> <p>67.</p>	<p>comments added. ASHKEN enters donut time</p> <p><b>SIN-DEE</b> -That is a cute-ass blouse.</p> <p><b>ALEXANDRA</b> -Girl, she shopped at the same store you shopped at! But she wore it better bitch!</p> <p><b>SIN-DEE</b> -Nobody asked you, bitch</p>	<p>Specifically, we have the comparison between Sin-Dee and Ashken shown through the figure of the blouse. Both are wearing the same blouse, but styling it differently, showing the contrast there is between these two. In this scene we also have denigrating comments towards sex work, specifically trans sex workers, who are being referenced as men in a scandalized way. Razmik is also judged because of his sexual preferences and the treason committed toward his wife.</p>
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			<p>Ashken is confused.  <b>CHESTER</b>          Prostituta! How you say in Russian?          Ashken realizes what he means.          Razmik is pissed at Chester.  <b>ASHKEN</b>          Prostitutes?  <b>RAZMIK</b>          These are nice people. These are all very nice ladies.  <b>ASHKEN</b>          But-- ah-- but they are men! Oh my God, they are men! I am going to have a heart attack!          She points at Sin-Dee, Alexandra... and Dinah.  <b>ASHKEN (cont'd)</b>          Men!          Dinah is offended.</p>			
6	Tangerine	01:23:19	<p><b>SIN-DEE (cont'd)</b>          You boys wanna party-The DOUCHE in the passenger seat lobs the contents of a Big Gulp at her. Yellow-ish liquid splashes all over Sin-Dee.          They all laugh hysterically and peel out.  <b>DOUCHE</b>          Merry Christmas, you tranny faggot.          Sin-Dee</p>	Same	<b>Marginalization of trans sex workers</b>	This scene culminates in a very cruel way what a trans sex worker represents for society very often. In this case, Sin-Dee continues to be humiliated right after she finds out her best friend was hooking up with his

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		<p>is dumbfounded. She realizes that the liquid is not soda when she smells her hand. She is disgusted and begins to cry.</p> <p>The SUV accelerates, passing Alexandra down the block.</p> <p><b>DOUCHE</b> (cont'd) We pissed on your friend, bitch! Sin-Dee is frozen in her tracks, soaked with urine. A midnight mass is being held for homeless at the other end of the parking lot. Alexandra runs past them toward her friend.</p> <p><b>SIN-DEE</b> They just threw fucking piss on me - it's in my mouth.</p> <p><b>ALEXANDRA</b> Oh my God, come on, come on.</p> <p><b>SIN-DEE</b> It's in my fucking hair! I don't have no fucking money for new hair. Alexandra pulls her into the 24-hour laundromat.</p> <p><b>INT.LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT</b> Alexandra helps get Sin-Dee all cleaned up. She reaches for Sin-Dee's wet shirt.</p> <p><b>ALEXANDRA</b></p>			<p>boyfriend while she was gone. This scene ends up breaking Sin-Dee. Then she finds herself being fully vulnerable in front of Alexandra since she has to undress. This puts into evidence the importance her wig and the rest of her clothes have to construct her image and build up her confidence. Sin-Dee ends the movie in a place of vulnerability when throughout the whole movie showed herself as strong and reckless.</p>
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			<p>Take this off. Come on.</p> <p>The shirt comes off revealing a black bra underneath.</p> <p><b>SIN-DEE</b> Ya know what, why don't I just take these off too, huh? Alexandra dabs the pee off her body, notices her soaked hair.</p> <p><b>ALEXANDRA</b> This has to come off too-Sin-Dee</p> <p>grabs her arm to stop her from touching her wig.</p> <p>She feels the urine dripping off. She reluctantly yanks her hair off and tosses it to the ground.</p>			
1	The Florida Project	00:12:20	<p><b>HALLEY</b> is seated with a CASE WORKER (female, 30's). Moonee is messing around with another LITTLE KID (4) while the adults talk.</p> <p><b>HALLEY</b> Most of those rachet-ass bitches were doing extras... ya know, in the back room. (gives a handjob gesture) I'm not doin' extras. I'm fuckin' dancing for tips. That's what I do.</p>	<p>In the movie Moonee is not playing with another kid, she is next to Halley playing with a doll.</p> <p>She is listening to the conversation and there is an</p>	<b>Society's view towards sex work</b>	<p>This scene shows us a little more about the legal framework, and the implications of Halley being the one responsible for Moonee. There are also a couple of references to sex work as something that has taken place in the past and has</p>

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		<p>I said no... two days later with no warning Hector fires me... after not letting me up on stage all fucking night. Fuckin' bullshit.</p> <p><b>CASE WORKER</b>          Okay, well... this will affect your TANF. (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)</p> <p><b>HALLEY</b>          No shit. That's why I'm here.</p> <p><b>CASE WORKER</b>          Okay, you need to make a concerted effort to find at least thirty hours.</p> <p><b>HALLEY</b>          (frustrated)          Yeah, well you find me thirty hours! I have applications in at every shithole up and down Irlo Bronson and the parks ain't going to hire me.</p> <p><b>CASE WORKER</b>          You can cover those up, Halley.</p> <p>Halley is thrown off for a second. She then realizes the case worker is referring to her tattoos.</p> <p><b>HALLEY</b>          No, my record. And now that it's summer and I got her during the day... C'mon.</p> <p><b>CASE WORKER</b></p>	<p>extra dialogue in the movie where the case worker tells Halley to be careful with her language in front of her child.</p>		<p>been a constant issue for Halley to keep Moonee's custody. Also, it might be implied that she has been given a warning for her behavior considering she is the one taking care of Moonee.</p>
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			<p>I get it. But you've got to give benefits three job contacts a week or you'll be considered noncompliant.</p> <p>(reading file)</p> <p>And no child support. Halley just shakes her head. <b>CASE WORKER (CONT'D)</b> When is he getting out? Halley shakes her head again.</p>			
2	The Florida Project	01:17:11	<p>Moonee is in the bathtub. We hear a door open off-screen. Moonee looks over. <b>JOHN (30's)</b> enters the room (we only hear his voice). <b>JOHN (O.S)</b> Jesus! There's a kid in here?! <b>HALLEY (O.S.)</b> Dude, I said the bathroom was off limits! <b>JOHN (O.S)</b> I had to piss. This is your kid? <b>HALLEY (O.S.)</b> Moonee, pull the shower curtain. Moonee pulls the curtain. We hearing the sound of urinating on the other side of the curtain.</p>	Same	<b>Society's view of sex work</b>	<p>Here, we can notice how Halley is crossing borders when it comes to the way she is handling her situation as a sex worker. She is now involving her own daughter in the situation and doesn't even bother on hiding what is going on. One of her clients is now aware of her having a daughter and this scandalizes him in the beginning (later we find out this man has a daughter as well, which might</p>

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						have triggered some type of discomfort).
3	The Florida Project	01:21:33	<p><b>BOBBY</b> This guy says you have something of his.</p> <p><b>HALLEY</b> I don't know who this guy is.</p> <p><b>BOBBY</b> She doesn't know who you are. Wrong girl. Now c'mon. Gotta to leave the property if you're not staying here.</p> <p><b>JOHN</b> I'm not leaving until she gives me my four MagicBands. She lifted four MagicBands from my jeans.</p> <p><b>HALLEY</b> What the fuck is a Magical Band? I don't what this guy is talkin' about.</p> <p><b>JOHN</b> When I was in the bathroom, you took my family's fucking bands.</p> <p><b>BOBBY</b> Let's go. She doesn't know what you're talking about.</p> <p>Halley has not changed her blank expression.</p> <p><b>JOHN</b> I know you know what I'm talking about Goddamnit! I want them back NOW! You stole \$1700. That's grand</p>	Same	<b>Society's view of sex work</b>	<p>In this scene we see how Halley is off-limits when it comes to what she is willing to do for getting money. She is now stealing from her clients.</p> <p>In this scene, we also see how Bobby intervenes and makes John go away by picturing the situation in which his wife and children know about his treason.</p> <p>Of course, there is an unavoidable signaling towards an unfaithful husband, much more if the treason was committed with a prostitute.</p>

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			<p>larceny. That lost profit margin stings Halley but she retains her composure. Bobby intervenes. <b>BOBBY</b> Listen, bud, look, I'll be happy to call the cops right now. We'll put in a report. You can tell them what your business was on the premises. Four of those bracelets? So I can assume this was for your wife and children, yeah?</p> <p>John has calmed down. <b>BOBBY (CONT'D)</b> Right. So why don't you get the fuck off this property now and don't let me see you here again.</p> <p>John leaves, defeated.</p>			
4	The Florida Project	01:27:09	<p><b>HALLEY</b> Yeah, well, look. Can you help me with rent this week? I'm ass out. Ashley chuckles. <b>HALLEY (CONT'D)</b> What? <b>ASHLEY</b> I think you got it covered. <b>HALLEY</b> What are you talking about. <b>ASHLEY</b> You don't think everybody knows</p>	Same	<b>Society's view of sex work—Marginalization of sex workers</b>	In this scene, Halley's work is put into evidence and the fact that she is a mother makes it even more difficult for that behavior to be acceptable. She is exposed and she hits rock bottom when hitting the only person that she had

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		<p>what's up Halley? Like everybody?  <b>HALLEY</b>          'The fuck are you talking about?  <b>ASHLEY</b>          Bitch...</p> <p>Ashley leans back and grabs the phone from her night stand. She approaches the door as she pulls up a web page.  <b>ASHLEY (CONT'D)</b>          That's you.          Ashley lifts the phone and shows an ad on Backpage.com. It's clearly a photo taken on the "swimsuit selfies" night. Bikini Clad Halley shot from the neck down. A phone number is printed across the image.  <b>HALLEY</b>          That's not me.          Ashley laughs.  <b>ASHLEY</b>          Are you fucking kidding me?! Those are your tats bitch! And I swear to God, if Scooty was ever in that room when you were whoring out, I'll fuckin' kill you—</p> <p>Halley attacks Ashley. The women topple over the bed and Halley proceeds to beat Ashley hard. Three blows to the face.</p>			<p>left. Halley surpassed the moral limits that were always present for Ashley, including the children in their businesses.</p>
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			Halley looks up and sees Scooty watching this, stunned and frozen. She leaves.			
5	The Florida Project	01:39:39	<p><b>HALLEY</b> Can I help you? Because you'll need a court order to get me to take a drug test.</p> <p><b>CASE WORKER</b> Halley, these DCF officers are here in regards to Moonee.</p> <p><b>HALLEY</b> You wanna inspect my room? Be our guest. The group follows Halley inside the room.</p> <p><b>HALLEY (CONT'D)</b> Wanna shake my cereal boxes to check for buried treasure? Look inside my fridge?</p> <p><b>DCF INVESTIGATOR</b> Halley?</p> <p><b>HALLEY</b> What? What do you want?</p> <p><b>DCF INVESTIGATOR</b> We have security footage that shows nine different men entering and exiting your room over the last three weeks.</p> <p><b>BOBBY</b> Uh, why don't you take little Moonee outside so you can talk privately.</p>	Same	<b>Marginalization of sex workers- Society's view of Sex workers</b>	Halley is now facing the consequences of her behavior while being humiliated by taking her child away. There is enough evidence backing up the investigation, which means there is not much to do for Halley at this point rather than feeling defeated and agreeing to leave Moonee to another family.

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			<p>The case worker escorts Moonee outside the room.</p> <p><b>DCF INVESTIGATOR</b> We've also obtained an online classified ad soliciting costumers for sexual activities with your phone number attached.</p> <p>Halley takes a moment to make eye contact with each person.</p>			
6	The Florida Project	01:42:22	<p><b>SCOOTY</b> My mom said you're going to another family..</p> <p><b>ASHLEY</b> Scooty.</p> <p><b>DCF WORKER</b> Thanks again so much. Ashley pushes Scooty inside and closes the door as Moonee is walked back toward the stairs.</p> <p><b>MOONEE</b> Why did he say I'm going to another family?</p> <p><b>DCF WORKER</b> You're just going to live with them for a little while.</p> <p><b>MOONEE</b> Wait, are those cops-- are they taking my mom away?</p> <p><b>DCF WORKER</b> No.</p> <p><b>MOONEE</b></p>	Same	<b>Marginalization of sex workers</b>	<p>Due to Halley's behavior and lack of commitment towards being a mom Moonee is going to be taken away. We understand she is probably going with a foster family temporarily (at least that is what the DCF workers say). Scooty is well aware of what is happening to his best friends, since his mom has told him about the situation. Here the issue is that as a consequence of not knowing how to carry a life as a sex worker a child is getting the</p>

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			<p>Are they taking me to a stranger family?</p> <p><b>DCF WORKER</b> We're taking you to a nice family. Just for a little--</p> <p><b>MOONEE</b> Well I don't want to.</p> <p><b>DCF WORKER</b> Okay, Moonee, your mom knows about this and--</p> <p><b>MOONEE</b> Stop. Moonee stops following her up the stairs.</p> <p><b>DCF WORKER</b> Your mom know about it and says it's okay--</p> <p><b>MOONEE</b> Stop! You want me to get super angry?</p>			consequences for her mom's mistakes.
1	Red Rocket	00:11:58	<p>Close-up of the manager's face as he looks at Mikey's job application.</p> <p><b>MANAGER</b> The last full time job you listed is over 17 years ago. That's quite a gap in employment.</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Well, I've worked everyday for the last 17 years. It's just that I was self-employed for most of that time period.</p>	Same. After this sequence he goes to several other place to apply for jobs. In the movie it is edited so that it looks like everything is happening simultaneously.	<b>Society's view of sex workers.--- Marginalization of sex workers</b>	Being a porn actor might be seen as an interesting feature for conversation, and Mikey seems very proud of bragging about it, however, it is not very well seen in the employment he is applying for. The different

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		<p><b>MANAGER</b> In what line of work?</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Mostly entertainment. I've been living in Los Angeles. That's why I have a 323 area code if you were wondering. Film, TV, music. Entrepreneurship.</p> <p><b>MANAGER</b> Okay. So, why are you interested in working here?</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Well, I'm living here now. My wife and I were... let's say... estranged for awhile but we both grew up here and decided that it would be nice to settle back here and make a run of it, know what I mean?</p> <p><b>MANAGER</b> Okay, well, we require at least some previous experience or training in the service industry. Not to mention, I'd need at least one reference.</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Yeah, that's going to be hard. I worked at CiCi's Pizza from 1999 to 2000 as I wrote there but I'm pretty sure that CiCi's closed years ago. I mean... you could contact corporate.</p> <p><b>MANAGER</b></p>	<p>In the movie he is rejected directly from all of the jobs he applied for, stating he is overqualified or that it isn't good for the image of the company.</p>	<p>managers he meets agree on the fact it is impressive and appealing, but certainly, it is a disqualifying feature for a serious employee. Porn is seen as entertainment only, something to watch and discuss under the shadows, but a taboo topic for society.</p>
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			<p>Yeah, well, it's really up to you to provide contact info for references.</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Is there anyway I could work here on a trial basis?</p> <p><b>MANAGER</b> It's okay if you were incarcerated. I just need a letter from your parole officer...</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Dude, I wasn't in prison. Never a day in prison. Okay, look, I'm going to be straight with you... I'm a high level pornstar. A professional pornstar.</p> <p><b>MANAGER</b> Excuse me?</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> I've been working in adult entertainment since 2001. And even though, I'm very successful... as I said, I'm moving on. A new chapter. I'm thinking about raising a family here now that I've reunited with my wife. A renewal of vows so to speak.</p> <p><b>MANAGER</b> Did you say porn?</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> I did. Look. Here... search MikeySaberXXX. Go ahead. The manager turns to his/her computer and starts typing.</p> <p><b>MANAGER</b></p>			
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			<p>Mikey...  <b>MIKEY</b>  Saber. S. A. B. E. R. XXX.  The manager's jaw drops as he looks at the images on his computer screen.  <b>MIKEY (CONT'D)</b>  That's me.  <b>MANAGER</b>  That's certainly you.  <b>MIKEY</b>  Yeah. I'm considered a legend. I don't call myself that shit. 2000 movies, 6 awards, 13 nominations and Hall of Fame did that. And those accolades reach far and wide, but look... I'm here now and want to kick ass for you and Food King here and hey... the ends justify the means, know what I'm sayin'?</p>			
2	Red Rocket	00:24:30	<p><b>LONNIE</b>  So, are you just visiting or...  <b>MIKEY</b>  Bro... LA is nothing but backstabbin', opportunists who will stop at nothing to destroy the competition even if it means having no code of conduct, integrity, or maturity. So no, I'm not visiting. I'm here now.  <b>LONNIE</b>  Wow. But must have been pretty cool though...while it lasted.</p>	The dialogue order varies a bit in the movie; however, the intention and Mikey's stories remain the same.	<b>Society's view of sex workers</b>	In this scene Mikey is on the road with Lonnie telling him about his glorious years back in the day when he was a porn star. Mikey is going to repeat the pattern of bragging and remembering things from his past career throughout

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		<p><b>MIKEY</b> Yeah well, I had quite the run. But there comes a time when you have to throw in the towel and all that bullshit.</p> <p><b>LONNIE</b> So you're back with Lexi?</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Yeah.</p> <p><b>LONNIE</b> That's cool. Change of pace, I guess.</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> But honestly, bro, I can never be considered a civilian again. No way. I'm a public figure.</p> <p><b>LONNIE</b> Oh, yeah. I wasn't sayin'...</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> I have 800... close to 900 subscribers to my Pornhub channel and one of the highest ratings...and that's not just male talent...that's overall. You'll see I have a fuckin' 81% positive click rate, you know where people hit the "like" button. And the one scene that was viewed over a million times... every single person who watched it hit the like button. That's 100%.</p> <p><b>LONNIE</b> That's cool.</p>			<p>the whole movie. He states that he was very famous and won a couple of prizes for being a porn star. Funnily enough, he is now back where he thought he would never come back. According to the dialogue, he plans on staying there with Lexi (soon we'll see that intention changes, or was never there in the first place).</p>
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3	Red Rocket	00:44:50	<p><b>MIKEY</b> As a matter of fact, I've been fucked out of male performer of the year literally 5 times. But I'm not an ass-kisser and I play by my rules so... almost every girl I did a scene with, started fucking me off-camera.</p> <p><b>MIKEY (CONT'D)</b> Agents don't like that shit. But think about it, a bitch moves into my model house, the first thing they see when they come in is my Hall of Fame trophy on my mantelpiece. They say... 'you're famous for fucking! Like Hall of Fame famous for fucking'. They're in my bed within two days.</p> <p><b>LONNIE</b> So... you had your own model house?</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> I had three model houses, bro. And my last one... that was a savage ass house. Until I started letting agents book bottom bitches in there and everything went to shit.</p> <p><b>LONNIE</b> Bottom bitches?</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Bottom bitches are technically the best of the hookers. But they're still the hookers. And see... that's what they started sending to me. Was the hookers. And that's</p>	Same	<p><b>Society's view of female sex workers —Marginalization of sex workers- female</b></p>	<p>Mikey keeps bragging about his position back in the day. He also mentions how he got involved with many porn actresses and puts them in a lower position. He also mentions the term "bottom bitches"- In American pimp culture, a bottom girl, bottom woman, or bottom bitch is a term for a prostitute who sits atop the hierarchy of prostitutes working for a particular pimp. He also mentions that once girls get what they want from the industry they become unbearable, making an indirect for Lexi, and predicting what is possibly going to happen with Strawberry since he is taking the same path with her.</p>
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			<p>when shit started going wrong.          'Cause porn chicks, once they get a hooker mentality... they're know-it-alls, they're hard to deal with, real pains in the ass.  <b>LONNIE</b>          Okay.  <b>MIKEY</b>          I forgot that Gulf Coast bitches can be mighty fine. There's this bitch who works at that doughnut shop down near the refinery entrance. Smokin' hot. And fucking 17, bro... Legal as an eagle.</p>			
4	Red Rocket	00:53:35	<p><b>JUNE</b>          But weren't you working in porn or something?  <b>MIKEY</b>          Five AVN's.  <b>JUNE</b>          What's that, an STD? (sexually transmitted diseases)  <b>MIKEY</b>          No, it's the adult film awards... like the academy awards for what I do.  <b>JUNE</b>          Good job.  <b>MIKEY</b>          Including Best Oral three years in a row.  <b>JUNE</b>          Best oral?</p>	Same. He is more descriptive in the movie but the purpose of the scene is the same.	<b>Marginalization of sex workers (female)-- Society's view of sex work (porn industry)</b>	In this scene Mikey is talking to June about his awards for being a porn actor, specifically winning best oral. This shocks June a little because she wonders why it's him getting the award and not the girl. Here we are able to see an evident aspect of gender inequality in the porn industry. Women are not getting what they deserve when they

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		<p><b>MIKEY</b> Yup.</p> <p><b>JUNE</b> Just one question though... best oral is about getting head, right?</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Yeah.</p> <p><b>JUNE</b> Well, what does that have to do with you? You ain't doing the work.</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> I ain't doing the work? Sister, let me tell you something...</p> <p><b>JUNE</b> Don't call me sister.</p> <p><b>MIKEY</b> Okay... June... it's June, right? She stares at him.</p> <p><b>MIKEY (CONT'D)</b> Okay, look, if I won three years in a row, with three different girls, the chances of it being the girl is pretty limited. Think about it.</p> <p>June cannot believe this guy.</p> <p><b>MIKEY (CONT'D)</b> Look, I'm the one guiding the girl in the scene. Essentially I'm face fuckin' her... excuse my language. The female has very little control. So to give her credit is like... how? I'm grabbing her by the head and force fucking her for 15 or 20 minutes. So, how is that about her</p>			<p>are doing the hard job, but men are the ones receiving acknowledgment for their work.</p>
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